

BE-AT

An Anthology of Poems by The National
and International Beat Poets Laureate

Edited by James P. Wagner (Ishwa)

National Beat Poetry Foundation & Festival

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This book is dedicated to a group of individuals who have inspired others to express themselves. They are the new generation of “Beats”. Typically it is those who have something to say and want their voices to be heard.

Foreword

The **Beat Generation** is a literary movement started by a group of writers whose work explored and influenced American culture and politics in the post-World War II era. The bulk of their work was published and popularized throughout the 1950s. In a rare interview in French (with English subtitles) for a Canadian television channel, Kerouac explained how he came up with the name that described the literary movement of his generation, the **Beat Generation**. Jack Kerouac was asked what he thought being ‘beat’ meant. For the interviewer he redefined the word ‘beat’ as ‘BE-AT’(Latin), but insisted that was not important. When hearing some old men talk about being crushed by society, beaten down, poor, defeated, Kerouac expressed sympathy for their plight. He decided that his generation, ‘The Beat Generation’ would not succumb to what society dictated. He would exercise his ‘voice’ to prevent it, and inspire others to do likewise.

The original beats were heavily influenced by Zen Buddhist Philosophy. In consideration of the philosophy, the phrase ‘BE-AT’ (Latin) implied consciousness of who you were, what you were doing and where you were going at the present moment of time – in a word, full-awareness of space/time consciousness and one’s place in it. In this context, the objective of beat poetry is use to that tool to improve all corporeal, interpersonal, and spiritual aspects of the human condition.

These poets symbolizing be-at consciousness would become known as the **Beat Generation**, a group of writers interested in changing consciousness and defying conventional writing. Their work was based upon the premise that they would be true to themselves and express their ‘voice’ about matters that

concerned them. No one would tell them how to write, what to write about, or infringe upon their expression in any way. Beat poetry is free verse in every sense of the word. Every word, phrase, and line represented their right to express themselves in the manner they saw fit without regard to any preconceived notion of style or format. The style was one's own, the format one's right to choose, and the subject matter one's license to use. No one had the right to choose it for you.

Our new generation of 'Beats' is following that dream. That is to be free of the encumbrance of 'conventions' and 'expectations'. Those are the societal conventions that dictate what to do, what to say, how to think, and how to act. Primarily conventions and expectations are thought-control and behavior modifications designed to remind a person he or she is not free. He or she is confined by the boundaries of imposed mind-control; consigned to live in their box, never test the boundaries of it, and be satisfied with their lot in life. Such individuals live in a box. Our new generation of beats has decided they don't want to live in their box. In essence, they want to expand outside of it because when one stretches one's arms one doesn't want to feel the sides. It is confirmation one is not free. To be confined by a box means one is imprisoned by it. For a beat, it becomes a moral imperative to break free and nurture the free spirit inside you. A beat takes that opportunity to express their 'voice' and makes the most of it.

It defeats the purpose of living if one is not free to be him or herself. It begs the question: Who else are they supposed to be? Are we supposed to be carbon-copies of each other or am I supposed to be me? The wondrous diversity of Nature I see around me informs me I am supposed to be me. The logical choice then is to embrace my individuality and be me.

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National Beat Poets Laureate

George Wallace: 2015-2016

The Truth Of The Matter

it is the fourth of july and the children of america are barefoot in the sand and run like shadows into and out of the sun, they wave their big flag and they cast no shadows, because they are creatures of the sun, shadows have not touched them yet and the flag which follows behind them waves and waves like the sun, the sun shines everywhere for the children of america and they grow like indian corn, naturally.

and they lie in the sun and stare into eternity, unlike the boy reading the newspaper who is paying close attention to the news of the world, and they do not know the truth of the matter, they ignore the world, which is better than paying so much attention to it the way adults do, and it's better that way, what the adults know is often very stupid and anyhow there are no shadows that grow on children yet -- no shadows of love, no shadows of longing, no shadows of law or debt or disillusion, no government no death no loss no gain no limitation.

and it is the fourth of july, it is the birthday of america and the fireworks will come, the fireworks will come, sooner rather

than later i mean, when the sun goes down it will be dusk and the children of america will look up at the big display and they will wonder, they will look up and laugh and clap their hands, and one or two of them will know the truth of the matter, and be sad, and nothing can stop any of this from happening.

Coyote, This Time

The road leads north across the desert until there is no more road only the border wall and that is patrolled by another man in a jeep who throws no shadow. It is the age of helicopter steel. It is the age of the drone and the vigilante, it is the age of fear between men and men, and some men are hollow, hollow as a metal jacket. We do not need more men like that. We need more men like this man waiting for a change in the weather in the desert heat. This man, his hands are shaking with cold, his heart soaking up the world like bread and water. He is a man only a man, but he is making plans to defeat a wall another man has built. And he will defeat it. Kiss the ring and call it holy, where there is work there are men, because there are mouths to fill and the means to fill them. Seal a man in a cactus shell, toss him over the Rio Grande. He will open it up and he will climb back out again.

No one can separate a man from his work, not even a president. A man is stubborn, a man like this man anyway. His breath escapes his body like cold fog, his old life was a prison his new life is a dream, dreams don't die and you can't keep a good man out. He's a leather glove and if you toss him out of a car window and leave him to die his fingerprints will just crawl out and he will keep on coming. He will bounce back, he will cross your fucking border and stand on the corner until someone comes along to give him work and he will nail your

roofbeams and spackle your walls, he will put the hinges on your empty coffins.

Cross your heart and hope to die. He is unapologetic, a double fisted immigrant, just like your grandpappy was. His name is Coyote, this time. His name is America.

How The Mist Moves

to make love to you the way the mist moves, without motive
or logic, like a bird of prey, like sufi dancing, like the first
man to look beyond the golden valley and feel the urge to go,
just go, to stray across the river and go into the glow

i am accustomed to the wind and weather and the city,
how heavily raindrops fall on concrete, all isotopes and jazz,
all mad water, and i am accustomed to the eastern sea, its
pavilions and concourses, its secret contours and confessions,
its corridors of being,

but i have never known the earth like this, in the hands of
sun, my hands, how urgently they rifle through morning --
how the mist moves, in search of itself, through your hair,
through your clothing, through my impoverishment

and these gestures you offer to the sun and to me, their
rhythm, their movement, i have never known gestures quite
like these, radioactive, liquid as volcanic rock, quick as
obsidian, this sad timepiece ticking in its secret coil and mortal
shell

and om to your eyes, and om to your lips, blue nests on
mountaintops, and om to this eternal confusion, this thing
called infatuation

and i am a man only a man, and you are a category of womanhood i have never known, you reside beyond scandal or desire, unknown even to yourself, and between us daylight grows pregnant and alive, bold as canna lilies and ready to open!

If Rocks Were Huckleberries And Every Oak Leaf A Message From God

if i had a handful of coffeebeans, and a grinding machine;
and squirrels in the yard, and a rifle; and onions and carrots
and a sharp knife to cut them up with, and a few potatoes and
a little salt, and a clear stream running;

if i had an iron pot and dry matches in a box and tinder in a
pan; and shingles and nails and a few sheets of window glass
to keep out the rain; and a path to my door and a friend in
town with a wagon to visit me once in awhile and relieve the
silence, and bring me tea leaves and sugar, and tell me the
news;

if i had a tree with hickory nuts and the wind to blow them
out of the swaying branches; if rocks were huckleberries and
every oak leaf a message from god;

if there was a way to hit apples out of apple trees, safely, i
mean, with my fist or with a long stick, so that i could catch
them in my hands unbruised, and drop them into a wicker
basket well woven by me, and a horse and a hog to share those
apples with;

if i had a deep front porch and a straight back chair, and a watchful dog to sit with me and interpret the meaning of storm clouds brewing; and a wife who loved me back, and woke with me up like birds wake me in the morning; and a grandchild learning the alphabet on the floor; you might never hear from me again.

If You Could Remove The Dead From The Dead

if you could remove the dead from the dead, bomb by bomb, eye by eye, if you could pluck the mad bull screaming, from blood and from dust, from the arena, death unstrung, life returned, the fields of faces, their embraces, like clover, like honey, tooth by tooth like bees in grass, while the generals were not watching i mean, while the dictators were not watching, while the idiotic cheers and jeering of the crowd, while the circular race of steel and money and blood and macho, while the worship of the sword, nobody watching,

oh it is crazy to think it, oh it is stupid to imagine it, all the sleeping dead rising from death, standing at the bridge, looking down from the parapet, all the incoherent laughter, perfect innocents raised back up from the heap, all the untroubled song, no more disillusionment, no more oblivion, do you understand what i'm trying to say, can you see it for yourself, the slaughtered sons and daughters, sharecroppers and soldiers, students, nurses, peasants and miners, all the sweet lives returned to the living,

and all of us embracing them as they rise, i would have you embrace them, i would have you salute and sing them, and welcome them, the dead from the dead, eye by eye, released from their paralysis, liberated from the uselessness and consignment of their caustic dead sleeping, risen from the junta of dollar and nation and power and design, speaking

truth to the ruling class, talking the true talk to those who carelessly plant them into soil,

no not again, no more this root and rock of going! the dead from the dead, taking back their plows and their farmhats, shaking the reins their fathers and grandfathers put in their hands and returning to their work, hands full of seed and dreams and callouses and sweat, can you hear them singing, the song of the living, can you see the morning sun in their beautiful faces, their penetrating smiles, can you feel all that, their small love, their bravery, men and women, risen, children of god again, risen, their mothers' voices softly ringing in their ears,

and am i so stupid as to suggest it, am i so stupid as to imagine it, all their faces in the mist of civilizations and idiotic rain, the dead separated from the dead, bullet by bullet, eye by eye, walking again, hand in hand, like the walking sun

Lori Desrosiers : 2016-2017

Redemption

At midnight I notice
the stretch between time zones.
Hawaii eats last night's supper while
Ireland is waking to tomorrow.

We live unaware of the curvature of Earth
undaunted by atmospheric shift
unfazed by sunspots, tidal currents
meteors pass, satellites hum
we sleep unconcerned.

We are a blip
someone once said
in the arc of history
and what we call history
is only the human story.

We look for evidence
of ourselves in our world's soil
but before that were millions
of years without us
after us is forever time
beyond even the concept of time.

Yet there are good things
legends we have invented,
stories told, art wrought
songs sung for centuries
evidence of our best selves.

Despite our future slumber
in time's uncaring cradle
this is our hope for redemption.

The King of Television

All hail the king of television
Gaimon's book come true
the gods of materialism have won.

He walks onto the stage
framed by a giant screen
cameras strobe in applause.

Phones held high light the Mall
the hired audience sings an ode
to whiteness, money, success.

Someone punches in the code
fake fireworks light the Memorial
Pretend to remember Lincoln

pretend to remember King
pretend to admire Obama
pretend to care about history.

He doesn't care to care
he thanks you all for coming
but you are not there.

You are at the protests
lighting candles
waiting, watching

for his inevitable fall
as five letter signs
tumble to the pavement

We are real, there are more of us
and we know how to switch
the televisions off.

Published in Nicholas Kristoff's blog, *The New York Times*, January 25, 2017

Praise to the Earth

Praise to the ocean, waves and foam, bright reef fish hiding in anemone, sharks and whales doze below, above them cormorants and gannets float. To waves that roll into shore at night, the moon reflecting sea foam's white, the breakers in sync with our breathing as the buoy bell sings in the harbor.

Praise to tiny creatures, amoebae and molds, bacteria, to the algae sisters Chloro, Phaeo and Rhodophyta, green and blue-green. lichen, moss and plankton. Praise to nanobes and eukaryotes.

Praise to beach roses, pink under street lights; to peonies, iris and lilac; even at midnight inhale the scent; to the bees, safe in their hive, to evening clouds, white moon behind them; summer rain, watering the gardens.

Praise to writers and scribblers, fruit in the bowl, mat on the table, water in the mug. To the record on the turntable, the hat on the hat stand, the coat on the chair.

Praise to new parents walking a baby, to the restless soldier home from war. Praise to the peacemakers.

To poets, listeners to the night noises, cicadas, clapping of wings. To snorers and dreamers, singers in their sleep. Praise to the Earth, our home.

In *Carrying the Branch, Poets in Search of Peace* (anthology).
Glass Lyre Press, 2017.

Words are Not Enough

Some days I realize
that all I have is words
which are not enough

though I also have
this body to push with
its muscles and sinew

the bit of strength in them
and there is also music
the sound of rain on canvas

the roiling of waves
my feet lead me to dunes
or over stone bridges

and the smell of moss,
lavender, or grape iris
and the taste of roses,

fog, or salt in the wind
creak of tree sap
wails of nesting crows

orange hills at dusk
then indigo evening
and limitless starlight

which is
more than I can fathom
or just enough.

In *Peacock Journal*, July 2017.

Yellow Dragonfly

After you met me in the park
we sang Leonard Cohen's

"Dance Me to the End of Love"
on the steps by the church.

I played my samba for you,
with the scat in it, *bada daba daa*.

After your car pulled away,
I walked down the municipal building

steps, swinging my guitar.
A yellow four-winged dragonfly

hovered above my car,
buzzed by the window

as if it had never seen a girl
as if I had never seen a yellow dragonfly.

In Sometimes I Hear the Clock Speak, Lori Desrosiers,
Salmon Poetry, 2016.

William F. DeVault: 2017-2018

Vodka and Condoms

bring vodka and condoms
she said
I heard
her say it in a sotto voce whisper
rough with fear and hunger
like a cat in heat in a cage
wanting something
she couldn't ask for in
simpler terms
because the words had sharp edges
nothing more than someone
to tell her what is expected of her
between the courses of life
when she wants to be wanted
as we all do
under the influence
of vodka and condoms

Captain America and Bucky Bukowski

word-slinging superhero sidekick.
fighting for freedom and the occasional bender.
born on my birthday, not the fourth of July,
but he would have been the right age
at the right time
and how the history of the war
might have been different with
Bucky Bukowski teaming up with
Captain America.
going against the flow
coming in low
then exploding in an expletive-laden
flurry of word-punches
that got the thought across
to enemies of free speech
with the right to remain
anything but silent.

Padparadscha

you alone will know where to find me
you alone I will not refuse

the path broadens, then narrows.
stone to clay to dust to grass to stone again.
when the sun is at the right angle
I can see the long neglected spires.

home.

you alone will know where to find me
you alone I will not refuse

when the wind blows, it is from the South.
when the rain falls, it is down from the skies.
when the sun rises, I can see the edge
of a world I have never comprehended.

you alone will know where to find me
you alone I will not refuse

vacant streets save for the occasional ghost
of seasons and reasons long past and cast aside.
a bride of dust. the pride of trust, forgotten.
I am home now, and there is much to be done.

home.

you alone will know where to find me
you alone I will not refuse

the trivialities of other, lesser cities.
pale purgatories to one who has lived
where the gemstones pierce the night
and shed their light on the dreams of lovers.

you alone will know where to find me
you alone I will not refuse

find your way to me, when you can and will.
I will clear out the upper levels of the palace
and lay new stone by my hands, black marble
for the bare feet of acolytes who have fled.

home.

you alone will know where to find me
you alone I will not refuse

I hide in the open, so only the blind miss me.
the tumbling weeds and hungry hornets pass by
and acknowledge me not, for I am not relevant
in the green waves of prairie grass they inhabit.

you alone will know where to find me
you alone I will not refuse

my voice echoes in the violent silence until...
until the echoes find synergy and it sounds
like a multitude, a host of fair heirs, chanting.
and all my words are of you. all my words are true.

home.

you alone will know where to find me
you alone I will not refuse

the dust slides on the smooth stone in the wind
as the moon illuminates without heat
and I shiver like a frightened child, alone
to face the morning with renewed vigor.

you alone will know where to find me
you alone I will not refuse

trouvere. priest. worshipping one of seven.
penetration without flesh or even sound.
the riddle of scrimshaw on jigsaw people.
the towers shift in spectrum, but retain strength.

home.

you alone will know where to find me
you alone I will not refuse

two hundred and twenty three stairs, gently curving,
and I am undeserving to ascend them, empty handed
but for yet another sack of words, awaiting worms
to feed upon me as I lay, sightless, forgotten.

you alone will know where to find me
you alone I will not refuse

the lotus blossom minarets whistle in the wind
and I watch the dance of the stars, forgetting years
and vows I had made, without malice or regret
for I am caught up in the universe and the sky.

home.

you alone will know where to find me
you alone I will not refuse

my padparadscha prison was smoothed by hand and sand
and now stands, neglected. too long. too long.
and I am not an agent of rebirth, my muscles
will be dust and rust before you find your way here.

home.

I rained poetry

there is no fear on the edge:
joy.
joy is what I find in the instants
between moments
when my feet are touching nothing but
sky
and the rocks recede
to return.
sooner or later.
driven by grave gravity
and the intemperate nature of natural law.
but
in the brisant moment,
leaping from
precipice to precipice,
I am reborn,
triggered and transfigured.

worn away are the chains of
the pains of
the stains of
mortal mediocrity
and I -
I am one with the clouds.

and I rain poetry.
(for that is my nature.)

as you turn your face skyward
to catch a few drops
on a tongue parched
by the dry air of memory
and the sun of shallow sentiments,
sold in the Hallmark rack
in the name of mass seduction.

and I rain poetry.

to irrigate the fields of forever
and make them ready for the seeds
planted without your realizing it
when you waved to me
as I ran the cliffs
high above the plains of stale acceptance.
and danced.
and danced.
and danced like a hurricane.
at the thought of you,
naked in the rain.

and I rained poetry.

bringing the thunder at the appropriate moment

when all other senses were spent
and only sound could
penetrate

the wet shell of overloaded synapses.
what passes for the echo
of fire that surged
and purged
the very ions of our irony.

and I rained poetry.

calling the winds to lift me.
to gift me with the words
that you would carry,
eroded into your sandstone soul.
nevermore the monolith,
but an aggregate of your essence
with flecks of my pitchblende.
bound to you by eloquence
that quenched an ancient thirst,
cursed to you
in a garden you will never see
except in the mirages of the maelstrom.

and I rained poetry.

and it was nothing.

compared to a single, honest kiss.
but it was,
in the absence of passion,
a worthy golem in the armies of solitude
up
on the cliffs
where I still dance with the winds.
and call the thunder.
even when no one watches.
or cares
or dares
to dance along.
(for that is my nature.)

cantare

so close to heaven.

so close.

I heard the distant music.

so close.

then you danced away

like the stars at dawning.

so close.

enigma and insult.

no anger. sorrow.

free will makes us all victims

of our best intentions.

so close.

the feelings remain.

trapped in closets barely closed

and visited when I need to feel.

so close.

International Beat Poet Laureate

Chryssa Velissariou 2017-2018 (Greece)

Fight Arrogance - Do Die Without Sorrow

(Υβριν αμόνου - Τελεύτα άλυπος, Delphic Maxim)

All this love, which I can not even bear,

All this endless worship,

all this game with death!

A moth with black wings

became a prey to the light

to approach for a while and

extinguish with it,

falling onto it.

Who the hell am I, me to uproot

the stars from the skies?

Who the hell am I, to go against the waves?

Who am I, to offend the sacred?

I'm the one I am!

I can not be otherway.

I give, I engage myself, I am strong.

I spend myself for what I crave

Sacrificed for the ones I became one

I fall in love with life

I catch fire falling on it.

Inspiration! I guess I do not have much time!

The gods punish Arrogance,

cut the life's thread earlier, said my ancestors
Let's get drunk then, with what is left!
Do not leave me alone, I crawl towards you as a
humble supplicant..
Come with me!
Time is running out!
For how long malevolent Atropos*
will sharpen her scissors;
You, do you hear me? Cut my thread, I want to go first!
I own my fate.
One thing I know, I don't need the wear.
But most of all... I know how to live,
That's why I can even die,
without fear.

*Atropos was one of the three goddesses of fate in ancient Greek Mythology. The one who was responsible to cut the human life's thread, so the one who was responsible for death.

Wish Happiness

(Ευτυχίαν εύχου, Delphic Maxim)

It is so simple to be happy!

Forget for a moment yourself and
meet the joy in the eyes of your loved ones,
now, before and after,
all that you 've collected in
the balconies of your mind.

In Antonis's when you were kissing him,
in Thanasis's when you were nursing him,
in Despina's when teaching together ,
when Melina enjoyed the sea,
when Catherine wrote her first poem,
when Vasso was meeting you on Sunday in church,
when Costas was confirming in front of you
with a paper the laws of fall like Galileo,
in Pericles's when you were sitting next to him,
in Kiki's and Maria's when you were returning dizzy
from your student nighters,
in Vasilis's when married,
in Costas's when you tickled his nose,
when Fotis were analyzing to you ancient philosophy,
in Stella's when she was talking to you about her big love,
in Spiros's when he was dreaming .

Happiness is an endless puzzle full of memories,
which accumulate yet,
so you still can smile.

Be Suspicious Of None

(Υφορώ μηδένα - Delphic maxim)

I 'm walking towards you in open arms.

Without any shield.

Want to trust you.

My imperishable body is full of wounds

bleeding, but so sweet

because of love.

I look at you in the eyes, stranger !

Hit! I can stand it.

Waiting for you.

Belief in you from the beginning.

I still am vulnerable.

But no defence.

In my life's path I will always risk

to know you as friend

fully uncovered.

I do not follow any precautions

won't lose what I 'm able

to be, innocent.

I will welcome you unrepentantly.
As much as the pain,
more will be joy.

My caring smile brought you by my side
I'm like a tree branch
to your wind's blow.

Bending, not breaking, I need your breath
my unknown brother,
just to experience.

Wisdom and happiness your approach
I won't confine you
to any limit.

Looking forward for you openminded,
I accept, I hope
you'll bring the light.

It's just me, it's just you, like children
let us play again
in the same yard.

Respect Parents

(Γονείς σέβου, Delphic maxim)

Father, Mother!

You stood puzzled there back
in the past.

I've charged you with the wings of an Angel,
together with the horns of the Beast.

You are watching my today with embarrassment.

Am I or am I not the one
you had dreamed

the night I was sown?

I leer into myself on your criticism,
sucking promiscuously your praise.

Egged on or pacified unexpectedly only by a nod.

You've been loved,
embraced,

fought with tooth and nail
in your relationship,

in society,
against prejudices,

against yourselves

as I was watching, learning
proceeding on these trails.

I am the vision in the nights of lust,

the product of the fears,

the firefly in the darkness of hesitation.

I create,
spreading in future your genes being
absorbing moisture from your principles and care.
I exist as a tree, the offshoot of your root.
And I 'm pleased, I suffer, I enjoy life, joy
blessed by your persistence.
If I fall or get up
die or awaken
if I make mistakes
in despair or in hope,
fell in love or giving birth,
you , there, rock-solid in the soil,
helping my coming back.
I became conscient now,
time revealed to me
both your weaknesses and greatness
I saw you at last completely.
The gap between us, an illusion.
You and I, as candle and flame
we give a meaning
in the perpetuation of the souls,
the future of evolution,
the cheating of Death.

I fight with tooth and nail
in the battle of love,
in society
against prejudice,

against myself
increasingly submitting
my respect on your path.
Till the fateful moment
when you,nailed longer in the star-shining firmament,
will encourage my war against the night.
"Where you were, I was
and where I am, you will come "- told me grandma.

Follow God-Respect Entities-Test The Sacred

(Ἐπεὶ Θεῶ, Θεοῦς σέβου, Ὅσια κρίνε, Delphic maxims)

Well yes, it was not written for ever.

It was for a while, just a sip, a contact,
a threshold's exceedence.

The lost truth mutually to be taught
by the one to the other .

Our conscience to be shaken,
to be awaken, to be tested.

We were looking for it by ourselves,
Divine Grace provided,

I do not know...

I shun to talk about my beliefs, aloud.

Besides what else could God be
than the voice shouting in me?

State Beat Poets Laureate 2017-2019

Chris Vannoy - State of CA, San Diego

He asked me what "BEAT" was
So I told him, "Beat is NOT a "what"
"BEAT" is an "IT"

It's Jazz blues crying out on the night
Of moody stars
Over a city that never sleeps

It's a struggle of hard bones and empty bottles

It's dreams left sleeping by the click-clack rail road tracks
And dreams waking on beaches
with the taste of last night's drunk still in your mouth

It's calling out your lovers name so loud
That it shakes the sky to brightness
Then moving through the day with fierce determination

It's living present and feeling the perception
That there will not be another day like this ever

It's balancing feathers and driving around the world
With the stereo blasting through the interstellar air

It's blades spinning through psychedelic movements
of wind
Powering the light of the end of the world

It's beat children struggling to save a beat plant
From plastic bags roiling in a radiated sea
"Beat" is beat down, "Beat" is beat up
"Beat" is life, baby!

Beat is when someone takes all you have
then disappears into the fog of missing possibilities
And leaves you there crying at a table set for one

Beat is when you don't care anymore that you are beat
And you just lean forward and listen to the flapping
Of your shoes on the hot asphalt of
A slow boiling summer's day
Beat is "Ya man", Beat is "YA Man"
Beat is "YA MAN, cool, Cool, COOL!"

It breaks over you in waves of spent notes
Spilling wildly from some musician's pinched lipped horn
It eats into you like a hungry worm
Then wraps around you like a hot smooth woman
On a cool/warm night

Beat is the long slow cry of distant train whistles at
midnight

In the middle of a long dark dream
It's knowing you are standing on a path
Where one journey ends and another one begins

Beat is watching the vapor trails of airplanes
Criss-crossing the sky's and knowing
That you will be somewhere else when
Tomorrow burns a new experience inside you

It's tapping shoes and nodding heads
And wild screams when you can't contain the joy
that's inside of you
It moves your feet
Propels you across the floor
And throws you into the arms of a pretty girl
While the musician on stage is smiling because
He feels it too
So he starts pounding the piano so hard
That the sound is flying out through the electric air
As the drummer taps his high hat of unexplored
possibilities
Beat is finding the rhythm in the poem
Beat is life man, Beat is LIFE!

Arlandia 032317

He was waiting at the airport
for his wife to come from Syria

Three and one half years it had been
since he had seen her smile as warm as
the fresh baked bread
she had fixed for him
on the day he left to find this new life
for the two of them
far from the rattle of machine gun fire
and barrel bombs

cradled in his arms was a bouquet of
long stemmed red roses
the same color of the ones
that once grew in their garden
before the war came

behind him was the conflict
that had taken most of his friends
and many of his family

He paced the newly polished floor in anticipation
his new shoes squeaking with each step
and he knew that with each step
she was coming closer to him

and this night she would be there
safe in his arms again.

Eskilstuna Rag 032917

The snow flakes are dancing around me
And I am smiling
Ginsberg is sleeping in Izzy's basement
And I am smiling as
Dylan's ghost throws down another whisky
And I am drunk on IPA
Charlie Chaplin taps his cane
Listening to the thumping beat
of Jazz mixed with old friends

Irene screams slam poetry
Standing on top of the piano
Where Tom Waits bangs out a new tune
With a cigarette dangling from his lower lip

As the psychedelic Juke Box
Drops another record onto
the turntable of the world and
Bessie Smith drones from the speaker
where Miles blows his midnight horn

Marlene catches my eye with a wink
And we are dancing, dancing, dancing....

Softly Raging 052017

I had been delayed in my travels
Retraced my errant steps
back up the slow long hill, stopped
when my lungs screamed for air

When I opened the door
The wind came in behind me
A chill of dark dreams danced in the corner
Then moved across the silence
of no clock ticking and asked
why I wandered here

A faint line of empty chairs shifted
The inevitable glass
Of half emptied of whiskey
Rattled on the three legged table

The bottle of emotion
Resting prone upon the floor
Found my hand around its neck
It whispered it's sorrows to me
In a sad lament filled with sighs

With a toast for no one who was someone once
This cuddled day found my lips moving over

The verses of his notebooks

The words tasted of sea and ash
As the night disappeared
Into a sadness of stars
that trembled in the raging light

I got beat In San Francisco

I was blessed by beats
in the holy temple of City Lights.
Slammed by word speakers in Seattle
as Star Bars sparkled in my eyes.
Paloozed in a tent of hissing spoken word.
I was saved in San Diego by the POET'S TREE
Sangria Lizzie
dazzled me with her hot Spanish licks on my cool
blue skin.
She left my heart beating
like flamenco dancer's shoes.
Oracle Mark waits at the intersection of Park and
Washington
with the angst of Market Street still on his Southern
Comfort lips
Hovering over me!
Smelling of a bad women in a deep blues dress.
"ARE YOU A POET MAN?", he kept saying,
"ARE YOU A POET?"
Man! I feel deliverance moving in.
Sprouting hairs from my chin.
My hands stroke bongo's.
I got the beat, my hip feet hit the street,
along sidewalks, past Kerouac's Alley,
he was out with Sally, drinking again,
thinking about going to Mexico.

Allen was howlin' in the fog
that blanketed North Beach.

Bukowski!

Slummin' in the hotel of lost souls saying
that POETRY just saved his ass.

Ferlinghetti lives in City Lights
spends nights painting pictures by the window.

Beat, Beat, Beat, my feet hit the streets
and I was out there, way out there man!
Silver plane giving me wings,
my bags full of word things
spilling from the shuttle that droned me home.

Dangerous Dan, the "word man"
he met me at the gate,
said that I'd be late
for the reading needing readers.
Exceedingly tired
I pulled my felt hat down.

The POETMAN was back in town!

Annie Sauter - State of CO

She Would Have Been From Decatur

The Florence Home was named after the daughter of New York drug maker Charles N. Crittenton. Florence died from scarlet fever in 1882, at the age of four. Distraught after his daughter's tragic death, Charlesfounded the Florence Crittenton Home to provide shelter for "erring and wayward" women. This label referenced the former prostitutes that the New York home first served, but it also reflected a widespread stigma surrounding any childbirth outside of traditional marriages at the time.

She would have been from
Decatur, but that was before

That grim girl,
Daughter of Roy and Hazel Grimes
Met that blond-haired
Sailor, in from Great Lakes Naval Center
North of Chicago.
That sailor , all cracker-jacked
And muscled-fine with
His post-war basics,

Training, in the bus station
Ready to

See the world. His girl

Barbara, Valentine

Box

Of heart , in hand

Cherry-chocolate and soft-

Centered in her sneakers

And felt poodled

Skirt,

All Swirl, was swept up,

Smoothed as sin, all skin

And lips-

A confined red

The silkiest of

Satins-straight line to the

Rest of her world.

Sat at the same

Bus station, busting the button off,

That broken zipper-Off

To the big city

No training for her

Just basics, at the Florence

Crittenden Home,
For Prostitutes , and
Unwed mothers.

Otherwise,

She would have just been
Another girl
From Decatur.

Dark Matter: The Flesh of Fear

Out here at the end, where the galaxy
 Bends , and where I can look back in
 Through all the pinholes in the sky
I feel their journey into red
 Giants and the dead ,
Dwarves --Naked -- lonely as ice.

I take my clothes off too. Shake them
Skin flakes fall, like snow: A whiteout--softly
Becoming only infinity.

Or perhaps, then, they go beyond.

I have no directions, and
 There can be
None. There is no return. I know that now.

It is obvious from where I stand
The only way now : Is further
We all used to know that. It was part of us.
We wrote it on our walls, on
Our hearts and on our bodies.

That further was the only , not
Just a door out , but

The only entrance, or exit
To anywhere.

I watch you struggle with the likes
Of pictures, conjured: True as a hope
That I can never understand. Imagining That

A deep need Can be manipulated,
By your vision, as a tool, into flesh
 As cool as smooth-skinned beauty
Itself. A Peach-soft
And perfectly rounded. Sweet
Without sustaining--even
A single bruise in picking.

As if denying harvest, means that
It was never of a cycle. But a spiral

Or, just the
Luck of the draw, the spin
 Of some wheel, always
 ISO-- All the *right* numbers, as if
Love were as simple as the *right* calculation, a

Lottery , and if only it were played
Right, at the *right* moment. Time
Would stop. No-- it would be suspended . No
Rewound --But you

Only find yourself re-wounded, bloody
And red as a pit caught in skin-tight
As stretched as pain itself.

Forever , inside the safe place. The canal to the next
Nebula, pink ribbed as a vaginal hole, but emptied
And so hard, and literal, that

I thought it was real. Then you say,
Georgia O'Keefe was only painting
Flowers. But grass needs to be cut, (they say),

Even in a desert. Even in a trailer park.
Where you tell me , I need to find my scissors too.
To free the fleas in the bush,

But I won't--Cyber flowers never rot.

But you. No , you keep plucking your own
Stardust of C H O N, and
Dying it . Bleaching it. Picking it.

All loined--As fruit, still filled
As random possibility, disguised as truth
Some stupid supposed proof, stating,

The lame-- "Everything happens for a reason"

Skillfully you disregard pus and age. So
In the heat, *I make you tuna*

And you see her smooth fleshed thighs
In the pale pink meat. Your tongue imagines
Creamy as mayonnaise , as forever

As Twinkies--and she is eating them
The *Right Way*-- no need to pinch them
Or her years,

Into the correct waist- to-hip ratio.
But I am light years from there.
So you tell me. *Don't burn the French*

Toast. Put jelly on like Suzi did.

Both of us drunk. You tell me you hated her.
Your mother, but baby, *I, am not dead.*
And sometimes I feel an urge to forget

To wash my hands, and then
To reach into the dusty batter
All egg and bacteria-- And create

A new star, a new planet--one for you
To orbit. But the Milky
Way is already too slippery, slathered in

Butter-- Wrapped up. But left

On the distant counter

Only to be eaten , on some other day.

In the endless halo of the end.

I think to myself,

What does one day , or two , or ten really matter?

And I know for me, it doesn't.

But for you-- in the center, you are frantic

Over the possible. Over the threat of the manifestation

Into the real--of the elusive *dark matter*.

And then? What will she think of your ?

So. You ask me for celery. Then

You lock your door.

As Stark As Our Scars

I don't love you because love requires.

It needs. Blood and breath to flow.

No not like a river

Not like thoughts

It needs to move. Needs. A place of refuge

From the likes of *principle* or even just the ears of

The jealous, the prudish,

Where you seek for their approval, with a roll

Of Duct tape.

Remove the sticky silver strips. Un-tape me.

I don't love you because I jumped ship—while you

Only jumped

Just another of your inflatable sharks-*all soul*

Less as a

Love doll--one made

For the fingerless, those

Over--endowed with scaled eyes

And fins.

A dark fin . A knife. Halves the street

Between us. Demarking our sides.

It is flesh

Blood, but not

Flow. Just

A block. A clot.

I look out and breathe, yes -

Only a sigh

Of relief. But I am relieved just the same that

I can breathe it. Not

You. You just close your blinds. Turn up

The static

And spew chum.

I don't love you

Because

I am already

Miles away. dark in the dark. Deep night in

The deepest of night-oceans. Even split as we are

By the sharp crescent of moon, still

Venus appears. But you

Only catch a glimpse.

And lose her.

*I get up. Follow her. Across a long blue strip
A vein-chill trail, beneath the skin
Of a black sky. Fresh as our*

*Flesh. Our blood. Holy as Flow.
A shark*

Stark as our scars. Its
Edges bending in the cold, to
Embrace me.

That is All I Want --Really

That is All I Want
That is all. Really.
After last night
If you didn't know already
Why I hate your late night
Internet--Hot tit and pussy hunts?
Now you must.
What did you say, you
Were going to do, to her,
With her, give to her
If she came
To you—you telling me
As if saying, but she wouldn't
Come.
Mattered.
You said. She still hadn't responded
By the time, I took my
Clothes off. All of them
Off my perfect-imperfect body, and laid
It down, for you—without
Any of the promises you made
To her being spoken--

At least not in years now,
Naked, hip to hip in the
Dark. You tell me, you humiliated yourself

With her for me, to prove ...
But there we were in the glow of the

Computer,
Exposed

To all the perils of flesh and bone.
The smells--
Too much, too little
The bed, the room, the light--
Too dark, too Bright—the air-
Too smokey, too perfumed, (you will Have
--To wash your sheets-me the stench from
My clothes) Sweet
And earthy but
Not patchoulied—and my body
In the end. Just more porridge for reality
Too hot, too cold. Too small, too big,

Never just right as
Compared to *that* image, *those*
Texts--The pictures, sent or not,

Of her—or some woman.
Any woman, “taking it”.
Looking
At her face, her gaping holes
All body , All mind, All soul-
But much less.

You think I love too much?

No.

All I want is to wake up in the day

--Light.

Being okay

With my face, with my morning after—of

Too-much

Vodka-breath, with small beads of my sweat-

Sweet-as water, on my chest

And take in, the smell of last night's love

Still wet, and *yours, warm*

Between my legs,

As I heat up--

Like water for coffee,

And stand easy, by the stove in my robe

And slippers ,

Make something simple,

That goes down so fine as you stand there

With me, behind me, and fuck me,

"Good

Morning" . And we call it love,

Or not.

Just a man. Mine, and unafraid

Of my lips, my tongue, my mouth.

Weightless

I have on your sweater
But, you say, I can only put one arm
Into one of the sleeves,

And leave the rest
Hanging,

Trailing uncertainties
I can promise you nothing

Either, except for the promise of
Massive risk

The debility of desire's
Deadly disaster ;

The certain surety
Of the salty edge

Of insanity's sting,
When it slides

Deep
Through the defining slice

Of a suddenly-sober skin

As promised, I

Have no explanation
To offer for my heart

And it refuses to look
For any , beyond

Being satisfied
To sleep

Beat-by-beat
Across your chest.

No, I am not

A woman who knows
What she needs

Even just to live
Beyond the next morning.
Because,

No, I don't know,

And I won't know, until
That sun

Rises.

And I will never sort through
All of our inevitable wrong
Turns-- looking back,

To see
Where it was that we lost
Our way

Where it was we
Became caught up

In this current
Always headed, for

Casual calamity

All I know for sure is
That the mistakes, the grief

Yes, they
Will be there,

Either way we turn.

That there is
No *other* direction

No road
We can take, that does not
Lead ultimately to ashes.

All we can do, is
Choose
Which skin it is, that
We want to burn in.

Whose crazy pain we are willing

To wear ? Whose reality we will allow
Ourselves to lie in,

Or whose truth we will invite
To rest, still and unquiet-ed

Cradled, in our lap, our arms?

And oh, yeah, I do know that your grip
on all of this, it
Is shaky--as tenuous

As my own, still

My answer is yes,

I will put yours on

Easy, close as my own skin-if you let me

---But that is not the real question

---Is it?

The real question is,

Whether , together

Can we bear it--

The weight of each other's

Fears. And, no, I don't know, and

Right now, I don't care

--The quiet of afternoons
Soaked in our sweat , in port
Music, and poetry

Or maybe just some old
DVDs-- will have to be enough.

As that is what we have here and now.

There is no other time, there is
Nowhere else

Until, or even-- if-- we can

Finally, ever realize, that

We in fact, are weightless.

Ernel O. Grant - State of CT

Black Boots

Your left; your left; your left right left (3x) Black Boots...Black Boots...

I'm beaming, smooth, spotless, no dust; you could see your reflection in my glorious spit shine

I glide across the asphalt, head held high, moving to the cadence, strutting my stuff with pride

I am a lean mean killing machine, my drill sergeants saw to that and so one can test

I have my knife, my trustworthy friend M203, M16 with a grenade launcher to put anything to rest

I follow orders like a good ole boy; invading countries; taking prisoners while proudly saluting the American flag

I'm young, aggressive and impressionable so was molded to take out anyone and anything the US deemed as a nag

Your left; your left; your left right left (2x) Black Boots...Black Boots...

Oil fields are in flames as Black smoke enveloped the landscape; it's 12 noon but nothing could be seen past 10 feet

Spit shine long ago faded; leaving beat up leather with grooves and matted dirt; I'm in a sense of confusion; feeling ashamed; what did I come here for?

Elated to be back in the states but lingering questions and uneasiness plague my brain; back to reality

So what I served for this country? Nigger please...I still have too much melanin and viewed as a threat to society

Passed over time and again for promotions; couldn't get an in-house interview because I don't match the demographics of the team

Cut my locks so I wouldn't intimidate; put on their garb and speech; not to assimilate but merely to be seen

Black Boots...Black Boots...

I fking Hate You**

Why do I feel so solemn, so helpless, so sick to my stomach?
Nose runny, eyes on the brink of overflow, heart speeding,
body lethargic
But how could I feel all this when I'm not the one fighting
for each breath?
What gives me the right to be so, so f**king mad?
Feel so cheated?
Feels like life has dealt me a bad hand, feels like I'm weak,
feels like I conceded
If I show a chink in my armor

But you fight even though breath to lungs hurts considerably
You keep fighting although you can no longer chew food
You keep fighting although you are in continuous
excruciating pain
You keep fighting although bones, lungs and brain are invaded
by this silent killer
You keep fighting when no one would blame you if you threw
in the towel

My first memory ever was of you and the moments when you
were getting ready to leave Jamaica, although we lost touch for
decades when we reconnected it was as if we were never apart
I feel, I'm human, I'm hurt, I'm distraught, but I have to
be strong
I have to fight like you are
So this is not a poem of admitting defeat, this is not a
poem about someone giving up
Instead it's saying it's ok for me to break down a little bit

It's ok for me to feel remorse, it's ok for me to want more
life for my kin
So cancer...yo cancer...I f**king hate you

I fking Hate You**

My hands are on fire

Nov. 10, 2016

My hands were on fire

My hands were on fire

I beat the Djembe until my hands were on fire

Mass hysteria, mass disappointment, mass confusion, mass uncertainty, mass fear & mass hopelessness.

There's a lot of finger pointing, there's a lot of division, a lot of hateful words & a lot of opinions. There's a lot of conversations rooted in deep hurt and remorse. Dialogues with kids about what the future might be. What might be on the horizon? Armageddon just around the corner and in our near future.

I went to my open mic to bring some balance to the day, to get my thoughts together, to find some serenity and get my mind right. It took me awhile to get the music going but I was determined to let loose and vibe to some sounds. Hard beats after hard beats dominated the room, with artists like Nas, Mobb Deep, Fashawn and Most Def. I was in a groove and fed my appetite with more roughness, more hardcore music, with more emcees who were spitters and not just folks trying to duplicate and pimp hip hop for her cash. Something within made me realize the rhythms I was flowing to actually depicted my state of mind, my emotions, and my feelings.

My hands were on fire

My hands were on fire

I beat the Djembe until my hands were on fire

I put on an instrumental beat and sought to immerse myself in the flow. I grabbed my Djembe which was close by. Already blessed by a good brother with his thoughtfulness and understanding. I had an inner body experience where I felt taken over by a powerful force. It was as if I was feeling and playing notes that were not audible to me before.

My hands caught a rhythm and beats that I would not have created before, would not have visualized, and would not have felt so deeply about before, came to life. I let go, I surrendered, and I obeyed. I let the ancestors in, I moved with their guidance, I played their song. I've never thrown caution to the wind like that before. No music ever sounded so sweet, so clear, so wonderful, and so purposeful. I was beating the drums through my ancestors and they were not happy, they were so disappointed, they were so filled with anger and frustration. The drum, talked, it sang, it cried as I beat it for so long, so intense and so hard. I thought my finger prints would be left on the skin like bloody tattoos. I thought my flesh was left on the surface and my bones fractured and as if I would put my hands through the covering of the drum.

I let the moment run its course while gaining more enlightenment. My for-fathers had a message for me and my people. We are warriors, we are kings, we are the sought after, we are the strong, we are the universe. Let's reclaim that glory, let's reclaim that love for self, left reclaim that unity, and let's take back that strength. Let's stop being afraid, let's stop the blame, let's stop the in-fighting, let's stop the hate,

let's unite. My face is on fire, my feet are on fire, and my
calves can feel the burn.

My hands are on fire

My hands are on fire

I beat the Djembe until my heart is on fire

Nightmares

I am often shaken back to reality by my wife. The snarls like a rabid animal fighting for dear life usually rips her from her slumber. I've been yelling, screaming, snarling and moving around uncontrollably in my sleep. Apparently I have been reliving different experiences and acting it out something fierce. I rarely remember what had me agitated and acting like a wild beast. Evidently I am still going through some type of trauma and it's being manifested through these dreams.

Was I fighting against a force from the Middle East like I did back in 1990? Was I being abducted by aliens who wanted to do all types of experiments on me? Or was my body remembering and going through the struggles of being enslaved centuries ago? Those unspeakable acts are surely etched in my DNA. What is happening and why can't I remember what I was going through during my nightmares?

I remember years ago waking up at a friend's house and saw a worried perplexed look on her face. I didn't realize at the time that I had one of my episodes which scared the mess out of her. I guess having a grown man suddenly yelling in her ear and tossing and turning didn't leave a good impression. We saw each other a few times after that but that incident had us growing farther apart. There was no discussion as to what went down but it's clear she thought I had mental issues. We eventually went our separate ways but I frequently wondered what she must have felt about my extraordinary behavior.

I am planning to get a way in a couple of months and have ideas of enjoying ATL to the fullest. In the back of my mind though I am a little uneasy. I plan on staying with a long-time friend but it worries me that I will have an episode and act up. Will he think I'm a crazy bastard who needs help? Will he look at me like I have a deadly disease? Will he look at me with judgmental eyes boring through my soul?

For years now I have been living with nightmares; and although I am not a big proponent for psychologists and shrinks; it appears I might need to see one. I am not sure what conversations will be able to do for me as I am a skeptic. I hear good reports of people being helped through dialogue so I'm open to at least try talking to someone. If my issues are related to PTSD or trauma from generations of slavery; how will I get better and have a chance to leave these nightmares behind?

Between a Rock and a Hard Place

February 9th, 2012. I'm caught between a rock and a hard place and it's 3:30 in the morning as pain dominate my heart muscles as if I just lost a loved one to a violent crime. I'm still paying the doctors for previous emergency room visits believing everything will be fine soon.

I was informed there was no blockage so this must be stressed related. Should I throw caution to the wind and just chock this up as another event that will pass? Or should I put my trust in the hospital; this big money- making business? As I ponder my next action I found myself walking to my kid's room. I watch them sleep and wonder if this will be the last time I see them alive. I cover them up, stared at them for awhile and kissed them on the cheeks.

If I go tonight it would mean I won't get the chance to say goodbye to my oldest daughter. I would not get to finish the picture I' working on for my mom's birthday. How will my wife survive? How will she cope with the constant questions from the kids? Where is daddy and why did he have to leave us? Like a broken record playing the same blues over and over again.

How would my mom deal with the death of her son? It's like Mary accepting the crucifixion of her only child. How will she overcome the pain? I think back on all the abuse she has overcome but know that this would be biggest blow to this gentle being.

I'm caught between a rock and a hard place.

I tried to calm myself because worrying won't change my situation. Should I go to the ER again just to be told: Mr. Grant your heart looks great so this must be stress related or should I prepare myself to meet my maker? After a few minutes of pondering my situation I decided that I have left a good impression on this world and wish the best for those closest to me.

I realize I am merely following the path that has been laid out for me. If this is my last night on this earth I must say that I am proud of some of the things I was able to accomplish. We live and we die, that much is certain and I now have a sense of unbelievable peace and calmness.

Paul Richmond - State of MA

The Lost Cafe

I didn't have much money
So I order the cheapest items on the menu
I ordered a kids portion of French toast
I was brought a pile of Blueberry pancakes
With ice cream on the side

I ordered a small side dish
Of home fries
I received a plate of grilled steak, sausages, and bacon
Which the waitress said came with the large plate of
home fires
I ordered a small orange juice
I was given a large pitcher
I said I'd like some coffee
And the pot was brought over
I ask the waitress what was going on
She said this is how it is here
I said wow
I want to live here
Just then
My alarm clock woke me

In the cold kitchen
I found I was out of eggs
The milk was sour
The mice had gotten into the cereal
Looking out the window
I couldn't see the corner store
The snow was a white curtain with a howling wind
That wouldn't have stopped me But
My wallet was empty

I went back to bed
I lay there
Eyes closed tightly
Knowing
I wasn't going to find that cafe

This is from Paul Richmond's third book “ Too Much of a
Good Thing – In the Land of Scarcity Breeds Contempt”

The Card Game

People have been playing for generations
Many just didn't know they were playing
You know you are playing
When someone says
Are you playing the race card
Are you playing the sex card
Are you playing I should feel guilty card
I was dealt the cancer card
I am playing get out of jail card
I have the power card
I win the argument card

Some play I believe in Jesus card
Some are creating their own deck

The person on the phone said
Sir I am not allowed to talk to you
I can't give you any information
Or tell you anything since we don't find
The papers you say you've filled out 5 times

All I wanted to do was cancel some appointments
Stop medications coming to the house
We will have to talk to your father
They started to hang up

I played the dead father card

My father died

Silence

I am sorry

I just want you to cancel the appointments and all
medications

I can do that

(You just need to know how to play your cards

This is a new poem to be published in Paul Richmond's
5th book.)

Lost Wallet

When the camera zooms in
To focus on the main character
He is just about to go out
Suddenly he realizes he doesn't have his wallet
The search begins
He traces his steps
Looks through his pockets
Opens up the bags he has with him
Looks in the car
Under the seat
It must have fallen out of his pocket
In retracing the steps
He thinks that he came home with it
That it has to be somewhere in the house
Now he's running out of time
He was going to go out
Meet some people

The camera zooms back
To take in more of the scene of this main character
And lying on a couch
Is a woman
They have been lovers
For 11 years
They live together

She was feeling low energy all day
On trying to figure out what they might do
He suggest meeting some friends
At a political talk
A Woman who has become
Famous
For asking the President
Why did her son die in Afghanistan?
Why were we in the war?
She was here in town
Speaking at the local middle school

He asks did she want to go
She says Why?
To hear about how fucked up things were
She feels she knows what is going to be said
Isn't inspired by these talks
She doesn't want to go
Says she has no energy for anything
Nothing inspires her
She apologizes
Says it was nothing personal
She just doesn't have any energy
He doesn't try and make an argument for going
He is ready to go alone

Back to the lost wallet
Getting frustrated for time is getting late

He can't find it
He doesn't want his life to be like this
Looking for lost wallets
Life is going by
He has now searched the same places twice
Three times
He has to admit it wasn't anywhere to be found
He can't leave until he finds it
Suddenly feeling sick to his stomach
He goes to the bathroom
Diarrhea
Had the flu about a week ago
All of a sudden
He's in the bathroom again
On coming out He thinks to look on the table again
He thought he took everything out of his pockets
He checks the table again
Starts to clear the table
He moves her purse and there it is
Her purse was on it
Now He has the wallet
But suddenly he needs to hit the john again
Thinking of his father
Who complains that he has diarrhea all the time
And blames it on a new food that he thinks gave it to him
His thinks he's turning into his father
Then he looks at the clock
And realizes how much time has gone by

The event is starting
He is still standing in his kitchen
He is 30 minutes away with more stomach rumblings
Feels like any moment
He will need to run to the john again
Not a great incentive to go out

This isn't quite the story line of a thriller
A cliffhanger
Where you are sitting on the edge of your sit
Instead our hero is sitting on the toilet
Wanting his life to mean something

This poem was published in Paul Richmond's second book "Ready Or
Not – Living in the Break Down Lane "

A well-dressed Man and a Dog

A well-dressed Man
Walks into a bar
With a Dog
The Bartender says
He looks really mean
He looks like he wouldn't listen to anyone
He looks like he would kill for no reason
I don't want him pissing and shitting in the corner
And can you get him to stop humping the bar stool

And the dog says
You can dress him up
But he is who he is

(This was previously published in Paul's first book No
Guarantees – Adjust & Continue)

Pep Talk

The word on the street is
We're Fucked

Nothing is going to change
Is the daily propaganda

It's useless to try
Becomes the Mantra

There is mounting evidence
By the military personal and vehicles
That are surrounding us
That this is not going to be a party

There are many who will argue
That the studies have all been falsified

I am afraid to break it to you all
That it is much worse than reported

Now is no time for despair

Even if all the means
Have been deployed to destroy
Our communities
You would be amazed

At our ability
To create
What we need

I know many of you are wondering
Just what is the catch
How much is all this going to cost
It always comes down to that

It is obvious
That it is way more than we bargain for
There are no sales
And even at the lowest price
The price is too high
It has been scientific proven
Depending on my hunger
I will eat anything

Which God
To pray to
Don't all of them
Have the message of love
Compassion
Helping those who are down
Seems to fall on deaf ears
As the killings continue

Now that we gathered around the collection plate

Many of you are asking
How much should I give
If you are asking me
I say
Give it everything you Got
Give it everything you Got

This was published in Paul Ricmond's fourth book "You
Might Need A Bigger Hammer"

Carlo Parcelli - State of MD

The Rugby Match (an excerpt)

Fuck you, Constable! And fuck yo' cunt queen. And fuck god. And fuck yo' bloody anthem and yo' bloody fuckin' football match. God Save the Queen, me ass. A wee prat, eh. What I see beyond the mucky gang ways a you pissed up wanks and all dribbly eye over yo' bloody queen muvva who certain as the ghost a Maggie Snatcher don't care a tripe a cocks and corks a the likes a you.

And no, I ain't got no concourse wif them Wasp RFC blokes. Them's what pummel Pakis, pikeys and junkies. And in no regulated order. And I not be at Coventry for a barney. Just for the love a sport. Though I will say, barneys do seem ta be the consequence of an unmitigated scrum. Yet here I be detained for me own safety, the bulls say, and for maintainin' domestic tranquility. All what I take ta mean keep the bloody bosky London hooligans in the pens.

Course the coppers nicked me stash. There be warrant why the evidence room be called the chemists. Don' choke on me K, constable. And, mind ya. Lizzie'll have her cut from her familiars a the East India Company while the Chinks and Pakis grace us wif takeaway.

I do. I do. I hates this bloody country. And I hates the god what slime its anfer. What a ol' Cambridge prat call

misopatria, hatred a country. And it's A side, misotheism, hatred a god. There be no bloody aut'entic god here, but the hurt and the terror a sufferin' and deaf what lurk inside every bird, bounder and bloke. And what that clever Hebe Einstein call patriotism, the measles a mankind, he did, and as infantile as bouncin' a ball about.

Bloody fuckin' football match. But, I tells 'em, me Nellie be a bit finical after me fenty and bam brunch. But, nooooo. We be short a Becks and Posh. And what be me given gift but ta daddle a poke or two.

What warped a me wits what be the anferm me tony blare:

'God fuck our musty queen. She be so bloody mean. Long stink her quim. Drip her vice over us. Sotty and scurrilous. Long ta leach off a us. God jizz the queen.'

What some tupence Tories take offense. And the beatin' commence. Whilst I chime 'What our god Load arise, from Lizzie's rancid thighs...' And I be hauled off scatterin' me enemies - and many a friend alike.

Hey Bronzy! Bronzy. I fancy a curry take away. There be no bloody Ghandi up in here, Bronzy. I be Lee Marvin.

Don' get me wrong. I love bloody rugby. The scrum a the earf. But not like some, what some public school trickster name a 'Johnny' Ellis ripped it off the almighty a full two weeks before Promefeus nicked fire from Zeus.

Oi. Me mates be ignorant, made daft a football. What aft a pint or ten, they be so lost in their ignorance they tear up and celebrate their own oppression and gnash on 'bout the ol' Queen Muvver.

God and country be bloody lies and rooted in evil. And 'god the lie' makes holy the converse a evil such that its roots be held firm by naught but god's filf. What plays about the mind but empty signs and Promefean prattle?

You'd believe Promefeus be a god hisself if Aeschylus had his fancy. Nuffin' but stagey twattle about a bloke what nicked fire from that geezer, Zeus, and who a that cattle rustler Hermes or that fruit filchin' caprice a god, Eve, we mankind be consequent in our destitution. What say we be comin' ta the end a our run and takin' hostages and wif our evolutionary thumbs waste worlds blastin' away at phantoms. What compare to some pogeey, curry and swipes, thieven' be honest work and dun it make me and mine heroes a all mankind as we but emulate our betters and their Promefean ways.

Proudhon says all goods is dodgy. And I say all good deeds is dodgy if ya boost 'em to a phantom. Like when ya fence your sins at confession turnin' them into a wash up. It's all be bloody cosmic hokum. When fools be prayin' ta the gods, beggin' his forgiveness, they just be chattin' up themselves. Lookin' for a spotless Piccadilly for their conscience, they mumble and burn incense before these phantoms.

That's why the divine fucks be made in our image. Dicks, twats and all by some accounts. 'Cept for the shite and piss part what usual get left off, but for them old foregone guineas, thorough prats wif one Sterculius, a god a butt muck and mire and Cloacina, goddess a the shite what filled drains and mains.

We had our Promefeus out a Hackney by the name a LI'l Creepy. Creepy boost cars from Leadenhall ta Knightsbridge. Knickin' chariots from tin pot Chelsea Apollos. And don't them rich prats see themselves as modern Promefeusēs? What the yank oligarchs even wager themselves 'job creators' like they be deadbeat dad's of all of us wee folk. What sets me ta jokin' those cunts be Job creators alright wif their plagues and trials a derivatives, quantitative easin', fraud and fiat currencies. Make many a bloody international suicide hotline, that lot do from Indian farmers to Ohio machinists. That bloody vicious, bunch a paternal tossers. Li'l creepy got 14 years in the jug for attemptin' ta nick Lizzie's Bentley. Eight for carvin' up the lambswool sateen. And that be the tale and tellin' of it.

God be a right moody geezer. Be he Zeus or Yahweh, the ol' creeper giveth and he taketh, fucketh and raketh. The ol' knobber got everyfing. Leave somefin' on the table, yah bloody blighter. Not like god needs his Boneham and Turner ta crack a safe or Arfur Anderson ta cook his books. But don' he sound some simple wealfy prat wif sociopathic inclinations drippin' boar's blood gravy over his \$300.00 Ermendildo tie at Alain Ducasse's Chop House.

The heart of it be: How can one hate god and love football? What one sport ratchet up the passion a the ovver. What ta lose ta Uxbridge by 3 points because your best rugger fractures his tibia on a sloppy track at the opponent's goal.

Indeed, there do appear a bit a skullduggery don' it. Like god bog down the Nappies and Huns at the Bear.

Proudhon called god "the tormentor of my reason. The spectre of my conscience..." "Every step we take in advance is a victory in which we crush divinity." So fuck the bloody anferm and the god and queen bore in it. Hey, Old Bill! Billy! I'm feelin' a bit peckish. Where's me bloody curry!?"

**Velius suffers a bout of indigestion and shits in his
host's wine goblet**

(An excerpt from the epic, *Canus Ictus in Exilium*
(Dog Bite in Exile))

Contrary much ta agita Velius Cesinus inclines

What he sit erect and brood and mull

Wif his hands cupped up what he be a beggar

What his thumb oppose as be a teacup

A transit what be most exposed.

For he by Bodai riddle know

If guinea meet the master on the road

He dispatch such wif knowledge a Bodai say so or no.

Most likely 'no' for such be guinea sport.

And what opulence be ta a beggar Bodai

What sort live on aefer.

While a follower a this Paul a Tongues

Live on the scraps a his masih's bung.

And our cynic? He be upturned in a prelate's bin.

But Bodai do profane as he be what spoon wif celebrity.

And

These Paulites do con the rich and poor alike

Wif palavers a afterlife what not sport

The heart nor soul a any holy bloke's

Epicurean delight

But by inconstant promises and foretokenin's,

Where but obstinate and contrary the cynic be.

His riddles not dodge or glance at truf but air it inside out.

Still me Velius need relief but by guinea custom
What exit the table be naught as grief and censure upon
the host.

So Velius's guts slosh wif meat and wine
Be it ta ape by grunt and growl an Affluvian tumbler
A lime and gravel, water and clay.

He what defrutum and spiced pears make a
soupy mix.

So after much grumble and viscerous dismay,

The gates a [Acratopotes](#) burst away,

And Velius drops a deuce in Apicius's cup

A rather fulsome load I must say.

As our hirsute harpy from the rafters swings

What be his gangly limbs as they be wings

And spew afore and shite behind

He spin as a pinwheel about its axis as

Aloft a buffet a few what cater equal to

What cranky Zeus put on display.

The same what befoul wif Snatcher shite

Take the breaf a blinded Phineus away

A bloke what saw much and jabbered more

By what Argonauts be return ta the Thessalian shore.

Or awful coils, winding ziggurats a filf
what Scatalogus ascribes,

Titan stool still steaming at the brink

Noxious such stink what knock the Harpies from the sky

And gack wif vile excrement

What be a foul frescoe a Sodom's slutty cultae,

Etched at our dear Pompeii.
 Vesuvio rear his arse
 What the Plinys regard from across the bay
 And wiser than his uncle,
 The nephew demurred and stayed away
 For the Younger heed the words a sage Loquacious
 what say,
 “Objects fall what seek their lawful destiny”
 And far be it such a promisin’ augur
 As fledge Pliny stand in Decima’s way.
 For Pluto broil a right spicy buffet
 What as wise Varro say Vulcan’s one-eyed
 minions
 Devour in stews, casseroles and cakes
 Laced apparent wif ghost peppers and onions
 Such be the souls a what depart dispense
 What be a noseey foretaste before we cast ‘em
 inta holes.
 As wise Scatalogus prescribe,
 At birf we be but a honeyed goose,
 What ripe rejoice the leavin’s
 What exit our Jordan bound caboose.
 As be our Gallic Queen Gargamelle
 Once relieved a vat a its tripe smell
 Want the more be shed a her babe, Gargantua,
 Her wailing, wanton heir
 Who desperate a drink deposit from his queen
 mum’s ear

What her bum plugged so severe it occlude her cooch
Wif herbs a some drunken midwife
An ironic cork what keep our Sprig from his hooch.

The Central Ohio Fixin' to Die Blues 1966

(in two parts)

1. Deer Hunting

The welcome sign to Argosy State Park was constellated with buckshot.

And every maggot in the woods seemed to exalt in the fact

That you'd be postin' there sooner or later.

My cousin Donny, who had his leg blown off below the knee at Khe Sanh,

And a plate in his head

Has been using his BAR as a crutch ever since we left the trail.

They may be kin, but they also may have dragged me up this mountain to kill me.

So I hang back with my safety off a battered M-1

That has as my cousin Marco puts it, "S'been in the shit."

Back in camp, he starts on me, "How come you ain't gone?"

A skinny, little guinea shit like you is a tailor made tunnel rat."

"What? Me matriculate in a body bag from Cu Chih U.? Fuck off."

"That supposed to be some kind a joke, faggot,"

He sneers as he jerks toward me.

My cousin Gino grabs him around his shoulders.

“What, you gonna beat down your cousin?

What would your Aunt Lucia gonna say?”

“Fuck you Gino. Look. Look at Donnie,” drunken, k
weed tears in Marco’s eyes.

“He’s all fucked up.”

In the morning its bacon, beers and weed.

All the big talk about bagging an 8 point has
evaporated.

Adamo and his friend Mac, two tours each, go off into
the bush to fix.

Ricky climbs into his GTO to return to Dayton.

Steve and Vito collect themselves and ask me
If I want to come along and “shoot something”?

Squirrels, coons, niggers. Anyfuckin’thing?”

I say, “Fuck off.” So they add smirking, “We were just
jokin’ about the squirrels.

C’mon. C’mon. We ain’t gonna do no time for
shootin’ no niggers.”

We make our way up the trail a mile or so

When suddenly they break

And cross a gully to a dirt road where Ricky waits
idling the GTO.

Ricky peels off. When I get back to the main road every
one is gone

And I’m left hitching 80 miles to Belmont.

I shatter the stock of the M-1 on a rock

And toss the battered gun into a thicket leaving it

for the maggots.

An old codger with a flatbed loaded with empty chicken cages picks me up.

We introduce ourselves. “Hi, my name’s Trader. Trader Home.

Though some call me Sonny,” he offers.

“Traitor?” I hear.

“No trader. Like a fur trader,” he chuckles. “Where ya headed?”

“Washington DC, I guess.”

“Ya mean ya don’t know?”

“Well, I was staying with my people in Dayton.

But we don’t much see eye ta eye on some things.”

“That so? So you’re from Washington? Are you some kinda politician?

You ain’t one of them lobbyists? Are ya now?” He chuckles, then,

“You like baseball, son.”

“Yeah. I played some in high school,” I say edgewise.

“Well, I pitched in the majors back some.

Yeah, I played for the 1929 Cubs. Went 1 and 1 in 11 games, all but one in relief.

Struck out 6. McCarthy didn’t use me in the Series though.”

“Oh yeah? Joe McCarthy? What was your ERA?”

“Ah no need ta go there boy. Look it up.” And later I did.

Sure enough if the old man was who he said he was,
He pitched for the '29 Cubs right next
To Rogers Hornsby, Hack Wilson, Kikki Cuyler and
Charlie Grimm.

“Ya hungry kid. I know a diner. Best shortstack
And hash browns this side of Cleveland. Ya like
eggs.

I love eggs. That's my business, now.”

So I thought fuck the draft board. Fuck my cousins. Fuck
Dayton. Fuck the war.

I was on the road eating the best short stack
This side of Cleveland with baseball royalty.

2. Trader Home and the Hitchiker

3.

I don't want ta talk no more baseball.

It's all a blur to me now no how.

I drank then. Mostly with Hack Wilson

You know Hack used to drink white lightnin' out of
a thermos.

I raise mostly Comets and Reds. Best egg layers.

Boy, I think our pretty little waitress is partial to you.
Why don't you take a run at her while I go to the crapper.

Deconstructing the Demiurge: the Burden of Meaning (excerpts)

Man is not Nature's substrate,

Nor its alternate.

How to be done, to say it all

Before the darkest dawn.

The grand concordance of existence,

Plunging time into mass.

And theory that mass can't account.

The ruthless mutuality of microbes and men.

Entropic whispers. Dark matter.

The great chain from the infinitesimal to the
colossus.

And the collapse of the eigenstate into consciousness.

And yet Cern's 'god' particle, mathematically predicted,

Rendered no augury

For the death of the project's chief engineer.

And again, without exception, mortal ubiquity

Defies precise arithmetical bodings.

"The gods call us back,

And forbid mortal eyes to know the end of things."

So Pedro's shipwrecked epic or what flotsam remains.

All prelude, a simple spatial prophecy calibrated

In the bow string, the bomb and the stars.

All projectiles calibrated toward their destiny,

As close as fortune has come to telling.

Numbers that weave a digital sarcophagus in

the birth canal.

Brittle, jagged, craving the tensile condition

So that it may fall out of mathematization

And back into existence as proof,

The algorithmic prophecy of launch pad to target.

Without mass will the neural net hold that rock; that moon

Where a 'dark matter' prevails?

Yet among all of this quantum watching,

The rush of data occludes at time t ,

This vain observer and the observed,

Fail as often as not to be either.

The quantophrenic sacking of the moral psyche,

Grief still imposed.

None would confirm that his end may come too soon.

Mind that box of bolts, that pile of flashing, the sawdust
of stars,

Left over from reverse engineering Creation.

The Seventh Day was spent quietly on the estate in
the Berkshires.

On the sixth he took a conference call with Marvin
Minsky, Elon Musk

And Ray Kurzweil on the viability of eliminating the
human race

And replacing it with sentient nano-bots

And received a full-color holographic catalogue

Of genetically engineered animals
From his ranch in Costa Rica.

On the Fifth day came Word that the seas
Had been fished to extinction
And his standing order of Bluefin sashimi had
been cancelled.

And you thought perhaps that
“I [myself] should have been a pair of
ragged claws”

But likely not, such be your pitiable self.
Where decades before Oppenheimer had engineered
A more expedient end boasting
“Now I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds.”

To which again Pedro’s ghost, “Why are we violating
alien seas
and sacred waters?”

The night before the stars were again veiled.
The Sun having scorched anonymous billions,
And on the Third Day a continent of ice
collapsed

And the barren sea overwhelmed the abandoned shore.
All the while the demigods shed, merge, divest,
change shape,

Gods casting the shadow of beasts over mere
mortals.

Monsanto Co. of St. Louis, MO compounds the very
dust of the earth

With debt and suicide.

A miracle of biblical contortions.

Genesis 1:12. "Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust,"

Genes hoarded in banks, and money in clouds

To portend our bizarre, fanciful end.

And the corporations have devalued god's currency

As though by fiat

And forged masterpieces of Armageddon.

Peisander

Peisander of Camirus, who gave Herakles that cave
man look;

Lion skin about his loins and churlish club
Like a hand hewn Louisville Slugger made of battered
cherry wood.

That Alley Oop pose much in vogue today,
Internalized by a cartoon culture,

That has spliced copy-cat with vulture.

Enduring, though as Clement claims your tale,
Albeit but that the Labors are 12,
From the Nemean Lion to the Augean Stables
To the Capture of Cerberus.

All else pirated from one

Pisinus of Lindus, more lost to time than even you.
Neither text survives. Pisinus not a word.

Peisander but 3 shards;

Two from the Scholiast in Aristophanes

And one from Stobaeus.

But when extant the Alexandrian Grammarians

“thought so highly of the poem

That they received Peisander

Into the epic canon together with Antimachus, Panyasis
Hesiod and Homer.”

Is it enough to endlessly compete in Elysium

So myriad be the affairs of the gods?

To route Eupolis and Pindar from Olympus
To take the laurel and dispose of Agathon
and Sophocles.

Or witness after your burlesque of the mocking
Archilocus himself dangling from a tree.

Those contented with mortal judgement;

Jousting for time's sullied perpetuity.

As, in accord with Caecilius of Calacte,

Menander to Philemon

"Are you not crimson with shame

Deemed victorious over me?"

So those in life

Who gain Fortune's indifferent victory.

Marci Payne - State of NJ

beautiful lies

(dedicated to Yevgeny Yevtushenko)

they are all so lovely
so appealing
the low hanging fruit of
an infinite social orchard
we sit there
gluttonous debauchery
covering our faces
cascading from mouth's corners
pooling between our naked breasts
yet still we desire more
failing to devour each other
leaving dismembered lives in our wake
breathing
gasping for love
light
a simple touch
from caring hands
holding more than memories
sentimentality
the devil's promise

of enlightenment
and well-being
i've eaten mangos
unclothed in bed with
the most beautiful liars
and include myself
among the fallen
among those who believe

other

enough time has been spent
choir loft sitting with my ilk
fallen angels convinced of perdition
without a glimmer of heaven
passing through stained glass prophecy
as clouds will have their way
mitigating the passage of whatever truth
might be left in this age of wonder
i smile
embracing the abyss
the great void between fish and fowl
a rainbow embracing the absence of light
arching through various imaginary ecstasies
transcendent in a universe where gravity is a given
i float
delighted knowing that between point a and point b
lay the realm of the infinite
the undefined
whispers within sounds which comprise our
collective howling
i consider amplifying every heart which beats upon
this rock
if only for one moment
each rhythm partial to the whole

the steady vibration
the hum
the motion which gives dark matter its weight
an audible measure of all speculation
made so loud that the inevitable
becomes palpable

i can taste it

reason and its lacking
licking my skin
until reflections undergo a metamorphosis
and i can look into my own living eyes
one and separate
two and whole
seeking a box to check
which simply says
other

gravity is just a theory

we all feel the weight
making a living
forgetting to make a life
tip toe away from the places which hurt
decorate dead trees to celebrate birth
and we glow
but it is a nauseating light
battery powered tea candles
without regard for wind
water
elements which exist beyond
our own personal chemistry
the sphere of influence
which draws others close
the jingle of keys in shaking hands
possess a magical power
they change our prisons into homes
inside we sing oh silent night
because the silence is too much
because the candles won't ever flicker
because time passes
because life is a virus
infecting the perfect body of death

(she shakes her head
keeping her distance
if only to prove entropy
-the only law to which
she is subservient)

because blue is the color
of the sky pretending to be innocent
because
after all
it's only a theory

resisting inspiration by unwanted syllogism

trite semantic arguments
litter the floor of the sanctuary
it's all gold and flash
sleight of hand
tongue in cheek
ready to bite at first feeding
peeling cellophane away from manna
without regarding the nutritional information
required by man's law
once the incense stops burning
there is an empty feeling
the hollow created by decay
once the worms have finished
corrupting the convocation
while considering ginsberg's list
of everything holy running
mad and naked toward
neon exits
falsified profits
and an illusion of everlasting strife
it's a zero sum gambit
threads of ecstasy warping
though the primordial fill
a forbidden paradox
woven to be worn
only by con men
and those saved

when the wine is all gone

i wish there were a god
who would take responsibility
for all the shenanigans
instead of just the wonder

i wish there were angels
fighting a heavenly battle
keeping the forces of evil
far from my peaceful slumbers

i wish there were a heaven
where we all could meet again
all the faces i have loved
drink tall drinks and dance

i wish there were a hell
with demons i could blame
when i transgressed
hurting those most close

yet i remain grateful
for the light of this day
reflecting off of the tree
outside my window

grateful to witness
flowers which bloom and die
my connection to ants
which crawl across toes

full moons and half moons
floating upon celestial oceans
the stars which fall
and those which stay in the sky

i am grateful for all that i know
the unanswered questions
best left 'til tomorrow
when the wine is all gone

James P. Wagner (Ishwa) - State of NY, Long Island

15 Songs

In 2001

My sophomore year of high school

I got the new Gorillaz CD

They were a cool band

With cool songs

And this CD had 15 of them.

So thankful we had come so far from the days of

Records

8-Track tapes

Cassettes

My CD player

Came everywhere with me

Going through the anguish

Of trying to fit the big round device

Into regular-sized pockets

I would listen to my songs

While walking in the hallway between classrooms

I had my favorites on the CD

But listened to all of them

Got to know all of them

Just me and the band's music.
Little did I know
That by the time of my 10 year high school reunion
The devices we'd have would be 15 times smaller
Hold over 15,000 songs on them
And that it wouldn't be very often
That anyone would listen
To an entire album
Anymore.

911 As A Sophomore

It started out like any other day
Second week of my second year
Of high school
Second period
Math class
Going through the anguish
Of trying to concentrate
When still half asleep
Not yet used to the early days again
After summer
The announcement came in the last 5 minutes
of class
“Boys and girls, we have just received word
That there has been a terrible accident at the World
Trade Center.”
An accident
I remember that wording specifically
None of us really knew what to make of that
A moment later the bell rang
And I got up to go to third period business class
Taught by Mr. Campbell
The most laid back
Hilarious teacher
Only a few year away from retirement
And as a veteran of the Vietnam War
Not one to take the silly dramas and trials

Of dealing with teenagers too seriously.
Upon entering the classroom
The television
One of the few active,
Non VCR/DVD player-only televisions
That happened to be in the classroom
Where we normally had class
By pure happenstance
Was on
Turned to the news.
We didn't do any classwork that period
Watched the footage
Of the first plane
Followed by the second plane
Saw one of the towers collapse live
Saw a replay of the other one
The smoke growing and growing
We were all very confused
No motive or reason had yet been released
The casualty numbers were climbing
Two classmates from that period excused
Sent to the office
Where they could make phone calls
To try to find out information
About their parents who worked
In the city.
And Mr. Campbell
Standing there, arms crossed

Shaking his head
With a somber
Sullen
Saddened look
That I never saw on him before
Or since
“You don’t know it know,” he said,
“but this is going to be the day that will define
your entire generation.”
More than a decade later
I can only say
How right he was.

Checking The Eggs

The very small woman with the very loud voice
sitting in her very awkward shaped car that she drove very
awkwardly through my drive-thru,

screams at me in a very awkward manner:

“Two dozen eggs and a half gallon of milk and make sure
you check the eggs this time!”

I sigh, wondering if ever such a time existed where I gave
out eggs

that had not been checked.

“Yes Ma'am, that's company policy!”

as I ready her order.

Opening up the two dozen eggs

to check each one thoroughly,

both sides of the eggs

I do so in an overly obvious fashion

so that she can see my efforts.

I tell her the price, ring in her small crumpled dollar bills,

bag her order

and walk over to hand it to her.

“The eggs aren't cracked, right?”

she asks as I give her the items.

I realize at this moment that she must be
the kind of person
who sees 8 people waiting in front of a lobby elevator
but still has to press the button herself
because it wouldn't occur to her
that it just MIGHT have occurred to at least one of the
other 8 people waiting to do so before she got there.

My mind runs through a list
of appropriate responses, including:
“You saw me check them all here right in front of you—
and yes they are all cracked,
but I decided to give them all to you anyway.”
And, I wish that such a response would not get me
suspended.

Instead, I sigh and calmly reply. “Don't worry, I checked
them all, they are fine,” with a horribly forced smile.

“Good!” she squawks back. “Because I can't tell you how
many times I've gotten cracked eggs from here!”
No sooner does she say this
than she grabs the items through the window,
THROWS them over her shoulder into the non-cushioned
back seat
and drives away.

.

Phone Call Request

I knew even before she got to the window
from the way her car zig-zagged back and forth
as if she was drunk
though she wasn't--
that this one was going to be interesting.

"Do you sell laundry detergent?"

"No, Ma'am."

"Could you check?"

"No need to check Ma'am, we have never
carried cleaning items."

"Could you call your other store in Commack?"

"We all have the same items ma'am,
they won't have it either."

She stares at me and thinks for a moment.

"Could you call the Dairy Depot up the street and ask?"

I tilt my head. "Ma'am, that's our competitor."

"Can you call them anyway?"

"We don't do that Ma'am,
and I don't even have their number."

"I have it right here." She waves a piece of paper.

"So, you want me to call our competitor for you to ask if
they have a product?"

"Yes."

"No."

Her face turns red. "Why not!?"

"We can only call stores within our chain. Sorry."

"You're supposed to go out of the way for your customers!"

"That's true. But nothing you have done in the time you have been here falls within the parameters of you being a customer of OURS and speaking of which, there is another car behind you that's been waiting."

After she drives off in a huff, I help the next customer without incident of insanity.

Just Hanging Out

“Wanna hang out?”

“When?”

“Friday Night?”

“What time?”

“8?”

“What do you wanna do?”

“Food?”

“Where?”

“Apps?”

“Sure.”

In making these plans I remember a time

When friends would converge

Randomly

Unplagued by classes

When work was a part-time thing

Meant to give you pocket money

To make your own adventures

And hanging out

Was not preempted

By a shopping list of specifics

When people weren't so rigid

With their likes and dislikes

Their dos and don'ts

When we still had space

And time

To find out new things about ourselves
Let the chips fall where they may
And the company you kept
Was the only constant
That you needed.

Viviana Grell - State of NY, New York City

I Want My Own Word

Woman you say I am...
but no I am not
Take m.a.n. from woman and
you have a WO!!
I want my own word...
Man is a free word.... stands alone
and I as WO will grow on my own,

I break free from the man
MENstruation
MENopause
I MANipulate this tongue
No dick(tionary) to define my soul
oh no.. I am a WO!!

And its Wostruation not
MENstruation
and MENopause ...
is plain gone!!!
I've been hot flashing since I was born
been speaking my mind and bitching since I could

hear sound...
Been horny since my tits could dance...
I won't pause for men... to label my changes...
when I change like sails loyal to wind !!
When I am happy its MANia
when I take charge its MANagement !!,
when the clarion call is
loud and clear
it's a MANDate!!!

It is MANpower called
when the needs arises
and I am invisible as a WO!!
and when I make wishes come true
I MANifest!!.
Its not I as a WO that conjures your dreams...

Oh see me born as a WO,
a cheer of change!!
I release man to be on his own
and the world of WOs ..to come out in droves. !!

I am not a man-eating WO
just a WO needing equal time
I am invincible !!
indivisible by 0
undivided in time
I will join you as WO to MAN

be your partner
your joy
your sexy vixen to the core
but take the MAN from WO
I want a word of my own-
WO stands alone
without the man
we are whole!!

Towers Gone

They burn
scorching in white smoke,
and burgundy fire
my towers torched in orange flames,
my eyes glow with ire...
the plane slices through the Towers,
secretaries' fingers blasted
from the keyboard
into Al Queda's inferno.
Man in wheelchair
becomes ashes with his friend
kneeling beside him,.
I sit and watch
my head turns left from my computer
to the television screen
his eyes say,
should I jump or burn?
will I die before I land?
Will I faint before I turn into dust?
I sit staring at the television screen...
their screams pierce my flesh
their souls impale my heart,
they run from smoke
the living,
they breathe the smoke,

the dying,
I ride over the Queensborough Bridge
Empire State Building's blue light
shines alone...
NYC has lost its two front teeth.
When I ride the bus over the bridge
I burn with them
I jump with them
A little bit of me
is gone like them...
My towers are globs of steel
laced with
torn fingers,
detached arms.
One lonely shoe
belongs to a lady that lives....
She sees the picture of her shoe in The Daily News..
looks in the mirror
and lights a candle
to honor her next breath.

Our Father

Our father who art in heaven
hallowed be thy name?

And what about Mother?

Why wasn't her name hallowed in heaven as well???

WHO WAS MADE IN MY IMAGE????

When I hold my hands in prayer
where is the Lady of the Lord???

How immaculate can your conception be when I am
invisible?????!

Didn't she give birth to you oh "holy father"!!!!????

Wasn't she the reason you
breathe????

You could have been a formidable pair!!!

Father AND Mother!!!!

You could have given me a mirror to see myself in a
glow of majesty!!!

Could have given my father a reason to honor me and
not beat and abuse my body to the point where I wanted to
poison him!!

If the holy goddess sat beside you, I could have chosen my
Mother's name, or perhaps invent my own!!

I could have been president, prime minister, maybe a
pope!!!

I could have waged war and fought Hitler instead of being
one of the girls bowing to hero soldiers at the end of

the war.

I could have been a heroine and been in the parade
waving my arms proud of helping free the Jews of
Nazi persecution,

I could have managed the Yankees or Dodgers,

I could have been a Black woman and held the reigns of
this country or any other!!!

I could have voted since the beginning of time instead of
1920!!!

I could have spoken proudly of my horny nature and made
love to men without worrying if I was in love!!

Enjoyed the nature of my dynamic voice instead of being
called a bitch...

If you dear “father” “lord” “god” of singular power,
“white knight with blue eyes”

had the vision of true spirit and had a womyn on a throne
next to yours,

my daughter would dream of being a doctor or lawyer in
stead of a secretary fetching coffee,

My parents never celebrated my Bat Mitzvah, never
thought at 13 I was a poet, singer and dancer with an
eagle’s grace,

both my brothers were divined as men and taught they
were the providers of sons and daughters.

The times are being born when
the silent will dance!!!

The mighty will wake apologizing.

I shall not take a back seat to bible, torah and koran
litany demeaning my power!!!

I shall pray to the Universe and the Forces which led the
way in helping me find my soul, surviving beatings and
mental torture.....

The dream continues,

I sleep wrapped in my own arms-

I keep dancing, facing the mirror,

the one the “holy father” never showed me!!

Eman

She's strong and bold
the angel
bearing secrets
not yet told...

The child is wild
spits in your eyes,
rises from birth,
crying and wise.

You can
slap her,
scold her,
burn her flesh
fuck her nascent lips,
scare her
smack her
spank her
but nothing can kill her words.

Can't be silenced,
or stopped,
can't be shut down or out,
can't be spoken to from below,
only reached from the top,
Can't be insulted,
intimidated,
you are helpless

before her majesty,
the baby born with blades.

You can't be older,
or braver,
you can't be quieter
or louder...
She will see you,
read you,
know you,
before you speak.
She will teach you,
love you,
kiss you before you
have a chance to control her.
She will run
fly
cry with abandon,
You can't stop
the wild
for they will crash
through you,
race you and win you
you will only see a cloud
of pink dust...
You can't kill her..
with bullets or bombs,
you can't stab her

she'll break the knife.
Her spirit does not know
from religions or rules,
her flight has no limits
no gimmicks
no games.
She was born a child
a woman
a sage.
She will smile softly
stare you powerless
with love and rage.

You are not her parent,
she is yours,
don't give her a color
a birthday
or a flag,
don't tell her
she is this and that...
For she knows
her nature like no one else.

She dresses with wings
and shiny things,
one day a butterfly
one day a killer.

Oh fill her
with love
that she will understand,
don't stop her
from her path,
she will never land.

Give her a sword
a poem
a song and a guitar,
she's the girl called Eman
The Avatar.

Ngoma Hill - State of NY, New York State

Java

Dear Starbucks
the line in my poem
"Trynta pay off student loans
w/salaries from Starbucks"
was in no way intended to offend you
The real question we ask is
why the U.S. economy
can't provide
adequate employment
for me to be able to repay
the loans on my three degrees
with minimum wage
and in this so-called land of plenty
home of the american dream
where nothing is at it seems
why can't education be free
Actually Starbucks
we thank you for giving us the opportunity
to be employed
in this land of the free
where so many have lost their jobs

so we work for you
unorganized and non-union
it's the american dream turned nightmare
homogenized and deculturalized
ignoring the pleas of our 3rd world kin
as child labor picks your beans
while half the world
is strung out on sugar and caffeine
lined up to get your overpriced fix
to start the day
like crack fiends
I must admit your product is supreme
got folks dreaming
the american dream

Lady Liberty

Lady Liberty
stands in the harbor
dazed and confused
about what she is seeing
pondering how the asylum
is being run by the inmates
or if someone slipped hallucinogens
into her tea
maybe the water
is tainted as Flint Michigan
wondering why the filters
are clogged to the brim
so things seem distorted
and oceans are muddy
from sea to shining sea
seems like she may need
medical assistance without Obamacare
since social security has been kidnapped
and freedom is no longer free
Lady liberty stands in the harbor
hiding her eyes
from all the corruption she sees
in total dismay.of the disarray
that all of the rigged elections bring
wondering if there is a fortune teller

who can let her know what the future will be
and if Orwell's Animal Farm
and 1984 were just rehearsals
is this democracy only an illusion
or will she be deported
by Homeland Security

Cerebral Calisthenics

Epigraph: Free your mind and your ass will follow
~Parliament Funkadelics

the scribblings on the wall read
be careful do not leave the arena to the fools
but the inmates are already in charge of the asylum
sanity is highly overrated
There's a prostitute in the vestibule
turning tricks for tickets to the show
the one armed bandit is in the corner
bets are placed
all the decks are stacked
there's a neon sign over the door
flashing "No Exit"
abandon hope all who enter here
no one's paying attention
dumbed down by weapons of mass distraction
hypnotized by social media
sending text messages to Esu
begging not to be bamboozled anymore
but he laughs at them all
mumbling that the mind is the last frontier
death is a way of life
nobody comes out alive
so we search for a new chapter

looking for a do over
but the pencil has no eraser
there is only white out
and the paper stock is blue
the delete key is broken
then i awaken from this nightmare
to learn time is never ending
the body is only a container for the soul

My Pens Got A Point

it's a gloomy day in gotham
even the sky weeps
two trips around the sun short of half a century
since the king of love was killed
malcolm's cry for self determination
short circuited by civil rights still absent
the debt of reparations still not paid
peckerwoods disillusioned
confederate battle rags taped to their consciousness
brains on lockdown
illiterate believers in the holy babble
wishing for the good ole days
when strange fruit hung from poplar trees
ghost of hitler reincarnate
klansmen dressed in suits of blue
water hoses replaced by teargas
tanks and FEMA camps on standby
for the coming armageddon
gentrification is ethnic cleansing
land of the free
home of the brave
doomsday looms on the horizon
as we pray this is a nightmare
i'm afraid my tongue was handcuffed
struggling to sound the alarm

hoping you read this poem of liberation
before the fifth amendment is taken hostage
and thinking is outlawed
i'm just glad my pen's got a point

Things You Wanted to know about the Bronx, but were afraid to ask

i first came to meet the Bronx
while she was pregnant with hip hop
a bastard child she didn't know who the father was
i lived on the top floor of a six story walk up
down the street from loose joints
nickel sacks of sess and dimes of thai stick
searching for something good to say about it
I could only say the rent was cheap
and the building kept together
by the roaches holding hands
late nights i found myself
watching the mice dancing across the floor
doing the boogie to the ricochette of gunplay
I was beginning to think that's why it was called the
boogie down
the hot commodity was heroin
crack hadn't made the scene
the year 1978
and the threat of gentrification
was stewing in a pot of destruction
music programs were eliminated from education
so the school of hard knocks
appropriated electricity from street lights
to power speakers and turn tables

the US War machine slowed down a bit
the economy dragged and Ronnie-the-Raygun
looted the poverty programs
so community centers locked their doors
DJ Kool Herc threw block parties in the projects
so rappin and dancing became the new battleground
the drug war hadn't started so
there was temporarily no turf to fight over
there was a brief quiet before the storm
of heroin replaced by crack cocaine supplied by the C.I.A
aiding the Rockefeller Plan to make the hood unlivable
building condos pushing out poor folk and Mom &
Pop stores
meanwhile MC's had bragging rights
to talk trash about the birth of Hip Hop in the
Boogie Down
corporations raised the rent too high for bodegas
and corner stores struggle not to be replaced by Starbucks
It's the last hold out for affordable housing
the news media called it Urban Blight
treating it like an extension of the Bronx Zoo
but the inhabitants called it Fort Apache
Street Gangs ruled the block and Hunts Point Titty Bars
like the Wedge and The Golden Lady
were where the hustlers and ladies of the night came
to play
Fat Joe,T La Rock,C Ray Waltz,Smooth B
Kool Keith,Sadat X,Big Pun ruled

When Run DMC from Queens
came on the scene
KRS One let everyone know who came first
singing-The Bridge is Over-The Bridge is over
but now there's gentrification
I call it appropriation as the new urban hipster's
call it SOBRO
so as things change and may never be the same
just remember
I'm talkin- South Bronx-South South Bronx

Daniel McTaggart - State of WV

Call Me Momma for Just One Night

The saxophone moans around a dark avenue
like a two dollar prostitute, telling her trick

“Call me momma for just one night.”

He can only pay her in rolls of pennies,
but she'll take anything for the privilege
of being anything she ain't.

Her curves are lit by the low aura
from the newsstand just outside the alley,
but no one notices out of courtesy.

She could be hollering “EXTRA! EXTRA!”
while moonlight's soldering clouds together.

Anything can happen when you're
rucking in this kind of weather.

Across the way, Sally's getting chilly
like a dilly-dally filly getting lost
on her own street corner.

Wandering with head down between her legs,
thinking “Christ! When's the last time
I had a plate of ham and eggs?”

That saxophone screams with desire
for something you just can't have

no matter how pretty it is.
Notes reflected in a pool of late night rain,
or wino drool from Mr. Penny Roll.
What happens in an alley takes a heavy toll.
Sleeping in scraps of yesterday's news.
Rolling in scabs of the last three screws.
Looking up at some strange smirking lady
asking you to call her momma for just one night.
“I only have a few rolls of pennies,” you say.
That's fine with her because the saxophone
is not nearly done with the air.

Parking Meters Like Walking Sticks

Just a nickel past 2 on a Saturday night,
a local drunk ambles through the parking lot.

He leans on every meter, looking at
the needle on each one and saying,

“I guess it's time for change.”

Chuckling every time, because
he's the only one who ever laughs
with himself, not at himself.

He crosses the road to where Madge the street maven
is begging for change outside the Midnight Penny.

The smell of coffee floating out those doors
is almost better than going to sleep.

The drunk puts a hand on Madge's head and says,

“If I gave you a quarter,
how much time would you have left?”

He lopes down the alley laughing
(with, not at)

and wondering what the hell happened
to all the parking meters around here.

Right Cross in a Juke Joint

The story goes that I hit Jimmy Phelps
for looking down my girlfriend's shirt

That the force of my blow spun him round
and that's why his face hit the counter
and landed on the floor
in a shower of blood and teeth

Well, he sure did lie
in a pool of his own making

And his bacon-slaw-bbq-burger
laid eviscerated on checkerboard tile
next to his paunchy gut

But the truth is
the truth went down with Jimmy Phelps

And I sat down to a meal with
a beautiful girl I'd just met

Closing Time Coffee

It's only as burnt as you feel
When the last car leaves the parking lot,
When the last echoes shrink

Down toward the interstate.
Some say the bottom of the pot
Has the best flavor,

And that ring around the middle
Is just a bookmark for
The last person to drink of it.

The sun is not quite finished
Casting strange alphabet on walls,
So you pour a cup,

Still hot and dark,
Hunching over the counter,
Deciphering a little with every sip.

Midnight Coffee, Eggs, & Hot Sauce

I drink coffee at a counter
Littered with ash and small change
The platter streaked in spirals
The color of rust

Heat near the back of my throat
Where useless flavor goes to die
And until the corners of my eyes dry
Feathers on edges of everything

Country music playing in a corner
Excavated from a beer-soaked tomb
Unseen by sun since 1973
I pay no attention to trucks going by

My shadow is cast in window cut-outs
Sliding across tonight's specials

NBPF Staff

Colin Haskins

Founder & Co-Owner NBPF

Colin Haskins is a writer, poet, published author, & event promoter. For 30+ years has been creating venues locally, nationally, and worldwide.

Bringing poets, authors, artists, and musicians together to bring poetry, music, art and culture to many different national landmarks, museums and historical locations. Colin is Co-Owner, Co-CEO, and Executive Director of the National Beat Poetry Foundation, Inc. which includes the National Beat Poetry Festival and International Beat Poetry Festival with Debbie Tosun Kilday (2016-present). He is Poetry Director at The Licia & Mason Beekley Community Library, New Hartford, CT where he manages a monthly “Kerouac Café” for the National Beat Poetry Festival. He co-founded the Connecticut Beat Poetry Festival (2008), National Beat Poetry Festival and International Beat Poetry Festival with Yvon J. Cormier (2015-present). He is Founder of Free Poets Collective(2011-present), which is the first group certified to host the yearly “Woman Scream” event in the USA held yearly in Connecticut in the month of March. He acts as Ekphrastic Poetry Director for The Community Renewal Team National Arts Program in Hartford, CT (2012-present). He is also

Poetry Director for The Buttonwood Tree Performing Arts & Cultural Center in Middletown, CT (1995-present).

His poetry has been published in several different publications. He is the published author of 6 poetry books, currently working on two new poetry books soon to be published.

Debbie Tosun Kilday

Co-Owner NBPF

Debbie Tosun Kilday is a writer, award winning published author, poet, nature photographer, artist, illustrator, graphic artist, and an expert high-roller slot player.

She is Co-Owner, Co-CEO, and Executive Director of the National Beat Poetry Foundation, Inc. which includes the National Beat Poetry Festival and International Beat Poetry Festival. (3-2016-Present)

Debbie is Special Events Director, and Past President of Connecticut Authors and Publishers Association, (CAPA)(2005-present). Debbie is owner of Kilday Krafts, (1981-present). She is also a member of Free Poets Collective, and the now defunct, University of Connecticut's (OLLI) Osher Lifelong Learning Institute's Hydropolis Poetry Group. Her poetry has been published in several different publications. She has appeared on television and radio as a how-to expert on winning millions playing slot machines and is known as the Slot Queen of the Northeast.

Yvon J. Cormier

Executive Director NBPF

Yvon is a writer, author, poet, and poetry event promoter who is dedicated to creating new venues locally and throughout the world to bring poets, authors, artists, and musicians together.

He is Executive Director of the National Beat Poetry Foundation, Inc. which includes the National Beat Poetry Festival and International Beat Poetry Festival with Colin Haskins and Debbie Tosun Kilday (2016-present), Co-Founder with Colin Haskins of the National Beat Poetry Festival & International Beat Poetry Festival (2015-present). Co-Founder with Colin Haskins of the Connecticut Beat Poetry Festival-(2008).

Cormier has been writing poetry for 20+ years. His work is characterized by an influence of Jazz & Blues. He writes from an insatiable nomadic intelligence which obsesses over what is unsaid and the seemingly invisible aspects of daily life. His work is rooted in drawing life pictures where words owe a greater debt to what they represent rather than the reverse.

Cormier is a Self-Employed Author, Writer, Poet and Editorial Consultant – YJC Copy. He also makes handcrafted wirework & beaded jewelry –Djuna Star, and teaches writing and jewelry making workshops.

About the Authors

Lori Desrosiers' poetry books are *The Philosopher's Daughter* (Salmon Poetry, 2013), a chapbook, *Inner Sky* (Glass Lyre Press 2015) and *Sometimes I Hear the Clock Speak* (Salmon Poetry, 2016). Her work has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize. She edits *Naugatuck River Review*, a journal of narrative poetry, and *WORDPEACE*, an online journal dedicated to social justice. She teaches Literature and Composition at Westfield State University and Holyoke Community College, and Poetry in the Interdisciplinary Studies program for the Lesley University M.F.A. graduate program.

William F. DeVault is the U.S. Poet Laureate for the National Beat Poetry Festival for 2017-2018. The author of over twenty books, with half a dozen CDs of spoken word recordings to his credit, this poet was christened "The Romantic Poet of the Internet" in 1996 by Yahoo. He vibrates in the strange ether between the academic poets and the street poets, aggressively avoiding labels while he churns out memorable works in his Bohemian existence. His works have appeared in multiple anthologies and he has stalked venues from New York to Los Angeles, from New Orleans to Boston. He formerly was the founder and host of "The Romantic and Erotic Poetry Group" for AOL and is the creator

and publisher of the fusion literary/photography journal amomancies.

Ernel O. Grant Poetz Realm Owner/Founder September 2006- Present. Poetz Realm, a family owned business, was founded in 2006 by Ernel Grant. Poetz Realm is a place where artists get together and share in their artistry (i.e. spoken word, poetry, and emceeing, singing, verbal expression). Ernel established Poetz Realm in an effort to continue providing the Bridgeport community with a positive and uplifting venue. The 2011 Connecticut Poetry Team was put together by Poetz Realm and Verbal Slap Productions in an effort to have a well represented team from the state. Efforts to put another team together for the National Slam this year are already underway. Various clothes drives were conducted by Poetz Realm to assist less fortunate members of the community. Along with the clothes drives attempts to collect school supplies, back packs and art supplies were also done throughout the years. Ernel was introduced to spoken word in 2000 due to needing an outlet for expression. He has been wrapped up in poetry and the performing arts since then. He is also a founding member of "The Bulanians", a spoken word group who revitalized the art form in the Hartford area. Young artists can perform poems, music and dance in an attempt to share their talents. This is open to all ages and takes place every 2nd and 4th Saturdays of the month. This workshop allows generations to have fun and learn together.

Viviana Grell was shot out of her mother's uterus landing in Argentina. At age 10 landed in New York City, learned English with words becoming a weapon of expression. At age 17 thanked her parents for being transportation to get to this planet and left. Her mission as a writer is pushing boundaries of sex, religion and politics. She has a law career, hosts the Spanish radio show "Accidents Your Power and Justice" on WPAT AM, hosts her uncensored open mic "Stark Reality Open Mic" in NYC, organizes Singles over 40 events in NYC.

Ngoma Hill is a performance poet, multi-instrumentalist, singer/songwriter, Artist and paradigm shifter, who for over 40 years has used culture as a tool to raise socio-political and spiritual consciousness through work that encourages critical thought. A former member of Amiri Baraka's "The Spirit House Movers and Players" and the contemporary freedom song duo "Serious Bizness", Ngoma weaves poetry and song that raises contradictions and searches for a solution to a just and peaceful world. Ngoma was the Prop Slam Winner of the 1997 National Poetry Slam Competition in Middletown, CT and his been published widely. He was featured in the P.B.S spoken word documentary The Aproposets with Allen Ginsburg. Ngoma has curated and hosted the poetry slam at the Martin Luther King Family Festival of Social and Environmental Justice at the Yale/Peabody Museum since 1995. He was also selected to participate in the 2009 Badilisha Poetry Xchange in Capetown, South Africa. In December of 2011 He

was initiated as a Priest of Obatala in Ibadan, Nigeria. In June of 2013 he was initiated as a Priest of Ifa.

Daniel McTaggart's poetry has been published in Kestrel, Backbone Mountain Review, and Amomancies. Most of it has been written in several local diners near Morgantown, WV. He is the editor of "Diner Stories: Off the Menu" from Mountain State Press.

Carlo Parcelli studied and worked for many years with the Joyce/Wake scholar, Dr. Rudd Fleming, who translated Greek drama with Ezra Pound while Pound was incarcerated at St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Washington, DC. He has published two books in the style of Pound's Cantos, 'Three Antiphonies' and 'Fernparallelismus'. He has also published a series of 88 monoloues, 'The Gospel According to Simon Kananaio: A Meditation on Empire' based on David Jones' monologues of a Roman principalis in his volume 'The Sleeping Lord'. Carlos has a forthcoming epic poem about a fictitious First Century Roman cynic philosopher called 'Canus Ictus in Exilium' (Dog Bite in Exile). His work, generally excerpted, has appeared in a number of journals including Exquisite Corpse, Make It New, Brave New World and Science as Culture. He has performed his work, especially 'The Gospel' at dozens of venues including the Boog Poetry Festival, The National Beat Poetry Festival, The Bowery Poetry Club and Busboys and Poets in Washington, DC. He is currently an editor at Flashpoint magazine

<<http://www.flashpointmag.com/>., an online journal largely devoted to high-Modernist poetics.

Marci Payne is an American author, photographer, and musician living in Northern New Jersey. Her main influences are American Roots music, Russian Authors, and Italian food. She lives alone with her memories and an imaginary cat.

Paul Richmond artist and performer for 45 years. Created Human Error Publishing, organizes monthly readings and annual Word events / festivals, publishes independent writers. Four books; "No Guarantees – Adjust and Continue.", "Ready or Not - Living in the Break Down Lane" and "Too Much of a Good Thing - In the land of Scarcity - Breeds Contempt" "You Might Need A Bigger Hammer". Fifth book due out 2017. Published in numerous journals, anthologies, a featured poet here and abroad. www.humanerrorpublishing.com

Annie Sauter is a poet of the loud and rowdy variety. She has been published in multiple journals, collections, magazines and underground press publications over the years. She has also had her work published by Berkeley Women's Collective, Bright Hill Press, Great Weather for Media Press, Maverick Press, and the Alternative New Years Day Collection, Poetrybay, and in Reality Beach. Her Book A Plastic Bag of Red Cells was published by Bright Hill Press. In Colorado she was just featured at the Millardi Theatre, in The In The Moment: Life Art Performance event. She frequently writes

about the political and street scenes of the 1960s and 1970s, and later of children and rural life. Lately trailer park living has occupied the pages. In the 60s and 70s shewas published by The Rat, The Berkeley Tribe and the Berkeley Women's Collective press. She is a watercolor and acrylic painter. She lives in a trailer in Almont, Colorado She has two grown daughters.

Chris Vannoy from San Diego, has been writing for most of his life. Promoter, editor, teacher, and tireless advocate of words both heard and spoken; he works endlessly to raise up words from page to ear and from mouth to the air. He is the originator of the Poet's Tree featured and open reading series, as well as editor of the Poet's Tree Press. Chris has been published in Ghosts of the Beatnik Poets, City Works, The Writing Center, Tokes anthologies, Visions, and Step Jazz magazines. He has participated in San Diego's Quincy Troupe's "Artist's on the Cutting Edge" series, Lollapalooza Spoken Word Tent, Border Voices Poetry in the Park, Tearing the Curtain 3, and a poetry exchange between San DiegoAnd Orange County. He was one of twenty-five San Diego Poets featured in the Exploded Views CD and two CDs from San Diego based group Wormhole. In 1998 Mr. Vannoy was published in the Poetry Calendar and JOE'S JOURNAL Best of the Beach. In 2000, he read at Mills College in Oakland, and at The West Coast Regional slam at Henry Miller Library in Big Sur, California. Latest books published by Baxter Daniels Ink Press are: "A Strange Summer" (2014) where

much of his performance poetry is compiled and “ The Rest of It” recently released this year.

Chryssa Velissariou a published poet in Greek and English, has been nominated as the 1st International Beat Poet Laureate of the National Beat Poetry Festival 2017-2018 in the USA. She has more than 3000 poems in her blogs. She also writes poetry in French and in German. She was a host at the International Beat Poetry Festival 2015, the WP Poetathon in 2013 and the WP Peaceathon in 2015 in Greece. She is a Peace Activist, WP Canada and International Peace Ambassador, and 100 TPC events’ organizer. A Professor of Physics (Space Physics), candidate Doctor in NT Education, honoured and awarded since 2011 for Excellence and Innovation in Education by the Ministry of Education, Greece. She is also an elected Member of her hometown Municipality.

James P. Wagner (Ishwa) is an editor, publisher, award-winning fiction writer, essayist, performance poet, and alum twice over (BA & MALS) of Dowling College. He is the publisher for Local Gems Poetry Press and the Senior Founder and President of the Bards Initiative, a Long Island based non-profit dedicated to using poetry for social improvement. He has been on the advisory boards for the Nassau County Poet Laureate Society and the Walt Whitman Birthplace Association. James also helped with the Dowling College Writing Conference. His poetry is also used to autism advocacy, having appeared at the Naturally Autistic Conference in

Vancouver and in Naturally Autistic Magazine, as well as his essays. James believes poetry is alive and well and thoroughly enjoys being a part of poetic culture. His most recent collection of poetry is *Ten Year Reunion*.

George Wallace is a professional writer and educator with 25 years in journalism, public relations and education. He is additionally a poet and performer, writer in residence at the Walt Whitman Birthplace and first poet laureate of Suffolk County, with 29 chapbooks published, and is an adjunct professor of English at Pace University. He has conducted literary readings and discussions at such US locations as the John Steinbeck Center, William Carlos Williams Center, Pollock-Krasner House, Gordon Parks Museum, Woody Guthrie Festival, Lowell Celebrates Kerouac and the Center for Hellenic Studies in Washington DC. As well, he has a worldwide profile of performances, lectures, workshops and appearances, and a quarter century as organizer of poetry communities.



Local Gems Poetry Press is a small Long Island based poetry press dedicated to spreading poetry through performance and the written word. Local Gems believes that poetry is the voice of the people, and as the sister organization of the Bards Initiative, believes that poetry can be used to make a difference.

www.localgemspetrypress.com