

CIRCLESHOW

THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF SEVEN CIRCLEPRESS

WINNER OF THE
2012 POETRY PRIZE
INTERVIEW WITH
DAVID CHORLTON
7 NEW POETS
AND MORE

VOLUME 7
WINTER 2011

Editor-In-Chief
Seth Jani

editor-in-chief@sevencirclepress.com

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From the Editor

Plans for 2012 by Seth Jani

2012 may be a bit of a minimalist/quiet year for the press but it will not be lacking. We are kicking it off right with another jam-packed issue of CircleShow that includes the winning poem of our 2012 Poetry Contest “Lucky Frog” by Catherine McGuire. This contest is not only the first single-poem contest we have ever hosted (and plan to do every year as opposed to our more unpredictably scheduled chapbook contest) but it is also the first time we have ever offered a monetary prize to an author. The winning poem will also be included on a special broadside/postcard production to be distributed through an endless array of creative means, so keep an eye out (especially if you’re in the Seattle Area).

In other news your editor-in-chief Seth Jani (who is currently writing all this in the third person) will be backpacking abroad this coming spring/summer for an undecided number of months. During this time we aim to keep submissions to CircleShow open (thanks to the god-like ubiquity of the internet) but this will certainly cause a dearth in more tangible publications (such as actual books).

The beauty of this is that during these months the press will have the opportunity to forge a more international audience. Not to mention its founder (who is a die-hard Romantic) will finally have the chance to sit in awe before such literary landmarks as Keats’ grave and Hesse’s childhood home.

We will keep folks updated throughout the year about press plans, but until then enjoy this wonderful issue.

And as always we would like to thank the many poets who sent their work our way. We could not do it without your continued interest.

-Seth Jani
Editor-In-Chief

February 28, 2012

Poet's Perspective

Searching and Being Led:
Both in Writing and in Life, and How Everything is Connected
by Martin Willitts, Jr.

About the Author



Martin Willitts, Jr. has been an oral storyteller, puppeteer, and “Science Magician” that can bounce eggs and throws ordinary playing cards into hypnotized watermelons. He has been a Children’s Librarian, Reference Librarian, Law Librarian, Library Director, and he retired as a Senior Librarian in upstate New York. He is currently an AmeriCorps Member. He is a visual artist of Victorian and Chinese paper cutouts. He has been nominated for 5 *Pushcart* awards and 2 *Best Of The Net* awards.

He had nine chapbooks accepted for publication in 2011.

What I like best about contemporary poetry is the variety of types of poetry and poets. There seems to be room for everyone. I tend to read everything in poetry whether it is online or in a magazine, attending as many readings as I can, purchasing poetry chapbooks and books, from rap and slam to experimental to formal to haiku to everything in between. I had an article one time that I listed some of the many new poets that I have read, and that was a short list off the top of my head: <http://www.freewebs.com/rarepetal/interviewwmartinwillitts.htm>.

I open myself to beginning writers as well as to published writers, listening and sharing with anyone who will talk and share. I do not belong to a college, writer’s center or workshop, or teach poetry. I stand alone and connected as much as possible. I write 20-40 poems all at once which are theme related, and I write like a Jazz musician in terms of riffing on a theme.

To me, it is all part of “Quaker Practice” of being open, listening to the “Spirit”, meditating, going on a Spiritual Journey, being “in the Light” (in the presence of God), “holding in the Light” (praying), “walking joyfully in the Light” (think of it as being in ecstasy). I am a Mystic and a Healer, “centered in the Spirit”. According to many people, this is all mumble-jumble; but it explains where I am in my life and my writing. As a Seeker, I am constantly trying to find “that which is God in all of us.” Think of it as realizing we are all connected, from the smallest atom to the infinity of the cosmos, and without one thing (if it dies or is destroyed) we risk the fabric to be broken. We are in a symbiotic relationship with other things. A good example of this was the Silk Worms.

There were a lot of silk worms in a certain area. People built factories to take advantage of the silk worm industry and it created jobs. Jobs created more people and security for those people, who built houses and other businesses. Then someone saw how the silk worms were living in certain trees, so they destroyed the silk worm nests. The problem was the trees were dependent on the silk worms and so were the factories. When they destroyed the silk worms, the trees become sick and depopulated, factories closed, people became unemployed and moved, and the community became poor. The only thing good that came out of that tragedy was that I wrote and published a poem about it. I would rather have the trees and silk worms.

I try to be centered. This means that I meditate and try to keep negative things and feelings out of my life. It opens me up to other experiences. I love to go out into nature and experience things, but I can accomplish the same results through Guided Imagery. This leads to many poems and how things are related. This is probably why so many of my poems are about nature and the relationship of everything to everything.

When I am centered in Silent Meditation, I am open to what will happen next. In our Quaker group, we speak during Silent Worship if we get a message from the Spirit and we feel that it is from the Spirit and not from the Ego. We believe we are meant to share that message and it is meant for someone. There are many meetings where nothing is spoken, and there are some meetings where a lot is shared. I think this is why so many of my poems are Persona Poems.

When I began on my Spiritual Journey, there was much in the Bible that I could not reconcile. I doubted much of what I studied. But in my quest, I found a more personal relationship that led to my being more centered and my healing abilities increased. I am careful when I say that I am a healer because I am limited of what I heal, how I heal, and I cannot cure anyone of anything. But this searching meant I was willing to be led. I had to be open to “what-is-next”, just like a Jazz musician improvises on a theme. This path has led to my writing some really long poems, as well as some very meditative religious “Psalms”.

Now that I am an ecstatic, everything is so exciting, so vibrant. I do not fear death. I do not fear anything. It has increased my ability as a Peacemaker (Quakers teach “Peacemaking”) and it brings peacefulness to others. This feeling increases my ecstatic relationship with my creator and people notice. The other thing they notice that at 63 years old, I have the energy level of a 20 year old. I go to a slam or hip-hop event and I do not feel out of place. I have been involved with the local Occupy Movement in terms of donations and telling them how to handle crowds, so our local group has not been evicted. I retired from a supervisor position and within a day I became an AmeriCorps Member at one-sixth my salary and I feel so vibrant again. I have to do

teambuilding and community building all over, from scratch, from the bottom. I could not do that if I was not centered.

All of this is connected. It all is from being centered and from empowering my openness. It has increased (if that is possible) my writing. It brings me closer to other writers and hopefully guides and supports them.

I feel so blessed and honored every time I have a poem accepted, or a collection of poetry published, or have someone (such as Seth) request an interview. I am into the awe of someone thinking my poems and opinions are worth anything. I believe that I am the smallest insignificant voice in the universe, temporary as a snowflake, humble in the Spirit. Whether I give a poetry reading to one or more people, I hope one person likes what I wrote and it affects them. I hope that a person reads one of my poems, goes back to it, and sees something different. I want two people to see two different things from the same poem, just like two people disagree about a painting. If I do any of those things, I feel I have done something as a writer. I feel if any writer gets the attention of any reader, then they have something special. Even if the other person does not understand the poem, or hates the poem, or says it reached them, then the poet has done something important.

We wonder if we have an audience, or if anyone reads us. I say, it is the idea of writing that is important. It is not the acceptances (although I love them) or the rejections (I understand them), but it is the reaching-out and saying “I have something to share and I hope you enjoy it.” It is the countless editing to make a poem better and being open to constructive criticism:

<http://networkedblogs.com/rxadn>) and

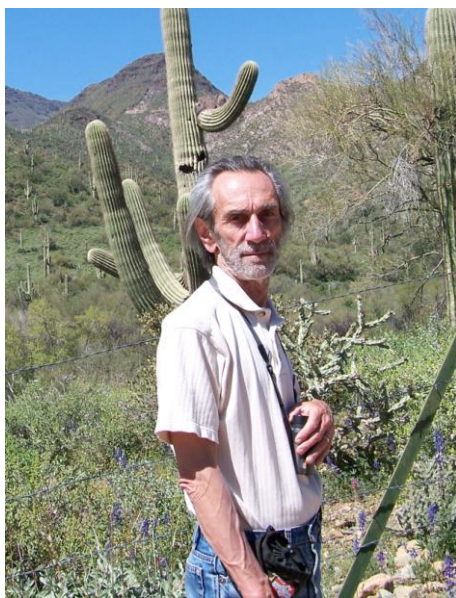
<http://caperlitjournal.weebly.com/4/category/martin%20willitts/1.html>).

I say, embrace all the differences in poetry and read other poetry. Read this magazine and others. Encourage other writers. Be open to constructive criticism. Listen to anyone and everything. Do not worry if you are a good poet or a bad poet, because poetry is a subjective taste. Like what you like in a poem and understand that there are other voices out there in the world. If you listen to within yourself, you will hear something astounding. I just hope that I have told you something that will help you. I hope you find your path in life.

Interviews

Interview with David Chorlton

About the Author



David Chorlton has lived in Phoenix since 1978 when he moved from Vienna, Austria, with his wife. Born in Austria, he grew up in Manchester, close to rain and the northern English industrial zone. In his early 20s he went to live in Vienna and from there enjoyed many trips around Europe to enjoy and paint its landscapes and towns. He has grown ever more fascinated by the desert and its wildlife, and especially enjoys the mountain ranges of southern Arizona. His books include [A Normal Day Amazes Us](#) (Kings Estate Press), [Return to Waking Life](#) (Main Street Rag Publishing Company), [Waiting for the Quetzal](#) (March Street Press), and [The Porous Desert](#) (FutureCycle Press).

SCP: I want to start this off with one of my favorite questions, and a great introductory one. Could you tell us a little bit about why you write? What draws you to the craft? At what age did you first gravitate towards such a practice?

David: It is easier to explain that I continue writing because it helps me examine my surroundings and allows the expression of ideas that wouldn't otherwise occur to me, than to remember exactly why I started. The first attempts came during my time in Vienna around 1972/73, when for reasons inaccessible to me I started writing, casually. A stroke of good luck brought me together with an interesting group of English-speaking writers who met regularly in an informal workshop. So, I was in my mid-twenties when I first took part in a reading and thirty when I moved to Phoenix in 1978, hoping to find a similar workshop group here. As none existed, I helped gather one which met for a couple of years or so; long enough for me to learn something useful.

Poetry remains attractive to me, both to read and write, because of its aesthetic and the "serious" nature of the pleasures it brings. In the beginning, I think I looked around for anything to feed the appetite to write, while today I take an opposite view and try to use the writing to address whatever is important or appealing to me first. It helps me to stay in the present tense and to keep my senses sharp.

SCP: And secondly what about your other artwork? I came across a handful of your paintings and photographs online. Do you find these arts inseparable, part of the same spirit as your writing? Or do they come from different places, serve different functions in your life?

David: Painting was my first chosen art form. In all the time I pursued it seriously, I didn't see it as having much to do with my writing, even if outside observers looked for a connection. It occurred to me that I could have been a poet and a plumber and nobody would have thought of connecting the two!

The best and longest series of works were the watercolor/pastels with a very European urban atmosphere. They definitely looked back rather than reflecting on my surroundings in Arizona. I have an ongoing interest in landscape in varied styles, as a kind of bonding with nature, but that hadn't dominated what I did. I always liked to scribble or paint something on travels, almost as a sideline.

In the last ten years, I've let the painting go, outside of two or three landscapes a year during trips we take. There are lots of reasons to stop doing something, including seeing the quality fall away; the ideas becoming variations on an old theme; lack of incentive; re-evaluating its place in your life. Writing and working on readings when the opportunities are present have kept me from having any regrets about letting the brushes dry out.

SCP: Beyond that I can't help but ask about some of the imagery in your poems, especially the desert landscape. I spent a good three quarters of a year camping in the Mojave Desert a few years back, and I am endlessly drawn to your very accurate, very haunting descriptions of this sort of environment. Can you tell us a bit about your experiences of the desert, and the space they so often occupy in your poems?

David: Having lived in England with its industrial cities and rolling, green countryside, then Vienna with its culture and its own set of shadows as well as grey winters, and having travelled around Europe a lot, I found the desert to be at once exotic, tense, beautiful, and for a landscape even shocking. The extreme climate fascinates me, as does the wildlife. I love the desert, lament the harm done to it, and enjoy most of all travelling through it and visiting the various "sky islands" of southern Arizona.

Writing during and after these travels is a way of telling others what is there, and of extending the experience personally. The contrast with what I'd known before still strikes me, even after thirty-three years. I admit to having had a bias against "nature poetry" for a long time, due to the rather comforting presence of landscape paintings on English chocolate boxes and a misunderstanding of the poets I heard about at school. Now I realize that Wordsworth and John Clare were writing about nature in the time of industrial expansion, much as the deserts (and other New World landscapes) are now under siege from growth. It took me a while to see there is nothing complacent in writing about nature. It wasn't until I'd come to know the desert better that I started to write about it for its own sake. This landscape is, of course, also a dramatic setting for those who cross it today as it was during the age of padres bringing their religion to it.

Also, going back to aesthetic, writing about what we want to preserve is every bit as confrontational to prevailing systems as a more angrily worded poem or manifesto. I acknowledge my anger, but often find a better way of expressing it is to take the side of what I want to see protected. At least I can stay whole that way. We do become what we write (or paint or play) and I don't mind becoming desert, thorns and all. Writing about a region such as ours, with its climate, goes beyond surfaces. Be it as a metaphor, a simile, or a stark description, the desert invites examination as a state of mind in those of us who live here. Even in the city, some desert atmosphere penetrates.

SCP: As this journal is read by a lot of other poets and aspiring writers I always like to inquire about an author's publishing habits. How do you go about the publishing process (I suspect you have well over a hundred poems published online)? Do you send out pieces continuously or do you lay low for a bit then do a kind of submission blitz? What are your thoughts on the act of publishing in the face of ever evolving technologies that allow easier, cheaper and more independent printing? You have had numerous books released by small/independent presses; do you ever self-publish any of your work?

David: Basically, I submit as I go. I don't save new work up for long. My friend, the late J. W. Rivers, who lived here around 1979/80, would telephone me to read a new poem. I might read one back to him. "Where have you sent it?" he'd ask, and I replied, "Hell, Jim, I only finished it fifteen minutes ago." "Doesn't matter," he said, "it ought to be in the mail by now." The system worked well for him.

Getting poems to where somebody can read them is important to me, regardless of the size of the readership. Writing is itself a solitary activity, but through the small presses we can break out of that. Starting to submit for anyone is difficult, when there is more guesswork as to what kind of work a specific publication wants, or whether it is worth the time to send to this or that magazine. In time, we become familiar with editors and the small press universe.

Whether it is the first or the tenth, getting a book published is a significant event. The big problem is distribution and selling enough to help both the author and publisher. There are readings as promotions of course, but they vary in number and interest in book-buying depending on where we live and what kind of audiences are there. We like to see our work treated well, and if an outsider is brave and generous enough to be our publisher, we have an ideal situation and a little extra satisfaction in feeling appreciated. If a poet writes more rather than less, she or he will have more luxuries and options about how to arrange a possibly irregular or chaotic life's work. My choices help me to find what little order there is in mine.

I've taken the self-publishing route when I had specific reasons to, even while I was lucky with other presses. I self-published a collection early on, when you would type out the pages and take

them to local offset printer. It served my purposes of having something to offer at readings. Later, I put together a chapbook to sell to try and raise money for a group that helped immigrants. It covered my costs and earned the group about \$180, which was more than we could have donated personally. And I put another little chapbook together in part because I like making books, and in part because I knew some would go to a lodge in a canyon we like to visit and be there for people who don't ordinarily seek out poetry. Computers make it easier to typeset and prepare, even print, a chapbook today. I recently put together and began running off copies as I need them of a chapbook on my computer at home when I had a group of poems I thought went together and had no particular publisher I thought had any reason to undertake the small project. I'd also become aware of options some of the poets I know were choosing, and felt uneasy with the way the poet can be lured into pushing for an unrealistic drive for sales in advance by a certain press. Anyway, I'm not basing a career on my home printing, and have no illusions about it being more than it is. I'm aware of some first-class musicians (Cellist Matt Haimowitz and singer Loreena McKennitt) who have their own record labels, an interesting parallel.

SCP: My last question touches on a reoccurring theme here at Seven CirclePress. We are very interested in the question of the poet's role in modern society. In a breath or two, why do you think the poet and/or poetry are important in the here and now of our fast-paced, increasingly extroverted society?

David: I've long been fascinated by the different perceptions we have of poets in other countries and particularly so in those who worked in restrictive systems, including communist or fascist ones. In this country, I often think a little censorship could go a long way to create more interest in what poets and other artists do and to acknowledge it. When a work of art is attacked institutionally, it often draws more attention than it ever would for its quality. Please note: this is an observation, not a policy statement!

Poetry doesn't change the way things are. I think Europeans are more relaxed about accepting this, but they also recognize art more as a valid observer. The American impulse strikes me as being more activist oriented, and I do feel some sympathy for this, at least in the sense that all the little signs of discontent add up. Stepping back from all this, I think poetry in the US encourages subtlety and sophistication in the face of an often crass culture.

Poetry is invariably created in isolation, and that leads me to consider how valuable it is to have access to what comes through the quiet process and subconscious of people writing. Whether poetry is intensely serious or leans to spontaneity and lightness, it brings language to life. In a loud world, creative introspection is especially valuable and a foil to propaganda of all kinds.

And to finish on this point, I think the question of whether poets should write “political poetry” is less an issue than whether readers can draw political conclusions from poetry of all kinds. Good readers see all layers in a poem.

SCP: Any last thoughts?

David: On public readings: Poetry can parallel opera in its willingness to embrace exaggeration in service of emotional truth, and making a reading lively and treating it as performance is important to me. Dry readings are a disaster, no matter how celebrated the star.

On reviews: I wish for more, and more objective reviews of poetry books. Many poets want publicity statements rather than reviews of their work.

On libraries: I’ve found that public libraries here in Arizona are open to local authors donating their books, while they continue to pay for works by better known ones. The book buyers read reviews to help them decide what to order, which takes us back my previous point.

SCP: Thanks So Much!

David’s Faves

[Tomas Tranströmer](#) - I was happy to see him receive the Nobel award. He is a wizard with imagery. I don’t read Swedish, though I did hear him once in Tucson, and was delighted that was so honored last year. The personality of his poems survives translation.

[W. S. Merwin](#) - He hasn’t just repeated himself and has varied his approach in a long career. Merwin has always been the kind of figure whose stance against matters of war or natural destruction has been deftly woven into his overall poet-personality, and I admire that.

[Ingeborg Bachmann](#) - An Austrian poet, perhaps the first poet I came to admire. I can’t speak to the quality of available translations into English, but she wrote in many genres and the poems excel in craft and content, written as they were, in the decades following World War II in Austria. The country, to its credit, has recognized her well.

Steven Stepanchev - One of the poets who come to mind as under-appreciated. Modern in outlook, great progression of images in the poems, and a warmth in outlook that doesn’t always come with the territory.

At one time or another, I revisit many poets whose work continues to open up for me: [Richard Shelton](#) (A voice for the desert here as well as for victims of the prison system), [Eugenio Montale](#) (No, I don’t read Italian but do like William Arrowsmith’s translations, especially of [Cuttlefish Bones](#)), David Fisher (Another deserving of more attention, whose little Book of



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Madness from 1981 is a sad and riveting gem of a book), [Marina Tsvetaeva](#) (Even though she is almost beyond translation, her personality is overwhelming), [Yannis Ritsos](#) (His imagery and surreal vision are like nobody else's), and the list goes on through [Margaret Atwood](#), [Charles Wright](#), and more.

Special Feature

Winner of the 2012 SCP Poetry Prize

Lucky Frog by Catherine McGuire

Lucky Frog

for Li Po

I begin to understand why poets become
wanderers, hermits –
why they disappear into mountains
sending back poems like autumn leaves
fluttering into town.
I see why the wind was a fine companion
and the shiny masks needed for city life
were – so gratefully – piled at the crossroad.
There is a desperation alive in the villages
that few except poets comprehend –
the pressure of so many glances
the hiss of a pot coming to boil.



Catherine McGuire is a writer and artist with a deep interest in philosophy, the “Why we are here?” question that lurks under so much of our lives. Using nature as a mirror, she explores the way humans perceive themselves and their world. Her chapbook, [Palimpsests](#), was published by Uttered Chaos (www.utteredchaos.org) in 2011. She is webmaster for the Oregon Poetry Association and claims her entire garden as her “poetry office”.

www.cathymcguire.com

Interview with Catherine McGuire

SCP: So first off Congratulations on wining the Poetry Prize. We had a lot of great submissions and really think your work is top notch. Can you kick us off by telling us a little bit about yourself? About your writing and the impetus of your work?

Catherine: Thank you very much for selecting me – I’m delighted and honored. And I’m happy for my poem (feels like a “child” getting a prize). I’ve always been a poet; since the earliest time I can recall, I was saying, and then writing rhymes. Looking back now, I wonder if poets are born, not made. I certainly didn’t have access to poetry (except Cat in the Hat rhymes) until 4th grade, when we moved near a library. That was a major turning point in my life. I still remember finding Rabindranath Tagore in 8th grade – a mindblower. Also in 4th grade, we were made to memorize a classic poem per week – I usually did two. Oddly, I never really studied poetry or English in college; a couple of bad teachers drove me away.

I’m not just a poet, of course (I wish!) Tried my hand at many jobs in several fields (the 1975 recession meant my Bachelors took me 9 years). Too many clerical ones; but also grant writing, tech writing and about a decade as a mental health therapist. Lots of fodder for poems. I’ve had two children’s books published by TSR, Inc. I’ve lived in New Jersey, New York City, Southern California, and Oregon. Not much of a traveler, but I enjoy watching travelogues online; the differences and similarities among cultures is fascinating.

For the past four years, I have been living in a small town, working from home by maintaining websites, writing technical articles for various newsletters and selling my crafts on etsy.com. I am attempting a simple, self-sufficient life via a large garden, a flock of chickens, a trio of rabbits and a manual approach to my needs. I’ve traded off the flexibility of middle class wages for the natural setting and quiet that I crave, and I’m happy with the trade.

SCP: Can you tell us some more about this poem? What brought it on? Are you an avid reader of Li Po and his clan, or was this more of a random piece inspired by a passing read?

Catherine: That was a lucky circumstance, or synchronicity. A friend gave me a large, wonderful book of Chinese poetry “Sunflower Splendor: Three Thousand Years of Chinese Poetry” (in English, of course). I had been enjoying it a lot, and I was amazed at the similarities of expression – the poets’ grief at the various wars that ravaged the countryside (over and over), the need to get away to nature and the wonder at the natural beauties that city folk seemed to ignore. They were saying what we say – back in 400 AD! It does strongly suggest that human nature hasn’t changed much in centuries. I felt the need to respond, and that’s where “Lucky Frog” came from.

SCP: You recently had a chapbook published by Uttered Chaos called Palimpsests. Is this your first book, or rather how much have you published (or self-published)? Can you tell us a bit about Palimpsests, the title is quite intriguing?

Catherine: The word palimpsests (I do love the sound of it) refers to the scraped manuscript page where traces of the old text can be seen underneath the new text – thus, old stories re-appearing through the new ones (ancient monks would scrape off old pagan books to write new Christian ones, as vellum was expensive). When I was approached by the publisher, and looked at my poems, I saw a theme of myths and fables that were re-cloaked in modern terms. Thus Cassandra shows up in a modern psych unit, Athena is seen in the Middle East and the Little Mermaid speaks from a corner tavern. There are many patterns in life, for those who look.

Palimpsests is my first chapbook by an independent publisher. I had two previous self-published books: Joy into Stillness: the Seasons of Lake Quinault (that's in WA's Olympic Peninsula – gorgeous!) and a for-fun Poetry and Chickens (I have a flock, and lots of chicken poems). I love to combine my artwork with my poetry – my photography is in Joy.... my chicken sketches in P&C, and a collage is the cover of Palimpsests.

SCP: What are your feelings about the current poetry publishing landscape? Cheaper and more innovative technologies allow for the existence of such venues as Uttered Chaos and Seven CirclePress, some would even say we are in the midst of a paradigm shift, what are your thoughts on such notions?

Catherine: I am grateful for the electronic revolution that has opened poetry and literary fiction up with so many new outlets. I'm not sure about "paradigm" – I've read enough history to know that the printing press, the steam-driven press, the typewriter and the mimeograph all opened up new avenues and created blooms of small presses that lasted a while and then big giants gobbled them up. It may be this way for electronic, sadly. Though there are always smaller presses alongside large commercial ones.

The good news about the e-presses and small press houses is that they are able to make an impact that is larger than their size – they have rippled out and shifted the older publishing scene. So it's true that you don't have to be huge to have an impact.

And I will admit something taboo – as a middle aged poet, I don't feel like I have a good grasp of the new poetry landscape, and that is natural: there are new generations of poets already concocting a vibrant new poetry scene, and I'm content with that.

SCP: In stride with that question, what are some of your favorite journals, zines, and publishing ventures?

Catherine: That's a hard question to answer. I write widely varying poetry (I have over 1,000 poems in my submissions database and 271 are actively being sent around) so I send to a wide set of publications – 117 different ones so far! *New Verse News* online has accepted 11 of my

social commentary poems; *Avocet*, a print nature poetry journal, accepts many of my nature poems; Gray Sparrow Press had me on the same online page as Maxine Kumin (a hero of mine).

One of the wonderful things about submitting poetry is that I find new and wonderful zines and presses all the time! And some of the newer ideas for poetry – like your postcard “broad-sides” – I love that. Another press, BluePrint, hosts a “blog carnival” where poets put their poems and illustrations on their own websites, then BP posts a page of links gathered on a theme – that’s a fun variation on an “issue”. And in Oregon, we have a fun project – Mailbox Poetry: people put realtor’s boxes in front of their houses and fill them with broadsides, generally a poem a month. It’s really catching on! And there are some publications that I long to get into – like Gettysburg Review, the New Yorker, Southern Review.

SCP: In another interview with you available on the Uttered Chaos website you said that poets were once “the keepers of the tribe’s memory.” That’s a beautiful thought. What do you think the poet’s true role should be in age when so much of our “memory” is caught in photos, videos, televisions, computers and thousands of other forms of tangible media and art?

Catherine: I do think about that a lot, and I love to read others’ thoughts on it. Wonderful essay by Joshua Michael Stewart in your latest issue of CircleShow, by the way. One point of view that resonated with me was psychologist James Hollis’ saying, “Poetry is not affectation, nor aesthetic sleight of hand, but a mediation between humanity and the numinous.” He also states that in a plastic, throwaway culture, the poet’s job is to “affirm, to render what is real, amidst the fleeting moments and disappearing things.” That speaks to our desire to understand the world, and to share our understanding. With the modern onslaught of images and ideas, poets can find/create strong, resonant symbols that point to human depths.

One of my poems in Palimpsests, called “Mnemosyne,” deals directly with this issue. I quote from the last section:

Some see memory as synaptic layers;
bit buckets filled, emptied, filled.

Not the tendril lifting
from deep, unseen roots.

Not a goddess
flowing through the mind.

SCP: Any other thoughts, dreams, warnings, tidbits you would like to share with the world?

Catherine: I would like to urge poets to read widely from other countries – both to stretch your mind and to see why poets living elsewhere than the US are imprisoned and feared. Poets have

power, and perhaps we've forgotten that. And read from many historical times – see how similar and different life has been.

I would also like to thank the readers, writers and lovers of poetry! It's a huge tribe, and I'm always amazed to meet new members. No matter what the mainstream media says, poetry has an essential place in our culture. It's just not easily encapsulated, and thus ignored.

SCP: Awesome! To close it out could you point us towards some other places on the web a hungry reader could find some more of your work (if any)?

There are 11 in New Verse News archives <http://www.newversenews.com/> (search for "McGuire") including "Orphic", "Avatar" and "Living On Foodstamps and the \$150 They Get from Nielsen."

Palimpsests poems published online:

"Curing Cassandra" <http://www.melusine21cent.com/mag/node/114>

"Knives, Then Foam" <http://www.enchantedconversation.org/2010/06/knives-then-foam-by-cathy-mcguire.html>

"Overlay": <http://homesweet-or.blogspot.com/2011/06/var-gajshost-https-document.html>

And you can find one of my chicken poems and more information on my writing at:
<http://www.cathymcguire.com/poetry.htm>

SCP: Thanks so much!

Note: Hollis quotes are from "The Archetypal Imagination" by James Hollis; Texas A&M University Press, 2000

Poetry

Vince Corvaia

Vince Corvaia has an MFA in creative writing and currently lives in Boise, Idaho.

The Evolution of My Mother as a Beatles Fan

My mother didn't get it.
Then Paul sang "Yesterday"

in sixty-five.
"What a pretty song,"

she said.
Fifteen years later

my mother heard the news
and said, "What a damn shame."

Thirty years later
she asked for ice cream

from her hospice bed.
"One scoop vanilla, and microwave it

for eight seconds."
I sang old songs

as I lifted the spoon.
"Oh, I believe," she sang along.

Ruth Gooley

Ruth Gooley is a native of Venice, California. She divides her life among the ocean, the mountains, the desert and the sky. Feeling an affinity towards all living things, she carefully deposits spiders outdoors, avoids stinkbugs when she hikes, and counts stars as close friends. She published her dissertation, *The Image of the Kiss in French Renaissance Poetry*, and has published poems in *Mali Mirage*, *The Loyolan*, *Day Tonight Night Today*, and *The Red Poppy Review*. She has forthcoming poems in *Snowy Egret*, *Pure Francis*, *Literary Fever* and *Poecology*.

The End of Love

The point is empty.
No one here but me,
fogged in and grim,
overlooking the memory of the ocean.
A bird arpeggios and goes flat.
A line of planes hums towards LAX.
A motorcycle whines up Pacific Coast Highway.
A dog barks and another,
carried up from the highlands.
I hear a step.
I turn around to look.
No one's there.

After the fog burns away,
the sun is hot
on legs bare
feet sockless,
face thrust up, eyes closed.
But I feel a chill,
here,
where I sit alone
with a Gala apple
and a silent phone.

Tsunami Sunset

You would have thought a tsunami was coming
the way the tide had drawn out so far
towards the thin lip of the horizon,
had obeyed the pull of the setting sun,

drooled on the sand, left wide wet swaths
and a shine like an antique golden jewel.
I passed the pier, a berm, a pile of rocks,
wet tennis shoes smacking in the muck.
A band of greedy seagulls curlicued above,
dissonant and angry, it seemed,
at the loss of the sun, warmth, sand crabs
hunkered safely in their hermit's lair.

I know the sound that bent wing makes
when air flows past feathers soaked in brine,
another round, another night,
back to the constant worry of the wind,
head tucked away until morning's flight.

I stepped through a strand of kelp,
its plastic bladders glistening with salt.
Distant waves hummed, dashed out
spray, that tartness that stings
the eyes and hair, sours the face,
and eased the tautness from my aching shoulders.
Two body surfers rode waves,
a pair of snowy plovers dashed about,
dug in the sand, retreated as a sliver of water
slipped through their toes.
A sandpiper, her thin legs like pick-up sticks,
back feathers an abstract cotton
drawing in black and white,
ran from a wave and lost, slogging
through the water wearily, night down.

I know the sound that fragile stick-foot makes
in its struggle with the weight of water,
another round, another fight,
facing the constant worry of the wind,
eyes open to the light.

Peycho Kanev

Peycho Kanev is the editor-in-chief of Kanev Books. His poems have appeared in more than 400 literary magazines, such as: *Poetry Quarterly*, *The Monongahela Review*, *Steam Ticket*, *Ann Arbor Review*, *Midwest Literary Review*, *Third Wednesday*, *The Cleveland Review*, *Istanbul Literary Review*, *Loch Raven Review*, *In Posse Review*, *The Penwood Review*, *Mascara Literary Review*, *The Mayo Review* and many others.

Expectation

“Poetry is indispensable - if I only knew what for”,
said once Cocteau, and I am trembling with anticipation!
I had so many hearts in my closet, and now it’s only one,
but I am not complaining.
Obviously I’ve changed. If I could choose between myself
from the past and the one from now, I’ll choose ignorance.
And history will lick its bloody mouth again.
I remember how in the winter in the woods, we were kindling
dry twigs and listened to the cries of the silence.
But today the winter is everywhere.
This is a sad song, I hope will warm me in some cold night,
when I’ll listen to the ticking of the clock, and I’ll dream of
my life lost long ago with the butterflies.
There is not a big difference in living on different continents
if the faces everywhere are all the same.
You apprehend the Grand Canyon only as a great and long hole
if the bluebird in your guts is trembling.
It’s the same with the rest of the world.
In North Dakota an Indian told me that our destiny is not written
anywhere and then he gave me a calendar and a pipe.
And since then I am looking for matches to build one match-stick
soul; I need glue, and one torn Rembrandt to glue together again.
Art! Will it last forever?
I also need tarantulas to pet, words to write in the darkness of
the shortness of life next to a burning candle.
I don’t want credit cards to cut the whiteness of my memories,
and I do not need the virgins of King Solomon to be their God.
And before I say Goodbye, I’ll turn on the next page, where
it’s winter again to start afresh.

Impossible Calculations

It's quiet. I look down at my hands
and count the memories that have left their mark.
The one from my grandmother's
rusty scissors, the scar from the first
cigarette, two fingers crushed by the piano
in one southern city, the cut from the crooked
army knife and one from the cigar during one crazy
night. But, one day, I will see in my hands oceans of
wrinkles, in which the stones will sleep, in which
I'll swim to the end.

Dave Malone

Dave Malone is the author of several books of poetry and a new ebook series, Seasons in Love (Trask Road Press), available at Smashwords and Kindle. His poems have appeared in *decomP*, *Elder Mountain: A Journal of Ozark Studies*, *Mid Rivers Review*, *San Pedro River Review*, *Spindrift*, and *Word Riot*. His interests include Ozark culture and crime fiction, and he can be found online at www.davemalone.net.

They Learned the Hard Way

Scientists flooded our home.
They displayed diagrams
of sexy lines and arcs.
The cognoscenti came.
They lipped poems
with circular rhythms.
Everyone was bent
on destroying you.
The media claimed
tomfoolery,
skullduggery
on our parts.
CNN misused polysyllables.
But when evening turned
crimson and shadow,
slicing forms of line
like praying Muslims
beheaded many
a media mogul.
From the front porch
your body defied
gravity, nomenclature
as tits to hips
curved
silencing the world.

White

after Mark Rothko's *No. 15*

Before you dive into the painting,
all gleams white. We know it, too, in
antiseptic museums with guards
as crisp as Gestapo. You beat us to the canvas
like fists in egg whites where you broke birches
into bullets while we start on the edges,
bashful swimmers about to be dunked.

Joseph Reich

Joseph Reich is a social worker and displaced New Yorker who really misses dis-place and lives and works out in the state of Massachusetts. He has a handsome little 6 year old with a nice mop of dirty-blond hair, and a wife eleven years his former, who must have the patience of a saint as is raising two boys.

Joseph has been published in a wide variety of eclectic literary journals both here and abroad, and has been nominated twice for the Pushcart Prize.

Drama/mean

while on the treadmill
 watching the travel channel
 i got to thinking

 about the sadistic & sleazy history of the world
 all the fucked up things when you look
 back at its patterns

 not coincidental that have so
 hypocritically & historically & strangely spiritually
 been revered & worshiped

 the crude & vulgar ceremony
 of the killing
 of the beautiful helpless bull

 carrying jesus on a cross
 like a poo-poo platter
to his fate

 stonings
 & sacrifices
 & slaughters

 cowboys
 indians
 slave quarters

[ap: america's policy
in vietnam called "body count"
to kill as many vietcong as possible

not so different than hitler
caring to kill more jews
than winning the war

than stalin murdering
20 million of his own
during the purge

than japanese throwing
chinese babies up in the air
catching them on swords like shish-ke-bob

than the most recent repeated carnage
which has transpired by the government of
guatemala on its helpless women & children]

the tourists of turn
of the century coney island electrocuting
some elephant for simply striking back

against a heckler just getting sick of him throwing
lit cigarettes at him and gathering around in a mob
hysterical in the sizzling smoke seeing

him slowly gradually tip over
tumble and drop dead to the boardwalk
struggling howling crying out

taking his last breath
coiled up in the fetal position
eventually with hoofbeats to heaven

still got these melodramatic americans
running like fucken madmen
down the aisle in the a.m.

(in the supposed struggling economy...)

*come on down!
and you're the next contestant
on the price is right!*

you get off the treadmill
feeling dead to the world
repulsed nauseated seasick.

Humans

After mowing the miserable lawn I honked the horn and Erica came running in and we went down to the beach just around the corner and hadn't been there for ages and dunked my whole body in and that's the brilliant and amazing and redeeming quality about water about the lake and river and ocean and these two horrible creatures were just lying there staring straight at me (as if we had invaded their terror/tree on the beach) could never and still can't understand people who just decide to be randomly mean and angry when they don't know a thing about me. I think they were like these two miserable middle-aged ladies and maybe I represented something of the male species who the fuck knows and who the fuck really cares, and they were wearing these red white and blue bikinis I think with stars on them but always thrive in these types of situations and become more crazy and wild and natural and conversational being something of a New Yorker and remembering all the wonderful magical weekends in Coney Island always being something of a mad celebration of cultures who let it all go without a care in the world without a single ounce of judgment or criticism or reservation and have better and deeper conversations even make plans for the future with my beautiful Erica while they naturally disappear and get back in my Timberlands and we climb back up the rocky shore and she lays down a towel in the driver's seat simply smelling the deep scent of the sweeping salt water all over our neck and shoulders and just vanish through the sunflowers and corn.

Henry C. Smith

Henry C. Smith is 27 years old and lives in London with his beautiful wife. He writes when it seems to make sense to do so, doesn't when it doesn't. He's been published here and there, and can be contacted at henrycsmith@hotmail.com. He hopes you enjoy this poem about Li Po, an ancient mountain mystic that died trying to hug the moon.

Jade Hills

each flower's scent
sent Li Po
to heaven.

he danced
upon the cusp
of mountains,
dove into
the blue beyond.

his feet
pressed untouched snow,
his words
settled like
thick round flakes.

jade hills
wrapped him in welcome,
wanderers embraced
his easy way.

his heart soared
with wine and angels,
his soul was the music
in each gibbon's wail.

how many shadows
now dance beneath the moon,
lost in reflections of Li Po?

Lisa Wiley

Lisa Wiley is an English professor at Erie Community College in Buffalo, NY. Her poetry is published or forthcoming in *Earth's Daughters*, *Beyond Bones*, *Word Worth*, *Teaching English in the Two-Year College*, *The Buffalo News* and *Yale Journal for Humanities in Medicine*.

Back Porch, The Summer I Turn Thirty Nine

When the leaves turn inside out, does it mean it's going to rain?

— A Friend

A lost firefly circles the yard,
lone remnant of country club fireworks
or an orphan from his flock?

Waiting until tonight to appear,
he urges us to wear more red,
get those carefully wild tattoos,

paint the sky, climb the Eiffel Tower,
visit Hemingway's haunts or
add another to our fold.

He must have been a harbinger
of something, as you cradled me
in your lap. The wine glass half full.

Venues

Here at SCP we know that seeking out and finding quality publishing venues for one's work can be a difficult and tedious task. With all the phenomenal options out there for a budding or seasoned poet how to choose where to send your work?

Well that's why we created our new feature Venues. Every issue we will showcase two of Editor-In-Chief Seth Jani's favorite poetry-focused websites, magazines, e-zines etc. along with pertinent submission information and links.

It's a way to both help great authors find great venues, as well as brings those venues to a wider audience. Enjoy!

San Pedro River Review



Website:

www.sprreview.com

Submissions Page:

www.sprreview.com

Format:

Perfect-Bound

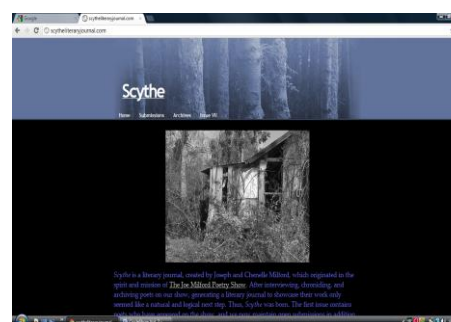
Accepts:

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Rights Held:

First Serial

Scythe



Website:

www.scytheliteraryjournal.com

Submissions Page:

www.scytheliteraryjournal.com/submissions

Format:

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Accepts:

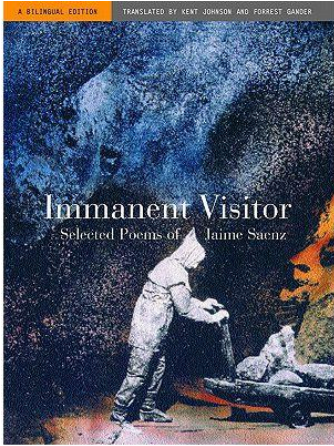
Poetry/Prose Poems

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Lost Classics

Immanent Visitor by Jaime Saenz



Publisher:

[University of California Press](http://www.ucpress.edu)

Translated from the Spanish by:
Kent Johnson and Forrest Gander

ISBN:

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Format:

Paperback, 167 pages

From the Publisher:

Immanent Visitor is the first English-language translation of the work of Bolivia's greatest and most visionary twentieth-century poet. A poète maudit, Jaime Saenz rejected the conventions of polite society and became a monk in service of his own imagination. Apocalyptic and occult in his politics, a denizen of slum taverns, unashamedly bisexual, insistently nocturnal in his artistic affairs, and secretive in his leadership of a select group of writers, Saenz mixed the mystical and baroque with the fantastic, the psychological, and the symbolic. In masterly translations by two poet-translators, Kent Johnson and Forrest Gander, Saenz's strange, innovative, and wildly lyrical poems reveal a literary legacy of fierce compassion and solidarity with indigenous Bolivian cultures and with the destitute, the desperate, and the disenfranchised of that unreal city, La Paz.

From Seven CirclePress:

Jaime Saenz's poetry has all the dark fascinations of Baudelaire as well as the inverted sensual faculties of the symbolists and surrealists best embodied by Rimbaud's "derangement of the senses" mixed with his own intensely wild and death-obsessed vision of transcendence. In Saenz the dark night of the soul is not a prerequisite to the light, but is itself a tunnel to a savage, down-and-out god of otherness. It's poetry of a different order.

About the Press

Founded in 2008 by poet Seth Jani, SCP is an online, in-print and ephemera based micro-press that seeks to vigorously promote and distribute the works of new and established poets.

It is funded solely by its editor and friends, as well from book and product sales. It never solicits subsidies or reading fees from its contributing authors.

It commits to no prescribed esthetic but has a strong inclination to view art as a means of promoting unity and meaningful interaction.

The heart of the press is its online literary journal CircleShow, and its home on the web can be found at www.sevencirclepress.com.

Created by Alli May of ALLIMAY DESIGN (<http://allimaydesign.blogspot.com/>) our logo represents our belief in a flexible lunar consciousness, a nourishing, dark maternal creativity.

The small sprout also points to our identification as a homegrown project born out of commitment, passion and vision free from either establishment esthetics or corporate packaging. A wild, poetic biodiversity of weeds and roses.

For more information about the press and our vision, as well as an explanation of the Seven Circles themselves visit our About SCP Page on our website at: <http://www.sevencirclepress.com/aboutscp.htm>

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