45th Anniversary Celebration

The Cyril A. Dostal Poetry Workshop

October 21, 2018

South Euclid-Lyndhurst Branch
1876 South Green Road / 216.382.4880

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ORDER OF READING

Empty Nester by beth choi
Arla Adams Ate Ants by Jill Lange
Summer Storm by Kathryn Brock
Nine Eleven by Roberta Jupin
Fight Club by Rebecca Ferlotti
Untitled by R Ferris
Smiles by Charles Scheitler
Office Party by Adrian Schnall
Quaff by Amanda Terman
More Snow Likely by Alyson Widen
Choosing a Topic for a Nature Poem by Fred Schraff
Final Wishes by Raymond Neubert
Nice Time by Mutawaf Shaheed
Memory of Helplessness by Dail Duncan
Free Verse Is Like by Mary Turzillo
Echoing Skies: The Mountains by M. A. Janning
Karma by Marilyn Schraff
There is No Single Poem by Christopher Franke
Napping by Robert McDonough
Empty Nester

Perhaps she will stay downstairs for a while, contrive to fall asleep on the sofa, lights ablaze,

teeth not brushed and glasses twisted, caretaker a timer, ready to wake her when morning comes.

Perhaps when the day dawns, after she tidies up, sips tea, eats sugared toast, dissects the latest news,

she will task herself to climb up the stairs to make peace with the silence of emptied upstairs rooms.
Arla Adams Ate Ants

How strange the events we remember, regret, and carry with us.

The year my friends and I turned seven, already I had a gift they appreciated; I could find four-leaf clovers.

Arla Adams, a year or so younger, was here staying the summer with her grandmother.

Even now Arla’s reason is not clear, whether she only wanted to impress us, or was just not altogether there.

Arla claimed she liked to eat ants---to prove it she picked a large black one popped it into her mouth and swallowed.

Impress us she did, she knew it; she kept on.

Another day I actually paid her---one precious four-leaf clover for each ant swallowed, about eight of them.

I regret---wasting my gift that way, any taking advantage of Arla, causing the untimely demise of the ants.

Today I hope Arla is well and happy. I hope she is a vegetarian.
Kathryn Brock

Summer Storm

Through the open window
thunder rumbles,
vibrates my skin,
echoes through my body.
A huge, jagged crack
splits the sky,
makes me flinch.

He must stop drink or leave.
He makes motions,
calls case workers,
continues to drink
until he falls.

My sweet baby boy,
lost in mania and despair,
drowns his pain in drink,
will not take his pills,
wastes his life and mine.

Rain beats on the roof
bounces off sidewalks
quenches parched plants
runs rivulets through the street,
cools and cleans the air.

My tears can’t do the same.
Nine Eleven

a photo, grainy, gray
taken from a great distance
a form barely distinguishable at first
then incomprehensible
then shockingly clear
a human figure
a man in a pale summer suit
bat-like against the wall of the tower
before it crumbles
holding on to god-knows what
breathing the cool blue-sky air
into fire-singed lungs
too terrified to let go
not finished with his prayer
frantic to climb back in
frantic to get away
looking down
looking down
looking down
knowing death is certain
final
clinging still
battered by the wind
There's a sense of serenity in dodging raindrops, bobbing and weaving as the clouds cry. And the chill of the breeze assaulting taste, touch, feel, hear, see.

Strands of hair adhering to strands of hair forming clumps – deity-made blocks of sopping wet caramel-colored proteins.

And eyeliner violently smeared by minuscule drops of water pummeling tired eyes and smoke-screening the view of a solemn scene.

Lips chapped by wind-chill and replenished by sleet.

Sandals shoved between unpainted toes squeak.

*Originally published in Mind Murals, 2013*
R Ferris

we

are
closest
at night
in bed
when we
are asleep

naked thigh against naked thigh
Smiles

Heat accumulates
Inside my car
As I read Japanese poetry
About a hut with paper windows
Trembling in the cold--
Clouds are about to block the sun--
Content
I sit here
Like an aged monk
Who disdains vanity
Dismisses his deepest thoughts
And is not regretful or afraid
That he will die--
Office Party

No hours of painting
plucking teasing for him.
No arguing with the face
in the mirror no back and forth
over lips too full skirt too short
top too low. Oh the injustice.

He tosses a smile across the room
extracts himself from the cluster
exchanging monotones
bearing wine glasses like candles
comes over eyes all brotherly
stops an arms-length away.
Wow he says you look really nice.

I could have killed Linda
telling the new girl
I’d worked for him twenty years.
With me he chimes we’re a team.
And an echo -- that growl
of his -- rasps at me
without rising a single tone.
Yeah I say nine to six
five days a week twenty years
it’s like being married I say
draining scotch number four
just without the sex.
Not sure which came first
his flicker of a look
or the inner voice saying
maybe I should have stopped
at three.

In the coatroom his arms surround me
hold me soft and strong
too close too long.
You okay to drive he asks
and I say oh yeah sure and the words
slip out too fast and his body sighs.
All right he mumbles okay
see you Monday.
Quaff

Definition: To quickly drink a lot

*Sneeze, sneeze, cough, cough*
“Mom, I’m really sick.”
“Don’t worry, dear, we’ll head it off -
I know just the trick!”

Mom raced to the other room
and cooked a pot of broth.
“Now gulp this down without a spoon -
don’t just sip, dear - quaff!”

As soon as I was done,
Mom started cooking more.
She cooked until the morning sun
was streaming through the door.

I drank and drank all through the night,
just like Mom said I should.
And whaddaya know, my mom was right -
it made my throat feel good!

“Thank you mom for your advice,
and hard work in the kitchen!”
“Dear, it wasn’t just a sacrifice -
I was sick of your coughin’ and bitchin’.”

Quaff was originally published in LMFAO from A to Z by Amanda Terman on May 13, 2017.
More Snow Likely

I hope the frost vanishes,
Looking at all the white stuff
makes me shiver shudder
and it’s all over,
like a dog shaking to dry off after wet.
I search along the horizon for the end,
not yet in the stars or air.
Weathermen dread the forecast,
but plunge ahead,
while pointing out peeks of sun
to avoid mention of that 4-letter word.
My snow brush has had a workout
and so have I getting my car ready for trips
which take longer.
I put more air in my tires,
since the weather has wreaked havoc
on the tire pressure monitor
as the light keeps me company
and I hope it’s just more air I need.
Choosing a Topic for a Nature Poem

Whose form this is we all well know
My words fit in my thoughts to show
Just bland enough to read them here
No topic to inflame or grow.

Twelve nature poems in a year
Are more than I can write I fear
This day I have no point to make
Nor tender thoughts to draw a tear

No love for flowers can I fake
Nor beauty in a pond or lake
No hill or cliff-side soft or steep
No raindrop, hailstone, or flake

My thoughts tonight are not so deep.
Nor long enough to induce sleep
Nor copies of my work to keep
Nor copies of my work to keep
Final Wishes

I opened the letter
From a local mortuary

Dear Raymond
May we call you
Raymond
Or would you prefer
Ray
Or
Raymond P
Maybe
Dear friend
We need your help
To determine
How members
Of our community
Plan for
One of the hardest things
A family has to face
The death of a loved one
In order to assist
With sensitive
Caring
And professional help
When people are in need
We need to know
The real thoughts
And feelings
Of individuals
Just like you

My mother died early
From complications
Of arthritis
My father of old age

I plan to take after him
Mutawaf Shaheed

Nice Time

Come sit with me and watch the sun settle behind the horizon, while I look for the moon to rise in your eye.

We watch the flight of fire flies move laser like against the backdrop of a dark red sky.
I hear the cricket’s cricket.
Shadows appear.

They were not there two blinks ago.
The night is involved in night time.
Emotions hidden by sunshine now emerge to mingle in the mist.

In the lightless landscape we hear the sounds and catch a glimpse of the other things that begin to stir. The very acts of our nature seem to bring us closer.

I heard my muscles say they missed you.
Dail Duncan

Memory of Helplessness

Half an ounce with wings

beating hundreds of miles
south under fall constellations
over great dark lakes
calling chip calls

heart and wings (presumably) weary
now must discern
sky
from skyscraping reflections.

To ease the swelling of a collision, a rescued, panicked green Wilson’s
warbler is offered a drink from a syringe of anti-inflammatory fluid, finally
notices the bugs provided, eats, and calms enough to finish its way and go
back to singing

two notes at once.

To make sense of the daze, I drink words, put pain to paper,

lost songs on telephone poles.
Free Verse Is Like

Frosty old Frost says
free verse is like
playing tennis without a net.

But I say,
 rhymed verse is like
singing opera with your mouth full of cocktail weiners,
like swimming the English Channel in a 50’s prom dress,
like climbing Everest with vampires for sherpas,

a haiku, like a
Frank Gehry built inside a
Motel Six Bathroom.

A cinquain is like doing aikido
while wearing roller skates
and juggling lion cubs,

and sonnets are like chefing a gourmet dinner
with just ingredients that start with the letter Q,
like writing a symphony with only kazoos and a triangle
like dancing a tango on a pogo stick.

I don’t say you shouldn’t,
just that it’s amazing,
like a triceratops foxtrotting on its front hooves,

and hard on the nerves,
like playing a glass harmonica on milk cartons
while wearing boxing gloves.

Picasso did just fine when he had only blue paint,
but I think
free verse is more like
walking a tightrope without a net.

Echoing Skies: The Mountains

Out beyond our cities and towns
in the wilds unspoiled by man
the skies begin to echo
to the songs of mount and glen

The age-old melodies of the peaks
sing and sigh of times gone by
of long slow rise and longer fall
echo 'tween sky and vale

They sing of crags and their caves
of rivers and of trees
sing their birth among the stars
and how they came to be

In earthquake’s rumble, and volcano’s roar
songs of Gaia, and Pangaea, too
Mem’ries new and aeons-old of rising and of fall
of ev’rything — of land — and sea — and all

The skies do answer all the songs
with clouds and rain, with lightning, and with thunder
to echo back the strains they’ve heard
of the mountains and their wonder.
Marilyn Schraff

Karma

I asked if anyone knows who took my garden hose. The thief, a bit of a sport, left me another one short.

Seventy-five feet, green, was no longer to be seen; replaced by thieving fellow with twenty-five feet, yellow.

If my neighbor’s looks could kill, I’d be lying dead and still. She said my mind was shaken, or maybe I’m mistaken.

The one who questioned my mind is at times to me unkind. As weeks went by in the hood karma took place as it should.

As neighbor told of her woe, within my heart I did glow. Today she did awaken to find her hose was taken.
There is No Single Poem

There is no single poem,
no singular poet;
but the signs to others.
There is no star;
but a galaxy!
There is no single verse;
but a universe.

The song of poetry
is a choir,
and of chorus,
what else . . .

It is all that
it would be
if not quite
what it can’t.

But, poets, be
out of your closets.
May your quill’s panache
fly your poems
from . . .
off —
There . . .
pages.

Sometimes may judgement
be
a peer.

Though the heard be . . .
quadruped? . . . What
feat be whom for?

We might not laugh
but grin. We might
not cry but sigh.
We might not say
but know, or not
know, & yet say . . .
Robert McDonough

Napping

I ponder whether I am sleeping and decide not. After all, at the foot of the bed I see something I must not be using, plausibly wrapped in burlap, and from beneath the bed a cloud of thin smoke seeps out. So, no, but I must sleep now to stay awake tonight during the poetry reading.