



Time Is A River
Without Banks

Ekphrastic Poetry

Irene Toh, Editor

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Preface: Time Is A River Without Banks

My grandfather had a clock.
It flew—the grandfather clock—through
the air, over the river, over the lovers,
over the blue. As it now bridges
time to memory, it's as ersatz
as memory goes.

So we have another pastoral.
What heaven would have been if
it's a place with houses and steeples,
and being vociferous with love,
we will look affably upon the
poetic idiocy of a winged fish

playing a fiddle—so music carries time
(ah, aphoristic wisdom), as do souls
like gypsies wandering into the other
before first memory turns opaque,
before the stealthy boatman comes
and takes you far away.

Irene Toh
Spring 2019

No One Expects the Spanish Inquisition
By Misky Braendeholm

But why do you feel safer in public?
He doesn't answer.
He looks as fragile as chipped china,
and I want to rinse away life's
last meal from his unmended finish.
Bring him up where the surface ripples.
I want him to see tomorrow because
I'm not sure that he will.
But why do you want to sit here
on this pigeon poop bench?
He looks at me, as if ready to reveal
some great secret, and then he
scratches his flourishing beard,
and laughs like there's no tomorrow.



Photo prompt by Red Wolf Prompts, Prompt 424

(<https://redwolfprompts.wordpress.com/2019/02/09/prompt-424-ekphrastic-poetry-night/>)

Misky Braendeholm's work is regularly published in monthly issues of *Waterways Poetry in the Mainstream*, *Ten Penny Players*, *Light Journal*, and *Muse*.

We Are Two Boats Docked
By Adrian Ernesto Cepeda

On the pier, this light rope
clings us together floating
on this water, sometimes
turbulent but I know you
love them waves, at high
tide while I prefer tranquil
stillness of low tide, either
way we live for the sound
of glowing salty midnight
reflections, the water rippling
us closer, like two aging
paramours floating side
by side, when gazing
towards sunset at this isle
of view. Although my coat
has some rust, I love the days
when I can feel you quiver
with anticipation wanting
to sail off together, the ocean
opening before us like putting
ears to seashells, we can feel
our horizon amplify.



Josef Kote, Morning Serenity

Uplifting Herself
By Adrian Ernesto Cepeda

As she reaches the peaks
of her devoted vocation,
watch how she vibrantly
hangs there, like a hardcover
tome, dustjacket open, on
the bookshelf, this author
forever enshrined in print,
from a first glimpse you can
picture her arms vividly
outstretched with only her
favorite oversized white
button down dress shirt
that covers up her most
private of parts, but from
the spine of her volume, you
can see everything about her
dedication, on and off the page
never sneaking backward
she is always forward, looking
gloriously at the stars,
as she clutches the top
of the doorway. She
is already rising alone.
She doesn't need another
to lift her up with idolization
she soars alone, like
a Goddess immortalized
in a portrait, even hiding
her face, can you feel her
gliding towards immortality
this bird has wings, prolific
on flight, no longer tied
down, look up at her skies
don't dare call her your siren—
this invincible victress,
floating invincibility,
she has already flown.



Francesca Woodman, Untitled, Rome, Italy (1978)

Adrian Ernesto Cepeda is the author of a poetry collection, *Flashes & Verses... Becoming Attractions*, from Unsolicited Press and a poetry chapbook, *So Many Flowers, So Little Time*, from Red Mare Press. His latest work *Between the Spine* is a collection of erotic love poems that will be published in 2019 by Picture Show Press. His poetry has been featured in *Frontier Poetry, poeticdiversity, The Wild Word, The Fem, Pussy Magic Press, Rigorous, Palette Poetry, Rogue Agent*

Journal, Tin Lunchbox Review, Rhythm & Bones Lit, Anti-Heroin Chic, Neon Mariposa Magazine, The Yellow Chair Review and Lunch Ticket's Special Issue: Celebrating 20 Years of Antioch University Los Angeles MFA in Creative Writing.

Adrian Ernesto Cepeda is an LA Poet who has a BA from the University of Texas at San Antonio and he is also a graduate of the MFA program at Antioch University in Los Angeles where he lives with his wife and their cat Woody Gold. You can connect with Adrian on his website: <http://www.adrianernestocepeda.com/>

First Communion 1960
By Tim Dunne

The white suit, shorts, socks,
made proud, by mum,
rough to the touch.
Holy, pure,
Like you.

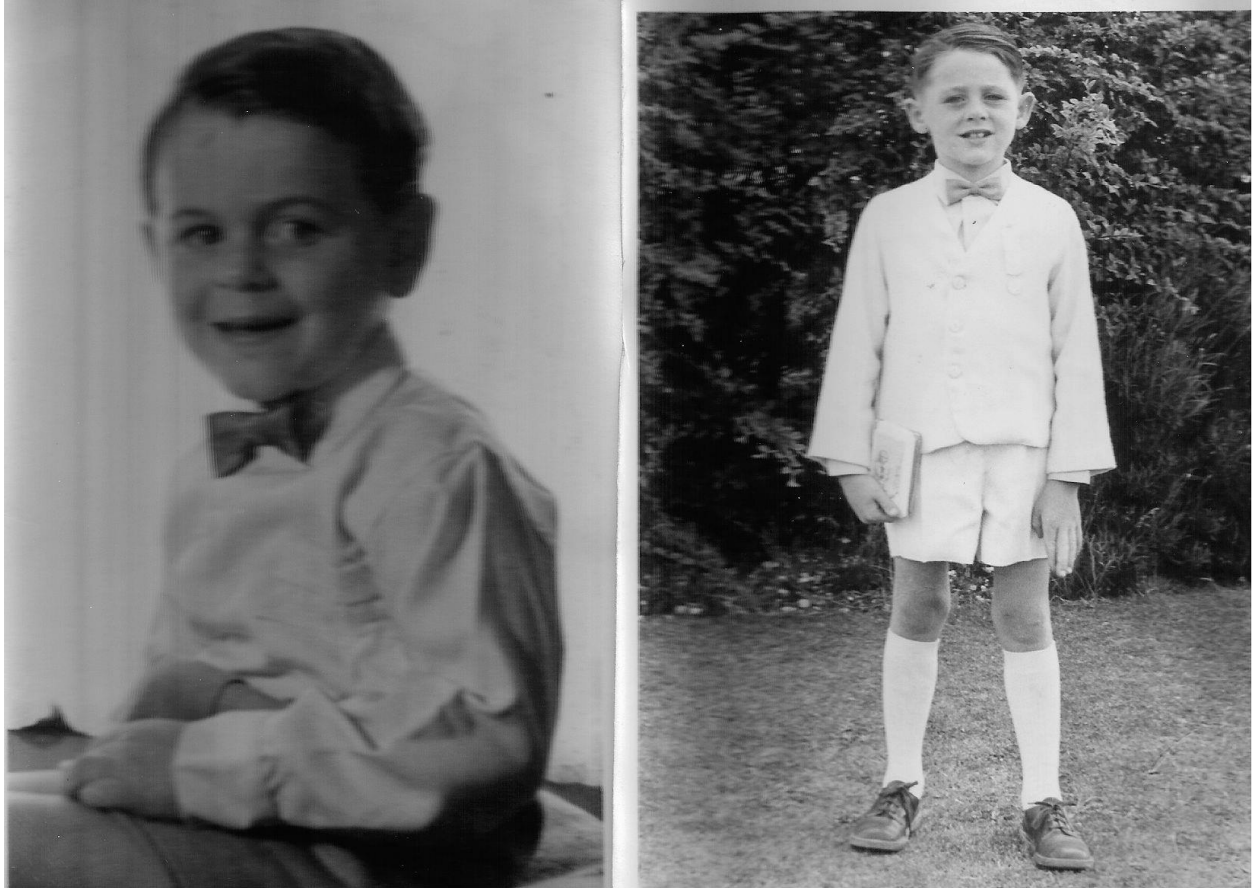
Dim in the fog of the Sacred Heart's
pungent incense,
you kneel, awed in belief,
eyes fixed on the hanging saviour,
the sight of whose suffering
a reminder of the sins
of your seven years.

First time at the altar rail.
Dominus Vobiscum
Et cum spirit tuo
The sounds of the Latin Mass
unknowable, familiar,
your responses learnt by heart.

Confession yesterday
in the dusky tabernacle
with the cloistered priest.
Your sins confessed,
you passed that test,
absolved,
Sin free, grace-full,
to kneel at the altar rail
and taste the wafer, divine.

'The body of Christ' inside,
You rise, 'Amen'.
Fierce in your faith
your halo, a hello
to the communion of the church.

Glowing with grace.
you step away from
this First Communion,
an innocent saved,
and ready to face a world of sin,
solely pure in your
white suit, shorts and socks.



Tim Dunne has now taught English and Drama for more than 40 years. At first in the North West of England, then North Wales and for the past seven years abroad, first in Saudi Arabia and now in Azerbaijan. Home though, is up in the mountains of Snowdonia in the beautiful Croesor valley, where he lives with his wife, Bev, daughter Phoebe, six cats and one dog. Though now legally a pensioner, he has no intention of retiring just yet.

Dog Days
after The Juggler by Iris Scott
By Alexa Findlay

there stands
in a fountain
of water
a golden retriever
as he shakes
the water droplets
off his back
with a yellow
tennis ball
in his mouth
ready to play
with his human
on a warm
Saturday afternoon.



Iris Scott, *The Juggler*

Rogue
after The Great Wave off Kanagawa by Hokusai
By Alexa Findlay

as grey clouds
cover the
blue sky
a rogue
wave forms
rising higher
than the
snowcapped
mountain
in the
near distance
carrying the
the wooden boats
along with it
a sight
so beautiful
yet terrifying
as the sea
prepares to
swallow those
who fall into
its mighty mouth.



Hokusai, *The Great Wave off Kanagawa*

Alexa Findlay has her B.A. Degree in Creative Writing from the University of California, Riverside. She spends most of her time writing fiction and poetry. She is the Founder and Editor-in-Chief of three online literary magazines. She is currently pursuing her M.A. Degree in English at California State University, Long Beach. Her work has been featured in *Pomona Valley Review*, *Better than Starbucks Magazine*, *Adelaide Literary Magazine*, *Halcyon Days*, *Grotesque Magazine*, *The Quail Bell Magazine*, *Vox Poetica*, *The Ekphrastic Review*, among others.

In Honor Of The Magpie
By Christopher Hileman

This pain has savor,
a dark bittersweet flavor
like fine chocolate.

I wish you were here.

I have been splurging lately
and I've also worked
my light boned fingers,
honing my picking skill set:
no pocket is safe.

I need your taming
as only you know how to
reach as deep as souls.

Well, I might fib some,
Exaggerate my sad case
just a little bit...

but I do miss you.



Claude Monet, The Magpie

Christopher Hileman moved to Oregon in 1973. He has retired to live on the volcanic bluff overlooking Willamette Falls in Oregon City, Oregon. He ascends the stairs from his basement digs to improvise on his Yamaha keyboard or the house Playel grand when the calico cat releases him from below.

Chickie-Runs
By Nancy Byrne Iannucci

On the Road star gazing,
Bill Haley's comets come.
kicking stones to stolen cars,
Jim & Buzz wonder "*Why do we do this?*"

the road could have ended
at Elvis' hips but they
kept doing *this*:
the Beatles, Rolling Stones,

The Doors, Motown, Hendrix-
Sunday bests surrendering
to Saturday Night Fevers,
God save the Queen,

No future for you,
Bowie, Run DMC,
Wu-Tang-
cars keep racing,

cuffs keep catching
door handles,
Mary Quant minis,
hoodies, Vans,

Back to the Future
Slappy grinds & rail slides,
playing S.K.A.T.E
in private parking garages,

waxing youth,
rebels without causes,
doing *this* like
reruns-

new generations
supplanting old ones

in high speed
chickie-runs.

Do we know
what we're doing?
Do we see a pattern?
Plato, what is a chickie-run?

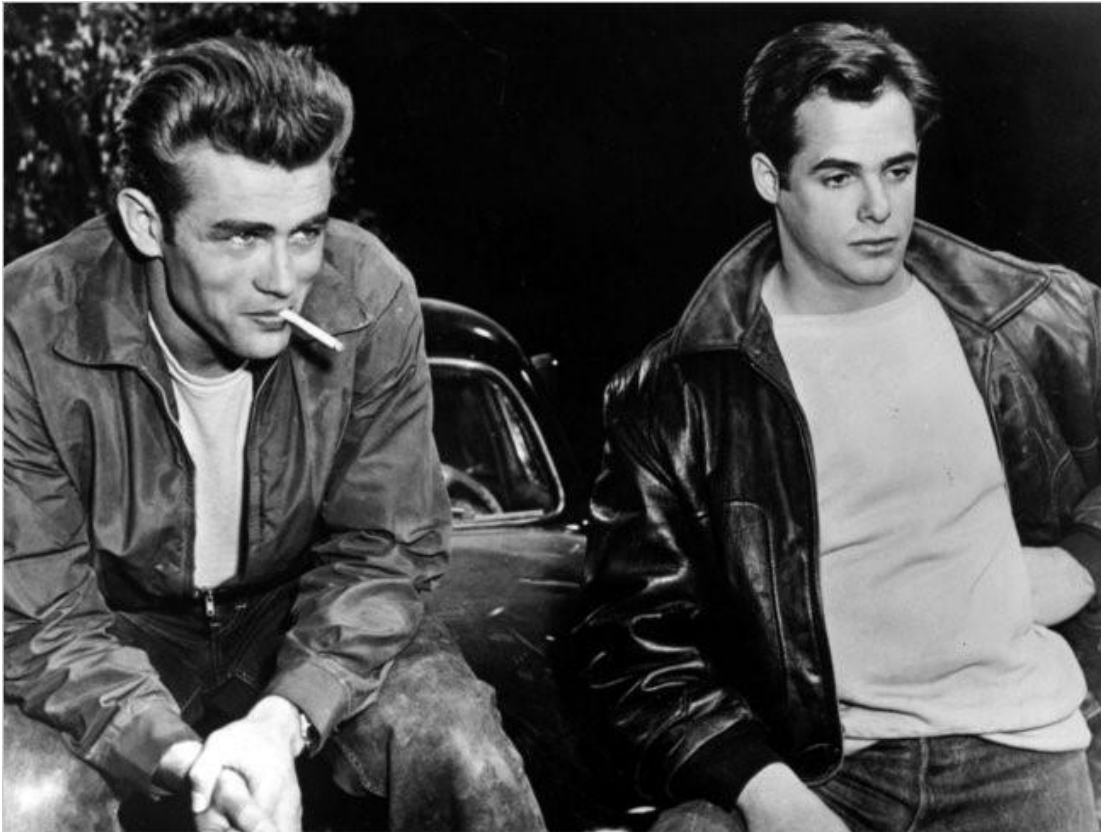


Photo credit: James Dean and Corey Allen on the set of *Rebel Without a Cause*, 1955, Getty images.

Nancy Byrne Iannucci teaches history and lives poetry in Troy, NY. Her poetry can be found in numerous publications including *Allegro Poetry Magazine*, *Gargoyle*, *Autumn Sky Poetry Daily*, *Typehouse Literary Magazine*, *Riggwelter Press*, *Three Drops from a Cauldron*, and *Picaron Poetry* to name a few. Her debut book of poetry, *Temptation of Wood*, was recently published by Nixes Mate Review.

Incantation

By Diane Jackman

Let down your hair, o watermother.
Let your waves spread over the land
filling the cracks and fissures
with the blessing of water.

Cradle your golden ball, o watermother.
Let your waves shade the sun
hiding its ceaseless fire
with the blessing of cloud.

Open your body, o watermother.
Let your waves break
in a fertile shower
with the blessing of life.



Watermother -
bronze sculpture made by Irish sculptor Fidelma Massey in 2008
www.fidelmamassey.com/
Photograph supplied by the sculptor with permission to use.

Diane Jackman's poetry has been published widely in magazines and anthologies. Starting as a children's writer, she now concentrates on poetry and researching lives in the Breckland, England's desert. In 2017 she started a poetry café in Brandon, Suffolk.

Stereoscope

By Mary Anna Kruch

Seventy years ago,
life played out in shades of gray
for my mother,
but she longed to view it in colors
of the Parks she and my father would see
once they had saved two hundred bucks
for a used roadster.

She had seen Alaska,
but had not yet laid eyes on Denali.
She'd not viewed the multicolored sunrise
over Yellowstone, the outcrops
of Aztec sandstone in Red Rock Canyon,
or Yosemite's Firefall
as the sun hits Horsetail Falls,
illuminating upper reaches
in fiery red.
She would settle for even one of these
as long as Dad was beside her.

So they moved into a small
upstairs apartment above Dad's parents,
did without a car, took the bus,
saved five bucks a month in an envelope marked "Parks."

Although the smell of fried garlic
wafted upstairs, drove her to near insanity --
and although the in-laws spoke "in tongues"
as though she did not exist --
Mom looked past all that.
Soon she'd see the Parks,
far from the old neighborhood;
maybe even move to their own home.

When the first baby arrived in '47,
the road trip was put on hold; but not her dreams.
Dad snapped photos of baby in black and white

then developed them in the hall closet,
hand-coloring them in pencil
to add dimension.

When Baby #2 arrived in spring of '49,
they moved two blocks away
to a house with room for the kids to play.
For her birthday that spring,
Dad bought Mom a View Master.
The accompanying booklet boasted
that one could see "third dimension pictures"
in full-color Kodachrome.
Mom saw Yellowstone,
Red Rock Canyon, Denali, and Yosemite
in vibrant slides of stereoscope,
as she told stories about the national parks
to my brother and sister and to me,
Baby #3.

Process Notes

My poem "Stereoscope" was inspired by a photograph I snapped of my mother's View Master and slides. After her death, the View Master was among the items she left for me. Raised during the Great Depression and married at the end of WWII, my mother knew how to be frugal as well as positive when it came to embracing life's gifts. Rather than say she was "stuck in the city," she preferred to dream of wild places, eventually making it to Yosemite and Yellowstone National Parks. My father, however, died very young so did not accompany her. My poem is a tribute to my parents—who inspired a love of nature, art, and hard work.



Mary Anna Kruch is a career educator and writer. Childhood memories, her Italian family near Rome, and the family farm in Northern Michigan inspire poetry and photography. Currently, she supervises student teachers for Northern Michigan University and leads a monthly writing workshop, Williamston Community Writers. Mary Anna has been published in *The Remembered Arts Journal*, *River Poets Journal*, *Edition 3*, *Plum Tree Tavern*, *The Safe Place*, and *Credo Espoir*. Images of nature, childhood, and family farms are prominent in her writing. Her first poetry collection, *We Draw Breath from the Same Sky*, is in press.

The Vision (after Marc Chagall)
By Sarah Law

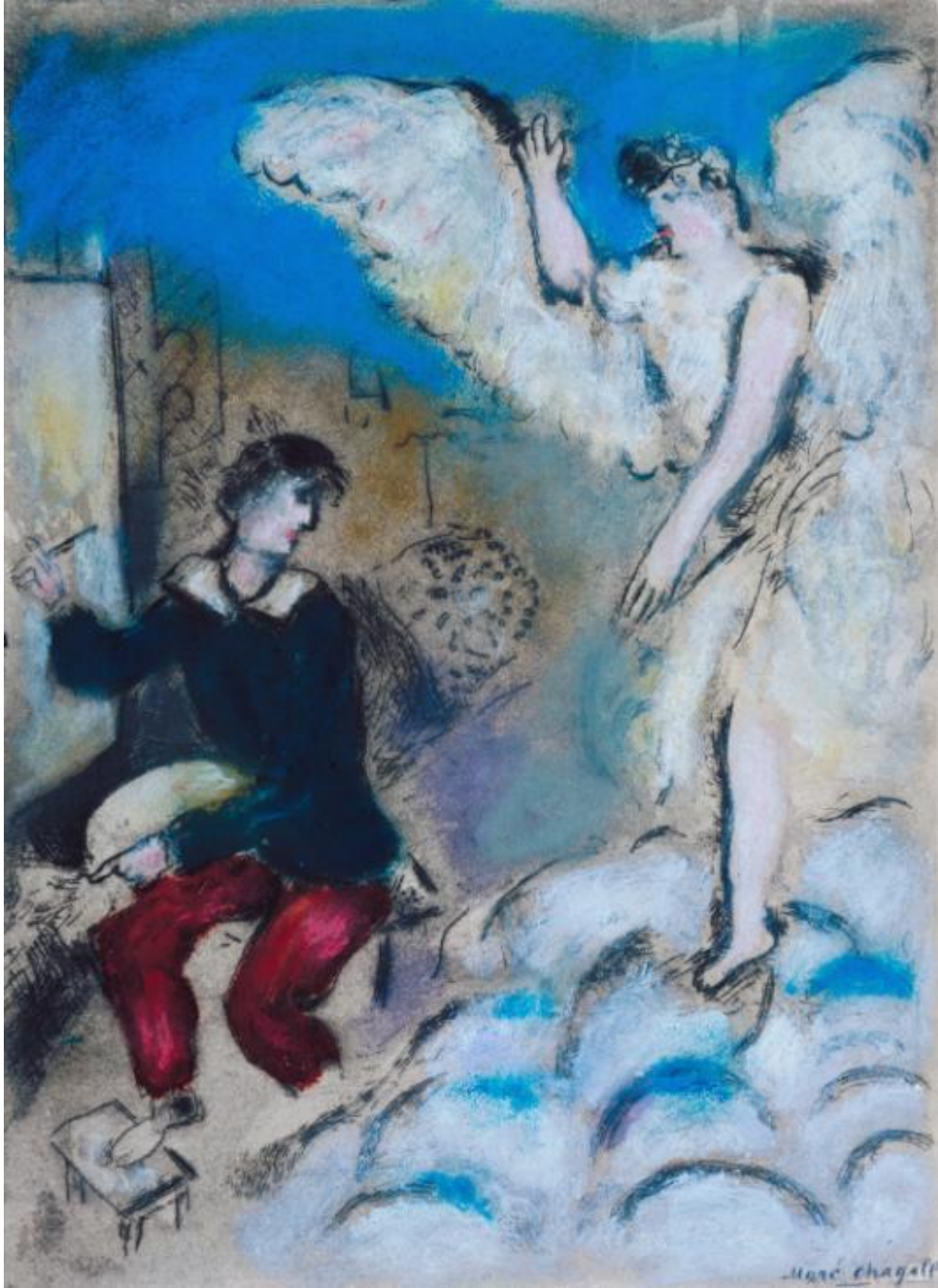
It is an annunciation of sorts -
the young man at his easel,
palette on lap and hand raised to the canvas;

for his subject is an angel,
whose wings are clouds, whose
body is milk-bright; whose music,

cool and sweet as hope, hovers
over ethereal spheres. This angel
utters his wish: it is to bloom

within the simple portrait; brush us
with whatever we call immortal -
he gestures at the cerulean blue.

The moment holds its breath; the man
assents; he and the angel are refracted
as the light wavers them through.



Marc Chagall, *The Vision*

Ten Lamenting Angels (after Giotto)
By Sarah Law

They stud the sky
with the postures of grief

one: a headlong dive
two : a bruised sprawl

three: sleep's rending
four: love's recoil

five: a wide-armed plummet
six: a sunken jaw

seven: curled in sorrow
eight : a keening glide

nine: arms outstretched
ten: a stab at prayer

wings upper body arms
dissolve in dismal cloud

at Christ so heavy and dead
grounded below them.



Giotto, *Lamentation*

Sarah Law lives in London, UK, and is a tutor for the Open University and elsewhere. With many poems placed in online journals, she has also published five poetry collections and a recent chapbook, *My Converted Father*. She edits the online journal *Amethyst Review*.

Hindsight
By Betsy Mars

Even Chagall looks over his shoulder,
hearing voices of ancestors whispering
of inadequacies and distortions:
they murmur *a crescent moon*
when the moon is full!
This one holds the Torah tightly,
solemn as God's commands.
Another plays the violin -
in his ear, the music tastes purple.

A couple compares his portrait
to memory and finds it lacking,
The red cow longs to jump
over the low-slung moon,
to catch the bouquet and eat it.

A bride waits at the altar;
the jilted girl is green
with envy and pleads
with the yellow groom.

Mortality and immortality flick paint
from mind to heart.
He listens and hears it:
the shofar, the language
of the shtetl, the wind under the wings
of an angel, hovering
above his father and mother,
embalmed in pigment,
yet floating, eternally fading
into the quiet of quenched canvas.



Response to *L'Apparition de la famille de l'artiste* by Chagall

Betsy Mars is an LA based poet and educator who spent two formative years in Brazil where she composed her first poem in Portuguese at age 5. She is a mother, animal lover, and over-enthusiastic traveler who spends much of her spare time trying to tame the loose fur rampaging around her house. Her writing has recently appeared in *Misfit Magazine*, *Sheila-Na-Gig*, and *Writing In A Woman's Voice*. Her first chapbook, entitled *Alinea*, was released in 2019 from Picture Show Press.

The Artist (after Henry Fuseli)
By Joshua Medsker

That Roman arm
broken at the wrist

That golden leg
broken at the ankle

Those remnant hands
and feet, deposited like
so much rubble, index finger
up in accusation, the artist's
body, crumpled, arm draped
atop his heroic foot

fallen

into disrepair,
the hand, and foot

in perfect proportion,
sprouts weeds, hair

never found on its model
carved from alabaster,

broken in the ancient sun.



Henry Fuseli, *The Artist's Despair Before the Grandeur of Ancient Ruins*

Wack (after Keith Haring)
By Joshua Medsker

Out on the FDR
ready to cross into Queens

out the window
just past the Spanish Harlem
Target

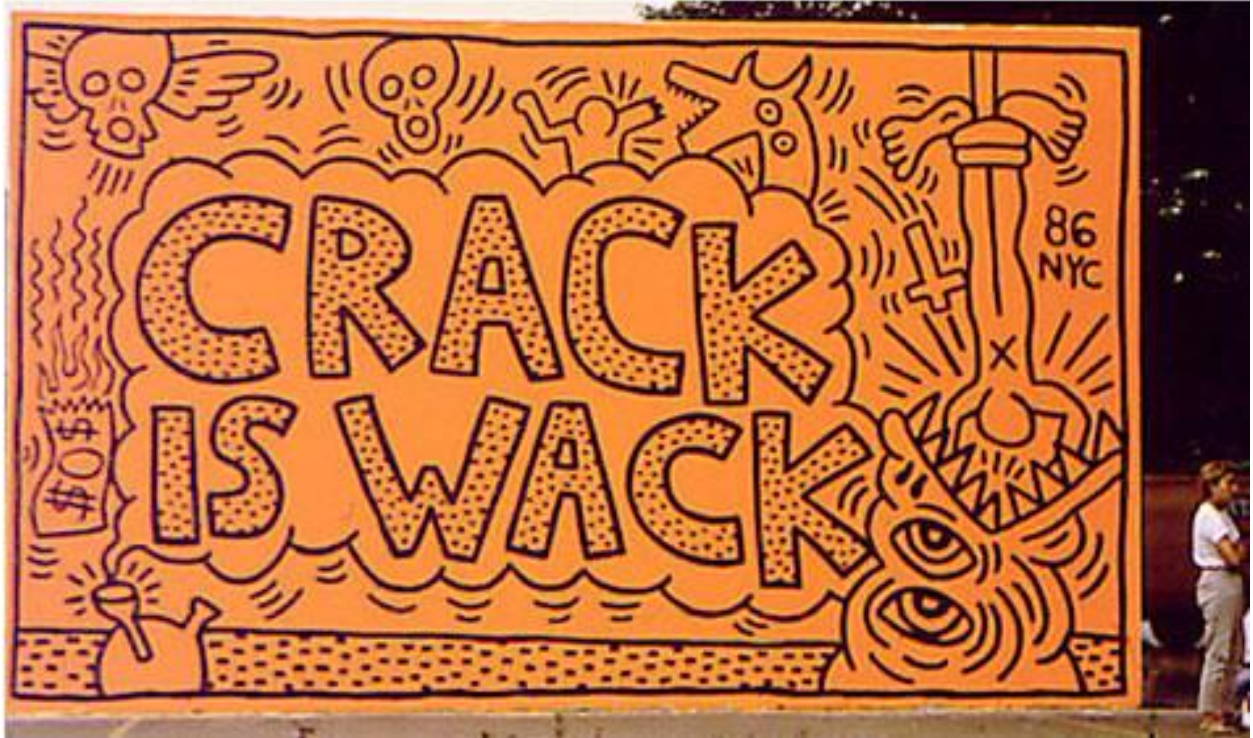
on the back wall
of a handball court

a fat-lined
unmouthed
weathered head proclaims

CRACK IS WACK

with worry
lines faded from 1986

as the handball boms
across the face of Manhattan
in the shadow
of the late, great NYC.



Keith Haring, *Crack Is Wack*

Josh Medsker's writing has appeared in many publications, including: *Red Wolf Journal*, *Contemporary American Voices*, *The Brooklyn Rail*, *The Review Review*, *Haiku Journal*, and *Red Savina Review*. For a complete list of Mr. Medsker's publications, please visit his website. (www.joshmedsker.com)

Miro's "Still Life with Old Shoe"
By Michael Minassian

An old shoe
burnt leather
and weeping laces
alone on one corner—
on the left,
the apple, Eve's fruit,
sex and juice and seeds
pierced by a fork—
behind the shoe
a loaf of bread
baked with flour
and pulverized bones
the bottle of wine
bitter as blood
half empty
half formed—
I prefer the soft edges
of the canvas,
the hidden hand
of the artist
beyond the horizon
of the table:
chaos
the catastrophe
of the everyday,
helpless against the flames
and shadows—
the marginalia of life.



My process: In 2015, I saw two exhibitions of Miró's paintings: one at his Home and Museum in Mallorca, Spain and the second in San Antonio, Texas. I was fascinated by his evolution as an artist and the diversity of his art. This painting seemed different from his other work and I was reminded of the description of Miró as the "assassin of painting."

Michael Minassian is a Contributing Editor for *Verse-Virtual*, an online magazine. His chapbooks include poetry: *The Arboriculturist* (2010) and photography: *Around the Bend* (2017). For more information: <https://michaelminassian.com>

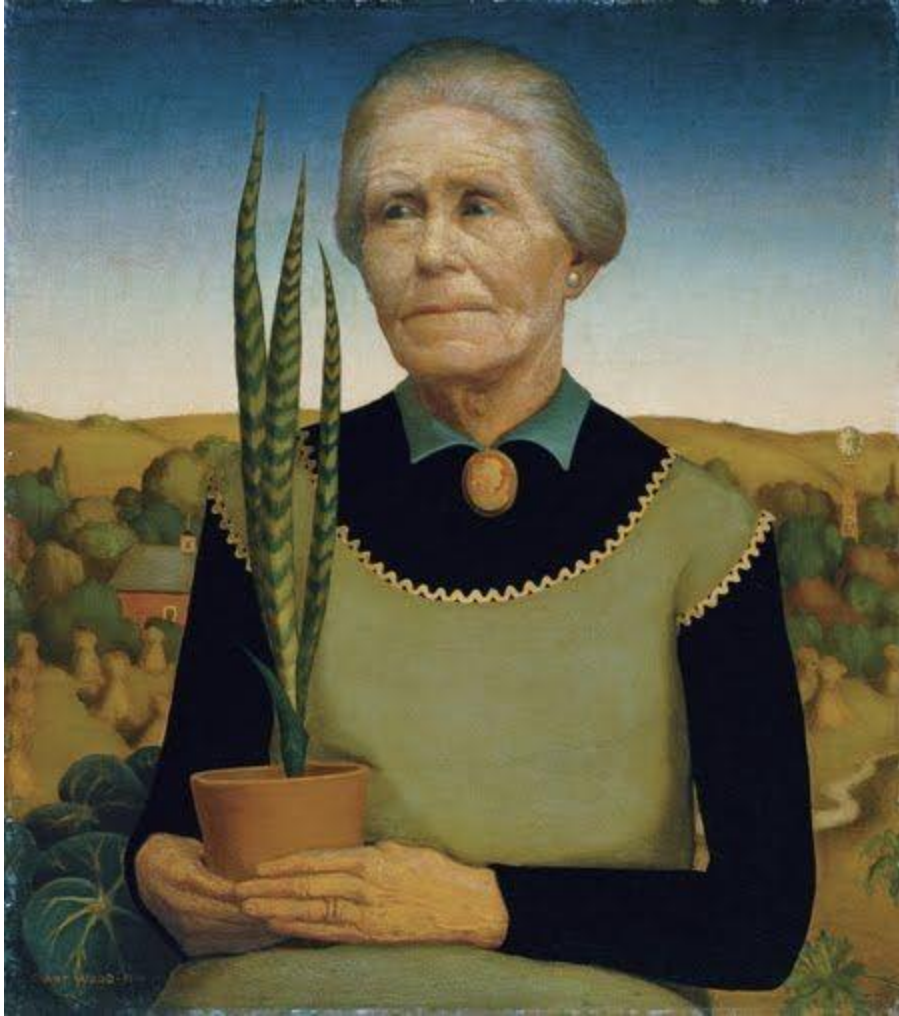
Woman With Plant
By Debi Swim

Barely 16 Ezra brought me here
course it didn't look like it does now
that took a lot of back-breaking work,
a lot of prayer and beseeching
and a toll on body, mind and spirit.

I know you're not fond of me girl
I reckon it don't much matter
we get along alright, respect each other
you're a good wife to my son
will be mistress of this farm anon

I wasn't always this hard
drought, misery, sickness, death
kinda drives the soft right out a body
and a hard man makes for a hard heart
but don't mind my sharp tongue

When you look at this picture
years down the way
with your looks etched by sun
and seared by dry winds
I hope the plant has survived.
Thrived.



Grant Wood, *Woman With Plant*

Sansevieria trifasciata is most commonly known as the snake plant, mother-in-law's tongue, and viper's bowstring hemp, among other names.

Sun Dance
By Debi Swim

An empty room
full of the past
pregnant with life to come
Perhaps, the floor misses feet and paws
the walls long for their purloined jewelry
the empty space for couch and chairs
Perhaps.
But the light that pours from naked window
delights in the empty space
dances, darts, drenches the walls
in its turn about the room
unhindered in its length
unhindered from dawn to dusk
Perhaps.



Edward Hopper, *Sun in an Empty Room* 1963

Debi Swim writes primarily to prompts. She is a wife, mother, grandmother and persistent WV poet. Blog: <https://georgeplaceblog.wordpress.com>

Perspectives
By Debi Swim

They walk along the chilly shore
heads together deep in conversation
the sounds of the gulls overhead
barely tugging the stuff of awareness

Skiffs and other colorful boats
committed to the business of commerce
take no notice of the couple
But curse the gulls as thieves and nuisances

The sky belongs to the keen gulls
single-minded, aggressively hungry
one eye on the couple for crumbs
the other for a chance to pilfer fish

And I sit far up on the hill
with a spyglass watching the classic scene
flicker like a silent movie
awed by the many perspectives below

what we see and what we ignore
one man's beauty and another's mundane
it's all the same and yet remains
someone's point of view, someone's diehard truth.

"We can ignore reality, but we cannot ignore the consequences of ignoring reality."

— *Ayn Rand*



Photo prompt by Red Wolf Prompts, Prompt 423
(<https://redwolfprompts.wordpress.com/2019/01/14/prompt-423-ekphrastic-poetry-seagulls/>)

Debi Swim writes poetry or something like it in WV.
Blog: <https://poetrybydebi.wordpress.com/>

First Snow
By Robert Walton

Cloud fingers,
Swift as serpents,
Steal stars
From night's silk pockets.
Snowflakes riding wind sprites,
Flirt with pine needles,
Whisper promises of nights entwined,
Of embraces lingering
Until spring.

Process: First snow in the mountains lifts my spirit every time. Lots of promises of better days to come.



A recent view of the High Sierras from the Yosemite Association's webcam site.

Robert Walton is a retired teacher, a lifelong rock climber and mountaineer. His writing about climbing has appeared in the Sierra Club's *Ascent*. His novel, *Dawn Drums*, won the 2014 Tony Hillerman prize.

Starry Night
By Martin Willitts Jr

When darkness-filled madness
shudders trees, spreading into each leaf,
it's a wonder if any of us would be left
standing as a barometer of stillness —

not shaken, not lost. Whatever radiance
we have had would leave us, we'd feel
abandoned, lost in an impression of voices
no one ever hears.

Surely, our bones would turn blue
from this churning. The sun
would clamp down on the remaining music
trying desperately to release such anguish.



Vincent Van Gogh, Starry Night

Abstraction, White Rose
By Martin Willitts Jr

Each petal blurs, fuzzes — almost pastel variations of jazz rifts of the same key in different orders. It's about noticing the soft focus when it's nasty cold outside, repeating rain. The way there is no answer to *what does it all mean?* Perhaps, a heal-all drained from clouds. Perhaps, her dabbing-blending is a bee sampling. Perhaps, it's not raining a baritone of quivering sounds. Perhaps, it's everything mixed together. Perhaps, none of this, nothing at all, close enough to smell no easy answers.



Georgia O'Keeffe, *Abstraction, White Rose* (1927)

Martin Willitts Jr has 24 chapbooks including the winner of the *Turtle Island Quarterly Editor's Choice Award*, *The Wire Fence Holding Back the World* (Flowstone Press, 2017), plus 11 full-length collections including *The Uncertain Lover* (Dos Madres Press, 2018) and *Home Coming Celebration* (FutureCycle Press, 2019).