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The Write Place at the Write Time

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About this image: This picture symbolizes the last two seasons of the year.

We see the luscious, mature Autumn beauty, when we reap the last harvest, then witness the stunning transformation of the foliage, an explosion of vibrant color.

The birds are fewer now, no doubt most have flown to warmer climes. The figure of Winter is being shielded by beautiful Autumn, he tries to hide his face behind a mask, until at last he cannot help but be revealed.

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In its own way the last and oldest season of the year is equally beautiful, as the wind blows through the leafless branches revealing their skeletal nakedness. So quiet are the falling snowflakes that make a soft white quilt upon the land, covering all but the hardiest plants and fauna; most must take refuge and rest as the earth does until spring returns once more.

But, now we smell the aromatic smoke of logs burning, gather evergreens and hope to celebrate the joyous festivals of mid-winter. —Antoinette Campbell-Hunter, RI, USA. Copyright 2016.

The Mask

by Anne Whitehouse

The walrus ivory is stained dark from long burial in the earth. It will never be white again.

The animal face catalyzes spirits deep within us.

Shadows come alive, and a night-veiled girl dances in a circle of light. Like smoke above a fire, she sways and dissolves.

Wisdom is in the knot threaded through the mask, the braided tassel trembling on its own, without a touch of hand or air.

Bio- Anne Whitehouse is pleased to appear in *The Write Place at the Write Time* once again. She received the 2015 Nazim Hikmet poetry award and the 2016 *Songs of Eretz* poetry prize. Her sixth poetry collection, *Meteor Shower*, is available from Dos Madres Press, and her novel *Fall Love* will be appearing in Spanish translation as *Amigos y amantes* from Mundi Books.

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Harrowing Hallows' Evening

by David Anthony Sam

I am sorry but I cannot believe you in your total absence from everywhere except in resurrections of dreams.

I am sorry that I witnessed your body gaping mouthed from loosing soul to its escape wherever it goes now.

I am sorry that I touched a cold shell that was not you. Although you had once been so cold and rigid in your living,

you were not so when you fell back into your death chair while playing with the children in your store.

I am sorry it has been seven years that I have hoped to reawaken you to your deep voice and lighter smiles.

Today, Halloween, your favorite of holidays, I look into the masks of every ringer of our door and hope

to see your black eyes filled with sparks of laughter, pretending that you do not now wear death as your ever costume.

I am sorry that, as I go to sleep, I still am trying to let you go, so you can lay the path I have to follow in my own way.

If you can, make the way clear, as once you did, holding my hand along dark streets, showing me the tricks of shadows Poetry Page 4 of 16

on older All Saints Eves when spirits rose and memories were made. I am sorry that I still jump at such old ghosts.

Halloween

by David Anthony Sam

In magic we surrender the duty of being ourselves, the obligation to ourselves, and the responsibility of what we might have meant.

Abracadabra, and we are free of everything but the results of our fear.

Bio- Born in Pennsylvania, David Anthony Sam now lives in Culpeper, Virginia with his wife and life partner, Linda, and serves as president of Germanna Community College. He has two collections: *Dark Land, White Light* (1974, 2014) and *Memories in Clay, Dreams of Wolves* (2014) and his poetry has appeared in over 50 journals and e-magazines. Sam was the featured poet in the Winter 2016 issue of *The Hurricane Review* and in 2015 was twice nominated for the Pushcart Prize.

Songs Like Consciences Laid Out

by Sandra Kolankiewicz

Instead, you give yourself away, a tell visible to all except you, your thin dimension rubbing up against mine, still somehow connected to the man across the room in his own thoughts until he sees yours. I ruin the party by talking of how we're alone in a group, each no more than the phone in his pocket. No one sings at gatherings these days unless there are

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musicians, our underpaid cheerleaders, their songs like consciences laid out on the table next to the cheese tray, a good singalong found just at camp, sitting around a fire under the stars possible only because there are no towers or satellites. Our itchings and leanings sit there for all, though someone rarely watches, the world one type of advertisement, then another, with episodes in between.

Advice from the Beyond

by Sandra Kolankiewicz

Before coupling, we ranked the world's problems in order of importance. He put the treatment of women nearly at the bottom, right above animal rights. I stared at the page, waiting to ask how he thought the economic subjugation of females was separated from his number one choice: finances. Nature found itself near the middle because he liked to hunt. Over the bed my grandmother was floating, the one person who took the time to understand even up until she died, not speaking when she arrived, the silence of one who's always laughing more powerful than eyebrows. She never raised her voice nor looked like my mother. The list trembled in his hand as the bed dipped with my rising, the slipping on of the skin I'd let fall as if forever, like I were wearing another woman's clothes now on a body escaped in a stairway unfamiliar, Nana seeing me home.

When One Thought Becomes Another

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by Sandra Kolankiewicz

and Of course One wants To say It, but Then the Line slips Away, curls Up like An old

Memory and Goes to Sleep, whatever
I meant To say Less important Than what

Lets out Now. For Who wants To move On to The obvious. And who Desires to Shake

what Is supposed To be Solid and seems to Be holding Without being Tested?

the Worst surprise You could Have would Be what Everyone warned You about, Like a

Threat spoken With kind Words. yes. I have Spoiled in Irredeemable ways While at The

same Time i Was dignifying Others, adaptive, Attracted and Repulsed like

Magnets propel Me to Accelerate.

Bio- Since 1980, over 300 of Sandra Kolankiewicz's poems and stories have appeared in reviews and anthologies, most recently in *New World Writing, BlazeVox, Gargoyle, Prairie Schooner, Fifth Wednesday, ArGiLo, Prick of the Spindle, Per Contra,* and *Pif. Turning Inside Out* won the Black River Prize at Black Lawrence Press. Finishing Line Press published *The Way You Will Go. When I Fell,* a novel with 76 color illustrations by Kathy Skerritt, was released by Web-e-Books.

*

by Simon Perchik

On the way up this darkness must sense it's more wax letting the varnish take forever Poetry Page 7 of 16

though you count how high a second time—these shelves aren't restless enough, here

for the fire all wood is sent for —in every room! caskets stacked as if from behind

the wall would reach around smelling from bark, roots and the uncontrollable embrace

heating your cheek the way rain returns to lower its face on the dirt that never moves: these boards

kept open for a dry rag all night rubbing your forehead darker and darker, almost there.

Bio- Simon Perchik is an attorney whose poems have appeared in *Partisan Review, The Nation, Poetry, Osiris, The New Yorker* and elsewhere. His most recent collection is *Almost Rain*, published by River Otter Press (2013). For more information, including free e-books and his essay titled "Magic, Illusion and Other Realities" please visit his website:

www.simonperchik.com

Exertion

by Gary Beck

The open air café is closed now. Customers who lingered all day nursing a cup of coffee, may or may not miss watching people pass by, observing the oddities, the proud beauty strutting, the young prince of the city ambitions not yet defeated,

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an abundance of obesity, most of all, faces of fear dissolving from constant stress in the never ending effort to subsist in trying times.

Bio- Gary Beck has spent most of his adult life as a theater director, and as an art dealer when he couldn't make a living in theater. He has 11 published chapbooks. His poetry collections include: Days of Destruction (Skive Press), Expectations (Rogue Scholars Press), Dawn in Cities, Assault on Nature, Songs of a Clerk, Civilized Ways, Displays (Winter Goose Publishing). Fault Lines, Perceptions, Tremors and Perturbations will be published by Winter Goose Publishing. Conditioned Response (Nazar Look). Resonance (Dreaming Big Press). His novels include: Extreme Change (Cogwheel Press) Acts of Defiance (Artema Press), Flawed Connections (Black Rose Writing). Call to Valor will be published by Gnome on Pigs Productions. His short story collection, A Glimpse of Youth (Sweatshoppe Publications) was published in 2013. Now I Accuse and other stories will be published by Winter Goose Publishing. His original plays and translations of Moliere, Aristophanes and Sophocles have been produced Off Broadway. His poetry, fiction and essays have appeared in hundreds of literary magazines. He currently lives in New York City.

In Sickness and in Health

by Carole Mertz

The seed within us has cracked.
We have changed from within as we cope with the Without.

Four days of hospital stays: Five medical teams; twelve tests. Our personal test: abiding with patience, together.

A diagnosis is made. The inner strength released, past the Poetry Page 9 of 16

outer shell. Time to renew, develop a plan.

What strange path to growth! Calling first for our shells to be broken. Only God knows how it is done.

Bio- The latest poems of Carole Mertz appeared in *The Write Place at the Write Time, Indiana Voice Journal, Pyrokinection*, and *WestWard Quarterly*. Two poems are forthcoming in Kind of a Hurricane Press print anthologies. A recent pantoum won in Wilda Morris's Poetry Challenge. Carole's reviews of poetry collections appear regularly online at *Mom Egg Review* and elsewhere. Carole wrote a collection of devotions for the developmentally disabled. She lives with her husband in Parma, Ohio.

The Seasons and the Slants

by Michael Lee Johnson

I live my life inside my patio window.

It's here, at my business desk, I slip into my own warm pajamas and slippers—seek Jesus, come to terms with my own cross and brittle conditions. Outside, winter night turns to winter storm, the blue jay, cardinal, sparrows and doves go into hiding, away from the razor whipping winds, behind willow tree bare limb branches—they lose their faces in somber hue. Their voices at night abbreviate and are still, short like Hemingway sentences. With this poetic mind, no one cares about the seasons and the slants the wind or its echoes.

Sundown, Fall

by Michael Lee Johnson

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Fall, everything is turning yellow and golden. No wind, Indian summer, bright day, wind charms with a native enchantment, last brides marry before first snowfall, grass growth slows down, retreats, bushes cut back with chills, retreats, haven of the winter grows legs, strong, learns baby steps, pushes itself up slowly against my patio door, freezes, and says, "soon, soon, Spring, I'll be there." Winter is sweeping up what is left of fall, making room for shorter day's longer nights. I hear the echoes of the change of seasons, until next sundown sunflowers grow.

If I Were Young Again

by Michael Lee Johnson

Piecemeal summer dies: long winter spreads its blanket again.

For ten years I have lived in exile, locked in this rickety cabin, shoulders jostled up against open Alberta sky.

If I were young again, I'd sing of coolness of high mountain snow flowers, sprinkle of night glow-blue meadows; I would dream and stretch slim fingers into distant nowhere, yawn slowly over endless prairie miles.

The grassland is where in summer silence grows; in evening eagles spread their wings dripping feathers like warm honey.

If I were young again, I'd eat pine cones, food of birds, share meals with wild wolves; I'd have as much dessert as I wanted, reach out into blue sky, lick the clouds off my fingertips.

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But I'm not young anymore and my thoughts tormented are raw, overworked, sharpened with misery from torture of war and childhood. For ten years now I've lived locked in this unstable cabin,

inside rush of summer winds, outside air beaten dim with snow.

Bio- Michael Lee Johnson lived ten years in Canada during the Vietnam era. He is a poet, editor, publisher, freelance writer, amateur photographer, small business owner in Itasca, IL. Mr. Johnson has been published in more than 925 small press magazines online and in print. His poems have appeared in 27 countries as of this date; he edits, publishes 10 different poetry sites, with over 100 videos on YouTube. Michael Lee Johnson was nominated for two Pushcart Prize awards for poetry 2015, and Best of the Net, 2016.

Leave-taking

by Patrick Theron Erickson

Starting out

mere nubbins on bare branches and expecting limbs

bearing the brunt of late frosts

of March winds and the ides thereof

of spring rains

the sudden thrust of thunderstorms and mushrooms

and the heat of summer

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a haven for the webs of spiders and webworms

for birds and squirrels and blight

the boughs less heavy burdened

bending and bucking up

who can say whether the trees release them

or they let loose of the trees

And we

less heavy burdened ourselves

will we turn over new leaves

or will they too take leave of us?

Bio- Patrick Theron Erickson, a retired parish pastor put out to pasture himself, has work which has appeared in *Former People, Literati Quarterly, Burningword Literary Journal, Crack the Spine,* and *Grey Sparrow Journal,* among other publications, and more recently in *The Penwood Review, Tipton Poetry Journal, Lavender Wolves Literary Journal, Futures Trading, Wilderness House Literary Review* and *Danse Macabre.*

Speak to Me in Touch

by Laura A. Lord

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Fingers that traced lightly along the porcelain expanse of skin there, at the base of my hairline, along the back of my neck. My spinal cord became the railroad track for the bullet of your lust and the pads of your fingers slid and bumped gracefully down the archa bridge that allowed for the passing of conversations we had been avoiding like a dark plague. Infesting our home, fleas in the carpets were words unsaid. Bedbugs line the distance between our bodies at night, our own Berlin Wall. Spiders strung webs of melancholy through the doorways and hung from the banisters and caught my feet from under me and sent me sprawling into your arms. I'm still here. I'm still here.

Bio- Laura A. Lord is the author of numerous collections of vignettes and poetry and one awesome children's book about a T-Rex screwing up her entire day. It's absolutely a true story. Laura's work has been featured in *The Beacon, Mirrored Voices, The Collegian, Precipice, Massacre Magazine, Tipsy Lit, The Reverie Journal*, and *Whirl with Words*. She is one of the founding members of *The Reverie Journal* and Book Genesis, a book editing and marketing company. Laura is also an editor for *Birth Without Fear*. Laura lives with her husband and three children on the Eastern Shore of Maryland.

The Endless Sensations

by Linda Neuer

The endless sensations of scent, sound, touch, taste

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running, running
your body and mind
all the time. Instantly,
you must be gratified. Leaving
everyone you lie to
and lie with unsatisfied.
You cannot be true to your form,
neither man or beast. Caught
in the chemical snares of attraction
and addiction, you constantly
hunt new prey who believe. Charming
in moonlight, from a grin to a growl,
your trail gone cold by daybreak.

Bio- Linda Neuer is from Miami, Florida. Recently, some of her poems have been published in *Jupiter*, *Quantum Poetry Magazine*, *Tattoo Highway*, *Lily*, *Sangam*, *Abyss and Apex*, and *Astropoetica*.

Tea Leaves Reading

by Lana Bella

I am a girl who reads tea leaves, with serpents and butterflies milling in tepid water, funneling ethereal things into a universe anchored by luck and optimism.

But, it's December, and you are elsewhere, the fleur-de-lis congeals on the bottom of the cup-like remains of your collapsed steps lingering on the porch.

My eyes gaze up to the million displaced stars who pull timidly at my heart's strings then out to the slimness of your cool irises that Poetry Page 15 of 16

> are long polluted by the myths laying secreted beneath my tongue.

Bio- A Pushcart nominee, Lana has work of poetry and fiction published and forthcoming with over 170 journals including Abyss & Apex, Chiron Review, Coe Review, Columbia Journal, Foundling Review, Fourth & Sycamore, Galway Review, Harbinger Asylum, Literary Orphans, Lost Coast Review, Pinyon Review, Poetry Salzburg Review, Poetry Quarterly, Roanoke Review, William Jessup University, and elsewhere, among others. Her chapbook, *Under My Dark* (Crisis Chronicles Press) was released winter 2016. She divides her time between the US and the coastal town of Nha Trang, Vietnam, where she is a mom of two far-too-clever-frolicsome imps.

https://www.facebook.com/niaallanpoe

Melting

by Ginger Peters

As my body melted into the earth I smelled the aroma of rich soil. I saw the architectural genius of the ant colonies and the enormous amounts of food they stored. I saw miles of tunnels running in every direction, an underground pathway for the rabbits, mice, gophers, ground squirrels, and snakes following closely behind. I heard the rumbling of thousands of worms, twisting and turning and defecating into the ground, hoping for another dead thing to feed upon. I saw the mighty roots of trees, so strong, so wise. As I sank deeper, I saw arrowheads, pieces of pottery, wagon wheels, and skeletons of previous beings that once lived before me. I wanted to be sucked in deeper and see if there was really a hell, but the earth refused my request and began pushing me

I am whole again now—

I will melt into the ground at a different time—the last time.

Bio- Ginger Peters is a freelance poet and writer living in Santa Fe, NM. She has sold poetry and nonfiction to a variety of magazines over the past twenty-five years. She enjoys

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family, friends, walking, yoga, and is a member of the Thubten Norbu Ling Buddhist Center in Santa Fe. She tries to live by the philosophy of loving kindness, compassion, and growing in wisdom.

Contentment

by Lois Greene Stone

Autumn colors cling to trees and lawns; the distinct aroma of crumbling leaves lingers as branches become bare for winter. Contemplation. If I were to know my eyes might not see this season again, and I looked at all the autumns I've witnessed, what, if I'd the chance, would I have done differently? Reaching for a loved one's hand, as reds, golds slide off branches, I have my answer. What, looking back, would I have done differently: Nothing.

Bio- Lois Greene Stone, writer and poet, has been syndicated worldwide. Poetry and personal essays have been included in hard & softcover book anthologies. Collections of her personal items/photos/memorabilia are in major museums including twelve different divisions of The Smithsonian.

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