

WestWard Quarterly

The Magazine of Family Reading



Summer 2019

To our readers . . .

We're pleased to present the Summer 2019 issue of *WestWard Quarterly*, which once again appears as an international publication with contributors from Canada, India, Ireland, and South Korea as well as the United States.

Our Featured Writer in this issue is Ray Greenblatt of Maryland. His "bio" appears on page 4, with a selection of poems he wrote after a trip to the Netherlands on page 5. Contributor James Piatt reports that his new book *Solace Between the Lines* is available on Amazon.com and elsewhere.

Again, in this issue, Frances Leitch provides appropriate seasonal quotations on page 18. On page 19, Esther Leiper-Estabrooks (our "Writer's Workbench" guru) offers a selection of New Hampshire summer poems. As we follow the saga of the potential New Hampshire poet laureate appointment, Esther's husband Peter Estabrooks reports: "New Hampshire Governor Chris Sununu and the five Executive Councilors continue their 'one on one' discussions regarding the next Poet Laureate for the Granite State, with the hope of confirming an appointee in early October; and thus an effective start of January 1, 2020. This effective date solves a long-standing problem of nicely fitting two five year term Poets Laureate into a decade per the original Poetry Society of New Hampshire concept."

In this column we usually comment on the seasonal weather in our area. This time we'll simply refer you to our Publisher's poem, "Midwest Weather Woes," on page 23. It says it all.

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Dr. Richard Leonard, PUBLISHER

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. All rights revert to authors upon publication. Please credit *WestWard Quarterly* for prior publication if you later submit your work to other publishers.

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Cover Image: *Haying Time. Chelsea, Vermont, 1968*
Transparency by Richard Leonard



Featured Writer

Ray Greenblatt

Maryland

My mother's reading to me as a child initiated my interest in books. Music was always in our home since my father was a professional musician. That set the stage for later appreciation of rhythm, tone, even timbre. In fourth grade I won a short story contest; this

encouragement spurred me to continue creative writing. By college I had written short stories and essays. A wise editor, seeing imagery in my prose, suggested that I try poetry.

I have been primarily a writer of poetry ever since, composing ten thousand poems in fifty years. This really is not excessive if you do some basic division; if you are consistent (that is the key word) the average is three poems per week. Over the years I have won awards like the Mad Poets Annual Contest and the Anthony Byrne Contest, sponsored by *The Irish Edition*. I have been an editor on the *Schuylkill Valley Journal* and helped found a review, *General Eclectic*. I also helped start a critique circle — the Overbrook poets — that have been meeting on a monthly basis for thirty-five years.

I have had my flash fiction published in periodicals like *Boston Literary Magazine*, *Innisfree*, and *Scarlet Leaf*. In more recent years I have enjoyed writing book reviews. I have been published in *North of Oxford*, *Joseph Conrad Today* and *BookMark Quarterly*. I have also had the good fortune to be published by the John Updike Society, the Dylan Thomas Society and the Graham Greene Society.

I think the major influences on my writing of poetry have been two very different poets. I lived in New England for a number of years, so Robert Frost's subject matter has deeply impressed me. His blank verse, in which he employs no rhyme but a strong meter, is underrated by critics. Also, I have been struck by the originality of T. S. Eliot's imagery. Likewise, his dry humor — another poetic facet not highlighted by scholars — is very compelling and sharply sets off his intellectualism.

Besides walking in nature, my wife and I enjoy travel. One special trip was when we went by ship down the coast of Chile to Tierra del Fuego. We observed condors and albatross, seals and whales, icebergs and glaciers. I also had an invitation to speak at the annual John Steinbeck Festival in Salinas California. There we also visited my son who — although born in Pennsylvania where I have lived most of my life — had fallen in love with San Francisco, married, settled down and had a daughter. Thus, California keeps calling us back across the vast expanse of the United States.

Poetry by Ray Greenblatt

Dutch Rivers

The rivers around here seem to be brimming
filled with silver light,
it is as if our ship could float
right into a tulip field
where we could gather armfuls of bright colors,
to adorn portholes, cabins, tables
with brilliant sprays.

It is as if we could rise
level to a windmill's vanes,
pause its slow turning
interrupt its soft honking
like cradling a squirming fish,
to study its intricacies
of ancient fine-woven linen.

It seems as if we could enter
a Dutch cottage,
partake slices of Gouda and Edam
on unleavened crackers
stare through the smiles, lace caps, wooden sabots,
through the opaqueness of their language
to learn how they really feel.

20 Feet Below Sea Level

Man cannot live there.

Following methods of the ants
he learned to build dykes
pumped the seabed dry
spread three years of waterweed
to absorb the brine
finished it with rape
and man kept living.

Now crops could flourish
horses and cows might cavort
flowers wave bright banners.

When the cataclysm comes
the Dutch will know the answer.

Zuider Zee

We drive across the bottom
of the Zuider Zee
to see Schokland Island
where a chapel still stands
from the seventeenth century,
but now the sea is drained
so all crops grow here
along these new highways
poppies to asparagus
sheep atop dykes
a goat on a box
three brown lambs
even a llama or two.

On the Road to Maastricht

Past an inn
past a farm
and a pony corral
past a long row of
orderly plane trees
past a Mercedes dealer
past a community
of modern houses
past the American
Military Cemetery
you leaf through a guidebook
to discover the Romans
once marched along this road.

Bruges in Ascension

The canals are the power
although guided through sluiceways
with pre-measured depths

that can raise churches
with their gray-stone solemn weight
to a new revelation

and the personal houses
of each living being
who in the waters can see
a purified vision of himself
on shimmering liquid
the city and all the busy work
float and echo across smooth surfaces
the nobility of life
a shining city in the air.

The Table of Life Jane Hutto, Florida

The first letter of each line codes a message.

Thinking about the wonder of
Having a place here, being
Included, being allowed to
Sit at the table of life to
Assimilate what is free-
My senses swirl and I am
Amazed, wondering if the
Zenith of it all has arrived.
Instinctively I wait a spell,
Noting mysteries past and
Granting more may come
Tomorrow. The unexpected
Has a hold on me, therefore
I hesitate to declare that all
Nature has to offer has been
Given. So vast, so full a
Caring Hand has lavished
Another day! Another
Leaf in my book, another
Line in the song my soul
Endeavors to sing. The
Dearth of my capacity to
Let it be expressed in
Its fullest may inhibit, or
Fill me with unease, yet I am
Empowered by it as well.

With Just a Little Nudge Dr. James G. Piatt, California

The sunrise with its pink and coral quilt
covering the morning dew, signals another
beautiful day, and shows us if we remove
the incoming angst, that there is always
hope, always something to experience,
which is beautiful,

Perhaps, with just a little nudge, we can
choose to ignore the chaos without, listen to
the beautiful singsongs of tiny birds, feel the
tranquility of a softly flowing rill, and smell
the beautiful fragrances of beautiful wildflowers
swaying in the soft breeze in a
verdant meadow, where God still exists.

Over and Around Dr. Roger Singer, Connecticut

It was a summer day
spent away
on a road without names
or numbers
an unknown destination
absent of stress
a wind away from
the start
a breath nearer
to the end
a back road where
long shadows
are welcome
and night breezes
welcome the passage
of gardenias
and the sound of
very little
or nothing,
in the space
where familiar
lives.

Awakening Ken Allan Dronsfield, Oklahoma

As I opened my eyes to the Sunrise
I craved the dawning, dimmed daylight.
That reveille — that morning reveille!
“It’s that bugle’s trill,” I was thinking;
Ah, instantaneously I was stimulated;
The peepers brought such euphoria,
And choruses forever melodious.
And so I asked, “Is that a canary?”
The wandering wood thrush whipping.
In there stepped an awakening dawn.
The scarlet tanager seemed thrilled.
Ah, distinctly I was chirping to them,
Singing and dancing with my bluebird.
The sparrow hawk brought a wariness;
I tossed its ghost against the hallelujahs!
My dreams always stray to wing beats as
The morning’s finale brings a sorrow, but
Afternoon’s shall see the lovely waxwings:
Dreamy awakening of the warmer days.

Sun God Dr. Dennis Ross, Iowa

As a child, I thought the sun
a small hot presence just out of reach,
a friend to talk with, tell troubles to,
like the chatty old oak tree out front
or the strange voices in the blackness.

I reached up for the sun with tiny arms
as for a mother’s love and found
somehow a piece of all being,
a piece of the oneness of all existence.

Today, scudding heavy clouds and cold,
then for a moment, a hole in the shroud,
and the sun pours down its sacred light
turning the snow into a world of glitter.

How can we not be grateful
even worshipful as were the ancients?

Summer Glories Bruce Levine, Florida

Sultry days of summer
Warming the heart
As wheat fields sway in breezes
And flowers bloom triumphant
The rebirth of spring surrenders
To golden days of August
As July passes with leisure
And tranquil times remembered

Drifting over valleys
Like hot-air balloons
Japanese lanterns
Illuminate the sky

Festive times enhancing
Simple pleasures abound
Water games and hiking
Rejuvenate the soul

Yielding to simple pleasures
Rekindled by the sun
Basking in summer glories
And seasons yet to come

Just Dreamin'

Dr. Sujit Banerjee, Georgia

Children doodling summer by
Dreaming futures with playful eye
Soldier or sailor, tinker or tailor?
Tomorrow's daylight put on hold
Never cold

Impetuously they come of age
To strut their stuff on center stage
Thursday's children, far to go
Their dreams are daylight disobeyed
Never stayed

When morning gray turns evening red
Aging shadows jump ahead
Not quite sprightly, not yet lame
Dreams and daylight cross in time
Never rhyme

With evensong the echoes fade
As twilight dulls the sunset shade
The light is gone, the dreams remain
To hold past daylight in disdain

Starting Over

Sanjana Karthik, British Columbia, Canada

Beginnings are hard.
A promise of change;
It is hope and optimism
And fear of failure.

Without wanting to look back
And intending to move forward
You let your insecurities dissipate.
Leaving regrets at bay.

Letting it go, you hope for a better tomorrow,
Hope for a vision to emerge from the dark,
Praying for some sort of spark.
And you do this over
And over,
And over again . . .

Until finally that "tomorrow" becomes "today,"
Your fear becomes "yesterday"
And your new beginning is your present . . .
All of God's gifts brought down from heaven.

A Bird of Passage

Kihyeon Lee, South Korea

It sounded like a dull and dumb knock
Too weak to break the window like a hard rock,
Yet sudden enough to startle this heart of mine
Quick to take alarm at the slightest ominous sign,

And I found you lying down there almost belly up,
A punch-drunk boxer powerless to stand up,
Showing no resistance but only the white feather
Like a rag of sail-cloth beaten by harsh weather.

I picked you up and held you whole with great care
In my hands cupped filled with a gentle stare,
So you can feel safe and snug as in a womb,
(An eggshell, to be exact) not buried in a tomb.

Caressing you with the thicket of my beard,
A comforting gesture you might find weird,
bill-and-cooed to my best as a mimic,
As if quickening a heart failing so weak,

And it was a convalescence remembered the shortest
My loneliness cruelly wished to be the longest,
Till in my nest hand-knit secure and steady
You began to show your spirit re-hatched and ready

For the flight you were given wings to navigate,
Like the journey I still have the will to elongate,
To someday land on the haven of the land far yonder,
Guided not by mine but His invisible hand of wonder.

I don't know why you lingered around for a short while,
Perched on a twig, preparing yourself for a long mile,
Maybe, to leave me a parting message,
As we are all on Earth a bird of passage,

Or a nameless Icarus to hit the bottom of reality
Where death is one of many a mundanity,
While I think I know, my fair feathered friend,
Why it shouldn't be the clinching end,

For not as a thrall freed from a deadly capture
You chanted up a trilling song of rapture,
Whose thrill so enthralling was not just fleeting by
But for my soul to always remember you by.

The Woods that Whisper *Satyananda Sarangi, India*

As the roaring quietness whirls in air,
Autumn's music is slated to break free;
Grand flutes in form of trees, hollow and rare,
Soothe the ears of the sleeping night and me.

While a distant windmill with rusted vanes
Welcomes maiden gusts in June's lassitude,
Whisper of the woods then waxes and wanes
When limpid moon invades their solitude.

When I tread alongside the lone thistle,
The purple leaves ne'er fail to ring a bell;
Over the brook, winds do blow and whistle
And forecast a storm via clouds that swell.

Must I, an old companion for these groves,
Wait beneath this roof of darkening hour?
Barring my shadow that around them roves,
At rest of the passers-by, they glower.

These sky-high minarets raised by nature
Protect plaintive songs fleeing from someone,
Much like hoarse cries of an ancient creature
Whose lifespan its ordeals may have outrun.

Since I mingle with this solemn, dear place,
In quest of fresh twilight within my heart,
The woods convey not all sagas apace,
From a constant chum, they wish not to part.

Sunflowers

Joanne Smith, Québec, Canada

Sunflowers so bright and yellow
Mother Nature's golden halo
a happy haven for busy bees
during a warm summer's breeze.

Patches and patches of round fiery blooms
lift up their yellow faces on sunny afternoons
rows upon rows of sprightly sunflowers
grow and grow during summer showers.

A splash of yellow from nature's colors
to paint her bright and cheery flowers
Mother Nature's work of art
golden rays to warm the heart.

Time Machine *Mahathi, India*

In to the future times, eons from now
my friends and I in newest time machine . . .
We flew to reach a world, enchanting wow,
with rose thickets, meadows and lofty pines!

No heat; no Sun, in there! A lone full Moon
was smearing sandalwood balsam on us.
Running bunnies and frolicking raccoons
did run a riot, while bees honey hummed buzz!

My friends were filled with joy and flair, new-found.
One reined a dinosaur; one chased a hound,
one painted white, a crow; one tamed a bear,
one dressed a wounded deer and hugged with care!

One ran for sweet honeys dripping from trees
with tongue outstretched and hit a black outcrop.
Some climbed the trees and ate the fruits with glee.
Some clung and swung to banyan's hanging props.

One raised a bough like a sword, displayed his brawn
and screamed, "I'm the king of these realms green!"
Adorned his wife with milky quills of swans
her red headband and preened, "I am the Queen!"

Went on and on my peoples' prank and mirth
till sounded time machine, "It's time, it's time!"
We sprinted back to occupy our berths
and left that world of bliss with thoughts sublime.

And back in my office; on broken chair
below my screeching fan, with grim grimace
I sighed aloud and reached the open air
to find my friends drudging in Sun's furnace!!

A wrenching feeling rudely swept my mind
"We live in neither future nor in past.
To this Present alone we're firmly chained
and breathe the breeze of this minute and last!"

When truth unclothed had streaked before my eyes,
returned I sad and broke my truck of lies.

Thacka

D S Maolalaid, Ireland

nothing the same
as buses in traffic;

trains move much
like a needle through cloth,
taking the city
and pinching it close. holding it
together. crunching it
tight. like,

say I get up one morning
in Kilbarrack and active weather
and decide to visit Chrys
all the way in grand canal. I get dressed
with a jacket, make coffee
and feed the dog. then get on the train
and roll back smoothly
as it pulls me toward her. It's like

Kilbarrack's the tree stem
and I am an apple
and the train is a hand, dropping me in its basket,
strolling along as the tree whips up,
jaggedly arching
at the sky.

thacka.
thacka thacka.

Summer Dance

Dorrih Leipziger, Florida

Come dance with me
Brothers and sisters
Under a cobalt sky.

Breathe in the scent of leaves
Drink of the honeyed light
Hear the winging of birds.

Lift your arms high
Clap your hands
Let your fingers go snap.

Rumble tumble your feet
On the green grass
Till bells ring in your ears.

Sons and daughters of spring
Touch one another with grace
Find your voice and sing.

Sing loud till the clouds shout back
Our summer has come again
Under a cobalt sky.

The Conch Shell

Sally Sandler, California

Its coarse name belies this silken treasure,
with iridescent dome and spiral apse.
Imagination slips inside with pleasure,
to contemplate the opus of blown glass.

Perhaps a queen lived here (no homely pauper,
within these walls of vaulted pedigree,
with sheets of silk moiré, and pearl-lined coffer,
and deep in strains of Handel symphony.

But if a pauper, she was quite clever —
as well, a soul of generosity —
to create such beauty, and forever
bequeath to us the mystery of the sea.

But does it work? Ask children passing near.
Just listen! All of Time is what you hear.

On Her Sixteenth Birthday

Mark D. Bennion, Idaho

My oldest daughter wears the shape
of my face and the slant in my back,
Still, she likes to claim
she has “stolen” my hair,
so I call her both inheritor and thief.
Her mane extends to the middle
of her spine even as mine recedes.
She's the center on a basketball
court when her ponytail's pulled up
into a bun. Someday I will reconcile
myself to this, to ancestral outlines
and a pilfered shock of curls,
to the long swell of environment
and the grab-bag of genetics.
Perhaps, too, I'll let go
of restlessness and control,
of thinking I still have a chance
to play professional baseball
or tennis, but as she might say,
“Let's be real here.”
Today, it's enough
to see her story emerge among part-time work,
ballroom dance, organ practice,
serious films, and cherry tomatoes.
She has hopped off the last bicycle
of junior high angst
only to take the car into downtown traffic
and eventually out of the city.
Sometimes, it's enough,
to believe what's been filched
can be redeemed through jokes,
taps on the shoulder, or sidelong mirrors.
Always, it's enough to know
the DNA patterns continue,
seen and unseen. She spirals
forward, even as I look back.

The Artist

MaryJean Zajac, New York

I hear him through the wall.
The sounds he makes are almost inaudible.
Soon, they will shatter my solitude
Like waves crashing against the rocks
As he fastens the line that connects us with his surge.
He is an artist in every sense of the word.

There is no need for applause.
There is no need for acceptance.
He hears the applause that silence brings.
It is his domain and we who are inept tread
Cautiously in this world.
He is an artist in every sense of the word.

I am comforted now by his resonance.
I see him skillfully fingering the catgut
As if he is one with it.
The tones he envisions bring me closer to him
In a way I cannot define.
He is an artist in every sense of the word.

He has found his sphere
And I am pleased for him.
My work is done.
I have created the boy and he has created the man.
No need for worldly pleasures, just his chanson.
He has succeeded!
He is an artist in every sense of the word.

Seasons

Janet Goven, Pennsylvania

Seasons mark cycles of time for the changes
in all life that grows here on the earth.
You, too, will journey through every cycle
Always beginning, time of your birth.

Spring will bring new life, the time for exploring.
There is so much possibility.
Summer demands decision, the time to be building,
hopeful to bring you maturity.

Then comes Autumn, the fruits of your labor,
pray to be reaping, abundantly.
Winter offers reflection, enjoying each memory,
contentment precedes serenity.

Canvas of Life

Mace Hosseini, Ontario, Canada

Life is the water that fills the potential crevice of my soul,
Life's the fire, burns the fuel of my intentions, chars of my coal.
Life is the morning spring breeze of the fragrance of the lilac kind,
Life is the sandstorms of the desert, in the hourglass of my mind.
Life is the first breath of an infant, the last breath of dying man,
Life does not discriminate and it happens wherever it can.
Life is grass in a gazelle's mouth, or a gazelle in lion's jaw,
Life is freeze of the winter frost and early drip of the spring thaw.
Life is not good, bad, joyful, sad, full or empty, no not at all,
Life's cold in winter, hot in summer, green in spring, red in the fall.
Life is a canvas to paint, to make a difference with a brush,
Life cares not if it's a Mona Lisa or a disturbing mush.
Life is the melting wax of a candle, the dancing moth to flame,
Life judges not the candle, the moth, or the dance, there's nothing to blame.
Life is the caterpillar, cocoon, transcending butterfly too,
Life always reflects thoughts you think, words you say, and the things you do.

Jessica

Elsa Bonstein, North Carolina

Baby, sweet baby,
nestling here sleeping,
I yearn to keep you
here in my arms.
Protect you, enfold you,
safe from all harm.

I will teach you to fly
with soft wings of love,
teach you to wonder
at stars far above,
whisk you to places
under the moon
where pale mists of eiderdown
dapple and swoon.

Where flowers grow trumpets
and fat kittens play,
scamp'ring near bushels
of soft golden hay.
Streaking along
past white clouds and whistles,
crystal clear raindrops
and pink fluffy thistles.
Near clean rushing streams
great trees gather moss,
as bluebells grow tall
and fair pixies toss
jingling white balls
of fine shiny silver.

Their bubbles of laughter
in soft summer air
will crowd 'round you, baby,
protect you from care.

From My Vantage Point . . .

by Chester the Cat



Photo by Shirley Anne Leonard

Summer Unchained

Shirley Anne Leonard, Illinois

Liberated —
into the wide world
of earth and sky and water!

Set free from ice and snow
and frozen dreams full
of unfulfilled desire

Oh, to bask in sun
and run on pathways
to brooks and streams
lined by flowers
and linger in the bowers
of new spun leaves
and perfumed blossoms
on the once-dead trees

Freedom at last from
winter's icy grip
we burst forth like rivers
gushing with new overflow
rip off winter coats
and fly out into the
newborn sky

Summer is a fantasy
made of dreams of rhapsody,
golden days and balmy nights
of earth and sky and water

If you've kept up with the latest scientific news, you've heard of "black holes" — places in the universe with gravity so strong that even light can't escape from them. Whatever falls into a black hole, like a star or some other astronomical body, is trapped there forever.

I have my own sort of "black hole" in our living room, a cardboard box with a T-shirt stretched over it that our publisher made for me. Whenever I want to go into "solitary confinement" I head for my box.

Maybe you sometimes feel you'd like to crawl into your own kind of black hole, disappearing from all the stresses of life. Writers tend to be more sensitive to stress than people who aren't creative — at least, not creative in a literary way. When things get hectic it's hard to maintain that flow of ideas that makes for a good poem. You might just feel like disappearing for a while.

Happily, I can get out of my version of the "black hole" whenever I want to. I never stay there very long. Sometimes Callie wants to get in, too, and there isn't room for both of us.

What do you do to escape from your "black hole" and get back to creativity?

Quotations of Summer

by Frances B. Leitch, Writer and Poet, California

Summer Paths to the Sun

“Summer, the green stalks turned golden brown. The wheat rose and the ripening heads bent in the prairie wind, a rippling curtain, an endless, undulating sea that stretched to the horizon.” — *Rick Yancey*

Summer is an infinite sea of possibility:

“Life unfolds like the flowers of summer that drop fanlike petals on eternal soil,” says Roman Payne.

It’s a time of new beginnings according to Aimee Friedman, noting that: “In summer, people shed their home skins, think they can be a new person.”

“And so with the sunshine, and the great bursts of leaves growing on the trees, I had the feeling that life was beginning over again with the summer,” said F. Scott Fitzgerald.

Summer’s birth heralds a rebirth, as life’s possibilities unfold for the writer.

Summer often ends a cycle, and begins one anew. Writers and poets burl into their souls in winter, growing the roots of their work to burst forth in spring, and then there’s a summer blossoming. For many, summer is a time of happy finishes, then wondering — what the winds of change have in store for them.



Now that you’ve done it all, what more can summer bring? Some poets clean up their old files of poems, and choose ones to publish. Sifting through poems often leads to new sources of inspiration too. Summer can be a time to plan for future writing, or build a submission schedule to launch the past year’s harvest of poetry blooms.

But watch out, that summer sunshine has a way of smiling at the pen and bursting sun rays of poems anew. How can one resist — when the summer world, as Maud Lovelace says, “smells of roses. The sunshine like powdered gold over the grassy hillside.”

For, as Charles Dickens says, “The earth donned her mantle of brightest green, and shed her richest perfumes abroad, in the prime vigor of the year, all things glad and flourishing.”

SUNSHINE: “The garden thrives . . . a flash of sun on a waiting hill. Streams laugh,” Dunbar notes. “The sky smiles down with a dazzling blue.”

Onward step for more poems of summer’s hue.

North Country, New Hampshire: Trilogy of Summer Poems By Esther Leiper-Estabrooks

Twist of Wrist

A Petrarchan Sonnet for July 2019

My daughter Hannah proves the very first
Among us wriggling through thick stream-side vines,
While Tom holds up a curling loop that twines
To curtain the green pathway just traversed.
At last the pair lean down to slake their thirst
From a deep pool that mirrors cloud-designs.
I too draw close where chill, sweet liquid shines
And cup my hands where pearly bubbles burst.

Here flows our favorite summer get-away!
This mountain brook (for now) runs mild and slow.
The kids splash onward with me following —
Till sand-bar stones assure my perfect day.
“Watch this,” I brag: With one quick flip I throw
A six-hop-rock: Zing! Zing! Then water swallowing!

Skipping Day

A Petrarchan Sonnet for August 2019

My older child, determined — proved the first
Among us pushing past thick stream-side vines
Though one strand holds her fast, then rudely twines
To bind us from the path we want traversed.
Soon wriggling free we sprawl to quench our thirst
And catch our breath above where water shines;
Or shimmers with reflected cloud designs —
But still bugs bite, then scratches must be nursed!

The bank here’s overhung; one tuft gives way
And then another: — Sliding, down I go,
With giggling children swiftly following.
Now sun-warm rocks will make a perfect day,
Plus skills intact from yester-year; I’ll throw
Stone after skipper stone with practiced swing.

Garden Guardian

A Petrarchan Sonnet for September 2019

— First tingles of September sparkle air
As gaudy marigolds meet leaf-whirls meant
To spread the tang of plum and apple-scent,
Plus raucous, raiding crows are hard to scare.
Still, what they steal will scarcely make a dent;
— Especially since I’ll keep well aware
To gather fruit, plus strip ripe garden bare.
(They think for *them* the sweet fruit is meant!)

Red cabbages grow big; huge Hubbards wait
Plus scarlet beets, green cukes; corn tassels high,
While tomatoes now have ripened by the score.
— Each day I’m in and out my garden gate —
While thanking generous Providence I’ll try
To harvest all I can from nature’s store!

Esther’s Note: The Petrarchan sonnet has a rhyme pattern of ABBA/CDDC/EFG/EF, whereas the Shakespearean Sonnet has a pattern of ABAB/CDCD/EFEF/GG. Esther’s WIN! book, pages 160-186, analyzes these two — her favorites — plus eight more: Spenserian, Mason, Beymorlin, Glorionic, Opal, Asian, Illini, Visser — plus the traditional Rhymed Couplet. In the future she will try to write sonnets for you using these other patterns.

Wait for the Rain

Daniel W. Polk, California

I'm convinced they only arrive
when they want to, the poems
don't like furrowed brows

concentrating on making art
as if it is all effort

like raindrops falling to ground
no choice, this water, these lines
wait for the clouds

Wordsmith

Vernon Waring, Pennsylvania

A poet's canvas is a blank white page
Waiting for outbursts of rapture and rage
Waiting for verse set in rhyme and meter
To set the stage, to reach the reader
To strike a chord and play a part
Engage the mind and touch the heart

First Day of School

Marne Wilson, West Virginia

It usually managed to be cold and foggy that morning,
as if pointing to the winter to come
even from the heat of August.
I could never wait for the bus to appear
and always left home early,
my feet shuffling down the long driveway,
crunching gravel I had barely encountered in three months.

My new lunchbox or schoolbag in alternating years
ensured that I was always accompanied
by something familiar and broken in
but also by something new and exciting.
The bus eventually arrived,
and after waiting an eternity for the doors to open
I ascended the grooved plastic stairs
and made my way down the aisle,
staring at everyone in their new clothes and haircuts
as they stared back at mine.
For once, it didn't really matter where I sat down.
I knew any seatmate I chose would be exceedingly polite,
for we were all perfect angels that day,
the last time all year we would be good in unison.

The Tenth Blank Page

Barbara Tate, Tennessee

Pacing like a lion
locked up in a cage
couldn't seem to concentrate
on the tenth blank page.

Is it another chapter
or the ending of the last
maybe I should just give up
it seems the dye's been cast.

No muse comes to sit with me
nothing comes to mind
I search two old journals
hoping I will find

a little inspiration
to plant another seed
an idea just to build on
in my time of need.

So I pace just like a lion
locked up in a cage
still can't seem to concentrate
on the tenth blank page.

Book with Cobwebs

Francis Conlon, Colorado

My attic has a far corner nook,
I've not been there for a while,
Surprisingly, it has a cobwebbed book.

A hard cover like the old style,
That dusty sight does my mind impress,
Final passage transcribed from some file.

Now resting free from writer's stress,
And arguments from the critics' fight,
All gone now to some arts' recess.

Quiet, too, the extended night,
To finish the thoughts on that page,
Trying to get the words just right.

Perchance it captures the old spirit's age,
Bound in dust as web's lover,
A glimmering thought of some old sage.

A dusty record like no other.

(Yet, now the book is long past,
Mind's memory, too, is so vast,
Perchance its echoes might ever-last.)

Memories, Memories

Rick Hall, Oklahoma

Impressed in our minds, the memories of times long ago
come alive once again
Though not blood and flesh, they're vivid and fresh, and so
They remain to the end

For the old days we yearn, our young dreams still burn, but fleeting
A wisp now and then
So treasured and dear, but really how clear are we seeing
The things that have been

Don't cling to some past, whose shadows will cast a glow
Over all you recall
It wasn't that way, was never that way, no
It wasn't that way at all

Ode to My Golf Ball
Terry Johnson, Minnesota

Take flight oh little one take flight and freely soar
Fly unencumbered to that hole and trouble me no more
Fly high may I say fly high for seeing you is getting tough
Make your mark upon the green and roll not in the rough
I can't see you anywhere and fear you won't be found
Have you rolled past that green into the rough beyond
In that rough I'll look for you and know I'll find you there
Yet no matter how I look I can't find you anywhere
I hear my friends calling me they badger and cajole
They're saying look you fool look here in the hole
There I find you safe and snug looking back at me
You're one of the prettiest things I think I'll ever see
Now I see you every day soaring boldly through the air
Not like the others did rolling half way there.

Stuff
Dr. C. David Hay, Florida

I think I have an addiction,
Because I can never get enough
Of all the wonderful treasures
I choose to call my stuff.

Stamps and rocks and books galore,
I'm running out of space.
If this curse continues —
I'll need a bigger place.

I went to "hoarder" counseling
But didn't make the cut;
Said they couldn't help me
And concluded I'm a "nut."

So here I sit in clutter,
Pondering my next selection
From all the glorious stuff
I can add to my collection.

As Dolphins Do
Peter MacQuarrie, California

They sing,
they play,
they swim
each and
every day.

They dance,
they eat,
they do it
every time
They meet.

We should do
as dolphins do,
all because
the dolphins
told us to.

Give Me Monday
Charles Parnell, Pennsylvania

Monday is my favorite day,
The week starts fresh and new.
The doors are open at the banks
And mail's delivered, too!

The busy world gets back to work
And hustle-bustle rules.
The Stock Market hits new highs
With lots of bears-and-bulls.

Monday has a rapid pace
The people rush and go.
But I'm retired and just observe;
I'm one happy so-and-so . . .

Midwest Weather Woes
Dr. Richard Leonard, Illinois

When biting winds assail our flank
And clearing snow takes up our time,
Midst Winter's weather, dark and dank,
We covet Summer's balmy clime.

But come July the gauge's dial
Creeps up to maximum degrees.
The humid heat is such a trial,
We long for January's freeze.

But what about in Spring and Fall,
Are there no days of clime serene?
Would it were so! — but, hang it all,
Where we live there's no in-between.

Our weather just does thus and so —
A feature of our neighborhood
That we can't change, for weal or woe.
Complaining won't do any good!

The Invisible Plaque
Carole Mertz, Ohio

People are winning awards.
People to the right of me,
people to the left of me.
All over the earth people
are winning awards.

I say, hooray for those people.
Me, I don't need rewards, I
got enough rewards, as it is,
even though you don't know it.

Me, I got rewards from the walk
I took down by the stream, dreamin',
just dreamin'. Plaques don't matter
too much to me, though if I got one
bob-dang-it, I'd hang it!

I got rewards when my sister fell
and I lifted her up. When Joshua
lost his job and I paid him to
mow my lawn overgrown. (And
Josh liked the lemonade, too.)

Me, I don't need rewards. I got
enough. But if you ask me, my
walls look a little bare. Still,
people are winning awards
all over the earth.

Wrangling, Jangling Keys
Caryl Calsyn, Texas

I think my keys are arguing and
that is what the jangling is all about.

The house key feels very important
because he keeps the residence safe.

The car key counters that, if not for him,
the owner would have to stay home.

The garage key tries but gets nowhere
when arguing about his importance.

The smallest key feels he doesn't
get his due for locking up the safe.

The keys that are picked-on more than
any others in the hierarchy of keys

are those whose purpose is unknown.

Good-Bye

Lydia Moccerro, Pennsylvania

The kids will soon be going back to school;
It's evident that summer's winding down.
They left their sandals in the vestibule,
Exchanged them for school shoes they bought in town.

It's evident that summer's almost done;
The sunlight shrinks a trifle more each day.
The rosebush drops her beauties — one by one.
Mosquitoes are more sluggish with their prey.

The evenings come — they aren't quite as warm.
It's evident the summer's leaving us.
The weather pattern, once so uniform,
Brings autumn's chill on the asparagus.

It's twilight time and shadows slowly creep
Upon the summer as she goes to sleep.

Sayings

Alan Yount, Missouri

I have an old oak
kitchen cabinet
with a work table

that you know
was around
for over a hundred years.

people fixed food
& rolled out pies
& biscuits for themselves

like they
had followed some old sayings
& recipes for years.

there's a patina
worn into the table top
that runs true . . .

under the hands:
how it rolls out . . .
how they told their stories.

Inhabitant

Matthew J. Spireng, New York

In the tack room in the barn
where there is no longer tack,
and there are no longer horses,
or hay, and only old things

are stored — junk, mostly useless,
that should be thrown away,
and will be before long —
suddenly, a scramble

to the rafters and a glimpse
of grey, squirrel spooked by
my sound, squirrel nesting
among the junk, maybe

nursing young there now, or soon,
it being spring, it being time.
But I spook it as I visit the barn
for the first time in months,

raising the door, and rousing
it from its nest, sending it scampering
to the roof, to a tree where
it waits until I am gone.

Summer

James B. Peters, Tennessee

A quail whistles
From the pasture fence.
It is hot enough to make
the spring flowers memories.
The shade sings a welcoming song
As the old dog
Crawls under the porch.
In the evening heat
Thunderstorms begin to crackle.
Hear the wind in the trees,
Smell the scent of rain
Carried across the porch.
Breathe the freshened air
Under a clearing blue sky.
After a summer storm.

Playground

Lois Greene Stone, New York

I watched him swing:
toes upward
legs stiff
hands clasping chain.
He laughed
as air pushed past
his face.
His tongue teased
the wind.
He vainly tried
to swallow
his created breeze.

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Simple Breeze

David J. Ludlow, New York

If you think about it,
it's beyond belief:
the amount of life,
in a single leaf.

The Sun offers hope
every single day,
growing the trees
under which,
our children play.

It only takes a second
to step outside
and enjoy a simple breeze,
and re-focus a child
from a keyboard
to learning how to breathe.

Porch Palm

Donna Wallace, North Carolina

Pruned, abandoned
time-promised fronds

from this blunt,
leafless stump.

Amputated plant
slanting in rain

leaning in snow
lopsided, exposed

for weeks — nothing
from nothing.

Spring's pledge:
a spear, green stalk

stirring shoots
from rooted knot,

the oath is birthed
from potted earth.

On My Veranda, What I See and Hear

Janice Canerdy, Mississippi

Oak trees, dark or sunny sky,
Neighbors waving, passing by,

Music of the buzzing bees,
Young ones playing as they please,

Varied colors seasons bring,
Ecstasy of birds that sing,
Roaming strays, both dogs and cats,

Active squirrels, dancing gnats,
Nature's grand, diverse array,

Divers sights and sounds each day —
All God's glory on display!

Choose Life

David Fox, New York

Life's sometimes a struggle;
I know this, my friend,
But for all that it's worth
Don't let it end.

Even though it's rough
Try to be strong;
There's always a reason
To keep going on.

Trust me, I know,
I've been through it all.
Death's knocked on my door
But I ignored the call.

So choose life,
and then you will see
Just how happy
life can be.

Fly-Fishing

Elizabeth Howard, Tennessee

A hint of fog colors the
morning silver. A lone man
wades out of the willows,
casts, the line whisking
to the deep hole beyond
the cascades. A fish rises
to the lure, plunges, the line
singing through the rod tip.
It arcs as he nets his catch,
eager to savor bass and
corn dodgers fried in a
skillet by a rippling brook.

My Little Man

Randal A. Burd, Jr., Missouri

I held you in my heart before I knew
Those dimpled cheeks and beaming impish grin.
Once quite the helpless creature, then you grew
Into the little man you are. And when

You speak with a maturity unearned,
Intelligence beyond your fledgling years,
Amazing me each day with what you've learned,
Your childhood much too quickly disappears.

Soon time will take this little boy from me —
Replace this child I love now with a man.
Whatever you decide you want to be,
I hope that you will always understand:

I held you in my heart when you were small,
And time won't change my love for you at all.

Photo Album Twines

Diane Webster, Colorado

The photo album splices generations
as the pages turn onto each other
as children grow, parents die,
baby with grandpa's name sits on a lap —
like family puppeteers twirling ancestry
into ropes tight and strong
or frayed, unraveled
only to bind again to continue
the thread webbing across the lineage
from picture to picture as pages turn.

Gentle Wave Triolet

Melissa Frentsos, New Jersey

Such kindness in a gentle wave —
When I could barely say a word . . .
Kind gestures make me feel more brave.
Such kindness in a gentle wave —
That was a thoughtful gift you gave;
Though all was silent, I felt heard.
Such kindness in a gentle wave
When I could barely say a word.

Bird Talk

Nelson R. Locher, New York

Any house that has a tree,
usually is filled with birds.
They chirp and cheep to each other,
in a language of their own words.

We can't understand it,
the meaning is all their own.
They know how to communicate,
deep within a separate zone.

Ever wonder what they say,
when they're talking to the rest?
Are they discussing food sources,
or maybe the glamour of their nest?

Do they talk about the weather,
rain, snow, sleet or sun?
Maybe they chat about hunting worms,
that's always a lot of fun.

Is there discussion among all breeds,
can they get along with each other?
Do they talk about their plumage,
and who has the brightest of color?

Does bragging take place,
over how many eggs were laid?
The concern may shift again,
to the most beautiful chicks they made.

So many different types of birds,
all with so much to say.
Switch to being a bird watcher,
a much better way to spend a day.

*Originally published August 29, 2016,
in the Buffalo News Reporter's Notebook*

Janet Goven has published a new book entitled **Adventures with Providence**. She shares fiction and non-fiction stories, poems, and personal opinions, all with a feel of Providence. Purchasing information can be found at www.drurypublishing.com.

You are invited to visit **Poems From Oostburg, Wisconsin**. There are poems by Ellen Grace Olinger, photos by Karl and Ellen Olinger, Creative Notes, and other posts. Our goal is to offer hope. <https://ellenolinger.wordpress.com/>

WRITER'S WORKBENCH

Seek Your Quarry

by Esther Leiper-Estabrooks



I grew up between two Pennsylvania stone quarries: one huge and active, the other known for green serpentine yet abandoned when water broke through, since diggers had delved too deep. By contrast, the vast Glen Mills Quarry was close to my elementary school and blasting started at noon each Friday, rattling our building and our ears! This immense quarry spiraled down twelve levels, and the owners swore to dig deeper still. Rain might fall, but no water seeped in through granite rock. Many filled dump trucks carried stones in varied sizes away in various directions. These rocks built roads, houses, and dry stone walls. (Dry walls are not cemented. Their rocks are fitted so well that — short of earthquakes — they'll never fall.)

The huge quarry rim also embraced railroad tracks where freight cars were loaded with stones of different sizes destined for many places. However, what fascinated me most was the stone crusher, set in a deep hole. There, great boulders were pulverized by a huge mortar-and-pestle with a loud cacophony! Indeed, workers wore protection for their ears.

The Glen Mills Crusher

— *July was humid — stone dust covered all,
The noise immense as boulders tumbled in,
But soon the immense pestle ground them small,
Nor could we talk above the monstrous din.
(How many times I biked on a smooth road
Whose tar-hued base was crushed down to size
With blacktop spread on gravel's under-load,
The scope of which I barely could surmise.)
Some said this quarry'd last a hundred years
Or more before its granite would run out,
While dump trucks in a line, plus in first gears,
Crept down — then up — the spiral roundabout.
— I'll not forget the scent of shattered stone;
Nor the pestle; harshest noise I've ever known!*

A quite different quarry fifteen miles away blasted serpentine rock, until a water leak filled it. Soon my brother Rafe took over this abandoned hole with a grand idea. Just into his twenties, he urged friends to see the place as a potential swim club. A deal was worked with the landowner and soon volunteers pitched in with amazing ideas, plus hard work and money raised. The kids' end was sand-filled, plus with shallow water to wade in, while next the deep end boasted three diving boards of different heights. For the gala opening my artist mother designed a huge and splendid road sign to promote the enterprise. Memberships with a dues list were started, plus a full-time life guard was hired for safety.

Rafe, who master-minded the plan, was voted president, so that's where, at age five, I learned to swim. Local folk became members, and the waiting list grew to include people from neighboring townships. Then, every July Fourth, races and diving competitions were held offering plentiful awards. At the age of twelve I came in third in a swim race for girls sixteen and under. I loved the quarry's sheltering stone walls, plus the amenities installed: ladies' and gents' johns and changing rooms were provided, and a warm-up hut where candy and soda came from coin-operated dispensers. I never felt claustrophobia in the quarry's deep bowl, and loved hot sun rays bouncing down the walls and the exciting plunge into chill spring water on a steamy day.

Indeed stone quarries, like people, come in varied shapes and size; thus many poets are fascinated, and thereby enjoy writing poems about them. Of course, as you know by now, I have no objection to doing that, and here is one:

Digging

*At age five my pal Bobby and I
Began to dig a hole to China,
Which went down two feet or so
Before we quit and wondered if
The true rock quarry so nearby
Hid Chinamen coming out at night,
Golden-hued as reflected stones
All tinted like that steep rock face
The shining moon gazed down on?*

However, this one is somber:

No Fence Around the Rim

By John Steele

*Someone's dog almost fell in; off his leash chasing a rabbit
That zigzagged for life, while speeding far away.
How many times have we been so lucky
To miss the bus that hit a car; or did not choose the girl
Who succumbed to her own, strange darkness,
Leaving us to find the sun again?*

And this last piece is mine:

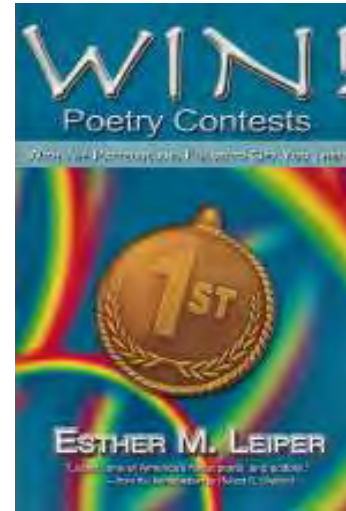
Quarry Conundrum

*Slabs of serpentine shine verdant in the sun
While heat flashes down long steep walls
To restless water sloshing far below
That fills this huge pit's deep bottom:
Yet there's a rumor – or perhaps true tale
Of a show-off boy who stood high once,
Too close to the sheer rim above, then fell,
And thus ended — but is this truly true?*

The quarry was fascinating: It was nothing like a river swimming hole, plus the steep walls offered privacy. Once there, new friends could be made, too — the three diving boards of different heights beckoned both grownups and kids to show off new skills. Wonderful summer bliss! (Google "Quarry Poems," click and scroll; then seek quarries in your area to write about!)

What Critics Have Said about *WIN! Poetry Contests* by Esther Leiper-Estabrooks

WIN! Poetry Contests with the Patterns and Forms to Get You There provides updated advice and guidance on the complete process of developing and submitting contest entries. Esther presents and discusses many of her own first-prize poems, and offers insights on each poem and how each was written. Having judged, as well as entered, contests all over the United States, she offers expert advice from the



viewpoint of both the judge and the competitor. This book gives precise instructions on how to brainstorm for ideas, write, and *WIN! Poetry Contests*. Here's what reviewers have said about Esther's work:

"The book brings poetry contesting, as an art and skill, into sharp focus. We believe beginners will find impetus to gain recognition while pros can find tips they never considered. Esther's sunny style — with anecdotes, examples, and quotes — has realism based on four decades of success. *WIN! Poetry Contests* will launch writing careers and become a classic text. Teachers will frequently use this invaluable writing tool."

— Leon Ogroske, former editor, WRITERS' Journal, Perham, Minnesota

"I commend the way you help writers and readers alike understand that poetry without craft or song throws away its force and evolves at best into petty prose or puzzle pieces of artsy gibberish. Yet, even in our grindingly materialistic culture, poetry will always be created anew; read for its music and emotive force, and beloved for its power to lift, lighten, and renew."

— Douglas C. Frerichs, Scottsdale, Arizona

"In language as clear as polished crystal . . . she provides us with a treasure house of tools for the making of poems. Even the expert may discover something new in her condensed encyclopedia of prosody. Leiper's chief purpose is to help you become a more memorable poet and a more successful contestant."

— Dr. Alfred Dorn, Retired Chairman of The World Order of Narrative and Formalist Poets, Flushing, New York

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