

The **TOE TREE JOURNAL**

**A SEASONAL REPOSITORY
OF RATIONALIST VERSE**



**Free
download**

TOETREE.CO.NR

ISSUE #1

FALL 2005



THIS IS YOUR BRAIN ON POETRY.

The Toe Tree Journal

www.toetree.co.nr
www.templeofearth.com/toetree.html

Fall 2005
Issue #1

Oliver Benjamin, *editor*
toetree@templeofearth.com

Cover Photograph © Dan Brandenburg
All other photographs © Oliver Benjamin

Copyright © 2005 by The Toe Tree Journal and the individual writers and artists. All rights reserved. The poetry and art on these pages are the property of the poets and artists who created them, and may not be used without the permission of that poet or artist.

THE TOE TREE JOURNAL

FALL 2005

The Toe Tree Journal and The Temple of Earth

Hello and welcome to the first issue of the Toe Tree Journal, a magazine of original poetry that aims to celebrate and uncover rational aspects in our lives and in poetry itself. True to our expectations, there are a lot of talented poets out there who don't find rationality and poesy incompatible. The popular assumption that poetry is chiefly a "right-brain" phenomena is given a serious challenge in the creations of these gifted contributors. We hope you find this "poetry for the left side of the brain" as inspiring and meaningful as we do.

The Toe Tree Journal is a publication of the Temple of Earth, the world's first "non-religious religion," a religion (if you will) that exalts pure rationality. Please visit its website at www.templeofearth.com to see what it's all about. Ordain as a minister for free, enjoy the site, and all the organization has to offer.

What the world needs now is logic, sweet logic.

Poets featured in this journal are not necessarily adherents to the Temple of Earth philosophy, nor are they necessarily members of the organization. They are simply artists whose work we believe helps elucidate our contention that rationality can be poetic. Moreover, rationality can display aspects normally considered part and parcel of the emotional and intuitive spheres of existence: i.e. beauty, joy, transcendence and wisdom.

Thanks for reading. If you feel like contributing any original work, please send submissions to toetree@templeofearth.com.

Sincerely yours,

Oliver Benjamin
Editor of the Toe Tree Journal



C O N T E N T S

Louie Crew			Glen Norris		
Waiting for the Take Off	6		Guru to Guru	26	
Dusty	7		Johnny vs. Dick	28	
Bryan Thao Worra			David Benson		
Reconsidering Gordian	8		Preaching to the Faithful	29	
Homunculus	8				
The Talk	9		Francis Masat		
Kenneth Pobo			In Ways Unknowable	30	
Stale Air	10		Crab's Crossing	31	
Arum Italica	11		Tyler Fenn		
Anastasia Voight			Beach	32	
To Be a Bee	12		Nicky Testavudo		
Raud Kennedy			on parting a gordian knot		
Bruised Fruit	14		with a razor	33	
Clifford K. Watkins, Jr.			Suzanne Holt		
Hollow Sun Reflections	15		Some little known facts		
The Purpose of Genes	16		about oysters	34	
Nicholas Long			Peter Bloch		
To think...	18		If a Poet You Would Be	35	
Steven Phyffer			Wendy Saw		
Storm	19		genesis; the true story of a		
J.B. Mulligan			modern day atlantis	36	
Importance of what is	20		Christina Wormann		
The Lonely Eye of the Sun	21		The Status of Thoughts	37	
Oliver Benjamin			Jnana Hodson		
Fault	22		Rediscovering Olympus X	38	
Letting it Leak	24		Anonymous		
Allen Weber			Cause and Effect	40	
Revolution	25				

LOUIE CREW

Waiting for the Take-Off

No leisure wear nor skirts in sight,
male commuters flocked like penguins at the gate,
one-fourth with Friday collars undone, and loosened ties.

Some fingered phones.
Others stale coffee sucked,
competing with the hum of air-conditioners.
Flights punctuated the flow of loud announcements.

Tap-tap, tap-tap, tap-tap.
She came to glimpse the runway.
tap-tap, tap-tap, tap-tap,
heels at least six inches.

When cave woman first lurched into daylight,
cave man exclaimed not “Uga!”, but poetry,
“Uga, Uga. Uga! Uga!”

The modern penguins were silent,
noticed not her heels,
ignored her eyes, her nationality,
her class, her age,
hypnotized by her elevated primal heirloom.

Tarzan swang in their dreams home in bed.



Dusty

Ain't it fun to know that
when the worms have grown fat
feeding on our lips where
we lie truly, fully dead,
someone for a month there
nourishment still finds where
we so richly fed?



Louie Crew, 68, is a native of Anniston, Alabama and an emeritus professor at Rutgers University. He is the author of 1,689 published essays and poems. He and Ernest Clay, his husband of 31 years live in East Orange, NJ.

lcrew@andromeda.rutgers.edu, <http://www.andromeda.rutgers.edu/~lcrew/poetry.html>

BRYAN THAO WORRA



Reconsidering Gordian

What have you done?
In a single stroke, what have you undone?
Brute Philistine, you were no Goliath
But in a moment of pragmatic impatience
You hurled us headlong like a sinking stone
To our Atlantean legacy, to burn through time.

For centuries I could not unprove you.
In a decade of troubled dreams,
You still won, every time.

I was a fool to pin a kingdom to a knot.
I was a villain for the lesson I allowed you to teach.
Just as well you never met the Sphinx,
Drunkard.

Homonculus

We always want to make
Little men, playing around
In the kitchens of the gods
We made and prayed to
When midnight lightning
Could not be expressed
As a simple one plus one equation
To the Children of Oceans.

Their heirs, the Turning Wheels,
Today give snide smiles
To antique alchemy in
Favor of the clones we pray
Will surpass their aging mold,
A step short of immortal,
As righteous as the Zero.





The Talk

The plague children exude is curiosity, to which we have grown
Tragically immune.
Once I drank with the scholar. A cup of coffee, for my moments.
He sat, bearded by knowledge, talking as if the words would fuse him to the table.
The grave would stall his jaw years from now, but he would still jabber on
In the notes and lectures of his students. The fiend.
I begged him to reconsider the destiny he was giving us, as he summarized
The volumes of the past into the soundbites of tomorrow, for the sake of his pupil
Who could not be made to read.
He shook his head, the reluctant criminal condemned to reveal what should be
Discovered not in mass process but in single exploration.
He drank and threw a book into the streets, asking me what he should do.
I watched the pages surrender to the mangling caress of the tire.
In Autumn, the old men are hungry to be read, he said.
Better they be gently bitten than forgotten altogether.
My friends, will you trim down even these notes, begging for lighter fare?
After my passing, who will you be?
The price of knowledge is struggle and memory, the serpent who is the rose.
I staggered away shaken,
Afraid to concede.

Bryan Thao Worra was born in Vientiane, Laos in 1973. A poet and writer, he has worked extensively on Southeast Asian refugee resettlement. His work appears in the Bamboo Among the Oaks anthology, Mid American Poetry Review, the Asian Pacific American Journal, Whistling Shade, and the Quarterly Literary Review Singapore, among others. An active member of the Hmong American Institute for Learning and the SatJaDham Lao Literary Project, he actively promotes the work of Laotian and Hmong artists and writers. Bryan Thao Worra currently resides in Saint Paul, Minnesota. His website is <http://members.aol.com/thaoworra>

KENNETH POBO

Stale Air

Leaves go
from green to red
to brown--even

a small jag of sun
changes the whole maple.

Poor God, always
perfect, His colors
never change,
a light that never
varies,
no autumn,

stale air
in a sealed room.



Arum Italica

In spring this exhibitionist
shows his creamy phallus

to anyone. When the garden
throws summer parties, he
slips away, yellows,
droops. By fall,

the garden poops
out. He teases fading ferns,
bent cosmos. Unbowed

in torn oak leaves, he sports
green shorts all winter.



Kenneth Pobo's book, *INTRODUCTIONS*, is available from Pearl's Book'Em Press. His work appears online at Forpoetry.com, Drexel Online Journal, 2River View, Southern Ocean Review, and elsewhere. He collects obscure records of the 1960s and early 1970s. He teaches English and Creative writing at Widener University in Pennsylvania.

ANASTASIA VOIGHT

To Be a Bee

As is well known, to be a bee
Takes queen, and drone and two or three
Workers working industriously.
For bee babes need , as do we,
To have their crèche kept tidily,
With nourishments at hand readily
To supply that quantity and quality
Required to later seek what bee destiny
Awaits in floral country.

Each worker bee, curiously,
Is a sterile she; not mother to be.
Instead one hive Queen repetitively
Performs unitarily.
Fertilized eggs for fems shapes she,
Keeping unspermed the necessary
He kind, required for future progeny.
This might seem a frivolity ,
Designed by Gaia whimsically,
But that is the nature of her bee.



How genetics works such curiosity
Was discovered recently.
Bees have a gene called *csd*,
Short for complementary
Sex determination. This gene
Has nineteen
Forms demonstrably.
Two different forms each new she
Requires, else she is a he.

No dads have bee boys normally,
Boy genes are the Queen's responsibility.
But errors occur occasionally
Producing drones erroneously
From egg and sperm whose *csd*
Genes read the same. Calamity!
For that male is doomed you see,
When worker bees, noting irregularity,
Correct hivish anomaly
By devouring him immediately.

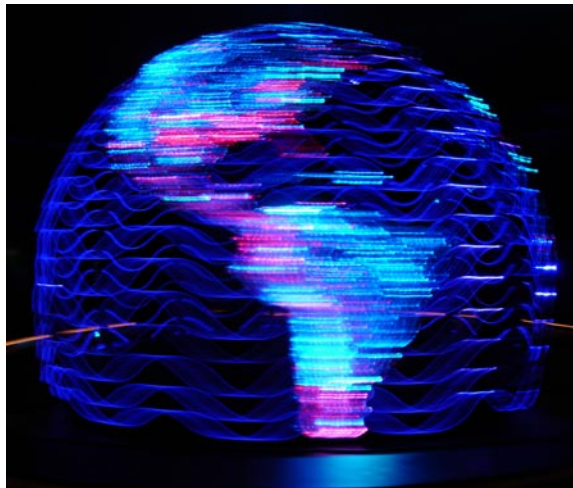
Anastasia Voight is a retired biology teacher who, in the half dozen years since retirement, has found time to exercise her brain with classes in the arts and in creative writing. But her biology background is evident in most of what she writes.

Recent research provided the basis for this genetic poem. She hopes some readers get as much fun out of reading it as she had in its writing.

RAUD KENNEDY

Bruised Fruit

The fragility of our bodies
goes forgotten until injured.
A deep cut, a broken bone,
and then the healing.
Can a smile repair
a sneer's damage?
Fragility is the common
Denominator.
Even steel melts.
Planets die, suns implode,
and we are as gnats
on a floating plum.



Raud Kennedy works as a dog trainer in Portland, Oregon. He's had poetry published in the US and the UK, along with several short stories. More information can be found at www.raudkennedy.com

CLIFFORD K. WATKINS, JR.

Hollow-Sun Reflections

follow me into a forest of deception to escape direction
and we can make tears for eternity that descend to muddle
reflections
nothing is near except the swaying trees stretching the truth
inside we foster a cavern of lies in absence of proof
bloodshot and weather beaten we return
in effigy we burn
simmering beneath our great god of fire
throwing ourselves onto a funeral pyre
souls hurled like rice
the brainwashed line the horizon to be sacrificed
a decapitated head for each steeple
the cloth is doubly divine
but still human
and no less evil
open doors to confront faceless people
such meager creatures
so tired and feeble
If it's nothing more than a promise of bliss
we could do better to slash our wrists
violent echoes of scream
we linger inside our fiery-electric dreams
embracing shrunken morrow faces
unlocked doors
and dark places
we desire
and need
happy hearts flutter as insanity feeds



The Purpose of Genes

no one knows why we dream
only that we're here for the purpose of genes
that are carried on by expedient lives
unable to crack the enigma of minds
so lost w/out a clue
we feast
breed
and die
polish our statues
and ponder the sky
dying with every subtle hue
slowly progressing experimental beings
smothered by reality
eaten by oneself
a feast of finality
maybe some day we'll attain immortality
some say inconceivable
never
who'd want the burden of living forever
imagine the boredom of a two-hundred-year bender
lost with depression
tired of being high
sedentary sighs
and ultimate surrender
it would be too much for even the most devout pretender
give me a muse
a reason to read
to write
and to be confused



the numbing pain of unattained love outshines ample tranquility
if only it doesn't kill me
we're all so alone
numbing the pain
so tired
and stoned
counting the days beneath gods on hourglass thrones
I want to go home
but I'm carried on by easy lies
as colors travel thru my eyes
bored with my sins
restless depression sighs
forget suicide
for far greater uncertainty resides
death
nothing's more perverse
don't get any worse
but life is the real trip
trying not to slip
and go cascading down
like an overzealous clown atop a burial mound
I love life
there's nothing more than this
only a promise of bliss
could be grandeur
may be worse
mere dregs of the universe
trying to rise above the rabble
a performer spewing useless babble
trying not to unravel
I hate the drive
but love to travel

Clifford K. Watkins, Jr. is a thirty-two-year old writer/lyricist originally from High Point, North Carolina. He's been published by Underground Window, Ygdrasil, Prism Quarterly, Seeker Magazine, Poetic Voices, Poetry Stop, Poet's Haven, Muscadine Lines, Oracular Tree, Cynic Magazine, Winamop, Wildchild Publishing, Endzville, and Infinite Glass. He currently lives in Jacksonville, Florida.

NICHOLAS LONG

To think...

My intelligence is not my own
It enters the head unbidden
And is sown,
By alien hands vanity calls my own.

Whorls of light and fancy's flashing flight
Domesticating the darkness.
Out of sight,
I feel them all upstairs, itching to incite.

Oh! I fear for my little lodgers so
That is why I fight their entry.
I'm afraid –
That if any feel unwanted, they may go.



Nicholas Long is 18, lives in London and is about to begin a philosophy, politics and economics degree at Oxford University. He has long been interested in philosophy and rational thought. Though a committed Christian, he believes that rational thought and Christianity can co-exist peacefully.

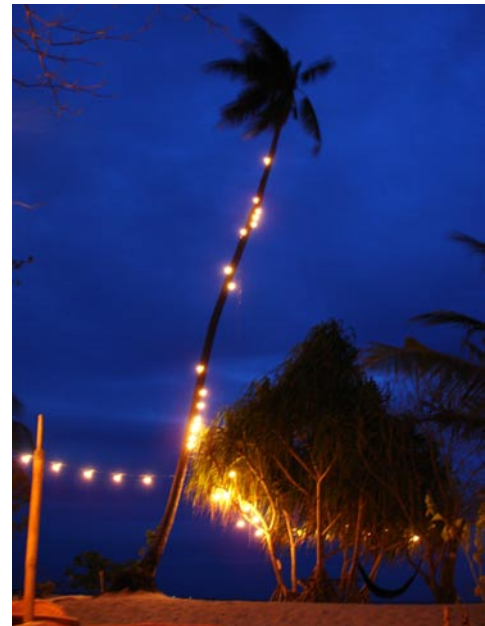
STEVEN PHYFFER

Storm

Through me blows a silent breeze
Whispers in the wind
If no one can speak a word
I'll listen and hear them

Seeing everything in grey
Could it be colourful?
Feeling that I've got it made
Although the whispers don't agree
The breeze turns to storm
Breaking me
Spinning me to far off horizons
And then silence
It's frightening
I'd rather have violence,
screams and more fighting

Through me blows a silent breeze
Whispers in the wind
If no one can speak a word
I'll listen and hear them



Steven Phyffer is 22 years old and has been writing poetry since the age of 6. Starting out with simple little rhymes, he had his first poem published when he was 16. He lives in South Africa, Cape Town in a little apartment at the ocean.

JB MULLIGAN

importance of what is

The importance is not
in what it's like
but what it is:
solid, as even air
is meat: a variable
but consistent form.
Nonetheless, resemblance
matters:
string through the pearls
which otherwise would spill
and fill the corners
and under the dresser
with a scattering rattle
that would shatter the room.
Nonetheless,
what matters is:
the idea, unmeated,
is not even string
is less than the hole in the pearl
without the pearl.



the lonely eye of the sun

Is the indomitable human spirit
angry meat? – shoving and squawking,
juicy with seed and time-battered?

Or have we built with that
the castle hidden in the wind?
The dream that calls itself from sleep?

Or was it always there, waiting
for the cup of ripe consciousness
to be borne down the flame-gilded aisle?

The sky keeps its eye on the answer,
but the universe is watching everywhere
for something that may be us, or nothing.



JB Mulligan is married, with three grown children, and has had poems and stories in dozens of magazines, including recently, *Bonfire*, *Iota*, *Tattoo Highway*, and *Poetry Renewal*, *In a Fine Frenzy*, as well as two chapbooks: *The Stations of the Cross* and *THIS WAY TO THE EGRESS* (Samisdat Press). He also has work in the recent anthology *Inside Out: A Gathering of Poets* (<http://www.geocities.com/anneyohn2003/index.htm>)

OLIVER BENJAMIN

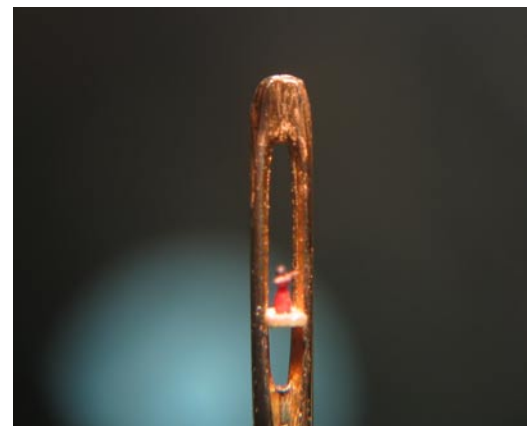
Fault

On narrow lonely pass
I met the holy one at last,
The one that made
The only sun to shine.
I spoke my artful thesis
That he broke the pot to pieces
And wouldn't deign
To make them recombine.

He said fissures made by sun and shade,
That tear the garden from the glade
Are not the whim
Nor will of things divine.
Vicissitudes of Nature
Tear the earthly musculature.
The fault is hers, he said,
My son, not mine.

So I moved next door to Nature,
Read her garden's nomenclature.
She confessed her work
Was accident plus time.
But without the cataclysms
That rent my soul to schisms,
I'd have never tried to leave
The seas of slime.

So curse your kings and emperors,
She said, those thrones whose bloody wars,
Divide the earth
'Long arbitrary lines.
They scar me till I'm fallow,
Send whole races to the gallow.
The fault is theirs, my precious child,
Not mine.



So I stormed the castle of the king,
The one who split up everything.
He let this stranger
Accuse him and opine,
But argued, his protection
'Gainst savage predilection
Allowed the growth
Of culture and of mind.

Lay the blame upon your muse,
He said, that liquor so abused,
That to drink her
Men would tear their eyes out blind,
Curse their fellow man,
Lay waste upon the land,
The fault indeed is hers,
Good sir, not mine.

At last we came together,
My soul upon this treasure,
This music resolution
To a rhyme,
But she was cryptic so I cleaved her.
I cut her and bereaved her.
The earth tore open,
Flooded dark with brine.

Our rift was deep and storied,
Mountains laid ungloried,
I pulled her into echo
And decline,
In a bid to change the weather
I dreamt the world forever
Fell in the ocean;
The fault, erosion, mine.

But the split released the spirit,
Of the earth, and who revere it
Cultivate a science
Of the signed.
Signals to salvation,
On the byways of creation
Point in all directions;
Falls, ascensions, twined.



Letting it Leak



Like broken teapot pieces.
Cast upon on the floor.
We'd better stick together
If we want to drink some more.

Come take my hand and
Wrap it around your handle,
Press it to my body,
There won't be a scandal.

When the spout is fast and ready,
And the past is finally prandial,
We'll work together to heat the tea,
I will light the candle.

I've missed you since our fall,
Since love spilled off the table,
I've been kissing at the dried-up pools,
Genesisising Cain and Abel,
Searching for the first edition,
Of our Chinese-whispered fable.
His truth goes marching on.
Truth. Go. March on.

Oliver Benjamin is the current editor of the Toe Tree Journal. After travelling the world for over a decade, he finally settled in Thailand because there are more convenience stores than people. Consequently, it's very convenient. He occupies his time embarking on fruitless projects, most of which can be seen at www.oliverbenjamin.net. These poems are taken from his novel, "Abyssinia," which can be downloaded for free at www.oliverbenjamin.net/abys.html

ALLEN WEBER

revolution

fire
unnaturally confined
loses interest
quietly smolders
within cast-iron
walls

open the flue
let it breathe

unobserved
it seethes
leaps
over charred remains
rages up
as if it were free



Allen Weber received IBPC nominations June, July, and August. He did not win in June. The July results should be available soon. He claims to be but a little fish in the big sea of that competition. He is 45 years old, is married to a beautiful poet, and together they've produced three sparkly boys, ages 10, 8, and 4 years. Presently he works as a Radiological Controls Instructor.

GLEN NORRIS

Guru to Guru

hair sprouts around
all my openings

every one.
i name them for fun.

neck turns my head
not asking why

me? myself?
the spirit looking out my –

at the outside edge
of the back of my hand.

sprouting helpless
i trim, i am.

fingertrips and tickles ask
who touches the string on my face

i'll pull the string on my own mask
to observe my border's pace

thing inside me walks
hand in hand with hair

and halts. and cries,
who goes there

between my inside out
they come to light on me.

i shave them all
and they return, and be-

fore and after sleep
i pull my coarsest weeds

thinking what i do and
what? "where are the seeds?"

a guru grows
in each of us.
who pluck it out
or feed it
tea.



Johnny vs. Dick



“The Buddha would have attained it –
enlightenment, clarity, jokes!
If he’d only simply admitted...
that nirvana stuff was a hoax!”

said Johnny.

“The Father could have permitted
on the third day The Son to rerise.
Which side of the bed did He wake on?
Jesus, that kid spoiled my surprise!”

said Johnny.

“Mohammed should have eaten pork.
(Just hidden it under his sheet!)
But you know him – his levitican slant...
He just liked the other white meat!”

said Johnny.

One hand in a bag of cashews
Mohammed sat there on a rock.
Shall I become Poet or Profit?
Good Friends or a Big Fluffy Flock?

Johnny Carson and Dick Van Dyke
tried out for The Dick Van Dyke Show.
McMen’s stale chuckles killed one.
But the other kissed Mary
often and slow.

glen has had a close relationship with words all his life. if he writes longer things, they are usually made of small things, such as this. He is published in *Our Western World’s Most Beautiful Poems* 1985, but he didn’t buy the book because it was \$70. he is uncomfortable speaking about himself in 3rd person.

glen’s first chap book of small things, *A Great Deal of Polypoton*, is available in random sections by request. It contains much isocolon and parallelism in general. The great deal of polypoton found within often takes the form of paronomasia. Also employed are various sorts of metaplasms,

especially metathesis, a great deal of paradox and occasional irony.

glen writes his small things at tine.com and is currently interested in pithy gnomistic truisms.

DAVID BENSON

Preaching to the Faithful

Reverend Maynard waves one stumpy
hand. "It's all part," he says,
"of the Lord's plan," then rolls
his chair to glory's edge. Science
says sugar diabetes took his fingers
one by one. Maynard says it was God's
sweet tooth that bit off his fingers,
both feet, and one leg to mid-thigh.
He clutches his Bible in what's left
of his right hand: ring finger and thumb.
"I need this arm, Lord," he says, waving
to his sheep. "But if you're still hungry,
I'll get by."

--rev. maynard is a real person, though his name is not maynard.



David Benson lives on a farm in southern New Jersey with his wife, two children, four horses, a couple of dogs, a few pigs and the various varmints that mooch off sloppy part-time farmers. He makes a living writing for a daily newspaper: few in that respectable profession suspect that his back is heavily tattooed with the developing story of a modern-day Medusa. David's poetry has been accepted by Samsara (Aramanth Press, Spring 2006), Triplopia (<http://www.triplopia.org/>), The Circle Magazine (<http://www.circlemagazine.com/>) (Summer 2005), and Auburn University's Caesura.

FRANCIS MASAT

In Ways Unknowable

“... living by voices we shall never hear.”
Henry Beston 1888-1968

Slowly, each chill winter solstice,
dusk shrouds The Dell, enveloping
all in a hushed unearthly resonance.

Early darkness creeps every nook –
no birds, no frogs, no buzzing sounds,
nor fragrances or heady breezes.

Only obsidian water, below the ice,
trickles, bubbling and gurgling,
impatient to be on its way.

All else waits for that celestial event
when Earth turns back. A moment
felt in ways unknowable to us.





Crab's Crossing

On the hot macadam street,
Land Crab's waving arms –
no match for a car's wheels.
Nor are my waving arms –
a match for the driver's eyes
fleeting past – unknowing.

I am helpless as I watch
Land Crab's crushing end.
Pop! and it has crossed over.

God of the sparrows
(of the Land Crabs, too?),
I was the only one to see!
A moment brief for Crab –
a moment that will not end
for me.

Francis Masat is a retired professor. He volunteers and writes in Key West. A Little Poetry, Liquid Muse Qty, Lynx, Modern Haiku, Paper Wasp, Pegasus, Poetic Voices, Poetry Midwest, Prairie Poetry, Presence, Stylus Poetry J., The Pedestal, and many others have accepted his recent work.

TYLER FENN

Beach

for three steps it's stones then sand
an ashtray if you look close
not secluded but empty now
riddled with footprints of ghosts
resembling the effect of giant raindrops
it is wide and long and a hundred
paces to the waters edge
where the land slides beneath
slow soft waves that allow a view
of the beach as it continues underneath
footprints vanish replaced by dunes
caused by water movement
leatherbacks lumber up leaving heaps
of sand and tracks like bulldozers
as turtles have been doing since
this shore was roamed by dinosaurs
sometimes i can still imagine them
sneaking up to bite a wedge out of my skull
maxwell's silver velociraptor



Tyler Fenn is someone who has never pushed off from the shores of his own internal, insular Tahiti, and claims to know his island quite well, although there is some yet to be explored. mainly the high parts.

NICKY TESTAVUDO

on parting a gordian knot with ockham's razor

Shall we strike out from sheltered space,
balance on bowstring of Mirabeau Pont,
to stare down deep onto
the surface of the Seine?

Narcissans, oui, we humans be:
cull vagrant clouds flown overhead,
craft universe from anecdote,
while looking from the outside in.
Reflecting imperfection there,
we'll count up every single hair
upon each other's head
in constant shuttle 'til we shed
proclivity for permanence
from transience.

For what will be
is now what is
and what now is
is what now was
and what it was shall be again
and around and through
in knots and yet
'til what will never be

and Phlomis bourgaei are we
are whirling wild and free so

shall we strike out from sheltered space,
balance on bowstring of Mirabeau Pont,
to stare down deep on through
the surface of the Seine?



Noodleman, aka noodles, aka nicky testavudo, aka charlie manson, aka vinnie "the shrimp" catchatelli, aka mister tricky-pants, is a cognitive science and neuroscience major at a University on the Eastern shore of the Untied States of Sneakers. He enjoys serotonin, will settle for dopamine in a pinch, but eschews Gamma Amino Butyric Acid agonists, especially Tequila. Additionally, he is fascinated by cheese, and collects thumbtacks. Finally, poetry is his favorite way in which to communicate obliquely and at the same time prove his intellectual superiority to the common nematode.

SUZANNE HOLT



Some Little Known Facts About Oysters

Oysters claim just a small, three-chambered heart,
which they always pledge for life to one location.
It pumps their opaque blood to every oyster part

as they live and breathe, symbolic of the wooer's art.
How much do they deserve their wanton reputation?
for oysters only claim a small, three-chambered heart.

Males and females of the species cannot be told apart,
so rarely do their hearts succumb to any base temptation
as they pump their opaque blood to every oyster part.

Advertised across the world as passion à la carte,
in nature they save creatures seeking refuge from predation
even if they can just claim a small, three-chambered heart.

In history they've been boiled and baked and creamed in tarts.
Did such awaited fates cause oyster hearts to beat in trepidation
as they pumped their opaque blood to every oyster part?

A fisher finds a pearl inside a shell when prised apart,
nurtured like a secret love in precious isolation
yet oysters merely claim a small, three chambered heart
which pumps their opaque blood to every oyster part.

Susanne Holt is a poet and teacher from the northwest of England. She started out as a news reporter, and then did her first degree in English and French. After time spent in Paris, Susanne moved into teaching, and now lectures in Creative Writing and English Literature. Returning to her first love, poetry about 3 years ago, she has completed a short collection entitled 'Family Fables' and is currently working on a second.

Her poems move between free verse and rhymed stanzas and focus on a view of the world that is not always revealed to the naked eye. Her poems try to search out what lies beneath. Susanne's biggest influence is Elizabeth Bishop, and she is currently completing a research paper on the American Modernist poet, Lorine Niedecker.

PETER BLOCH

If A Poet You Would Be

A poet now what would that be?
It's simple to define,
It's one who smells the roses
One who tastes the wine,
One who helps his brother
One whose thoughts are free
One who loves another.
Reciprocity.

It matters not the spondee
Or the trochee or iamb,
For poetry lies within one's soul
Yes poetry is "I AM".
Poetry is mathematics
It's structure, meter too
And if you are romantic
It's a built in part of you.

So take this wondrous store of words
Arrange them in a verse
Forget your emo egos
It's an ego boosting curse,
When your work is finished
And it's how it needs to be
Then write it. Let us have a look
If a poet you would be.



Peter Bloch is a teacher of Information Technology who is taking a break from teaching. He is happily married and currently living in Perth Western Australia. He is a New Zealand citizen, normally based in the central North Island. He was born, raised and educated in the United Kingdom before migrating to the antipodes in 1960. He enjoys gardening, reading, writing and caravan camping in the bush. He has three children all who work overseas in the Information Technology area. His wife is a painter and poet and wonderful woman. "Needless to say" he writes, "without her love I am nothing."

W E N D Y S A W

genesis; the true story of a modern day atlantis

in this skin
 this air
 this place
oxygen is dry
and i become
carboxyphilic;

burn away sloughed skin
the embers sear and melt in flame bright sparks
against night's charcoal hair

and
 i dive down;
 molecules of water trapped between nails
 bubbles brushing against, bursting open on,
 burning
into new skin made raw by carbon oxides.

it is colder than evolution,
and i am drowning
 filling with the
 heavy
 double
 bonds
 of
 O₂
once my saviour

i blink;
 we crawled from the sea, now calm.
i breathe;
 we will hunt in the midnight forest.
i burn;
 we shall feel kingdoms gather beneath our feet.

*reach out; grasp black water
rushing further down into infinity,
a raindrop never fell so fast
nor burned so bright*



Wendy Saw lives in Perth, Australia. She has always wanted to live in a cottage, be perpetually drunk and write awful poetry, but since she doesn't drink alcohol, has resigned herself to being a mere student. Literature keeps her from going insane.

CHRISTINA WORMANN

The Status of Thoughts

Being the over analyzer that I am,
so many suspicious thoughts that once lurked insecurely in the
back of my mind
now push and shove their way to the front;
stepping on the toes of the dismissive thoughts and knocking the
idealistic ones to the
ground,
while the rational thoughts step aside calmly;
waiting patiently to resume their place at the head of the line.



Christina graduated from Caldwell College where she studied Psychology and Fine Arts. Though she has written poetry for years, it wasn't until her friend O'Livia urged her to go to a poetry reading a few years ago that she started sharing her work. She currently lives in New Jersey with her stand-up comedian boyfriend, Cal.

JNANA HODSON

Recovering Olympus X

if a wrong turn
short-circuits map-webbing
follow it close as a spell
that kicks up stones while
bouncing down a logging lane
with a dust-plume for a tail
saying this can't be the way
yet unwilling to turn back
- following Oil City Road
though we don't yet know its name)
through heifers standing in our path
& stump-filled fields –
hi-yo, hi-yo
no oil, no city – abandoned
town that's fallen in
futile quest for riches

until you arrive, by surprise at last
in rain forest, river mouth
-- Ohalat-at-the-Sea,
Hrafn's holy ground –
where a single scale fell
from the big fish in his mouth
when Hraban returned from Heaven
stealing Eagle's sun-moon-stars
fresh-water, fire-in-his-claws
to give Earth's peoples

losing his snowy coat to smoke
-- blackness the sun washes white



without Promethean flaw, he's gone
uncaught
& laughs at blueback salmon
that struggle up stone-flour streams
sloshing from Zeus-Thunderbird's
ice caves
Whale-Catching-Man-in-Feathers
who scalds the brine
Don't drop your whales
upon us!

but ward off long-range bombers
-- heavy Boeing arrows
& keep these channels sacred
for in Indian religious ceremonies
your performance
was bloodiest, most savage of all;
performers painted their bodies black
-- especially their faces –
& cut their skin
to bleed profusely.
They whistled sharp to imitate wind
& hooted like owls
or howled like wolves
-- flashed pinewood torches
to represent lightning –
simulated thunder by pounding drums
or firing guns

Publication of his novel, *Ashram: Adventures on a Yoga Farm* (an ebook from PulpBits.com), has
Jnana feeling like a true boot-camp revolutionary who's finally earned a full night's sleep.
Alley-oop!

ANONYMOUS



cause and effect

bells rings
lights dim
boys drool
we are captivated by
 movies that simplify mysteries
how butterflies can cause hurricanes
 a flutter of wings
the moon blocking out the sun
 ancient miracles explained
by science and things

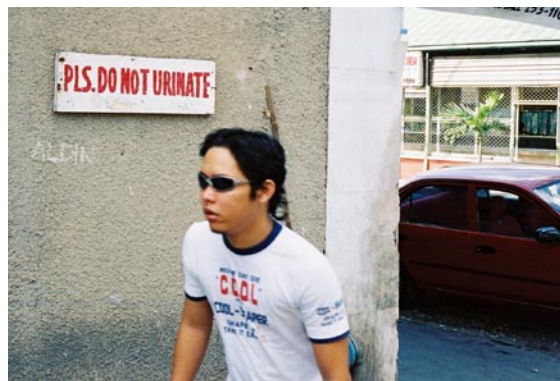
the nebulous cloud rolled back
 and spoke; a universe
set into motion
 your hand brushes mine

primordial soup formed
 your face and your touch
but my synapses fail for
an animal attraction and
i'm defeated by your scent

its natural selection now
 i'm tied up and bound
ready for a bloody sacrifice
 if you just say the word

language evolves from forgotten tongues
 betraying erection excused for
some indiscretion the feeling
 extinct.

don't close your eyes you might
 miss the evolution the
rolling stone, she gathers no moss
 but leaves behind a trail of busted stuff.



feelin' so logical!



Come check out **The Temple of Earth**, the world's first "non-religious religion," a religion of *reason*. Ordain for free. No obligation, no donations, and you don't have to wear a funny hat. Why should adherents to the irrational have all the fun? Visit www.templeofearth.com. Let's get logical.

*** disclaimer: we are not a bunch of weirdos**

