Wild Goose Poetry Review

Contemporary Poetry, Reviews, and Commentary

Wild Goose Poetry Review, Fall 2011, 100 Thousand Poets for Change Issue

with 3 comments

Wild Goose Poetry Review
Fall 2011

100 Thousand Poets for Change Special Issue

On September 24, 2011, more than 700 poetry events centered on the theme of "change" were held in over 550 cities and 95 countries. This groundbreaking, internationally-coordinated poetry initiative was called "100 Thousand Poets for Change" and was the brainchild of Michael Rothenberg and Terri Carrion, both of Big Bridge Press.

The purpose behind the initiative was simply to promote meaningful social and political change. The exact definition of that change was left to the discretion of local organizers. The event in Hickory, NC, for example, which featured 21 readers and another 2 dozen audience members, included poems on tolerance, diversity, peace, and sustainability.

NC as a whole was one of the most active communities in the initiative with at least 25 events in 21 cities and well over 100 participants. With the prompting and assistance of Joseph Bathanti, Kathryn Kirkpatrick, and Richard Krawiec, many of the poems highlighted at NC events were also sent to state legislators.

To help these important poems and this vital initiative reach an even broader audience, this issue of Wild Goose Poetry Review consists entirely of poems read at some of those 25 events in NC. These poems are published without the usual bios and commentaries so that readers can focus entirely on the poems and their social and political contexts. As always, of course, comments from readers are welcome. In fact, in the interest of political dialogue, they are encouraged more for this issue than for any other. You are also encouraged to subscribe to the comments or to check back frequently to fully participate in the continuing discussion.

Wild Goose will return to its usual format with the Winter 2012 issue, due out in mid-February. Submissions for that issue are being read now and will continue until the end of January. Follow-up 100 Thousand Poets for Change events have already been scheduled for September 2012 with the official date for next year set for September 29. More information on upcoming and past events can be found at http://www.bigbridge.org/100thousandpoetsforchange/

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Written by wildgoosepoetryreview

November 10, 2011 at 2:29 am

Posted in Uncategorized

How the Dead Come Back, by Joanna Catherine Scott

with one comment

Joanna Catherine Scott
HOW THE DEAD COME BACK

In the course of justice none of us should see salvation.
—Portia, The Merchant of Venice

The trick is you can execute them, but they do not die.
Will not. They refuse. Or cannot. Oh yes, they lie there
on the gurney, still as death, as stone men, still as flesh

that has not yet begun to rot, still as evil, still as sorrow
and resentment, still as innocence sometimes, stiller

than betrayal, which is all agitation and the counting out
of thirty silver coins. Stiller yet than justice, who has
done them in, or so assumes, which is all she can do
since she's blind, or blinded, blinkered, and so cannot see,
or foresee, the consequences of her delicately balanced

golden scale, a balance, everyone allows, which can be tricky—
card up the sleeve, two-headed coin, a pair of weighted dice,
a plea that turns, by sleight of hand, into a devil's bargain.
All are tricky. As is execution. Soft warm flesh
shot full of triple death, like the vengeance of a triple God,

the one who said, *Thou shalt not kill*, the one whose son
said, *Love thy neighbor as thyself*, the one who said
Mercy blesses him that gives and him that takes—No,
that wasn't God, just an ordinary woman with an ordinary
woman's view on how the world should be: twice blessed.

So then . . . the inmate launched with the grim ferryman,
now comes the unstrapping from the gurney, the hauling out
and incineration of the corpse, or, if the family can afford it,
the handing over for burial deep down, a place to mourn above,
his final resting place, although he's had no rest for years—

those constant shrilling lights—and might appreciate the chance
to lie there quiet in the dark and Rest In Peace . . . But forget all that,
because he's still back on Death Row, where he has been for all,
or almost all, his adult life, has grown accustomed to it,
learned how to survive it, even learned to think of it as home.

Which is why execution is so tricky, this shooting up with death
of men brimful with it, the poison overflowing, leaking out,
poisoning the executioner and lawyers, the warden, whose duty
is to come along and watch. (Does he love his duty? Does he
dream of it at night? Count the kills like a canned hunt

huntsman on a drive-by shoot of captive black buck antelope?)
Poisoning the witnesses, the doctor as he's box-checking
Cause of Death as *homicide*. Poisoning the executee's family,
who have been dying now for years, the victim's too,
if after this long time they feel obliged, compelled, to come.

Poison leaking through the ventilation system to the air outside,
to fall like gentle rain from heaven upon protesters
on the hill above the prison, with their prayers and hymns
and tears and tender hearts and lighted candles
and their signs: *No more lynching! Stop state killing now!*

Poison dropping down onto supporters with their placards:
Murderers deserve to die! their T-shirts saying *Die!*
Poison spreading like a virus, a contagion,
out across the city, and the county, and the state,
the entire God-bless-us country, out into the world.

That awful gentle dropping, that terrible insinuation,
that corrosive rain, gentler than mercy but remorseless,
down on *We the People*, seeping into hearts,
turning them to stone. Gently dropping down, too,
on the brand new teenage mother walking her new baby boy

with halo of black curls, walking him into the prison
of his future, into hers. And the newly undead watching
from a Death Row window, he and those who came before him,
killers, with the innocent amongst them,
gazing in confoundment at this grand homicidal spree.

Written by wildgoosepoetryreview

November 10, 2011 at 2:07 am

Posted in Uncategorized

Women's Prison, by Joseph Bathanti

with 2 comments

Joseph Bathanti
WOMEN'S PRISON

Two Sundays a month, darkness still abroad,
we round up the kids and bundle them
into a restored salvaged Bluebird school bus,
repainted green, and make the long haul

to Raleigh where their mothers are locked
in Women's Prison. We pin the children's names,
and numbers, to their coats, count them
like convicts at lights-out. Sucking thumbs,

clutching favorite oddments to cuddle as they ride
curled in twos on patched sprung benches,
they sleepwalk bashfully, the little aged,
into the belly of the bus, eyes nailed to its floor.

We feed them milk and juice, animal crackers, apples;
stop for them to use the bathroom,
and to change the ones so young, they can't help wetting.
We try singing: folk tunes and strike ballads –

as if off to picket or march with an army of babies –
but their stony faces will not yield and, finally,
their passion to disappear puts them to sleep,
not to wake until the old Bluebird jostles

through the checkpoints into the prison.
Somehow, upon reopening their eyes, they know
to smile at the twirling jagged grandeur
surrounding the massive compound: concertina –

clotted with silver scraps of dew and dawn light,
a bullet-torn shroud of excelsior, scored
in dismal fire, levitating in the savage
Sabbath sky. By then, their mothers,

in the last moments of girlish rawboned glory,
appear in baggy, sky-blue prison shifts,
their beautiful hands lifting to shield their eyes,
like saints about to be slaughtered,

as if the light is too much, the sky suddenly egg-blue,
plaintive, threatening to pale away, the sun
still invisible, yet blinding. Barefoot, weepy,
they call their babies by name and secret endearment,

touch them everywhere like one might the awakened dead.
The children remain dignified, nearly aloof
in their perfect innocence, and self-possession,
toddling dutifully, into the arms of anyone

who reaches for them, even the guards, petting them too.
When visiting hours conclude, the children hand
their mothers cards and drawings, remnants
of a life they are too young to remember,

but conjure in glyphic crayon blazes.
Attempting to recollect the narrative
that will guide them back to their imagined homes,
the mothers peer from the pictures to the departing

children – back and forth, straining
to make the connection, back
and forth until the children, already fast asleep
as the bus spirits them off, disappear.

(previously published in Shenandoah)

Written by wildgoosepoetryreview

November 10, 2011 at 2:06 am

Posted in Uncategorized

Tower of Mothers, by Gail Peck

with one comment

Gail Peck
TOWER OF MOTHERS

after Käthe Kollwitz, bronze sculpture,
1938, and two photographs
in Newsweek, 2006

Today their hearts are stone,
these mothers who've created
a fortress with their bodies,
their children peeking from the folds
of skirts. One mother has her bare feet
planted, another has her fist in the air.
No, they shout at marching boots,
planes overhead. Nothing can get
to the children now—what kind
of game is this they ask?
It has no name.

*

In the photograph of the gravesite,
a girl in blue pants and green top
is behind a casket. She is not

looking at it, her eyes are clouds.
She leans against a woman's lap,
her head tilted away
from the soldier who cups her chin.
The girl has a hand full
of red flowers, the other held loosely
around one rose about to fall.

*

The boy, probably four, lies face
down on dirt, rock. His pants
shredded by a mortar, his feet, legs, arms
soiled from dust. White shirt someone
must have buttoned, one sleeve
not fully covering the arm bent backward.
Who will come gather him, wash
his body, comb his hair?

Written by wildgoosepoetryreview

November 10, 2011 at 2:06 am

Posted in Uncategorized

Count, by Nancy Posey

leave a comment »

Nancy Posey
COUNT

Mathematically morbid, we tally the number
lost, marking each life with a chair, a cross,
a stone—at Oklahoma City, Columbine,
the Pentagon. We sometimes sacrifice
precision for effect. Shakespeare was not
the first, after all, to overstate the odds
when the" happy few," that "band of brothers"
came up against the French and won;
nor can we know for sure the dead that day,
since, we are told, the French only counted
their noble dead. (Is that why they call them
counts?) Does it matter to the living, to the
dead? Still we seek to comprehend, in grade

school celebrating the hundredth day with
a hundred things, marbles, cookies, pencils.

How, then, can we wrap our minds around
the count:
eleven million dead,
six million Jews,
a quarter million Roma,
1.5 million children,
give or take?
Somewhere in Tennessee, children fill a rail
car with eleven million paperclips to try to
understand, while somewhere else, Darfur
perhaps, just now, one more child dies.

Written by wildgoosepoetryreview

November 10, 2011 at 2:05 am

Posted in Uncategorized

History Lesson, by Nancy Posey

leave a comment »

Nancy Posey
HISTORY LESSON

Since the coach who taught history
tended to digress, we had to sort
our notes, weeding out the stats
of last night's game, to make sense
of World War Two. The first war,
the one to end all wars, had taken
less than a week, since he was eager
to put on the uniform he'd bought
off Ebay and wore to reenactments
all summer and weekends when
the team drew a bye. We had lingered
through the Uncivil War, the one
he claimed our grandparents called
the War of Northern Aggression,
although we knew that few in these hills
had owned slaves, and few fought
willingly for those belonging to the man
in the big house, whose grown sons

stayed home. Coach read from his old
notes bearing the whiff of the purple
ink from the long retired mimeograph,
dictating dates, names, and places
drawing no links between cause and effect,
between one period and the next,
between then and now. No wonder
we learned so little of the standard
course of study; not until we left
school for lives of our own, not until
we read books that sent us searching
to sift fact from fiction, not until our
sons and daughters shipped out
to deserts far away, did we ask
ourselves why we didn't see the need
not just to learn history, but to learn
from history.

Written by wildgoosepoetryreview

November 10, 2011 at 2:05 am

Posted in Uncategorized

September 2011, by Morgan DePue

leave a comment »

Morgan DePue
SEPTEMBER 2011

By now the world knows
I only etch into it the scars of promises
I know my heart can bear to burden.

So when I kneel to you, swearing by this
broken crescendo of a soul I was given,
that I will never surrender for anything
less than everything, that means until success or death.

I seek to give:
Nourishment to the starving.
Shelter and care to the sick and the cold.
Dreams to the disillusioned.
Peace to the world.

The idealist wishes of a naive little girl,
so I'm told. Even though humanity's greatest saints
worked till death toward the selfsame goals.

My creators cultivated my existence
with garden tool quotes,
Feeding my heart, mind and soul,
Forever reminding me:

With realization of one's own potential
and self-confidence in one's ability,
one can build a better world. (Dalai Lama)

This life is hard and you must know

The good you do today may be forgotten tomorrow.
Do good anyway. (Mother Teresa)

and the poem is a powerful tool
but

Better than a thousand hollow words
is one word that brings peace. (the Buddha)

Written by wildgoosepoetryreview

November 10, 2011 at 2:05 am

Posted in Uncategorized

A Brief Reading from the Hol(e)y Bible for Selective Homophobic Christian Friends

leave a comment »

Scott Owens
A BRIEF READING FROM THE HOL(E)Y BIBLE FOR SELECTIVE HOMOPHOBIC CHRISTIAN FRIENDS

Select, *You shall not lie with a male as with a woman*.
Unselect, *Nor shall you put on a garment made of two different materials*.
Declare it irrelevant

Select, *If a man lies with a man as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination*.
Unselect, *You shall not round off the hair on your temples or mar the edges of your beard*.
Proclaim it obsolete

Unselect, *The camel, the rock badger, the hare, the pig . . . of their fleshes you shall not eat*.
Dismiss as immaterial.

Unselect, *Anything in the seas or the streams that does not have fins and scales, they are detestable to you and detestable they shall remain*.
Deem apocryphal.

Select, *Love each other as I have loved you;*
If I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing;
God is love, and those who abide in love, abide in God.
Select, but simply ignore.

Written by wildgoosepoetryreview

November 10, 2011 at 2:04 am

Posted in Uncategorized

Conjugal Rites, by Scott Owens

with 2 comments

Scott Owens
CONJUGAL RITES

I was the first she wanted to marry.
No surprise there. Every dad
a daughter's first love. But then
she felt bad about excluding her mom,
decided the three of us should tie the knot.
We had to tell her you only marry one
other person, at least you plan it that way
and mommy and I were already married
to each other. She moved on to first
one brother, then the other, both of whom said
you can't marry your brother. So then
she tried her best friend, a girl, asked
to be clear if girls could marry each other.
Already thrice denied what could we say
to make sense to a four-year-old.
Yes, of course, but only in some places,
only where love is not proscribed by law.

(first published in *Main Street Rag*)

Written by wildgoosepoetryreview

November 10, 2011 at 2:03 am

Posted in Uncategorized

Manifest, by Scott Owens

leave a comment »

Scott Owens
MANIFEST

I believe in the world.
I believe there are things in the world
we can neither see nor understand.
I believe in trying to quantify those things.
And I believe that intolerant insistence
on any particular quantification is foolish.
Christianity, Judaism, Atheism,
any doctrine received whole–
to the open eye, the open mind,
none of these will do.

Heretic! Blasphemer! Unbeliever! they say.
You'll burn! they say.
But I know I burn already.

Tie me to a post.
Unstop my ears.
I would hear it all,
have it all,
renounce fear and self-denial.
Every day I meet my maker.

More weight, he said,
wanting all of his sins
heaped upon his head,
as much of the world
as he could take.

Written by wildgoosepoetryreview

November 10, 2011 at 2:00 am

Posted in Uncategorized

I Turn the Other Cheek, by Corrigan Klein

leave a comment »

Corrigan Klein
I TURN THE OTHER CHEEK

I'm leaving my body to religion. We've had our differences,
but I forgive you.

I leave my kidneys to George Rekers. May they filter
fear and intolerance and the inner conflict from your veins.
May they leave you free of disdain for the rent boy
who escorted you to Europe and massaged you every day.

I leave my liver to Newt Gingrich. You cut your gay
half-sister from your life. I give you a second chance
with a gay liver.

I leave my eyes to University of Utah Medical Center. May they
go to a Mormon man whose money denied gays the right
to marry in California. May your new eyes focus like lasers
on the hottest guy as you enter a room. May you enjoy
whatever lifestyle you choose to live with your new vision.

Let my heart go to a soul of United Church of Christ
or Society of Friends. May you exercise your new organ
as robustly as you did the original.

Written by wildgoosepoetryreview

November 10, 2011 at 1:59 am

Posted in Uncategorized

Smear the Queer, by Bethea Buchanan

with one comment

Bethea Buchanan
SMEAR THE QUEER

So you're gay and they say you shouldn't be that way,
that a man shouldn't love another man, but it's a okay
if a lady loves another lady- because let's face it,
lesbians are hot and guys wanna see that girl on girl
action. And we live in a world that's run by men
and their opinions- the minions of religious agenda
whose all loving God hates the homosexuals.
Keep your god out of my laws.
Your god has the gall to discriminate
and propogate hate for someone who was born that way.
Who chooses to live a life of torment? Unless you think
a confused twelve year old is masochistic and wants
to be called faggot. Wants to be beat up,
fucked up, ostracized and forced to realize
all too early that life is more than homework
and test scores. Held responsible for the feelings they
are taught are wrong and before long they're going
to agree and the hate mongering is going to sink in
and they will end up self loathing, instead of embracing
individuality, standing strong in the face of adversity-
they will be found cowering. Hiding from the truth
and digging themselves so deep into the closet they'll
start finding Christmas presents meant for next year.
When society hears about the pretty neck ties
the hate is sensationalized, bullies decriminalized
simply chastised for insensitivity, secretly
recognized as heroes for destroying the lives
of those who denied themselves and donned the disguise
of normality, ignoring their sexuality, and hoping
to avoid the fatality of sodomy.

Written by wildgoosepoetryreview

November 10, 2011 at 1:58 am

Posted in Uncategorized

Toyota Child, by Tony Ricciardelli

with one comment

Tony Ricciardelli
TOYOTA CHILD

I am idling in traffic, roasting on melted asphalt,
going nowhere like a corpse in a parade.

I am directly behind them,
two characters in a car that should be scrap metal,
And then I see

the bumper sticker that reads
“White is Might.”
The words are flanked on either side
by a swastika and a lightning bolt.
There’s more.

Four decals are positioned
in each corner of the rear window:
Dachau, Buchenwald, Bergen-Belson, Ravensbruck.
In the middle of the same window

is a large swastika.
Below it are the words
“Six Million and Counting.”

The two shaved men in the front seat
are drinking Budweiser.
They are wearing camo t-shirts, and I suspect
the rest of the required uniform
consisting of black, steel-toe boots and fatigues.

They cuss like longshoremen at the trough,
shake their fists, pound on the dashboard,
scream along with the death-chant hate-heavy-metal
that shatters the air, ignites the ears.

Like a dog smells cancer,
I can smell the rot in their putrefied souls.

The stench reaches far into the neighborhoods,
sickens and repels like vomit on the stairs.

The sum of their hate is too much
for any culture or country,
though never enough for the righteously ignorant.
They cough and choke and spat hate
in every direction,
like rampant tuberculosis,
from a Medieval Toyota Hatchback that twitches and jerks,
and mimics and mocks those
who died in the ovens and chambers.

Beyond the swastika in the rear window,
I notice movement.

It's a little girl,

maybe three or four years old.
She is blonde, slender, fair-skinned:
Der Fuehrer's forgotten progeny.

She is sitting
next to a styrofoam cooler, eating popcorn,
seemingly detached from the
propaganda rage and filth screaming from
Radio Auschwitz.

She sways slowly, rhythmically, from side to side,
trancelike,
as if she's found a way to separate herself
from the self-ordained Gestapo, in the front seat.

And for a moment,

her tranquility renders me hopeful.
And I pray that, perhaps,
in her mind, she's escaped to a faraway place,
to the familiar Mother Goose,
or she's skipping down Sesame Street,
or maybe she's climbing the rainbow
she drew in pre-school.

And reading her expressionless face,
I imagine
the worst scenario
of that child's miserable life,

and I must convince her
that there is good in the world.
I need for her to know
that somebody cares.

So, I gaze upon that child with fatherly concern,
and she looks back at me, hollow, distant.

My heart sinks because I suspect
that she doesn't understand love or compassion.

And I offer a smile and a wave to that
unfortunate child,
and she locks her sad, dead eyes on mine,
and gives me the finger.

Written by wildgoosepoetryreview

November 10, 2011 at 1:57 am

Posted in Uncategorized

Driving Black, by Ann Fox Chandonnet

leave a comment »

Ann Fox Chandonnet
DRIVING BLACK
How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.
–Anne Frank

Use a light foot.
Keep your eyes open.
Mind the signs.
Don't drive a white pickup.
Shun the shades.
You'll be stopped anyway.

When stopped:
No smirks.
No one-liners.
Hustle uppity words underground.

Conceal that muscular butt in ruffles.
Tame the curls.
Leave gaudy jewelry on the dresser.
Ditch the do-rag.
Shave the soul patch.
You'll be stopped anyway.

Heard a rumor it's the 21st century,
that you have rights?
You'll be pulled over anyway.

When stopped:
Hide your education.
Mute gestures

as well as tone.
Meat steams on the table,
but no place is set for you.
Never an open door, never a glass of wine.
Take it for granted:
Quicker than boiled asparagus,
you'll be stopped.

Fling the bling.
Bag the rag.
Scratch the patch.
Shed the dreads.
Pass on sass.
Odds are, you'll be pulled over,
and over.

(Previously appeared in *Whispered Secrets*)

Written by wildgoosepoetryreview

November 10, 2011 at 1:56 am

Posted in Uncategorized

Prelude: Rosa Parks at Her Booking, by Val Nieman

leave a comment »

Val Nieman
PRELUDE: ROSA PARKS AT HER BOOKING

Now, isn't this a moment –
The policeman takes my hand as gentle
and respectful as you please (though I suspect he doesn't).
You might just say it's the uniform or the office,
or familiarity with the task, how many
fingers he's set to ink and then to paper.

Every finger has a print only to itself, they say,
but I wonder if there is some difference
black to white, like nap of hair or curve of lip.
If you jumbled the cards, could anyone say
this soul belongs in the front of the bus
and that, by this arabesque, in the back?

He takes my pointer and presses it down,
rolls it side to side,
white on black, black on white.
A piano teacher might take my fingers,
place them so, so, and so
before the first note is struck.

(Previously published in *Crab Creek Review*)

Written by wildgoosepoetryreview

November 10, 2011 at 1:54 am

Posted in Uncategorized

Seriously Dangerous, by Helen Losse

leave a comment »

Helen Losse
SERIOUSLY DANGEROUS

The evening begins with kudzu—
summer memories submerged
in a deep southern swamp—
where spirited black boys, old dryers
bob beside alligators. Late in hot night,
flashes of yesterday surface in pain
like the prick of a thorn, the mock
of a crown that continues its burn.

Low whispers, deep shadows remain
where trials by fire have left actual trails
after a tromp in slime & muck,
with tell-tale footprints from society's
work boots. Seriously dangerous,
the cross without a savior—
deniable today, but for masks, hoods—
cannot burn away filth & dross,

nor wash us clean, 'til truth bleeds.

(First published in *Poetry Friends*.)

Written by wildgoosepoetryreview

November 10, 2011 at 1:54 am

Posted in Uncategorized

Little Mouse (Stuff), by Bill Griffin

with one comment

Bill Griffin
LITTLE MOUSE (STUFF)

I own a book I've never read. OK
OK, a couple dozen. More. (And not all
of them poetry, either.) Will I ever really
excavate the pile beside my bed? and meanwhile
half dot com keeps calling to me.

On the shelf a CD gathers dust
unopened (*Die Fledermaus*): I meant
to sneak it into your stocking, but you
have yet to listen to the birthday's,
mother's day's, etc. Our rooms are full

of cetera, those other things – did I think
I could redeem my self by filling shelves?
What is the other that this stuff replaces?
Could I survive a week without buying
anything but bread and milk?

I'm afraid to ask it: What would Jesus
buy? In his hands he cups
a little mouse, squats beside a soup can over
a fire of twigs to brew wild beebalm tea,
another way of turning water into wine.

Written by wildgoosepoetryreview

November 10, 2011 at 1:53 am

Posted in Uncategorized

Sunnies, by Debra Kaufman

with one comment

Debra Kaufman
SUNNIES

The sun had not risen
when I slipped into the kitchen

and saw my father at the sink,
where he never stood.

He did not order me back to bed,
but turned and gently

showed me the gold
he'd reeled in himself.

Their scales glittered like fairy wings.
He called them sunnies,

his voice a low rumble
like the night train that slowed

as it passed through town.
He too was always leaving.

He smelled of the lake and coffee,
happy and sad together.

The dome light shone on the cold linoleum
and a sifting sort of lavender

air made me shiver. A wren
chittered in the weeping cherry.

I stepped my bare feet onto his huge brown shoe
and balanced there.

Written by wildgoosepoetryreview

November 10, 2011 at 1:51 am

Posted in Uncategorized

Bleak Outlook, by Dennis Lovelace

leave a comment »

Dennis Lovelace
BLEAK OUTLOOK

Sitting safely on my enclosed back porch
Hermetically sealed with ultraviolet
Filtered protective glass, watching
Blood red sun sinking, distorted
By haze and shimmering heat waves

Staring out over the desolate landscape
Arid land, brittle, hard and cracked
From lack of moisture, vegetation,
Stunted, twisted, dried and leafless
Burnt brown and dying

Global warming, no such thing, they said
Ozone level depletion, acid rain, pollution
No problem, we'll take care of it
Hell of a way to learn the difference
Between conservative and conservationist

Written by wildgoosepoetryreview

November 10, 2011 at 1:50 am

Posted in Uncategorized

Men on a Summer Porch, by Douglas McHargue

with 2 comments

Douglas McHargue
MEN ON A SUMMER PORCH

The apartments sit where an old house was,
Victorian porch wrapped all around,
white railings cradling
but not saving it.

These porches are tiny and cement,
men with bronze hands sitting there,
grasping grocery bags of lunches
Spanish words telling how
bossman's lettin' twenty go
and *maybe we gotta go back*,
two of them on a narrow bench

sweaty work clothes touching
uncomfortably close
backs stiff against wood
like prim arthritic ladies
out on a warm afternoon
taking tea together
in bone china cups,
sitting on the edges of truth.

Written by wildgoosepoetryreview

November 10, 2011 at 1:49 am

Posted in Uncategorized

The School for the Blind, by Richard Krawiec

with one comment

Richard Krawiec
THE SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND

Like a music-drugged rock star
Tyler's head swivels
a figure eight
above the Braille machine
while he bangs out a story
of abandonment and acceptance

Monique's pink and downy
scalp glows over the paper
her lips pucker an inch above
she reads like a lover
bestowing a kiss
to the tale of herself
as an alien freeing an alien dog

Zach's fingers puzzle
each letter of Braille
he types, struggling
to get the spelling right
so he can share his premature
birth, detached retinas

The Braille Writer spits
out sheets which say

DaVonte's character bursts
into ashes, overloaded
with homework, his parents
die of stroke, blinded
by the letters of their assignments

Her frizzed afro,held in a T
by a wound elastic, quivers
as Diamond writes of that incredible gift
a visit to Food Lion, the ritual
to pack her clothing for the trip

When I ask Brandon
if his character, Princess Poach,
might open her parasol
and float into his life
he laughs at me, "That's too much
imagination." I am the one
who seems to be lacking.

How dare I whine to myself
about friends distanced
by divorce and ennui,
about lovers and sons
and their gnat-irritations?
How dare I inflate
into torment the small
discomforts of my day?

When
Cassidy smiles
despite her noseless face
Kimberly giggles,
the gray discs of her eyes
darting side to side,
Tavish, head lined
with an incision scar
from ear to ear across his dome
stutters with joy because
he learned how
to dribble a basketball?

Written by wildgoosepoetryreview

November 10, 2011 at 1:48 am

Posted in Uncategorized

Refuge, by Diana Engel

with 3 comments

Diana Engel
REFUGE

In this fearful place,
we clutch our lives
and draw inward,
seeking the consolation of home fires,
selfishly guarding our blessings,
spoon-feeding them hot soup
and crusts of bread.

But in the pits of our stomachs
and the chambers of our souls
we are famished,
lost like Hansel and his sister,
searching the skies
and the thick, dark forest
for the hidden path.

Nightmares of closed doors
and empty purses haunt us,
hobgoblins that steal our peace,
break down resolve to reach out
across backyard fences,
place our gifts in neighbors' hands,
those who wake fatigued
with nothing
but their own hearts to eat.

Let us be the voices in this wilderness,
cry "Make the way straight,"
dare to feed and clothe strangers,
embrace those surviving in hostile winter outposts
of this hard and hoarding society,
demand jobs for our teachers
and homes for our families
struggling from dawn to dusk
to reclaim their lives,
their grit and pluck
shouting their promise.

Written by wildgoosepoetryreview

November 10, 2011 at 1:46 am

Posted in Uncategorized

The Beast and the Innocent, by Diana Pinckney

leave a comment »

Diana Pinckney
THE BEAST AND THE INNOCENT

Of course, dogs and cats go to heaven,
my mother announced from her deathbed.
Welcomed into heaven, my childhood cat
will groom Grandmother's canary, feathers the same
yellow as the black cat's eyes, the bird

he ate when I was seven. In paradise
pointers lap at duck ponds while cockatiels
screech and perch on each dog's white and black
spotted back. Heaven's way is,

as we have heard, *the lion lying down*
with the lamb. A place where Christians kindle
the eight candles of Hanukkah, Muslims unfurl
prayer rugs for Hindi and the roped Tibetan prayer

flags flutter good fortune for the Chinese.
The wine and wafer bless a round wooden table, a feast
celebrated with unleavened and leavened,
mango and oyster, babel unlimited. And the spaniel
that killed my brother's rabbits will lie

on the wide-bladed grass of my youth, all manner
of four and two-legged creatures leaping
over him, some stroking the red and white silk
of his fur for pure pleasure, for the grace.

(Previously Published in *Imagining Heaven* Anthology)

Written by wildgoosepoetryreview

November 10, 2011 at 1:44 am

Posted in Uncategorized

(See) Saw, by Shane Manier

leave a comment »

Shane Manier
(SEE) SAW

People on the verge of suicide,
for lack of a love life.
Meanwhile,
Women of the Congo are raped with knives.
The survivors are treated as lepers to the men
of their village. Their homes are lies.

People complain there is nothing to eat,
tired of fast food and everything.

Meanwhile,
In Africa children starve in the street.
Swallowing flies every night in their sleep.
Laying down with hunger pangs as their only feeling,
their bellies don't rumble more than their whole being.

People talk gossip, wish harm on once friends.

Meanwhile,
Iraqi extremist kill 10.
Someone's father, someone's brother, someone's son.
Bodies run like fishing lures, and on the other line of fire,
a mother dies in a war not hers.

This world turns to feet that overtook ours with greed.
This world only exists because there are people who believe.
In good. In hope.
There is blood in our tap water, there is blood underneath our feet.
Metal coating trees, victims of siege.
A monk poised at last resort – The Pope spoke a warning.
Masks reveal snouts – watch as it flows out.
Floods, glacier melt, drought.
More than Global Warming, it's a metaphor forming.

They said the sign of a rainbow means,
that God would not flood the earth again…
But if we are causing it….what then?

Written by wildgoosepoetryreview

November 10, 2011 at 1:43 am

Posted in Uncategorized

Twenty Questions, by Devona Wyant

leave a comment »

Devona Wyant
TWENTY QUESTIONS

When did oil drilling become energy recovery?
When did putting people before profits become distorting the market?
When did the poor become economically disadvantaged?
When did very low food security replace hunger?
When did death become negative patient care outcome?
When did hiding the truth become lack of transparency?
When did denying your own words become “I may have misspoke”?
When did truthiness become close enough?
When did taxpayers replace citizens?
When did mercenaries become security contractors?
When did overthrowing a country become regime change?
When did a prisoner of war become a detainee?
When did torture become pain compliance?
When did killing your own soldiers become friendly fire?
When did killing civilians become collateral damage?
When did massive bombing become shock and awe?
When did genocide become ethnic cleansing?
When did lies become spin?
When did peace become pre-hostility?
When did all of the above become acceptable?