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, ecopoets 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.

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?

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*.