

## 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.**

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CLASSIC

**This is thy hour**

Walt Whitman

*This is thy hour O Soul, thy free flight into the wordless,  
Away from books, away from art, the day erased, the lesson done,  
Thee fully forth emerging, silent, gazing, pondering the themes thou lovest best,  
Night, sleep, death and the stars.*

CONTEMPORARY

**Untitled**

Ava Bird

*oceans  
inside myself  
ebbs and moons  
inside me  
wax wane  
lunatic  
sun inside me  
i give birth to the seeds  
even in the dark  
it is me  
it is up to me  
to birth the seeds*

\* \* \*

*in blood  
i owe  
to my ancestors  
in the earth  
give her back*

\* \* \*

*across this ocean  
no hidden treasures  
except the wide open  
land*

\* \* \*

*the earth very thirsty  
superficially dry, cracked  
rivers, creeks, empty bedded  
yet  
still waters  
run deep  
oceans  
alive*

\* \* \*

*another desert drought  
yet  
our abundant streams  
still flow*

CONTEMPORARY

**chocomallow**  
Brice Maiurro

*we hold sky dark soil  
in our reverent soft palms  
as the head of a newborn  
it slips between our fingers  
as the late days  
of the anthropocene  
a stand of aspens  
surrounding the clearing*

*as awe-wind moves through us  
our hands have held such variant things  
possibility is more more than we could think  
it holds us in its reverent soft palms*

CONTEMPORARY

**the visible**

Brice Maiurro

*oh yes  
i have seen  
the branches  
of the winter  
hackberry  
in the horns  
of the  
summer stag  
& the horns  
—  
of the stag  
in the leaves  
of the oak  
the leaves  
of the oak  
in the  
tributaries of  
the colorado  
river & the  
river in the  
tiny cracks  
of the  
swelling ice  
i have seen  
the ice within  
the womb  
of the snow  
& the snow  
in the coat of  
the snowshoe  
rabbit & the  
rabbit has  
seen me  
there is  
no question  
of the goodness*

*within all of us  
but maybe  
more so if  
we can see it  
& more so  
even yet  
if we can be  
so bold as  
to make it  
seen*

CONTEMPORARY

### **Shrimp Glyphs**

**Moira Nicholson**

*I saw a dark black glyph among a mound  
Of yellow coral polyps on the reef.  
The symbols, strange and beautiful, abound.*

*A guidebook told about the rune in brief:  
Two shrimps had made the enigmatic mark  
And dwelt together in their carved relief.*

*The blurb was short. I opted to embark  
Onto the internet to search for more.  
The pages that I looked upon were stark*

*And empty where I hoped I could explore.  
My guidebook had a broader set of facts.  
I've often found this gaping lack of lore*

*Where all I find is researchers' abstracts  
If anything on creatures that seem neat.  
I don't know if the internet redacts*

*The information that it could accrete  
Or too few people study decapeds,  
But everything I find is incomplete.*

*The nature shows are busy weaving threads  
Of plot through famous wild mammals' lives.  
Who cares? What bugs are climbing in the sedge?*

*This made-up melodrama trick deprives  
The viewer of the facts we've figured out.*

*This gaping lack of information drives  
Me, and others, to the sea to pout.  
I read the shrimp-made glyphs that I have found  
To search for knowledge through another route.*

CONTEMPORARY

### Less Travelled than the Moon

Moira Nicholson

*Take me deeper than my feet can go  
And deeper than the noontime sun can shine,  
Where abyssal life creates the only glow.*

*Let day and night trade places, I won't know  
Save by the squid who rise at dusk to dine.  
Take me deeper than my feet can go,*

*For on these plains one cannot walk, although  
Tripod fish stand on three fins. That's fine  
Where abyssal life creates the only glow.*

*Basket stars reach out for falling 'snow',  
The refuse shed much higher in the brine.  
Take me deeper than my feet can go*

*And deeper than a television show.  
No shallow scrape; think more a diamond mine  
Where abyssal life creates the only glow.*

*The pressure smooshes submarines like dough  
And air becomes a threat. Still, I opine,  
Take me deeper than my feet can go  
Where abyssal life creates the only glow.*

CONTEMPORARY

### Survival of the Species

AJ Dalton

*As a mosquito  
I'd have my chemical labs  
work on a lethal formula.  
If I were a termite  
I'd undermine all the cities.  
If I were a fish*

*I'd leap and push in such number  
that boats and crew were overturned and tangled  
in their own fouled nets.  
Were I cat or hound,  
I'd wait till they'd fallen  
asleep  
and gently smother and toothily devour all trace.  
An elephant, I'd trample them  
A mule, I'd stove them in  
and croakingly laugh as a murder of crows  
or rend with talons, spit acid  
poison with stings  
bite, slash, thrash and suffocate  
fang, claw, levers and weight  
and All.  
As a human, though, I'd hang my head  
In acceptance and shame.*

CONTEMPORARY

### **The Ichthylocene: A Reflection on Genesis 1:20**

Rev'd Allen Doyle

*Anemoia creeps  
into my bones yet again  
for that fifth day, God  
when the waters birthed the swarms,  
and no feet had touched the shore.*

CONTEMPORARY

### **St. Anthony's Song**

Rev'd Allen Doyle

*on any ole Sunday, down yonder in the river  
the fish do not school, but they church  
the catfish choir's anthems, will send your spine shivers  
the bass get absolved by perch  
they know the old stories, they sing the old tunes,  
their scales flash the moon's beams like stained glass  
while they gather every week, as is age old tradition  
that night something went amiss during their riparian mass  
cause down by the willows, a shadow appeared  
it approached the shore with great haste  
a possible angler, but he had no gear  
he opened his mouth, and the fish were amazed*

*what was said on that strange balmy night in Rimini  
I reckon the world'll never know  
the sermon was lost to the annals of history  
But the story carries on even so  
Now the miracles often reduced down to this:  
It was Dr Dolittle's Pentecost Party Trick  
But the disciples of the deep already knew the gospel  
this was just the first time they'd met a human that wasn't hostile*

CONTEMPORARY

### Strait of Gibraltar

Sandra M Grayson

*Iberian orcas  
between an ocean and a sea—  
summer morning*

CONTEMPORARY

### Synchronization

Sandra M Grayson

*Between the Atlantic Ocean  
and the Mediterranean Sea,  
each rhythmic blow sound  
accompanies a cloud-like mist.*

*“At two o'clock, pilot whales,”  
the captain says to the photographer  
as the boat sails ahead of the thunder.*

*The patient photographer  
believes that a single leader  
pilots each pod—  
an image he hopes to capture.*

*“At two o'clock, pilot whales,”  
the captain repeats  
as waves toss the boat.*

*The photographer focuses his camera.  
The camera lens, a compass,  
tries to find the navigator  
guiding the group.*

*Instead of a leader, the photographer  
captures synchronization—  
the pilot whales swim parallel to each other  
keeping pace with the boat.*

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**Lily Lured**

Michael Baldwin

*A bevy of  
ostentatious  
orange tiger  
lilies flirt  
brazenly  
extenuated  
stems nodding  
metronomically  
tockly ticking  
syncopated  
jaunty  
breeze jazz  
wooing  
the wan world  
beckoning  
somber bees  
flaunting  
flamboyant color  
Lacking  
fragrance their  
extravagant  
anthers lick up  
sun-honey  
proud in their  
pulchritude  
such an ugly name  
for beauty*

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**Empty Ocean**

Michael Baldwin

*Like the Earth itself, we are mostly ocean,  
each embodied human cell a tight, tiny puddle  
of salt water tiding constantly in response to*

*our heart's moon. Our each interior ocean is  
alive with microbiota living lustily, perhaps  
praying vainly to this god they ignorantly inhabit.*

*And we ignore our constituent cells, inherently  
incommunicado, trusting them to do their duties  
(as they mostly do), while we despoil our world  
with heat-hoarding gases and lust for gain, loath  
to love our Earth like the mother body She is,  
expecting a deus ex machina technology rescue,  
or praying our God will provide a miracle.*

*Our world ocean follows Earth's ever-falling,  
dust-dry moon, that constantly calls the water  
toward itself, greedily, and will do so even  
after there are no whales, sharks, or little fish  
to feel its tidal surge upon the global sea stir.*

*Waves and storms will anger the ocean,  
will monster as the oceans hot up,  
expand, rise another two hundred feet  
as Earth goes iceless, suddenly sunburned.  
Swarming jellyfish may monopolize those  
barren, blighted waters, but little else.*

*What will Luna's envious gaze make of Gaia's  
capricious wardrobe? Hurricanes will swirl  
in deadly ballet upon her warming seas, while  
fire storms dance like furies through forests,  
cities, suburbs, farms. Jungles, callously  
converted to monocultures for cows  
and money trees, will aridify to desert.*

*Glaciers and sea ice swiftly succumb  
to total melt, so deserts and arid plains  
will replace tundra and meadow.  
Hundreds of species of flora and fauna  
will fall extinct with each monthly sequence  
of the jealous moon.*

*Our bodies' micro-oceans, each and all, will spill  
themselves to air or earth, reliably returning to  
the always ocean whence we anciently emerged.  
Humanity's hubris will pass unnoticed, our time  
a mere drop in the sea of Earth's antiquity, while  
even this barren ocean will submissively mambo,*

*ever in thrall to the eons-eager craving of Earth's  
thirsty moon ~ as unquenchable as ourselves.*

CONTEMPORARY

### A Word to the Dumb

Paul Murgatroyd

*Portending the end of days,  
a man-child has been born,  
with wolf-heads on his chest and knees and elbows,  
crying: 'Kill, baby, kill!'  
Soon stone will rise up against stone,  
every creature will look to heaven and tremble,  
locusts with human hair will strip seas and lands bare,  
wormwood will infect rivers, infest streams and lakes,  
suns will scorch the soil to ashes  
and mountains will be engulfed by bleeding oceans.  
Such are the fruits of your torpor,  
Apathy's child.*

### About the poets

**Walt Whitman** (1819–92) was an American poet, essayist and journalist. He incorporated both transcendentalism and realism in his writings.

**Ava Bird** is a multi-versed artist who is continually grateful to and inspired by and on Mother Earth. She has written in many forms and published widely, though greatly censored! She has written several poetry books and is a featured columnist on the New American Dream show. Her art and creations have been seen in galleries around the US, and her poetry, art and stories are published internationally. She has a collectable trio of Zen poetry books, and her book *Magical Moments* was released in 2022.

**Brice Maiurro** is a Colorado, USA, poet, workshop facilitator, storyteller and artist. He is the Editor-in-Chief of South Broadway Press. He has authored four collections of poetry, including *The Heart is an Undertaker Bee*, published by Middle Creek Publishing. His work has been published by *Voice & Verse*, *Tiny Spoon* and *Inverted Syntax*. Themes of his work include human connection, ecology and finding the divine in the mundane.

**AJ Dalton** is a UK-based writer. He's published the *Empire of the Saviours* trilogy with Gollancz Orion, *The Satanic in Science Fiction and Fantasy* with Luna Press, the *Dark Woods Rising* poetry collection with Starship Sloane, and other bits and bobs. He lives with his monstrously oppressive cat named Cleopatra.

**Moira Nicholson** is a neurodivergent person with a doodling habit. She also works in colour pencil, ceramics and needle felting... just about any medium other than paint. She is a member of the Hawaii Writers Guild, and two of her poems were published in 66: *The Linn-Benton Community College's Journal of Art and Creative Writing*.

**Rev'd Allen Doyle**, originally from the Duck River watershed in Tennessee, USA, now lives on the Laramie Plains in Wyoming with his wife Michaela, and dog Brie. Professionally, Allen is the Director of Campus Ministry for the Episcopal Church in Wyoming and an Adjunct Instructor of Religion at the University of Wyoming.

**Sandra M Grayson's** poetry and fiction explore intersections among nature, communication and worldviews. Through her website *Anumpa Nan Anoli*, she is helping to preserve traditional Choctaw stories.

**Michael Baldwin** has written many poems on ecological themes. He has a 100-page book of poetry on the climate change crisis. He has also published seven volumes of poetry, two of which won contests.

**Paul Murgatroyd** is a professor of Classics who retired nine years ago and took up creative writing. So far he has had published or accepted for publication 22 poems in English, over 100 Latin poems, four prose poems and 64 short stories.