Nain Rouge

A Journal of Art, Poetry and Prose

Including:
An interview with
Ivan Prokopchuk, MFA

September 2012

BOSTON'S BUSKERS
Gayle Walters

Pedestrians gather
around a pavement stage,
a sidewalk garnered for a
busker's play.

Strolling through Cambridge
in bustling Boston, a juggler's
antics grab your attention.
Colorful garb and witty barbs
bring cheers from the crowd,
and deep, thankful bows.

Heading across the Charles River
on towards Harvard Square,
the sidewalk may offer up clowns or
mimes, comics or dancers,
a magical act or be-bop singers.
Here too you may have seen
Brother Blue...regaling those
gathered with storytelling hues...
his presence huge. Wearing bright,
crazy (blue) costumes, painted,
animated face...drawing
you in with his wit and truth--
wisdom expounded like a
philosophy sage.

Following flights of stairs below,
the city regards a rare, melodic delivery;
the subway pace slows for a moment.
Guitar case bared for any tossed
bills or change, we're engaged with an elegant interval—
a Berklee
student picks out his chords.
Another act--drawing in
several waiting--a man sings
while strumming a mandolin...classy
execution to be found in this place.

The performers of Faneuil Hall
(and Quincy Market)
have their pitches
protected, free to capture
disparate niches.
Enchanting visitors with
expertise and grace, their
infectious exhibitions
delivered with taste.

Throughout the metro
setting can be found
entertainment extraordinaire
of variety and renown.
Sometimes gritty,
sometimes sweetly
refined...these performers
enhance our endless, grey streets...
a busker's heart adds soul to the city.

§ § § § §

Gayle Walters Rose is a former legal and administrative assistant who for the last two years has discovered the joys of the blogging community and expressing her viewpoints on life through Bodhirose's Blog. Her writing includes memoir, poetry and short stories. She comes from a large, gregarious family which served to prepare her for life in a yoga ashram for several years as a young adult. Her spiritual quest began at an early age and continues to be the foundation and focus of her life.

COPYRIGHT PAGE

FIRST EDITION

Published September 2012
Printed in the U.S.A.
Published by White Cat Publications, LLC.
33080 Industrial Road, Suite 102
Livonia, MI 48150
www.whitecatpublications.com

ART IN ORDER OF USAGE

City Sidewalks (cover)
John Smolinski

A man within
Somewhere over the rainbow
A warrior within
Michael Dominic

Waikiki sunset #9
Cloudia Charters
http://comfortspiral.blogspot.com/

EDITORS-NAIN ROUGE

Peter Phillips
Mona Khan
Brian Miller
Katherine Vergin
Mark Durfee
Nain Rouge Illustrator
Cody Cockerill

No one knows how a start up journal is going to go, especially one dealing with art, prose and poetry. Seriously that is a ton of ego to deal with, not Wall Street "I have more money than you" ego, but "this is my baby and ain't she jus' beeyutiful" ego. I had no idea what I was being set up for when Rick Moore, owner of Whitecat Publications, approached me with the idea of editing this journal. My first thought was "pain in the ass," which ran concurrent with my second thought, "big pain in the ass." I am a poet, not an editor, matter of fact I don't submit for publication simply so I won't have to argue with anymore editors. Then he said those magic words, "you have complete creative control" and I entered into whatever ring of hell is reserved for someone who takes the artistic output of another and brings the hammer down on it. Sometimes with a rejection slip, sometimes with a critical eye that forces a word or punctuation change and some times by doing nothing when I know I should do something to a piece, not because I am afraid of 'the conversation" with the writer but because it makes sense in one direction and sense in another and I didn't write it so I left it. No I am not going to tell anyone what I did; the authors and poets will know when they read this journal scanning for their name. Gah! I will, though, take 100% of the responsibility for the finished product, love it or hate it—I had the largest hand in pulling it together. If there is blame to be apportioned it is mine alone and if it be credit then it goes to the crew that worked with me. Enough whine now to the cheese.

Here we, my cohorts in content and unpaid servitude, present to you the first version of Nain Rouge. You will see that we owe a debt of gratitude to the d'Verse online poetry group who weekly gather, is given a prompt and writes a piece in accordance with their poetic interpretation of that prompt and post it on their blogs. Much good writing comes from a prompt, one week in July they used the word URBAN as a prompt and promised that the best 6 would get published in this Ezine. All told they submitted slightly over one hundred of the close to two hundred pieces we looked at. The jury who worked by PIN number only, had a much harder time of it than I did, even though I read each and every piece twice, once silently and once aloud because in my poetic world, a piece has to work equally well in the eye and the ear…I only had to choose one top personal favorite as The Editors Choice. In this issue that choice is Boston Buskers by Gayle Walters. Is it the best piece in the issue? Dunno, it was chosen by me because it portrayed the vibrancy of what an urban environment can and should be and I liked it. A lot! Poetry after all is subjective in the reception of it.

But as well as d'Verse my sincere thanks go to everyone who submitted. Thank you for making this first issue a wonderful thing to behold.

A short explanation on the name of the journal, though we have poetry from all over the world, we are based in Detroit. Few outside of Detroit are aware of Les Nain Rouge. Which literally translated means The Crimson Dwarf. One of those creatures no one knows where they come from or where they hang out, but have been reported by people through out history. There are oral histories from The Tribes of the First Nations who inhabited this area of the small imp. The first appearance ever noted by a European was when Antoine Laumet de La Mothe, sieur de Cadillac who founded Detroit had his ass kicked and the area cursed by the little fella (probably for disturbing him at his leisure). Over the past three hundred years there have been various sightings of his rouged assed self. Almost every time a disaster was about to occur, it was spotted. As noted above, then when the British burned the town down in the war of 1812, prior to the race riots of 1943, and as far as my knowledge goes as late as 1996 when a tornado blew through here and leveled a large portion of Hamtramck and killed five people in Grosse Pointe by blowing them into Lake St Clair. Nain Rouge perhaps still holds a grudge and his curse is more potent than the one Bobby Lane put on the Detroit Lions football team, which only lasted for 50 years.

So why put his name on a journal of art? 1) Because I have complete creative control and 2) No other single thing truly defines Detroit to me. THE FORGOTTEN CITY is the latest name the media has hung on us, so why the hell not? Maybe the long lived little red fella will be pissed enough to come to the table and let me interview him. But before anyone goes feeling all sorry and shit for Detroit, don't! We have not only our portion of problems here but we also have great good as well as true greatness. Our strength is in the people who work to make it just a touch easier for others and think outside the box to make this place poetry at it's finest. Detroit may not be the place for Buskers, but it is the place for hardy and resilient folks who understand life as it is. Be Well and enjoy a literary touch from Les Nain Rouge.

Mark Durfee
Editor—Nain Rouge

NAIN ROUGE

DUMPSTER DIVING

Ivan Prokopchuk MFA

Dumpster Diving was first published in the Toronto Globe and Mail, November 1999

It was fun being a yuppie till the job died.

After employment insurance and on the brink of welfare, I was forced to spend time with lower-level social workers who would say "between you and I" all the time, while polishing their community college diplomas. "Whom are you?" asked one, showing she'd been to night class. I guess she'd never met a drunk or a real Master of Fine Arts before, not necessarily in that order. Suffice to say that I soon lost my second string job and then I lost the welfare too, thus becoming the world's last free enterpriser, out behind the Tim Horton's where the big dumpster and the garbage cans were. Some time later, I tried the IGA where my girlfriend has her own dumpster "business".

It wasn't bad.

I dove for food while Daisy-Mae dove for furniture. She had an apartment at least; I had moved out of my 1981 Dodge Omni "home" at the shopping plaza and I fancied myself as a star writer for Ladies' Home Companion. We chose dumpster diving because the food bank was low again, and chips and diet cola just weren't going to do it for us. We left the food bank not bothering to pick up the instant-popcorn-making kit. Still there was the stigma. I was old, poor and dreadfully out of shape. At 59, you're not as supple as you think you are. What a time to start a war!

Here is a typical day.

I'd made a scramble for the dumpster rim, but got hung up on top. Time for dumpster humour.

"You know you're white trash," I yelled to Daisy-Mae over at "the other shop," "when you skin your elbows going down into the dumpster." "Never mind," I heard my girlfriend's hollow bleat from somewhere deep inside, "I think I've fallen all the way in." How low the mighty have fallen.

My girlfriend used to be an heiress. I had been a writer and a municipal politician.

Hard to get that Trinity College stuff out of your head: "Take whatever you can get," said old Nick Machiavelli. "And when you lose an election—claim fraud." On the way home (she still had a car), we passed a man who was trying to smoke whitefish in the trunk of his 1983 Datsun sedan.

"We got a long way down to go yet," I breezed while noticing that, in her tumble, she'd put her toes through the ankle part of her pantyhose. If she hadn't been barefoot before, she was now.

And then, that evening, she said she might be pregnant. Who invented my life? Who invented her life? We seemed suddenly very much like a dope ring of two and no one was doing any chemicals. For this I worked so hard to get an MFA? Come to think of it, master of *what?*

There is an upside, even though the girlfriend threw me out when she discovered she wasn't pregnant after all. I retreated back to my Dodge and to show all the world that I was a damn fool. I tried being a busy fool by hauling furniture for refinishers just down the road. But that collapsed when I blew up the transmission on the owner's truck. Maybe now, in a low-rent-humour way, I could get a real job. Just think of the headline: "Local driver blows gearbox in plaza."

I needed a miracle and one was soon forthcoming.

People with whom I chummed at a restaurant would come to me with trays of food. About half a dozen women from the area would bring me gas money and food on the cold nights. Someone from the Good Shepherd brought a quilt and a pillow. The manager of the Swiss Chalet would be there some nights with takeout chicken. At Christmas, three generations of women - grandma, daughter and little granddaughter - came with turkey and Christmas cake. It was their second try that Christmas Eve, since the other time I wasn't "home". And my girlfriend finally offered me a place on her Goodwill couch, "Since you don't seem much good for anything else."

Hey, best country in the world, eh?

§ § § § §

As long as we are lucky we attribute it to our smartness;
our bad luck we give the gods credit for.

Josh Billings
(1818-1885)

CURIOSITY MADE US ASK—BUT IVAN WANTED PUBLICITY OR CIGARETTES;
WE (of course) WENT THE CHEAPER ROUTE.

Somebody had to do it, someone had to draw the short stick, and since I'd been served a shit sandwich in a game called "Divorce," I voluntarily grabbed that stick and poked a Canuck as if he were to blame for my personal failures. So here it is, an interview with Ivan Prokopchuk:

#Approximately six years ago you lifted a hot tub photo from my blog and posted it on your blog. Any regrets? Are you losing sleep over it? Or did that particular photo increase the popularity of your site?

*Definitely increased the popularity of my site. According to Liz Monroe's account: *"Oh, I remember well when Mr. Prokopchuk lifted Mr. Tomlinson's hot tub photo! It caused quite the hubbub. At the time, I believe Mr. Prokopchuk claimed that Mr. Tomlinson was his long lost son, who promptly showed up on Mr. Prokopchuk's doorstep and punched him in the nose! Or was that another long lost son!"*

#A few years later you sent me a "friends" request on facebook and I graciously accepted. However, why is it that I'm relegated to the B-list? It seems you have two facebook accounts. You've got some explaining to do.

* *The only explanation I have for possessing two facebook accounts is that I was too stoopid to devise a facebook password that was not cliche, and would stick. I finally found an acceptable password, but with my constantly changing it for it to be accepted by FB, I ended up with two accounts, one for "Ivan"--the one I use all the time now, and the other for "Ivam"--which is somewhere in Limbo. Oh, screw it...If it ain't broke, I ain't fixin' it.* (Editor's note: which also proves we know authors who cannot spell)

#Is it necessary for all writers to have a digital presence, i.e. website, blog, twitter, and/or facebook?

It is my opinion that all older writers were "dickheads" not trying to write novels, but somehow* ***dragging themselves* *into the 21st century. These were typewriter jockeys who were subconsciously breaching cyberspace and they seemed unaware that in their dickhead way, they were finally learning not only to compose on line, but to actually paste and copy--a tremendous advantage in the 21st century.*

#You often write about missed opportunities in life not so much to demonstrate how it makes someone a better writer but to show less experienced writers how fickle the publishing industry is. Could you elaborate? How does a writer recover from a major setback in life and continue to publish?

This is an interesting question and it veers me toward autobiography. I was one motherchingado of a success as a writer in my twenties...Published my first full blown short story in something called The Fifth Page,* ***Ryerson* *University's literary magazine...Damn, why couldn't I just have counted this as a success and gone on to an honest job as a ferryboat cleaner upper or something and forgotten the writing demon. I persisted at trying to be the writin' boy wonder after thirty--and seemed to fail miserably for decades, though I did win some awards in journalism. On my second novel, Peter Martin, a Toronto publisher, had said, after me puttin****g*** *in years of work on a book--that my book*

had no commercial value!...Thank God I had my original opus, The Black Icon which seemed to prove Peter Martin wrong..

#Yes, a writer can recover from a major setback in life and not only survive but prevail. (It is a tale out of school, but both you and I have been, and will be rich, even if we fail terribly as writers, if only in our own heads.

But then I have published three million words in commercial print, and it is hard to fight off the vanity...The tale out of school is that my wife was so impressed that she laid a hundred thousand dollars on me, which, like a writer, I promptly blew, Charlie Sheen fashion...Oh, the horrors of the bastard male writer! I do agree with the later Norman Mailer that the beginning writer, especially of initial success, is almost always a prick.

#Interview by Jim Tomlinson * Responses by some crazy guy we got to play the role of Ivan Prokopchuk who happened to have the same name, education and experiences.

(Editors Note: E.A .MONROE is the author of **Written in Omen** Available for e-books. Written in Omen, Book 1 in the Voice of the Wind: Shadows of Time series. **That Ms. Monroe allowed us to share her comment proves that we actually are liked by authors and know a few.)**

"I was seldom able to see an opportunity until it had ceased to be one."

Mark Twain
(1835-1910)

CITY OF TRADERS

Vanessa Matthews

The 5am chime of a central clock summons the twilight
If you can make it here you can make it anywhere
But this is not the Big Apple but the fruit, the veg
the fish, peel and flesh of the miniature city of markets
stitched between the seams of London's trading cloak

A slice of old, Spitalfields, Billingsgate and Smithfields
play a game of Chance on the Monopoly board
changing times form crenulations in its spine
tiny teeth nibbling at the sinew and bone of traders
who have crafted humanity within this urbanity

Traditions of 1,000 years under threat, tides turn
in the under currents where once, a boy could
grow to man on a staple diet of a job for life
as pitcher, cutter, porter or maybe merchant
Guv'nor if you had an appetite for money

Docks, prints and markets the only choices
for fellows of character like 'pikey Bill', once an apprentice
now minding carts for tips and tea in the stead
of in shore and bobbin jobs, once swaddled in by laws
since unwrapped by the claws of a lawless age

But that was then. Today, African finger snaps
replace the gentleman's *'good day sir'* as the four corners of the world converge at the counters

The last bastion of the Neanderthal man sinks into the
strong arms of market brothers in a nocturnal world

The daily battle for a future unchanged is littered with
the lives of fallen men who laughed with a smokers cough,
trailing broken marriages as they sit at a dinner for one.
More care taken of the job than the wife, so many regrets
swept under the stiff bristles of the yard broom

In this irreplaceable place that rots with the offal they ask
if one day the Beefeaters, the red buses and even the black cabs
will be lost with the echoes of the crowd roars and folded notes
of Christmas Eve, as loins of pork are gambled on the toss of a coin
Who then will feed the city in a flat cap tilted with pride?

More deadly predators shark at the top of the food chain
and the 5am death knell tolls today as licensed porters are
scattered amongst the minnows, spewing fish, guts and trust
across Tower Bridge. *'Maybe we've had it too good,*
for too long.' They sigh, fish hooks at their throats

§ § § § §

Common Garage, Too Early, Too Late
Peter Phillips

Is this safe you think we're safe?

It's safe, cross over, cross the street
It's safe just keep your mouth shut, mind your business, cross the street
It's safe just don't look around, I said cross the fucking street quick

Those two freaks creep me out, cross over, down the ramp
Underground Parking Garage,
the common's ain't no place to be at night, hurry
Down this hole, this place ain't no place to be either, oh jeez

Who's that, what's that? Captain you got a dollar? Captain
You want a drink? I think Callie from the alley is down the next level
On her knees making the scene with some poor fool got his
Pants around his ankles, just another chump in this dump

Don't even look, that's some sick shit, over here behind this Dodge
He'll be coming anytime, always late, always late, he's a coming
Just got to wait duck down, shhh! What's that? Oh fuck don't look
That ain't him don't look, don't look I told you not to freaking look

Yeah, do I know you?

No, you don't know me, don't look, hey later
Let's go, get up let's go, we are out of here, let's go, let's get out of here
Can you HURRY THE FUCK UP? And Jesus, I told you
Don't look at them
And for Christ's sake
Don't say a word

§ § § § §

"The shaft of the arrow had been feathered with one of the eagle's own plumes.
We often give our enemies the means of our own destruction."
Aesop (620 BC - 560 BC)

MISUNDERSTOOD
Steve Wirth

They say—
We must dress alike in order to succeed.
I say—
I'll dress the way I feel
and succeed at being myself.

They say—
You must act normal in order to be accepted
I say—
I'll act the way I want
and accept the fact
that few will understand.

They say—
Your clothes and hair
must be neatly trimmed in accordance
with the majority opinion.

I say—
my clothes and hair
are outward demonstrations
of my carefree personality
in accordance to no one but myself.

They say—
You must judge
each social setting individually
and adjust your image accordingly.

I say—
Regardless of the social setting
my appearance will always be
opposite of the majority
and I'll gladly accept the ridicule accordingly.

They say—but I reply—
They don't understand—
I'm true and honest
as I present myself
to their world.

First published:
Inside Out-2011

§ § § § §

BENEATH NOTICE
Mark Windham

A world class concert
musician played his three
million dollar violin in a D.C.
subway station.

In the streets above
homeless and hungry
huddled against the
cold -- offered food
and blankets in a church
basement -- ignored by
politician, protester and 1%
alike; words and ideas being
more important than acts.

He played for forty-five
minutes -- six complicated
Bach pieces – he made $32
in tips. Only children seemed
interested in stopping to listen,
denied by busy parents.

No one applauded.

§ § § § §

Politicians
make many more dollars
than sense

Mike Stenburg
§ § § § §

URBAN CAMPING
Steve Shultz

A new "community"
to shop, dine and dwell
gee, that sounds swell

as long as you've
got the funds
and don't plan
to stay the night
overstay your not-welcome

kinda like
wham bam thank you Sam
a dirty old uncle
buying drinks for one night stands
and while the man rests easy
sleeps lucid dreams
of star-striped things
getting rich
rolling monopoly
collecting blocks and stocks

while little game pieces
can't pay the rent
so he takes their homes
so they take to the street
we don't like the homeless
so we take back the streets

spraying down sidewalks
as if we could wash
our hands clean

§ § § § §

Altered in Detroit
churches not in service
profit theology

Mike Stenburg
§ § § § §

"When we remember we are all mad,
the mysteries disappear
and life stands explained."

Mark Twain
(1835 - 1910)

2:25AM—28 JANUARY 1994
Lawrence Cheong

why didn't death take a break
that night in the hospital?
get a coffee, take a smoke
    or lose its way
but no it dragged those chains
down
these dim corridors
clanging, grating
a stench of rotted wood
a blur of a shadow
    a cold whiff of frangipani
then
it took her away,
gently leaving me
at 3a.m.
all alone
looking out at a sodden sky
about to weep.

§ § § § §

LAST NIGHT
Mona Khan

Last Night
I removed my shoes
To take a walk with you
By the shore

On the way
We found the Moon
Lying on the beach...

It is red, you said
It is blue, I said
Repeating ourselves
A numerous times
Yet not deciding
That it was purple
A beautiful rich purple
A fact we both knew.

A thousand words
Uttered
To avoid one word...

If only...
If only...
If only...

We went around it
Avoided silky sand

To step on pebbles
And thorns

If only...

We went around it
Although our feet bled

If only...
If only...

We went around it
Lest we tripped
Over it
And fell...

One word
One call
Purple light
And a Dream...

If only....

Last Night
The moon was
O! So close!

But Fear and Only
Were closer...

§ § § § §

"Think like a wise man but communicate in the language of the people."
William Butler Yeats
(1865 - 1939)

SERENE ANGER
Michael Croker

Satirical indignation awakens
my minds eye, behind my smile wry
my conscience takes all in.
My cheeky grin a mere blockade,
a mask for the insults thrown my way.

I never wanted to be in this situation
yet for some reason it found me
and now I stare
down the cavernous pupils of a spitting rage
I think my smile angers him,
plaster wall over my face.
The wind of the night has changed
and now I'm stuck soaring upon it.

He may mistake my look for arrogance,
I hope he does.
My fists clench with every bullet of moisture
that graces my face.
At least this guy has
pronunciation down to wit, grace.

I wouldn't point that finger friend,
not so close to my eyes.
I hate it, when people do that,
a kid in a playground shouldn't
get annoyed if I'm not bothering—him.

Keep waving that red flag—mate

He pauses.
The jagged sink hole in his face closes briefly.
His eyes want to say more but
an instinctive fear of the unknown
silences them.

My smile remains, my face a kempt Eden.
The snake lies restless inside me
holding an apple to drive my fiery emotions.

His spark is out now, dead
with nothing to fuel it
nowhere to spread, it dies.
His surroundings become apparent,
as sullen guilt cowardly
perforates his features.

He is timid now, cowed.

I remain
Smiling, waiting
My fists still clenched
my conscience awry,
my fire rages still
behind calm eyes
I have plenty of flame
to burn arrogance at will.

§ § § § §

OUR SOUL SOCIETY
Archna Sharma

I sat inside
a narrow line,
filling with thin air
a flooding pool
inside my sour lung
Unfolding a page to write

the last letter home.

What I might say:
To my mother, who sleeps
inside of piano plates,

"Forgive my silver tongue"

My brother,
whose northern light shines clear,
"I ask that you follow
the road who has not sought one.
Shallow the hole
where society has won."

My walls confined,
aurelian,
lost of gilt and gold.
Ghost in a world
who litters in pine and cream,
hanker and lust
Through knots in rope,

I swallow my soul.

§ § § § §

NO MATCH FOR A POOL CUE
John Smolinski

A high school chum of mine, one of Detroit's Finest at the time, told me this tale from his years on the beat: Called to break up a fight at a locals bar, the Del Ray Café, when he and his partner arrived the scuffle was already over. One participant, younger dude, was knocked out, benched and bleeding. The other guy, a retired line worker, stood over him with a broken pool cue, seething. When asked what happened, the older gent said the unconscious young punk had accused him of cheating, said, "Old man, I'm a black belt and I'm gonna kick your ass!" Asked by the cops why he didn't call police to the scene to intervene, the older guy replied:

"Because officers, I'm no fool. Karate is no match for pool cue."

§ § § § §

ATLANTA BYPASS
Mike Stenburg

I certainly would not be Sisyphus
rolling his stone
constantly
up an endless inclination.
No not me,
I would be
Eternally
approaching Atlanta
during rush hour traffic.

Why didn't I take the bypass?

I'm sure it is a city of interest,
after all it is home of the Braves,
but I just can't believe it.

Five lanes are spread across
with no holes seen
on this field of gleams
and we continue to crawl
like a giant tortoise
suffering from arthritis
in this slightly moving tribute
to some slick oil companies.

Ahhh, we possess such deepwater horizons.

Why didn't I take the bypass?

This suspended auto-nation
without an excuse
coming from construction.
it's mind boggling
I swear, I'm in purgatory
to do this throughout eternity
would be hell to me

Why didn't I take the bypass?
Oh wait a minute,
this is the bypass.

Two roads diverged
in the sate of Georgia,
I took the one less traveled
and it made absolutely no difference at all.

§ § § § §

"Thanks to the Interstate Highway System, it
is now possible to travel from coast to coast
without seeing anything."
Charles Kuralt
(1935-1937)

PEEP SHOWS
Pamela Sayers

Neon lights curve
her woman's hips —
scorching;
she stands in a doorway,
a nighttime goddess,
glass of iced bourbon in her hand
she twirls it casually,
while eyeing passersby.

Her body mirrored,
she glitters
as I try to read her gestures,
written in code from a different realm.
Where this part of the city's abandon
fights its way into
skin
on hot summer nights.

§ § § § §

"Human beings, by changing the inner attitudes of their minds, can change the outer aspects of their lives. "

William James
(1842 - 1910)

WELCOME TO MY HOME
Bianca Grace

One day,
the buildings will stop
tumbling around me.
I will pick up the pieces
and stick them back together,
like a one thousand piece puzzle,
slowly but surely.
Tears will be recycled and put into the rivers
and lakes. After all, they are more rundown,
than I have ever been.

One day,
this place will become overcrowded.
The population will drown you
and your angry antics out.
I will not be here to witness when you
become a victim, a victim,
of your own crimes
that play on the filthy street.
Will you repair the damage
or wail in your own despair?

One day,
when the dust has settled
and we have grown up,
the buildings, will stand tall and smile at what
they have become.
The rivers and lakes,
will have the oxygen they need to survive.
The population, will be managed,
so we have the space we need.
Most importantly, your crimes will stop
so we feel safe again

§ § § § §

"I am still determined to be cheerful and happy, in whatever situation I may be; for I have also learned from experience that the greater part of our happiness or misery depends upon our dispositions, and not upon our circumstances."

Martha Washington
1732 - 1802

AS ONE:
A Portrait of Mental Illness
Stella Rothe

You and I,
I and you, together.
We are always
together.
You and I and I and you,
together, together, always, never apart.

Apart? Never! We're always together.
You, the voice in my head,
repeating, repeating, repeating,
repeating, repeating –

Did you say something?
Repeating.

Fear and lies,
lies, lies, lies.
Fear and lies.

You try to hypnotize me,
me – me is you!
And I and I and you,
me and you, and you and I.

Together, hypnotized.
Hypnotized, forever:
self-made demons,
demons self-made, a hell made by
me, my hell, my own self-made place
I
can't
control.

YOU made it!
But you are me and I am you so we,
together, made this place in my brain.
In my brain, there are dark places, dark places,
oh so many dark places in my brain!
Dark and dark
and
dark and dark.

Regret and can't forget.
Can't forget.
Can't forget;
won't let me forget—regret.
All the dark places, all of them yours.

Go away now. You can go away. Now!
Just go,
leave.
Leave me, go away, retreat;
don't look back – you're looking back –
don't look back
I see you, you're looking
back: back, back, back, back;

I go back into that dark place.
No! No, please no, just go away, away;
go away.
But you can't leave, can you? Can you leave?

No, you'll never leave; you're me, I'm you;
you're the voice, the demon, the voice
a self-fulfilling prophecy:
a prophecy that fulfills itself
Though fear and lies and regret and
hypnotized years so self-contained.

You and I, I and you, together.
We are always together.

You and I and I and you, together:
together, always, never apart.
Apart? Never! We're always together.
You, the voice in my head,
repeating, repeating, repeating, repeating,
repeating –
Did you say something?
Silence.
All the dark places
All of them all of them all of them
yours.

§ § § § §

URBAN DREAMS
Mary Grace Guevara

he dreams
of cornfields and hay strewn farm
of table laden of fresh milk and bread
of simple life beneath the lavender sky

he sees
the city choked in dust and twisted steel
the street filled with foreign made goods
the night complicated by debts and politics

he paints
heartland drawn from honest work
soil that his ancestors toiled and spilled blood
countryside so his children may find their future,
rooted in this land

§ § § § §

CITY SKIN
Joseph Hesch

The heat of August remains in the sidewalk
after the sun goes down, like a memory of the day.
The girls, barefoot and playing at being ready,
would remove their sandals on cool nights,
dangle their toes off the stoops
to massage them on that warm concrete skin
of the city in the humming wake of street traffic.
We boys would side-eye stare at their
ostensible nakedness, from dirty soles
to Promised Land thigh tops, their
bare shoulders to fingertips so small in our hands.
I would dream of massaging my fingers on their city skin.

I've had such warm memories of those nights,
now lying, as concrete as any I recall,
in this sundown September of my life.

§ § § § §

D'Verse Poets Pub

Brian Miller

http://www.dversepoets.com

Wood, worn, chipped, yet polished. Warm, the mood between shadows and pockets of soft light around tables. Music, but voice only, buzzes, smile to smile, eye to eye, some blue, green, brown. Some loud, some soft, some hard, some light. A spotlight centers on a stage, reflecting in the silver skin of a lone mic.

From the back, "Hey, glad you are here, Welcome to d'Verse."

D'verse Poets Pub is a place for poets and writers to gather to celebrate poetry. We are many voices, but one song. Our goal is to celebrate; poets, verse & the difference it can make in the world. To discover poetry's many facets and revel in its beauty, even when ugly at times.

People enter, people exit but we hope you stick around long enough for us to get to know each other and that you walk away inspired to write.

We have three opportunities each week for you to take the stage and mingle with your fellow poets:

- **Poetics** - is all about inspiration. You will write about a provided prompt, whether music, art, photography, quotes or other challenges. Poetics opens at 3 pm EST on Saturday.

- **OpenLinkNight** - is our large gathering where you link any poem you would like. This is a great place to meet and hear new voices. OLN opens at 3 pm EST on Tuesdays.

- **FormForAll/Meeting the Bar: Critique and Craft** - is our lab, where you will receive teaching on poetry forms and critique. This is where we hone our skills. FormForAll and Meeting the Bar: Critique and Craft will alternate weeks and opens at 3pm EST on Thursday.

MORNING TOWN RIDE
Polly Robinson

chackety chack
chackety chack
chackety chack

Like a
toothpaste
tube of
hunched up,
bunched up,
crunched up,
swilled and
SPIT at
station
drain.

chackety chack
chackety chack
chackety chack

Oh oh,
get some
mouthwash,
don't breathe
on me
please;
last night's
garlic
was good,
last night.

chackety chack
chackety chack
chackety chack

Finger phones;
manipulate
mobiles
for mails;
thumb apps,
angry birds,
twitter,
overheat,
a mass,
morass

chackety chack
chackety chack
chackety chack

of smells.
Standing
room only,
read 'Free
Metro', or
'Kindle'.
Hang from
bars like
sensible
apes

chackety chack
chackety chack
chackety chack

Save
yourself!
bump,
lurch,
sway,
sway.
Hear
wheels,
tracks,
screech.

chackety chack
chackety chack
chackety chack

iPod,
earbuds,
jiggle,
bleeding tracks,
fan face,
cool down,
heat up,
moist hot
heaps of
humanity …
Ride on
morning
town ride.

chackety chack
chackety chack
chackety chack

§ § § §

MADNESS

Candice Morrow

Tell me, who are you to dictate to me? Who are you to tell me what
I am, could be, should be? Who are you to tell me what colour
best suits me, how high my skirt should ride?
Do you know who I am?
Do you care that I look to you for guidance?
Even though I am not aware of it—
perhaps that is the point, how else would you survive?

Perhaps I am selfish to enquire such of you.
Day in and day out, you unsuspectingly adulterate your dapper mind,
mastering the art of dredging my unsuspecting mind to the point of
dilapidated despondency until your own unsuspecting mind
is daubed by the dilapidated creations of your defeatist mind.
But then again, you did not force yourself upon me;
you played on my vanity to inveterate a coalition with my ever so weak mind.

Overpowered by those invidious tendencies in my vain human form—
I exchanged my principles for red lipstick. Who am I to judge you?
You know of no other way. You rest in eminence, adrift in the lull
of the dapper chaos that engulfs my unsuspecting mind.

It's madness really.

You live to exploit me, to pollute my mind with tempting intricacies
that pervert the intrinsic to a mere memory.
All sensibility disembodied, shadowing your every step that leads to digression.
The mind and body not knowing unity, I live to be exploited by you.
I marvel at the wordless words of worldly wisdom that define who I am in your light..
I listen avidly as you dictate to me, gently you coax me
with a misleading insolvency
that elicits a valley of temporary fulfillment.
I smile a while, until you find fault in me again
and a new me is born in order to satiate your constant hunger.

A new me is born in my unsuspecting mind
that the savage voices in my head will be still for a while..

And then I smile a while, its madness really.

Oh how we all are churning in this whirlpool of media madness,
in an uniformed din of thuds
as we try to find ourselves in the dark..
Resolute mind of mine,

SAVE ME!

§ § § § §

CARSCATSBELLY & SOUSA NIGHT MARCHES

Matt Spence

The sidewalks always
feel weird under foot
this wrecked late hour.
You in your cool
nightdress
and
warm lips
have left me again
with those gloomy
woodshed blues.

The neon signs like music
plays a ragtime suite.
A beggar holds
out a hand like a
broken instrument
hanging in the doorway.
He is teaching redbrick
desires and I am going
star-hitching
playing birdlike
circle anxieties
in this dark
dark
hour of the night.

I hear drum rhythms
broadcasting
contemplation
blasting marches
go flapping collars
downtown
my head
is marching.

§ § § § §

NAKED LUNCH BREAK

Steve Shultz

I'm sitting on the 16th Street Mall shuttle on my lunch break
people watching, eavesdropping,
nobody in Denver seems to have anything interesting to say today,
so I observe how they dress,
how they choose to accessorize their unique selves:
a silver Juggalo pendant, a Velvet Underground banana T-shirt,
several suits & ties, a tattoo that reads "Family,"
a Victoria's Secret shopping bag,
a Mossimo hat turned backwards,
hippie tie-dye, beards & dreads
taking a round trip
from Civic Center to Union Station,

I'm just watching everyone packed into this moving tin can
I picture them all naked,
for better or worse stripped,
not just of designer & thrift-store clothing
but also their
vitamin water,
smart phones,
plastic Starbucks &
paper McDonald's cups
ugly leather handbags,
rainbow headbands &
worrisome, toothless faces

what would we all talk about then,
in this dream scenario?
certainly not the weather
or
Obama vs. Romney
how bad the Rockies are playing
or the
Twin Cities Gay Men's Chorus coming out
to the Mile High City for the GALA Festival, no

we would clam up, staring transfixed at each other's
no-longer-private parts
while covering our own with embarrassed, fig leaf-shaped hands
we would stare at every wrinkle, mole & fat roll every dimple, every nipple
every untrimmed patch of hair or perfectly waxed fold
every misshapen belly button every scar, every sag, every indentation, every flaccid penis
we are judgmental passengers on this free ride sizing up the crowd
ranking everybody on a scale from 1-100
comparing maximum occupancy best-of lists
I've nearly finished composing mine when—

these thoughts scatter
we all do, like rats, at the last stop
and I feel the sudden need to sanitize my hands

§ § § § §

THE CARNIVAL
J Cosmo Newbery

Prologue

The air is thick with smells and squeals
Of food and kids and Ferris wheels
There are spruikers, dodgems, chips and stalls
Ghost trains, drinks and mirrored halls.
Gypsies who can read your mind
And snake oil vendors, of the finest kind.
From the outside, you can sense excitement
Oozing from every stall and bright tent.

Spruiker
Come in, come in, you wont regret it!
Life will depress you, if you let it,
Look! Over there, performing fleas!

Children
Oh Daddy, Daddy, can we please?

Father
Escape from life, leave the gloom behind?
Come kids, let's go see what we can find!
But we must be away by ten, at latest.

Children
Yea for Daddy! You are the greatest!

Gypsy
Good Sir, let me read your palms

Preacher
Your end is written in the Psalms!

Vendor
Get some donuts while they're hot!
Or perhaps a beer would hit the spot?

Father
A beer and two donuts, the hot jam ones.
And a sausage in one of those long buns.
Actually, I think I'll have a second beer.

Clown
Balloons, balloons, get your balloons here!
Here kids, let me twist it into a hat
Or would you prefer a dog or a cat?

Woman
Hello, big boy, how can I please you? Come to my tent and let me squeeze you!
Don't worry, Bruno, here, will mind the brats!

Father
No, thanks. Hey kids, look! Dancing rats!

Children
Oh yuck! That's vile. How truly gross!
Dad! Dad! Don't get so close!
Oh, Dad! Can we go on that spinning ride?

Father
Will you keep your food inside?
I well remember the last time, honey;
Dinner was a waste of money.

Vendor
Hey, show your kids you are a man!
Make the bell ring—if you can!

Children
Go Dad go! Give it a good whack, not a token!
Oh—never mind, it's probably broken.

Father
Oh look, it's late, the time has flown,
One last ride then we must head home.
Or would you like to try out the guns?

Children
It's not fair, we are having fun!
We want to stay until we win a hat.

Gypsy
I knew they were going to tell you that.
Children are the great negotiators!

Preacher
Repent now, prepare to meet your maker!

Father
Come kids, you didn't listen to what I said,
It's time I got you home to bed.

Epilogue.

The last folk leave, the night is late,
The spruiker shuts and locks the gate
The stoves are cold, they've cut the lights
The music's gone and the place is quiet
The make-up's off, the splendor shed
A drink is opened, a paper's read.
In the caravans around the site
Ordinary people embrace the night.

§ § § § §

THE HEART—COLLECTOR

Kavita Rao

With her translucent veins
invariably spilling commuting sighs
With her Arabian waves
magically forming a quixotic mist
With her thumping heart
thrusting life into her slender body
With her sultry skin
attracting a rush of excited nerves
With her monsoon scent
injecting doses of moist earth
She stands there
- poised -
Eyes inviting
Arms outstretched
Smile bewitching
And all one can do is
Succumb
to her incomparable charm
Drown
in her sweltering heat
Melt
before her yielding embrace
While only hoping to chant
the syllables of her tuneful name
...Bom-bay...

§ § § § §

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, HERE ARE OUR POETS AND WRITERS OF THE TOP 6 PICKS OF THE dVERSE WRITING CHALLENGE OF JULY 2012

MORNING TOWN RIDE—Polly Robinson A member of Worcester Writers' Circle, Worcestershire Literary Festival, Parole Parlate and 42, Polly's writing has been published in anthologies such as *The Survivor's Guide to Bedlam; Reflections on a Blue Planet: Earth – Water – Sky and Reflections on a Blue Planet: Nature's Palette* (Wrixton & Hirst, 2012), *Ripples: Friends in Verse* (Summers, 2012), and *Eerie Digest* (www.eeriedigest.com April, May, 2012). She started a blog in November 2011 and writes regularly: http://journalread.wordpress.com/

A freelance writer and specialist educationalist, Polly would love to spend all of her time writing and researching. She enjoys design work and creates material for those in education who want their programmes to be engaging and student-focused.

Candice Morrow—MADNESS

"I only have one word to describe love and life, and that word is poetry. My love for all things and all beings can only be expressed through words that express those emotions and that is poetry that is life.

Reading is central to all this and as an aspiring fashion designer all beauty is poetic. As a woman my entire form is a poem that refuses to be understood or completed but none the less beautiful and profound.. I'm abstract, deep are the waters that flow within me."

CARSCATSBELLY & SOUSA NIGHT MARCHES—Matt Spence

Steve Shultz—NAKED LUNCH BREAK Steve Shultz is a poet and journalist from Aurora, Colorado. His poetry has been published electronically in Four and Twenty, Tuck Magazine and the Railroad Poetry Project, and will be published in print in 2013 in an as-yet-untitled anthology from Chromatopia, LLC. He blogs at http://fmghost.wordpress.com and http://fracturedphrases.blogspot.com.

THE CARNIVAL—J Cosmo Newbery

J Cosmo Newbery is married, with three adult sons. He is a food chemist during the day and writes poetry, to exercise the other side of his brain, at night.

Kavita Rao- THE HEART—COLLECTOR

Kavita is a business graduate with a sweet tooth and a strong affinity for aesthetics and the English language. As an aspiring poet/writer, she dreams of some day signing her own book of poems for a fellow enthusiast. Her sole intent however, is to capture that faint thought - in words - before it vaporizes into a chasm of oblivion. Some of her works have featured in literary magazines such as Like Birds Lit and The River Journal. She may be reached via her blogs at http://kavisionz.wordpress.com and http://kayleidoscope.wordpress.com"

GOOD FENCES

James R. Tomlinson

I have this student who is prone to psychotic episodes. One minute he'll tell me I'm the best mutha*$#%&^! teacher he's ever had, then the next minute, once frustration creeps in, he does this Curly-from-the-Three-Stooges head-rub, only slower, more concentrated, more deliberate, then faster and faster and faster until I become the adjective, until I become the mutha*$#%er. There's anger in his voice too, and I know from where he locks, that he's on a smorgasbord of meds; heck, in 7-block they'll sling shit on you in protest. Still, he is one of my better students. He doesn't mind doing the class work as long as it's not too thought provoking. Today he's working on a Hidden Message Word-Search related to the topic HINDRANCES. The leftover letters will reveal a quote from a Robert Frost poem. He finds "Barricade," "Barrier," and "Blind Alley." He prefers the alphabetical approach and absolutely will not jump to another word even if he glimpses its whereabouts; it has to be next on the list, he has to use a systematic approach. Never mind that it takes him longer than most students, his work is his own. I'm thinking he has a tinge of OCD. When he completes the assignment he marches up to my desk, proud as a peacock, his feathers in full plume.

I take a quick glance. "You might want to finish it," I say.

"It is finished!" he says, dropping it on my desk

"No it's not." I hand it back to him and notice that he's starting a one-handed head-rub. "You forgot to write the hidden message," I add. He retreats to his seat with the worksheet. A few minutes later he comes back.

"It's not correct," I say.

Now he's vigorously rubbing his scalp with both hands and cursing. "You're outta your mutha*$#%&^! mind, it's right! I'm not changing a mutha*$#%&^! thing."

"You forgot a letter," I inform him.

"No I didn't!" he yells. "I'm not re-doing it!"

"You forgot a letter," I repeat.

"You better read it again," he yells.

"You're missing the letter 'n'." He refuses to look at his worksheet.

After an awkward moment of silence, I take him up on his offer. I read the altered Robert Frost quote so the other prisoners can hear: "Good feces make good neighbors," then I add, "at least in 7-block." Everyone's laughing.

I guess the truth is where you find it. Inside the joint (at least in 2012) we have 366 April Fool's Days. Then again, some of the smarter prisoners will argue that I miscalculated, that I'm one day over

§ § § § §

SYNAPSE SUBWAY
Karin Gustafson

There is a subway under the skin that
travels by synapse rail. It trails the curve
of spine and your sixth birthday out
in the yard; accelerates through the loins, jumps with only a bump over that boy
in the backseat, chugs its way up
to the brain.

Trestles of pleasing try to ease the way,
still, it bogs down over changes in time, destination, track, derails
completely periodically.

You don't much care for the riders–
the breath of some is terrible–
others (poorly shaven)
constantly bug you for change.
A few make themselves
up while the train careens through
the autonomic nervous system,
but they are not like those on the IRT,
who, holding compact mirror in hand,
apply their eyeliner in a precise calligraphy–
these bunch the lines in blotted
jags that disrupt clear vision,
practically invite tearing,
the rider's grasp upon the glass
not as firm as it might be,
nor
upon the brush either.

§ § § § §

"Nothing is more conducive to peace of mind than not
having any opinions at all."
Georg Christoph Lichtenberg
(1742 - 1799)

BLINDNESS
Susan Chast

Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel
to squeeze through the eye of a needle
than for a rich person
to get into the kingdom of God. ~ Matthew 19-24

In the heat of judgment,
she decides
to leave her AC on at 85 degrees—
a compromise
between privilege and poverty
and one
not too uncomfortable
for after the pool

In the relative cool of evening,
she decides to write a poem
about privilege—a substitute
for standing in at Maggie's house
where Maggie faces
those repossessing her only home

In the water of one fire hydrant,
she fills her pail like everyone else—
a necessity in the growing drought
which finally births equality
after words and honey fail

In the light under her bushel,
a private alternative to the market place—
she notes with hands shaking
that common plastic buckets
are lighter than her copper one

In the alternating light and shade of daytime,
she decides to give away clothes and food—
a sad kindness in a land
where promises of rain
fail to materialize under the blind eyes
of sun,
moon,
and God.

§ § § § §

A SOLDIERS LEGACY
Steve Wirth

Soldier's fight many battles,
many do die
but death shall have no dominion.
When dead warriors fall to the earth
they shall rise again,
with a soldier, the wind and the west moon,
when their bones are picked clean—
and then their clean bones gone;
their legacy shall still claim victory.

Sailor's fight many battles,
many do die,
but death shall have no dominion,
for when they fall to the sea
they shall rise again;
a sailor arriving with wind in the sails
to the distant harbor,
When their bones are picked clean—
then their clean bones gone,
Their legacy shall still claim victory.

Aviators fight many battles,
Many do die,
But death shall have no dominion,
For when they {all from the sky
they shall be reborn, a pilot with compass
And distant horizons
when their bones are picked clean—
and their clean bones gone,
their legacy shall still claim victory.

They all shall have stars at elbow and foot,
When they go mad they shall be sane,
and death shall have dominion never again,
Though lovers shall be lost
and mortal love shall not be found again,
their families always carry—

Their Soldier's honor—
Their soldiers legacy—

§ § § § §

congress spends billions
on homeland security
as banks foreclose

Mike Stenburg

§ § § § §

THE BLUE LINE
Joseph Hesch

On this blast furnace Arlington afternoon,
they all dip into the dark below Clarendon.
A tepid breeze blows hard in their faces
up from the lungs, the long escalator throat,
and out the green-lipped entrance of
the Metro station by the Courthouse.

Black, white, brown, men, women,
even t-shirted kids, you can tell
who's the local here and who's just visiting.

Once they step off the dimly lit platform
onto the silver and glass sarcophagus headed
back to DC, they all will take plastic seats
or grab a bar and lean against their
sticky fellows. But the ones commuting home
or to their evening job in The District
are head-down in repose or prayer-like torpor.
The others still have their eyes up and
their raucous attention leaning toward
the voice barely heard above the roar calling
Blue Line stations with names like
Foggy Bottom, Crystal City, and the one
for that forgotten naval hero Farragut.

These lively ones visited the dead today.

§ § § § §

"Sometime they'll give a war
and nobody will come."
Carl Sandburg
(1878 - 1967)

DO YOU SEE WHAT I SEE?
Vanessa Matthews

Graffiti streaks of red and black, and a moniker scrawl,
slice the concrete breaks in the railway bank.

Do you see the paint stained fingers, ink under bitten nails,
or read the twists and turns of an artist's foraging mind?

Cackled screams of cursed slang bounce off tinted glass,
attempting to prick the commuting consciousness.

Do you hear the venom spat from yellowed teeth,
or the crack of leather belt that beat them 'til they bled only fury?

Hoods hang to hide the furrowed faces, dirty with
a malice that creeps under the terminal malaise.

Do you see the violence of the gang they pledge to,
or the huddle of lost children united in abandonment?

Alleyways hide crack pipes and needle punctures,
to the skin of an underground map of a bleeding city.

Do you see the rotted blisters and sores of addiction,
or the heavy heart grieving love drunk for a pied piper?

Do you see what I see?

§ § § § §

SMOLDERING DEBRIS
Laurie Kolp

The angst of summer heat
echoes through the night;

"Angora wool on aisle nine,"

The aisle where the wild play

sway hips in unison,
dance poles like strippers on display.
Leopard prints dig holes in seedy
neighborhoods.
packs drooling
at the musky scent of rank denial,
the litter left behind
meant for someone else,
tomorrow.

alone at curbside
drained bottle of vodka
speaks of emptiness

Mike Stenburg

§ § § § §

§ § § § §

Riddles to Answers & Riddles
Brian Miller

It is ugli fruit,
but only in comparison

A man with a machete
size knife, carves the rind
in quarters,
juice pooling beneath
and across his sticky fingers
that ply the pulp heart from within,
sharing a word and taste
with those on the sidewalk
from his cardboard box pulpit

taste & see, he smiles as he works
and that is enough, in the moment
we pass

Following the cryptic napkin
map, drawn by the Chinese man
who, even now, stands on the corner,
waving his arm & calling a-cross the crowd,
having left all his other customers
to ensure we make it
to the subway

The only strangers here
are those silent
in their own world

taste and see, i say
folding these last memories
of the city into my pocket
along with the map

To one day follow back.

§ § § § §

"I have
always
depended
on the
kindness of strangers."

Tennessee Williams
(1911 - 1983)

Broken Bottles
Steve Shultz

He has a hobby
of picking up glass
broken bottles
on every corner
from perfect strangers
drinking to different mistakes

shards of juvenile delinquency
shards of hopelessness
shards of infidelity
shards of miscarriage
shards of rage

shards of
if only I could have done things differently
shards of
if only I could see him one more time
shards of
if only I could have one more chance

shards of abandon
shards of grief
shards of no one to turn to
shards of nowhere to go
shards of I just don't give a damn

he picks them all up
one by one
without gloves
careful as he is
his fingertips are
a bloody, bandaged mess

he picks them up
puts them in a bag
takes them home
heats them up
burns them down
he blows them into art

his hand-blown glass
hangs at the clinic
hangs in the library
hangs at the bus station
hangs on campus
hangs at city park

he hand-picks all their misery
and turns them into stars.

§ § § § §

CHASING AFTER FORTUNE
Marc Christopher

Fortune runs heavy,
it has pockets full
of all the things
we chase after.
But if it runs so slow
how come no one
is able to catch it
except the fortunate few?

Is it fate to have more poor
than the adequately cared for?

I tried to be rich and
wound up having
that fucker run
faster than me
and I was in shape
but I only got close enough
to see, to be able to pick up
the few dollars that fell
out of its pockets as I chased after it.

I didn't even want
everything in its pockets,
just enough to
feed my family
put clothes
and a roof over their head.

But that old fortune just kept
getting further ahead of me.
So I had to settle for debt
and payments and worry over
being able to make them.

Yeah man that fat old
fucker fortune
runs slow but still
faster than
most everyone I know.

§ § § § §

"Myself, I prefer life without fires,
without nocturnal panics."

Juvenal
(55 AD - 127 AD)

SHOP GIRL
Gay Cannon

every night
walking along cold streets
then turning a corner
i'd see her
she'd sit black and white
in the shadows of a window
sometimes she didn't
mount the frame until i
walked by, other times
she waited staring with
moon eyes glinting
silver streaks through
the glass watching me
watching her
she often lifted her
leg putting a
toe to her mouth to show
her lean flexibility
once she let her tongue show
as she rubbed her sinuous
body along the glass
tempting me with her
confidence and sexuality
and then like the good
worker she was
she curled herself up
pretending sleep
and listening for
mice.

§ § § § §

Venus' flytrap
lead us into temptation
death where is thy sting

Mike Stenburg

§ § § § §

LUMBERJACKS
Elizabeth Lim

a piece of paper
carried by the wind

lands at my feet

a bank statement
of few transactions

withdrawals
more than deposits

withdrawals for bills

bills
bills
and more bills

diminishing the size of one's nest egg
demanding what's owed for living

we pay ourselves
for services rendered

mine becomes yours
yours becomes mine

cycles of constant withdrawals
with low percentage returns

lumberjacks breaking bread
with lumberjacks

§ § § § §

"He that dies pays all debts."

William Shakespeare
(1564 – 1616)
The Tempest, Act III, sc. 2

"A society of sheep must in time beget a government of wolves."

Bertrand de Jouvenal
(1903-1987)

FRAGMENTED
Sreeja Harikrishnan

Stands high with all the luxury;
a mall of man's dream, full glossary,
inside perfect fineness, lies life ,
bitterly.

Every second counts in on him, sly
machines he made for him, to comply ,
fragmented him beyond his dreams
dangerously .

The bird of ambition perched high,
as he rummaged his bits to get nigh
to fill his lockers and sell his profiles,
desperately.

Night stars close in with fantasies,
feelings colored by borrowed theories,
he grapples with ironies of truth and dogmas,
nervously.

Loneliness bites midst all attachment,
solitude yearns for wisdom, detachment,
his identity finding no solace mourns,
impatiently.

In thoughts, he grew beyond the horizon
in vision, in interpretation
he is deep as the ocean
his experiments fine,
his life grows more subtler
incredibly.

Is he near? Or far? From his truth,
his eyes betray his thirst, for truth
he is discerning to see beyond limits,
he missed
truth, miserably

§ § § § §

THE SCOFFING SUN
Stella Rothe

Analise was the youngest of her sisters. She never knew what that made her:
the foolish one? The naïve one? The one with the heart of gold?
Beth was the eldest, and no one questioned what—she—was:
the wise one. The protector. The one who kept the others safe.

Somewhere in the middle lay June and Lila—the risky one and the
reader. But it was Analise and Beth's world; all four girls knew
that. Beth was the sun; Analise was the moon—one intense and
strong, the other cool and mysterious. Sixteen and thirteen, with
minor stars in between.

The sun watched over the moon, slipped away when she needed freedom
to shine, slipped back in, overpowering, when the moon grew weak.
The sun, the scoffing sun, extinguished the lights of the stars but
she only covered the moon, biding her time.

No one knew what went wrong on that cool September night, the night
that fireflies filled the air like so many stars; the night that, the
next morning, everyone in town would swear they had a sense of
foreboding, of danger, but no one really did. The night before
everyone felt guilty.

The sun, dear Beth, laughed at June and made her cry. She called Lila
names and waved away her concern. "Don't be silly," she'd
said, "Analise is old enough; don't be stupid." But she felt
nervous as Analise tip-toed out of the house that night; she watched
her little sister walk to the harbor until she was a little spot of
dark shadow against the indigo sky. "Have fun!" Beth called, "Be
careful" (an afterthought). The sun slid away and the moon beamed
sweetly. She was on her own for the first time.

The next morning was hot and bright; to look at the sky was to scorch
your eyes, and to step on the pavement was to melt the soles of your shoes.
One of the sisters was dead, the town was whispering, they found her
late last night, raped and strangled by the water.

"And I had a bad feeling last night, isn't that odd?" the women
lied in hushed tones. "Where was her mother?" a few people whispered.
"Where was Beth?" the sisters cried.

That day seemed to last forever: it lingered on so long that people
said, reverently, the night might never come again.
The sun would burn forever and the moon was dead and gone.

§ § § § §

ME HOME IS ME HOME
NAIN ROUGE

I don' dance, prance er take a chance on a tune I do no play.
I don' really much care what you have to say but ya' better show some respec'.
For I been aroun' for awhile and I am not adverse to a touch of abuse and neglec'.
Der was dem folks who lived in hide houses worked da fields and wooed their spouses on the coldest of nights, now dem folks I t'ought was a bit of alright. Den along came dat French feller who t'ought a name wide as a furlong was somewhat impressive but to prove hisself wrong I just felt like kicking him and his in their snotty lan' grabbin' asses. An after dem came a beaver dam a bustin, a city of mortar and stone buil' up all over coverin' me own sweet home and everyone was making money and hustling, but they soon forgot about me which is sometin' I don' take to kindly. E'ery now and then I have to come out of the wee place I made for meself and remin' the folks livin' her today that although I don' mind a bit o' play this is my home and I ain' give no one permission for it to own'.
So beware the boogeryman, the little red devil, or crimson colored dwarf as I been called many a name o'er many a long ages, I been here since before everone and seen dis place go trou all its stages and hold no ill will or even feed human folks no bitter pill. Blame me if ya mus but unnerstan all that ever was an' is here is mine to frolick in,
but the trouble sown is surely surly human to own.

§ § § § §

NAIN ROUGE

A JOURNAL OF URBAN POETRY PROSE AND ART

Mission Statement: We here at Nain Rouge are a journal of poetry and prose and art. Our focus is geared towards urban life. But not just the concrete where millions of people call home but to the individuals journey, we nod to the fact that every one has a *different* definition of what is URBAN. Urban life is not all decay, rot, and ruin but while we recognize a lot of it all over the world is DR&R we also find that within that is the hope that by making an effort enough voices will unite to form a tide of change. We hope to add a voice to that tide and in so doing maybe to assist at least one person find a different path than the one they are on and in finding that new direction they will be saved from themselves and the culture they live in, whether it is the crowded slums or dirt floored village. Urban is everywhere under the great expanse of sky.

Our intent is that we hope to go to both a quarter published e-zine and a once a year print journal. Of course no body gets paid for anything yet, not even those spending time to see this through, but eventually we hope to be able to throw at least enough money for a grocery store bottle of wine your way, no promises though.

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES: ***Read and understand carefully that any deviation from these few guidelines will be an automatic rejection.***

1. All submissions are to include complete contact information. We don't necessarily need your home address, or your damned phone number (or text msg crap because we don't use that stuff anyway) but if you choose not to include that information YOU MUST INCLUDE YOUR NAME AND 2 EMAIL ADRESSES. Just so we can get in touch with you to let you know if your work is acceptable or not.

2. With your contact information include a **5 digit PIN that you pick**, *this is important* ***no pin = automatic rejection***. OK you're already saying WTF? Here is the deal each piece that is submitted will go to a body of editors who will vote on the pieces acceptability for what we want to include. We want only the initial recipient of the submission to know from whom each piece comes from so every one whether a previous published writer or someone writing their first piece or drawing their first picture or telling their first story has an even playing field. With an uneven number of editors there will never be a tie and the majority rule is the only rule.

3. Poets: No more than three pieces of poetry, nothing that exceeds 400 words, and all three together must not exceed a word count of 1000. Titles, we like titles but won't add them into your word count so don't make your title one thousand words long.

Prose writers: No more than two short stories with the same word restriction as above. 2 stories where both have no more than 1000 words when combined. If we come across a piece that we feel has potential for serialization over four months we will ask you to expand it.

4. Illustrators and graphic artists at first anything goes and we will decide but as we get up and rolling we are going to try and make this a bit more interactive. We will send you an anonymous piece of poetry or prose and let you interpret it. This will happen more as our lists of poets, writers and illustrators grows.

5. All we can promise is we want publication rights (yes it can be something published somewhere else but cite that in your submission) in an electronic format. Then if we choose to put it in the paper and ink journal the rights to that publication in that journal. In short, you, except for those two things, keep your own copyright which allows you to publish it, sell it or do whatever you want with it as long as you cite that we published it in digital and/or print format in such and such volume and issue.

6. And that's about it if you understand the mission statement then you understand what we are looking for.

SUBMISSIONS FOR THE 2ND ISSUE TO BE PUBLISHED JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2013 ARE OPEN BEGINNING SEPTEMBER 15, 2012 SUBMIT TO—

nainrougesubmissions@whitecatpublications.com

In an effort to promote literary literacy among youth we are going to begin a new section in this upcoming edition. We are asking for submissions specifically, but not exclusively from them 18 and younger. Though the same blind judging process will be in place using the 5 digit PIN number, we will be taking intent into account as well as form and function. If you have children, grandchildren, nieces, and nephews or friends with the aforementioned, we encourage you to encourage them to write and submit.

ALSO

Some folks have asked us for a prompt. We see poetry or a story in everything and normally don't use a specific prompt. But I consulted the Crimson Dwarf and he said "Hav dem write bout de last haf of de las sentry." I tried to get him to understand that not everyone was old enough to remember that, He laughed that ear chewing laugh of his and said "so, deys riters an poeticals ain dey?" Anyone over 35 or so should have memory to rely on but others well— you're just going to have to do a little thinking about how 1950 forward affected you.

We write not only because we must but also because we can and by necessity have to be versatile. Enjoy and we're looking forward to your cleverness. Outsmart the little guy!

PLACES WE HANG OUT AND LITTER WITH SUBMISSION FLYERS

LAWRENCE ST
G·A·L·L·E·R·Y

22620 Woodward Ave Ste A
Ferndale, Michigan 48220-2899
1 (248) 544-0394
lawrencestreetgallery@yahoo.com
http://www.lawrencestreetgallery.com/

Hours:
Closed Mon & Tue
Wed & Sat 12-5
Thur & Fri 12- 9

The Lawrence Street Gallery began its adventure 25 years ago in Pontiac MI. The gallery is an artist owned cooperative with a monthly rotating gallery exhibition. A number of award winning and journeyman artists working in a variety of styles and media are displayed on the walls and pedestals.

On the third Friday of every month The Lawrence Street Gallery is also gracious host to the Poetic Travelers Poetry event. Where spoken word friends gather with a bit of wine or other beverage and snacks to perform or hear the work of others, while completing the circle with the visual arts on display.

TRACEY'S
Corner Café

Find us on:
yelp
foursquare
gowalla

Open Seven Days a Week

See our Facebook page for current events

586-576-0317

Tracey's Corner Café is known for their wide variety of high quality loose tea and exotic coffees from different areas of the world.

Sandwiches and Panini, as well as baked goods, are available to enjoy with your beverage of choice at a reasonable cost

Tracey's is open 7 days per week

Tracy's is also host to not one, but two open mic' nights.

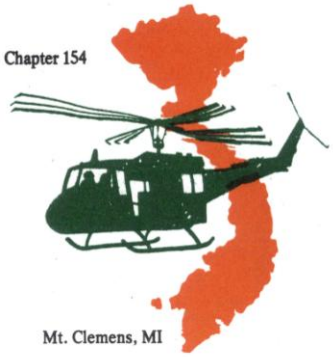
Tuesday and Sunday 8pm -11pm.

Tracy's Corner Café
29200 Hoover Rd
Warren, MI 48092
(586) 576-0317

Hours:

Mon-Wed-Fri	**7 am—10 pm**
Tuesday	**7 am—11 pm**
Sat	**8 am - 10 pm**
Sun	**12 pm - 11 pm**

PEOPLE WE THANK WITH GRATITUDE AND WELCOME HOME



Vietnam Veterans of America
Chapter 154—Mt. Clemens MI
http://www.vva154.com/
Veterans Serving Veterans

Home of the Michigan Vietnam Veterans Traveling Memorial,
2654 names of Michigan's KIA from Vietnam, along with biographies of each.
Contact Dave Schoenherr at ***586-709-7511*** for information

Veteran Support Center
16945 Twelve Mile Road
Roseville, MI 48066
586-776-9810

Hours of Operation—10:00 am - 4:00 pm Monday thru Friday.
After Hours please leave a message and your question will be answered.

- **Veteran Out-Reach** and other Programs include:
- VSO **(Veteran Service Officer)** at Vet Center—call for details 586-776-9810
- Pop Kramer's Macomb County **Veteran's Food Bank**
- **MESC** Job Service (Friday)
- **Color Guard / Point Team—Jim Watts, Commander (586-709-7502)**
- **AA & Al-Anon** (Thursday)
- **Operation Christmas—Drop Off Donations at the Vet Center**
- **Annual 24 hour POW/MIA Vigil** (Michigan Remembers Memorial, Novi MI)
- **Speaker's Bureau—Contact Mike Brink (248-399-6981)**
- Many other Veteran and Community Related Projects

Veterans Support Center Service Officers
Come in and speak with them about your claims
Call ahead (586) 776-9810 to schedule an appointment with a Veteran Service Officer
  - If you think you may be entitled to compensation,
  - If you were previously denied,
  - If you have Type II Diabetes, Prostate Cancer, Parkinson's Disease,
  - Ischemic Heart Disease (By-Pass) or anything else.

What was not compensable earlier may be compensable now.


(c) 2012comfortspiral.blogspot.com