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Middlesex: *A Literary Journal*

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Cover Art: Rachel Zimmerman, "Mokuton"

Mokuton – Origin: A Japanese anime ninja term. Meaning: Wood Release (Wood Style), is an inherited gift of combined nature transformation where one holds the earth-based chakra in one hand and the water- based chakra in the other hand to create plant life through any surface, even by converting one's own self into the source of life. Wood Release parallels the real-life ninja art *Mokuton-no-jutsu*. One exercise of this art is *Tanuki-gakure*: the practice of climbing a tree and camouflaging oneself within the foliage, or becoming the vegetation, the life surrounding.

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I Found My Impossible

I found my impossible
in the most exquisite land
to never exist,
of soundless music
of wordless song,
of no time and too long.
I felt the sky's blueness,
heard the sun's heat,
traced love's scent
upon veins sweet.
pure pain,
deep healing,
all-hidden,
ever-revealing.
and I couldn't tell apart
my head from my heart,
a thought from a feeling,
so I let my impossible in.

My Two Daughters

(Victor Hugo)

As the light-shadow of the cool, charmed evening falls,
one a swan, and the other a dove recalls—
lovely, and both joyous. O sweetness!
Look, the older sister and the younger rest
there by the garden gate, where a bouquet
of wind-agitated white carnations sways,
and, leaning from a marble urn on long, frail stems, contrives
to look at them—motionless, and yet alive—
and in the shade at the urn's edge, trembling,
seems—in ecstasy arrested—a butterfly's wing.

Sonnet

(Stéphane Mallarmé)

O so dear from distance, yet near and white,
so deliciously yourself, Mary, that I dream
of a rare fragrance which streams
from the empty crystal vase by some deceit.

You know it, yes! For me those years return once more.
It is always your beguiling smile that makes those
days linger, that lovely summer's same rose
drifting into the past, then pouring back into the future.

My heart, which in the night seeks to hear itself, or to
know what last word, most tender, to call you,
should exult only in the whispered name, sister,

were it not—so great a treasure for a head so small—
for another sweetness that you teach me well,
spoken softly by the sole kiss in your hair.

The Obit Reader

Every day she reads the Obits
looks for names connected to
her gated village and social
club. *It's my job to send sympathy*
cards and fruit baskets.
I'm glad when I don't spot a name.
This morning, she spots two friends,
no connection to her village or club;
deeper than that... both young.

Family Puzzle

So many pieces of the puzzle we hold:
our grandmother who told what her
missing father was like; her own man --
headstrong, headstoned -- the other side
of the earth now; sons, daughters of

that grandmother, moved across the country;
nails of the house we heard hammered
together, the rain and sun we saw
alter them, floorboards we slippered worn,
garden and white picket fence, fenced now by
blue chicory; a sister, a brother jigsawed
apart, never again fitting into
the rubber-banded, cardboard
scenery on the box.

Survival

Before we bomb, my friend says, *spray the baseboards*
especially by sinks in kitchen and bathrooms.
Even roaches need water. We spray. Roaches
stream from black cracks, up greasy walls
to the ceiling where they drop -- a heavy dark
rain, their bodies pelting hair and shirt.
I clank down my spray tank;
Brush me off! Brush me off! I scream
to my friend who tumbles out laughing
and later bombs the tarp covered rooms
with slow release aerosol cans.
The owners are not allowed back
for three hours. I never go back --
look for another job, try to avoid
dark, damp places at night.

On A Good Friend's Sugar Maple

This Maple full of seeds
and sweet memories; each
tier of leaves tells a year
of your life. The yellow earth
movers and dump trucks rust
beneath you... children's toys.
No grass grows under you.
Children shimmy up your corduroy-rough
trunk, pick stiff-winged seeds
to split and stick on their
'Polly noses'. Under you
we eat, dropping crumbs
of ourselves and laughing.
My friend tells of extending her house
maybe vertically. A roped black tire hangs
from your bough-- an exclamation!
A breeze shifts all the light in your leaves.

The Ant-Lion

His dusty body goes backwards to be dust.
On dust more frictionless than ice
A frantic slipping ant will make us wince
To see a crucible mind no more than claw;
A mind that harbors no dark thought to appall
But shapes his perpetual falling wall.
He does not jump for justice or to be just.

Summer's first rain-drop rolls in dust a world
Whose wet invites all wetness hints of growth
(Such a world may we recognize in drought).
Silent and dry, he emerges like a roar
And makes the molten tension burst,
And drowns himself with water, nothing more.
And a something unrepeatable is learned.

The Willow Bond

"Let's have a game of truth or dare," she said.
She snapped a longly hanging willow-wand.

We shared the field with no one but ourselves
And the willow that knew us from the play of years

That fountained alone and yellow in the field.
Winter's tears to April dew had yielded.

"The game is played by our both being blind
Until the willow tells true where true love abides."

A hint of mischief's smile filled my closing look.
She offered an antennae-end; I felt and took.

"A willow wand between two lovers' hands
Communicates the tension of love's bond."

The switch, whip-supple, wetly flailed,
Live as a shedding snake held head and tail.

I felt, where dew-bewildered life had broken off,
A sad pull; something, then, lent something soft

To our springtime game of gain and loss.
The wand had left a distance for us to cross

And reared between us a budded arch
Forever flowerless as frozen March.

"My question is: Will you love me all your life?"
"What you mean is: Will we be man and wife?"

I broke into a laughter I did not understand.
The willow sent it on to her own blind hand.

Perhaps this willow, being the ductile thing it is,
Adds a playful pulse to those it passes.

Something about the way the time compressed,
Or how the intercessor willow hissed,

Misgave me to give the game my heart;—
And that too went out along the drying bark.

What we are, I thought, we are by accident.
What happens makes us bend as we are bent.

I kept eyes open now, sure that hers were shut.
A glimmer or a tremor of I knew not what

Laid a furrow clear across her forehead,
As when question answers question as we'd feared

And not as we had hoped. The bond, the branch, snapped
Sudden as two children's hands can clap.

Cranes In The Back-Yard

Suddenly—in the middle of what was
The only green and subtle meadow that I knew,
A dozen cranes or so with jagged wings
Settled their legs in beads of old snow.

A dozen heads, or so, with accentuated necks,
Are staring at me again, down twenty-four years like eyes,
And I begin to see;—they are stained so white
I think their wingtips cannot be as black as they are.

Then, and slowly, their wide wings begin to beat
Until legs like straws let their linkages down
Above the lush wave that presses my throat
So I cannot think except to gaze at their feet

Not touching the earth the least.

Daniel Zimmerman

Hyperlocal: A Review Of Hank Kalet's *Stealing Copper*

A longtime reporter and editor lately involved in "hyperlocal" journalism, Hank Kalet has a new book of poems, *Stealing Copper*, published by Finishing Line Press. His work embodies the Poundian view that "poetry is news that stays news"—so much so that many of his poems take their inspiration from actual news stories. In a hyperlinking move reminiscent of Charles Olson's postcard admonition to William Carlos Williams against (poetically) cut flowers: "These days // whatever you have to say, leave / the roots on, let them / dangle // And the dirt // Just to make sure / where they come from," Kalet supplies sources for those poems in a Notes section at the end.

Stealing Copper laments and celebrates, often at the same time. With a grounding in facts that recalls poets like George Oppen, Charles Reznikoff and Walter Lowenfels, these poems testify to Tip O'Neill's observation that "All politics is local." They take us inside the local, illuminate it, open our hearts and eyes. The title poem contemplates the too-common trajectory of bad to worse: a meth addict in a vacant house with copper pipe in his hands, surprised by a cop, leaps from a second-story window, breaks his leg, and rides with the cop to the ER. My dad, a railroad engineer, worked with guys who moonlighted by stealing copper (and anything else not bolted down). When they targeted ingots headed for the Philadelphia mint, the Feds nailed them. At least Kalet's thief acts from an addict's desperation—arguably a better excuse than greed (if that motivated them).

Kalet has never visited Detroit, but "CITY OF DOGS" imagines packs of the 50,000 strays scavenging throughout that stricken city. Closer to home, "THERE IS NO GOOD WAY TO STOP A DOGFIGHT" (which I hear also as a telling caveat about our involvement in the Middle East), shows the author, after successfully following the best how-to advice,

. . . arm bruised, ear torn,
shoulder scratched, blood on the pants –
collateral damage as the combatants lick

each other clean and we wander like refugees
in the quiet aftermath of the blast.

Clear as lenses, his poems reveal more than our eyes, however clear, discover at first sight. "BEARING WITNESS ON THE BELT PARKWAY" shows a lone fisherman, who

. . . bows monk-like
into the wind away from the Belt, away
from the blare and moan of motors,
into the space above choppy water
and muddy banks, holding tightly
to the rod as his line dips
into the robe-black creek below.

That "robe-black creek" factors the angler to a higher power. So do *Stealing Copper*'s vivid descriptions of work, of loss, of war, and of technology gone rogue as the dogs of Detroit.

Some of Kalet's poems look in and out at the same time, some by counterpoint— as in the longest poem, "WAITING FOR THE KNUCKLEBALL TO SPEAK," which alternates the unpredictable relationship of ace knuckleballer R. A. Dickey's signature pitch and his career with signature snippets of the precarious state of employment across the country. Dickey's specialization makes his place in the national pastime as precarious as the machinist's in "SIGN POSTS" becomes in the American Dream when his job gets outsourced: he winds up "Dressed in parka and cold rain, / . . . hunched above his placard / for a lighting store liquidation."

The care, the irony, and attention to detail in these poems mirror that of another of Kalet's projects: *As an Alien in a Land of Promise,* a poetic documentary of failed capitalism and homelessness in the now-closed Tent City encampment in Lakewood, New Jersey, in

which he collaborated with photographer Sherry Rubel and filmmaker Jack Ballo. As that work—a collaboration in the spirit of James Agee and Walker Evans' dust bowl classic *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*—awaits publication, we have the penetrating vision of *Stealing Copper* to celebrate.

STEALING COPPER
By Hank Kalet

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"Because of the Cold" and "Bearing Witness on the Belt Parkway" appeared in *Main Street Rag.*

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"There is No Good Way to Break Up a Dog Fight" and "Sabbath of the Punk Guitars" appeared in *U.S. 1 Worksheets.*

"Waiting for the Knuckleball to Speak" appeared in *Spitball.*

The Franklin Mint Chess Set

"For in a real tragedy, it is not the hero who perishes; it is the chorus."
Joseph Brodsky, "Uncommon Visage."

I used to dream of owning
The Chess Set of the Civil War,
With pewter-finished game board
And protective wooden case,
And every face and saber
Carved in exquisite detail,
The coats with braids and epaulets,
The war reduced to sculpture now
And undefiled geometry.
Imagine pewter gambits,
Accurate, in draftsman's lines
Across the smooth, enameled board.
There were Grant and Lee as kings,
And, saddled on their rearing mounts,
All the generals cast as knights,
Their flesh and blood transformed to myth,
With Grant perhaps Ulysses now,
Slipping through old Dixie's walls
And Richmond burning down like Troy;
With Hector's part embraced by Stuart
Against the wrath of Sheridan;
And all the dog faced pawns in front,
Their names on scraps of paper
Fastened to their chests,
Waiting in their perfect lines
To stain the clear, enamel squares.

The Cavalry Widow

I loved him so
When he came back to the farm,
This boy I had missed and despaired for,
And who never came back,
But instead this wonderful, sun burnt man,
Bowlegged from the saddle,
His hands as hard as a shingle and smelling
Of saddle leather and steel,
This absolute stranger
Who claimed me for his wife.
I helped him pull the long boots off
And stroked his calves and ankles,
Shivering beneath a woman's touch.
Then I yanked open that brief jacket
And the shirt beneath,
And pulled the whole war inside me:
The endless days and nights
In the long, dusty columns;
The rattle and the ripple of guns;
And all the sounds of horses
A trooper won't forget:
The din of their wheeling, screaming in the roads,
Of their heavy, metered clop on parade;
Or a whinny in a farmyard
While a young woman naps
In the silence of an April afternoon.

Earth's Garland

At Sharpsburg in the fall,
The morning fog's like smoke
Among the branches and trees
And out across the stubble fields
The voices call up ghosts,
Mere murmurs on the wind.
And caterpillars fill the roads,
These fragile, moving dots of fur
We crush beneath our wheels and feet.
And out beyond Antietam Creek
The hills roll on like regiments.
Only momentarily
Do the angles of the landscape change:
Discrepancies of stone,
A tower from the Renaissance
Overlooks a sunken road;
A beautiful Italian bridge
Arcs across a narrow stream,
A marble spire ascends beside a fence.
The land repeats the past,
As leaf by leaf and stalk by stalk
It reconstructs a time
When gun smoke drifted
Through the shattered trees,
And curlicues of blood
Ran down the creek.

Tyrannosaurus Rex

While closing hour approached,
And back across the vestibule,
My children browsed through
Piles of regalia,
I wandered back to pay respects
To fury's perfect archetype,
And standing in the shadow of
His monstrous grin,
I mimicked briefly Adam's reach
And slowly stretched a finger out
To touch his blackened fang.
Tyrannosaurus, lord of secrets,
Ordered bones of our worst dreams,
Tell me, if you please,
By what grace did your leer succumb?
How did the frailty of the silverspot appear,
And the red cherries ripen in your dead jaws?

Keats's "Ode To A Nightingale": An Historical Interpretation

Poetry is vital to humanity because no other form of writing captures so succinctly and beautifully at a precise moment in history the emotion and thought of a single individual. A great poem embodies the spirit of its age and through its art and beauty transforms that spirit into a universal and eternal engine of thought and feeling. "Ode to a Nightingale" is such a great poem. The "Ode" radiates a perennial freshness that commands our instant attention, and every time we read it, we seem plunged anew into the living mind of John Keats.

And yet, for all its timeless appeal, Keats wrote "Ode to a Nightingale" at a particular time and in a particular place, and these circumstances shaped the poem, so that it is more than a work of literature. It is also an historical document, and a telling one at that. It defines the Romantic position in the clearest terms and repudiates the pure rationality that drove the previous age to disaster.

"Ode to a Nightingale" was the fruit of Keats's "glorious year." Perhaps no other poet has produced so many poems of the highest order in a single year as did Keats in 1819, when he wrote all six of his great odes as well as "La Belle Dame Sans Merci," "The Eve of St. Agnes," "Lamia," and "The Fall of Hyperion." He also wrote a number of sonnets, including the classics "Bright Star" and "Why Did I Laugh Tonight?" When the year ended, so did his poetic career, as he began to battle the tuberculosis that would kill him.[i]

It was also in 1819 that Keats had his famous meeting with Samuel Taylor Coleridge on Hampstead Heath just north of London. The two poets lived on opposite sides of Parliament Hill, Keats in Hampstead and Coleridge in Highgate, but had never formally met until April of that famous year when they accidentally ran into one another on Millfield Lane, just outside Highgate. Richard

[i] Robert Gittings, *John Keats: The Living Year, 21 September 1818-21 September 1819* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1954), 197-98.

Holmes has suggested that during this meeting, Coleridge may have planted the seed in Keats's imagination that burst forth in "Ode to a Nightingale."[ii] In a letter to his brother George, Keats listed the topics Coleridge discussed: "Nightingales, Poetry—on Poetical sensation—Metaphysics—Different genera and species of Dreams—Nightmare—a dream accompanied by a sense of Touch—single and double Touch—A dream related—First and Second Consciousness—the difference explained between Will and Volition . . . ," etc. Keats gently lampooned Coleridge to his brother in nearly the same terms he would later use to describe the nightingale's song: "I heard his voice as he came towards me—I heard it as I moved away—I heard it all the interval—if it may be called so." [iii]

The incident is famous enough. But often overlooked is the extent to which this brief interview may have influenced Keats. Nearly all the topics Coleridge touched upon would find embodiment in "Ode to a Nightingale." Also of interest is the order of Keats's list. "Nightingales" come first. And it would be on April 30, only two weeks or so after listening to Coleridge's streaming high talk, that Keats would begin to compose his great ode. [iv]

Coleridge himself had written two poems on the nightingales and their song. The second of these, "The Nightingale: A Conversation Poem, April, 1798," appeared in *Sibylline Leaves*, published in 1817, a book Keats is known to have owned.[v] In the poem Coleridge chastises poets for mindlessly adopting Milton's notion that the nightingale is a "most melancholy bird":

> In Nature there is nothing melancholy
> But some night-wandering man whose heart was pierced
> With the remembrance of a grievous wrong,
> Or slow distemper, or neglected love,
> (And so, poor wretch! filled all things with himself,
> And made all gentle sounds tell back the tale
> Of his own sorrow) he, and such as he,

[ii] Richard Holmes, *Coleridge: Darker Reflections* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1998), 497-98.

[iii] John Keats to George and Georgiana Keats, 16 April 1819, *Letters of John Keats*, 1819-1821, ed. Hyder Edward Rollins (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1958), 88-89.

[iv] Gittings, *John Keats*, 132.

[v] Susan J. Wolfson, ed., The Cambridge Companion to Keats (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2001), xxx.

First named these notes a melancholy strain,
And many a poet echoes the conceit; [vi]

By contrast, Coleridge hears joy in the bird's song and, in lines addressed to William and Dorothy Wordworth, vows not to impose the burden of individual sorrow on nature:

My friend, and thou, our Sister! we have learnt
A different lore: we may not thus profane
Nature's sweet voices, always full of love
And joyance! 'Tis the merry Nightingale
That crowds, and hurries, and precipitates
With fast thick warble his delicious notes,
As he were fearful that an April night
Would be too short for him to utter forth
His love-chaunt, and disburthen his full soul
Of all its music! [vii]

In the ecstasy of nature's wonders, one would hardly know, in spite of Coleridge's deep interest in politics, that England, at the time the poem was written, was in a desperate war with Napoleon Bonaparte. The older English Romantic poets, who had initially applauded the French Revolution, by 1798 were beginning to withdraw into nature to avoid confronting the carnage the revolution had spawned, averting their eyes from the defeat of the Enlightenment's high aspirations. But while they were doing so, they believed they had to be careful not to infect the natural world with their despair over the state of human affairs. In closing the poem, Coleridge hopes that he might teach his son and by extension the next generation to "associate joy" with the night tide, with nature, and with the nightingale's song. [viii]

This was but one response Coleridge made in poetry to the events in Europe. In 1798, he also composed "France: An Ode," which catalogued his growing disenchantment with the course of the

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[v] Susan J. Wolfson, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Keats* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2001), xxx.

[vi] *The Poems of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Ernest Hartley Coleridge (London: Oxford University Press, 1935), 264-67.

[vii] Ibid.

[viii] Ibid., 267.

revolution. Here Coleridge calls on nature—"Ye Clouds . . . Ye Woods . . . ye loud Waves . . . Thou rising Sun! thou blue rejoicing Sky! Yea, every thing that is or will be free!" to bear witness for him, so that he might show

> With what deep worship I have still adored
> The spirit of divinest Liberty. [ix]

In the first flush moments of the revolution, Coleridge had supported France against the coalition of monarchs that had sought to snuff out liberty's flame. When, in that early day, his own country came into the fray against France, Coleridge had hung his head "and wept at Britain's name." [x] But when the French invaded Switzerland in February 1798, the revolution—about which he had previously had many doubts— became insupportable.He repented, in lines addressed to the Swiss defenders:

> Heroes, that for your peaceful country perished,
> And ye that, fleeing, spot your mountain-snows
> With bleeding wounds; forgive me, that I cherished
> One thought that ever blessed your cruel foes! [xi]

For Coleridge, France had now joined in the hunt for spoils. It had turned from its high purpose of spreading the blessings of liberty and had now ignominiously begun "To mix with Kings" and "To insult the shrine of Liberty." [xii] One may well wonder whether the "night-birds," to which the woods listen at the outset of this ode, are also nightingales.

Coleridge began *Biographia Literaria*, his great assault on the deficiencies of the pure rationality of the Age of Reason, in March 1815, less than a month after Napoleon Bonaparte escaped from his captors on the island of Elba to return briefly to the imperial throne of France. By the time Coleridge finished it, Napoleon had met his final defeat at Waterloo and was exiled to the safer confines of the island of St. Helena

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[ix] Ibid., 243-44.

[x] Ibid., 245.

[xi] Ibid., 246.

[xii] Ibid.; Richard Holmes, *Coleridge: Early Visions* (New York: Viking, 1989), 196.

off the coast of Africa. [xiii] In this great work of philosophy and literary criticism, Coleridge attacks the notion that pure scientific study—the measurement of the objective world—can in itself lead to sustained human progress. Coleridge admits the utility of science and reason but reveals them to be deficient for providing a complete understanding of humanity.

The Idea of Progress based on rationality, which Coleridge challenges, had developed slowly since the twelfth century when ancient Aristotelian logic was reintroduced into Europe. The full-fledged Idea, which Bernard de Fontenelle formulated and popularized in the mid-eighteenth century, consisted of four related axioms. The first two were drawn from the philosophy of Rene Descartes, who in the early seventeenth century asserted the supremacy of reason or the scientific method, which in the second instance could be used to discover the immutable laws of nature. The late sixteenth-century English philosopher Francis Bacon supplied the notion of utilitarianism, which formed the third element of the Idea of Progress. Bacon held that morality required human beings to employ the newly gained knowledge of the axioms of nature to improve conditions for humanity in the world.De Fontenelle himself provided the fourth and final element of the Idea of Progress—the principle of perpetual progress. According to de Fontenelle, humans, armed with the scientific method, would gain ever more knowledge of universal law, which they could then employ to achieve perpetual improvement. [xiv] As the eighteenth century wore on, an increasing number of influential Europeans began to replace a fundamental faith in the efficacy of a providential divinity with a new faith in human reason and science. By the mid-eighteenth century, British capitalists and scientists had applied the new doctrine of progress to industry, initiating the first stage of the industrial revolution. Montesqueiu, taking a cue from John Locke, believed the scientific method might be applied with equally beneficial results to society itself. In political affairs, John Locke, in his defense of the Glorious Revolution of 1688- 1689, had developed the

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[xiii] James Engell, "Biographia Literaria," in *The Cambridge Companion to Coleridge*, ed. Lucy Newlyn (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 59; Ben Weider and Sten Forshufvud, *Assassination at St. Helena Revisited* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1995), 121, 177; Holmes, *Coleridge: Darker Reflections*, 412-13.

[xiv] J.B. Bury, *The Idea of Progress: An Inquiry into its Origin and Growth* (New York: Dover Publications, 1960), 50-52, 65, 105-110.

idea that reason, not divine right by accident of hereditary succession, should provide the foundations of civil government. After a group of aristocrats had deposed the rightful monarch of Britain and elevated another in disregard of the order of royal succession, Locke wrote to defend their unprecedented actions. Governments, he argued, exist for the sole (and rational) purpose of protecting life, liberty, and property, and the community had a right to alter any government that failed to meet this responsibility—even if this meant deposing a monarch who had come to the throne legitimately by right of birth.[xv] Rousseau, writing in the mid-eighteenth century, added that governments must base their authority on the general will of the people and had a responsibility to preserve a fundamental equality among a nation's citizens. To many later readers, Rousseau's ideas implied that the people had a fundamental right to alter any regime that did not adhere to these admittedly ill-defined standards.[xvi] The ideas of Locke and Rousseau, together with the growing public acceptance of the Idea of Progress, served to undermine the traditional institutions of the monarchy and church, which were essentially holdovers from a time when a providential God, not reason, reigned supreme in the minds of men and women. By the end of the eighteenth century, the new thinking had engendered two major revolutions, the American and French, which aimed at establishing human liberty and equality as fundamental rights to be protected by the government. Although the Romantics tended to reject the Idea of Progress as embodied in the industrial revolution, deeming it an essentially unnatural development, they initially accepted the Idea's application to politics and society, hoping against hope that a new European society based on liberty and equality might emerge. But the subsequent descent of the French Revolution into bloody tyranny and dictatorship led many Romantics to question the Idea of Progress itself.

For his part, Coleridge was forced to conclude that human experience embraces more than mere perception of the physical world. It also encompasses dreams, illusions, emotions—all manner of non-rational perception and thought, which cannot be ignored in any

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[xv] Ibid., 144-45; John Locke, *Of Civil Government* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1947), 179-180.

[xvi] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, trans. Maurice Cranston (London: Penguin Books, 1968), 61, 69, 96-97; Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The First and Second Discourses*, ed. Roger D. Masters, trans. Roger D. and Judith R. Masters (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1964), 172.

comprehensive study of humankind. Moreover, as Coleridge pointed out, while scientists using the scientific method might agree on certain objective perceptions of the physical world, other perceptions both of the physical world and of the interior world of the human psyche must remain subjective. [xvii] Yet, for all its subjectivity, this inner world of the mind has a reality of its own and, as Coleridge knew from his own experience, helped to shape the external, physical world in consequential ways.

It is within this interior world of the mind, declared Coleridge, that the very concepts of science originate. Human beings imagine the forms with which they categorize nature, and they impose meaning on the physical world in the same way Milton imposed a melancholy interpretation on the nightingale's song. For Coleridge, then, imagination, and specifically poetic imagination, is the power by which human beings understand and provide meaning for the whole of their experience and existence. In this way, the exercise of the imagination becomes an act of moral will. It is not simply the result of psychological volition—the willy-nilly association of one image with another. This is mere fancy. Through imagination, human beings unite within themselves the objective and subjective realms, the physical and the spiritual universes, the platonic world of the intellectual forms with the chaos of the physical world and nature, and consciousness (the subjective experience of the world) with self- consciousness (seeing oneself as an object within nature). [xviii]

Any true understanding of the totality of human experience must, then, in Coleridge's view, include a subjective element, an element each individual must provide for him- or herself. In this way, having witnessed the wholesale slaughter of a generation of young men on the battlefield during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars from 1792-1815, Coleridge provided a new morality as a stay against further calamity. The colossal *Grande Armée*, 600,000 strong, which Napoleon led to disaster in Russia, was supposed to bring the rational revolution to Moscow. In this vast drive to progress, individuals were mere cogs in the wheel rolling toward the establishment of a new society founded on

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[xvii] James Engell, *The Creative Imagination: Enlightenment to Romanticism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999), 329-38.

[xviii] James Engell, "Introduction" in Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, 2 vols., eds. James Engell and W. Jackson Bate (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1983), 1:xcv.

immutable laws. Individual, that is to say "subjective," perception, as far as the rationalists were concerned, was of little real value since it did not point objectively to the universal. But as Coleridge was to remark in later years, "The pith of my system is to make the senses out of the mind—not the mind out of the senses, as Locke did."[xix] This reversal put a premium on individual, subjective perception. Every person's individual approach to reality provided some knowledge, some piece of the puzzle of human understanding not otherwise attainable.

What is more, in Coleridge's system, the individual not only perceives reality but begins to shape it in conformity with his or her imaginative will. As James Engell has so aptly pointed out in his introduction to *Biographia Literaria*, Coleridge's philosophy is dynamic because a creative act produces the material world and then is again required through self-conscious willing to reconcile the mind-matter dichotomy.[xx] Poetry, to Coleridge, is a supreme act of moral imagination and free will. It expresses, through imagination, the unification of the objective and the subjective worlds, connecting, as Engell notes, "external nature to the acts of reflection performed by the inner life of the self-conscious mind." In creating a poem, the imagination, through conscious desire and will, creates "a new whole" or "something not yet in existence." As Engell explains, the use of the poetic imagination, which includes but is not limited to reason, becomes for Coleridge "the fullest exercise of the self and of its inner powers." It is, as Coleridge himself asserts, "the free will, our only absolute self."[xxi]

Imagination, then, returns meaning to human existence in a way science alone never can. "If nothing else," says Engell, "it gave mankind an important and understandable place in the cosmos. This seemed inevitable to Coleridge; the other possibility, that of being isolated, ignorant of what our knowledge meant and therefore ignorant and lost forever, was hideous and unacceptable . . . man possessed a power that could join him to the world. There was a natural correspondence between the mind and nature, symbolized in art."[xxii] And art, in the

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[xix] Ibid., lxxvi; Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Henry Nelson Coleridge, John Taylor Coleridge, and Carl Woodring, *Table Talk* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990), 2:179.

[xx] Engell, "Introduction," lxxvi.

[xxi] Ibid., lxxxi, xc.

[xxii] Ibid., lxxxi.

end, must be the product of the individual consciousness—it cannot be won on the battlefield by thousands of individuals marching in lockstep toward their deaths.

This was the political and intellectual climate in which Keats wrote his great poem to the nightingale. Wellington had vanquished Napoleon and had thereby brought to an end the dictatorship Coleridge unalterably opposed. The Congress of Vienna, which reordered Europe, had ushered in a new era of conservatism, the monarchies stood firm in their power, and the sort of liberty the French Revolution had promised seemed to have been forever squelched. The bloodshed, with more than a million dead, seemed useless, and reason itself seemed suspect. Faith in reason had promised that the immutable laws of nature and society could be discovered through the scientific method and put to work for the betterment of mankind. Had not de Fontenelle promised that faith in human reason would bring perpetual progress in human society? Most of Europe's best thinkers, including Coleridge, had initially marched off to the tattoo of rationality and its power. Only Rousseau stood aside, wondering whether a tool as awe-inspiring as the scientific method (reason) could be well-employed by those who had not sufficiently cultivated virtue.[xxiii] When the guns grew still after Waterloo, Rousseau's warning seemed prophecy. Reason promised a government dedicated to Lockean values of life, liberty and property, to Rousseauvian notions of equality. But this was, in the short term at least, to remain an unfulfilled dream for Europe.

Even before Napoleon's rise to the imperial throne, Romantics such as Coleridge had begun to view events with horror. In the aftermath of Waterloo, Coleridge and others began a reassessment—one toward which they had been traveling in their poetry for quite some time. The critique the Romantics had raised against the Industrial Revolution could also be used to discuss the problems that resulted from too firm a faith in a science of society.

II.

In 1819, nightingales were common enough on Hampstead Heath to keep Coleridge awake with their "incessant" song. And as Keats's housemate Charles Brown related, one of the birds "had built

[xxiii] Rousseau, *First and Second Discourses*, 34-56.

its nest near my house." Unlike Coleridge, Keats felt no irritation at the constant melody but, as Brown tells us, "felt a continual joy in her song; and one morning he took his chair from the breakfast table to the grass plot under the plum tree, where he sat for two or three hours. When he came into the house, I perceived he had some scraps of paper in his hand, and these he was quietly thrusting behind the books. On inquiry, I found those scraps, four or five in number, contained his poetic feeling on the song of our nightingale."[xxiv]

On those scraps of paper were the makings of one of the finest poems ever to be written in English, Keats's great "Ode to a Nightingale." The finished work declared itself from the first line to be a poem in the Romantic style, in every way opposed to the type of poetry the Age of Reason had produced, the exemplar of which might be Pope's "Essay on Man." While the "Essay on Man" and "Ode to a Nightingale" both deal with humanity's place in the universe, the approach is quite different. Pope lays out a reasoned, philosophical argument in rhymed couplets of iambic pentameter. He discusses man in the abstract and avoids presenting in any important way his own emotion or feeling:

> 1. Say first, of God above or man below,
> What can we reason but from what we know?
> Of man, what see we but his station here,
> From which to reason, or to which refer? [xxv]

For Keats, reasoning solely from empirical evidence is insufficient for discovering humanity's purpose. As if to underscore the change in philosophy, he abandons the rhymed couplet and speaks directly from his own emotional experience in the very first line.

> My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
> My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,

[xxiv] Holmes, *Coleridge: Darker Reflections*, 498; *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, 3rd ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1974), 664 n.; Since the earliest manuscript of the poem is written on two sheets front and back and Brown mentions four or five scraps of paper, some scholars have questioned the authenticity of Brown's account. He may have forgotten the number of pieces of paper or there may be some other explanation for the discrepancy, but I see no reason to discount altogether this first-hand testimony of the poem's composition. See Robert Gittings, *The Odes of Keats and Their Earliest Known Manuscripts* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1970), 311 n.

[xxv] *The Poetical Works of Alexander Pope* (New York: A.L. Burt, n.d.), 187.

Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains [xxvi]

The poet's heart does not ache "through envy" of the bird's "happy lot" but because the nightingale is "too happy" in its happiness. The bird, unlike the poet, is able to sing "of summer in full-throated ease"—full-throated because it has none of the poet's sense of despair to hold him back. [xxvii] The poet, who hopes to shed his human melancholy, first by drinking his cares away, calls for

a draught of vintage! that hath been
Cooled a long age in the deep-delved earth,
Tasting of Flora and the country green,
Dance, and Provencal song, and sunburnt mirth! [xxviii]

Perhaps deep in his cups, the poet might "leave the world unseen" and with the nightingale "fade away into the forest dim." [xxix] The word "unseen" in itself presents some ambiguity that allows the poet to accept here in stanza two both the subjective role of the perceiver and the objective role of the perceived, unifying them in the way Coleridge had suggested in *Biographia Literaria.* Is the poet himself to be unseen within the forest dim or is he to leave the world unseen, i.e., to depart without perceiving the world in any empirical sense? Here are the first and second consciousness Coleridge had discussed with Keats on Hampstead Heath. It will reappear in the poem later with the "lustrous eyes," which at the same time see and are seen, and in Keats's own ears, which subjectively hear the nightingale's song but like "a sod" are also objects in the physical world. Stanza three supports both senses of the word "unseen," as the poet proposes to "Fade far away, dissolve," and also "quite forget / What thou among the leaves hast never known" (the foreknowledge of death).[xxx] It is only by leaving the world behind that the poet may, it seems, join in the full-throated song of the nightingale.

This physical world, perceived empirically, reveals only "weariness," "fever," and "fret." It is the knowledge of this world "where men sit and hear each other groan; / Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last

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[xxvi] John Keats, *The Poems*, ed. Gerald Bullet (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992), 201.

[xxvii] Ibid.

[xxviii] Ibid.

[xxix] Ibid.

[xxx] Ibid., 201-202.

gray hairs, / Where youth grows pale, and specter- thin, and dies" that prevents the poet and all human beings from singing songs or writing poems which are completely joyful.[xxxi] The last image, as is well known, is a reference to the death of Keats's younger brother, Tom, who had died in December 1818. Keats had tried to nurse Tom back to health and had kept a sad vigil at his deathbed.[xxxii] Reason, which in the previous century had promised progress in worldly affairs and human happiness on earth, could not return Keats's brother to life or alter the empirical fact that "youth . . . dies" and "Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes, / Or new love pine at them beyond tomorrow." Reason tells us, then, that there is merely a progression from youth and beauty to misery and death and that everything of real value in the physical world is doomed to eventual extinction. In the final reckoning, humans with their unique ability to reason inhabit a world "Where but to think is to be full of sorrow / And leaden-eyed despairs."[xxxiii] Here Keats attacks root and branch the pretensions of reason untempered by the imagination and at the same time condemns the preceding age, the philosophy of which had led only to war and to the failure of human aspirations for a better world.

In stanza four, the poet discovers that the temporary effects of drunkenness will not allow him to escape the palpable evidence of death which surrounds him. He now chooses to join the nightingale "on the viewless wings of Poesy" in a new world he shall create for himself in the poetic imagination. In this way, the poet, addressing the bird, finds that he is "Already with thee! tender is the night, / And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne, / Clustered around by all her starry Fays." In the darkness of the imagined night, he can no longer see the objective physical world and finds himself released, at least temporarily, from sorrow. Since he "cannot see what flowers are at" his feet, he must create a new natural world in his imagination.[xxxiv]

In this, Keats follows the example Coleridge had set in his conversation poem of 1797, "This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison," in which the poet, by reason of an injury to his foot, finds himself unable

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[xxxi] Ibid, 201.

[xxxii] Ernest Raymond, *Two Gentlemen of Rome: The Story of Keats and Shelley* (London: Cassell & Co., 1952), 144; Andrew Motion, Keats: A Biography (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1997), 327.

[xxxiii] Keats, *The Poems*, 201.

[xxxiv] Ibid., 202.

to accompany his friends on a walk through the Quantock Hills. Imprisoned in his little lime-tree bower, Coleridge recreates in his imagination each exquisite detail of the glorious natural wonders his friends are to witness on their tour. He summons the sun to "slowly sink / Behind the western ridge" and puts the entire landscape under the command of his imagination:

> Shine in the slant beams of the sinking orb,
> Ye purple heath flowers! richlier burn, ye clouds!
> Live in the yellow light, ye distant groves!
> And kindle, thou blue Ocean! So my friend
> Struck with deep joy may stand, as I have stood,
> Silent with swimming sense;[xxxv]

These scenes of nature, which the poet preserves in his imagination, bring him joy. Coleridge derives satisfaction from the knowledge that while he is, objectively, a part of nature, he is in another sense superior to it. Through imagination he becomes one with the divine creator, holding within his own mind the whole of the universe. The Romantic thus finds the courage to confront the grubby world of affairs by carrying with him in his imagination the joyous scenes of nature. It is a subject Coleridge had broached two years earlier in "Reflections on Having Left a Place of Retirement." Even though he is constrained to leave the "quiet Dell! dear Cot, and Mount sublime!" and rejoin the active world of affairs, he proclaims that his "spirit" shall revisit in dream the cot and its natural beauty—"Thy Jasmin and thy window-peeping Rose, / And Myrtles fearless of the mild sea air."[xxxvi] It is a device Wordworth was soon to adopt somewhat less effectively in his 1798 poem, "Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey." Here the poet finds repose under a "dark sycamore," where he can view the resplendent natural beauty of the countryside:

> These beauteous forms,
> Through a long absence, have not been to me
> As is a landscape to a blind man's eye;
> But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din

[xxxv] *The Poems of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, 179-180.

[xxxvi] Ibid., 106-108.

Of towns and cities, I have owed to them,
In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart;
And passing even into my purer mind,
With tranquil restoration—feelings too
Of unremembered pleasure;[xxxvii]

Wordsworth, "Knowing that Nature never did betray / The heart that loved her," prays that nature will

so inform
The mind within us, so impress
With quietness and beauty, and so feed
With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all
The dreary intercourse of daily life,
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold
Is full of blessings.[xxxviii]

For Wordsworth, the memory of the countryside around Tintern Abbey, the memory of natural beauty carried in the imagination, shall lead "from joy to joy."[xxxix]

Keats, sitting out beneath the plum tree in 1819, was surely aware of the poem "Tintern Abbey," which was included in *Lyrical Ballads* in 1798, and he was undoubtedly acquainted with "This Lime-Tree Bower," which Coleridge had first published in 1800 and then included in his 1817 collection, *Sibylline Leaves.* Following the example of the older generation of Romantics, Keats, in stanza five of "Ode to a Nightingale," turns to the poetic imagination to recreate a natural world in his mind that he hopes will carry him from despair to unalloyed joy. In darkness "embalmed" by the "soft incense" of flowers hanging from the plum tree's branches, Keats must

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[xxxvii] *The Poetical Works of Wordsworth*, ed. Thomas Hutchinson (London: Oxford University Press, 1932), 205-206.

[xxxviii] Ibid., 207.

[xxxix] Ibid.

guess each sweet
Wherewith the seasonable month endows
The grass, the thicket, and the fruit tree wild;
White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;
Fast fading violets covered up in leaves;
And mid-May's eldest child,
The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine.[xl]

But in Keats's case, nature reimagined cannot fully free him from the sorrow of the world, a sorrow which also affects or infects his imagination. It is an insight that Coleridge and Wordsworth, in their ecstasy over the beauty of the natural world, had wholly overlooked. For the more sober Keats, the specter of his wasted brother intrudes even upon the world of his imagination. The change in historical circumstances is also evident. In the late 1790s, there was still a flickering hope that the great ideals of the French Revolution might eventually prevail. But by 1819, Europe had entered a reactionary era and the cause of human liberty seemed permanently damaged. "Ode to a Nightingale" is a Romantic poem because it finds reason insufficient in itself as a means of finding joy, but it differs from the earlier poems of Coleridge and Wordsworth in that it also finds imagination wanting. In the final line of stanza five, Keats interjects a less hopeful natural image, imagining that he hears as a countermelody to the nightingale's tune "The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves."[xli] This sonic image returns him to the theme of death, which he had foreshadowed in the double meaning of the word "embalmed" at the outset of his flight into an imagined natural world.

Intoxication and imagination having failed him, the poet next turns to embrace death itself. Perhaps by accepting death's charms, he might finally escape the world's sorrows. He recalls that he has "many a time . . . been half in love with easeful Death, / Called him soft names in many a mused rhyme," and it now seems to be a propitious moment, while listening to the bird's exquisite music, to call an end to life and its sufferings:

Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
To cease upon the midnight with no pain,

[xl] Keats, *The Poems*, 202.

[xli] Ibid.

While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
In such an ecstasy! [xlii]

Yet, even an acceptance of death will not allow the poet to experience the nightingale's supreme happiness. As we shall learn presently in the next stanza, death would merely deprive the poet of the meaning and value he is creating for himself as an individual. For, as he says to the nightingale, were he to die at that very instant, "Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain— / To thy high requiem become a sod."[xliii] Death would prevent the poet from completing his own song, his own poem, which in turn would divest the nightingale's song of its meaning. The nightingale's song is meaningful, as Coleridge had noted in his earlier poem, only because humans give meaning to it. Keats must live and write about the nightingale's song, then, for there to be any beauty or joy in it at all.

This brings us to the essential distinction between the nightingale's song and that of the poet. Keats fully explores this difference in the context of human history in stanza seven. The nightingale, he avers, is an "immortal Bird" that was "not born for death." Because the songbird has no reasoning power with which to gain a foreknowledge of his own death—his song is "full-throated" and therefore indistinguishable from that of any other of his species. It is the foreknowledge of death, unique to humanity, that makes each human being self-consciously individual and unique. With this foresight, gained through the faculty of reason, each human being is forced to decide how best to use the finite time he or she is allotted. Each, in imagining a future life, will adopt a slightly different approach, and each will develop his or her perceptions from a long history of human affairs. Now, Keats tells us,

The voice I hear this passing night was heard
In ancient days by emperor and clown:
Perhaps the selfsame song that found a path
Through the sad heart of Ruth, when sick for home,
She stood in tears amid the alien corn;[xliv]

[xlii] Ibid.

[xliii] Ibid.

[xliv] Ibid

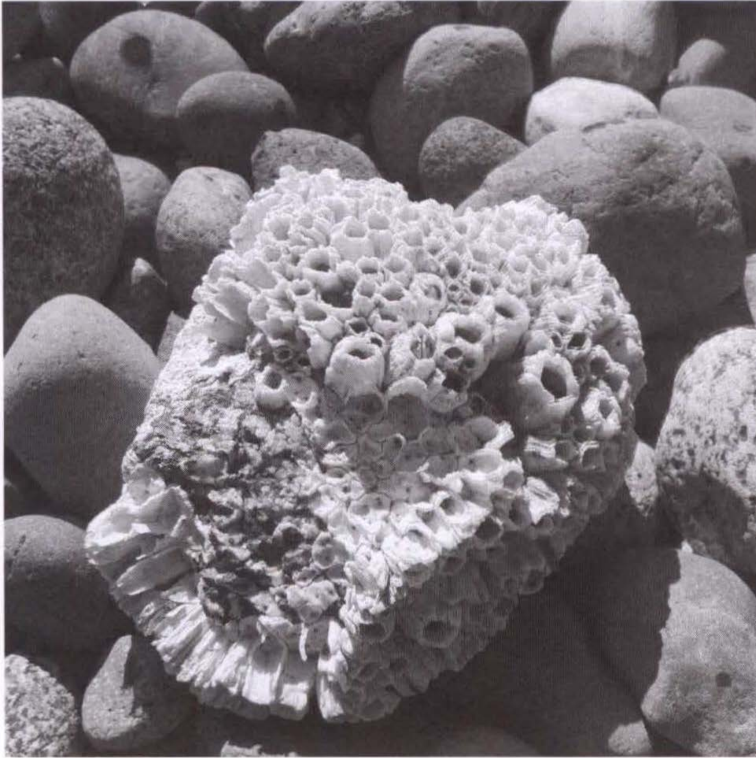
For each generation of nightingales the song is the same. The nightingale not only has no foreknowledge of death to help it shape an individual song, it has no reason or imagination with which to exercise its creative will. Moreover, it has no history, no context in which to create a new melody. These are the things that differentiate humanity from the other species—foreknowledge of death, reason, imagination, and finally, history.

In some sense, history is the most important human attribute, for it is always new. The record of time, for each generation and each individual, constantly changes as each moment of time ticks away. There is an unrelenting addition to the human story. Because this is so, Keats alone had the experience and personal insight to write "Ode to a Nightingale," a poem which required him to draw on his unique individual perception of the physical world, on his imagination, and on his sense of history. The poem is, as any good poem must be, evidence of its own truth. Keats has created a unique and beautiful song, more meaningful than that of the nightingale, a song which encompasses the world of the nightingale and lends meaning even to *its* rote melody. In this way, the ode celebrates the value of each individual in a manner that implicitly criticizes the waste of human life Europe experienced during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars. In this sense, the poem becomes an historical document or artifact, registering a change in attitude from the previous generation and marking a distinct boundary in the history of human affairs. The poem also creates a one-of-a-kind personal history for the poet and gives important meaning to the suffering and death of Keats's brother, and to Keats's own suffering.

At the end of stanza seven, Keats suddenly reminds us that we have been in the world of the imagination right along, that the nightingale's song is the same in reality or in imagination. It is the same melody "that oft-times hath / Charmed magic casements, opening on the foam / Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn." Again Keats warns that even in the world of the imagination, because it too is human, sorrow and death are ever present. The word "forlorn" tolls the poet back to his "sole self" and back to the reality of the bird's song, which (in a passage echoing his description of Coleridge's voice on Hampstead Heath) he now hears fading as the nightingale flies "Past the near meadows, over the still stream, / Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried deep / In the next valley- glades." Since it is still, in the context of the

poem, presumably dark, we are still, in this description of the landscape, firmly within the realm of the poet's imagination. Finally, Keats leaves us to wonder whether the entire episode was "a vision, or a waking dream?" With the music now gone, he asks, "Do I wake or sleep?" leaving us to question whether the nightingale's song was ever real. And yet, in the final analysis, it doesn't matter. Empirical truth lends nothing to the individuality or reality of the poem. Whether a dream or an actual event inspired it, it remains a unique testament of Keats's thought and emotion. Keats has succeeded in creating "a new whole," something that had not heretofore been in existence. What is more, the poem, unique though it is to its own time, took its place in the physical realm from the moment Charles Brown pulled those famous scraps of paper from behind the books on his bookshelf. With that act, "Ode to a Nightingale" began to shape all subsequent physical reality and all subsequent human history. Such is the power of a poem.

Rachel Zimmerman



Curl-Footed

There are 1,220 barnacle species currently known. A barnacle is a type of arthropod constituting the infraclass Cirripedia. Cirripedia means "Curl-footed" in Latin.

Sand creeps between my toes
And the sea washes it away
Pulling the earth beneath me
Back to the bay
My footprints prove me here
Then water plays a trick: it's clear
I've left nothing
And nothing will see
I moved something
To the smallest degree

Rachel Zimmerman

The Ancient Ones

Hashirama sits on the edge of a stone
By himself, not completely alone
In one of his hands is Earth
In the other hand, Water
A thunderous clap and flashes of fire
Call loud as a whale, burn bright as a tiger
Twisting and whirling while changing disguises
He collides with the tide, the air improvises
A simple seed to a blossoming tree
Bursting from the belly finally set free
Sprouting out the corpse comes the Ancient One
And its leaves sway an elegy of praise in the Sun.

Rachel Zimmerman

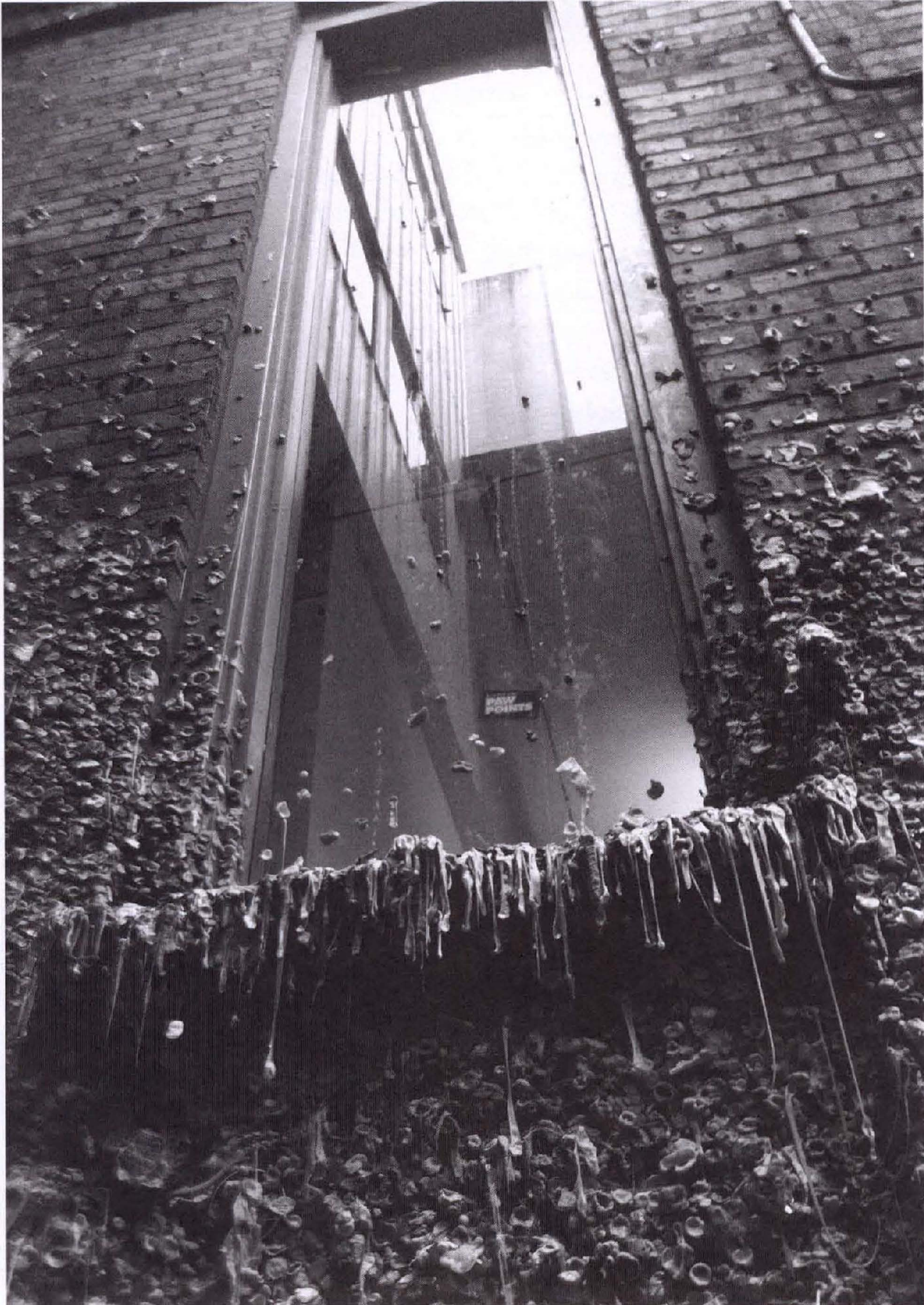
The Poppies Will Put Them To Sleep

Down the path of no return
Where munchkins sing and witches burn
Soars a crow that no one knows
Flying out where no one goes
To send a message of dark intent
He spies his target and makes his descent
Past the Emerald City where his master resides
If she is so powerful, then why does she hide?
The western breeze whips in his lungs
Awaking a beast speaking in tongues
His once steady heart beats quicker now
Nothing can tame him, not nobody, not no how

Rachel Zimmerman

Rachel Zimmerman

Rachel Zimmerman



Taking The Gloves Off

Yeats—who clawed his way
over Leda's thighs, from whose
beating wings flames seared
Mary's ear, who'd turn
into an enameled bird *to keep*
a drowsy Emperor awake—wrote
what he had to to make
what he didn't at all believe
believable to preserve the hoi
polloi inviolable.

how, he wondered, could those
dumb broads inaugurate
anything? it would take
a slouching beast to accomplish
the twist from now to when
anticipation would go exactly
wrong as he predicted. he
himself might do in a pinch,
dancer from dance a moment
extricated, brute blood of air.

architect of his own despair,
fate's scrivener, mortuary
engraver towering a life ill-
content among the shows, scorner
of mackerel-crowded seas,
admonisher of horsemen, his
eminence grise eclipsed
the emerald isle with a tattered coat
of old mythologies. he never did get
common enough to walk naked.

Daniel Zimmerman

The Empire Strikes Back

for Andrew

we played till a glove broke. then he flew
West again to St. Louis. low blue, don't
take him any further now. where you going,
what did you get from Bath,
England? arm sore so he can reach second.
Professor, it's hard to, but keep
talking to your friends. explain
inadvertent, watch out for rocks
in snowballs, do what you're good at.
visit our new apartment you gave a 10.
the glove's ready. the bed's fresh.

A Declaration

precise as an expectation sunrise will repeat itself yet yesterday
will not, a legacy of recollection white elephants the free
exercise of guaranteed pursuit & compromises the tenacity
that checks the swing & gets to base on balls.

strike one: high & outside. the kid believes
in himself when he ought to believe in the pitcher.
the pitcher believes in the kid. he saw
the swing coming before he stepped into the box.

strike two: the kid hammers the plate,
shrugs off a signal, wrestles his bat like a caber.
a knuckleball kicks dust into the catcher's mask
as the cudgel testifies to its religion.

strike three: he should have known, but the fast ball
down the middle looked too good. the bat
somehow stays with him all the way to the dugout.
tomorrow, wiser, he will pick another one.

Gnomon

Rachel, four, ballets to bed
the tenth time, having kissed
her seated daddy, delicately,
a twentieth.

the first four steps
draw back her arms against the air,
a Primavera. she pirouettes.
"I like you. You're beautiful."

The Chieftain's next selection is a reel.
Rachel Alexis wriggles out a dozen adept
Hibernian maneuvers in the three
more feet to the foot of her bed.

she tumbles over the quilt, soft as shadow.
the stars—"one of them might be God,"
she speculates—twist in the window.
I fold down the covers from her head.

Poetry

an extinct shark leaps
into my boat, thrashes
dangerously, slowly
turns to stone.
a specimen, no sushi.

all day, one cloud
refuses to move.
unaffected by sun,
it tracks the moon,
gauze over crescent.

one egg, two yolks.
"an embarrassment
of riches." shark's gone,
moon's done. the lone
mosquito.

Intersection

restless as history, strong
as a spell with English
on it, you want a miracle
but have to save yourself.

no Pope will beatify
your getting out of bed,
no Zen master whack
satori-yen out of your head.

what do I know? you ask.
good question if your name's
Montaigne. if not, not. no
question you exist. now what?

save yourself for what?
the dog needs a walk,
your lover hasn't said,
the light's still red.

Atlantic Coast Line

the frosted windshield this morning
too beautiful to scrape,
I let the defroster fog it away, shivering.

hopes can wait. I don't sit in a blind
grunting for them. late for work
anyhow, I watch clouds on the way in.

cars pass like bulls at Pamplona,
sheets of ice flying from their roofs.
my cell phone sings a tune my daughter gave me.

the clouds inch. if I forget to call back later
it rings again. no penalty this morning
for delay of game.

Ruth

She runs like truth
Clear
As natural as doe
Or dawn
Like water
Fluid as April
Hushed rain in gentle
Western wind
No rush
A steady flow
Her eyes
Her smile
A glow

In Praise Of Long Branch

In Long Branch
the boardwalk rises,
a rainbow of salt spray
and spinning waves
of sea gull flight
and plaintive sandpiper quick run.
Praise the rebirth
in word, in laughter, and in song.

Bob Dylan Incident

when Bob Dylan walked into Morris Avenue and shifted south
to Joline, looking for something (remembrances of Bruce?),
dressed in rain rubber boots and two pairs of sweat pants,
he wandered here and there,
until he found himself in a well-kept yard.
the lady of the house called the city cops
who questioned this strange person,
a troubled lady as they thought.
"I am Bob Dylan," said Bob.
"You don't look like Bob Dylan," said the lady cop.
and called her sergeant.
Who also said, "You don't look Bob Dylan."
and so they took him to Ocean Place where
Willie Nelson and John Mellencamp bailed him out.
"Yes, he is for sure Bob Dylan," they all said.
and so Bob Dylan lost in Long Branch
eventually said, "What do they know in Long Branch,
a lost city by the sea.'
And as the bus drove away from Ocean Place,
the cops waved and smiled
as Bob Dylan was copped away.

Recalling Otmar

(Translated by Emanuel di Pasquale)

I bought a large purse
today, to hold forty-nine years,
which I will reach in a few days,
black, like the skin I have never wanted
to caress – I ask myself
from what idiosyncrasy: it is soft
and sweet-smelling, deeply so. It accepts
scattered tobacco and the lighters
thrown in the garbage, her being dull
when I call her and a cellular
that rings at inopportune times.
It rubs against my side, flutters
And slams, hits and pecks
Grazing my hand, thankful
For the carefulness with which
I slowly open the hinge

Like Them

(Translated by Emanuel di Pasquale)

I am unable to talk to you, to tell you.
Only howls come out from the flowers
since a thread has whispered
to a leaf that has informed
a stem that it has reverberated
waves in the pond,
and all has been troubled,
As my soul is murky
as it struggles in the mud,
the old murky mud, ploughed
by seventy years old wrinkles,
by envious folds from fat
and plaintive women. I
do not speak, say nothing, hatch
serpent eggs; are not
infants the same
on the ninth week?
Like them, I neither know how to speak
nor listen to the Seraphim.

Let's Close Our Eyes

(Translated by Emanuel di Pasquale)

A postponed salutation
for the instant of a flight
between angels and hurricane clouds
vapor of border
Below, the earth
where I will bury my eggs
above, the sky
of our souls

We already know everything but
let's close our eyes!
Let's close them again
till we wear out our eyelids
wear caresses out of our faces
words out of our lips

THE JOY

(Translated by Emanuel di Pasquale)

Thinking of being with you running
right where the wave laps
the shell broken by winter.
Imagining a vague, indistinct
horizon of white clouds and
salty water. We will
protect ourselves
from the cold wind
cheek to cheek
arms to arms, rolled
tongues with closed eyes.
We will resume our journey
together, up to the bathing hut
and there disappear, turned into sand or
skimming against a keel

I Could Tell You Of Life

(Translated by Emanuel di Pasquale)

I could tell you of life, of that time
I was God in my belly, I could tell you
of how easy it is to confuse
cobwebs with love and how only the
unknown causes fear. Of death,
I have written a book, perhaps you will read it,
but it's not an important theme. I could even
consider something artistic
or formal: what's the weather where you are today? Then,
I could send you a song
by Cohen, its inner message telling all
that a woman desires to hear.
If I knew the answer, I would explain to you
why I run, of the deep down
hurry I have. Or I could even
stop talking and listen for long
to your voice, without breathing.

WHERE HE SLEEPS

The slick smell of goose crap
signals spring. Olive drab
jacket, sleeping bag, tent.
Screw the shelter. Mornings
remain cold, though the frost
is gone and grassless ground
once brick-like thaws to mud.
Easier this way, like
patrols in the Mekong.
Easier alone. Off
the highway in densest
thicket, dark and light, shadows
and sudden sun. Birdsong,
brake-squeal, the chatter
of crickets. Scent of pine
and diesel smoke. Morning
coffee from the 7-
Eleven and the paper.
When it rains, he slides across
the roadway, ducks beneath
the bridge ramp to stay dry.

Hank Kalet

PARIS OR MAYBE HELL

he found her in the bathroom
what was she thinking
in dreams, yes,
the dead can live –
she thinks of them
as visits, and prays
they claim no corpses
when I dream of him she says
when I dream
we are light and dark a breeze a muddy rut in the yard
we are flesh we are
flesh we
are flesh
for now
how could she
hanging from what
I can't imagine
is it courage that allows one to choose one's end
or a failure of nerve
killing yourself Camus says
amounts to confessing
memory desire
suicide is the single greatest expression
of freedom
bullshit
it is negation it is repudiation refusal denial refutation
an exclamation
an end
priest's rambling prayer he
didn't know her
says

her journey is over says
she is coming home
says
the community of all dead
is so vast
Benjamin said
talking of Michael
and Angelo of
Michael and Angelo's
of Michael Michael Michael
to rebel says Camus

in the funeral home the mourners come
and go
talking of
she lingered two days hooked
to machines
we are blood no blood water we are water we are air we sink like stones
sink like sink
you wouldn't know from the picture with the obit he says
there is no way to climb inside
another's mind and know
there are vowels there are consonants
constant chattering coming from somewhere
and a video
talking of Michelangelo
dozen bath towels
knotted together threaded
through the bathroom fan
a noose
more dead than alive
isn't that what Benjamin meant
that in death
we go to the many more
dead than living
line them up pile them up
body and body and body

Sweet Thoughts

and I keep sweet thoughts that saved me
scribbled on paper,
hidden in a house

tiptoeing in a frenzy,
like a mad mouse

if only they could hear my thoughts
my goodness!- if they could,
why, they'd hear all my love and woe
throughout the neighborhood

and there did come a time when people
started to care about my rhymes
the hidden poet-
she hides herself
where it is safe,
sleeping in scarves of lace

and I am infinitely small in a world I created
and I know no one in the world I've created
She walks like an emerald
through huge open spaces
down a long twinkling hallway
she paces,
a mirror of many faces
but still all by herself.

Find For Ourselves

God lead me to that stairway
    where heaven calls upon us but doesn't reach
    where heaven falls upon us but doesn't teach
    us the ways we have to find out for ourselves

we find for ourselves
we find for ourselves
we find out for ourselves

god lead me to that gate
where I finally see the Father
the one I've missed for so long

suddenly its all falling into place
everything I pined for
everything I dreamed
everything I wished for
everything I've seen

so when will I be redeemed?
please tell me
when I will be redeemed?

Mathew Spano

TARDIGRADE...

Posing on a pencil point,
cute as a comma,
tiny moss piglet
plodding, pudgy-legged, through the plot
of the Great Mother's tome,
through chapters each ending
with a great Negation:
trilobites trimmed,
T-Rex and pterodactyl,
expunged and redacted;
mammoth and sloth
blotted out in Her onslaught.

Tardi bear, ready to brave
radiation enough
to melt a man to his socks.
Hardy badger, steady
under pressure more crushing

than the sea's deepest crevasse.
Shrugging off absolute zero,
blowing bubbles at the boiling point,

Her toughest little tyke
who tucks himself in
for ten years without a bite
or a drink in the middle
of the long, long night.

Till he wakes in a drop of dew
ready for breakfast before his next big test:
more asterisk than astronaut,
naked in space all alone,
he can suck up the void,
vacuum the vacuum,
till he tumbles toward the next blue dot,
carrying Her biography,
himself the final period
in our all too brief epitaph.

Mathew Spano

Mantis Shrimp

Stowaway
tucked among the Pacific colony
of tiny sponges and mollusks,
well behaved citizens
of the hunk of living reef
sneaked through customs
for our saltwater tank in the Suburbs--
the greater tank within which we had swum
half asleep all our lives--day-to-day,
nose-to-glass, end-to-end.
But this lethal larva, assassin seed,
alien breed, embeds deep
in coral crevices, a sleeper cell
that slowly grows, surveilling
with stalked eyes, periscoping
from a black crevasse, until,
spring loaded claws cocked and loaded,
it is ready at last to mug a passing angel,
gobie, damsel or dragonet--
pet store clowns swimming their rounds,
blind to the wild beyond the glass
or that waiting beneath the filter.
Blackjack blow from the deepest shadows--

dirty work of a baby-faced gangster
who always plays the innocent pawn,
poor prawn ready for the plate, the perfect cover.
Nature's oxymoron: tiger shark shrunk
into a shrimp shell.

After our fish went missing,
the crabs, one-armed knights, came hobbling home,
flesh streamers from armor split,
white flags trailing the death march.
Then the ornaments were vandalized:
treasure chests smashed, divers decapitated,
the shipwreck with fresh holes punched in the hull.
We called in the experts--
triggers and scorpions
straight from *Pet Palace,*
but the next morning...only bubbles
rising from the filter, winking as they burst
the poker-faced surface.

When we tried to dislodge the little Dillinger,
he tasted our tactics with anxious antennae,
hunkered deeper, eyes pivoting
in all directions, peering infrared,
reading our souls,
marking our hands with the scars
that earned him the alias "thumb-splitter."
Finally cornered,
this swashbuckler,
with a single shot from his flintlock fist,
blasted a hole
in the aquarium glass
and rode the torrent to freedom,
sweeping us up in his black pirate wake.

That night, we served him as sashimi
and, to honor him properly,
took vows to taste and share even more
his passion for shattering glass
to return to the sea.

Mathew Spano

Salamander

My rake rends a glowing grave
of maple leaves shrouding the autumn lawn,
cauldron of molten gold,
the guts of which broil up
microbial stew, smoldering
witch's brew of black fire
among the steaming heaps.
I have disturbed a demon sleep
deeper than the garter snakes
that glide just beneath
the stained glass surface.
The Lord of the black furnace
writhes forth flashing fire,
convict lexicon glaring
for all who would dare to seize
a flailing tail, swallow a flaming sword.
This one's growing new limbs,
his kin busy dissolving the belly
of a precocious pit bull,
who ate three before his heart finally seized.
Gills gone, he flees the winter breeze,
diving into flame, swimming through magma
on his long journey East
back to the fiery palace of Prester John.

SCARECROW

He hangs, a husk
on a wooden cross
beneath the rusted windmill and empty silo
on a hill outside of town--
the only cornfield left, a patch
ripped from a generation past,
antique ornament for the new pox
of pressboard mansions on electric green lots.

Children pause to mock him
as they cut through his kingdom unchecked
in their daily pilgrimage from school to screen.
They taunt him to come down from his cross
and play a while in the twilight
and tweet his image with hashtag jokes
and leave plastic bottles and spent syringes at his shrine.

Tonight he will rise
with the harvest moon, blood moon,
to slash tires with a rusted scythe,
sweeten diesel tanks with sugar
to silence bulldozer and backhoe,

snatch up logging stakes and spike sycamores,
cut phone cables and fell cell trees,
fracture foundations and torch trailers.

But all the children will see the next day
is the same boney frame draped
in tattered flannel, moldy hat atop
a burlap sack with black hole sockets
that suck their souls
and a jagged mouth, loosely stitched with old shoelaces
undone a little more than the day before
in what might be called Earth's grimace
or her gaping grin.

Mathew Spano

DESERT FIND

A Winchester rifle, leaning,
since 1883, against an ancient desert tree--
rusted barrel, cracked gray stock, cradled
and resting in the juniper's long embrace.
Who left it, just for a moment
frozen,
lost in the Great Basin,
shadowed from the stalking sun?
A lone prospector, his last stand,
fending off coyotes circling
a dying fire?
Defective defense for a Paiute brave
who chose to go back to the bow?
An outlaw squatting low

over the stolen gold and holey bones--
he placed it there "nice-and-slow"
as he raised his hands for the posse
in the moon's turncoat glow?
The miner's means to a well earned lunch,
jackrabbit spinning slowly on a spit,
seasoned, shaded by the old juniper?
Twilight Zone time traveler
who found the modern meds to cure his son,
then stepped back over the rim,
leaving this antique behind?
The final solution rejected
by the Civil War vet headed west,
running from nightmares,
walking away instead
into the desert dawn?

Only the juniper knows
but it whispers nothing
to the rabbit-eared researchers
who never heard of Stevens' jar from Tennessee.
They mummify it behind museum glass,
so now there's just the tree.

Daniel Weeks

Mythology of Blood: A Review Of Emanuel Di Pasquale's *Knowing The Moment*

There is something elemental about the poetry of Emanuel di Pasquale, an immediacy that comes from a direct and visceral relation to whatever he is writing about—whether nature or human interaction. It is the kind of directness that di Pasquale admires in Whitman and Dickinson—evidence that he, like them, has more than an academic acquaintance with the world and its changes. He has experienced them and understands how to make us experience them, too, through words.

But unlike Whitman, who is given to verbal flourishes, or Dickinson with her cryptic obtuseness, di Pasquale's poems rely on a knowing simplicity of statement and question. This is the approach he has found in his hero, Aeschylus, who lived his last days, died, and was buried in di Pasquale's native Sicily, and also in Dante, whose *Vita Nuova* di Pasquale has so lovingly translated.

Emanuel di Pasquale spent most of his childhood in the baroque hilltop city of Ragusa, Sicily, which rises—bone white—from amid the green olive, carob, and almond trees. The roots of the town are ancient, dating back more than two thousand years, and the evidence of this long occupation—"old bridges used only by doves" and "broken-winged monuments"— is scattered everywhere. In its long history, Ragusa, originally settled by the ancient Sicels, came under the rule of the Romans, Byzantines, Arabs, and Normans and absorbed elements of these diverse cultures, even while remaining itself. But perhaps the signal event in Ragusa's history is the devastating earthquake of 1693, which leveled much of the city. It is largely a baroque city today because that is the period during which much of Ragusa was rebuilt.

Any thoughtful person who grew up in Ragusa must have been reminded daily of the mutability of physical reality and also have been a little awestruck by the power of nature and the relative fragility of human life. These ideas are strongly represented in all of Emanuel di Pasquale's poems, but are especially present in *Knowing the Moment*.

These notions of impermanence, though, are always tempered by or countered with the idea of each human being's place within nature, a sense that must come as a matter of course to one, like Emanuel, who on any warm day may be found swimming a mile or more in the Atlantic near his home in Long Branch, N.J. One so at home in the ever-changing and vast ocean, as he is, must inevitably come to understand, in a deep way, the individual's place within the flow of time, and in di Pasquale's poetry, we learn that the individual exists in a permanent condition of change as "a being of waters, earth and winds, / a voyager in a world where birds / sing from gutters and pines."

In December 1956, when he was fifteen, di Pasquale immigrated to the United States with his mother (his father had died when he was just nine months old). He has written affectionately of Sicily, including a book of children's poems—*Cartwheel to the Moon*—about growing up in Ragusa, and has absorbed its history and culture into his own life. Sicily is, he says, "a memory sounded in the blood and sand." But however much his native island has shaped him, he has said that he would not have survived had he remained there. He was born during World War II and lived through the difficult times the Sicilians faced in its aftermath. "In Sicily, I was beaten up every day, and when I came to America I didn't get beaten up anymore," he recently told an audience at one of his readings.

While tough times in Sicily provided a push, there was also the pull of America, which di Pasquale credits his mother with recognizing. "She was clairvoyant," he explains, "and saw me accomplishing things if she brought me here." He did not know a word of English when he arrived but seems to have been a quick study. Mother and son settled in Tarrytown, New York, now known as Sleepy Hollow, and he attended Sleepy Hollow High School, the very name of which is a literary allusion. There he became a poet-in-residence who wrote occasional verses for the school. It was, he says, "a miracle."

After earning a B.A. in English at Adelphi University and an M.A. at New York University, di Pasquale headed to North Carolina to teach English at Elizabeth City State University, one of the South's historically black colleges founded at the end of the nineteenth century. "I loved the college and had a lot of fun there," he recalls. But in North Carolina itself he found that "the racism was awful. A lady wouldn't rent me a house because I worked at a 'Negro' college," he remembers. After two years, he moved back north, in part because of the racism but

also because he missed the four seasons, which are not so pronounced in North Carolina.

For the past forty-six years di Pasquale has taught English at Middlesex County College in Edison, N.J., helping his students develop their own voices through poetry and the written word. He lived for a time in New Brunswick but in 1989 moved to Long Branch, where he has made his home ever since, just a stone's throw from his beloved Atlantic. Sometimes when he is swimming just beyond where the breakers "unfurl like white bed sheets," he sees himself connected by the water to the Mediterranean Sea and his childhood home in Sicily. And yet, di Pasquale, even with Sicily sounding in his blood, declares himself to be a "Long Branchean," and many of his poems have their setting in this New Jersey town.

Since coming to Long Branch, the birthplace of important writers such as Dorothy Parker, Waldo Frank, Norman Mailer, and Robert Pinsky, di Pasquale's work has garnered greater acceptance and acclaim. BOA Editions published his first book of poems, *Genesis*, the same year he settled in the city. Since then he has published sixteen additional books of his own poetry. He won the Academy of American Poets Raiziss/de Palchi Fellowship in 2002 for his translation of Silvio Ramat's *Sharing a Trip* and received the Bordighera Poetry Prize for his translation of Joe Salerno's *Song of the Tulip Tree*. From 2003 to 2009, he served as the poetry editor of the highly regarded New York literary journal *Chelsea* and is now the editor of *Middlesex: A Literary Journal*, published by Middlesex County College. In light of these achievements and his long residence in Long Branch, the city named him its poet laureate in 2014, an honor for which he received special congratulations from the former poet laureate of the United States Robert Pinsky.

Emanuel di Pasquale has never been one to shy away from the more difficult aspects of living a full and engaged human life, and *Knowing the Moment* is perhaps his most searing work in this regard, as he explores the hardships he encountered in his native Sicily. But these kinds of revelations are never the final word in his poetry. Tough times always seem to point him back to love, a word he is unafraid to use and which he says signifies a "mythology of blood in presence or in memory." It is the one value, as we learn in these poems, that one can make a constant in a world of change—love of nature, of family, even of strangers—love of the world in all its manifestations.

Contributors

Champ Atlee lives in Lawrenceville, New Jersey with his wife Annette and daughter Olivia. He is the author of *Reynolds' Keepsake And The Theater of Memory: The Poems of Champ Atlee*, and his poems have appeared in the journals *America*, *Civil War Magazine*, and *The Amherst Review* among others. He teaches at The Lawrenceville School, where he is Director of the James Merrill Poetry Seminar.

Olivia Calabrese is a student at MCC, majoring in English.

Emanuel di Pasquale is Poet-in Residence, Professor of English at Middlesex County College, and Editor-in-Chief of this journal. Born in Sicily in 1943, DiPasquale came to America as a teenager. His published translations include Dante's *La Vita Nuova / The New Life* (with Bruno Alemanni) (Xenos Press, 2012) and Silvio Ramat's *Sharing a Trip: Selected Poems* (Bordighera Press, 2001), winner of the Raiziss/de Palchi Fellowship. In 1998 he won the Bordighera Poetry Prize for his translation of Joe Salerno's *Song of the Tulip Tree*. DiPasquale has published over a dozen books of his own poetry, the latest being *Love Lines* (Bordighera Press, 2013), *The Ocean's Will* (Guernica, 2013), *Self-portrait* (The New York Quarterly Press, 2014), and *Knowing the Moment* (Blast Press, 2014). For several years, he served as poetry editor of Chelsea, a major NYC literary journal. He lives by the ocean in Long Branch, NJ, where he serves as Poet Laureate of that community. His "Bob Dylan Incident" was recently published in the Long Branch newspaper, *The Link*.

Frank Finale is the poetry editor of *the new renaissance*, and essayist for Jersey Shore Publications magazines and guidebooks. He has co-edited two poetry anthologies: *Under a Gull's Wing* and *The Poets of New Jersey*. He is author of the regional best sellers *To the Shore Once More Volumes I and II* and three children's books, *A Gull's Story Parts 1- 3.* Mr. Finale is a retired Toms River Teacher and taught there for 38 years. He was voted Teacher of the Year in 2002, and named to the state of New Jersey's 2002 Governor's Teacher Recognition Program. He has been widely published over the years and has done district-wide workshops for teachers on "The Effective Use of Poetry in the Classroom."

Gregg Glory [Gregg G. Brown] has devoted his life to poetry since happening across a haiku by Moritake, to wit:

Leaves
float back up to the branch--
Ah! butterflies.

He runs the micro-publishing house BLAST PRESS, which has published over two dozen authors in the past 25 years. He still composes poems on his departed father's clipboard, which he's had since High School. He is a two-time Asbury Park Poet Laureate awarded by the Asbury Music Awards.

Hank Kalet is a poet, freelance writer, and Economic Needs Reporter, *NJ Spotlight*. He teaches writing and reading at Middlesex County College, and is a part-time lecturer in journalism at Rutgers University. His poetry has appeared in numerous small press journals and his journalism appears in *The Progressive*, *NJ Spotlight*, *In These Times*, and elsewhere. His chapbook, *Certainties and Uncertainties*, was published by Finishing Line Press in 2010. *As an Alien in a Land of Promise* is a book-length exploration in poetic form of the failures in American capitalism and the continued predominance of homelessness in America. It is based on a year of visits to the now-closed Tent City homeless encampment in Lakewood, NJ, with photographer Sherry Rubel and filmmaker Jack Ballo. Sections of this poem have been published in *Serving House Journal* and *Blue Collar Review*. His most recent book of poetry is *Stealing Copper* (Finishing Line Press, 2015).

Sarah Keane is a student at MCC, majoring in English.

Mathew Spano is Professor of English, Freshman Composition Coordinator, and Co- Director of the Honors Program at Middlesex County College. He earned his PhD in Comparative Literature from Rutgers University in New Brunswick, NJ. His essays and short stories have appeared in the journals *Psychological Perspectives*, *The C.G. Jung Page*, and *The Hesse Page Journal*. His poetry has appeared in *The Los Angeles Times*, *This Broken Shore*, *The Turtle Island Quarterly*, *Frogpond*, *Cicada*, *The Heron's Nest*, *Acorn*, *The Piedmont Literary Review* and other magazines and newspapers, as well as in the anthologies *The Poets of New Jersey*, *Dust of Summers*, and *Baseball Haiku*.

Daniel Weeks has published six collections of poetry--*X Poems* (Blast Press, 1990), *Ancestral Songs* (Libra Publishers, Inc., 1992), *Indignities* (Mellen Poetry Press, 1999), *Small Beer* (Blast Press, 2007), *Characters* (Blast Press, 2008), and *Virginia* (Blast Press, 2009). His poetry has appeared in *The Cimarron Review*, *Pebble Lake Review*, *The California Quarterly*, *Mudfish*, *Puckerbrush Review*, *Zone 3*, *Slant*, *The Raintown Review*, *Barbaric Yawp*, *The Northwest Florida Review*, *The Roanoke Review*, *Sulphur River Literary Review*, *Mobius*, *NY Arts Weekly*, and many other publications. Two of his poems were also published in *Wild Poets of Ecstasy: An Anthology of Ecstatic Poetry* (Pelican Pond, 2011). His translations of French symbolist poetry have appeared in *Blue Unicorn*.

Daniel Zimmerman, Professor of English at Middlesex County College, served as Associate Editor of the issue of *Anonym* that published Ezra Pound's last canto, and as editor of *The Western Gate*, *Brittannia*, and *College English Notes*. His poetry has appeared in many magazines and anthologies and, in 1997, he invented an anagrammatical poetic form, Isotopes. His works include *Perspective*, a curriculum of the soul #20. (Canton, NY: Institute of Further Studies, 1974), *See All the People*, illustrated by Richard Sturm (Toronto: Open Studio, 1976--now available as an iBook), the trans-temporal *Blue Horitals* with John Clarke (Oasii: Amman, Jordan, 1997), *ISOTOPES* (London: frAme, 2001), and online: *ISOTOPES2* (Chicago: Beard of Bees, 2007). His book *Post-Avant* (2002) won the Editor's Choice Award from Pavement Saw Press in Ohio. In 2012-13, he enjoyed a yearlong McGraw Mid-Career Fellowship at Princeton University.

Rachel Zimmerman is a mixed media artist currently living in Seattle, WA and working at the 5th Avenue Theatre. Born in New Jersey, raised in Arizona, she received an AAFA in Theatre Design from Scottsdale Community College and a BA in Lighting Design from UNLV. She is influenced by the effects of nature through light while exploring themes of love, death, politics, religion, culture, time and truth. Her style is a mixture of ideas from Impressionism to Expressionism, Magic Realism to Surrealism, Absurdism to Street Art. She demonstrates how life extends beyond its own subjective limits, blurring dream and reality.

Claudia Zironi is a housewife who recently started writing poetry books. Her *Eros and Polis* is a modern spiritual Kama Sutra. Emanuel di Pasquale's translation of her book, a bilingual book, will be published by Xenos Press. She lives in Bologna, Italy.

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