

# *Yggdrasil*

---

A Journal Of The Poetic Arts

May 2013

VOL XXI, Issue 5, Number 241

*20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Issue*

*Editor: Klaus J. Gerken*

*Production Editor: Heather Ferguson*

*European Editor: Mois Benarroch*

*Contributing Editors: Michael Collings; Jack R. Wesdorp*

*Previous Associate Editors: Igal Koshevoy; Evan Light; Pedro Sena; ; Oswald Le Winter*

ISSN 1480-6401

# Table of Contents

## **INTRODUCTION**

**AE Reiff**

**Banquet of God**

## **CONTENTS**

**KJ Hannah Greenberg**

**“Retarded:” Another Spoil of Child Abuse**

**Loving One’s Hevrusot: Authentic Brotherhood Evidenced at a Wedding**

**Rock is Home**

**Johannes S. H. Bjerg**

**white holes I - pavement**

**white hole II - questions**

## **PATRICK WHITE**

**HOW TO SPEAK WHEN NO WORD CAN BE SPOKEN**

## **Ken Kesner**

**IMAGE AND INCIDENT**

**then python**

**from notes**

**you**

## **Michael Ceraolo**

**July 4, 1054**

**Some Depression Scenes**

## **Francesca Castaño**

**Instant coffee**

**No roof over head**

**The TV news said**

**Lightsome**

## **POST SCRIPTUM**

## **Paulette Turcotte**

**I want to taste the new spring buds**

# Introduction

AE Reiff

## Banquet of God

First in the soles of feet, up into legs and groins,  
The crux that leaps, forbidden flower employed  
Enflames a sleep. Throw out those books,  
Torn papers encrust stone, one walking looks  
To where a page of poems brood  
Outlined by, ah, the underlined, bright rood.

Home roadway, airport railway, factory,  
We eat our fill in earth's refectory.  
We have a sewage problem Amazon,  
Piped to our cities. We long for you  
River of the world to eat our fill,  
If you can contain the products of our will.

There is a problem, surely it has been a problem.  
One lay across the thwart, the heart, the bleeding stem,  
Bled, burned. The boat? The bellowing ash of earth.  
There walked children whose eyes gave mirth  
To masses who saw their death and died,  
So look upon the faces with unaverted eyes.

The grass caught fire, leapt trees, on fire his hair,  
On fire the man you will see running there.  
He leapt into a pool of sparks, redux,  
The burning coals enjoyed a barbecue.  
All cows were happily so consumed, goats leapt  
Upon grills, sheep tendered their loins and slept.

Burn heavens, light mountains now you candles,  
Drain rivers, seas drain, or were you vandalized?  
Awake cave dwellers, for once upon a time  
in meadow, grove and stream you unapparelled find

celestial light, the forest wrong,  
At first the groves but then the trees are gone.

And the song, of outlandish devils shame,  
Imbedded from the mast of earth, who blames?  
The flavor is an appetizing boil,  
Charcoaled, grilled to ash, unspoiled.  
Our meat was in the fire cooking  
Consumed throughout. How's that looking?

Pigs, chickens gave them up to farce,  
Alone among foods, vegetables last dished.  
There is a hunger now, would you be warned?  
There is a thirst, you should not go unarmed.  
So the world turns, the daily sight  
Continues its delight.

Silence pipettes in radioactive milk,  
Nonsense takes a mercury sandwich, silt,  
But no DDT. Don't spare the topsoil,  
Stung before dismembering. No microbes toil.  
No sky will fall nor mountain cease to clap  
When hands, though terrors, possess not this abstract.

Here proclaim a time when meadow, grove and stream  
Were filled, backfilled, trucked off. What does it mean?  
Authorized, certified, entirely official,  
Back to nature we got an administrative bushel.  
There man can better himself  
If not by worth he takes the earth by stealth.

Good funding institutes these bonds  
Where Procter and Gamble compose a split gene round.  
Piruvate phosphatase\* the daily song repeats,  
Science and business sing. No defeat  
For cruelty. The knowing herd, the drifting dark  
Comes to noon, sun shines, burns heart.

Tear turf, rip ravines, ruined cities judge first  
yourself. This is the way that God is just.  
When business empires whiten without,  
There within clerks and executives, doubt  
Inks margins to encroach the light,  
Which sport enables the approaching eon night.

Look, this is hell and there the savior walks  
Among coals, pitted ruins, idle talk.  
There it was among industrialists  
He leaned into rubbish, proved to exist  
This token of hope against war, to tell  
How first with angel fire the first trump fell.

Still it's a bit ticklish, the feeling  
When the hair falls out as the skin is peeling.  
Admit it. Trees never had leaves.  
The telling those old wives' tales must cease.  
Come over for the visit, the erosions' not too bad,  
It's not the flash, it's the light and shock that's sad.

We lost a third part of the atmosphere.  
Nothing was spared. There was a sale at Sears.  
The innocent working bee, bacterial spring,  
The inward warmth, tree rings,  
The cynic died a horrid death,  
We saw him as he was, unstaunched and luminous.

Lover's bone to sinew broken, ligaments  
Peacefully expired, the hair fell into place.  
You mistake. Ignorance feels nothing.  
What returns? Iniquity, cowardice, slumping.  
Why think a heart of beef, calves' liver  
Less human than this pumping gesture?

When I cut the heart into usable pieces,  
I mean when I sought experimental protein  
For the lab of judgment there was no meat  
At all, fatty substance unusable, sweet,  
Outpoured ill got sentiment,  
I never knew just what it meant.

Rain fire clouds, smoke heartily ravines,  
Lift continents angelic gravities.  
Juggle its pieces into air,  
Time's filled, there is no way the earth were spared.  
We shall not say it was the fault of man.  
No man indeed. Indeed it was no man.

Come all to this great supper, press wine,  
And heavenly birds you also come to dine.

One Pompeii blast or Ceres' quake will bend  
The fine earth, shake, lift sea and hems.  
There is another sphere, come worms and flies,  
Raveners to great sacrifice.

From pits come vultures, eagles come to fish,  
The lambs must wait now man is the dish.  
Earth cleansed, war with him has gone,  
Come beasts, coyotes, dogs and learn to carnivore.  
Come bear, panther, bobcat find your spouse  
And breed, the earth's your wedding house.

Progeny extinct, come poison fish.  
Mercury snakes from inert wood.  
Calculate the final layer of mud  
Where even the bacteria find no food.  
This witness from the art invite  
But banquet first, this food is ripe.

When once at the predicted end of time  
Forgiven my sins and rhyme  
Certified, I came to the wedding,  
Rose in the mist, spread across a flooded plain,  
It seemed the ghost of all the souls who died  
Mammalian successors and antecedents sighed.

Come to the palpable spirit wreck  
ghosts swarmed air like soundless bees to seek  
The million million stings themselves,  
It was no cries with which the air was filled.  
Air smokes and solid forms melt.  
Was there a sun? Not that my senses felt.

Stone ran a common river, molten steel  
a monument when it congealed.  
The night air cooled, there was an evening breeze,  
*O attic shape, what pipes and timbrels these?*  
Who comes to sacrifice? What have they forged?  
Thus my earth hungered even while it gorged.

---

# KJ Hannah Greenberg

## **“Retarded:” Another Spoil of Child Abuse**

Individual esteem teeters where  
Social development’s just a jewel in higher climbing.  
Too few among the ambitious  
Realize real ramifications of rubricing.

Those sagacious sorts grasp and spout that severe impairment,  
Triggered by nights of shouting, slapping, stomping,  
At offspring, at spouses, at pets, cleft days,  
Impossibly resulting in fractured juveniles.

They lecture that familial fiduciary crises,  
Parental drugs or alcohol,  
Rough neighborhoods, sickness, all  
Route innocents to emergency rooms.

They point out how  
Red lights, whistles blaring,  
Announce unmentionables, the sort  
Captured on x-rays, records, police videos.

Later, “tonsillectomies of the hypothalamus,”  
Performed by their well-intentioned social workers,  
City administrators, undereducated clergy,  
Bring about further breakage.

Consider that while spacesuit bladders are rubber,  
Little boys’ heads were never meant  
To resist harsh cosmic vacuums,  
Oceanic atmospheres, clinical evaluations.

Pajamas, messy shoes, peach pit games, submarine imaginings,  
Ought, instead, fill moments where  
Children labeled “developmentally handicapped”  
Could have thrived, would have grown straight.

No soul needs to be constrained to sweeping  
Civilization’s discarded bits into self-supplied bins.  
Fairy dust costs too much for happily ever endings.  
The youthful “derelict” has long been a collaborative project.

## Loving One's *Hevrusot*: Authentic Brotherhood Evidenced at a Wedding

Hand in hand, hand on shoulder, swaying, rocking, lifting  
Ever light, bright, righteously invigorated, virtuous in energizing generations'  
Reach, in partnership, the next best, deluxe, most excellent, incomparable peak.

Seeking, searching, questing, the chatan, when not spiraling in Shemyim,  
Pulls rabbis, fathers, friends, other loved ones, a speck higher, a madregah more,  
Cashes in his special spiritual investments while hoisting wedding callers forward.

Such near-caliente wagging of limbs brings joy beyond our ken, luminosity enough  
That this royal paloma, this groom, flies, again, from his trumpet-filled party,  
Beyond, flutes, drums, oboes, to the singular, complex place of merit.

In rare movements, he spins G-d's Glory past chuppah silk, further than  
Kallah radiance, clear of guests' gauche, worldly finery until supernal altitudes  
Converge, beckon, set on fire, sure torches for the new husband.

Plunged back to the mundane, the tedious and regular, once more he heaves the troop  
Toward shiny radiance parallel to dancing life's principle condigns. He spreads good  
Fortune, boosts the entire community, fortifies all holy klipspringers.

Morphed into heirs, into legatees to ethereal emotions, into recipients of benevolence,  
Men embrace truth-spangled illumination, otherworldly chromatics, pious notes. Together, doctors,  
lawyers, plumbers, roshei yeshevot, turn to everlasting splendor.

Then the angels rebuff, puff at dutiful ears, trip keen feet, cover eyes; apparently,  
Certain semitones, which herald ultimates, remain too profound for flesh.  
Only the kitel-decked ought to trespass, to encroach, the quintessentials of creations.

## Rock is Home

Rock is home. Stone's sound, verifiable, secure.  
Steadfastly warms, holds light and heat until  
Street crews sweep up odd gender-defined litter.  
Then, we go home hungry, contemplate necessities.

Compassion lifts up. Empathy elevates, promotes, raises.  
Coexists with neighbors, makes grandchildren sing unless  
Green grocer bribe police, other bureaucrats.  
Thereafter, we might miscalculate tearing motions.

Today's common denominators rot. Oversimplification hurts, punctures, destroys.  
Depletes denizen quirkiness, denudes half life love pending times when  
Pursuing aggressors halt growth's utility.  
From then on, we scrutinize each other's laundry.

Setting aside taxes harms. Levies spoil, impair, otherwise sting.  
Collects fumbling more than friendship, mars anticipating happenstances where  
Formal discourse serves disproportionate directives.  
Subsequently, our obligation to tolerance fades.

Writing proceeds accordingly. Words reflect influence, authority, weight.  
Heal slowly the confluence of money, power, greed, save for instances including  
Internet machinations hatching varied qualities of charm.  
Later, we embrace evil, throw out moral strictures.

# Johannes S. H. Bjerg

## **white holes I - pavement**

this ain't a pavement papal innocence in flames

bitte nicht hier a white hole spews out furniture

blue rabbits as long as one can see NN acts detached

she had a face (she has more) in her bag the keys to the ocean too

so banal more additives than substance

on the verge of spring here's the sleeping otter

just look at the pietá no tears from marble

in Nostradamus' stool cabinet cabbage from the past

so, ladybirds, eh? something stuck in my pineal eye

deeper messages hidden in the slug this one's from Spain

carnivorous we play with rubber balls in any park

“f\*ck the heron!” “why, here?” the rest is queuing for the loo

## white hole II - questions

some movements of dance then flight

segregation a political class roost cubic eggs

“mermaids? haven't seen any” the table is a mess again

“why not fall into light?”      “we're sad creatures”

“why not fall into hope?”      “the milk's gone off”

some of it is a beetle in a porcelain world

at the foot of a mountain an eye is born

obituaries printed on cheap paper then fish

“did she really say that?”      “damn where's his aorta?”

raga Bhariav a river a river a river

settled in cones red dust from a war god's helmet

“bacon? is that what you call it?”      “foreskin, hood, whatever...”

# PATRICK WHITE

former poet laureate for Ottawa

## HOW TO SPEAK WHEN NO WORD CAN BE SPOKEN

### *for Newtown*

How to speak when no word can be spoken.  
How to grieve when even the bells are broken.  
How to shriek one note so high and pure  
at the implacable heavens, even space cracks  
the wine-goblet of the silence with a flash  
of black lightning like a tuning fork where the roads  
unravel like strong ropes, and the rivers  
that were joined like one journey on the same bloodstream  
at their sacred meeting place, put out their fires  
and mourn the murdered children like an apple  
the death of its seeds in late autumn. And the six doors  
of the teachers and parents they were meant  
to walk through without any locks on their thresholds.

How to comfort the inconsolable. How to heal  
the expanding darkness of the eyeless starless abyss  
of an open wound in the tangible absence of the flesh within  
no scar of the moon will ever close. No candle  
will ever cry hard enough to catch up to,  
its single feather of a flame beating against  
the impervious windows veiled in black drapery  
for the fall of so many sparrows. Does God know?  
Does God keep up with her songbirds so intimately  
she knows them like an elementary school teacher  
knows them like the lullabies and stories of her own childhood  
she can sing in a closet to keep the horrors at bay?

Knows them by their smiles and the pink shrimp  
of their fingers, knows them like the myriad centers  
of the magic circles she draws around them  
like rain and haloes on the ground she embraces  
within the boundless folds of herself to protect them  
like a lapwing from the snake that strikes at the nest.

Treachery come to the blessed. Blood  
on the broken Easter eggs the sun

doesn't rise from anymore like gold  
from the albino ore of our highest hopes  
fallen like fledglings from the dead boughs  
of a false dawn the children sang to nevertheless  
not caring whether it was true or not, knowing  
that their praise was the only way to prove it otherwise.

Twenty buddhas and six enlightenment paths.  
Six planets and twenty shepherd moons  
smashed like lightbulbs and streetlamps  
by a madman on a delinquent joy ride with death  
shooting out the stars with a semi-automatic Bushmaster  
when the pilot light went out on the furnace of his brain  
and the cold crept in to a vacant space  
where no fire burned in the ice-age of his blood  
and the waterclocks of his tears stopped dead like glaciers.

We know the holiness of our children by the sanctity  
we pour into them like homegrown wine distilled  
from the vineyards of our own hearts, and we know it, too,  
by the desecrations of the pariahs cloaked in darkness  
like an eclipse had been pulled over their eyes like a stone  
rolled over a tomb, come in the night to poison them  
like housewells, to destroy all signs of the innocence  
they weren't brave enough to let master everything  
they were afraid of bringing into the light like spiders  
hanging rosaries of flies like trophy lines from the webs  
of the ruptured safety nets of their neuronc constellations.

I bring wheat. I bring poppies. I bring chicory and asters.  
I bring the crickets and grasshoppers of the field.  
I bring maple keys. I bring cedar boughs. I bring  
dolorous resins of pine and lunar goblets of morning glory  
buzzing with honey, to entwine in their hair like a Milky Way  
you can touch to your lips like the skin of their eyelids as they sleep.

I bring human sorrow, confusion, anger, shock, horror  
at the insanity of the unsymbolic inanity of the event  
that enshrines the absurd in the vicious indifference of the void.

I bring a sense of empathy osmotically saturated with grief  
so that a stranger's tears can run in the same creekbeds as mine  
toward the same sea that binds us like the tendrils of grapevines  
on the skeletal trellises and scaffolding of our own human divinity  
trying to climb up and paint roses in the wine of our creation myths.

I bring my eyes and my voice and my blood  
and this encrusted paint rag of a heart that's been  
wiping mirages off my brushes for lightyears  
like a bouquet of brooms in a desert, hoping  
to keep it clean for deeper mirrors to see  
the same stars in the dark shining after me  
that I once spoke to in an interrogative language  
that had to be translated into the answers of my mother-tongue  
before I could understand who I was listening to.

I bring a raw apple of love that isn't soiled by polishing  
to the graves of the nascent heroes and heroines  
who trusted their dreams enough to achieve great things  
even within the limitless confines of such small bodies,  
great victories of life in everyone of their cells,  
cosmic imaginations with room for stray dogs  
and wounded butterflies, grail searching light swords  
among the galaxies where even the black holes  
looked forward to a happy ending with a cool drink  
of something garish from the watering hole of a local fridge  
and vowed to show up the next day with their homework half done  
to begin the dance all over again. Nothing hidden. Nothing sought.

I bring the same secrets we all know but cannot say to anyone  
because our voices have not grown into them yet,  
and the silence is too small to contain our most sacred syllables.  
I bring wisdom in the stern of an empty lifeboat  
and love in the figurehead of a dauntless maiden at the bow.  
I bring the same numbness of grief that will no doubt  
later thaw like frost-bit fingers into ten triggers of vengeance  
when the pain begins to flow like a volcano  
instead of an ice-berg nine-tenths subliminally submerged.

Off in the distance, I bring a small, tender wind-chime of a child's voice  
like a shy nightstream whispering through the woods  
like a stray wavelength that fell from the stars like a ribbon  
undone on a gift of light, as if she were puzzling out her wonderment  
like a weathervane trying to align herself  
with all directions of prayer at once as she asks me  
how is it possible to hold a human accountable  
for things that God can't even explain to herself.  
And I place a sheathed sword of enlightenment at her feet  
and refuse to mar the waters of her mindstream  
with more bloodshed, until eye for eye, we all go blind.

Sometimes the insight of a firefly is enough to astonish the stars.

Or a chimney spark from the hearth of the human heart  
a whole new spontaneous order of things beginning with itself.  
Let us be fire on the water. Let us make the darkness whole again  
with the humility of our shining filling the empty begging bowls  
of our hearts pouring even the smallest grains of our light  
like a harvest of stars into the empty siloes of space and time.

Let the death of our children who have fallen from us  
like the fruits of our flesh, teach us to love as they did  
when the whole earth was a windfall of small miracles  
and the most amazing of all, them, who saw what we did not.

Let us ask from each other the same aspirations  
we request from God, and let us rejoice in the labour  
of meaning as much to each other as we try to mean  
to our ideas of what we're all doing walking around on the earth,  
looking up at the stars, wondering if they can hear us way down here  
or see their own reflections like fireflies burning in our wishing wells.

I bring my solitude to a communal place among trees.  
I bring my doubt like a stranger I befriended along the way.  
I bring a lost pilgrimage of children fired up like spark plugs  
to go the rest of the way on their own, as if the training wheels  
had just come off their mountain bikes, and they  
were flying among the contrails of the stars  
with streamers flowing like comets over the whitewater mane  
of the Great Square Of Pegasus running the rapids  
of their creative energies heeling it bareback but unbroken  
through the surf of the Milky Way as if in all ten directions  
of the night sky the universe were one horse wide,  
and time were nothing but the wingspan of the ride.

Child by child, life grows at its own pace  
like a celebration that's always just getting under way  
like horse-drawn floats of apple bloom in a spring parade  
or when winter carves crystal chandeliers out of ice  
the coals in the eyes of the snowman by the mailbox  
catching fire like diamonds caught in the highbeams of the stars  
because some child stared at it from the living room window  
to keep it from feeling all alone by itself in the front yard.

There may be universal laws that abstrusely govern here  
as if one size fits all, but it's the mystic specifics  
we abide by like the fragrance of light on a child's hair  
when a mother is drying it like a comet in the rain  
after a cucumber-coconut-apricot bath wash

she just had to try like a new flavour of candy on her skin.  
Or a boy being brave as his father about a bruise.

The paradigms of the constellations might go out  
like a candelabra in the firestorm of an apocalypse,  
and the petals of the daisy chains huddle close  
to one another holding their hands together like buds again  
to ward off the eerie perils of a per-emptive eclipse,  
but it's the life we store like dreams in the corners of our eyes  
as we glance by a child among her crayons on the floor  
proud to teach her chaos to colour inside the lines,  
delighted with the dawn if it should bring the sun back  
like a ball in the mouth of a slobbering mongrel  
that licks her face like a salt block  
just to hear her squeal with delight as she  
throws it over hand without expecting it  
to ever come down again like a childhood  
in a solar system organized by helium balloons.

Improbable concourses and course corrections of happenstance,  
alarms and guards and gates and small arms licensed to kill  
and what was visionary about the way we saw one another  
all singing in the same lifeboat together rowing for shore,  
not knowing whether we'd make it past the reefs and rocks  
like salvage or salvation, now a narrowing of our field of view  
into a mistrustful invigilation of our own kind as we learn  
to live in the shadows of the black holes and haloes  
of trap door spiders that don't want to be recognized  
like strangers in the light of our street cameras with eyes just like us.

Let the loss of our children empty our arms of the things we were  
mistakenly carrying like burdens we took upon ourselves  
into a wider embrace of the new moon in the old moon's arms  
like a disparate reunion of opposites in the circumpolar bear hugs  
we give each other in tears around the graves of the very young  
who bring us together to weep like bells in unison  
for the kyrie eleisons and consolation dawns  
in the swelling clarions of our clear-eyed grief.

Let us remember that it is our eyes, purged of ashes,  
though constellations appear and disappear like mirages  
on a starmap in an hourglass of pyramids and quicksand,  
that keep the fires of the stars alight on the nightwatch  
that looks in on a sleeping child, and leaves the door ajar  
where the intimate mystery of life embodied in flesh and blood  
goes on dreaming like growth rings we can understand

the infinite measure of by the enlargements of our heartwood  
marked like a calendar of full moons rising in the doorway  
like the floodwaters of love overflowing the starmud of our mindstreams  
as if there were oceans of awareness ahead that only a child,  
one hand after another, could guide us through together  
like blind prophets and despairing oracles fearful of our own weather.

Let the house of life not be dismantled by inclement elements  
or lowered into the grave like an orphanage for dead children  
and even if the wolf huffs enough to blow it down  
let us raise it again like the strong rafters of our children  
blooming like the crocuses of pup tents all over the back lawn.

Let us follow them through a hole in a fence a child wide  
that can't keep us out of paradise for any longer than it takes  
to be the last to enter like twenty six bodhisattvas  
rising like the starcluster of the Pleiades in the east  
to mark the trail of what they didn't hesitate to reveal to us  
like fireflies in a telescope with eyes full of wonder at both ends,  
unborn, unperishing like the flight of hinges on an open gate  
as if our exits and our entrances were two wings on the same bird  
singing on the dead bough, singing on the green,  
of things as there are, seen and unseen, like the blossom  
of a moonrise in the orchards of spring, like leaves  
in the autumn summoned like a choir to a seance  
of inner fires that burn like distant stars without smoke  
by the dancing masters and singing coaches of the wind  
that knows each by the dawn they've come to rejoice in  
and at nightfall, the unique inflections of the bells in their voice.

# Ken Kesner

## IMAGE AND INCIDENT

and how does this question  
again  
and still would  
you  
remember when  
were you here  
pray in melody  
elations in courtyard  
sunlight walls  
join their language  
a curse to know  
for evening justices  
forget to leave and  
i get lost  
in perfect riddles  
humming hardly  
a second voice  
sometime to revere

## then python

will our discerning logic in  
a valley of this percussion is reflected  
all that drama knows  
everyone survives scathed  
in the opiate of senses  
more than countless  
and even  
twice than before  
one creates  
in this valley timing of glass  
reckless origin nods  
to pierce a liquid  
of gesture

**from notes**

you

your calling after  
after me words

dawning amaze

already lies forever  
is fantasy or matters tell

and i'm not there  
i can't go

you'll speak remembrance  
divining in truth

elegant mural

piety  
torn backwards

begin following you





wanted to install Vincent Caruso as the new pastor,  
and  
the parishioners objected, for a variety of reasons  
(some too esoteric for a poem, or anywhere outside a seminary),  
but  
near or at the top was the hierarchy's insistence  
on imposing imported priests;  
the parishioners objected to  
"the foreign influence in the parish  
and to the foreign priests they often get"  
Caruso showed up on January 16th,  
alone,  
and was politely turned away

The head of the diocese was not amused,  
and  
he didn't deign to meet with anyone from the parish  
until two lay representatives,  
Mrs. Helen Sanzo and John Trivisonno,  
mentioned financial improprieties in the parish  
that they would discuss with him over the phone  
A meeting was held January 31st,  
to no avail

The next attempt to install Caruso  
was on February 11th:  
this time  
he wouldn't be alone,  
he would be escorted to the church  
by a disliked diocesan functionary  
Again  
the attempted installation was politely refused  
The third attempt,  
on Sunday the 18th,  
would not be polite on anyone's part

That day  
was a typical February day weatherwise:  
the high would reach 36 degrees,  
there was already snow on the ground,  
more snow was forecast for later  
Caruso was again accompanied by the hated functionary,  
and more:

Knights of Columbus members  
parading the neighborhood in full regalia  
(inviting targets for snowballs thrown by neighborhood children),  
and  
(so much for separation of church and state)  
seventeen cars from the Cleveland police  
carrying a contingent of sixty cops,  
including  
a deputy inspector of the department  
(the only person who would be injured here today  
was one of the cops,  
burned  
when the teargas bomb he was carrying broke in his pocket)

A crowd of 1,500 assembled quickly,  
notified

by a female Paul Revere  
(who was on foot and eluded capture),  
Mrs. Josephine Del Zoppo,  
who rang bells alerting the neighborhood  
to what was happening at the church

Even  
the police presence and the diocese's  
threat,

and imposition,  
of punishment,

had no effect:  
Caruso was again turned away

The local papers had a field day:

"Prelate Brands Riot at Church 'A Mortal Sin' "

"Parish Put Under Ban as it Rebels"

"a shrieking milling crowd of 1,500 men, women, and children"

But it was three-strikes-and-you're-out  
for Caruso and the local hierarchy  
Despite the punishment  
the vast majority of the parishioners wouldn't budge;  
collections dwindled to almost nothing,  
and

pressure from above as well as below,  
along with the approach of Easter,  
forced an acceptable settlement:  
an American-born priest, Father Ferreri,  
was given charge of the parish,

and  
the incident was gradually swept from the collective memory  
and the establishment's 'official' record,  
until

being resurrected decades later-----

## Some Depression Scenes

July 1931

The voters had approved a bond issue  
for \$2,500,000  
in the pre-Depression election  
in November 1928,

with  
sixty possible uses for a large outdoor stadium  
outlined during the campaign,  
including  
possibly the hopes of hosting the Olympics,  
definitely  
without a firm commitment from the city baseball team  
(with the exception of one year,  
neither  
the baseball team nor the later football teams  
played there full-time until 1947)

And  
after almost three years,  
after the deaths of two workers,  
after only a twenty-percent cost-overrun,  
with the distinction of being the first publicly-financed facility  
in America (certainly of that size),  
the Stadium was ready to open  
The first event would be a heavyweight title fight  
between Max Schmeling and Young Stribling,  
to take place on July 3rd  
There would be ceremonies the day before,  
hyped to the hilt in the local papers

"Stadium Dedication Is on the Air Tonight"  
broadcast on the city's radio stations,

including  
the first radio broadcast of the official weigh-in  
of the two participants in a heavyweight title fight  
And

there would be stultifying speechifying:  
the Stadium would

"be an enduring local monument"  
"the scene of great events inseparable from the name of Cleveland"

And boosterism masquerading as news would continue:  
on the day of the fight a special section of the paper  
touted,

among many other things,  
the use of aluminum in the Stadium's construction,  
saying  
it "will always appear shiny",

surely  
news to those who remember its dirtiness and dinginess  
only two generations later

(another prediction  
elsewhere in that day's paper would be equally accurate:  
"BANK STOCKS GAINING STRENGTH")



framed in the following manner:

"Resolved"

"That the ten per cent reduction be restored to all employes [sic]"

"That no man be discharged for participation in the movement,  
but all receive their rights as heretofore"

"That all train-men be paid overtime for all detentions over ten hours"

"That firemen and brakemen be furnished with monthly passes  
on the divisions where they work"

Lest

modern readers think that last demand out of line,  
the testimony of one striker:

"Why,

I may be ordered to take an engine down town,

and for the down trip I am paid sixteen cents

I then have to return to Collinwood

as speedily as possible

The company don't give me a pass,

and

I have to come out on the train,

and

*pay my fare,*

twenty-five cents

What do you think of that?"

Public sentiment

thought the strikers' demands were reasonable,

and

the public was largely on the strikers' side

And

this enabled the strikers to fight

the usual strikebreaking machinations,

including

the newspapers publishing train schedules,

to just about a draw

The men went back to work on August 3rd,

having gained some small concessions,

and

the anti-labor hysteria went dormant for a while-----

Another decade,

another depression,

dubbed

with the usual diminutive Panic;

this one began in 1893

and was still growing stronger

the next year

Red-baiting had come into fashion

after Haymarket,

and

was used extensively here after

mass demonstrations by the unemployed,

several thousand strong,

on May 1st and May 2nd, 1894

"Remember,  
you will not be missed"  
said an employer of those who walked off the job  
to join the demonstration

"AN OUTRAGE"  
(though the newspapers tried to have it both ways:  
workers were either too strong,  
or  
they had no will of their own  
and were at the mercy of a few agitators)

"The first duty of government is its own protection"  
(something I somehow missed in my readings  
of the Constitution)

"The city is practically under martial law"  
(the dream of many an alleged democrat)

"No More Gatherings to be Allowed  
on the Square or on the Streets"  
(freedom of assembly be damned)

"Coxey and Browne have had an inning  
with the Washington police,  
and  
the bluecoats are masters of the situation"  
(as are the bluecoats here)

thus

"The only signs of life  
about the heretofore boisterous and active place  
were the bluecoated defenders of the peace  
who were stationed about the different portions of it  
and amused themselves with juggling their clubs"

Xenophobia was ever-present,  
even though,  
as the newspaper reported,  
the speaker

"was talking English"  
(of equal intelligence  
on display on the same page of the paper,  
a report saying  
"One death from smallpox at the pest house  
need cause no alarm")

And

the paper reported a speaker's subversive comment:

"these men surged through the streets  
in order to show the world  
that they are unemployed

but willing to work"

to which  
the status quo,  
through  
its unofficial (?) mouthpiece,  
offered  
the status quo's ever-unchanging response:

"There is no place in this city  
or on the continent of America  
for any such doctrine"-----

May 14, 2012

A Monday,

and  
the official opening of the first  
of the state's four new casinos  
(legalized in 2010)

And  
though the current depression  
(again not named as such  
through the use of new euphemisms  
as "The Great Recession")  
is in its fourth year  
(though things seem to be  
improving incrementally),  
as in  
all other depressions named and unnamed  
the vast majority are still doing decently  
at the very least,

and  
on this night hundreds at least  
wait patiently in a line that snakes  
around a couple of blocks,  
wait  
to be let in,  
a few at a time,  
to the casino's temporary home  
in one of the departed downtown department stores  
(the permanent home to be elsewhere downtown)

An event with saturation media coverage,  
complete with idiot-in-the-street interviews,  
in all the various forms of media

An event with heavier-than-usual  
police protection  
(at least  
in the downtown district  
and for the benefit of out-of-towners)

An event to be commemorated  
in the collective memory  
(with  
the usual consumer crap:

get your limited-edition coffee mugs and t-shirts)

Later,  
after the saturation media coverage  
has moved on to something else,  
after the downtown police protection  
has returned to the usual levels,  
after the amount of out-of-towners  
has returned to normal levels,  
those  
who perhaps aren't doing as well  
during the current depression  
will take advantage of those who are-----

# Francesca Castaño

## **Instant coffee**

Half past seven  
the sound of seagulls  
screaming across the sky  
awakens me

The swift locomotive  
of consciousness  
slowly ripens above  
a dense forest

I step out of bed and the visible  
world gathering in the hand  
of morning coolness and  
other thunders appear

## **No roof over head**

*A poem for Karen Bowles*

I was strolling the icy  
winter day raindrops  
anonymously singing  
in my head discreetly  
tapping with my feet  
calmly and patiently  
trying to understand  
the empty apartments  
naked of furniture and  
life being erased  
the holes become  
fragments of what will  
happen if the bird's song  
darkens parting the air in two  
above thunderclouds.

## **The TV news said**

Friday has  
its own rituals  
after work  
everybody  
runs to a chosen  
place to sip oblivion

How enduring  
the week has been

All of us obedient  
to the virtues of fear  
and what a lot  
of sand in the dessert.

Moreover,  
there were falling stars  
and a meteorite  
injured a thousand  
people in Russia.

In the church of Rome  
an old absolute ruler  
resigns his post  
some call it blasphemy  
others shame.

Meanwhile,  
bankers add blue  
rings of smoke  
to other reveries; waters  
shine dark in the unmoving air.

## Lightsome

Today I was happy  
I forgot about  
the pains that will  
be my guests again

A blend of loneliness  
friendship and desire  
after a heavy cold winter  
the sun was breaking leaves  
with the sound of small  
unhallowed laughter.

Folded- arms

Hours pour  
onto me

church bells  
sway a signal

sparkling metal  
across dirty fog

I stand, a shield  
far from stillness

empty space  
waiting beneath.

# Post Scriptum

Paulette Turcotte

**I want to taste the new spring buds**

I want to taste the new spring buds of the douglas fir,  
locate the sound of ancient forests on my tongue,  
from my heart and my singular frame, suspend time,  
from the root stocks, drop into  
timeless summer, feel the heat  
crease my face, as it would,  
eke out a mystical transcendence  
as happened that morning when I heard  
the sound in my own room\when I awoke  
and someone had resurrected a whole forest  
that was in my space, my hall,  
now, and green needles trembled and  
lush wet ferns swayed in the unimaginable breeze,  
I heard the slow awakening of birds and light  
and sound in trees,  
and waist deep in ancient grass, I felt  
my own roots dig in, hold  
from the beginning and some nights, too, when the trees fell silent,  
in every corner covering every niche, every space on four walls,  
and windows, words words words, as I peered into the dark  
and glimpsed a brave new creation in these burnt out chambers of my heart.

---

# Copyright Information

All selections are copyrighted by their respective authors. Any reproduction of these poems, without the express written permission of the authors, is prohibited.

YGDRASIL: A Journal of the Poetic Arts - Copyright (c) 1993 - 2013 by Klaus J. Gerken.

The official version of this magazine is available on Ygdrasil's World-Wide Web site <http://www.synapse.net/kgerken>. No other version shall be deemed "authorized" unless downloaded from there. Distribution is allowed and encouraged as long as the issue is unchanged.

## COMMENTS & SUBMISSIONS

Submission and comments should be sent to Klaus Gerken, Chief Editor at [kgerken@synapse.net](mailto:kgerken@synapse.net)

Submission must be in the body of an email unless otherwise agreed on.