

# *Yggdrasil*

---

A JOURNAL OF THE POETIC ARTS

November 2019

VOL XXVII, Issue 11, Number 319

Editor: Klaus J. Gerken

*European Editor: Mois Benarroch*

*Contributing Editor: Jack R. Wesdorp*

*Previous Associate Editors: Igal Koshevoy; Evan Light; Pedro Sena; Oswald Le Winter; Heather Ferguson; Patrick White*

ISSN 1480-6401

# Table of Contents

## INTRODUCTION

**Children's Art – Somerset Street West**

## CONTENTS

**Julian O'Dea**

**3 Poems**

---

**Jonathan Beale**

**10 Poems**

**Jim Bennett**

**5 Poems**

**Gregorio Tafoya**

**Short Story – Got Friends**

**Maria Jacketti**

**3 Poems**

**Wayne Funk**

**1 Poem**

**Vasilina Orlova**

**Essay - 'I am a Little Poetess with a Huge Bow:' Female Poets in Contemporary  
Russia**

**Beate Sigriddaughter**

**3 Poems**

**John McKernan**

**5 Poems**

**Greg Patrick**

**Short Story - Last Busker of Dublin**

**POST SCRIPTUM**

**Children's Art - Somerset Street West**

# Introduction



**Children's Art – Somerset Street West**

**Photo by Klaus J. Gerken 2001**

---

# Julian O'Dea

---

## Today

I woke up in a parallel world  
this morning;  
I am calling it Today.  
Everything is slightly different,  
older;  
as if I had travelled in time.

I am not quite the same.  
Nobody is.  
Some people have unaccountably  
disappeared;  
into the earth, they say.

And there are some new people,  
it says in the paper,  
and cars I haven't seen before  
on the road.

The clouds have changed;  
it is all so strange.

## Juvenilia

When God was a boy and just  
starting out on creating, He took  
some divine plasticine, all colours,  
primary and pristine, and pastel  
too, and rolled out some sea slugs,  
for practice really, and let them tumble  
into the sunniest seas.

Shell-less molluscs, Nudibranchs  
to be precise, frilled and flounced  
and tipped and dotted, with blobs,  
squiggles and even racing stripes,  
for, in His youthful haste, He had  
invented questionable taste.

## Particles

There must be a factory in that bush  
making blue wrens all day long,  
boys with their heads dipped in blue,  
girls flitting along like wind-up toys;  
like life bubbling from an ocean vent,  
or spread by comets from the void:  
whatever, beauty emerges free  
from a buzz of particles, and joy  
alights time and again like a wren.

---

# Jonathan Beale

1

## Old Man and The Sea

"Let him think that I am more man than I am and I will be so." Hemingway

*You never give up, even when you should.*

1

Sat, borne from the sculling racks  
The blazing aluminium cut the sky  
Burning the eye - beneath this  
Immaculate cloudless spring day

2.

The briny amorphous being  
That is your carriage and killer  
Here where all factors meet  
Somehow, you're just a minor character

3

Away and away....  
The scene is lost; paradise regained  
Beneath you, there is heaven  
Your prize - leads you to what should have been

4

Cast and pull cast and pull and again  
Leave the line for fate to adhere  
the day perceives you, and I  
under here some you cannot share

5.

Tongue or thought: you are by some line  
Of god or hope or destiny blowing  
The hook! the Trawl! The fight!  
There will be an end - to go fighting

6

Silence - battle is done and won  
the shore seems different today  
it took another to see I wasn't defeated  
so tomorrow, we fight again.

"But man is not made for defeat," he said. "A man can be destroyed but not defeated."

Hemingway

**On rereading peter porter**

The Great 'D' and Great 'R'  
pure bred bloodstock  
for ending those lines

Here is where or rather marks are  
Where they fall ( ), ( ), ( ), leaving no shadow  
Only a mythical status.

By the better..., or different sound  
those feminine sounds that conjure  
Something unique and yet really no less hard

Yet as hard within their core  
That D and R echo in the memory  
In another way

Before dropping and rattling on the floor  
Until forgotten again  
Until that book comes down once again for rereading

**Strange Days**

The wind disseminates slashing.  
Discriminating against one and all.  
Cutting to the bone from the soft flesh.

Convulsing, teasing -  
Private Pastimes behind some dreamt barrier.  
Defying everything in her path.

Carved in reason: cut in stone.  
Those who attempt to fathom her, cannot.  
Things are lost in the universal speck of dust.

Horizons' everywhere whatever way they look.  
There is *no* narrative, no caveat, no way.  
She breathes life: just life! Her self-preserving presence.

She cuts through existence without mass -  
The, exhausted, invisible, and the random  
Caught in a vortex and now gone.

**Chemistry of tears**

Who would understand  
Or who could?  
Or even care  
As the Sirens crash.  
the affects wash  
on another shore  
in another time  
that piano played  
beneath the clock.  
Her are and were;  
'two hearts with one pulse'.  
nature grew  
even the shadows  
have their own beauty  
forming into something  
other than the new.

**Wish**

They forget: all too soon  
That linear path that once lead to simplicity  
A simplicity beyond the sky  
To expound its virtues  
Is the innate skill  
That cannot be learnt  
On forgotten – never to retrieved  
They held that wish, just too long  
Fading, they grasped. And it was gone

**Ezra Pound**

That voice through the night  
Biblical. Alien. Cutting. Sinuous.  
Imagining: his tongues weighty deeds.  
Creating, from the heights.

As his voice rolls and crashes  
To some incomprehensible unfathomable  
Ocean, that Shelley knew  
Yet, somehow, making perfect sense.

Eerily clandestine, a voice  
Pins up the night's canvas; clarity - is - all.  
Its rightful place between the suns  
Allowing those avenues to be opened.

Structure and form are metamorphosed  
His dust shall be mingled with the universe's  
The fisherman and the fish  
Married in a simple world - Salute....

**Poem**

*i.m.... when life's mosaic isn't what you thought.*

spring, the cruelest time  
awakening the ghost within, again  
how much has been taken  
how much. Lost.

the spring light brings something  
that has evaded – the darkness  
whatever I do is see the unobtainable  
my fingers cannot touch the soothing moon

There the blind blossom  
Hangs in its grace  
Deaf to the torture  
Reflecting a meaningless beauty

Easter brings a new beginning  
A new dawn a new gateway  
To new world a new, or another unguent  
For another solution.

**The morning drive in to work....**

The Road along...  
...hides, plays, and reflects  
of something that has been....  
an abstract. Not abstracted.

The Hauberian Thames - scintillating.  
Against, the still sleeping silhouetted Hampton Court  
Beside the der Morgenstern.  
A creation beyond those who pass.

*'reason, not only the need.'*  
As they experience their human pleasure of  
*Touch*, they feel each other mingled with the night.  
...of some inexplicable unknown ease.

For the masses from memory, from your mind's eye,  
Untouched, yet the bread and wine  
Revives once again, until...  
Again, it becomes long forgotten, as all arrive.

**From the Silver Tongued**

Those aged hacks who taunt  
Even today – from their minds  
Moulded by rote.  
Still the charm of err and error  
Whistle among winds song  
Heard too often.  
Forgotten too, too easily  
There they sit imbibing port  
And silting – discussing...  
The ephemera of ephemera,  
The atom can be divided.  
Warnings of ‘what will happen’  
As they slug whiskey and wine  
To the tune of an inhaled cigar.  
Here the voices ring still.  
From the words they ironed  
Out in mornings cold air  
And pursued and pursued  
And pursued again.  
Until that final full stop arrived  
Taking them away  
With just a gleeful relished  
And permanent smile,  
On their faces.

10.

**Those garage days**

Empty tins of Swarfega\*  
and deranged chromium  
Clanging and chiming  
In the top capped foots breeze.  
Some order, more chaos;  
Each pieces place, it's place.  
Orphans to another world.  
This alchemy understood.  
In chipped knuckles - sore heads.  
This vast expanse....  
Universal - cosmic - magical.  
Seeing sick engines revived.  
Even today that's still magical  
This wonderment is never is lost.  
And the smell of Swarfega.

End

---

# Jim Bennett

## running away from the circus

tired of all the laughing faces  
the smell of sawdust making pratfalls  
of scaffolding and rigging

of tents lying like deflated balloons  
staging and spot lights  
his home a caravan where

he painted on his face each day  
glued a red nose into place  
and scraped it all off every night

Joey ran away from the circus  
changed his name to John  
and went to join the police

on the march he arrested me  
for calling him a clown perhaps  
his humour was also left behind

## hard lesson

the day before the march  
the strangers came  
wearing colourful shirts  
kaftans and scarves  
they brought some exotic food  
sat smoking passed it round  
listened to Pepper

this is where the clean shaven  
grew their beards  
took water in their hands  
scooped it to their face  
said "hell no we wont go"  
outside the war gathered  
in the newspapers like clouds

some breezed to Canada  
others practiced intellect  
or changed their name  
those that went smoked pot took LSD  
Country Joe even sang a song for them  
thats how they learned  
the meaning of irony

## **the cigarette**

the match struck flared into life  
held out cradled my hands  
a lantern that let light escape

onto her face captured in her eyes  
she leaned forward  
the tip of her cigarette

touched the flame the end raw red  
she leaned back exhaled a cloud  
that billowed round me

now I know the dangers  
I would think differently  
But then I was looking at her mouth

and didn't even realise  
that the flame  
had reached my fingers

## **the man who invented spectacles that let the wearer see ghosts**

found that eventually the only people who bought them  
were the recently bereaved and some very weird people  
he stopped selling them after a while because of the complaints  
not that you might think that people were scared  
it was actually quite the opposite people laughed and thought  
ghosts quite charming and amusing but after a few minutes  
they knew everything they would ever want to know about them

rather than being the howling things of horror literature  
the blood dripping white sheeted terror in the night  
these ghosts in the main were quite boring people who still tried  
to go about their business sitting in the corner of a shop  
walking between the market and a great house where they worked  
standing on street corners lost in a new geography  
they were everywhere and not in the least bit scary

mostly they were shadows of possibilities that waited to happen  
going about a day that had not occurred because they had died  
the wearer of glasses could talk to the ghost and hear the ghost in turn  
but they had little to say because they had forgotten the lives  
they reflected instead they made up names and stories

with twists and turns and a myriad of odd sounding names  
but melodrama always high melodrama

one man returned every few months for new **spectacles**  
eventually the inventor had to tell him there were only four pair left  
the man bought all of them without hesitation  
intrigued the inventor asked the man who was not weird or bereaved  
what he found so interesting in the ghosts "Their stories" he said  
"But they are known to be lies" the inventor replied  
"All literature is a lie" said the man the inventor chuckled

the man went on "I need to find the ghost who was telling me a tale  
about his great expectations another talked about a very bleak house  
then there is the Pickwick Club and the life of poor Oliver Twist  
and Little Nell but mostly I want to find the ghosts of Christmas  
the one who says he is Christmas Past has a singular story to tell."  
the inventor laughed "What will you do with these stories?"  
"Why write them down of course," said the man "write them all down."

## **the lady from the weather observatory**

he was standing in the road when I first heard him talking to no one in particular  
there was nothing to set him apart he was dressed normally  
nothing odd strange or peculiar that would make you avoid him nothing  
until he spoke

why is it that the snow hangs about in the top of the trees he asked  
the question was directed to everyone who passed and because he looked normal  
some people tried to answer some answers were long some short some dismissive  
he ignored them all

he kept asking the question like he was waiting for the right answer  
but because he had not heard it he just kept trying eventually the lady from  
the weather observatory stopped and explained about conservation of energy  
temperature and convection

he listened people passed by the woman went on said she was happy to explain  
knew all about these things found them interesting she said it was her job  
the man smiled you know so much he said tell me why did my wife die  
and leave me alone

she looked sad you didn't want to know about the snow did you she asked  
yes the man replied I want to know so many things I ask till I get an answer  
it is just that I have to keep asking and the questions get harder  
and the answers stop coming

# Got Friends

By Gregorio Tafoya

Jacob was going to pick her up from the airport. It had been two months. Rita had been so excited about seeing him, that she didn't even bother taking a pic of the new airport carpeting and lamenting about the old carpeting.

Her boyfriend was standing right there past security, hands in his pockets, an almost stoic look to his pretty face. It meant something, Rita told herself, that Jacob had bothered to park in the short-term lot and meet her inside the airport, instead of circling the arrival lane until she magically appeared out of the correct revolving door. Jacob was a considerate boyfriend.

"Rita," he said when he saw her, and they embraced and it was almost everything she had pictured in her head. Two lovers embracing after an extended absence. Maybe a little something was missing. Maybe she had romanticized the setting and reactions too much in her head. Had overdone it with the fictional "oohs," and "awws," of the fake airport crowd and had also had way too many suit-n-tie businessmen ending their conference calls and saying "I need to call my wife," like the sight of young love embracing in the PDX waiting room was a reminder of the important things.

Her Jacob looked a little different too, but in the ordinary way that distance and time does to a person's appearance. All of Jacob's essentials were still there though: his curly black hair, his tapered and surprisingly muscular frame, his secondhand denim. He grabbed

her humongous suitcase and rolled it down the new carpet for her. She put her hand to the back of his head and tugged gently at his hair.

“I missed you,” Rita said longingly.

“I missed you too,” he replied.

She shouldered her carry-on onto her right side so she could walk with her arm in his.

“Amanda wants us over for dinner,” she told him, which wasn’t confirmed true yet, but Amanda and Rita had texted this eventuality during Rita’s two-month intern nursing program in Nebraska.

Amanda was everything—a great cook, a strong, approachable Christian, and Rita’s best friend from high school. She was working at a bed and breakfast in Happy Valley, a job Amanda had secured right out of graduating from George Fox with a degree in English. A connection Amanda made in college recommended her for the job and she got free room and board in the house’s finished basement.

Rita had attended state schools after high school, unsure of what she wanted to study. She had applied to the neo-natal nursing program at OIT straight out of high school, but didn’t get accepted. The next year she tried to get into the oncology-nursing program at Pacific, near her parent’s house, but had equally poor luck.

So Rita bounced around from campus to campus, until she got accepted into an accelerated nursing associates degree program at a Willamette Valley Community College. It was there that she met Jacob. He was a university student taking community college math courses cause they were easier he said. She liked that about him immediately. His honesty. They were in the Community College computer lab, and the first time they spoke

she had to ask him how to log in to the Windows PC. And when he showed her, she asked him if there was a way to change her password.

“I can hardly keep track of all my student ID numbers.”

“Yeah, I think so,” he said and clicked around on her mouse as he told her what keys to press. He smelled wonderful—a hot mahogany.

“Okay, now just type in your new password twice and click confirm,” he said after figuring it out too quickly she thought.

“Huh,” she sighed pretending to contemplate something cryptic.

“I won’t peek,” he said and she giggled and said:

“It has to be something unforgettable.”

“Yes that would be good, oh and by the way,” he smirked “my name is Jacob. That’s J-A-C-O-B.” And she was laughing before he finished spelling.

She typed his name as her password along with the number 1 because it required six characters.

It was a story she loved to tell cause it was such an original answer to the “how did you two meet” question. Though a computer brought them together, they had not met online, a fact Rita was openly proud of. Sometimes, Rita told a version of the story where she had asked for Jacob’s name with the intention of using it as her password. That was the version Rita told Amanda, when they had texted about Jacob for the first time.

Amanda was always lamenting how she could never meet the right guy at George Fox. Or that all the guys she met at her private, Christian school were the right guy but were just so wrongly monolithic.

“I’m just tired of a man-bun being a substitute for personality,” Amanda had written Rita once, “that is what passes for edgy around here.”

The saddest part was that Amanda was beautiful. In high school, Rita had been mistrustful of boys who wanted to be her friend because she knew they were really angling to get closer to Amanda.

But she knew Jacob was a nice boy, cause it took him three more times of seeing each other in the computer lab before he asked for her phone number.

“You know, just in case you forget your password,” he said typing her number into his contacts. When he texted her later, she saved his number in her phone as “Jacob1.”

Friend requesting him, she learned he was a year younger than her, a French major, and originally from San Jose. But the best thing was that they were both Catholic. Jacob had even gone to a Catholic High School: Archbishop Mitty where he had played baseball, and Rita invented an irony for herself that involved all of her high school’s baseball players ignoring her, but now kicking themselves over the social media images of Rita with her private school star. Rita’s parents didn’t have the money to send her to De La Salle or Central Catholic, but they still went to mass regularly in high school.

Rita had stopped attending Catholic services weekly around the second time she transferred universities, but she still modeled her morals around her faith.

Jacob challenged her in many ways. He’d written, the first night they did some heavy texting:

“The reason I’m so bad at math is cuz I read too much.”

His favorite novelist was Francois Mauriac. His favorite short story writer was Guy de Maupassant though his favorite short story was *Le Tabac Vert* by Claire Sainte-Soline. Rita, not even having thought about the distinctions between novelist and short story writer before, started her inauguration by reading English translations of Maupassant. *Le Boule Suif. Le Maison Teller. Le Hossier de Madame*. But her favorite was the one with the lesbians on the boat.

It was another way she was challenged: by becoming a progressive Catholic. She had stumbled onto Dorothy Day pre-Jacob, and was in rapture with her.

On Jacob's suggestion, she read "Gay Friendship," by Stanley Hauerwas and it really did shift her perspective, farthing her progressiveness. Not that she believed in the denial of gay rights before that, but it helped her reconcile her beliefs in gay marriage rights with her staunchy, old religion.

Before winter break, Jacob read *Le Tabac Vert* to her out loud and in English. She had told him that she didn't quite get it when she had read it by herself the first time.

"Some of the subtleties prolly get lost in translation," he explained. But he read it emphatically and with exaggerated emphasis, and she understood the suggestions and allusions that were pockmarked in the story.

"So scandalous," she said when he was finished and she was playing with his hair.

Two nights later, the night before Jacob was flying back to San Jose for Christmas break, their own pre-marital congress started.

Over the break they texted every day and called each other on Christmas and Christmas Eve. Jacob was coming back on New Year's Eve and was scheduled to spend the night on her parent's Forest Grove living room couch.

Rita's parent's had never met a boyfriend of hers before, mostly because Rita had never had a serious boyfriend. She warned him that her dad would stare at him uncomfortably and at odd moments, "but he's not trying to intimidate you, it's just what he does," and her father was true to form, but Jacob survived all the unusual scrutiny.

They went downtown that night, and it was also the first time Jacob met Amanda. Amanda was dating a Mike who didn't have a man-bun, but was short and contemptuously quiet and seemed generally displeased with the whole downtown socializing scene. Jacob had turned 21 over the Christmas break, so their outing doubled as his birthday party.

Amanda whisper argued with Mike the whole time at Henry's off Burnside. Evidently, Mike was not happy about something. They ate late-night happy hour appetizers and had drinks and after Amanda's second, she asked Jacob if Rita's dad had given him the 100-yard stare.

"Yes, so intimating," he teased squeezing Rita's leg under the high table. They were gonna go to Kelly's Olympian next, but Mike's contempt for secular food and drink and socializing was too strong for a bar crawl, so he dropped them off at Kelly's and told Amanda he'd pick her up around midnight.

"I know," Amanda said to no one in particular, "He's a bore, but he really is a good guy."

They drank more at Kelly's, before walking east towards the waterfront. At this level of inebriation it wasn't even cold out. They wandered all the way until Voodoo, and walked past the cliché line into the picnic table alleyway. Music blared from every hole in the wall, but they continued to the alley's outlet and around the corner and they ended up in a

treacherously lit two-room crowded club with no cover charge. They were also the three whitest people in range of the throbbing baselines and misogynistic lyrics.

After they bought surprisingly affordable drinks, they carried their party of three to the sunken dance floor where conservatism came to die. Two songs in and Rita was dancing sinfully with her boyfriend, occasionally cocking her head back and to the side and making eye-contact with Jacob. He would push her face back with his nose and smile against her thick brown hair.

Amanda, for her part, was dancing face to face with a tall black boy who kept a respectful distance between himself and Amanda. When Rita and Amanda broke for the obligatory bathroom break, Amanda gave her the patented best friend smirk and in the bathroom, hugging each other, Rita confessed her truth to Amanda.

“You don’t think I’m awful do you?” she asked Amanda.

“Rita, never,” Amanda said looking her in the eyes, “I’ll never judge you.”

“Ok,” Rita said not realizing how relieved she’d been to confide in someone. Hugging her tighter, Amanda said:

“It’s what people do when they are in love.”

Amanda was such a real Christian, Rita thought.

At midnight, Rita and Jacob kissed and Amanda had to break the black boy’s heart and tell him she had a boyfriend. Filing out of the club, Amanda complained:

“Mike doesn’t even believe in the terms ‘boyfriend’ and ‘girlfriend,’” and they laughed as she continued “to him those terms are too casual. So right now we are in the courtship stage of the relationship.”

The courier was idling in his GMC over by the Embassy Suites and the three of them hopped in. Mike drove them west, mainly in unsettlingly silence. He dropped Amanda off at her parent's house in Cornelius. No kiss, just hand squeeze as Amanda waved goodbye to Rita and Jacob in the backseat. After asking Rita where she lived, Mike asked Jacob where he was going to drop him off at.

"Uh, I'm staying at Rita's," Jacob said. Mike's silence now was equal parts abhorrence and condescension. In defense, Jacob said "yeah Rita has the comfiest living room couch in Forest Grove," And it would have been funny, but Mike's scorn for their heathenness sucked the life out of the vehicle.

At her house, Rita told him:

"I don't think we are bad, do you?" And he laughed and said:

"I love you," and he had said it before, but this one had more meaning to it.

"I love you too," she said and kissed him good night on her staircase.

"I think I can feel someone staring at us," he whispered in her ear and she laughed but was careful not to wake her parents.

After brushing her teeth and changing into her pajamas, she scampered back downstairs and kissed him one more time before retiring to her room.

The New Year was the best. Rita and Jacob did everything together. On her birthday in March, they went back up to Portland and had lunch at the Salad Bar across from Powell's. Then, after overhearing a fastidious couple discussing their favorite cannabis locales, they went to a renowned THC edibles concocter on West 23rd. They laughed

soberly at the advertisement in the window display of the shop sitting on prime real-estate: “Portland’s Only Non-Profit Dispensary.”

Neither of them had been high before and they spend the rest of day laughing and bumping around the new developments on the north end of West 23<sup>rd</sup>.

At night they met Amanda, who had broken off her courtship with Mike before it reached the prelim engagement stage. They ate at Deschutes and then played arcade games at Blitz. Inside Blitz, the three of them were the youngest by at least two election cycles and Rita and Amanda joked:

“Oh my gosh, I do not want Blitz to be my Saturday night ten years from now.”

After turning down a bearded stranger’s request to show them how to play ZombieQuest, they left. Jacob drove them to Forest Grove dropped Amanda off in Cornelius, and spent the night on his favorite couch.

For the rest of the spring, Rita and Jacob didn’t have classes on Friday mornings, so they would drive up to Portland every other Thursday night and go to Bushwhackers for line and square dancing with Amanda.

Amanda was the picture of America: tasteful Daisy Dukes, flannel, and her blonde crown. Jacob would chauffeur them back to Forest Grove afterwards, the girls kicking off their uncomfortable cowgirl boots and giggling the whole time about the square-dancing Amanda suitors.

Rita and Jacob went to all the seminal Catholic services as a couple. Ash Wednesday. Fish Fry Fridays. Easter. And sometimes, secretly, Rita went to confession on odd Saturdays before meeting up with Jacob somewhere off-campus.

April was when she learned about the intensive ER nursing internship in Nebraska. They advertised that 95% of their intern graduates passed the RN exam on the 1<sup>st</sup> try. Rita applied, solicited recommendations from her most generous instructors, and by some miracle got accepted. She told Jacob about it after she was accepted, not wanting to offend him but also thinking she would jinx herself if she spoke about it too soon.

He was ecstatic for her, knowing how her earlier travails in the nursing world had floundered. After a week, he started to ask her, mock-serious:

“When, again, are you leaving me for your Nebraska lover?” and she’d shriek in laughter because those two words at the end of his question were so incongruous that they were hysterical.

When she left, she reassured him that it was all only temporary and “absence makes the heart grow fonder,” cheesy sentiments were exchanged.

Over the next two summer months, they talked every day and she told him her funniest ER stories. At least once a week, it involved some Nebraska man getting some Nebraska object lodged somewhere compromising and harmlessly humiliating.

But many of the patients they saw were sobering. Diabetics whose insulin fell to intensive care levels. Those were the sad cases and she texted Jacob about them too.

After two weeks, Jacob wrote her an actual letter and basically it said everything he’d been texting her plus cute French phrases.

“It’s nice to get physical mail too,” he texted her the day she told him she received his letter. Rita was living in a lonely, sublet apartment and working 10 hour days, but it was invigorating to have purpose and the comfort of knowing Jacob’s absence was only temporary.

She messaged Amanda too. Amanda told her about how she was basically just performing the role of housewife at the Bed and Breakfast, “without the husband part, but at least I’m getting paid hehehe,” she wrote. Rita felt bad for her, cause clearly she was lonely.

Jacob texted her excited about the *Hamilton* play coming to Portland, him and a buddy from campus were going to go.

At the last minute, the buddy fell ill and Rita thought about Amanda:

“She needs a friend. U should take her.” Rita felt hip and progressive being so judicious with her boyfriend. Rita messaged Amanda too, and she wrote Rita, “Really? I’ve been trying to go but tickets are so expensive.”

Jacob texted her before and after the performance and she told him, “you should really work on finding Amanda a boyfriend,” She wasn’t serious, but she liked that now she could be the benevolent one in hers and Amanda’s relationship.

Jacob continued to write Rita hand-written letters each week and it helped measure their time apart.

Now in his car, after her summer in Nebraska, they were on the Sunset highway heading west towards her parent’s house. She kept staring at Jacob’s quiet presence—pretending to be concentrating on the freeway traffic.

“I can feel your eyes,” he joked. And she laughed and kissed him as close to the mouth as possible, as he kept his two hands on the wheel.

“I love you,” she said.

“Me too,” he said, but she knew what he meant.

They made it to her parent's and he carried her luggage up the walk, and inside where they discovered her parent's still at work. Her parent's didn't text, but there was a note on the fridge saying how they would be home at five. It was 4:18.

Rita went to shower and Jacob went outside, walking around their small country property and examining the wooden fence line. When Rita got out of the shower her mother was in her room, and they embraced and looked out the window to see Jacob and her father discussing the finer points of fence mending. It nourished her heart to see Jacob and her father engaged in discussion. The bedroom alarm clock said 4:44 and Rita was glad they had chosen to spend these pre-five o'clock minutes the way they did.

Amanda had texted her back and said:

"Sure, dinner sounds nice."

"Does seven give u enough time to cook?" Rita wrote.

"Plenty. I love you Rita."

With her parent's they went to the frozen yogurt place and by some miracle neither of her parent's mentioned how it would spoil her appetite for Amanda's dinner.

On the August evening trip to Happy Valley, she asked Jacob about his summer. He had taken summer classes on campus in the Willamette Valley and had a position as a campus tour guide during the week.

"Yes," he'd written Rita about the job, "I got the job cuz I can speak French. My boss thinks it highlights the university's diversity >the oh brother emoji<."

On the ride to Amanda's he gave canned answers about his summer, but turned the conversation back to her. Things she had texted him, but still felt good to rehash them out loud and in person.

“When are you planning to sit for the RN exam?”

“Early September,” she replied “I want to use the rest of the month to study and then take it online in September.”

“And then Emmanuel or Good Sam, here you come?” Jacob teased.

“Yes, but whatever I can get I’ll do,” She laughed.

Rita gave him the directions Amanda had texted her when they’d pulled off the 205 into Happy Valley. The house was in the nooks and crannies of a hilly neighborhood and they parked on the street and took a brick lined path to the intricately glass windowed entrance door.

Amanda answered the door and hugged Rita, leading them to the left of the cherry wood floored foyer and down carpeted stairs to her “step-child lair.”

The finished basement was full-luxury apartment. A sectional sofa and big screen TV in front of an open-countered kitchen with a small attached dining room. A plush hallway led to a bedroom and Amanda gave Rita a tour as Jacob set the table, opening drawers in the kitchen probingly.

The bedroom was small, but cozy with its low ceilings. A double bed was against the far wall and a sliding door led to a bathroom. Amanda was barefoot, wearing stylishly faded overalls, a sleeveless white tee, and a blue bandana holding up her golden hair.

“There is only one couple staying upstairs, but they are out right now,” Amanda said, sliding the bathroom door clear back and showing the flawless vanity mirror and walk-in shower.

“This is so posh Amanda,” Rita exclaimed “And no rent. You really know how to pick ‘em.”

“Uh, yes I’m very grateful,” Amanda said distractedly, taking them back to the kitchen.

The dining room table was set around a crystal salad bowl and Amanda worked to extract a quiche from the stove. They sat around the rectangular dining room, and Rita said grace. Just a simple thanks.

Amanda served them first salad and then cut out slices of an aromatic vegetable quiche. Rita admired the toned, blonde arms of her best friend.

They talked about Rita. About her internship and Rita tried to pick the best dinner-time appropriate ER stories. It didn’t matter, because Amanda laughed at all her experiences and Jacob was his usual attentive self. She told Amanda about her plans for when to take the RN test, and she thought it was smart.

“Yeah, I could live with my parent’s for a bit,” Rita said, “save some money, and then maybe we could get a place together Amanda, you know, maybe somewhere near Emmanuel or in Goose Hallow.” Rita said this without really ever having formulated the idea of being roommates with Amanda until just now.

“Oh yes, of course, that would wonderful,” Amanda said looking right at the corner of Rita’s eyes.

“But I know it would probably be a far-step down from this,” Rita joked, gesturing around them. Amanda smiled reminiscently, and said “Yeah.”

“And we have to do the Top Golf soon,” Rita said, “it looks like too much fun.”

Both Amanda and Jacob agreed with her assessment.

Rita was glad that Amanda didn’t insist on them staying after dinner to watch a movie, because she was looking forward to alone time with Jacob. To reacquaint

themselves. This urge had run as an undercurrent inside Rita since she'd tugged his thick black hair in the carpeted airport waiting room.

Rita hugged Amanda goodnight, after a feeble attempt at washing the dishes was shot down by Amanda through a wave and a "I got 'em."

Amanda looked saddened by their departure and her basement existence softened Rita a little on the stairs up. Before they reached the top step, Jacob suddenly turned and said:

"I better use the bathroom."

"You better," Rita said, turning to let him pass while squeezing his arm. She ventured out into the professional part of the house. The soft wood floors cracking cinematically as Rita explored a large drawing room.

A wicked idea struck her. She thought about hiding herself somewhere quiet and secluded and waiting for Jacob to come find her. When he did, she would lead him imperially down a hallway until they encountered the first B in B&B.

But then something on the drawing-room desk diverted Rita from her Happy Valley fantasy. It was the playbill to *Hamilton*, tucked under a paper weight of a bridge and Rita couldn't believe she had been so carried away in her own excitement that she had forgotten to ask Amanda or Jacob how they had liked the play.

She fingered the folded playbill and opened it. On the right was handwriting she recognized, and the contents of the handwriting told her it was morning-after handwriting—passionate and lucid—and it broke her heart before she even got to the last three words. And then Rita burst and ran out of the house, where she luckily found the car unlocked or she would have just kept running.

Jacob slithered out the front door not two long minutes later, and Rita had tried to compose herself, but as soon as the driver's door was open and before he could sit she asked him sobbing:

“Is it true?”

And his head twisted slowly towards her and she clarified redundantly:

“Is it true what you wrote about loving her?”

His hand in his head told her what she already knew. Rita cried in the passenger seat as the Valley's August twilight ended.

# Maria Jacketti

**It is a blue- day**

**It is a blue- day for a drive from the heart of  
Anthracite to shop hard to forget,  
Mangez encore une fois falafel at the Fair,  
Stop at the distillery,  
Live as if it were not real,  
As if we could live through anything.  
Coming over the mountain range, the Lehigh Valley  
Below is a cup, ready to be filled with the ocean  
Or something elementally unlike.  
Allentown is marked  
On a map of secrets.  
And then she sees it.  
The flash.  
She sees it with her eyes closed.  
And she sees it with no eyes.  
And we see with our ghosts.  
With no sign of Jesus  
In his rescue spaceship.  
The road melting in front and behind her,  
The mountain range plunged down,  
The roof-tops aflame and sky, rust-red  
Licking up the folks  
Who voted for this show.  
And it makes no difference if you fought  
To stop it;**

**It devours you anyway,  
Too far away to vaporize,  
It all concludes with a punch  
To the heart and skin blasted black  
Like croissants left too long in the oven.**

**Jan. 24 2019**

## **Nail Polish**

**Clipped short-sharp and wiped to a gleam:  
behold the shapeshifting cat  
with claws of quartz stained arterial red.  
Do you dare risk a swipe for love?  
Can you soften to collapse into mere lavender existence, or  
Ensoul the lost ultramarine-aqua of tattoos  
distilled from generations of drowned sailors  
Who burst back to life with the chameleon blessing of your touch?  
Tonight, I let him choose, and he picks some "Safety Orange,"  
Made in Italy, the color screams,  
I am sovereign, behold this rugged  
Shade of broccoli.**

**Maria Jacketti**

-

**March 25, 2019**

## **She Gives Us**

**A grain of rice that impregnates the field  
Showers with gravel, but not stoned,  
She rises from history, at home and alien.  
Oh, bonsai city at war with itself:  
The she-mayor herds hope distilled inside  
Droplets of the hurricane.**

**3/13/19**

# Wayne Funk

**On Birth of My Father and Beyond**

**Small enough to fit in a shoe-box, later**

**You survived Remagen and the Bulge for me**

**Small enough to fit in a shoe-box, born,**

**To liberate Dachau: At home again sweet cinnamon**

**Crowned sticky buns rise --the same you made for the general--**

**We will devour the gift.**

**3/12/19**

# Vasilina Orlova

## **'I am a Little Poetess with a Huge Bow:' Female Poets in Contemporary Russia**

Even though the center of this talk is poetry itself, I hope to enable us to think about different ways of navigating, expressing, or denying gender-related ideologies in the practices of contemporary women writers in Russia and beyond.

I used the line from the poem by Irina Odoyevtseva as a part of the title and as some sort of epigraph. "I am a Little Poetess with a Huge Bow." Odoyevtseva was born in 1895, in Riga, Latvia, emigrated to Paris in 1922, returned to Leningrad in 1987, and died in Saint Petersburg in 1990.

### Note on Translation

Before I recite Odoyevtseva's poem, I want to note that all the poems here are translated by me, and the rhymes poems I translated without rhymes. While this choice could be argued about, here I will limit myself to the above declaration.<sup>1</sup>

No, I will not be acclaimed,

Nor will I be crowned with fame,

I have as much right for that

As for the bishop's rank.

Neither Gumilyov, nor evil media

---

<sup>1</sup> The reason I made my choice was partly because I wanted to convey the impulse and the energy of the poems rather than transform them into the chess-like crosswords. While again, this is the kind of choice that is not without its downsides, even such pedantic translator as was Vladimir Nabokov resorted to the similar choice in his translation of "Eugene Onegin." (Nabokov translated "Onegin" in the yambic rhythm.)

Will call me a talent.

I am a little poetess

With a huge bow.

Irina Odoyevtseva is a poet who foreshadowed some of the creative practices of the contemporary Russian poets by and large, but as a woman poet she is not as often spoken of or widely read as Marina Tsvetaeva and Anna Akhmatova. This Odoyevtseva's poem encompasses the female image of the poet in the male world, as it were, with the soft irony that undermines the very hierarchy that it portrays. The irony is directed at the self ("I am a little poetess with a huge bow"), but it is a device that should bare the existing power dynamics by subverting and undermining them. The poetess performs femininity in an aggressive, almost-mocking way. Irina Odoyevtseva knew the famous founder of Acmeism poet Nikolay Gumilyov in person and is considered his pupil. In her poem, she put herself on display with her willful claiming of her own littleness in a powerful gesture of playful, teasing derision.

Odoyevtseva's poem speaks to the performances of femininity that women and femme poets often choose and/or led to perform. Here, I am bringing together several prominent contemporary Russian poets from different aesthetic universes: Dana Kurskaya, Inga Kuznetsova, Irina Ysn, Alina Vitukhnovskaya, and Luba Makarevskaya. What allows me to bring them together is not merely femaleness of these figures of the contemporary "literary process" (as the Russian expression would have it), but their willingness to subvert or support the established cultural narratives of femininity and their ability in doing so to go at times sharply satirical, at times softly ironic way without losing the sincerity of self-expression. I am bringing them together not only at the arbitrary will of myself the translator, even though the arbitrariness is voluntary and undeniable, but also in order to open the space to connect these figures in analyzing the emergent poetics and defining points of imaginary cross-references to see if this is possible to take a broader view on the contemporary female Russian poetry writing.

Dana Kurskaya, born in 1986 in Chelyabinsk, since 2005, lives in Moscow, and is without exaggeration one of the loudest voices of the contemporary Russian poetry. She's the author of the book *Nothing Personal (Nichego lichnogo)* and a writer on Facebook who posts poems that often reference existing people familiar to her readers in person (much as Odoyevskaya names Gumilyov in her poem), transforming these people into literary personages, which often arises heated conversations. Kurskaya maintains the publishing project Steklograf, which prints poetry, organizes the poetry festival in Moscow called Mayfest; she invented her own poetry prize, and is otherwise involved in the numerous organizational endeavors. She's organizing the poetic space.

When you are being drunk  
And shout at me  
That no one needs you,  
That everyone is laughing at you,  
And something about pain—  
Here, if at this very moment  
One should lead me to the mirror;  
It is possible to observe  
That my eyes  
Are startlingly similar  
To the eyes of plush stuffed animals  
Left on graves.  
These animals are called  
Into support and encouragement  
Of children  
On their way to death.  
But the animals never  
Asked anyone about it.  
They never chose  
Such fate.

Irina Ysn leads a secluded life as an author. She says “I do not like all these ‘I was born there, I married here,’” but she belongs to the same generation (Gen X-senior millennials) that other contemporary poets that I am bringing together here. She has barely published her works. She is not presenting herself as a poet on her social media. Her works are known to the small circle of her

friends. Another creative practice that she's engaging with is jewelry making. She uses silver wire and semi-precious stones to compose earrings that she gives away as gifts and souvenirs.

He has an earring in his left ear

The eyes of Don Juan

I recognized the profile of the eagle

And lips of a tyrant

Conversation in a French manner

Skin of the olive

I had been waiting for exactly two centuries

Until he returns.

Inga Kuznetsova, born in 1974 in Protvino near Moscow, is a widely published poet and the laureate of literary prizes (Triumph Prize and the prize Moscow Count for her debut book *Dreams-Chickadees* (*Sny-sinitsi*, 2002)). In the last years, she published prose, *Patchwork: Burn After Reading* (2017).

I am growing a white flower

of black melancholy

white wind

black earth

teach me how to transform

letters into silence

lines into gaps

a shadow into a person

Luba Makarevskaya, born in Moscow, the year of birth is not in the open access, initially attracted my attention as an artist posting her art on Instagram, in particular, a series of vaginas in aquarelle, and with her pale selfies. Rather than the author dies in text, the text dies in the author, as Dmitry Prigov observed; for poetry, it might be all the more so since it is not the poetic text by itself that charms us as much as the wholeness of the image of the author whose flute is producing these celestial sounds. Makarevskaya is the chief editor of the journal *Sled (Trace)*; her prose published the portal *Snob*. She is the author of the book *Love (Lyubov', 2017)*.

When I  
was fourteen  
years old  
girls in school  
performed  
lesbians  
they gathered  
in a circle  
sang  
and then  
kissed  
wet  
trees  
looked askance  
at them  
their faces  
were like  
japanese masks

not real

faces

digitized

transparent

pornographic

faces

out of an adult

dream

and in the news

flashed

zinc

caskets

and I knew

letters

perhaps even

worse than

they knew

me

worse

than not familiar

hands

could have

known

me

I learned

the alphabet

by heart  
dry  
black  
I  
did not utter  
words  
until  
trees  
blew  
windows  
like grenades  
with eyes.

And the last figure of this talk, Alina Vitukhnovskaya, born in 1973 in Moscow, has long been enjoying renown since when she was arrested and accused of having drugs in 1994. Notable figures of the Russian intelligentsia wrote petitions and spoke in her defense, including Valeria Novodvorskaya and Andrey Voznesenky. She refused the offer of political refuge in Sweden and soon was arrested again. Vitukhnovskaya was one of several female presidential candidates in the elections of 2018 in Russia, taking her candidature off in 2017 after Ksenia Sobchak also decided to run for president. Vitukhnovskaya perceived Sobchak's candidacy as the Kremlin-orchestrated cannibalization of Vitukhnovskaya's platform, and refused to further participate in what she deemed the circus of the Russian elections. She is the leader of the Party of the Republican Alternative in Russia and speaks about her poems as about first and foremost the tool that allowed her to acquire the beginnings of her biography in the literature-centric Russian political discourses. I wrote prefaces to two of Vitukhnovskaya's books, *World like the Will and Crime* (*Mir kak volya i prestuplenie*, 2014) and, recently, to *Notes of the Materialist* (forthcoming). She is the author of many books, including *The Children's Book of the Dead* (*Detskaya kniga mertvikh*, 1994) and *The Last Old Woman Pawnbroker of the Russian Literature* (*Poslednyaya starukha-protsentshitsa russkoi literature*, 1996).

Brain

Controls

Handy

Tool.

Machine protracts its hand

(tentacle?

rose?

nail?)

I materialize through the screen like

beheaded medusa

at the crossing of two centuries.

I radiate.

And you

Smashed

Me-arachnid.

I am a droplet.

The poets that I named and quoted are oftentimes working with the aesthetics positioned on the edges of the respectability; in their writings, they consistently push boundaries and limits of acceptable in terms of what constitutes the poetic utterance. These poets build different universes of meaning and affect.

Perhaps it is worth noting that while the aesthetics of Makarevskaya feels like closest to being called “feminist,” Vitukhnovskaya adamantly rejects the feminist discourse and sees no value in it. On the third side, Irina Ysn many times stated that the femininity is a separate energy and a separate way for a woman to grow in the world, in relation to the masculinities that have their own sovereignties as well, and it is best when a woman knows that her energetic best is feminine. Irina did call herself a feminist on occasion, she called herself a “real feminist.” Her views of the separateness of the femaleness and maleness and their independent existence as a set of different energies seem to be not widely shared within the Russian feminist communities. As far as Kurskaya and Kuznetsova are concerned, they expressed interest in the feminist discourses but did not state their allegiances explicitly, to the best of my knowledge, nor did they make clear their attitudes to feminisms and many issues that feminisms can entail. I think this presents us with a startling contrast to the Western writing practices of the female writers where belonging to one or the other feminist discourse is short of mandatory, and even the conservative public figures, not the writers only, claim their allegiance to the feminist ideas by and large, even though there will be no agreement on what constitutes the feminism and feminist takes on the left and the right sides of the political spectrum.

By virtue of their femaleness, they are often expected and pushed to be performers of femininity. Some, like Kuznetsova, Kurskaya, and Ysn, choose to embrace it, but in this very embrace they perform femininity very differently; Alina Vitukhnovskaya is an avid denialist and rejector, often speaking dismissively on any women’s issues and abhorring any lumping of herself with women, and, finally, Makarevskaya is doing what I see as the practice of raising above the dictates of gender by displaying the constant and full of tension reflections on the gender issues. By no means the list of the poet(ess) that I presented here is exhaustive. Speaking of the contemporary Russian poetry even limited to the representatives of the “generation X and millennials,” one has to name Vera Polozkova, Linor Goralik, Polina Barskova, Anna Logvinova, Anna Tsvetkova, Ksenia Buksha, Galina Rymbu, and Ksenia Charyeva. Inclusion of these figures would have allowed us to significantly wider our horizon and perspectives on the performing and/or denying the performance of femininity female writers in connection and disconnection to the Russian, Western, and Eastern feminisms. But this is the task for another endeavor.

# Beate Sigriddaughter

## GIVEN

Given  
the choice between  
being invisible  
or being harassed,  
she is perplexed.

She wants neither.

## **SURVIVOR**

Strange night: She watched  
the gray rain rise, the moon melt  
into morning. Didn't she swear  
only yesterday to strangle  
herself if she used this word  
"strange" one more time? Seems  
in the end she always survives.

## **HALLOWEEN SPOOK**

Halloween slips into the business  
district in broad daylight:  
A man on the street wears plastic  
purple over his face,  
and the yet unspoiled  
young lady wildly  
tucks at her colleague's sleeve.  
"Look, he's wearing a mask," she cries.  
"So?" says he, wearing his own  
of lofty politics and law  
embedded in the tilted edge  
of his indulgent mouth declaring  
his mind absorbed, hers simple.  
The excitement fades  
like a bad movie. But real.

# John McKernan

## TWO HUNDRED FOOT OAK TREE

Up there in strips of fog

On top of the hill

Works

As a sundial

Even on cloudy days

Its leper shadow

Creeping down this hill

Over the deer droppings

Into the gopher holes

These brown leaves

And green leaves

And black leaves

Skittering past my feet

Keep saying something about Tomorrow

The leaves on the ground

Point back at the tree

Towards the ladder inside the tree

Towards the campfire to cook the food

Towards the suicide note yet to be written

Towards the pencil with words inside it

## **NOOSE UNDER THE OAK TREE**

The cloud disguises itself

As a gust of rain

When the axe floats

In the middle

Of the well

And the mad undertaker

Follows my instructions

To fireproof the planks

Of my coffin

Cold air curves

Into the candle's flame

Imitating a grain of sand

To recite the word

*Death*

## **SHE WANTS**

To degrade

Herself

Which

Would be

OK with me

Like putting M&M's

In every corner

Of every crevice

Within her beautiful body

But she has other thoughts

Circling in the grooves of her skull

When she wears

That silver & ivory necklace

Of thumb-size tiny humans

## **WARNING TO MY BRAIN**

All the clocks

Are still ticking

The child you were

Is still lost twice

In South Omaha

You need

To go to Wal Mart

And buy a sharp spear

And a Halloween costume

When you touch

A slab of marble

Look at the first flower

You see

And recite your real name in Braille

## **ARE YOU LAUGHING YET AT**

The suicide

Of her mother

Are you laughing

Yet at her frail

Bisexual son

Her psoriasis

And diabetes

Are you laughing yet

And occasional cardiac arrhythmia

Watching her husband

Buy expensive condoms at the Rite Aid

Then scoot off to her best friend's

Condo

Are you

Laughing yet The story contains

Gripping dialogue and settings

Arguments over fine china

Are

You laughing yet

And several paragraphs about a beautiful sunset

# Last Busker of Dublin

By Greg Patrick

“For a dreamer is one who can only find his way by moonlight, and his punishment is that he sees the dawn before the rest of the world.”

— Oscar Wilde, *The Critic as Artist*

The night has fallen. Street-lights appear. How above the roar of the city will they hear?

Words reach out to those in the swarming like a balancing fisherman with his spear.

The world is marched to a beat, not of the heart's blood-chant  
but of a hunger and need-driven feet. The dreams of the bard obsolete. Hunger for things  
and dancing on popular will's strings. Music lend me thy dark wings.  
His breath steams like a smoking gun in the chill air as the echoes of the song trail off.  
not a cd sold words hauntingly linger like an old warrior's wounds throbbing in the cold.

He sings other words to the herds, till they become his own...the words of bards the finger's that  
caressed the harp now bone.

He plays for the coins of the visitors from across the sea...Praise-singer of the urban world. Who  
needs a tree?

He sings of 1798 as processions of shadow warrior pass phantasmally.

He closes his eyes as shadows dance to old songs...Rebels who fought without a chance.  
He feels as gradually unseen as statues of great men that have become invisible while the living  
toast  
another land's queen, singing for a muse that seemed to have strayed from a silver screen.

Like a guardian at his post and station he stands and eyes that open to the song and passerby he  
demands:

Bring me night. Bring me the storms. There is no shelter from the songs. I'll play the right notes  
through

a lifetime's wrongs. Some artists make their mark. The soloist only paints  
notes on the dark and as if by a sleepless sculptor's hands, builds castles of dreams  
from castaway island's sands washed away by the hungry waves and like the sea who  
sighs at the castaway's feet the mainstream passes by as if the sum of all the tears to cry.

Eyes open like one startled from nightmare in the hours before the light, fluttering eyes like night-  
blooming roses

petals nourished by moonlight...like a heart that answers to the brightness of one smile alone. The  
music takes a darker tone.

A crowd has gathered he senses? But it is merely the reflexes of a once humbled swordsman who  
shadow-fences.

What words have I for that replayed scene..?

A moment of time that knew no reason or rhyme..

now condemned to haunt the street downcast eyes open to concrete...He knew not of the fallen rain  
that hailed his song as if the night had wept for an ancient wrong.

The music had taken him away...to that day.

"It's cold," the night seems to urge caringly.

*"Come back to your place and rest. Use your strength as a nomad rations water...sparingly."*

No. Just one more mirage in the painted desert of lights...Where tourists ask me "how many miles?"  
and people want to be unseen as themselves but seen for favourite styles.

And humanity stands like a soloist at a crossroads independent of the movements

of bodies swayed by a statesman that is great for a good-talker like shadows distancing themselves  
from the walker.

He played the notes and sang the songs as if heir entrusted to a promethean fire.

A somnambulist's walk in aftermath of battle, as if speaking wordlessly against the blare of horn  
and screech of tire.

Like a dance with the belle of one's dreams where one doesn't feel the floor...One last song of the  
night.

the ghosts of the street heard above the fading echoes of passerby's feet chant. *"One more!"*

*"One more!"* His steaming sigh like waves to a distant shore...like a selkie's lovesong to a muse on a  
mortal shore.

dark...intoxicatingly deep...to a soul that cannot distinguish death from sleep in the ghost's  
consciousness that rises

to answer to the moon he hears and feels the ancient's tune illuminating the streets like an earthbound moon.

Revelers flushed with an age of immortality's sense of power. Raise a mocking toast to the busker that midnight witching hour.

The jester's contempt for the knight but the shadow cannot exist without the light.

But he has gone...home? Where was he? Gone like a phantom pain of a love lost's kiss.  
a ghost then all long? Had he passed like a lost moment of defiance like a warrior hidden  
protectively by a king's men in the haunted mist?

The smile faded over its glass. He knew then why one sang in the street and  
the fallen glass shattered for the curse was traded. He understood like a punch what mattered.

# Post Scriptum



**Children's Art – Somerset Street West**

**Photo by Klaus J. Gerken 2001**

# 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.

YGDASIL: A Journal of the Poetic Arts - Copyright (c) 1993 - 2016 by Klaus J. Gerken.

The official version of this magazine is available on Ygdrasil's World-Wide Web site <http://users.synapse.net/kgerken>. No other version shall be deemed "authorized" unless downloaded from there or The Library and Archives Canada at <http://epe.lacbac.gc.ca/100/201/300/ygdrasil/index.html>.

Distribution is allowed and encouraged as long as the issue is unchanged.

Note that simultaneous submissions will not be accepted.

Please allow at least 90 days for a reply.