

WestWard Quarterly

The Magazine of Family Reading



Winter 2012

To our readers . . .

As I write this on January 12th, we are having our first snow and really cold weather of the winter. However, it snowed in New York State on Thanksgiving Day and our son, Terrence, took the photo on the cover. Now that the Holidays are past we can concentrate on getting this issue out. Due to our large family of children and grandchildren, we sometimes feel snowed under by all the time it takes to send gifts and greetings.

Our Featured Writer in this issue is Stanley E. Galloway of Virginia, a college English teacher. He has some perceptive observations on writing that I'm sure will benefit our readers, along with some fine poems.

Alvin J. Speers responded to our question in the Fall, 2011 issue asking if seventy-one poems were too many. His response was a poem that you will find on page 28. Mr. Speers' many publications are featured in an ad on page 29.

One reason for the large number of poems, requiring extra pages in the Fall issue, was a backlog of submissions we had accepted and needed to publish. In the future, we plan to be more selective in accepting submissions. When multiple poems are submitted we will generally accept only one from the group, to avoid a backlog of poems that may be overlooked later. However, it is a good idea to submit up to five poems since that will give us the option to choose the best of the lot.

When you check our ad section in this issue you will find that you can acquire a "Poetic License" for yourself, or to give to a writer friend. My husband, who is always coming up with interesting ideas, devised this one in observance of April 1st, and created an impressive document that could be framed and hung over your desk.

Shirley Anne Leonard, EDITOR

WestWard Quarterly

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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, www.wwquarterly.com.

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Cover Image: Snowfall, Morrisonville, New York, November 2011

Photo by Terrence A. Malmgren

Featured Writer . . .

Stanley A. Galloway

Virginia



I have always enjoyed reading. Writing is the other side of that coin. I flipped the coin in sixth or seventh grade and tried writing the kinds of things I was reading, which at that time was Edgar Rice Burroughs-style adventure and science fiction. As the wonder of young love stole over me in junior high and high school, I also wrote Hallmark-wannabe poetry to the girls (actually only two that I can remember) who caught my imagination.

When I went to college I pushed writing to the side. A story and a poem or two were published in some college publications. I had thoughts of being a writer but really had no direction on how to do that. Instead I followed the safe route — being a college English teacher. In graduate school I learned that I found great satisfaction in teaching. It was, after all, getting paid to do what I loved best, reading and writing.

Though I dabbled in poetry over the years, the change came for me in 2004 when I taught in Kenya for the summer semester. Because this was an experience that had so much potential I determined to record the things I saw and learned, and early on I decided I would do that in poetry. The lessons were strong both culturally and poetically. My confidence was not strong, however, and it took until 2009 before I dared myself to begin submitting poetry to editors. My first poem published after that (in December) was “African Crow,” at *vox poetica*. *WestWard Quarterly* published “First Morning” in Spring 2010. I was validated as a poet. I continued to submit and was nominated Best of the Net in 2011.

In 2009, I also began a series of poems based on the book of Genesis. The first of these poems to be published was “Simeon Responds to Joseph’s Second Dream” (*Caper Literary Review*, September 2010) followed by “Angel’s First Assignment” (a study in dactylic meter) in *WestWard Quarterly* in the Fall issue. A section of this collection has been accepted as a chapbook called *Abraham*, due out in 2012 from Sierra Delta Press.

I think it took a certain maturity for me to start writing (or return to writing) that is informed from the decades of teaching I have done. I learned about organic form in graduate school, saw it in practice in such contemporary writers as Denise Levertov and Lucille Clifton, taught the nuances of reading poetry year after year — until finally I have a view of the whole process, not only both sides of the coin but the edges as well. There are many kinds of poems, but for me, a poem must observe. Observation is more than image, though; it is investing meaning to image. When I write a poem now, I am not satisfied until there is an insight, what Robert Frost called “a momentary stay against confusion.” Sometimes the insight is stated, but other times there is a gap that the intuition must jump. The poetry of Julie Ellinger Hunt has pushed me to be more intuitive in what I write.

So, whether I am hiking, or watching a movie, or even reading a book, I am making connections. The obvious connections make for quick poems. The intuitive ones take much longer, but in the end, I think they make for stronger poems.

“Neck Tie” is a humorous observation about children and the way they experience their world. “Buffalo in Mud” is an overt spiritual lesson that came to me while on safari. “Thank You” was prompted by a thank-you note from the vice chancellor of the university where I taught in Kenya. “Water” was inspired by a message by our college chaplain on the faith of Peter. “Fourth Day” and “Pishon Gihon Tigris Euphrates” both come from the creation account in the first chapters of Genesis.

Poems by Stanley A. Galloway

Neck Tie

On my lap,
on the floor,
cruising nearby chairs,
smiling at everyone,
you, my youngest son,
delight, adjust,
with little effort.

All sensation —
sight, touch, taste —
intrigues you.

When I take you to my lap,
as the chapel service starts,
you take my new tie
in dusty fingers,
pat it, twist it, pull it,
then release it,
after an approving lick.

Buffalo in Mud

Alone he stands in knee-deep grass
some meters off the road,
still,
unwilling to move to left or right
while the African sun bakes mud
into a covering that hides his hide
and guards against the insects’ sting.
He thinks we cannot see him,
that mudded and still he is but
another anthill growing from the plain.
We smile at such delusions —
we see the meter-spread of horns
that no sane termite would construct.
Yes, this is Adam’s fig leaf,
meant to hide him,
meant to check the sting of sin.

Thank You

Your thank-you gave me opportunity —
an opportunity that passed me by —
to recognize the grace that I mistook
for my self-made accomplishment alone,
instead of something God had given me.
Forgive me for my failed humility
that took the credit where no credit was,
and pray God grant me next time wit to say
the only credit, thanks, and honor go to Him.

Water

In the darkness, in the void, was water.
You divided it and shaped all things in it.
In Your wrath, in the near-end, was water.
You washed the earth of all but one ark’s remnant.
In the clouds, in the storm-spent sky, was water.
You turned it, flashing, bowing from Your hand, a covenant.
In the plagues, in Moses’ rod, was water.
You showed us blood and water can be interchanged.
In the way, in stark defiance, was water.
You moved it back and made mud faithful.
In the wilderness, in choking dust, was water.
You brought it from the rock, as once You brought
rock from water.
In my thirst, in my utter desiccation, was water.
You said, “Come to the water, everyone that thirsts.”
In disobedience, in running from you, was water.
You created a great fish to swim the wayward back.
In repentance, in coming Godward, was water.
You sent John to call us from our dirt.
In faithful plunge, in plunging faith, was water.
You called Peter, and us all, to trust You in the water.
In my body — blood, bone, brain — is water.
You may use it as You wish.

Fourth Day

sunlight, starlight, moonlight:
all dim counterfeits
of First Light

Pishon Gihon Tigris Euphrates

“Pishon Gihon Tigris Euphrates,”
chant the children jumping rope —
nonsense words too old for many
generations back to place.
Pishon, Gihon, Tigris, Euphrates —
rivers flowing four from one,
watering geography
as much neglected as transformed.
Pishon Gihon Tigris Euphrates
children’s play invokes the start —
their own and ours — no more benign
or false for having been forgotten.

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Featured Poem Study

Charles A. Waugaman (1932-2010), Vermont

Editor's Note: The late Rev. Charles A. Waugaman originated our "Featured Poem Study" segment with studies that have appeared in other publications over the years. He was editor of Time of Singing from 1964-65 and 1980-98. A few of his submissions remain to be published in WestWard Quarterly; this one comes from 1978.

Christmas extends beyond each year to slip into Epiphany, and to round out the creche with camels, turbans and chests of gold and myrrh. May your New Year be blessed with enough personal epiphanies to keep you alert.

Sign of the Fish

The Magi fished the heavenly reefs
And netted schools of thought
But God went angling with a star
And three wise men were caught.

He played them far as Herod's court
Where their assumptions failed,
Then reeled them in to Bethlehem
Where Love-made-flesh prevailed.

And still men probe the vast of space,
And still they search the night.
And still God meets the seeking mind
Inaugurating Light.

The Idea:

1978 was a year that I decided to write a poem every day of December. Riffing the file now shows me thirty-six manuscripts for the month, every day accounted for. So I obviously exceeded my goal.

How fish and wise men linked up in my thought, I've no idea now. What it suggests from this perspective is multiple and interesting, from the call to be "fishers of men" to the post-Easter "Cast your net on the *right* side of the boat." You are free to read in for yourself.

I do delight to recall that this poem was one that received payment. And the publisher also submitted it to an Evangelical Press Association contest where it took third place.

The Form:

The form is simple: three quatrains with a rhyme on lines 2 and 4 of each stanza. The meter is iambic with alternating lines of four and three feet. It is the three-foot lines that rhyme.

Written: December 20, 1978.

Published in *The Christian Reader*, November-December 1979.

Contest: Associated Church Press, Third Place, 1980.

Reused: As a family Christmas card, 1985.

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Blenheim Rhapsodies

Karen Kelsay, California

Still robed in purple skirts, the morning wraps
around the hills and moves from tree to tree.
Along the path, where thickets flash their caps
of green, small ducks reside. December's plea

for snow will not be heard today. This peaceful scene
reflects an era of another time;
perhaps some noble woman, or a queen
has walked these grounds before. A distant chime

of bells is heard beyond the leafless elm
whose brittle branches rise like fragile prongs
to grasp December skies. This charming realm
remains untouched and, possibly, belongs

to fairy folk residing in the glen
who've finished singing autumn songs. But now
the winter chants those melodies again
in calming rhapsodies from every bough.

First published in Wilderness Interface Zone, 2010

Pioneer District

Luther C. Hanson, Washington State

A winter evening, and I force my way
From my warm rooms of despair
To seek a clarity in cold air
And newly fallen snow, the broad brick square,
A thousand, thousand flakes as bright as day,
And grace to see a globed streetlight.
I seek a peace in black and white.

My footprints alone disturb the street
Except for a form in doorway sleep.
A small town — as if time could keep —
Could return to a world that seemed to keep
Benedictions for the things a man may meet.
Get some rest, my shadowy friend, good night.
We seek a peace in black and white.

The falling, falling snow blankets, silent,
Sidewalk and square, failure, despair, a soul.
From hallowed memories of holly and laurel
Almost I hear an unremembered carol.
Snow also covers the benches of regret.
And then, in the dark splendor, I delight
To seek a peace in black and white.

Father's Love

(For Sebastian Smeets)

Larry W. O. Smeets, Canada

My fair-haired son Sebastian
unexpectedly came to me
at the supper table tonight.
He reached up, fearful
as if he were trapped
at the bottom
of a deep dark pit
ringed with witches, gruesome slimers
and other childhood monsters.
He did not say a word
but still made it understood
that my embrace was needed
now.

I warmly took him up.
As I did I recalled
how he already hungers
for the independence and responsibility
of manhood,
and I sighed.
Even my cherished son
at the tender age of three
faces the dark unknown.
And as I held him in my arms
I quietly wept
knowing that I could not always
guarantee him protection
or even solace,
but only a father's love.

We'll Go from There

Brittany Hill, Connecticut

“We'll go from there”
Is what you said
Tho nothing's here

Left to adhere
Or give me aid.
“We'll go from there”

Leaves anywhere
To be mislaid
Tho nothing's here

To take or share
As aforesaid,
“We'll go from there.”

For everywhere
Is underlaid
Tho nothing's here

But words austere
To counterraid . . .
“We'll go from there,
Tho nothing's here.”

Home

Juliana Karcher, Missouri

A two-hour drive
through the tears
from nowhere

Where the blacktop turns to gravel
and city lights are hours away
from nowhere

Not ready for life
forced by a letter
from nowhere

Soaked with regret
I leave my small town
the place that built me
this place is somewhere
it's home

Artifice in Ice

Sally Cook, New York

Street lights at night can imitate the stars.
Amazing, ways a street can rearrange
So we get caught in Bruegel, or on Mars.
A phosphorescent glow has made things strange.

You can't count on the stars; they move about.
No matter how we try, we lose the light.
Nature, unthinking, moves the scenery out
Leaving a empty, blackened stage of night.

And then, when bluish powdered sugar snow,
Fluorescent, drops where yellow street lights were,
Thick clouds diffuse the ruby tail-lights' glow —
All colors get transmuted, and the cure
For ugliness is found as such a sight,
Electric and surreal, defeats the night.

You Know What You Know

Brian C. Felder, Delaware

When you come from a place where it snows a lot
— and I think Wisconsin qualifies —
you learn to read the sky,
to discern the portent that it holds.
Even if you move to a place less challenged
— and I think Delaware qualifies —
you still look into the ether to see what it says
and today it says snow.
Yeah, I know, but snow it will,
so say my Milwaukee instincts
to my disbelieving Milford mind.

Potent Parlance

Vex Darkly, New Zealand

To fell a beast you only need
A sharpened spear and simple speed
To fell a human heart with ease
A sharpened tongue with expertise
Those lethal words can cut you deep
Attacking secrets that you keep
Your words have power, don't abuse
Your words, with wisdom, you must choose

Previously published at AllPoetry.com

Reflections

(The reference is to 'Dante Met Beatrice')
Paul Christian Stevens, Australia

Dear girl, I watch you read my poem about
 Beatrice — and you not recognising
 It is yourself depicted in that image:
 The girl who claps her hands at some idea
 And dances in delight is only you.
 And when you read this poem that I'm now writing
 About a girl who reads, not recognising
 It is herself, a poem about a girl
 Who claps her hands at some idea and dances,
 Or reads the poem about the girl who reads
 The poem about the girl not recognising
 Who reads the poem about the girl who dances —
 It's always you: the mirrors of my eyes
 Reflecting you on you on you on you.

Kiss

Christian Belz, Michigan

I love the way you kiss the day
 Starburst eyes and dynamic motor
 with an inventive spirit
 through which
 Ordinary is unknown
 and Nothing
 is taken for granted

You create, play and redecide
 Curling and twirling the day's crystalline threads
 tinting,
 trimming,
 and weaving
 a four dimensional quilt . . .
 singular in movement, brilliance,
 timbre and being;
 breathtaking to behold

And a sacred blessing to share

I love the way you kiss the day
 Passionately, deliberately
 caressing the moment . . .
 Deepening its colors,
 soaking in vibrance, life and vitality.

I love the way you kiss the day

Alternatives

Joyce G. Bradshaw, Texas

At the fork
 I chose the branch most accessible,
 most unobstructed.
 Around the bend, however,
 God built a wall
 and blocked my way.
 Scaling the obstacle, I felt victorious
 at having passed a test.
 Over the next hill
 I found a door securely locked.
 But persistently
 and cleverly (I thought),
 I fashioned a key of my own design
 and gained access
 where I should not have been.
 In a valley beyond,
 just at the point where I
 was confident of reaching my goal,
 the pathway ended.
 As I gazed bewildered into darkness
 the voice of God commanded:
 Do not be rebellious!
 Go back and take the other road,
 for I have set your future there.

Remorse

A Shakespearean Sonnet
Edward Dong, California

Through wintry drapes of sleet, I peer at gray
 And grieve the barren beds of bitter earth
 Till crocus buds unfold their bright array
 Your bloom of love that warms my inner hearth.
 With you the rains begin to sound like song,
 And forceful winds like vernal breezes soar;
 But fragrant flowers in such volume throng,
 My crocus stands now one of many more.
 Soon, spring and summer pass as if a week,
 And scarlet leaves portend the storms ahead;
 Forgotten crocus, cherished once, I seek —
 Then find neglected petals, dried and shed.
 As sky trades blue for dun, alone I see
 No light or hope but deep despondency.

Holding, Even Not Holding

Shea R. Van Rhoads, Arizona

At the top joints of his index fingers,
both bend slightly sideways:

 holding his hand,
 even not holding his hand,
I know this.

Above the ears, his gray hairs
appear more numerous after a trim:

 holding his scissors,
 even not holding his scissors,
I know this.

Behind long dark lashes, his eyes
the color of honey, convey contentment:

 holding his gaze,
 even not holding his gaze,
I know this.

With exposed vulnerability, his upper lip
quivers when he expresses deep emotion:

 holding his ache,
 even not holding his ache,
I know this.

In a tender, tenor tone, his voice
sings his unconditional love for me:

 holding his hand,
 even not holding his hand,
I know this.

Words Betray

Joyce I. Johnson, Washington State

Reading poetry I know,
without another clue,
which writer has seen many years
and which of them is new.
The missiles projected by the young
are inquiring and bold.
The resignation in another poem
declares the author's old.
The young emote about their dreams,
of that yet to be seen,
but we whose lofty dreams are gone
must pen what might have been.

The American and the Armenian

For Tati

Jason Sturner, Tennessee

She sits in a small café
Reading the poems of an American.
Her eyes steal the surrounding sunlight
And illuminate his rising words.

He sits near a kitchen window
Reading the email of an Armenian.
He is touched. Flattered. A bit sad
That he cannot visit her in the café.

And although mountains and ocean rise between them,
They do not feel so apart when using words.
They do not feel so alone:

For their hearts know the same problems of love.
Their tears flood the same fields of war.
Their pens write of dawns born in better days to come.

In a world of seven billion people,
On a planet spinning in and out of control,
The man and woman have come together
Peacefully, through distance and words,

Because souls are points of light on the skin of Earth,
Shimmering on a blue speck stuck to the arm of a galaxy,
Vibrant in a universe that blooms like a boundless garden
In the hands of mystery.

And although the man and woman do not explore Rome together,
Or share views from the Tennessee mountains,
His spirit is with her in the café,
Hers is with him at his home,

For no one is truly separate
When you look at the world
From great heights.

Angel Chimes

Michael Keshigian, New Hampshire

Their planetary weave
 comforts the air,
 polycentric orbits
 in random motion
 and yet when they do collide
 their voices praise
 the sunlight, stars
 and the gentle breeze
 which makes them fly
 to the arc's extremity.
 Persisting through elements,
 their shapes cast
 delicate silhouettes
 that dissolve on the siding
 when clouds come to call
 though not interrupting
 their spatial conversations
 on invisible threads
 that allow them to merge
 then part and reunite,
 a coordinated continuation
 creating sounds that mimic
 the song of birds
 on lofty perches,
 a fine wire act
 that avoids complicity
 as they twirl about
 in their circular world.

Between Sky and Earth

Nicolas Grenier, France

Between sky and earth,
 Snow, as a Beauty
 Which is changing
 Every moment
 The form of the landscape.

Written in French with translation by Emmanuel Cheiron

My Quiet

Roger Singer, New York

I am swimming in the water
 of stars.
 My skin becomes
 moon-soaked
 with velvet blue
 and soft sheets of silver.
 Cool air
 refreshes my energy.

Overshadowed
 by pines
 of night green
 I hold my eyes
 open,
 absorbing the
 greatness of a
 black distance.

I am arrested
 by the awe
 at the bottom of the
 sky;
 the end of space
 grasps at my fear.

My quiet is
 respect.

Tidy Twigs

Eira Needham, United Kingdom

New sunrays weave. I join the avian song
 yet apprehension dawns; my chick has grown.
 You fluttered restless wings, then squawked 'so long'
 abandoning our nest; my fledgling's flown.

Bereft, I stare at every cranny filled
 with dying leaves, once placed with expertise.
 Time's fingers seem to linger. I rebuild
 my life, extend stiff wings, explore new trees.

Recall my chirruped warnings that you glide
 above the stormy clouds. I'll prune this nest,
 then tidy twigs, repress those fears I hide.
 So preen your feathers, zoom the sky with zest.

I'll cluck around my brood in reverie,
 'til you swoop home, to roost awhile with me.

Stepping into Strength

Jennifer Jayne Scobie, Ontario, Canada

the road along this dusty winding dream
 it weaves between the mountains and the stream
 across the bridges you will find the view
 enchanting as the Sunday morning dew
 if you should care to walk along this path
 a few will scorn but do not feel their wrath
 if insults they will sling begin to hurt
 the piercing ones, the churlish and the curt
 just take your breath in slowly and you'll know
 that bitterness is really not your foe
 your strength is built on weathering a storm
 and soon you will appear in better form

Sometimes a Poem Just Happens

Dennis Herrell, Texas

The poem crawled out of my brain
 got to its feet
 found balance
 observed considered
 made decisions about its life
 then walked in its own direction
 beckoning me to follow.



Drawing by Patricia Sarazen

Dream and Aspire

Patricia Sarazen, Pennsylvania

With pen in hand
I can create
a garden fairyland
of summertime,

Pluck the very harp strings of serene beauty,
in masses of tall purple plumed flowers
that awaken each day at dawn's hour,
where petunias sally forth in loveliness —
a garden that captivates my very soul,
with flower aisles and chanting wild bird choir,

A garden where I can dream and aspire,
God's earthly mansion of flowery blooms,
where miracles transpire from day to day,
of garden fancies that touch our heart;
as I, mesmerized by this garden beauty,
will always yearn for flower delights.

So with pen in hand
I do create
a garden fairyland
of summertime.

From My Vantage Point . . .

by
Chester



Let me introduce you to my assistant, Callie, who joined our staff a few months ago. As you can see, Callie (formal name: Calliope) is very young and does not yet display the dignified bearing that befits a representative of a magazine of *WestWard Quarterly's* stature. I have been attempting to model for her the proper demeanor, but it is difficult to get the message across when she is playing tag with my tail, kicking my head in a scuffle, or racing me to the food dish. I have not yet been able to train her not to step on the Editor's keyboard (I take pains to walk around it, myself), and she has been known to delete the outgoing voice mail message from our house telephone. Further, she

occasionally attempts to displace me from my supervisory desk on the bookshelf over our color printer. (Usually I simply cede the spot to her, rather than risk another scuffle that might knock our Publisher's graduate diploma off the wall above.) I am hoping that in future columns I will be able to report Calliope's progress as a useful, and not merely ornamental and, frankly, pestiferous member of our staff.

The Nursery Cat

(Three Tanka)

Mary Kipps, Virginia

newborn kittens
mewling in the hayloft —
the barn owl
gives a wink, a blink
and a nod

one chocolate cat
one gingerbread dog . . .
I promise her a night
of sugarplum
dreaming

an old cat
asleep by the fire,
the tide of her breath
a gentle sea, her boat
a pea green cushion

That Darn Cat

Robert Black, United Kingdom

A mat with a furry shadow on top blinks
as it waits for a small ball of fluff to be puffed
by the draught from a cupboard door as it shuts,
which was opened just now by a large pink mouse
who growls at the furry shadow sat on the mat . . .
Until it is hit by a frilly hamster who insists
it's time for them both to be on their way
to the half-marathon charity run.

Creative Quotations

Art as a Guide to Reality . . .

My point is not merely that a good novel offers richer characterization and more enduring insight than our usual ideological or therapeutic takes on life. By and large the best art is a better guide to reality than the trendy orthodoxy purveyed as social science. Yet it is the better guide not primarily because artists are wiser or better informed than the professional academic — when they are silly or misguided, which is often, their rhetoric-fueled errors are even more stupendous than those of the jargon-intoxicated, tenured mediocrity. It is so because first-rate art makes imagined people, in all their ordinariness, real and therefore mysterious and transcendent, while our secular wisdom tends to make real people seem shallow and artificial.

— Shalom Carmy, “On Literature and the Life of Torah,” *First Things*, November 2011, p. 28.

Poetry Is Not an Evasion of the Facts . . .

It is clear that in Greece the values were different from our own today. Indeed we are not able really to bring into one consistent whole their outlook upon life; from our point of view it seems to involve a self-contradiction. People so devoted to poetry as to make it a matter of practical importance must have been, we feel, deficient in the sense for what is practically important, dreamers, not alive to life’s hard facts. Nothing could be further from the truth. The Greeks were pre-eminently realists. The temper of mind that made them carve their statues and paint their pictures from the living human beings around them, that kept their poetry within the sober limits of the possible, made them hard-headed men in the world of every-day affairs. They were not tempted to evade facts. It is we ourselves who are the sentimentalists. We, to whom poetry, all art, is only a superficial decoration of life, made a refuge from a world that is too hard for us to face by sentimentalizing it. The Greeks looked straight at it. They were completely unsentimental. It was a Roman who said it was sweet to die for one’s country. The Greeks never said it was sweet to die for anything. They had no vital lies.

— Edith Hamilton, *The Greek Way*, 1930, 1983, pp. 77-78.

The Quest

Leticia Austria, Texas

I’ve lived too many lives in this one life
and still I seek to live the one that’s true.
Perhaps the way is there, over that slope
where a corps of rain lilies, pristine white,
rise serenely after their long, deep sleep.
Could I, too, lie in wait beneath the ground,
till rousing rains at long last break the drought?
Small reward — such brief freedom in the light!
And yet those maiden blooms seem not to care
that joy is theirs but for a little while.

But, no, perhaps the way lies farther on —
there — where the church roof peaks like fingertips
together gently pressed and upward straight
in earnest supplication to the sky.
To ask is to receive, or so it’s said;
but I have asked, and answer never came.
It could be that I asked mistakenly,
against whatever plan was made for me.
Still, I asked. Is that not sufficient proof
I know the answer will be mine someday?

I have no guide except the silent sun,
upon whose face I cannot even look;
but looking round, my only company
is my gray shadow, clinging to my heels,
yet stretching still toward dust already trod.
It seems to hide from the sun that made it;
but I, in present state, am poor shelter.
There is nothing, then, but to carry on;
for the sun must surely set down somewhere,
and surely that is where my life awaits.

Words on Paper First

Denny E. Marshall, Nebraska

The pen not the PC to write new verse
To shape and mold the words on paper first
Looking for the revisions in reverse
Lines of imagery to act and rehearse
Deep within the letters, there is a thirst
Moving ink flows on for better or worse
The pen not the PC to write new verse
To shape and mold the words on paper first

If

Florence Marcus, Connecticut

If life has gone askew
Then my advice is meant for you.
If you're feeling glum,
If your heart is numb,
If your pain is severe,
If you shed a tear,
Follow my thoughts,
The answer is here.

If you wail and complain
About each ache and pain,
If you are unprepared for body to ache,
For parts to creak and break,
If you have problems
Performing your usual routine,
Then you know exactly
what I mean.

Oh, phoo!
Enough with the boo hoo!
Decide you're going to fix it.
You're definitely not a dimwit.
Go to the library and read a book.
Go to the kitchen and start to cook.
Don't be a sad sack.
You can get your glow back.

Snow Fail

Anne Skalitza, New Jersey

Snow is falling —
oh no, a storm!
I hastily dash
to the local store.
Move over, snow plow
I'm getting ahead,
I desperately need
milk, eggs, and bread.
The lines are long,
(no pushing or shoving)
but I get the award
for best in groveling.
"I'll surely starve!"
I loudly opine
as I grab and purchase
dill pickles in brine.

Newscasters scream
"Cover you must take!"
So I sit by my window
watching each flake.
One hour later
the storm has finished,
my trust in the weathermen
now greatly diminished.
I've gained ten pounds
(and by television's glow)
I realize that there's
only an inch of snow.
But I survived
and I have food,
only to hear that
another "storm" looms.

Accept what can't be changed.
Memorize the sentence you just read.
Produce a paper and a pen
And write those words I said.
Remember, it's not over till it's over.
Life's not always a four leaf clover,
So don't sit around feeling sorry.
Don't think, my friend, just do.

Eureka

Boghos L. Artinian, Lebanon

My father's pet research project had been
the rubbing of a myriad drugs on his scalp —
for he was bald — not just to re-grow hair
but to quick become a millionaire
by selling a possible discovery
and to be delivered from drudgery.
Daily he lay on his bed after work,
his scalp shining under a side lamp,
his eyes turned upward towards a mirror
and through a lens to enlarge any hair
jutting fast enough into his "private garden"
to justify the shouting of "Eureka!"
Pity that never happened in thirty years!

Old Jack Frost

Sheila B. Roark, Texas

Jack Frost has arrived again
with a paintbrush in his hand,
along with paint as clear as glass
to create a wonderland.

He covers limbs of sleeping trees
with diamond, crystal snow,
and hangs some shiny icicles
on eaves to help them glow.

Then he orders snowy flakes
to fall down from the sky
blanketing all the world below
as softly as a sigh

The world that Old Jack Frost creates
is peaceful and serene
where ermine fur of pristine white
replaces summer's green.

Winter?

Sophie Kang, California

The rest of the land spins in a snow globe
As here I dance, my feet bare, caressed
With lush green. I pirouette across moss
Peeking bright from old bricks. Applauded
By zephyrs, I curtsy in marigold sunlight.
Somewhere else they trudge in ice storms,
But somewhere else is not here.

Snow

Diane L. Akins, Colorado

Snow floats to the earth.
Snow melts on outstretched tongues.
Snow tickles faces.
Snow stings when thrown in a ball.
Snow shimmers in the sun.
Snow drifts in the wind.
Snow sparkles in the moonlight.
Snow quiets the night.
Snow evokes magic on Christmas Eve.

Winter Fun

Barbara Vetter, Colorado

I await winter
with anticipation
and just a touch
of trepidation.

Flurries of snow
from my window I see,
They seem to say,
"Come play with me."

So I bundle up
and warm and snug
like the proverbial
bug in a rug.

I step outside,
on my tongue catch a flake
"Umm, better than
a vanilla shake!"

I hear a call
off to my right
"C'mon over,
snowball fight!"

I grin and wave
at neighborhood friends.
"Gosh, I hope
winter never ends!"

My Tailwind and My Guide

Kevin Heaton, South Carolina

Race not chosen, tour of life,
no reason shown, no purpose see;
even so, Lord, test my faith,
I'll make you proud of me.

The road is long and not yet traveled,
how shall I survive?
Gales of wind traverse my face,
tempests rage, no place to hide.

Mile after mile more mountains loom,
the grade is steep, my strength subsides.
Emotions torn in wretched anguish,
Satan haunts my precious ride.

Nearly spent, my body heaves,
I pause to look behind.
Two angels now have joined the quest:
my tailwind and my guide.

As one we reach the final crest,
then down through valleys green,
swift along the ocean road
where seagulls race with me.

Clad in yellow, bathed in light,
I breach the finish line,
where inner man redeems the flesh
and miracles abide.

All

Robert Stomel, California

Long ago we were all one race,
What we were was all one trace.
Then some of us had to move away
So they would have a place to stay.
That's what made us what we are,
At least, of what we are so far
When we look for another place
So we can have some breathing space.

Some day that's what we must do.
When all of us will then accrue
To be of more than we can stand,
We'll have to find another land.

If we don't get together again,
Then what will happen to us then
Will be that we will be the same
As what we are that we became.

Then all the arguments and war
Will be the same as was before,
And what we all will have to do
Is be the same as what we knew.
The time is back to be one kind,
What we became can be behind,
So let's all be the race of Man.
Then what we have to do, we can.

A Promise to Keep

Eve M. Arensberg, North Carolina

There's Mr. Page, he's quite a sage;
he tells stories of a different age.
He came from a land o'er the sea,
The Statue of Liberty he wanted to see.

Born to a life torn by strife,
he worked and he slaved,
For the passage he saved.
To see a new land was all he craved.

Wishes spoken became promises made;
to each family member a smile was paid.
And each lonely night in the bed he lay,
his brothers beside him, sleep far away.

Fear strode with him throughout each day
and gnawed at his innards at work or at play.
Determined to go, he wanted to stay.
Doubts and fears he willed away.

And many a tear would start to flow,
packing a satchel before he could go.
To each little treasure he wanted to cling,
a memory of lost childhood he wanted to bring.

He left before dawn on a day now gone.
Through moonlight and shadows he sorrowed along,
his satchel swung from his tightly held fist,
a boy fourteen, gone in the mist.

He walked and he walked for each long day,
to meet the tall ship that would take him away.
Each mile he trod, his courage he led,
to the edge of the ocean, he kept it fed.

At dockside he stood, waiting his turn
To board the ship, where he would learn,
he wasn't alone in his fear and his dread.
Many strange voices spun round his head,

All with a language different from his own,
all from a country far from his home,
each with a dream kept close to their hearts,
a new land, a new promise, a new start for them all.

With a heart full of hope, he turned to the plank,
where passengers loaded according to rank.
And down and down in the ship he went,
into steerage, he followed, where the emigrants were sent,

(continued, page 26)

Where grown men suffered and swore silent prayers,
and dirt-laden children played on the stairs.
Seasick and hungry, the mothers were seen,
weeping for little ones grown so lean.

And up above in the ship's grand heights,
the wealthy and privileged danced through the nights.
There was food aplenty and beds for their rest,
while hunger and cold danced in the hold.

Nights and days on the ocean they tossed.
From continent to continent the mighty ship crossed,
bound for America the land of the free,
where hope for the weary stood like a tree.

And there in the harbor our lady's in sight,
our beacon of Liberty, day into night.
Happiness rang like a bell on high,
while people below had started to die.

Hungry, tired and dirty he came,
after weeks of sadness, hardship and pain.
Down the gangplank he plodded in vain,
looking for signs of fortune and fame.

In this new land he wished to find,
hope in a life free from bind.
Freedom to work for wages or found
he wandered his way from city to town.

Factory or farm, he toiled each day.
With many a night he slept in the hay.
His fingers grew bloody, his shirt often torn.
Many a day his spirits were worn.

But he didn't despair, or let himself cry,
or give in to thoughts of wanting to die.
He made himself smile and walk with a lift,
each day given he saw as a gift.

He walked the streets daily finding life hard.
He worked for food and what shelter he found,
had to be enough for his day to be crowned.
And each small coin earned a day,
made him so proud as he tucked it away.

Tall and lean with muscles he grew
as the days of work on by him flew.
His purse slowly filled, and his heart did too
with thankfulness and prayer, for a life that was fair.

To the great north woods he found his way,
hearing of work with a good day's pay.
"America is growing," he heard men say,
"Wood is needed to pave the way."

There were trees aplenty for a young man's axe,
and work that was hard for strong men's backs.
But his muscles were true with toil he knew,
the promises made, at last would be paid.

For family and hearth, his spirits did soar,
swinging his axe with a mighty roar.
And with each hefty blow, wood chips flew,
He called his name as down the trees came.

A family dynasty was his aim,
for sons and daughters, felling trees a game.
A game he played with each downed tree.
A child born in a country that was free.

Days and nights and days rolled by,
fulfilling the dream that wouldn't die.
Sunrise to sunset he followed his dream.
Westward he strode over meadow and stream.

Wide rivers he crossed and prairies the same,
looking, always looking, for land he could claim.
He worked when he could and hungered for more,
looking, always looking, from mountain to shore.

High in the Rockies he stood watch for the dawn,
a valley below him, with nightfall gone.
He watched and he waited for light to reveal
what shrouding mists had come to conceal.

Listening and waiting, his heart set afire,
he couldn't bring himself to retire,
campfire blazing in the midst of dreams,
black night sky brightened by a thousand gleams.

His future planned on through the night.
As days of glory came with morning light.
He'd marry well to a woman strong,
with children to come, the wait not long.

And through the years the promise came true,
as life and love and ambition grew.
And now he's old and always cold
But to saddle he'd fly for his days gone by.

A life well lived, in a land so free
The Statue of Liberty he finally did see.
He honored her promise until his last fall,
And now in his grave he honors us all.

Indifference? — Never!

J. Alvin Speers, Alberta, Canada

WestWard Quarterly has evolved over time
Excluding prose, except in masquerade — perceived crime.

Poetry à la Robert Service of Yukon fame
Became a cherished hobby I could not tame.

Do it right, or not at all, I say.
From the beginning I made it pay.
If you can't make it rhyme, do alternately;
Don't pretend it should pass as poetry.

I have much fun entertaining folk
With story relation, or telling joke.
At times I even stepped on some toes,
Bringing down criticism any pioneer knows.

Over two hundred media welcomed my work,
So I churn it out like scribe gone berserk.
Simultaneously I wrote books, both poetry and prose;
In either genre I love to compose.

In writing exercises I expand or compress
Plus converting both ways, editor to impress.
When book publishers required what annoyed me
I established small press, to just let them be.

Thirty-fifth book of poems will soon be done,
Taking total to 3,200 originals has been fun.
Fine profit yielded spurred me on,
But even for free it would still have been done.

Fall 2011 *WestWard Quarterly* included
Seventy-one items, nineteen of which exuded
Passable rhyme, some needing polish.
Lack of punctuation publishers should abolish.

Market for true poetry sincerely beckons
The way this successful poet reckons.
If it takes sweat effort to bring it about
Knuckle down to accomplish, or get out!

That may be seen as rude advice indeed
But false masquerade verbiage evokes a plead
To get back to basics with courage and imagination,
To create better production to be a sensation.

Some may opine I talk through my hat,
But record of accomplishments counters that.
The proof of the pudding is readers' choice,
Instead of public grants to give unwanted voice.

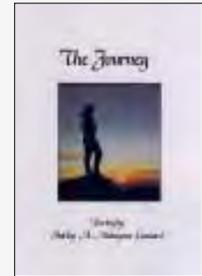
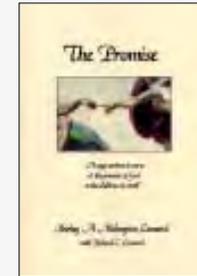
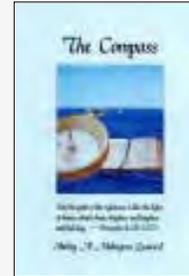
All Things Are Possible

David Fox, New York

May sunshine line your path
May rainbows lead your way
May you enjoy the pleasures of life
May you have the final say
May you never give up

May you be forever strong
If you do all these things
Then you will surely see
That there is nothing in life
that you cannot be

Shirley Anne Leonard, *WestWard Quarterly's* Editor, has published five poetry chapbooks. *The Compass* (revised 2011) meditates on the voyage through the seas of doctrinal dispute into the secure port of God's Kingdom. *The Promise* (revised 2011) celebrates God's historic work to bring about the restoration of His creation. *The Journey* (revised 2011) includes poems about the perils and joys of the journey from the Kingdom of Darkness to the Kingdom of Light. *Creation's Song* (not shown below) brings together poems celebrating the beauty God has created in nature for our enjoyment. *Remembering Eden* (not shown below) is a collection of poems honoring Christ and recounting God's plan for the restoration of all things.



The Compass (52 pages) *The Promise* (52 pages) *The Journey* (38 pages)

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"The Drugstore Cowboy"

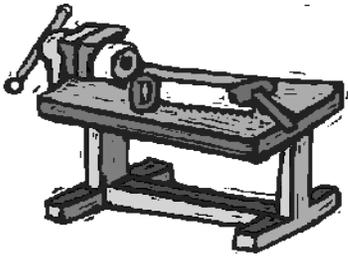
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- *Death of a Magazine: Reality for Writers*
- *One Poet's Adventure with Rhyming Words*
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Writer's Workbench

To Rhyme, or Not to Rhyme?

What is poetry, and what makes a poem a poem? Some might say: "Rhyme, rhythm, and meter." But are these the only criteria for judging a poem? There are many forms of poetry — narrative poetry, the ballad, the epic, the elegy, the ode, the sonnet, the villanelle, haiku, blank verse, free verse, the limerick. And there are as many reasons people write poetry as reasons for choosing the forms in which they write.

Much modern poetry is written in blank verse, or free verse. The difference between them is that blank verse is written in meter, but does not have the end rhyme — hence the term "blank"; whereas free verse has variable line lengths. But even free verse should have a rhythm, and discernible line movement and line division should bring out its meaning.

The underlying thought of the poem is important when deciding which form to use in composing it. Some poems are written simply to create a picture (e.g., haiku), while other poems convey a universal truth about the human condition (the ode or sonnet) or to tell a story (the narrative poem or ballad).

Sometimes people claim to be nostalgic for the days when all poems rhymed, or assert that modern poetry is just prose. They are forgetting that many classical poets of past centuries didn't use a great deal of rhyme. Among these are William Blake, William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Percy Bysshe Shelley, John Keats, Lord Byron, Alfred Lord Tennyson, Robert Browning, Walt Whitman, and Ralph Waldo Emerson.

On the other hand, much classic poetry does employ rhyme. The ear delights to hear patterns of rhyming words; this is one way in which the language of a poem sounds "special." Rhyming can help to accent key words and ideas. But if rhyme is used too heavily, there is the danger that the poem can become singsong and shallow, like a nursery rhyme. Avoiding this trite effect while still creating effective, "musical" verse is one of the most important skills a poet must acquire.

If you decide to rhyme, don't twist the lines around to force a rhyme. Don't use a word not because it is the best word, but just because it rhymes. Another problem with rhyme is that writers with a limited vocabulary tend to use the same rhymes over and over; their work begins to sound like those sappy greeting cards where you always see "year" rhyming with "dear." If you like to write rhyming poetry, invest some money in a rhyming dictionary and explore some new combinations.

What makes "bad" poetry? A poem is a poor one if it lacks a discernible point, or sounds just like prose when read aloud. Poetry should not be just a gushing forth of random thoughts scattered on the page, with equally random line breaks. It should not be a "greeting card" verse, just flowery fluff revealing no creativity, no fresh viewpoint. Bad rhyme is worse than no rhyme at all!

What makes "good" poetry? An effective poem has a point, and a purpose. It is well written with a concise and accurate use of words and strong figurative language. The reader can tell that the poet has done his or her homework, and hasn't just hastily

scribbled jumbled thoughts onto paper. The poem's words are used in context, and are spelled correctly. The verse is imaginative, lifting the reader out of the ordinary through artful use of simile and metaphor. A good poem enlightens the reader in some way.

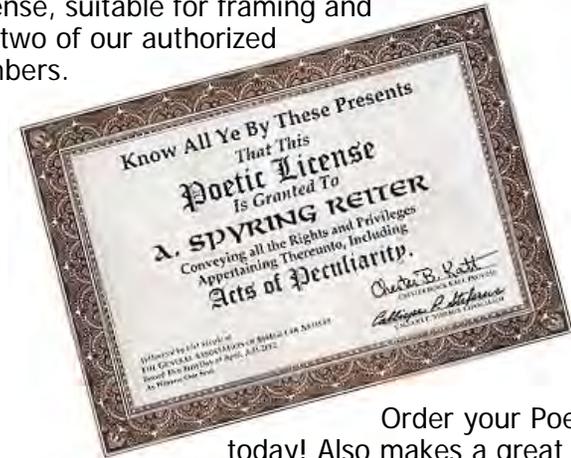
To improve your skills, read other poetry including the classics, the works of the masters. Study and try the various forms. Write often. Avoid trying to explain too much in your poetry, but also avoid being too obscure. Never cling to your words out of stubbornness, refusing to consider revisions.

Poetry is the expression of human experience in such a way that others can relate to it and take it into themselves. The poem is a lens through which we can see the world and its people in a different light. In much the same way that music does, an effective poem expresses that which cannot be expressed through ordinary speech. As someone has said, "Poetry is an echo, asking a shadow to dance."

Happy Writing — THE EDITOR

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