

Voices de la Luna

A Quarterly Poetry & Arts Magazine

Volume 1, Number 1

15 September 2008



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It's Alive!

Voices de la Luna
A Quarterly Poetry and Arts Magazine

The Magazine's Present and Planned Activities:

1. To publish an electronic and online poetry and art periodical.
2. To publish a quarterly hard copy poetry and arts magazine.
3. To use poetry and art to reach out to the community, e.g., with poetry therapy sessions, and poetry and arts educational programs at schools.
4. To participate in teaching English and American poetry and literature in high schools.
5. To educate therapists and literary groups in the use of poetry and art for healing purposes.

Our Mission

Our goal is to publish a quarterly poetry and arts magazine with international flavor and a commitment to inspiring, educating, and healing community members through the arts.

Thoughts For The Day

I see that sensible men and conscientious men all over the world were of one religion, -- the religion of well-doing and daring, men of sturdy truth, men of integrity and feeling for others.

Ralph Waldo Emerson, writer and philosopher
(1803-1882)

//////////

It is difficult
to get the news from poems
yet men die miserably every day
for lack
of what is found there.

William Carlos Williams
(Collected Poems II, 318)

Our Logo



The symbols behind la luna are much more poetic and much more appealing in Spanish than the moon in English. The key element of every expression is the speaker's poetic/artistic voice, his authentic voice. I believe that authentic voices rise up out of the unconscious, which is symbolized by la luna, the moon. La luna (the moon) is a major symbol for our feminine side. It represents the muse, the Earth Mother, earth, our shadow side, night, darkness, etc. The animal feeds the poetic and the passionate side of the male. Passion is where poetry comes from. Another element of la luna is the word lunatic. The moon makes us crazy; this craziness alludes to the craziness of poets and artists. They don't see things the way the average person does. We want to tap into all those authentic voices around us, stimulate them, encourage them, and develop them. Especially the voices of marginal communities; however, we welcome all voices, mature voices, too. We invite Texas poets/artists as well as international poets/artists, thus the word planetary. We hope that when we tap into Voices de la Luna, we tap into ways of healing for our planet earth. Poetry/art can be a very spiritual endeavor and can lead to the healing of poets/artists and other members of our communities. This brief explanation just touches the surface of all the rich layers of meaning behind Voices de la Luna.

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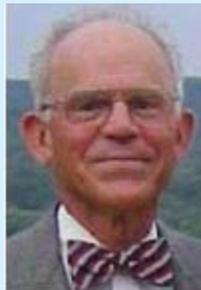
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Mo H Saidi was born in Iran, moved to the United States in 1969, and became an American citizen in 1975. He practiced OB/GYN in San Antonio while teaching at the University of Texas Health Science Center of San Antonio. He has published scientific papers in American medical journals and a book, *Female Sterilization: A Handbook For Women* (Garland Publishing Co.) His essays and short fiction pieces have appeared in medical periodicals. Now retired from medicine, he is a writer of fiction and poetry in English. His first novel, *Persian Marcher: A Novel*, is completed, and he is now working on his next novel, *The Grant Writer*, and a collection of short stories. In June 2007, he received a master's degree in English and American Literature and Language from Harvard University. His first book of poetry, *Art in the City*, won the 2007 Eakin Memorial Book Publication Award of the PST. He is married, has three adult children, two grandchildren and a cat named Emily.

James Brandenburg

Living in San Antonio since 1977, James Brandenburg works as a counselor at Tom C. Clark High School and is an Adjunct Professor in San Antonio, Texas. He has published two books of poetry, *In Pursuit of the Butterfly* (1996), and *Somewhere Everywhere Irgendwo Überall* (Co-authored with Hejo Müller from Berlin in 2003). Brandenburg and Müller are working on the second edition of *Somewhere Everywhere Resistance Irgendwo Überall Widerstand*. Brandenburg is a Certified Poetry Therapist, only the 2nd Poetry Therapist in the State of Texas, and an Analyst in Training for C.G. Jung's Depth Psychology (Dream Analysis). He co-edits *Voices de la Luna* and believes in the healing power of words.

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The Rider

Naomi Shihab Nye

A boy told me
if he roller-skated fast enough
his loneliness couldn't catch up to him,
the best reason I ever heard
for trying to be a champion.
What I wonder tonight
pedaling hard down King William Street
is if it translates to bicycles.
A victory! To leave your loneliness
panting behind you on some street corner
while you float free into a cloud of sudden
azaleas,
pink petals that have never felt loneliness,
no matter how slowly they fell.

"The Rider" by Naomi Shihab Nye, from *Fuel*.
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permission.

My Daughter Asks Me What The Soul Is*Lisa Suhair Majaj*

I who have no certainty of belief,
 how can I answer? Maybe the soul
 is a small bird inside the chest,
 beating its wings for the joy of freedom.
 Maybe it's a kernel of light, a pulsating star,
 a small moon within us that waxes and wanes
 without leaving the sky. It might be the energy
 that leavens our steps, the radiance that illumines
 our words, the sound that hums below everything.
 I ponder the rush of water in the kitchen sink
 as I wash, she dries. Her towel moves meditatively
 across the flat white plates, the chipped soup bowls,
 the forks bent from the garbage disposal.
 Her hair is in need of brushing, her face slightly grubby,
 her eyes luminous with thought. Gazing at her
 I feel my soul, whatever that may be, expand.

Perhaps the olive trees outside the window
 know the answer. They lean toward each other,
 a bulwark against grayness: each tree its own life,
 a witness to the sky, the sky a witness
 to the trees, sky and trees a witness to the earth.
 I turn off the water, dry my hands.
 Quiet vibrates like a pulse. Beneath my feet
 the earth turns, its subtle motion a witness
 to our humanness: so ordinary, so transcendent.

From *Geographies of Light*, forthcoming by Del Sol
 Press, published in *Cadences*, Vol 4, no 1. Copyright ©
 2008 by Lisa Suhair Majaj. Reprinted with permission.

Transformation*Stuart Young*

In eons past
 Hurling Orpheus
 Dealt me a glancing blow
 Leaving behind
 His core of iron
 Rings around
 My pockmarked head
 Coalesced into your radiance
 As you retreated
 You slowed my spinning thoughts
 And stilled my wobbling
 Now I can breathe
 And all my life
 Dances to your rhythm.

Sharing Love*P. C. McKinnon*

When we part,
 I take loneliness
 from your lips,
 emptiness from your soul.

These, I take
 into myself -
 pains of separation,
 desolation we share.

When we meet,
 loneliness
 in grotto's dark,
 empty nakedness,
 hides.

Romance lights
 passages, fabled halls
 toward Valhalla -
 there,
 we share love.

San Antonio*Naomi Shihab Nye*

Tonight I lingered over your name,
 the delicate assembly of vowels
 a voice inside my head.
 You were sleeping when I arrived.
 I stood by your bed
 and watched the sheets rise gently.
 I knew what slant of light
 would make you turn over.
 It was then I felt
 the highways slide out of my hands.
 I remembered the old men
 in the west side cafe,
 dealing dominoes like magical charms.
 It was then I knew,
 like a woman looking backward,
 I could not leave you,
 or find anyone I loved more.

From *Is This Forever, or What?* by Naomi Shihab Nye.
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 permission.

Extinction Heard on the Radio

for Chief Marie Smith Jones, Eyak tribe
Cyra S. Dumitru

She prays in a language I don't recognize,
 a language, the announcer says, that died
 yesterday, peacefully in sleep.

Hers is an ancient voice, shimmering with scars
 along the belly. As her prayer crackles through the
 Arctic ice, cuts through the void, I hear sounds familiar
 yet wild--

click clock sounds made when the tongue presses
 against the palate, sounds heard from a pygmy owl
 with broken wings that clicks a stranger's intrusion.

This utterance rubs against loneliness: recalling,
 as it might, the first walk across the Bering Strait.
 To keep the wanderers warm, perhaps God gave this
 prayer.

This is language might tone the songs of whales,
 include a word that means--bear sliding in icy snow--
 offer multiple words for heat and the undulation of fire.

This language might feel a word for the silence
 that follows a woman's final breath. We will never know:
 whoowha.

Wine Stain

Jenan Selçuk

(Translated from the original Turkish by the poet.)
 Marmaris, 2001

The Sky,
 day's newly pressed shirt
 worn on his date with
 mistress night.

A bouquet of clouds
 in his hand,
 and the Sun
 the kerchief
 in his pocket.

That thing you see
 is not a bird,
 but wine stain.

Πες μου πότε

Απόψε στον ύπνο μου.
 Στο πιο ασφαλές δωμάτιο
 του ονείρου μου.
 Μακριά από τα βλέμματα
 όσων δεν βλέπουν.
 Χωρίς διακοπές
 και δίχως ενοχές.
 Ψιθύρισε μου ξανά το
 Πάνω Από Όλους και Από Όλα
 που μ' ανεβάζει
 πέρα από τα πάντα.
 Κοίταξε με με λατρεία
 Και κλείσε με στο είναι σου.
 Κράτα την ανάσα σου μέχρι
 να σβήσει η δίψα
 της απουσίας μου.
 Απόψε.

When?

Andrea Theophanous

Tonight in my sleep,
 In the safest room of my dream.
 Away from the eyes
 Of those who cannot see.
 Without interruptions
 And with no guilt.
 Whisper to me again the
 Over Everyone and Everything
 That lifts me
 Above all things.
 Look at me in adoration
 And hold me in your being.
 Hold your breath until
 The thirst of my absence
 Is quenched.
 Tonight.

Lonely Tree

Dave Gravely (age 9)

Isolated from the rest
 Surrounded by evil dandelions
 Longing to move with others
 An acorn plummets to the ground.
 Three years fly by.
 The tree earns a new friend.

Soñar
Alicia Galvan

Yo sueño
con un día sin penas...
con lluvia que no se vuelva tormenta
con un nopal sin espinas
con un alma que escuche
mis plegarias

yo sueño,
cierro los ojos
imaginado el universo,
caminando entre las
estrellas sonriendo a la luna

Yo sueño
que nunca mas
la hiel amarga queme
mi corazón
y una palabra sincera
extendida a alguien
no se regrese envuelta
en traición

sencillamente
yo sueño

I dream
of a day without worries...
of rain not becoming a storm
with a prickly pear without thorns
of a soul that will listen
to my prayers

I dream
close my eyes
imagining the universe,
wandering among the
stars smiling at the moon

I dream
that never more
will bitter bile burn
my heart
and a sincere word
extended to someone
not be returned enveloped
in betrayal.

Simply
I dream

Stones From a River
Margot Van Sluytman

I am stones from a river.
I know generations of blood
And wanting. Generations of
So much hate, I have wanted to
Dissolve and disappear. And
I have known so much beauty
That I spin my yarns to
Sweet lilies and lanky
River weeds, who tell me
Their tales as well. I know
Brutality and barely fathom
Why love chooses, always,
To speak. I know misted mornings
When dawn, streaked with fragrant
Orange-gold hues, pin my heart
Upon hope and only hope.
I hunger for calm and tenderness,
And daily, I find myself torn
Though ready. Ready for what
Is, has been, can be, will be.
Ready to let the water cleanse
And strengthen me, even as my
Weaknesses breathe their voice.

When Someone Deeply Listens to You
John Fox

When someone deeply listens to you
it is like holding out a dented cup
you've had since childhood
and watching it fill up with
cold, fresh water.
When it balances on top of the brim,
you are understood.
When it overflows and touches your skin,
you are loved.

When someone deeply listens to you,
the room where you stay
starts a new life
and the place where you wrote
your first poem
begins to glow in your mind's eye.
It is as if gold has been discovered!

When someone deeply listens to you,
your barefeet are on the earth
and a beloved land that seemed distant
is now at home within you.

The call of the muse*Tom Keene*

Something happens
and the core of it shines
of inner light
to blast the inner eye.

We stand touched, grabbed,
struck dumb,
yet called,

not quite so strong as
Allah giving birth to
the Qu'ran's poetry,
commanding Muhammad:
Recite!
But maybe a little like it.

The caller has found us
and we will be our becoming.
Now we are blessed/cursed
with hunger and thirst for words
to speak the unspeakable.

Basket Makers Don't Starve*Jo LeCoeur*

Just bored blind with the simple
two-tone in out over under.

Which is why you start to play around
with color. Why you and your horse
dive into the basket cavern.

As for the weave, make it look as if
it got away from you, hanging on
bareback, your fingers twisted in mane.

Make it look like you fell off,
lay sighing, you and the weave
wrapped together at the end.

Tell folks you picked that basket
growing wild on Cave Creek.
They'll want to know where exactly.

Tell them only your horse can find it
when you give him his head and after the ride
he takes you there for a drink.

To Be of Use*Joan Seifert*

Sometimes an embrace is all that will suffice.
"El sirve" say the Spanish.
When all things sane and practical point out
the riddance stage is reached,
a gamble's all that's left—or a hug.

At the old house, years ago,
emptying the saddened attic
of furniture and past memories,
Martha said "El sirve",
pointing to a rickety chest, or armoire.
Though armoire was giving it
a dignity it didn't merit;
crazed finish, corners wracked with time
into disjointed sides but the wood still proud.

Was there no remembrance,
no gentle lure to captivate the curious?
None for them.
"Take it!" they said." The going's a relief."

A worn proverb tells that plum trees
are more beautiful after blossoms fall;
then the fruit begins its remembered promise.

One would never ask a stranger
the value of a faded photograph
or an almost-forgotten smile.

Verge of Extinction*Lee Robinson*

Already gone, the Iberian lynx,
Brazil's guitarfish and South Africa's
national flower. Gone, too, the Scottish
crossbill, the Parrot of Carolina.
Almost gone, the trees at Kew hanging on
in a greenhouse, their lucky progeny
stored in a seed bank we name Millenium.
Meanwhile talk's cheap and money's always money.
We argue over global warming and complain
about the price of gas; revise, re-think,
waiting for more evidence of ruin than
twelve thousand species or more on the brink.
Busy sawing off the limb we stand on,
we miss the news of our own oblivion.

The Voyage*H. Palmer Hall*

El mapa es al viaje lo que el mito es al lenguaje.
-- Alberto Blanca

A map is to a journey what a myth is to language.
-- tr. H. P Hall

Before the assassinations, dark waters brushed
against creosote pilings and the gray husk
of a T-2 tanker rocked with every rainbow wave.

Inside fires sparked and languished, yellow sulfur
packed tight, compressed, liquefied, so still, hush,
brown water, slick, sparkling rainbows on the hull.

Check the charts: pulled through miles of shallow water,
deep channels, dredged daily to the color blue: deep
drop off, flowing warm river in salt water. Here predators
swim, flanks iridescent, bright shiny: mackerel, tuna,
marlin,
tarpon, swordfish, sharks, all that array of fighting fish.
The tanker's props turn, push it on around the Florida
keys.

Here the chart speaks truth, escapes from myth, leads
travelers into clear water until something happens,
some
thing transcends what is drawn on paper, on screens,

ink and electrons, all pulling, mist-covered in angry
squalls,
the road breaking, turning in on itself, charts washed
away
as the tanker rocks, twists in the winds and rains, snaps

like a toy boat in a pond, nothing else, a voyage begun,
ended in warm waters, somewhere near Cuba, no place
on the map to mark the X, no oil slick, only a story

We Real Cool*Gwendolyn Brooks*

We real cool. We
Left school. We
Lurk late. We
Strike straight. We
Sing sin. We
Thin gin. We
Jazz June. We
Die soon.

Night on the River*Lou Taylor*

Silence
In
The hours from midnight
To dawn
Broken by
A deep horn
Almost a moan
A freighter on
The Mississippi
Signals its presence
An answer comes
From down river
A symphony of freighters
In the darkness
Lonely sound
Eerie sound
Calling us to ourselves
Telling us to breathe
Letting us know
That we are alive
That soul
Has a place in this crazy world
The sleepless join
In silent community
Hugging the river
With thoughts

POW: Prisoner of Words*by Alicia Keys*
(Excerpt)

I'm a prisoner
Of words unsaid
Just lonely feelings
Locked away in my head
I trap myself further
Every time I stay quiet
I should start to speak
But I stop and stay silent
And now I've made
My own hard bed
Inside a prison of words unsaid
I am a P.O.W.
Not a prisoner of war
A prisoner of words

Der Krieg hat kein weibliches Gesicht*Anja Nussbaum*
Berlin, Germany

Translated by James Brandenburg

Der Übersetzer
aus dem Russischen,
die Tränen in den Augen,
Wangen gerötet,
nach der Passage,
wo ein Soldat
einer Krankenschwester
und gleichzeitig
Regiment-Hure,
die Ärmel
von seinem Hemd
abreißt,
um daraus
eine Menstruationsbinde
zu machen,
erklärt den Zuhörern,
daß ein Wort "Krieg"
auf russisch
weiblich ist.

War Has No Women's Face

The Russian translator
tears in his eyes
and red cheeks
after reading the passage
where a soldier
tears off
his shirt sleeves
to improvise a poultice
that slows the menstrual bleeding
of the nurse
and part-time
regiment whore
explains to his audience
that the word war
in Russian
is feminine.

Two Untitled Poems*Xelo Candel Vila***Poem One**

Era su voz una mirada amarilla..
La ciudad despoblada y desnuda,
Como un animal en sombra,
Convergía en un único silencio.
Asomada al abismo de lo incierto,
Junio abrazaba el viento con la boca.
El balcón era un palco sin público.

Poem Two

Regiones de las aves enterradas
En la arena del frío y la llama,
selvas que rodean el jardín del miedo,
gritad con arrojo mi delirio.
Que mi herida conmueva
la piel de los tejados,
illumine los hogares
Y desnude vuestros torsos.
Llegue mí moz a través de verano
hasta ella y se haga diminuto
su dolor y mí regreso.
From: La arena. Reprinted with permission

The Summer Day*Mary Oliver*

Who made the world?
Who made the swan, and the black bear?
Who made the grasshopper?
This grasshopper, I mean—
the one who has flung herself out of the grass,
the one who is eating sugar out of my hand,
who is moving her jaws back and forth instead of up
and down—
who is gazing around with her enormous and compli
cated eyes.
Now she lifts her pale forearms and thoroughly washes
her face.
Now she snaps her wings open, and floats away.
I don't know exactly what a prayer is.
I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down
into the grass, how to kneel down in the grass,
how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the
fields,
which is what I have been doing all day.
Tell me, what else should I have done?
Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon?
Tell me, what is it you plan to do
with your one wild and precious life?

From *The Truro Bear and Other Adventures: Poems and Essays*. © Beacon Press, 2008. Reprinted with permission.

In Jerusalem*Mahmoud Darwish*

Translated by Fady Joudah

In Jerusalem, and I mean within the ancient walls, I walk from one epoch to another without a memory to guide me. The prophets over there are sharing the history of the holy . . . ascending to heaven and returning less discouraged and melancholy, because love and peace are holy and are coming to town. I was walking down a slope and thinking to myself: How do the narrators disagree over what light said about a stone? Is it from a dimly lit stone that wars flare up? I walk in my sleep. I stare in my sleep. I see no one behind me. I see no one ahead of me. All this light is for me. I walk. I become lighter. I fly then I become another. Transfigured. Words sprout like grass from Isaiah's messenger mouth: "If you don't believe you won't believe." I walk as if I were another. And my wound a white biblical rose. And my hands like two doves on the cross hovering and carrying the earth. I don't walk, I fly, I become another, transfigured. No place and no time. So who am I? I am no I in ascension's presence. But I think to myself: Alone, the prophet Mohammad spoke classical Arabic. "And then what?" Then what? A woman soldier shouted: Is that you again? Didn't I kill you? I said: You killed me . . . and I forgot, like you, to die.

Mahmoud Darwish was born on March 13, 1942 in Al Birweh, Palestine, into a land-owning Sunni Muslim family. During the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, his village was destroyed and his family fled to Lebanon. They returned the following year, secretly re-entering Israel. As a young man, Darwish faced house arrest and imprisonment for his political activism and for publicly reading his poetry. He joined the official Communist Party of Israel, the Rakah, in the 1960s. In 1970, he left for Russia, where he attended the University of Moscow for one year, and then moved to Cairo. He lived in exile for twenty-six years, between Beirut and Paris, until his return to Israel in 1996, after which he settled in Ramallah in the West Bank. He died on 9 August 2008.

A THOUGHT FOR TODAY

The greatest tragedy in mankind's entire history may be the hijacking of morality by religion.

Arthur C. Clarke, science fiction writer (1917-2008)

He Embraced His Murderer*Mahmoud Darwish (1941 - 2008)*

He embraces his murderer.
 May he win his heart: Do you feel angrier if I survive?
 Brother...My brother!
 What did I do to make you destroy me?
 Two birds fly overhead.
 Why don't you shoot upwards?
 What do you say?
 You grew tired of my embrace and my smell.
 Aren't you just as tired of the fear within me?
 Then throw your gun in the river! What do you say?
 The enemy on the riverbank aims his machine gun at an embrace?
 Shoot the enemy!
 Thus we avoid the enemy's bullets and keep from falling into sin.
 What do you say?
 You'll kill me so the enemy can go to our home
 And descend again into the law of the jungle?
 What did you do with my mother's coffee; with your mother's coffee?
 What crime did I commit to make you destroy me?
 I will never
 Cease embracing you.
 And I will never
 Release you.

Remember**Walk To Caesaerea**

Hannah Szenes (Chana Senesh)
 July 17, 1921 – November 7, 1944

God---may there be no end
 to sea, to sand,
 water's splash,
 lightning's flash,
 the prayer of man.

Szenes grew up in Hungary attending a Protestant school and later moved to Palestine. She was one of 37 Jews who trained with the British army and parachuted into Yugoslavia during World War II in order to help save the Jews of Hungary, who were about to be deported to the German death camp at Auschwitz. She was arrested, tortured, tried for treason, and executed by a firing squad before the judges had returned a verdict. After the Cold War, a Hungarian military court officially exonerated her. Her kin in Israel were informed about her exoneration on November 5, 1993.

An Interview with John Fox

James Brandenburg

Brandenburg: If people want to become involved in poetry therapy, what advice would you give them?

John Fox: Practice listening. Breathe poems into your body, into your cells. As Robert Heinlein might say, "grok" them. Speak poems out loud. Listen again. Pay attention to everything. As Rumi says about listening, "I should sell my tongue and buy a thousand ears." Write your own poems. Become a safe person. Give respect. There's more, but that's a start.

Brandenburg: Does the fact that poetry therapists need a background in both psychology and literature severely limit the number of people receiving certifications in this area?

John Fox: Yes. I believe it does limit the field. There are benefits, certainly, from such training in both psychology and literature, and I believe they are important to good practice. But when the training process becomes bureaucratic, complicated, and picayune, and when the flexibility and discretion of individual mentors/students is severely controlled, the spirit leaves the field. There always needs to be thoughtful concern for and attention to the safety and well-being of clients, patients, and any participant in poetry therapy works to assure good practice. That said, I am interested in people who bring more than academic training; I am interested in those thoughtful, passionate, and feeling people who bring a healing spirit to the field. People concerned with control and having more rigor are actually imposing rigor mortis on something breathing and alive. I like to remember the poem *How Poetry comes to Me* by Gary Snyder:

It comes blundering over the
Boulders at night, it stays
Frightened outside the
Range of my campfire
I go to meet it at the
Edge of the light.
It's not just poetry that stays outside the range of the
campfire, it's often
the wildness within each person. Those who think they
are doing poetry

It's not just poetry that stays outside the range of the
campfire, it's often the wildness within each person.
Those who think they are doing poetry therapy a favor
by being more rigorous are just scaring people away.

Brandenburg: How would you define poetry therapy?

John Fox: Arleen McCarty Hynes and Mary Hynes-Berry, in *Biblio/Poetry Therapy: The Interactive Process*, wrote: "Where beauty is perceived an integration of self takes place." That perception of beauty has its origins in many different things: being heard, the empathy of community, the valuing of your unique and irreplaceable voice, the discovery that comes from writing down a full and raw range of what you actually feel and think, and the way words can touch our brow, our heart and re-tell us our loveliness. In *St. Francis and the Sow*, Galway Kinnell wrote:

The bud
stands for all things,
even for those things that don't flower,
for everything flowers, from within, of self-blessing;
though sometimes it is necessary
to reteach a thing its loveliness,
to put a hand on its brow
of the flower
and retell it in words and in touch
it is lovely
until it flowers again from within, of self-blessing...

Brandenburg: Should poets become political activists?

John Fox: Yes! I hope they will. We are discovering that everything is interrelated. The language of poetry is the best way to show this deep connection. Let's bring poems to city council meetings, to hearings of environmental impact reports, to our attitudes about race and democracy. We are in the midst of a horrible war. The poet in all of us needs to speak up and say: "Enough!"

Brandenburg: What advice would you give to young people who are serious about writing poetry?

John Fox: I love working with children on writing. I don't think young people need to be serious about writing poetry. In fact, I would encourage them to be playful. Nothing will serve the adult better for what that child, God-willing, will become, than to nurture a spirit of playfulness about language. We take language far too seriously early on--red marks and rules--and I want to encourage the sheer pleasure and play of words. The fact is that without much effort on the part of adults, young people and children will understand the deep potentials of language.

Continued . . .

John Fox Interview continued

John Fox continues: Here is a poem by a child who was meeting and “unpacking” the word rivulet for the very first time:

Friendship

Carolyn Keane, 11 years old

Friendship is eternity,
Like two little rivulets that flow side-by-side forever
Between the two, lies the vision of sweetly being.
And when ashamed they release,
and flow down different sides of the mountain.
But then again, slowly but surely,
you can see them side-by-side again.

I walked into a 4th grade classroom in Fredericksburg, TX and asked those kids: “What would we lose in our world if we didn’t have poetry?” Within 12 seconds these children said aloud; “Feeling, imagination, music and memory.” I was looking for the door!

Brandenburg: Who were your major influences in poetry? How did they influence you?

John Fox: At about sixteen, I loved the music, beauty and fierceness of W. B. Yeats’ poems. I learned to speak poems by Yeats out loud, because I would listen to incredible recordings of Cyril Cusack and Siobhan McKenna. I was in my teens when T. S. Eliot made me think about poetry as a voice for my spiritual journey. When my leg was amputated at eighteen, I read the poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke. His Duino Elegies and poems about grief helped me survive a deep sense of isolation. Kenneth Rexroth’s translations of Chinese poets like Tu Fu and Li Po tuned my awareness to image. Denise Levertov and Wendell Berry combined a deep sensibility for the natural world and powerful witnesses to truth in the work of peace and social justice.

Brandenburg: Is using poetry for therapeutic means the wave of the future for poets?

John Fox: If you and I have anything to do with it, yes. I would say not only therapeutic applications but transformational and spiritual purposes. Poem-making as evocative language that calls forth our connection to the universe.

Brandenburg: Please feel free to comment on any aspect of poetry or poetry therapy you feel we have not addressed. Is there anything else you would like to share with the readers of Voices de la Luna?

John Fox: I greatly admire, Jim, the healing and creative vision you and Mo Saidi have for a poetry that is inclusive and powerful--that is open to voices that are marginalized by consumer culture. I would ask each reader of Voices de la luna to pause and recognize themselves as a part of that transformational vision, and then following that deep in-breath, to become more involved in a community doing something quite extraordinary! James Broughton wrote this in ***A Gathering of Poets***:

Poets are not gnats in the wind.
they are dragonflies from the sun.
Come, burn your bliss in midair.
You are more needed than you know.
Be arsonists of the phoenix nest
and glow!

The Church Softball League

Robert Flynn

My wife and I visited an aunt and uncle in a West Texas town that is best left unidentified. It was big enough to have two Baptist churches as well as Methodist, Church of Christ, Assembly of God, Bible and El Sendero churches. It was big enough to have a church softball league, requiring only two churches from neighboring communities.

My uncle, whom I will call Roland to protect the innocent, played first base for Second Baptist Church, that loved all people and all churches, and their softball teams, except First Baptist that they hated worse than sin. And they hated First Baptist softball team worse than they hated sin that someone else got away with.

First Baptist had brick walls, artificial stained glass, an electric organ, and a steeple with a cross that revolved like a windmill. When the wind blew. And the wind always blew. Their team had real uniforms with First Baptist Church on the front. Second Baptist had clapboard, venetian blinds and an upright piano. Their team wore blue jeans and tee-shirts with “round Back Chili” stenciled on the front.

I knew that the way you know things when you visit relatives once a year, knowing in a kind of “yeah, I hope you beat them this year” way. Second Baptist had never beaten First Baptist. The weekend we visited was Second Baptist’s chance to lose again but I wasn’t going to spend Saturday afternoon under a West Texas sun sitting on hot metal bleachers. I don’t know why they are called bleachers. After two hours of sitting in the sun you don’t look bleached.

Continued . . .

The Church Softball League Continued . . .

My plan was to sit under the air conditioner watching baseball on TV where players could get the ball from the outfield to the infield with only one throw. That was before another aunt and her husband dropped by. Her husband, whom I will call Earl to protect the guilty, had a reputation for "drinking a little," which meant he drank a lot. Especially on Saturday when he was off work. While pretending to make sandwiches for lunch the women plotted that I would keep Earl out of the domino parlor in the back room of the barber shop where illicit popskull miraculously appeared "round back." I would do that by inviting Earl to accompany me to the ball game.

To my surprise, Earl agreed. Earl had already been drinking. Earl stumbled through the grassburs that lined the red clay playing field and while climbing the bleachers fell into a First Baptist lap. A still, small breath of demon rum wafted over a church-bus load of the pure in heart in that hallowed if bucolic setting.

I guided Earl past the judgment of the faithful, got him seated some distance from the anointed and he seemed to doze through the warmup. When the first First Baptist batter approached the plate, Earl came to life. "First Baptist? You look like a Unitarian eunuch. Jesus was the first Baptist. Throw that sack of sacerdotal slime out," he yelled. "Hey crab cake, you're dangling your bat like it was a participle. Holy enema, you call that a ball? You stupid salvationist, you can't tell a church house from an outhouse."

Each new batter added to Earl's bile. "Swing you Methodist morphodite." "Figgy, what fruitcake did you fall out of? You swing like a Presbyterian penis." When someone yelled that a batter had won four letters in college, Earl shouted back, "Yeah, W-I-M-P. They circumcised him to his kneecaps. I've seen ants bigger than his anchovies."

We were close enough to first base that Roland could bear and he seemed to shrink as though trying to hide behind the bag. Despite Earl's imprecations, First Baptist led by three runs when they took the field.

Earl called down exotic plagues on the First Baptist pitcher and his firstborn son. Not all the plagues related to gender. "Don't let that pile of orthodox ordure scare you. He's got more pimples than he has pitches. He's colder than an Islamic igloo. He hasn't got enough spit for a Methodist baptism. He's shaking like a Quaker in front of a draft board."

Increasingly incensed, Earl encouraged Second Baptist batters, especially those who connected their bat with the ball. "Run you church lover, run," Earl screamed.

"Run like a Romanist chased by a Bible." "Scat like a Campbellite who hears a church organ." "Light out like a Lutheran chasing a beer keg." "Run like an Episcopalian from a dry county." When Roland came to bat, Earl prayed loudly for mold on First Baptist walls and shorts in their electric organ. He also prayed for Roland's success. "Knock that Mormon monkey out of the game. He sucks worse than a Seventh-Day seminarian. Hey pitch, your lip stick is crooked. Ethel, your bloomers are drooping." When the pitcher dared a look at his tormentor, Roland yelled, "Chunk the ball, you Catholic cunctator." A believer asked what church we belonged to.

While I prepared a diplomatic answer, Earl responded, "We're with Roland. He's at bat." Roland crouched lower at the plate. "Knock the beholden out of the ball. Hit it like it was a bootlegger. A line drive where Baptists don't go." In desperation, Roland hit a slow roller toward third base. "Run for King James," Earl screamed. "Run for a church picnic. Run, for God's sake." Roland was out by three steps. Displeased with the manner in which that fact was communicated to Roland, Earl directed his prayers upon the umpire. "Sacred smegma, where was your mother when you were born? Hey, belly rub. Jehovah's Witless. I've got hemorrhoids bigger than your brains. Take off your skirt and come up here and tell me that." Earl invented words and spoke in a tongue unknown to me. I was surprised that folks devoted to church and softball understood the language. Second Baptist didn't win the softball game but Earl and I won 59¢ at the domino parlor. Wisely, Earl went to sleep before Roland got home.

From *Slouching Toward Zion*, by Robert Flynn, TCU Press, reprinted by permission.

Word of the Day *from Mo's 5000 Poetic Words*

fugacious \fyo-GAY-shuss\ adjective
:lasting a short time :evanescent

Example Sentence:

Julie's bad mood was fugacious; she cheered up considerably when her son phoned to say he would be coming home for a visit.

Did you know?

"Fugacious" is often used to describe immaterial things like emotions, but not always. Botanists also use it to describe plant parts that wither or fall off before the usual time.

At Starbucks*Mo H. Saidi*

I met her at Starbucks. She was on her way to Los Angeles, driving over fifteen hundred miles. I said, "I brought you a basket of food with soft drinks, some nibbles, and two apples." She didn't look at them and I left them near her chair. She asked, "Are you riding with me?" I was surprised. I had no idea she wanted me to accompany her. I did not even know she was driving, not flying, to Los Angeles. "If you had asked me earlier, I might have been able to rearrange my schedule," I said. "But it is difficult to leave town abruptly." She looked at me with total contempt and snarled, "I knew you would decline this opportunity. I need someone to keep me company. So what good are you?" She had another sip of Café Latte and rose from her seat and walked away without bidding me farewell. My eyes were wet when she bent down and picked up the basket. She gave me a single scornful glance and left.

II

I took advantage of the break in my tutoring and teaching assignments in Los Angeles, and traveled to San Antonio to visit a college buddy and pick up the rest of my belongings from my parents' house. I did not call them in advance because I knew they would cause problems for me, destroy my stuff, or call my friends and spread nasty stories about me. They already claimed that the pottery pieces which I had made in art class at school were broken and gone. I had left five pieces in the house: two ashtrays, two vases, and a plate. They allege I gave them those items as presents, but I know better. They are lying. They never valued my art, never thought those pieces were important. To me they symbolize my childhood, my youth, my elementary school, my education. They were me, my creation. I will call the police and ask an officer to escort me to their house, and then I will search the house from top to bottom and discover everything that is mine. I need to buy a gun.

**Texas Flowers****Samuel's Tears***Mo H. Saidi*

Yesterday my father disappeared in the wood,
he hated the long journey through frozen prairies.
Our dwelling was charred by white men.
The flames entered my mother's chest,
she was too frail and couldn't walk anymore.

My uncle pulled on my hand; the road was frozen,
he said, "We are going to hunt buffalo."
They planted Mom under the snow;
she would grow and become an oak tree.

My father would climb it and would see me
hunting buffalo. My uncle can't walk anymore,
he falls face down and disappears under
the cavalry horses. He will grow into a tree too.
He will see me hunting buffalo.

Samuels Tränen*Translated by Hejo Müller*

Gestern verschwand mein Vater im Wald;
Der lange Weg durch die gefrorne Prairie—
das war nichts für ihn
Der weiße Mann hatte unsere Hütte—niederbrennen
lassen.
Die Flammen schlugen—bis ins Herz meiner Mutter.
Sie war sehr gebrechlich. Laufen mit brennendem Herzen
konnte sie nicht mehr

Mein Onkel nahm mich bei der Hand;
Die Straßen waren gefroren.
Er sagte mir: "Wir gehn jetzt Büffel jagen."
MEINE MUTTER PFLANZTEN SIE IN DEN WEISSEN
SCHNEE.
Später würde sie dann zu einer EICHE heranwachsen.

Mein Vater würde eines Tages auf die Eiche klettern
und mir bei der Büffeljagd zuschauen.
Mein Onkel kann auch nicht mehr laufen; er fällt voll
aufs Gesicht und die Reiter der Kavallerie trampelten ihn
zu Tode: AUCH ER WIRD IN EINEN BAUM WACHSEN;
auch er wird mir bei der Büffeljagd zuschauen.

The Immigrant Charles Simic is Poet Laureate of the United States

"The great thing about the United States is that you kind of start everything from scratch," says Charles Simic. The poet would know a thing or two about the American dream. Born in 1938 in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, Mr. Simic moved to America at age 16. He learned English as a teenager, started using it to write poetry a few years later, and this year was named by the Library of Congress to be U.S. Poet Laureate. "Being an immigrant you ...feel a bit of an outsider anyway," Mr. Simic explains, "which is really good if you're going to be a writer." Mr. Simic has been in this country for over five decades, and he points to American icons such as Wallace Stevens, Emily Dickinson, and Robert Frost as influences. Still, dark memories of war-torn Europe cast a long shadow over some of his finest work. His poem "Prodigy," for example, describes Nazi-inflicted horrors of 1944: "I am told, but do not believe/ that that summer I witnessed/ men hung from telephone poles." Such poetic visions of the old country are particularly appreciated by certain audiences. Mr. Simic describes reading to a crowd of second-generation Americans who really liked his poems, and how after readings some people would say, "my grandfather used to talk like that!" Perhaps Mr. Simic's "starting from scratch" approach to poetry is in part what makes his work so original. His poems sometimes appear to be quietly poking fun at poetry itself. "I believe in the soul; so far/ It hasn't made much difference," begins one poem. Another describes the sea "sounding weary/ After so many lifetimes/ Of pretending to be rushing off somewhere/ And never getting anywhere." Sparks of irreverence enliven his criticism as well -- one essay opens with this line: "No poem can be more delightful or more idiotic than a sonnet."

From: "<http://www.boston.com/news/local/newshampshire/articles>" 2007/08/02. Printed by permission.



Autumn Leaves

Somewhere between Mexico and a River Called Home

by Marian Haddad
Reviewed by Mo H. Saidi

Marian Haddad's second book of poetry, *Somewhere between Mexico and a River Called Home*, published by Pecan Grove Press of San Antonio, reflects her strong ties to her family and the city she was born and grew-up in; her poems are filled with tender recollections of her childhood in a crowded Christian Syrian-American family. Throughout the book, which includes 26 richly voiced poems, the images of her caring mother overshadow transient events, albeit as tragic as the loss of the author's sister to cancer: "One of us is dying now. Lying in a bed in a hospital suite. Tubes/ sprawling out of her like roots of a tree deep under the earth." In the poem, "*Somewhere between Mexico and a River Called Home*," used also as the title for the book, she presents a holy image of motherhood:

that you were a woman
in every sense
that you were wise
and regal
and a woman
who delivered ten children
and lost two
in bleeding womb---puddle
on the kitchen floor
or in a field

Haddad moves forward and climbs the ladder of poetic maturity, but always remembers where she came from and finds a wealth of ideas for her poetry in endeared memories of her childhood; often she nostalgically recalls her past, her origin:

I lived first
in the house of my mother,
not in-between walls
of stucco or brick,
but in the one house
of children, there,
in the uterus

The central theme of most poems is the glorification of family structure. The poet writes about her siblings, her mother and often cuddling father, and even about the two miscarriages her mother experienced.

Continued . . .

Somewhere between Mexico and a River Called Home - review continued:

Life is glorious and loss of it at any age is painful: "Mother baking Syrian bread. . . . // . . . // And there is me. If time keeps its course, I will be the last one left, to watch each box go down." Using free verse, structuring lines with timely end-breaks, and weaving subtle rhythms and slant rhymed stanzas, Haddad refines the memories of her childhood and transforms them into lyrical poems full of endearment, rimmed with love and sentiment. Her voice is strong, like a solo actor at center stage, performing a monologue about a life that is well imaginable by many of her devoted readers. In this collection of poems, she imbues the scenes and characters of her past with new life:

When it's nighttime
When it's dark
Sparks fly electric blue
In this season of want
In this wanting season
All is a circle
We return to our start
Our right foot forward

Even an unborn child, an aborted pregnancy become meaningful as emblem of the family's totem that always guards the other siblings, and the entire family. The poet's intertwined relationship with her mother is so strong that the parting time shatters her peace of mind and magnifies the essence of family attachments, and the strong bond that exists in both Christian and Moslem families in the Middle-East.

As noted by Naomi Shihab Nye, Haddad writes with elegance. She employs format and other poetic tools to resonate her message, and to express her potent feelings that are embodied in her poems, time and again, as the forlorn memories of her sister's death become a religious hymn: "Oh, Sister, how your blood is colored now/ in dark and smoky mist, the tainting/ . . . // Sister, eldest and wisest one,/ . . ." Like many poets, Haddad wrestles to explain fertility, birth, family, motherhood, and love; however, when she stumbles against death, witnessing her sister's loss due to cancer, her voice turns gloomy and desperate; and fear overcomes her poetry: "I am susceptible/ to all/ that is around me."

She struggles to explain the loss of her sister, Nawal, to cancer and comes up with the best possible scenario: To write elegiac poems about her: "I have not written yet about you/ . . ." The dark voice describes father's pale face and the conspicuous metaphor, the sister's vacant bed, her deathbed: ". . . / of the bed where you lay/ on your side when you stopped.

"Haddad's poems are realistic, honest, and although they speak of the author's strong sentiments, they have a potent optimistic message. In the penultimate poem, "Cypress, Daughter of Fertility", Haddad brings creation and fertility into the scene and sings about creation now and then: "We are dust/ and water/ molded into flesh/ Here./ my belly still/ swollen/ from the childbirth/ of you. Take/ from me. You will/ always be my flesh/ child, signature/ fruit of my making." Haddad mourns the loss of loved ones, decries death, but at the end submits to the process of recreation. Life goes on unabatedly, new creatures fill the gap in her life and minimize the harsh reality of human immortality. Throughout the book, the poet's voice is unique, powerful, and original, and most importantly leaves an enduring impression on the reader.

Poetry Therapy
James Brandenburg

In his poem, "Poetry," the Chilean poet Pablo Neruda proposed that poetry comes in search of us when we are open to the unconscious. A review of the literary canon shows how writers from various periods were able to project a profound affect (emotion) into their works arising from a passion for their ideas, for truth, and for beauty. Although clearly products of their time, many captured universal archetypes and symbols in their writings. When writing arises out of real concerns and real problems, the results are likely to contain affect and to touch profound places in the poet. The unconscious is more likely to seek us out when we are searching for answers, but often the poet is unaware on a conscious level of what is going on. Neruda wrote:

And it was at that age...Poetry arrived
in search of me. I don't know, I don't know where
it came from, from winter or a river.
I don't know how or when....

Poetry arrives from some unknown place; the poet goes from being blind and having nothing to say, to feeling the fire deep inside, to being able to write.

...something started in my soul,
fever or forgotten wings,
and I made my own way,
deciphering
that fire,
and I wrote that first faint line,
faint, without substance, pure
nonsense....

Continued . . .

Poetry Therapy continued:

Writing the first line, the heavens open; the writer begins to comprehend, to emerge from the mystery, and images rush out of the unconscious. Again Neruda: "I wheeled with the stars, my heart broke loose with the wind." Poetic language via paradox and metaphor can reveal and deepen what the poet feels. This process of discovering poetic language and deepening feelings is cathartic and therefore therapeutic. Some discover the process by accident and are able to express themselves. But all can find a sudden release through connecting to the unconscious, with often surprisingly positive results.

I discovered the process of connecting to the unconscious while in the throes of a divorce. As a college student I had written poetry, mostly to practice certain forms. My early writings do not exhibit much affect. But during my painful divorce, poetry was a way of dealing with my grief. Night after night words flowed from my pen, and I always felt better afterwards. It seemed that the unconscious was seeking me out. Though without great form, my poetry was honest and contained affect.

A close friend who experiences manic-depressive episodes has used writing poetry as a therapeutic outlet for more than 20 years. Another poet, who suffers from schizophrenic episodes and has been in prison for years, writes and paints to deal with the boredom and frustration of being incarcerated. Two other poets were abused by family members as young girls. Almost thirty years later, the unconscious sought out one of the poets, and she wrote to relieve her pain. The second female had been writing poetry for years without being aware that she had been abused; however, her poetry contained subtle allusions to those incidents. Her unconscious sought release in very subtle ways.

Many people are in tremendous pain yet have difficulty accessing their unconscious. Poetry therapists are trained to use literature to evoke feelings in their clients. The therapist chooses poems as a basis for talking in a class or in a session. Clients are not asked to identify the "true" meaning of a poem, but rather uncover a personal meaning. In poetry therapy, the focus is on the person and not the poem. The goal is to help the client access the unconscious so that he or she can begin the healing process by getting in touch with his or her feelings. The ancient Greeks are credited with intuitively understanding the importance of words and feelings in both poetry and healing. Apollo, dual god of healing and poetry, has been called the original patron of poetry therapy. In *Poetics*, Aristotle discussed the role of catharsis in affecting an emotional cure; obviously, the value of poetry in producing insights and providing universal truths was recognized. Today, catharsis is considered an important aspect of psychotherapy, one of the therapeutic factors in

group psychology and a central component of psychodrama. Formal recognition of poetry therapy came about with the establishment of the Association for Poetry Therapy (APT) in 1969.

The APT formally incorporated as the National Association for Poetry Therapy (NAPT) in 1981; since then it maintains strict adherence to its code of ethics, offers and reviews educational and training programs; and sets standards for certification and registration, either as Certified Applied Poetry Facilitator, as Certified Poetry Therapist, or as Registered Poetry Therapist. The website www.poetrytherapy.org offers more information.

There are only two Certified Poetry Therapists in the State of Texas;

James Brandenburg, Co-Editor of *Voices de la Luna* (brandenburgjames@yahoo.com) in San Antonio; and, Lianne Mercer, Certified Poetry Therapist and Trainer (lianne@ktc.com) in Fredericksburg.

Two Poems

Sakura (Sam)

Failure

Each scar is a reason
A warning never to go back
I promise myself,
I betray myself

Scars

Ashamed, I hide myself
Lonely, I weep
Loved, I face the world



Painting by Manijeh Nathan

Cyra's Phoenix*Cyra Dumitru*

Backwards and upside down
 I am suspended
 Light fading from my door way
 Home losing tangibility
 Far beyond myself have I loved
 risen
 above
 expectation

and been left crumbling into dust
 with no one sheltering me
 from the wind
 Dreams have wandered out of reach

too transparent to sustain themselves leaving
 me unabsolved

I know that you are drowning
 deliberately hidden from my love
 So I may not be the boat
 Guiding you to shore

This Herculean relationship
 has left me laugh-less
 prostrate before a giant statue
 seeking comfort

Mortality has not passed me by
 it seems
 I am just a woman
 wondering if her desire to be held
 will overshadow the strength
 to stand alone

All the Whole World*Jordan Schaefer*

something about the weather draws me to you
 the sun, the moon, the night's soft breeze
 there's a serenity in all of those things
 there's a serenity, i believe, in you as wellthe
 mystery of a new day dawning
 the melancholy pang of the darkling twilight
 i can see each of them, all of them in you
 and the world doesn't hurt quite so bad
 because i've got my own world to tend to
 where i help shape the weather, building the
 storms;
 i want to put that kingdom at peace, and live
 there
 because that world is my Nirvana;
 because that world is you

Eltaire's Phoenix*Eltaire Yantis*

You neither own me nor control me
 no longer am I fooled by your lies
 you promised me happiness, complacency
 and left me with nothing but guilt
 self-hate
 fear,
 weakness.

I flushed my feelings away
 and now I shall do the same to you
 I broke your hold on me and
 I am free
 to feel all that I thought
 you'd protect me from.

Meghan's Phoenix*Meghan Nesgoda*

The death inside me burned bright and red
 heavily diminishing that of the azure
 one of life at its side.

They were uneven as never before,
 and each day the flame of the past
 grew stronger.

Like an ugly snake rearing its head
 back to bite, memories captured me
 and sank their teeth in, holding
 me captive. My early struggle made
 me weary, and now my will sank
 against the iron walls of my mind.

Yet that's all it was, my mind. My
 escape could be seen, but only for when
 it was time. Another presence pressed
 upon me like a weight, and I gasped
 for air, feeling smothered.

Just as soon as it had come though,
 it was gone. My head was clear,
 and I could breathe, but it wasn't
 time, not yet. The light just had to wait
 until I was ready.

Sanctuary*David Peterson*

Peaceful, my place.
placid
alone I sit
or lie
in my refuge of blue
cold and quiet
silent.

How loud is my day
full of people and places
dull and blurred
even lonely

Ah, how relieved I am
when I step into my sanctuary
safe in my tomb of peace
how easily I could slip into a dream
never to return to the surface
still, I exit.

Each time
I exit my sanctuary
and return to the noise
of people and places
immersing myself into air.

Each night
I die
each night
I am born again,
a new existence.

Grinding Teeth*David Drymala*

A prophet dreams of peace
Something we might all hold on to.
Behind bars I grind my teeth
Losing track of all I've gone through.
Cowardly away in the shadows
Like a weary insect,
Feeling all the impure side effects
That my sin kept
My bones are sore.
The smell of jail is foul.
My home is empty
Thieves are on the prowl.
This drug is swifter
It keeps you blind and holds you tight.
Part of my adventure
Has been getting back my sight.
A prophet dreams of peace
Something we might all hold on to.
Behind bars Jesus grinds his teeth
Losing track of all he's gone through.

Breathless*Josie Mixon*

You've left me breathless
Waiting and watching the horizon
In hope of seeing you there
Returning home to my heart
Nights have been so long
Without you at my side
Shorelines have receded
While the oceans begin to dry
Saddened eyes absorbed
The gentle waves as tears
Hours run marathons when we are together
Yet stand still when we are apart
I featured you last night
In my dreams
With my longing to touch you
The morning faded your scent
I've watched the skies for your return
Only to watch the geese ride the northern wind
If only they carried you home to me
Upon their wings of down
My rejoiceful heart would sing
Our whispers of love have claimed an inability
To breathe without each other
Today
At the height of missing you
And desperately wanting to feel you again
You've left me
Breathless

Enough*Joyce Collins*

Enough he would say
when he didn't want to play anymore
Enough tennis...
(You hit the ball over the fence too many
times)
Enough frisbee...
(You made too many bad throws)
Enough wrestling...
(You're starting to win)
Enough spending time with you
(That I really didn't want to do)
Enough bearing the terrible burden
of your longing to be with me
Enough it should be to fulfill my obligation
But it was never enough and the the words
in parentheses always tainted time he gave,
always dashed the illusion that I was special –
at all, much less enough to inspire his love

Daddy
Sylvia Plath

Daddy
You do not do, you do not do
Any more, black shoe
In which I have lived like a foot
For thirty years, poor and white,
Barely daring to breathe or Achoo.

Daddy, I have had to kill you.
You died before I had time---
Marble-heavy, a bag full of God,
Ghastly statue with one gray toe
Big as a Frisco seal

And a head in the freakish Atlantic
Where it pours bean green over blue
In the waters off the beautiful Nauset.
I used to pray to recover you.
Ach, du.

In the German tongue, in the Polish town
Scraped flat by the roller
Of wars, wars, wars.
But the name of the town is common.
My Polack friend

Says there are a dozen or two.
So I never could tell where you
Put your foot, your root,
I never could talk to you.
The tongue stuck in my jaw.

It stuck in a barb wire snare.
Ich, ich, ich, ich,
I could hardly speak.
I thought every German was you.
And the language obscene

An engine, an engine,
Chuffing me off like a Jew.
A Jew to Dachau, Auschwitz, Belsen.
I began to talk like a Jew.
I think I may well be a Jew.

The snows of the Tyrol, the clear beer of Vienna
Are not very pure or true.
With my gypsy ancestress and my weird luck
And my Taroc pack and my Taroc pack
I may be a bit of a Jew.

I have always been sacred of you,
With your Luftwaffe, your gobbledygoo.
And your neat mustache
And your Aryan eye, bright blue.
Panzer-man, panzer-man, O You----

Not God but a swastika
So black no sky could squeak through.
Every woman adores a Fascist,
The boot in the face, the brute
Brute heart of a brute like you.

You stand at the blackboard, daddy,
In the picture I have of you,
A cleft in your chin instead of your foot
But no less a devil for that, no not
Any less the black man who

Bit my pretty red heart in two.
I was ten when they buried you.
At twenty I tried to die
And get back, back, back to you.
I thought even the bones would do.

But they pulled me out of the sack,
And they stuck me together with glue.
And then I knew what to do.
I made a model of you,
A man in black with a Meinkampf look

And a love of the rack and the screw.
And I said I do, I do.
So daddy, I'm finally through.
The black telephone's off at the root,
The voices just can't worm through.

If I've killed one man, I've killed two---
The vampire who said he was you
And drank my blood for a year,
Seven years, if you want to know.
Daddy, you can lie back now.

There's a stake in your fat black heart
And the villagers never liked you.
They are dancing and stamping on you.
They always knew it was you.
Daddy, daddy, you bastard, I'm through.

About Daddy
Rose Bromberg

Shoe Imagery

Within the first lines, Plath refers to herself as a foot, and her father as the black shoe in which she has lived for so long. When one thinks of a shoe, usually the association is made that the shoe is worn as a kind of protection. The imagery of her father in this way would imply that she has felt protected living in his memory.

Continued . . .

About Daddy - Continued:

The color black is thought of as the absence of light, darkness, and desolation – obviously the nemesis of purity, light and protection. Assuming that the association between the two is accurate, it would be safe to attribute the speaker's depressive thoughts, and haunting images, to feelings that she is bound to her father's memory despite the anger and resentment that she feels. Using this type of association one can feel the animosity with which Plath writes of her father.

Daddy as God

The speaker refers to her father as a God-like figure. She doesn't give him enough credit to be God, but he is composed of facets which one associates with God. Her words are a type of bitter mockery. During her childhood, it would be safe to assume that her father was a God-like figure, someone who was always present – similar to God's omnipotence, and soon after his passing such an association adopted the bitter, mocking tone. Though he is dead, his memory is something that the speaker cannot escape.

Confessional poetry

An intimate, and sometimes unflattering, these poems provide images and information about the poets' personal life, such as in poems about illness, sexuality, and despondence. The confessionalist label was applied to a number of poets of the 1950s and 1960s. John Berryman, Allen Ginsberg, Robert Lowell, Sylvia Plath, Theodore Roethke, Anne Sexton, and William De Witt Snodgrass have all been called 'Confessional Poets'. As fresh and different as the work of these poets appeared at the time, it is also true that several poets prominent in the canon of Western literature, perhaps most notably Sextus Propertius and Petrarch, could easily share the label of "confessional" with the confessional poets of the fifties and sixties.

There's a special relationship between poetry and medicine, and great value that physicians, other healthcare professionals, and patients could derive from making better use of this art form. Poetry can sharpen listening, attentiveness, observation, and analytical skills. It can refine the artistic side of medicine: Poetry allows us to express ourselves, fosters creativity, and accepts ambiguity. It enhances empathy, self-awareness, and introspection. Poetry about illness includes addressing not only the symptoms of illness, but the experience, which includes emotions and responses. We use various ways to share and validate our physical emotional intellectual and spiritual perspectives commonly through written and spoken language. The way we perceive and use poetry devices, for example: diction, tone, voice, organization/arrangement, meter/rhythm; the interactions and physical and emotional spaces/silences between the health-

care professional and patient or between the poem and reader, helps us to define and interpret ourselves and others, and to direct thoughts, feelings, and actions. Communication thus improves. Changing the cadence may influence healing and even outcomes. The poetic voice orders thoughts and allows for control, clarity, and reflection. It shapes our past narrative, and how we may construe our future narrative. Here's an example of a brief poem I wrote to express relief and provide comfort after an unpleasant medical experience:

SERENITY
 Whitewater lilies float atop the pond;
 a petaled quilt to keep me warm.
 Reading poetry lets an audience bear witness and transforms. We create community, which can enhance recovery. We now know that close reading of text and reflective writing contributes to personal and professional self-awareness and effective patient care and management. Perhaps it is time to study whether the use of poetry may do the same. That's my opinion.

Posted 03/14/2008 on the website of Columbia University. Rose Bromberg is the Resident Poet with the Program in Narrative Medicine, College of Physicians and Surgeons of Columbia University.



Painting by Stewart Klein

Mystery Man

*Catherine-Grace Patrick-Newman
San Diego, California*

Suki defines it:
"edgy".....
that frozen glare in Simon's eyes:
black ice that so surprises
when I see it;
albeit,
there is something
more
my vision
dares explore---
unable to ignore it,
steel so sinister and dark---
Regent's Park at midnight,
where no lighted moon confounds---
resounding something missing,
hissing
what may be profound---
when just around some corner
lies the prize

Waterfall

*Nora Nadjarian
(after Arshile Gorky's The Waterfall, 1943)*

You asked me what I was
doing last Sunday, when
you called and didn't find me in.

I was standing in front of a waterfall
in the Tate Gallery. Not back, like most
people, but close, right up close, looking

looking at, into, this abstract landscape hiding
behind white cascades. I was not sure whether
it was the trees first, or the water, or the shadows

I was recognising. It was all a haze - like a framed
tear- but I clearly knew that the eyes of the land
watching me, lost, here, somewhere in London

were making me shed all my rough edges
to become a soft body full of contours,
ready to step into pounding water

to meet others clinging like me
onto the rock of their identity
in this never-ending, flowing,
falling, falling waterfall.

You asked me once what
it means to be Armenian.
It is quite difficult to explain.

Deja vu of the Blind Witness

*Beverly Monestier
Only the dead have seen the end of war. - Plato*

We saw nothing, heard nothing, knew nothing
of camps on the edge of town,
the fates of missing neighbors
whose children screamed behind closed doors,
refused to betray their brothers
in crawl-spaces beneath floors, behind walls.
We turned away
from trains packed with dehydrated families
held upright only by the throng,
as if the truth might jump the tracks
and suffocate us.
We did not see living skeletons shoveling coal,
lights from the furnaces melting bone.

We see nothing, hear nothing, know nothing
of pyramids of naked prisoners trimmed in hoods,
flag-draped coffins forbidden to be photographed,
urine-soaked holy books, our water breaking
as we give birth to new generations of enemies.
We turn away from remnants of children
lured to military camps with candy,
permanent bases occupying
the wasteland left behind.
We do not see the unarmed heart sink to roadside dust,
covered up by pretense while the desert works at burial.

Six Impossible Things Before Breakfast

John Hammond

(for Lewis Wolpert)

The room slowly returns to itself
in the ghostly dawn — a frame gives birth
to a picture, a gray shirt takes on color —
as the tilting Earth invites the sun
into our neighborhood,
and we do not fall off the planet.

I awaken just as last night's dream
swims to the lightless reaches of my brain,
which knows more than it knows.

I make the bed with the cat on it,
moving her east and west
in our morning ceremony.
As I make my way
by heart through the puzzle
of furniture, a bird shouts,
"Me too! Me too! JudyJudyJudy!"

Light Pink Octagon

Richard Tuttle, 1967, Canvas dyed with Tintex,
Blanton Museum of Art
Wendy Barker

Like nobody's skin. Or skirt, blouse.
Nobody's flounce, neither ruffled nor scalloped,
nobody's ribboned
basket. Or bonnet, or roses. No carnations, no half-
sliced roast
beside the wineglass, no ruddy
cheek of a maid shouldering wheat,
no dimpled buttocks of Venus or Bathsheba, no
thundering
Jehovah-splintered sunset, no velvet-tassled curtain, no
fizzy drink.
Not like skin, no veins traversing
flesh, no one begging to be touched.
I could move into this unadorned, open, plain-woven
canvas,
a pastel simplicity, an unclouded fabric billowing
rugged as a mainsail uncurled,
heading out to the wide ocean
with the wind, this aerial cotton swath, unspashed by
any paint,
uncluttered by any pen or brush, this unframed shape—
arresting
as a full breath.

*From: The Georgia Review, 62, No. 2, 2008. Reprinted
with permission.*



Painting by Ulrike Rowe, Germany

five-fingered people

Lianne Elizabeth Mercer
(Camping in Canyon de Chelly shortly after
my mother's death at the age of 97.)

have left red
or white hands
on canyon walls
from sandstone
these hands
touch me
they planted corn
birthed children
gathered flowers
chipped arrowheads
found holes in rock walls
that sent them higher
they tatted snowflakes
planted zinnias
brought caring and cake
held my hand
crossing the street
fragile hands
hollow flying, bones
leaving their prints
on the ceiling of my heart

Scarecrows

Larry D. Thomas

We fashion them
with splintered sticks
and clothe them
with rags
cast aside
by tramps.
Even the crows

they're made to scare
taunt them,
roosting in droves
on their ever
outstretched arms.
Each summer,
as if on cue,

in mockery
of their mute,
cotton mouths,
the corn
perks green ears
numbering
in the thousands.

*From Stark Beauty. Timberline Press. Reprinted with
permission. Poem first appeared in Concho River
Review.*

Voices de la Luna Submission Guidelines

General Guidelines

Voices de la Luna accepts English language poetry and prose submissions from anywhere in the world. Submissions are accepted only by e-mail attachment in Microsoft Word or similar format for Mac users. Include your name, e-mail address, mailing address, and telephone number on each poem submitted, and on the first page of each prose manuscript. Youth poetry submissions should be clearly marked as such, and should also include the writer's age, name of school, and grade level. Please note that youth writers must not yet have graduated high school and be no more than 18 years old.

Brief biographical notes are interesting to us and help us understand who we are reaching. However, contributors' notes will not be published (at least not in the print version), nor will they figure into the selection process. Work will be selected for publication based solely on literary quality and the way each individual piece of writing meets our current needs.

Simultaneous submissions are acceptable as long as we are informed by e-mail immediately (with title and submission date) if you need to withdraw the work from our consideration. Submissions may have been previously published, as long as the writer provides that information and currently holds the rights. If work has been translated, make sure to include the translator's name for credit. In some cases, we may publish short poems in both languages side-by-side. Readable, well-crafted, formatted submissions are expected. Submissions in "rough draft" form will not be considered.

We do not pay contributors. We contact writers only if work has been accepted, letting them know that their piece will appear in the up-coming issue. This notification will come immediately before an issue goes to print, not sooner. Writers from the San Antonio area can pick up free copies of the magazine at a very large number of convenient locations, which will be indicated on our website. Out-of-town and overseas contributors will be mailed a copy or copies of the issue in which their work appears, as part of our distribution list.

We have a small editorial staff and many submissions. We cannot provide feedback on submitted work, nor will we offer reasons why a particular work has not been accepted for publication. We may hold work over for a future issue, especially work that arrives when the issue we are currently working has already been filled. Please do not contact us about the status of a submission. If we've had your work more than six months and through at least two quarterly issues, and have not contacted you, it is unlikely we will be using those particular pieces.

Just remember to withdraw your work in a timely manner if you surrender the rights elsewhere. Remember, you can send new work each month, while we are considering your previous submissions.

Prose

We are looking for short fiction pieces of up to 1200 words, works in which a heart struggles against itself, in which the messy, unmanageable complexity of the world is revealed in "sentences that are so sharp they cut the eye." As Takashi Murakami puts it: "We want to see the newest things. That is because we want to see the future, even if only momentarily. It is the moment in which, even if we don't completely understand what we have glimpsed, we are nonetheless touched by it. This is what we have come to call art." Please submit fiction to Awinstead@voicesdelaluna3.com.

Poetry

We are devoted to publishing mostly poems from unsolicited manuscripts. We do not base our selections on a writer's publication or award history, but on the poems themselves. We will accept up to 3 original poems per month. To fit into the format of our magazine, please limit the length of your poems to 28 (or fewer) lines of no more than 60 characters each. We believe it is up to the poet to break longer lines in the way that s/he sees fit. Please submit poetry to Joans@voicesdelaluna.com.

Contact Us:

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