

WestWard Quarterly

The Magazine of Family Reading



Summer 2008

To our readers . . .

We hope you are having a good summer. The spring and summer months have seen their share of storms, flooding, fires and turmoil in various parts of the world. We all have challenges and trials to overcome, and that is why we maintain a philosophy of being an uplifting publication that brings some inspiration and enjoyment to your day.

Many readers send us letters thanking us for the hopeful theme of the magazine. Some of the comments are: "a lovely magazine," "a breath of fresh air," "thank you for offering people much-needed inspiration," "impressed by the scope and quality of poems," "the magazine is rich in poetry, fellowship, inspiration and comfort." We appreciate these letters and they motivate us to keep going.

We are delighted to have, as our featured writer this issue, Charles Waugaman of Vermont. He is known to many for his beautiful poetry and illustrations. He was formerly editor of *Time of Singing*, a poetry quarterly now edited by Lora Zill, and his illustrations have appeared there and in magazines and chapbooks.

Our workbench article is by Richard Leonard, my husband and the publisher of Laudemont Press, who is also an author and poet. He was Scripture editor for *The Complete Library of Christian Worship* (Hendrickson) and a reviewing editor for the *Praise and Worship Study Bible* (Tyndale), and has published articles in several Christian periodicals. He was also the "ghost writer" of *A Theological Miscellany* by the fictitious T. J. McTavish (Nelson, 2005) and co-compiler of *A Glimpse of Heaven* (Simon & Schuster, 2007), a book of classical and contemporary readings. He has also published two novels that have been advertised in this magazine. His author web site is www.rleonard.com.

Many contributors like to order extra copies of the issue in which their poem appears in order to give them to friends and family. Please note that the contributors' price for these extra copies is \$3.00 each U.S., \$5.00 foreign.

Shirley Anne Leonard, EDITOR

WestWard Quarterly

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P.O. Box 250, Kirkland, IL 60146 USA
wwquarterly@aol.com, 800-440-4043

WestWard Quarterly showcases the best work of upbeat writers and poets. Our magazine's philosophy is: "Adversity happens. Find the eternal purpose behind it." Reflect an uplifting, positive or gently humorous attitude in your submissions. Send all letters, requests for guidelines, queries or submissions to the address above. Send SASE for response.

Maximum length for poems is 40 lines. Shorter submissions have a better likelihood of being published. The Editor reserves the right to edit material. For more information on guidelines and how to send your submission, visit our web site, <http://members.aol.com/wwquarterly>.

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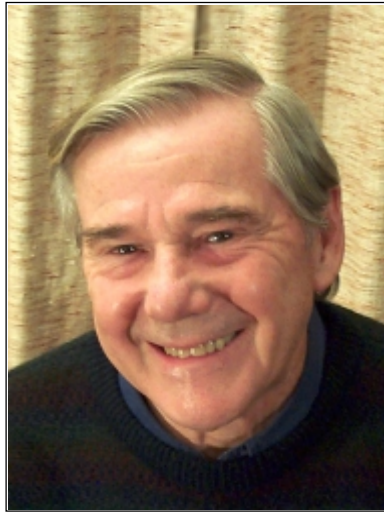
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Cover Image: Stanton Hall, Natchez, Mississippi
Transparency by Richard Leonard, 1975.

Featured Writer . . .

Charles A. Waugaman
Vermont



The Task and Joy of Poetry

I was a freshman in high school, after a family move to a new town, when I began to write poetry regularly. My father was a minister. Just prior to our arrival the town's grade school building burned, and all twelve grades were crowded into the high school facility. Most classes were fine, but in a science lab with alphabetically assigned seating "W" placed me nowhere near the demonstrations in the front of our classroom.

I began writing a poem each day to fill in for what I couldn't see or, sometimes, hear. I have always been interested in nature and wild life, so all I'd need was to think of an animal, bird, or wild flower and a poem on the subject spilled out.

Dad's ancestors had founded the Franklin Union Baptist Church, and in 1946 the 100th anniversary came. Dr. Ben Browne, state secretary for our American Baptist denomination, came as main speaker. He stayed in my room and noted my art and poetry. He had a great interest in young people, encouraged me, and published my first poems in the *Penn-Baptist*. He helped me to art school, gave me work in the editorial division of the American Baptist Publication Society that he, by then, headed; and urged me to attend seminary. It was he who founded *Time of Singing*, a poetry quarterly that I edited for years. After hundreds of published poems, numerous books, editing, publishing, critiquing, and leading writers conferences I still write poems 63 years later.

Since I majored in illustration in art school, I have illustrated many magazine issues, chapbooks and my own volumes. In 1955 I was ordained to the fields of art, writing and Christian education, a fifty-year ministry we celebrated last October. And I am asked where have I published. So I skimmed credits in four of my books and came up with 52 publications—religious, secular, small press, poetry magazines, newspapers, newsletters and anthologies. But, hopefully, the poet keeps growing.

Just a couple weeks ago I was sorting an accumulation of poetry clipping files and came upon a copy of a lecture I was asked to give years ago at a writers' conference. It was also included in a writing anthology. Glancing through the paragraphs, I was reminded how I had described the task of being a poet. I said that it was to see life, to see into life, and to see beyond life and record those visions

Scanning those comments I decided I had not changed my ideas. The new realization was that I now believe this is the task of every artist, whatever her or his medium may be. To see life and record that vision requires physical, mental and spiritual eyes. Skills enhance and articulate the recording, but do not replace vision. To see clearly is a gift from God; to shape, expand and hone this art is the task of the poet/ artist.

Observation is not sufficient: the mind and heart must "see" what the object, experience, or vision means and record it. The further step, is to discern what the meaning suggests for living, growing and loving. I suspect for each of us there are certain ideas that persist; personal themes that recur and ask to be more deeply probed.

Essential to all of this is the audience. When our audience can speak back to us that vision we tried to record, we know we have spoken truly. And yet . . . there remains the miracle. When our audience reflects back to us something true and essential that we had not even realized we said, the poem or work of art suddenly exists beyond us, and the poet/artist kneels in wonder and praise.

My writing includes articles, short stories, sermons, prayers, a short biography, book reviews, travelogues, and many incidental pieces; but poetry still persists. Some poems have been set in various musical forms. The real joy of poetry is going back to some vision captured years ago, and find it still sings freshly, colorful and pleasingly in ear and heart.

Weeds and Fishes

Charles A. Waugaman

I am amazed at what the Father's done
With common soil, a little rain and sun.
Mixed with the proper quantity of time
To run them ladderward beneath the light,
He fashioned countless miracles that climb
Their own construction to the proper height —
Skyscrapers that invariably deed
Their blueprints to the future in a seed
That any wind or bird can bear away
Without the slightest effort or desire.
Somehow the loaves and fishes fed one day
To multitudes no longer must require
A quick credulity, when I behold
The endless weeds one flowerbed can hold.

From *The Fabric of Truth* (1970)

“Just Another Day”
Ken Fisher, New York

I struggle toward the light of day, which beckons from beyond the blinds,
 Feeling what I can't convey when morning stirs my dread and finds
 Me groping through dark shades of gray, dreariness which soon reminds
 Me this is just another day.

A cup of coffee soothes all fear and I emerge to brilliant sun
 As anxious qualms now disappear, I'm bathed in incense, feeling one
 With every sound I'm blessed to hear, a symphony that's just begun
 To penetrate the thin veneer

Which separates my consciousness from everything I reach out for.
 My joy explodes the emptiness, I feel a crystallized rapport
 With energy I'd never guess exists to help my spirit soar
 Above confusion I now bless.

I see things others haven't seen, bask in visions so exquisite
 They startle me with shades of green so intense they now elicit
 My gratitude to float, serene, fortunate for every visit
 Beyond this world's mundane routine.

This miracle of my awareness, this dazzling gift of sentience,
 Enables me to be a witness to the wonder of experience,
 And when enchanted holiness fills my soul with its abundance
 It sanctifies my happiness.

Ecstatic with how dreams become reality, within God's show
 I glide on waves of freedom, now amazed my consciousness can flow,
 Drifting toward a glimpse of wisdom, mesmerized and thrilled to know
 The joy of equilibrium

Through sun and warmth, then cold and ice, each day recedes toward yesterday,
 Not *one* exposed as sacrifice, for nothing's lost when work is play.
 Although rewarded, I've paid no price for living just another day,
 Another day in paradise.

Bella Mira
Brian C. Felder, Delaware

We share blood,
 this Alpine lass and I,
 an Irish spring that feeds the common well,
 that waters the garden that she has become
 in this land of mountains against sky.
 She, the scholar, marries this day
 and so squares the sum of her knowledge,
 but it is her heart which grows greater;
 love being the most valuable of all knowings.
 Now, and justly, her boots fill with flowers,
 this a Swiss custom that speaks to all
 that is best between a man and a woman.
 A simple gesture made,
 a profound meaning conveyed
 and so, today, a full measure of joy,
 here in this land of mountains against sky;
 a poem writing itself before my very eye.

Inside the Light
Jane Stuart, Kentucky

You bring back time to me
 when trees were green
 when golden leaves fell
 to the forest floor
 and when sky sparkled
 from spring's bursting light.
 We danced across a path
 of moss and pinecones,
 flipping twigs up to wind
 that blew our dreams away . . .
 These hours brought back
 love's second sight,
 invisible moments when
 the world turned back to time
 and we could see
 the moon's first light
 before we slept.
 This was before Eden wept
 and Paradise
 was just a memory.

Little League: Last Pitch

James S. Wilk, Colorado

The freckled catcher signals to the mound
 “inside and low,” past where the batter stood.
 A whooosh, a grunt, then that familiar sound:
 aluminum on leather-covered wood.
 Three season’s drills and practicing assures
 the center fielder where the ball will spin.
 The shadow of a baseball cap obscures
 all but his gapped-toothed, beatific grin
 and fifty cheers grow silent as the ball
 arcs up, up, down in its trajectory.
 The center fielder, back against the wall,
 with stinging hand in mitt, drops it. “Here, Lee!”
 the shortstop shouts and hurls it to home plate.
 The catcher pounces — half a second late.

Saturday in the Park

John Grey, Rhode Island

The last notes of the band concert
 drift away.
 In an ancient oak,
 a woodpecker takes over the drumming.
 No more brass on this day.
 The clear blue sky won’t hear of it.
 One music is packed up in trumpet cases,
 unwieldy folds of sheet music,
 and melody reverts
 to chickadee and titmouse woodwinds.
 Meanwhile, bodies in uniforms
 scramble into old school buses.
 The crowd dissipates
 so this crowd of one
 can sprawl on the grass,
 listen to the park’s own song.
 Some blades of grass know
 the tune to “Greensleeves.”
 How comfortably
 they keep it to themselves.

Sunset on the Beach

Janet Goven, Pennsylvania

Eyes squint
 unable to look upon
 the golden, yellow brightness
 of the sun;
 as it
 slowly descends to meet
 the farthest horizon
 of the sea.
 The waves refuse to roar
 content to stay
 silent on the shore,
 choosing not to disturb
 perfect, purple twilight,
 sunset
 on the beach.

Monarch

James Hollar, Pennsylvania

The butterfly has something to tell me,
 its black-framed wings puff the summer breeze,
 keeping pace with my deliberate steps along
 the gravel path splitting the woodland.
 With no sense of urgency, it is determined
 not to lose ground between us; it flutters
 from briar to wildflower, inches from
 the side of the road, pausing with courtly patience,
 revealing its message in butterfly language,
 not knowing I cannot understand
 no matter how hard I listen. Yet
 it needs me to know something
 that butterflies know and men do not.
 The road curves sharply and I follow;
 the butterfly attends, ever at my side,
 choosing me to tell its secrets.
 Soon the lane will circle back and my twilight
 walk will be done. Should my delicate escort
 vanish into the unknowable somewhere, its
 meaning will be concealed from me forever,
 and the world and I will be all the less.

Under an August Sun

Patrick T. Randolph, Wisconsin

They met one late summer day on the beach:
 Her family had come to swim and canoe,
 His family had come to be together
 At the lake, to lie in the August sun.
 He was seven and she was almost ten.
 He developed a crush when she
 Asked if he would race with her on the beach.
 He nodded without saying one small word —
 She grinned and said “First one to the lake wins!”
 Before he knew it she’d become a fish
 And was swimming about in the water.
 “What’s your name?” she yelled. He answered, “Jimmy!”
 “Well Jimmy, you’re pretty fast! You know that?”
 He smiled, jumped in the warm August water,
 Closed his eyes tight and held on to his breath.
 When he opened them, he was still in bed
 And thirty minutes late for work — again.
 He got dressed, ran out and jumped on his bike.
 Still, at the age of fifty, he awakes,
 An old bachelor in this Midwestern town,
 Dreaming of her on his way to open
 His small auto shop on the edge of town —
 Just miles away from that lake in the woods
 Where he ran to catch his late summer girl,
 That mysterious fish he never caught.

My Source

Joyce I. Johnson, Washington State

In every line of verse I write,
 I put a little share of me.
 I can’t describe what I don’t know,
 Cannot perceive what I can’t see.

A poet writes of which he’s read
 A little bit of what he’s heard
 A crumb of it is what he’s seen
 And of himself in every word.

I have a long lifetime to delve
 For thoughts to put into my rhyme.
 If you scan each of my refrains,
 You’ll know the whole of me, in time.



Shucking Black Walnuts

Margene Whitler Hucek, Virginia

Every so often while hiking the Appalachian Trail
 we come across an old black walnut tree
 I always stop and pick up a few
 and stuff them in my backpack

Sometimes they are still in their green casings
 completely protected

Other times the casings are gone
 long ago decayed onto the forest floor
 One whiff of the pungent aroma
 takes me back to autumns in Illinois
 when the walnuts would fall and
 we’d gather them up to be shucked

We would hammer off the casings
 on a wide smooth stone by the water trough
 delighting in our strange green fingers

One year my father decided
 to jack up his ’52 Chevy
 and place a board between the tire
 and a cement block

He started the engine
 The wheel spun
 Dad tossed in the walnuts
 Out they spurted
 popping all over
 We took shelter
 behind the barn
 laughing

Next November
 we were back
 at the rock
 with our hammers
 shucking black walnuts.

A Song of Dawn

Susan Dale, Ohio

The lake's song
A water song rippling across
The half light before dawn

And in the silver-gray hours
When all is still
There shimmers across the horizon
Hope in a hush
Still with the veins of night
And the star of dawn that sighs
Before it sings

Midsummer Downpour

Maril Crabtree, Kansas

(published in *Best Times*)

In honor of the rain
breaking five straight days
of muggy heat
I turned on the radio and danced.

In honor of the rain
I chopped onions and carrots
made soup
instead of tuna salad

The rain swept down
in sheets as startling
as if they waved
on a clothesline.

In honor of the rain
I tossed my plans
like wilted salad
stared out the window

waited for water to tell me
what to do next.

Second Blooming

Ray Greenblatt, Pennsylvania

In August a kind
of late burgeoning
comes to a garden
with wily clematis,
rambunctious hibiscus.
We too
in shadowed bowers,
contemplating greenhouses
although past our meridian,
despite stiff neck, cramp, gout,
can push through hesitancy,
outclimb any fears.
We can still thrive.

The Old Pump

K. S. Hardy, Ohio

There must have been
A house around
Here somewhere,
Now long gone,
Burned by tragedy
Or collapsed by age,
But the pump remains
Standing in the once yard
Almost unseen in weeds
Like a strange rust
Colored bird with curved
Beak, the handle
An outstretched wing
Which when levered
Brings forth no water.
The well is dry.
Maybe this was
The reason for
The house's leaving.

Too Tempting

Nanette C. Orange, Florida

I hate to stay indoors at dawn
as golden rays relieve the moon.
The coffee, news and chores can wait,
but morning only plays till noon.

I only need an hour or three
to rise and greet Aurora's view.
It's grand to watch the earth unfold
a blanket decked in baby blue.

I long to hear the robins croon
as placid breezes stroke their wings.
These songs of praise are richer than
the tunes a great performer sings.

I can't forget the crystal dew
as petals stretch and exercise,
inviting swarms of thirsty bees
and energetic butterflies.

Beneath the skies of gentle blaze
the waters gleam as rays caress,
accepting dawn's relaxed embrace,
delivering me from daily stress.

Again, I will delay my meal,
for morning's hush is tempting me.
She sends the charismatic sun
to beam and lure relentlessly.

Garden in the Summer

William Beyer, Illinois

Beyond an open window
dark-green maple leaves
move occasionally
in hot breeze,
thin butterfly wings
ascend,
descend,
nervous sound
of honey bees,
repeated flowers
of the seasonal,
petunias,
asters,
borders of marigold
suggest a close,
lingering mood
of celebration.

Songs of Joy

Diane Klammer, Colorado

First there sits a quiet room
Free of cacophony
The only sound is a ticking clock

Then hands drum on wood
A doorbell rings
Musicians call out in laughter

Happy faces fill up the room
Singers dance in like children
At play

Some carry their instruments
Like treasure chests
Sheet music shuffles

When everyone sings it is for every reason
You can't imagine
You have to hear it

Carol leads these songs of joy

Every week it happens
The group practices these songs of life
Then takes them to church for Him

Where a real miracle happens
You can't believe your ears
So many make this one magic sound

It raises you up like Pegasus flying
Like clutching an angel gown heavenward
Like the Divine hand lifting you

Do you know what I'm talking about?

The warmth you feel
Is the dove being released
Is the dance of your heart
Is the shiver of your very soul

You can't help but experience something holy

Listen listen
Whatever it is you try to do with your life
Nothing will ever dazzle you

Like His mystical harmony
When every pore
Resonates with song



Drawing by Patricia Sarazen

Love Will Bloom

Patricia Sarazen, Pennsylvania

Beside a house
flower dressed,
in dreaminess,
with birds on wing.

A lilac bush about its door,
and apple trees in heavenly bloom.
Patches of buttercups across the lawn,
A plenitude of beauty to be found.
June roses will follow fragrant sweet,
and oh, the daisies, you will meet –

Here, the angels will circle round,
and flowers, in the garden, will abound.
Borders of delicate blue forget-me-nots,
will steal your heart in the garden plot.
So clothe your house with many flowers,
that will unveil magic powers.

Beside a house
love will bloom,
flower dressed
in dreaminess.

Poets from the Past: Robert Henryson

Although Robert Henryson was much admired by his late fifteenth-century contemporaries, little is known of his life. He was born some time around 1430 or 1440, and may be the “Robertus Henrisone” mentioned in the 1462 records of the University of Glasgow. If so, he was trained in both the arts and Catholic canon law, and may have completed his education at a university on the European continent although there is no concrete evidence for this.

Henryson is associated with the town of Dunfermline, since early editions of his work refer to him as a schoolmaster there. The school in Dunfermline, linked with the nearby Benedictine Abbey, gave the town particular prestige in education and the arts. Henryson was, apparently, a notable person in his era.

Henryson, mainly a composer of narrative poetry, customarily wrote in a familiar tone that draws the reader into his confidence. His language is a supple version of Middle Scots, but his wording demonstrates that he knew Latin as did all educated persons of Medieval Europe. Even when he takes up themes from philosophy or classical mythology, Henryson grounds his narrative in the affairs of daily life. The scenes he describes typically evoke the rural Scottish setting of which he was a keen observer.

Henryson is classed with the “Scottish Chaucerians,” a group of poets whose themes and style are similar to those of the late Medieval English poet Geoffrey Chaucer (1342-1400), famous for his *Canterbury Tales*. Henryson’s main works include a version of Aesop’s Fables (usually entitled *The Morall fabillis of Esope the Phrygian*); *The Testament of Cresseid*, a kind of follow-up to Chaucer’s *Troilus and Criseyde*; *Orpheus and Eurydice*, a version of the classic mythological tale; and *Robene and Makyne* of which we present an excerpt below.

When Henryson died is as uncertain as the date of his birth. Evidence from his younger Scottish contemporary, the poet William Dunbar, suggests that Henryson’s death occurred not long before 1506.

Below are the first two stanzas of Henryson’s 16-stanza poem *Robene and Makyne*, a dialogue between a shepherd and a maiden. The poem was written in 1568 and first printed in a 1724 collection by Allan Ramsay. It is a version of a standard French pastorelle in which the names of the speakers are Robin and Marion, but Henryson has changed Marion to Makyne (or Malkin), a diminutive of Maud or Matilda. The poem in Middle Scots appears in the left column, and at right we have inserted notes to clarify the meaning in later English.

Robene sat on gud grene hill,
Kepand a flok of fe;
Miry Makyne said him till,
“Robene, thow rew on me;
I haif the luvit lowd and still,
Thir yeiris two or thre;
My dule in dern bot gif thow dill,
Dowtless but dreid I de.”

Robene answerit, “Be the rude,
Nathing of lufe I knaw,
Bot keipis my scheip undir yone wid,
Lo quhair they raik on raw:
Quhat hes marrit the in thy mude,
Makyne, to me thow schaw;
Or quhat is lufe, or to be lude?
Fane wald I leir that law.”

Robene sat on gud [good] grene hill,
Kepand [keeping] a flok of fe [livestock];
Miry [merry] Makyne said him till [said to him],
“Robene, thow rew on me [thou makest me sad];
I haif the luvit [have loved thee] lowd and still,
Thir yeiris [these years] two or thre;
My dule in dern [my secret grief] bot gif thow dill [soothing],
[i.e., “Unless thou soothest my secret grief?”]
Dowtless but dreid [without doubt] I de [die].”

Robene answerit, “Be the rude [by the cross],
Nathing of lufe [love] I knaw,
Bot keipis [I keep] my scheip [sheep] undir yone wid [wood],
Lo quhair they raik on raw [where they range on the ridge]:
Quhat hes marrit the in thy mude [what has marred
thee in thy mood],
Makyne, to me thow schaw [show];
Or quhat is lufe [what is love], or to be lude [loved]?
Fane wald I leir [fain would I learn] that law.”

A Field of Lilac

Loretta Diane Walker, Texas

Even in the breast of
 a distant sky,
 you are my strength,
 my covering, a canopy
 around me when I am weak.
 You are my rock; I lean on
 the strength of our bond
 when I am tired.
 You are my shield,
 my fortress. I take
 refuge in the life we shared.
 The life of love we once knew
 is now like a gentle
 breeze blowing through
 a field of lilac. I shall breathe in
 all of who you are. The fragrance
 of love is circular; it blows from
 the heavens to earth, from
 earth to the heavens,
 from you to me
 from me to you
 even in the breast of
 a distant sky.

Friendship

Jim Rainey, Illinois

Friendship is love without the pain,
 Without the sense of loss or gain;
 To be ourselves just as we are,
 Whether near or whether far, to say,
 "It's good to hear your voice, again."

To brag, to laugh, to drop a tear
 And know that you are always near
 To hold my hand or to embrace,
 When all my world I have to face
 And know that you will always care.

All things begin where they end,
 And you will always be my friend.

Tapestry

Joan McAuley, Virginia

Our earth has hurled around the sun
 For all eternity;
 A spinning ball of green and blue,
 It lights our galaxy.

Man has lived upon our earth
 And built, with mind and hand,
 Philosophies and monuments,
 Unique to every land.

Like threads that weave a tapestry
 Of colors rich in hue,
 Different peoples flourished,
 And populations grew.

Societies of people lived,
 Through countless generations,
 Creating customs of their own
 And forming modern nations.

On every land around the world
 Our history tells the story
 Of man's achievements and his life,
 His nature and his glory.

Sprinkler-Song

Rebecca Larsen, Washington State

Its sparkling jets of water
 Glisten in the air
 And then descend to enter earth,
 Lest plants go thirsty there.

It springs up, like a fountain,
 Showering the lawn,
 And makes it feel as wet and cool,
 As dew makes it at dawn.

Delightful little rainbows,
 Shimmer in its spray,
 And in its cold cascading streams,
 Delighted children play.

The Angel's in the Details

Shari O'Brien, Ohio

The angel's in the details,
 if we could only see
 her glistening in the crystal dew
 on dawn's grass-slippered feet,
 and in the tender suckling
 of a newborn baby's mouth,
 like a bud, a-quiver,
 unsure of its new self,
 and in the scent of jasmine,
 white-blooming in moonlight,
 and in the caramel kisses
 of sunbeams in July.
 The angel's in the details,
 Oh! quick-silver-fluttering!

When Each Do Their Part

Mike Jones, Missouri

God gives gifts
 to strengthen and build;
 His plan for His church
 to know His will.
 He gives teachers and preachers
 and singers and poets,
 for the spreading of truth
 in their way to show it.
 Men and women
 who sit at His feet
 will learn from Him
 what they might speak.
 He gives helpers and givers
 and encouragers too.
 There are those who pray
 and care and do.
 All work together
 when He's in command,
 and all do their part
 as He had planned.
 Whatever your strength,
 do all to know it;
 it's a God-given gift,
 for His church to grow it.



Lake Reflections

Howard Tonn, Illinois

(Warrenville Lakes Homeowners Association News, Summer 2007)

Mist born overnight at the bend of the creek settles around the base of the tall cottonwood, waits for the morning sun to burn it away, and leaves drops of moisture like sunburned tears on each blade of grass.

A redwing blackbird, disturbed by a passing hawk, bends and swoops against the morning sky, its wing colors in contrast to the blue surface of the pond as it circles back to find its nest in the protection of the tall cattails.

Fish rise for careless flying bugs that make a bad decision to skim too close to the pond, and grumpy bullfrogs settle lower into the cool water.

The distant hum of traffic on the Interstate becomes a rushing river in our minds to complement this idyllic, quiet morning.

Summer brings days when the humidity makes us fight for every breath, but the air is heavy with the scent of lavender and other dooryard flowers we plant as if to erase winter from our memory.

There is no blue like a summer sky punctuated with popcorn clouds that promise not to gather and ruin our day. We camp, swim, fish and wish these days would never end. Gloves, boots and heavy coats are lost to the back of our closets and our consciousness.

We barbecue ribs and sweet corn, taste lush tomatoes, and consider finishing with a ripe watermelon or a trip to Dairy Queen. We make plans to travel without considering tire chains and blankets in the car. Children wear sunscreen like a best friend's secret, and a bicycle becomes a freedom machine to explore unknown lands.

In the evening, a northeast breeze slips around the patio wall bringing dancing fireflies trying to hold off the darkness and extend a perfect day. Quiet conversation of neighbors in lawn chairs mingles with the soft murmur of our pond fountain casting its lighted shards into the dark water.

Later, we will open our bedroom windows and fall asleep dreaming the fond dreams of our youth, with the smell of summer all about us . . .

*Rocks, Anyone?**Minerva E. Gilara-Walker, Washington State*

I kept a rock, tucked it away
in hopes to use another day —
Perhaps, when I have gathered more
I'll perk up an aquarium floor.

The rock pile grew, was multiplied.
I couldn't hide them though I tried,
but still I hoarded more and more —
the round, the flat, all I adore.

Then one day I was forced to face
transporting rocks to a new place —
so I re-gathered hoarded rocks
and packed them into a huge box.

The moving men arrived, and then
they carried boxes on the van.
I overheard one man complain,
“These boxes, they don't weigh the same,
you'd think these folks were moving stones!”
— which really grabbed my funny bones.

*A Nervous Kind of Happy**James Welsh, Delaware*

We dance, we spin, we grin our grins upon
The dance floor. Our feet hug the ground
The way that lovers hug. Our hands
Clasp the other's, the hands shake
And quake with a nervous kind of joy.
It feels as if I'm floating on a happy cloud today.
That is, I thought I was floating
Until I realized that I was stepping on
Your feet as we danced and spun
On the dance floor.

*Spilled Words**J. Alvin Speers, Alberta, Canada*

I upset the dictionary and spilled it on the rug.
What a mess of words it made, from out the cloth-bound “jug.”
As I tried to gather it, the order was all gone;
Then a vicious humor in my brain began to dawn:
This must be how they write it, “prose in short pants”
Those who, on the modern scene, make poets look askance.
The lovers of the rhyming gems that used to be called verse
With something very different now must struggle, or curse?
Non-rhyming compositions, much printed nowadays,
try to convince the world at large what's not convention pays.
Let's warn them, 'ere persuasion, to be a little wary.
I found how they do it when I spilled the dictionary.

*Reinforcement**Robert Donald Spector, New York*

In sports, I like it
When old men come through
And show the youngsters
How the game is played.
I am pleased because
What those athletes do
Is a reminder
Of the many skills
That I still possess.

*Fantasyland**Raymond J. Flory, Indiana*

Come away with me
into the land of fantasy . . .
Let's walk hand-in-hand
through the enchanted forest,
and climb majestic mountains.
We'll paint rainbows in the sky,
dance with butterflies,
sing soft summer songs,
and then ride the misty moon.

Pencil and Paper

Charlotte Ann Zuzak, Pennsylvania

Such power contained
in a number two pencil
and lined school paper,
humble instruments of
creation, whether of
arrows of love or hate.

A word entered or dropped
can indicate feelings
never uttered, open to
misinterpretation.

That which is written
can create turmoil or pleasure,
tell lies, cause tears or
lessen deep pain.

The choice is the writers:
a document of peace and love
or an instrument of vindictive evil.

Chapter 14

Rosemary Adam, California

I am living in chapter 14 again.
Heavy trials are recounted.
I know I will survive the turn of the page.
Life's crises displayed are still.

I am caught in this novel of being
Though I might hide and reject involvements
they occur, hybridized, extreme perhaps
and then I turn the page.

The worst, the storm, the conflict —
all told, bracketed in a single chapter.
There's doom and forfeit, dramaturgy,
misery — more dire moments.

Ah, but in chapter 15 a change comes,
a lightness invades the happenings
that take new turns. There's a timing to it,
and great generosity to this novel life I lead.

Country Toughness

Shakespeare Undiminished, Book Nine: Stratford, No. 32

Frederick L. Light, New York

Resolved on brightness like a rose, he meant
In florid manufactures proof of wit
Outright. Imaginatively vigilant
Was Shakespeare's growth, conceiving nature, fit

To breed her likenesses. No fatuous plants
He fostered. Plays of rosy plenitude
He reared. As blossoms live in brains, intense
Plantation having, profit he pursued.

Labors of earnings for Lord Hunsdon's men
In wealthy propagation Shakespeare brought.
The reddest attributes this rose might then
Reflect, as flagrant as success, who sought

Revenue. Vernal prospects ripening,
Autumnal profits for his friends he'd bring.

After the Storm

Shirley Anne Leonard, Illinois

The breeze tonight sighs with ambrosial bliss
brushing my cheek with a penitent kiss,
atoning for fierceness shown in the dawn
as branches were tossed all over town.

Storm clouds have rumbled away with a twist
replaced in the sky by a warm amethyst
reflected on flowers the rain almost drowned
as the fierce gale pummeled the delicate ground.

Blossoms lie strewn on the patio stone
in quaint disarray where they were blown,
their incense wafting from crumbled bequest
as benevolent twilight falls in the west.

Grandma Barker's Bible

Debra Pardue Hollar, North Carolina

The wisdom of a soul at peace,
 A smile within the heart
 My grandma held her precious book;
 With it she would not part.
 The Bible was her faith and strength
 The rock of all she knew,
 The beauty of her priceless heart,
 She read it through and through.
 The blessing that we had in her
 Shone like a ray of sun,
 The honor of a gracious soul it
 Touches everyone.
 I'm thankful for a soul at peace,
 A smile within the heart;
 I'm grateful for the book she loved;
 With it she would not part.

I Would

Johnna Quinones, Illinois

If I could sweep you
 Into my arms
 And carry you away
 From this world
 This cruelty and injustice
 And shield you from it all
 I would
 If I could keep you
 In your innocent youth
 And naive purity
 I would
 I would take you to
 A world of peace
 And beauty
 A world of love
 Equality
 And kindness
 I would I would



Getting Older

Peter Menkin, Ohio

The surprising thing about
 the abrupt recognizable
 landmarks of our lives comes
 with speed; please quicken me
 to fulfill, enriching for all
 around me I recall the dream —

My youth speaks: youth, your moments
 remain in a camaraderie. Remain,
 remain, oh, friendship with
 which I sleep — fill me in good.

About this, I talk with God, He
 absorbs me with an embrace
 and I know, You, Christ, are wisdom timeless.

In a dream there comes an angel.
 Behold an angel of the Lord: say yes.
 This is in the bones, in marrow
 by grace the beauty brings
 memorable tidings of youth —
 gifts of life.

Alas, grasping this promise of time
 brings me to know resurrection is sure.
 I wanted it, this youth, to last forever.
 My mind declares, I know there is more.

Here, let us receive the bounded
 and unbounded changes of another birth.
 Renewal is the seasons, electric. Stay
 awake for we know not when. Soon.
 See you there then, again. Singing.

Out of Breath

Vince Sawyer, Pennsylvania

My pulse can't stop racing
 And what am I chasing?
 I'm climbing through sorrow
 To get to tomorrow
 My words won't move faster
 I feel I can master
 The art of expression
 The sounds in succession
 Make words for the weary
 My eyes see it clearly
 The pain of the masses
 It doesn't take glasses
 To view all the screaming
 The pain is still gleaming
 And shining on faces.
 Is that what the race is?

Is that why I'm running . . .
 Is that why I'm running?

Or do I just chase it,
 To hear people praise it.
 And if I start dropping ,
 What keeps me from stopping?
 What keeps me from staying?
 What makes me keep playing?
 What makes my heart quit?
 What makes me jump script?
 What makes me lose something?
 I feel like there's nothing
 That enters my mind
 To make me unwind
 To put down this pen
 And call it the end.

Dust Dancer

Carol-Ann Hoyte, Quebec, Canada

Earth specks
 and
 pollen specks
 fall through the air
 pirouette in a ray of light
 land on a bookshelf stage
 cast a powder blanket
 inviting a finger to touch

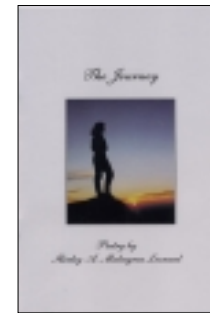
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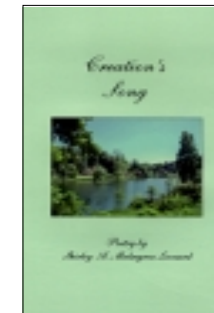
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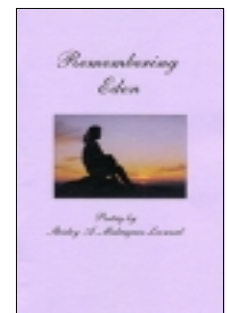
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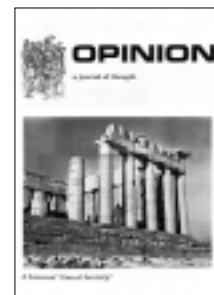


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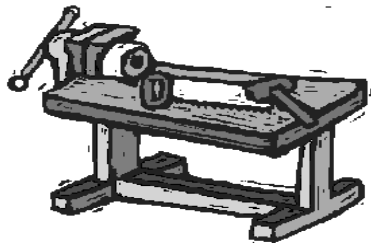
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Writer's Workbench

Common English Errors



Listening to people talk, reading online email or forum messages, and even checking out some web sites we notice several recurrent errors in English usage. Some of these even creep into submissions to *WestWard Quarterly!* So we thought it would be useful to call attention to a few of them here.

One of the most common errors is to insert an apostrophe in the possessive pronoun *its*, as in “She returned the item to it’s place.” The word *it’s* is a contraction for *it is*, but the proper form of the possessive pronoun is *its*, by analogy with *his* or *hers* (no apostrophe). Even some seasoned writers fail to make this connection.

A frequent mistake is to use *lay* in place of *lie*, as in “After supper I will lay down.” *Lay* is transitive; that is, it takes an object. You can lay something else down, but if you place *yourself* in a position of repose you *lie* down (intransitive). The confusion arises because *lay* is the past tense of *lie*, as in “Yesterday I lay down for a while.” The past tense of *lay* (transitive) is *laid*, as in “He *laid* the book on the table.”

Another error is to treat *lead* as a past-tense verb, as in “Then he lead me to the door.” The past tense of *lead* is *led*. “I will lead you now as I led you in the past.” The confusion no doubt arises from the other pronunciation of *lead* as a name for a metal. (English is crazy, isn’t it?)

We often hear something like, “He was reticent to take that step.” The speaker meant, “He was *reluctant*,” that is, not eager to do something. The word *reticent* means to speak little, as in “She was reticent about her many accomplishments.”

Even news broadcasters and politicians commit a frequent speech error when they say something like, “The thing *is, is* she didn’t really say that.” There is no need for the repetition, *is is*. Do people not listen to themselves when they speak? If they did, they would recognize the redundancy. And they should recognize the error in “It was a good move for Michael and I.” Would one say, “a good move *for I*,” instead of “*for me*”?


How often have you heard something like, “So I brought him all his books and papers, *eck-cetera*,” taking the abbreviation *etc.* (Latin *et cetera*, “and the rest”) as though it were *ect.* or something similar. That brings up another error, the confusion of *bring* and *take*. We hear, “I’ll bring you over to Kristin’s house,” when the speaker is at Justin’s house. The speaker should have said, “I’ll *take* you over to Kristin’s house.” Only if the speaker were already at Kristin’s would she be correct to tell Justin, via telephone, “I’ll *bring* you over.” To *bring* means to transport someone, or something, *from there to here*. When transporting *from here to there*, the correct verb is *take*.

Another mistake is to assert that something is *very unique*. If a thing is *unique* it is, by definition, one of a kind, so there can’t be any degrees of uniqueness. It’s either unique, period, or it’s not unique at all.

My favorite overheard expression is, “It’s raining outside.” I’m tempted to say, “Thank goodness—it’s not raining *inside*.” Hopefully, all your rainstorms will deposit their precipitation on the exterior of your residence. If the situation is otherwise, call a roofer.

Monitor your speech and writing for these and other common errors. They can slip in when we’re not watching. As a friend of mine used to say, “Correct me if I’m not mistaken.”

Richard Leonard, Publisher



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