

WestWard Quarterly

The Magazine of Family Reading



Summer 2016

To our readers . . .

Summer arrived with a vengeance in our “neck of the woods,” with temperatures ranging in the nineties many days in succession. We hope the climate is more temperate wherever you are reading this!

Occasionally we receive kind words of commendation from our readers and contributors. Judith Lyn Sutton, an English teacher in California, writes: “I am honored to have my poem included in this summer’s quarterly and look forward to receiving my copy. I will continue to recommend other poets to your publication including certain students whose work I think may be strong enough for you to take a look at. Once more, congratulations on the fine work you do to promote knowledge and enthusiasm for this wonderful art form we both enjoy so much.” Her poem, “Early Bright,” appears on page 13.

This issue’s Featured Writer is Dr. C. David Hay, a retired dentist from Indiana. His “bio” and samples of his work appear on pages 4-6. Dr. Hay’s poetry has appeared eight times previously in this magazine. It has never been like pulling teeth to get a good poem from him!

Esther Leiper-Estabrooks, from far northern New Hampshire, continues to supply the material for our “Writer’s Workbench” feature, on page 29. Please check out the ads that follow, and the special expiration notice on page 30.

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.

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Cover Image: Steam Tractor, Western Illinois Threshers, Hamilton, Illinois, 2013
 Photo by Richard Leonard



Featured Writer

Dr. C. David Hay
Indiana

I am a native “Hoosier,” born in Indiana and raised on my parents’ farm where I learned to appreciate nature. I developed an early love of poetry from my mother’s bedtime readings of the old masters. I began writing poetry of my own in high school and was encouraged by having some of my work published in a national school anthology, *Young America Sings*. I put my writing on hold during college while I earned my Bachelor of Science and Doctor of Dental Surgery degrees from Indiana University. I was in private practice for forty-two years.

During my professional career, I served as trustee of the Indiana Dental Association for ten years and as component editor of the IDA Journal, with my poetry often featured. I served as Regent of the International College of Dentists and district editor of the ICD Journal, the *Key*. Some of my poetry still appears in this national publication. I have been widely published nationally and internationally, and my poetry has been read on the British Broadcasting Channel. I have had the pleasure of having my poetry published in nineteen of the popular June Cotner anthologies, thirty of the Bristol Banner Books and numerous editions of Salesian Missions anthologies, which are distributed worldwide.

I have self-published five books of my own poetry. The most recent is, *Wings of the Mind*, with 90 illustrated poems, many of which have received awards. I have been published in *WestWard Quarterly*, *Bell’s Letters*, *Poets’ Espresso Review*, *The Storyteller*, *Long Story Short*, *Lutheran Digest*, *Studio One*, *Oblates*, *Mountain Laurel*, *The Criterion*, *Pancakes In Heaven*, *The Quill & Scroll*, and *Silver Wings*. I was the first American published in the *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* (independent newspaper) in Russia.

Recognition includes nominations for the Pushcart Prize in Poetry and recipient of the Ordo Honoris award from Kappa Delta Rho; also, the Silver and Gold Awards from the International Society for the Advancement of Poetry.

I enjoy all forms of poetry, but prefer rhyme and meter — both sentimental and humorous. Robert Frost said, “Poetry without rhyme and meter is like tennis without a net.” But who is not in awe of the moving prose of The Twenty-Third Psalm? Besides Frost, some of my other favorites are Robert Louis Stevenson, Edgar Allan Poe, Ella Wheeler Wilcox, Rudyard Kipling, Edgar Guest, Joyce Kilmer, Samuel Coleridge, Robert Service, and James Whitcomb Riley.

I have never read a poem I didn’t like — just some better than others. My philosophy on writing is: Poems are wings of the mind. We each fly in our own way to the heights of our aspirations and the depths of our despair. That we may touch others in our flight is the essence of writing. Most of my poetry has been inspired by a person, place or event that profoundly affected my life. Thus, my writing serves not only as a legacy but as my poetic biography.

All my books are dedicated to my wife, Joy — the wind beneath my wings — who has been the inspiration for my writing. We enjoy winters in Florida and the other seasons in Indiana. My other hobbies include traveling, mushroom hunting, the study and collecting of Native American artifacts, and spoiling our much loved little dog, Flossie.

Reflections

We are but scholars of our past,
Mirrors of the lessons of age,
Reflecting the smiles and sighs
Upon a twilight page.

There is no turning back,
The moment passes on;
We have a choice but once
And then the time is gone.

We could have gifted flowers,
Been quicker with a hand,
Shared more tears of grief
To show we understand.

We learn most from our errors
In the trials of don’t and do
And the Master tallies all
When the final course is through.

So forgive mistakes of youth,
And care not about the score,
We meant to do our best —
No one can ask for more.

Silent Twilight

I miss the call of the whip-poor-will
That echoed through the wood,
And lament the barren stumps
Where majestic trees once stood.

Hush too, the mystic shadow bird
Who hooted away the night,
Then retreated to his vanished den
Before dawn’s glowing light.

The symphonies of twilight time
Were solace to the soul —
Wise men know to leave untouched
What’s best in God’s control.

How sad the loss of that we love;
Too late we fail to see —
The treasures of the moment
Someday may cease to be.

I’ll Be There

When the days wane long and dreary
And the nights are longer still,
Trust I’m watching over you —
And I always will.

Sonnets of love are sweet refrain
But none can ever compare
To simple vows from the heart —
I promise I’ll be there.

I am your guardian angel,
Together we have flown
But when your wings grow weary —
You’ll never be alone.

I hope you always understand
That I’ll forever care,
And when you need to reach for me —
You’ll find that I am there.

Cosmos

The Heavens are my solitude —
I dream of stellar flight
And marvel at infinity with
Countless points of light.

Celestial diamonds flashing fire
From galaxies sublime
While nebulae drift endlessly
In boundless space and time.

Planets spin in solar glow
As meteors blaze green.
Comets wander cosmic trails
Past stars we’ve never seen.

Yet as we gaze at distant worlds,
Mankind has clearly shown
He failed to fully comprehend
The beauty of his own.

More of Dr. Hay’s Poems continued on page 6

The Wilding

Dr. C. David Hay, Indiana

Gardens of blossom in splendor,
Colors arranged as sown,
But none with beauty so rare
As the flower that stands alone.

Columbine and Indian Pipe,
Lady's Slipper of pink and gold;
Untamed treasures of nature
Are a glory to behold.

Fragile pixie of the wood,
No bouquet meant to be;
Bewitching is your charm
As long as you are free.

You bloom and die in solitude
Beyond the touch of care.
Your shining was not wasted —
God surely put you there.

Old Man

Dr. C. David Hay, Indiana

My child, the years are fleeting
As my hair is turning gray;
So many are the things unsaid
Before you went your way.

I miss our special bonding,
Lost so many years ago;
I hope you miss it too —
Though you never let me know.

Each time you look into the mirror
Be aware of who you see;
God may have given life and soul
But your flesh and blood are me.

I tried to give you wings of love
And teach you how to fly,
Perhaps someday I'll understand
Why old men have to cry.

Dawn in June

Dr. James G. Piatt, California

I hear the summer breeze's comforting song,
Watch the flames of the sun's verses in the sky,
Marvel at the irises and roses in full blossom,
And as I breathe in the aromas of the garden's herbs,
I am reminded of youthful times in a garden, happy
Carefree times when I had no concept of war:

Now that I am no longer young, let me not despair,
Let nothing dissuade me from enjoying this
Lovely sunrise in June, where sweet fragrances
From the flowered garden surround my senses
And permeate the atmosphere around my sadness
With peacefulness, to comfort my aging soul:

Let me not be fraught by nameless worries so
That I cannot find solace in the ordinary hours
Of this beautiful morn suffused with scents of
Roses and honeysuckles, which waft their ageless
Aromatic answers to questions of melancholy, that
Smooth the joy of living.

Tomatoes

Adam Szetela, Kansas

The heels of my small feet, stained green
from the tips of the wet summer grass
traced your deep bootprints through the pasture garden
where the cucumbers and tomatoes, mighty in the afternoon sun
wrapped themselves around the tall wood stakes.

Your stout arms, which fed wood to the fire
in winter and seed to the sparrows in spring
embraced the sides of my hips, lifting me into the air
where my boyish hands plucked a red tomato, ready to burst.

Together, we walked back to the kitchen
where the cutting board, which bears your engraved name
and the crude carvings of birds' nests and bees
sat on the oak table beside your father's radio.

. . . This morning, it is my boots which press into the soil
still damp from harvest rain, as the palms of my hands
calloused and darkened by the seasons
push your wheelchair through the garden.

When we stop in front of the tallest vine
your fingers, dressed in sunspots,
envelope the hanging tomato
whose skin, covered in water droplets
glistens like a red tractor in the sun.

The subtle pluck
reminds me of fall leaves dropping
from their brittle branches
and the stems of blooming flowers
pushing through the soft ground in spring.

Together, we walk back to the kitchen
where the old radio sings, and the cutting board
which bears both our engraved names
rests in the window's sunlight.

Golden Fleece

Frances Leitch, California

Where the fireflies
travel like fairies
through the cool night air
and roam through the woods
when no one is there
Where the toad croaks
and the silent rowboat
slips on by
a frog hunt
beneath the starry sky
Where the child
dangles her feet in the water
and listens to cicadas sing
silence and peace
the night wrapping
her up in its golden fleece

Day Lily Fields

Margene Whitler Hucek, Virginia

You walk now
through fields of day lilies
the lights of heaven
streaming down
Pain is no more
Everlasting love envelopes you
among the saints you laugh again
We care now
for your lilies
pulling weeds
picking bouquets
But it's winter in our hearts
and we miss your guiding hand
and the long, hot summer days
when you were here with us

House of Flowers

Mike Perkins, Missouri

in the wound
the scar from where the big silver maple used to be
two years gone now
where the men came with a big machine
that chewed out the stump
of a dying tree
in memoriam there now planted
a bed of flowers
where lives a rabbit
in splendid natural elegance
among wild blooms
grown from seed
into a canopy
of bright flowers

Learning to Fly

Linda Fuchs, Ohio

fuzzy caterpillar amber and black
looks up
tall tree, canopy of green
so far away
climbing might take forever
falling quite a danger
caterpillar wishes to fly
but has no wings
"I think I'll just curl up in this cocoon
and sleep a while"

Jeane Elizabeth

Thomas Donovan Murphy, California

The doe and spotted fawn appeared
So sudden from the darkened wood
Had never guessed were hidden there
Till at the clearing's edge she stood

How hesitant and statuesque
The small lithe mother wide eyed there
That periscopes, rotates her ears
Then lifts her nose to test the air

For picturesque these woods serve death
From carnivores and winter's snow
A wonder that the young survive
So overmatched my valiant doe

How beauty and why gentleness
Abide this cold and vicious shill
Know not, though through my doubts still pray
She always may, she always will

And midst these thoughts she disappeared
When caught my scent and for her fawn
A mother's instincts sought refuge
Again like you, too quickly gone

Childhood Memories

Laurie Kolp, Texas

Leaves of green and brown
crunched beneath our soiled feet
as we ran 'round and 'round
the farm in childlike play.

I followed you so close behind
your trailing mane tickled my nose
like a feather from my pillow.

You stopped dead
in your tracks like a mule;
we fell down laughing
so hard we cried.

I raced you up stair step branches
to the top of the century-old tree.

We played tug-of-war
until our hands burned
back and forth
back and forth

with an old frazzled rope
that once held Daddy's tire swing.
At last I peeled your fingers away,
entwined my legs around the victory
flying free as the migratory geese

down
down
down

landing in the leaves of green and brown.

Nature's Concerto

Terry Johnson, Minnesota

Sitting in the garden we remove the cares of the world too
long thought of as necessary garments.
Donning the cloak of peacefulness we await nature's concerto.
The bees come first to perform joined by other flying
insects rustling the air. Softly the breeze joins
in on the woodwinds, the morning glories on strings,
the bull frogs on bass, all accompanied by a chorus of birds.
With the rhapsody of nature ringing in our ears we join the
twilight in bringing an end to a beautiful day.

The Promise of Diamond Spring and Such

Carol Hamilton, Oklahoma

For the Westering, water held
the greatest hope and danger.
In Kansas, this one source
held steady and pure,
gurgled clean, a promise
for eons of travelers.
We found no such hope
in our early days climbing
in the Sangre de Cristo,
temperatures soaring
and our canteens emptying.
I dreamed I heard rain,
but it was only the chatter
of aspen leaves in the night.
We tried to purify a thick
remnant of water left
in a dip formed by horse hooves.
We dabbled at suffering,
but the young ones raced
ahead and returned
with filtered lake water.
They shone like angels.
Clean springs hold history,
stories of salvation, sites
of miracles. Words of such
are passed hand to hand
with power like Helen Keller's
stroke of revelation.
On the Santa Fe Trail, promises
were just hard-held hopes.
Only dogged faith can stare down
this journey's sere visage.

Like You

Michael Salerno, Illinois

Marigolds and daffodils
And lilies dressed in white
And jasmine with her fragrant cape
That blooms into night

Poppies dancing in the dew
And marigolds galore
The scent and sight of every bloom
Just leaves you wanting more

Zinnias are filled with hue
While clover is so green
Impatiens love a shady day
And daisies are a dream

The flora and the fauna grow
With water and with light
Sunflowers stretch to touch the sky
And reach to higher heights

And baby's breath is soft and sweet
And violets are blue
The tulips give the springtime joy
But none are quite like you

Home

Elizabeth Howard, Tennessee

I sit by the broad windows watching
birds flock to the feeders, squirrels
and chipmunks scurry about, dogwoods
blooming at the forest edge. For years,
my husband planned this house,
drawing and redrawing floor plans.
After he retired, he started building,
doing most of the work himself,
everything moving in slow motion,
hammering and sawing and drilling
our music sunrise to sunset, monsoon
rains pouring through scaffolding,
half-built walls, trusses, all of us
mopping puddles from the bare floor
boards. Now, years later, as night
falls on our mountain plateau, I watch
cardinals enjoying their bedtime snack
and rabbits sashaying out of the woods
to dance on the dewy grass.

Old Passion of Mine

Erik Lloyd Olson, Oregon

Sed antiquus amor cancer est. — Petronius

An old love pinches like a crab?

Mine proved too dangerous to grab.
Scuttling down my native coast,
I'd hunt ten-legged knights that boast
primeval armor old as tide.

Mailed backs stood out: some Tyrian-dyed,
some browned, some greened. Each mocked my reaches
in stale pool-beds, on cobble beaches . . .
Tide out, crabs sidled in concave
stone castles, cast up from a wave;
in quest of spoils, their armor scraped
the marble hall where seaweed draped.
My love of rocky pools still draws
my finger, groping for the claws.

Early Bright

Judith Lyn Sutton, California

Caramel curtains open
To blossoming morning
As I ascend sorrel steps,
Make my summer way
To serenity on our balcony,
Behold the fruitful valley
Beneath buttercup sun.

Heat has not yet begun
To glitter from orchards,
Grasslands, and ranches;
But I can see the river
Gleams already as I stand
Under morning glories
Reaching for cerulean sky.

Reveling in the mystical,
I rejoice in the terrestrial,
Revere the early bright.

White Roses

Chris Livernois, North Carolina

She speaks of white roses
as though she wants them
to fill the empty vase
her father left her mother
last Valentine's day.

"Your lilies are too white,"
she says to me,
as I offer her the only flowers
I know how to grow.

So I don't water my lilies
any more. Instead,
I water her roses, but
she planted the pink ones
by mistake.

"Thanks," she says,
"but I can water them myself."
And she could —
if she planted more roses.

She says she wanted to wait
until the roses she planted
bloomed on their own,
so white buds could dance
through winter soil.

She doesn't know roses
can't grow in dry soil,
and that she can't fill
that empty vase alone.

A World Away

Marc Livanos, Florida

It's so beautiful here,
welcoming, secluded, discreet,
sitting together on a boat,
anchored by the beach.

Around us, sea spray,
crystal skies, pretty shells,
brackish water, hypnotic waves,
and gulls splash about.

No other thoughts,
than I am here
with my wife of forty years
together in paradise.

By Your Side

Peter MacQuarrie, California

Never mislead
yourself,
always trust in me,
for I am
by your side.

When life throws
you a curve,
always believe in me,
for I am
by your side.

Always believe
in me,
I am there when
things go wrong,
for I am
by your side.

Never fear about
failure,
or loss
of faith,
for I am
there
by your side.

Big Brother

Joyce G. Bradshaw, Texas

With collective sighs of relief
we shook off the shadows of 1984.
'See,' we said with crackled self-assurance,
'he was wrong; we are still free!'
Returning to the steady round of petty concerns,
we continued to lie to ourselves
as the Internet reached out and consumed
digital bits and integral pieces of
our beloved privacy.
Now like veins in the body of our planet,
the Worldwide Web absorbs,
transmogrifies and distributes to the
interconnected segments of its
computerized cerebellum all the myriad
elements of which our
private lives are composed.

Persistent Illusion

Gary Beck, New York

The condition of tyranny,
the natural order
for most of humanity
subjugated by the few,
is frequently disrupted
by the optimistic,
willing to risk their lives
for a better future

The Caesars Say

Shirley Anne Leonard, Illinois

The Caesars say:
The circus must go on!
It did in Rome.
But here, the subtlety
is more perverse.
The culture blends
into a gray potpourri
of play and peril.
Time is what's at stake!
Sideshows must be bold
in their display to steal away
hours, days, and weeks
from those who may
decide to seek the truth.
They must delay — delay!
Truth is hard to find,
they say, impossible to know
what's right or wrong . . .
and so the Caesars say
the circus must go on!
It did in Rome.



Find "Through the Eyes of God," Photography by Terrence A. Malmgren, on Facebook.

"Lady Slipper"

Forest Reverie

Shirley Anne Leonard, Illinois

Zephyred bird song —
merry tune of balm-sung spring
in the greening forest.
A hymn of solitude
that holds all nature rapt.

I walk softly
through the forest
on the spongy path
of pine needles
to an awakened river
that somersaults
to the valley below.

A hummingbird hovers
amidst the bushes.
I stop and hold my breath.

It turns toward me
and then floats in luminescent mist
among pink blossoms.

I walk reverently
back to the plush carpet
of pine and cedar
breathing
the incense of life
in the sweet-scented air.

It bids me go further
into the vaulted canopies
of cool shadows and mystery,
to become lost
in the handiwork of God.

From My Vantage Point . . . by Chester the Cat



It's important to have plenty of substantive, worthwhile reading around the house. Everything you read forms the basis for your thoughts. So the right kind of literature needs to be available.

I guess that's especially important when you're trying to be a writer of poems, or whatever. I have to confess I don't really know much about that. My paws are too large to hit the right keys on the computer keyboard. So I don't write too many poems, myself.

But I do know that having good, comforting literature around is helpful if you want to take a nap. Soft cover publications are best, of course. Our Publisher snapped this photo of me lying on the Scriptures, but that doesn't happen very often. Usually I prefer magazines or those sale catalogs that come in the mail every few days. They bend more easily to the contours of your body, for a more relaxing fit.

Of course, if you're going to *read* the literature, with a view to broadening your background for writing, the Scriptures might be a good place to start. I understand many famous authors have found them helpful.

Creative Quotations

The Music of Words . . .

The *music* of words cannot be analyzed. It is possible to note combinations of vowels or consonants and various metrical effects, but the whole sound of poetry is too complex and composed of too many elements to be explained. It is like the melodic sense of the composer, a gift of the sensuous imagination. A mere delight in sonorous sound does not necessarily indicate the working of a poetic ear; there must sometimes be abrupt and jagged effects as well as smooth cadences — each in its proper place. Browning sometimes errs at one extreme, and Poe at the other.

All of us have experienced emotions too vague to be set in a definite verbal formula, but which have suggested phrases or a sentence. Or sometimes in a dream verses occur to us that seem heavenly utterance (though they probably are not).

Most of the moods and emotions that find expression in all but the most epigrammatic or satirical poetry are of the nature of dreams. Just as a dream may be so vividly real that it clings to us after we awaken, so the mood of the poet in creation isolates him in a world of the imagination and phrase-making that excludes every other impulse. It is essential that he yield completely to this, even though he run a spiritual risk, for if he hold back, if he stint his inspiration, either through caution or the knowledge that it is lunchtime and he is hungry, he will not be the single-toned lyre that nature intended. The many conspicuous social failures among artists of all sorts does not mean that they are less responsible than other men, but that they have taken more than the usual risks and strains of living and have not always come through unscathed. Shelley's invocation, "Make me thy lyre even as the forest is," is not mere rhetoric, it is a call to glory — and perhaps disaster.

When the mood leaves off, revision begins. The poet cannot, like the man in the dream, leave the mood to dictate the final form as well as the content of the poem. Once in a great while a poem is produced in this way by a genius with whom technical excellence is instinctive. The supreme poem of unedited mood and picture is, of course, Coleridge's *Kubla Khan*. The music is perfect, the images enchanting, and we ask no more of the poem than that it possess us with its literally meaningless incantation even as the original mood possessed the poet. There are other fragments of the same sort, such as Hamlet's haunting quatrain:

Why, let the stricken deer go weep,
The hart ungalled play;
For some must watch, while some must sleep:
So runs the world away.

Here there is no "message," but anyone with an ear for the music of words will not fail to catch the weary melancholy of the lines.

— Robert Hillyer, *In Pursuit of Poetry* (1960), pp. 12-13

Poetry Garden

Athena Mahajani, California

The earth dappled in violet,
The earth carpeted in green,
A place so pretty and quiet,
Well-suited for any queen:

Thus I settled down for a day
Among flowers of many hues
With lavender along the way
And inspiration from my muse.

As larks sang, I took my pen
In the softness of the sunlight
And wrote many poems then,
Stirred by the site and sprite

Poetic License

Vernon Waring, Pennsylvania

The poetic license I seek
Is truly something unique
No I.D. is on it at all
No address or number to call
There's no "issued" notation
Or "date of expiration"

No signature is needed
(A departure from the norm)
In fact, my name's not on it
Or the date that I was born

Don't dare to apply for one
In fact, I strongly insist
Save yourself stress and bother
For no such "license" exists

Just set your pen to paper
Or hit those computer keys
And let your mind roam freely
To create your masterpiece

Your words can evoke sunsets
Or spout political views
Your subjects can be fantasy
Or as real as Page One news

You don't need a poetic license
For imagination to soar
Just let creative juices flow
And let your mighty pen "roar"

Pinned Down

Vivian Bolland Schroeder, Texas

I have trapped a fleeting thought,
Caught it by the tail before its escape
And frolicked with its possibilities.

Finally, embellished in cadent rhyme,
It has ceased to struggle free.
It serves me well,
A copyright binding it forever to my name.

Architect of Desire

G. A. Scheinoha, Wisconsin

She measured her words
like a draftsman
lays out
a line,
defined
the perimeters
of a life,
etched, finally
a blueprint
for love,
more by error
than design.

Short Poetry

Shirley Anne Leonard, Illinois

W hy must it be long?
R ather say what you mean
I n five lines or ten.
T rying for more
E xhausteth your pen.
S hort is a blessing!
H appy readers will say
O verly wordy
R umples their day.
T hus make it snappy,
P ulsating with charm,
O ozing with rhythm,
E xact in its form.
T erse but not dry;
R ich with reflection, and
Y ummy as pie!

Home

Aishah Salihue, California

The tapping of little feet across a wooden floor
The knocking of a tiny pebble against a kitchen window
The aroma of fresh herbs, rich seasonings and exotic spices
The taste of summer corn, grilled just right
The sight of a crowded dinner table, people together
The sound of sweet laughter, hushed whispers, and joyful chatter
The pounding of rushing feet, of people trying to help one another
The sunshine through the glass, waking up everyone for another day
The constant chitchat keeps everyone united
Warmth, love, and hope are in a
never ending circle
Making this place
Home

The Spark from Within

Jesse James Doty, California

I look back at the poems I've had published
and wonder where the confidence came from,
now that I'm feeling insecure and sad.
Where did the inspirations come from, and why
don't they come to me anymore?
I feel intimidated by the other poets
I am now aware of, who have written longer,
more, and better stuff than I seem able to do.
Where's the spark . . . And the excitement
which goes along with creating something
from nothing. A fleeting line; an idea; a story
told to me years ago that still rides with me . . .
There was a time when anything could inspire me.
All I needed was the time to write it all down.
Now I have time, but the ideas are dull.
The sensitivity is so protected that I feel numb
to my own feelings — or frightened beyond control
of my own stark reality.
Getting older; losing touch with others;
losing memory . . .
Time creeps along at a slug's pace,
or rushes by so fast I don't have the time
to experience it all . . .
I relish time when it's my friend,
and curse time when it becomes my enemy.

The Gardener

James B. Peters, Tennessee

It is time to plant the potato
In the cool loose garden dirt,
Covering it with mulch of straw,
As one would some berries.
Await the cool spring rain,
And the warmth of a rising sun.

For his garden in the sun,
Which each year grows the potato,
He always looks for rain
While hoeing the rich black dirt
And weeding the rows of berries.
Thickly mulched with straw.

As weather decays the straw
In the long hot summer sun,
Which is good for berries,
Seedling sprouts of potato
Line up in rows of rich black dirt,
Leaping upward with each shower of rain.

Thunderous storms of rain,
Soaked up by the straw,
Cool rows of lifting dirt
From the hottest summer sun.
The blooming potato
Stands beside the rows of berries.

He goes each day to pick ripe berries
Searching for some rain,
For he knows a potato
Beneath a mulch of straw
Is threatened by a too hot sun,
Which is drying up the dirt.

In rows of Autumn dirt
Fruit is off the berries.
It is a declining sun
And tends to be a cooler rain.
Beneath the old decayed straw
Lies the fruit, potato.

He hoes the dirt and loves rain,
Prunes berries and rakes straw,
Bathes in autumn sun and gives thanks for a potato.

The Better Portion

Charles Parnell, Pennsylvania

How much I like to watch TV —
There's "Springer," "Broke Girls," and "Big Bang."
But after a while, I lose my smile
And look for a book within range!
I'm happier reading a novel!

The radio offers quite a list
Of news and music and shows;
Still I feel perplexed for page and text,
Then "good-bye" my radio goes!
I'm happier reading a novel!

The front porch and chair provide such fare
Of commerce, nature, and breeze;
But I limit such time to thinking of rhyme
For a book is all that will please.
I'm happier reading a novel!

I will go for a drive to feel more alive:
with the view and fresh air I'm content.
But calling me back is a book in a stack
And I submit to the story that's meant!
And I'm happier reading a novel . . .

Summertime Terror: Mosquitoes

Janice Canerdy, Mississippi

I think that I shall always see
Mosquitoes coming after me
These pests against my skin do press
Then bite and make a fast egress.
I lift my eyes to God all day
and plead with Him, "Take them away!"
Strong sprays in summer I must wear
Most places except eyes and hair.
Upon my skin itch cream I rub.
I have to buy it by the tub.
I try to make them leave me be,
But only God can make them flee.

Patterned after Joyce Kilmer's "Trees."

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Imagination

Esther M. Leiper-Estabrooks, New Hampshire

You can be just who you want to:
Prince or Princess; grumpy troll —
You can sing sweet as a minstrel
Or you can tunnel like a mole.
You can be a far-seeing eagle
Who flaps great wings and soars
Or a silly little dormouse
Who snores and snores and snores.
Treat a picture like a landscape
You can happily jump in
For with good imagination
You mind will always win.
You can be a prince or princess;
You can be a clever witch
Who gives those she dislikes
A case of nasty, scratchy itch!
Just recall what's done to others
Can boomerang back on you
So *do* use your imagination
And take care in what you do!

Little Wild Things

Shirley Anne Leonard, Illinois

Little wild things scurry in the night
on furry paws. With furtive faces
peer 'round corners, wide-eyed chase phantom
mice. Little wild things play hopscotch on
my bed, then creep closer to my head,
sniff my nose, burrow under covers
to bite my toes. Little wild things keep
watch while I sleep, look out windows
for night creatures that take flight.
At dawn's first light they nuzzle me and
meow, "Wake up, wakeup, wake up, it's day!"
As I wake from sleep they lie in wait
to lead me to the kitchen where they
change into bright-eyed kittens wanting
treats. Little wild things become docile
in the day, curl up on cushions and little spots
of sun to wash their faces, ears and
lick their paws and then it's off to sleep
their bellies full, their doings done.

The Troubadour

Barbara Tate, Tennessee

Played his guitar and sang a song
about the long dusty trails
sky so blue and eagles flew
he sang of old campfire tales.

Sang of his dusty old saddle
his horse and his old dog Blue
he sang of his chaps and just perhaps
he sang of his bedroll too.

Sang about the tumbleweeds
when the west wind blew on through
he set the pace and won the race
and saved the chuckwagon too.

Sang of how he won the West
he and his old forty-four
along with Sal his favorite gal
way back in '84.

He loved to play his old guitar
sing of the wild wild west
play along and sing his songs
on the streets of old Key West.

Kaleidoscope of Colors

Linda Amos, Pennsylvania

No matter what role
I play in this life
be it daughter or wife
I find life not to be dull.

The kaleidoscope of colors
that fills my days
and brightens my nights
Is not who I perceive me to be,
in the life I lead,
but, who I am perceived to be
by the others
who also brighten my life
with their peaceful harmony.

Fryeburg

Adam Szetela, Kansas

My girlfriend and I
walk the dirt path
adorned with deer tracks
towards the Saco River.

My sneakers
familiar with the city asphalt
catch small pebbles
mud and grass.

Down the hill
the forest's reflection greets us
reminding her of home
and filling me with a feeling

unfamiliar to those
who spend their days on the T
looking out glass windows
where skyscrapers block the sun.

Light Show

Brenda Kay Ledford, North Carolina

A yearly ritual,
pilgrims heading
to the Great Smoky Mountains.

A light show
setting the forest
on fire at night.

Thousands of fireflies
flashing together,
stop together.

People camp out
for the magical show,
lights in the mountains.

Adobe Abode

Carl Palmer, Washington State

The store-bought balsa birdhouse
brought by his grand-girl today
hangs on the same bent rusty nail

hammered in their backyard tree
for the handmade house her
mommy made forty years ago

from two terra cotta flower pots
one upside down atop the other
held in place with preschool glue.

Remnants saved in a special place,
yellow pencil perch, several shattered
shards of clay displaying initials

etched by his three year old
daughter preserved forever
in this old man's nest of memories.

Endangered Species

Lois Hayn, California

No more swirl silly bobcat sound
fingernails on a blackboard, buffing erasers.
Never again to roll the class around
a small friendly piece of a big black sky
expound equations in rows
space to write tall up and down, tell why
or orbit diagrams curled as roses
fool around with words on chalk
circle stale grammar, capture fresh take
when teacher all busy with talk
might sign for sure so swift a mistake
or cross funny picture right out loud
quick get those big old soft erasers
pump 'em together, boom out a cloud.

Such work to wash down that board
fresher computers huddle neatly gray
time glistens technology forward
Powerpoint soon gone too, okay?
Newer white boards stiff eyes glare
never now clean clean those big old soft erasers
no responsibility, no care.

A Prayer

Michael Fraley, California

My own unwelcome thoughts circle and eclipse my sight,
Preventing me from seeing what is just and right.

As much as anyone, I put my own case first.
Let the devil take my neighbour if no other way is found.

Sooner now than later I would welcome a conversion,
Simply letting life decide the outcome of my toil.

Teach my heart to claim compassion as its name—
Help me mitigate my sorrow by reaching out to others.

Make me mindful of my soul before my ending comes to pass.
Compose my mind of principles to last beyond a season.

Channel passion into practice governed by enlightened reason.
Lift me up until my faith is equal to the task

Uncombed Hair

Dr. Roger G. Singer, Connecticut

Sequoia cactus stand like soldiers
at attention, raising daggers to heaven
as we stream by, counting the stiff bristled
coat hangers. We lean back and let
the dry desert uncomb our hair.
The radio pushes out uptown songs. Broken
neon lights at abandoned bars languish
under a blanket of dust, covering everything,
including the heat.

We sing with a song as a curio station
drops out from view on the shoreline
of sand behind us.

Shotgun ravaged signs blur past. Like the
whiz of passing souls, trucks and trailers
own the road. Armadillos scurry; some not
so lucky.

Leather jacket nights under broken stars
force everything into a chill.

Homesteading

Jane Hutto, Florida

“Just a few more miles,”
Papa always said,
but, “Never look back,”
was his sister’s counsel
when we left Alfred’s garden
to climb Laurel’s hill,
Wondering if we’d ever see
Acorn Grove again.
“He’s searching for Arcadia,”
our mother smiled
as auburn-haired Harold
led us through tangled woods,
riverwalks, and a stretch
of his Louisiana purchase.
So we, as giddy as southern ladies
at their sherry, collected armfuls
of purple tulips, goldenrod, or
hybrid tea roses and forgot
the way back home.

Dear Lady of the Spring Rain

Mike Bayles, Iowa

Dressed in gray clouds, you swirl around me
in the afternoon and hide the sun.
As we dance, you rest your head
on my shoulder and cry.
The fields and meadows
listening to the whisper of winds
thirst for what you bring,
and you whisper to me.
Your voice of thunder rumbles
through the valley.
Others seek cover, but here I stay with you
feeling your caring touch,
the tears shed
for trees that bud and bloom
and for flowers and fields to grow.
I close my eyes and listen to the patter of your song.
In spring I dream the dream of a world renewed
and all that we can become.

Summer Sunday 1940

Dawn Zapletal, California

Coming home from Gram’s
In our old black Ford
With me curled cozy in
The back seat, sunburned,
Exhausted by the summer heat.
Through the open windows
The soothing sound of crickets
And whisper of twilight
Leaves from tall sycamore
Trees whose tops touched over
The brick paved street.

Night overtook us unaware,
One star against the dark,
A diamond solitaire.
The car purred cat soft-up the
Final hill, turned at the
Top and as if by habit or its own
Will, sighed to a stop.
The full moon shone clear
And bright as we went
From the car to the house in
The lilac scented night.

Beneath the Moon's Shadow
Satyananda Sarangi, India

O look at the gleaming moon!
The clouds aren't black at its side,
Whitened meadows on darkened nights
Shine with their silvery pride.

Let the grass and twigs be my pillow
And stars be the passage to dreams,
The moonlit layers of air play
And flow like the bubbling streams.

Give me a magic eye,
For human eyes won't do justice
To such magnificence at display
As if brindled with the volcanic pumice.

I shall sleep so secured,
Free of wallow, away from nightmares
Under the beloved moon and its shadow
So long as nobody really cares.

Summer

Eve Blohm, New York

the fullness of life
green grass and trees
canopy over the path

the Carousel music
the invitation
to enjoy life

the teens on boulders
horse and carriage drivers
telling New York tales

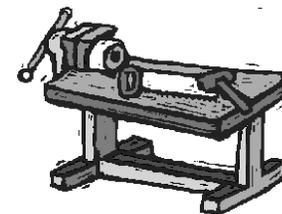
the Central Park pond
with mallards and wild ducks
swimming in circles

a shy egret
flies from the pond
into the trees

**WRITER'S
WORKBENCH**

**The "Forget-Me-Not"
Pattern!**

by Esther M. Leiper-Estabrooks



I believe Viola Gardiner created this poetry form, titled the "Forget-Me-Not Pattern," or at least her examples in the Massachusetts State Poetry Society's *Bay State Echo* were the first I encountered, and they charmed me. (The only other really short poems I know are anonymous. They are "Fleas: Adam / had'em," and "First Clothes: Eve's / leaves" — two couplets about the first couple!)

A "Forget-Me-Not" poem also has a brief title, then two lines containing four syllables each — a pattern inviting wry humor. Here are three examples of mine:

Fickle Fellow

*I'm angry: You
Hoodwinked me too!*

Incompatible

*You I'll not wed:
Better off dead!*

Blizzard

*Flakes plummet down;
Whiten our town!*

Exploring new patterns of poetry proves a fine exercise. Flexibility in language use is a necessary skill for all writers. Good poetry is both challenging and essential to writers plus readers. Yet too many pieces lack structure, and while free verse can be strong, it too must avoid extra words and clichés. Unrhymed, it still requires cadence to carry readers forward. There is no one "right way to write," and varied pathways embrace multiple devices — including: rhyme, alliteration, plus precise vocabulary. Different patterns suit different moods.

The destination — a crafted, completed poem — is grand, but so is the process, the journey being both a challenge and a pleasure. The more you read and write, the more you learn you can always learn more!

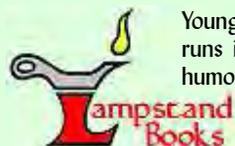
If your words aren't right the first or even the fifth time — that's what revision is about. I don't write right on first try; I play with words until I can't make them better. Read a lot; write a lot. Evaluate ideas — those you agree with and those you don't. If you dislike a poem or its attitude, try writing a rebuttal.

Indeed, the more you practice the more you learn about yourself, while by reading other writers' poems, the better your output will get. Theodore Roethke advised, "Learn by going where you have to go." Poetry lovers find the journey a fun discovery plus a true challenge, so enjoy it. Poetry is meant for mental stimulation and pleasure.

Thus, my happy reaction when I first encountered Viola Gardiner's "Forget-Me-Not" pattern. I've had fun with it. *Now you try the form and let me know your opinion!* Thank you for subscribing to and reading *WestWard Quarterly*.

Nordstrom Nakefish and the Great Flying Noodlenergle

by Richard Leonard



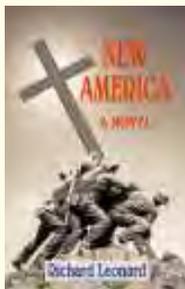
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