

## Poetry section

Edited by **Victor Postnikov**

Victor is a poet, essayist and translator whose home is in Kyiv, Ukraine.

Life far exceeds humans. For millennia, eco-poets have understood it as a far greater enterprise. In their poetry, we can hear the voices of those who came before us and those who live alongside us. Now, however, they face extinction and die in silence, deafened by the roar of civilization. The time has come to renew the old understanding that all life, including humanity, speaks a common language. Thus, the mission of ecocentric poetry, or ecopoetry, is to help us empathize with non-human entities, be they a whale, a tree or a mountain. For we are all kin. Through metaphor and imagery, it speaks directly to our hearts and genes. We begin to realize that we have evolved together and share a common fate.

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CLASSIC

### Reconciliation

Walt Whitman

*Word over all, beautiful as the sky!  
Beautiful that war, and all its deeds of carnage, must in  
time be utterly lost;  
That the hands of the sisters Death and Night, incessantly  
softly wash again, and ever again, this soil'd world:  
For my enemy is dead—a man divine as myself is dead;  
I look where he lies, white-faced and still, in the coffin—I  
draw near;  
I bend down and touch lightly with my lips the white face  
in the coffin.*

CONTEMPORARY

### The Great Dying

SC Flynn

*The predators are returning to the cities;  
their gleaming eyes flit through rubbish dumps  
and shine in the black depths of parks,  
the only things really alive under the moon.  
The golden lie still rings out,*

*but leafing through old books is no use now,  
nor are the latest discoveries  
of different ways of flying.  
Death has climbed in through the open window  
and the last of our fugitives  
will soon be tracked and caught,  
like tigers crushed by the coils of giant snakes.*

CONTEMPORARY

### What Does Water Become?

Adele Evershed

*a sea,  
a waterfall,  
a bay, a stream  
the relieving rush from a once dry tap  
or the yellow-eyed puddles at the bottom of a well  
it is summer rain and the tapping of a walking stick  
the drum beat of a monsoon wedding  
a splash made by a frog in the mind of an old man  
and a new universe found in a rock pool by a child  
it is the wake up call after a boozy night  
or the cooling touch in a fever dream  
it is the new shoot from a forgotten stump  
a silver rush of fish jumping like a rainbow's wish  
the bog thickened with bones of our ancestors or other cattle  
it is a blessing or a forgiveness or a popcorn style curse  
a roiling Saturday night or a tender first cup of tea  
feminine and masculine and the great in-between  
and it can be a drowning or a flood or a rageful God  
tears and spittle  
too much or not enough  
a poisoning and a protest  
the beginning and the end  
and one day  
it will be  
a war  
and then  
just a poem  
dripping  
words  
into a  
dead  
sea*

CONTEMPORARY

**pearl of polystyrene**

Michael Buckingham Gray

*between two bricks  
perfect as the day  
It was produced:  
white, round  
but soft enough  
to curl  
    into my  
dog's mouth.  
Pearl of polystyrene*

***filling the freeway***  
*workers laying  
a new ribbon  
of road*

*filling the freeway  
rain drifting  
a dozen  
different ways*

*filling the freeway  
a flood  
sending everything  
back to mud*

CONTEMPORARY

**Broken Owl**

Denisha Naidoo

*In the painting  
the owl  
shifts his head to the side  
perched on the bulldozer  
laying pipe  
where his home once stood  
I write,  
Broken Owl.*

CONTEMPORARY

## The Transcendence of Broken Owl

Denisha Naidoo

*"If you have conceived of it, it has already happened," Quantum Shaman says.*

*"Can it unhappen?" asks Broken Owl.*

*"It already has," replies Quantum Shaman. "Every moment repeats, even this one."*

*Broken Owl tilts his head.*

*"Find the Ripple Fox," Quantum Shaman says, "she will guide you."*

*The sun is electric. Dust and wind. Desert. Scorching.*

*Inside is cool. Broken Owl, eyes closed, searches the dreamscape for before. The trees*

*rustle, the breeze soothes. Everything is as it was, as the stories told. Ripple Fox is drinking from the stream.*

*Ripple Fox can feel the eyes on her body. She looks up and around. The sky is empty.*

*The trees whisper, the Owl awaits.*

*Quantum Shaman exists in the space between the nows, knowing Serpent Biting Tail is in*

*motion. Perpetual motion.*

*"I felt the Owl," Ripple Fox says to Quantum Shaman. "He was watching me."*

*"He is searching for before."*

*Ripple Fox nods. "If I take him, what happens to the now?"*

*"The now will always be."*

*"And Serpent Biting Tail?"*

*"Is strong, ready, in motion."*

*In her den, Ripple Fox closes her eyes to search for Broken Owl. She finds him in the*

*dust, wings splayed, he is almost gone. She takes him, softly in her mouth.*

*Quantum Shaman watches. Broken Owl is almost back to before. Ripple Fox takes his*

*body to complete his journey by the river.*

*Broken Owl is before, in one moment, eternally forever. He gives thanks to Ripple Fox,*

*feels Quantum Shaman surrounding him and the power of Serpent Biting Tail.*

CONTEMPORARY

## Waiting

Victor Postnikov

“Do you know how the devil tortures the souls in hell? He keeps them waiting.”  
– CG Jung

*We are all waiting for something.  
Waiting for the war to end.  
Waiting to be healed again.  
Waiting to be young again.  
(Waiting to be dead too?)  
Waiting for the world to fix itself  
And people are wiser, kinder.  
As if someone must come and  
Rectify our lives  
Paralised by goblins.*

*What’s that? Our common inadequacy as a species?*

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## About the poets

**Walt Whitman** (1819–92) was an American poet, essayist and journalist. He is considered one of the greatest poets in American history and was a staunch proponent of pantheism and pacifism.

**SC Flynn** was born in Australia of Irish and Scottish origin and now lives in Dublin, Ireland. His poetry has been published in more than ten countries.

**Adele Evershed** was born in Wales and has lived in Asia before settling in Connecticut. Her work has been published in over a hundred journals and anthologies such as *Every Day Fiction*, *Grey Sparrow Journal*, *Reflex Fiction* and *Shot Glass Journal*. Adele has been nominated for the Pushcart Prize and Best of the Net for poetry.

**Michael Buckingham Gray** is a poet, writer and creative writing tutor. He has won a ‘Distinctive Scribblings’ Award from *Eucalypt*, and received Best Microfiction and Best Small Fiction nominations.

**Denisha Naidoo** is a South African born Canadian BIPOC writer living in Canada, whose work has appeared in *Outpost Magazine*, *Ladies Briefs: An Anthology* and *Tree Talk*.