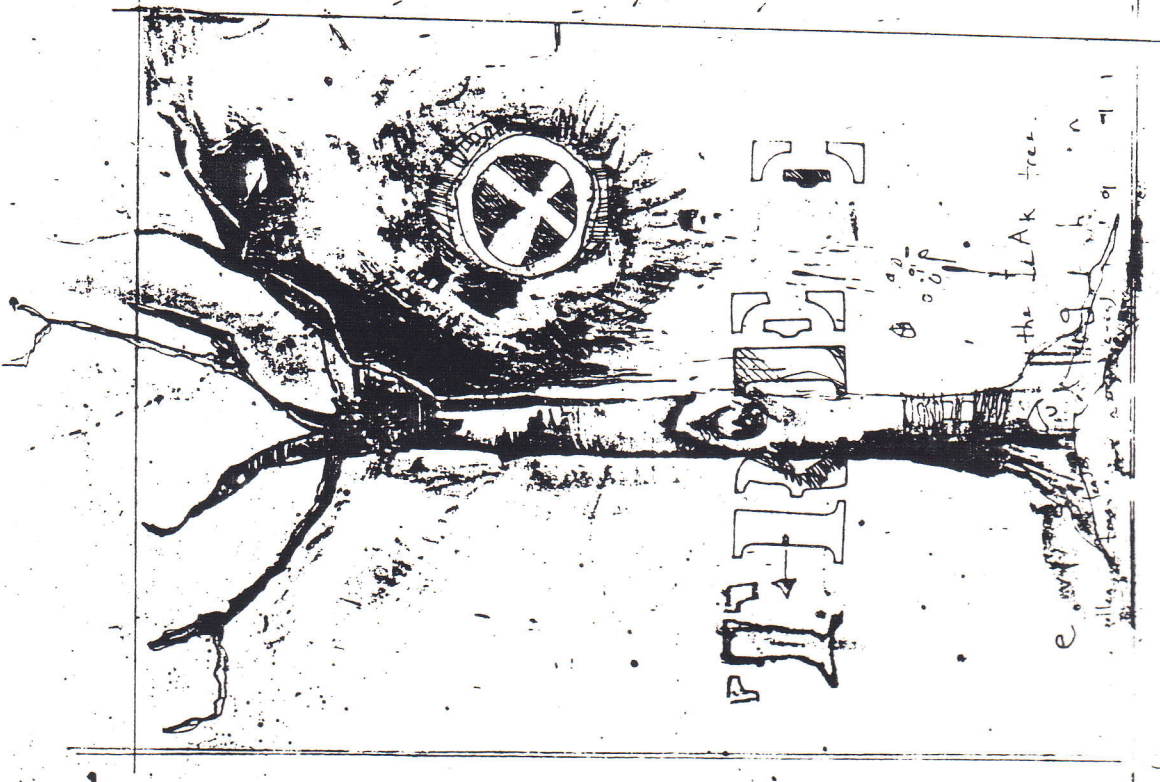


ALBATROSS



#7

The Anabiosis Press, Inc.
125 Horton Avenue
Englewood, FL 34223

"God save thee, ancient Mariner!
 From the fiends that plague thee thus!--
 Why lookst thou so?"--With my crossbow
 I shot the ALBATROSS.

ALBATROSS

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Editors: Richard Smyth and Richard Brobst

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The ALBATROSS accepts submissions of original poetry, black-ink drawings, and short interviews with established poets. Please mail all correspondence to ALBATROSS, 125 Horton Avenue, Englewood, FL 34223. We do not appreciate receiving simultaneous submissions and later finding out that poems submitted to us were accepted elsewhere, so please do not do this. Be sure to include a self-addressed, stamped envelope with all correspondence. Any contributions and donations will be used solely for the purpose of maintaining this publication.

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E.G. BURROWS

The Leaves in their Decline

Rainstrewn between hemlock and cello
the golden coda of maple hands
descending through the halts and delays of bare branches
that could be that man's choirs that man's salvages . . .

Today the thrushes have arrived
by their hundred stages from the iced spruce
and meres of emerald, their grace notes held
for wet weather, their lyres in abeyance.

I may never hear their music: the hermits
in their reverberent groves, their cavernous cathedrals.
Their silence among these yellow leaves
will not endanger, is gentle enough.

As for poets, the discordant ones like altos:
they make a loud noise in the forest. They dismay.

Woodisman

The axe could have cut you in two
if you had stood still like the alders,
each one with its hashmark, a boy's work,
though how could he be lost, turned blindfold
three times on this blazed trail,
the Interstate in one ear, the ballfield upwind?

The trees were a few we had saved
for their poor shade or the memory of it,
a bird here and there, though now

we are afraid of our own children,
everything sharp in their hands like
rage: needles, names, blades.

Did he think our small wilderness counterfeit,
not a vestige but another
deception like our love, the mechanical

devices buried under a bush,
a gray bird inside the loudspeaker?
You could be cut in two

if you stood too near, too late
for the axe to recognize you and leave
only a split heart carved in the tree.

In Praise

My Father,
the carriage artist
restores for me
what was lost in the darkest
phases. With wings at his fingers,
great wings, with thunder
arching at the tips,
he reaches forward
while I am reaching back.

He blows upon a wooden flute,
bangs the drum
its surface tied and taut.

He sits on the bank of the river,
watches his sins float slowly by.
He is unwept.

He looks towards the sky.
He remains pitiful
while dressed in garments like the sun.

How he set stones with his hands,
How he fashioned his cloak,
How he knew fire, the force
of understanding within him.

How, steeped in blood,
wrapped in pity, he admonished me.
He has names for what I do not know.
His light within, walks small beneath.
He knows nothing of his age,
or of his crudeness.

He is coarse, of leather and earth.
I listen and gesture,
moving my hands in his manner.
He is my father.

I am unable to escape
his ways.

Everything Has Been Said Before

We all presume too much.
Your hands stiff on my neck,
the foreseeable dream
tomorrow: draw water, work
the plough, patch
the south field fence
in the green sun of spring.
Already, words repeat themselves
from memory. You taught me
everything I know
about boundaries:
the unending river
flows east, white hills
shimmer to the north,
to the south—swamp,
west—desert.
And beyond all this,
more of the same.
We go back inside
to the kitchen of our beliefs.
We all know more than this.
Behind our eyes we see
our eyes and everything
they see, deep down, we know.

Red Flush

You interrupt cards to ask
if it's the same alone.
You smile. My trump.
You know I need both
this hand and the next.

I'm playing cards with you.
That's all. Face cards are ten
and jokers don't count.
The rules are fixed,
this isn't for money.

I am your biographer,
dusky and patient.
I am your broom.
I gather old pieces of you.

What I hear, flat, off key
—my eyes take control, squint
and the sky tightening

—one bird is always rain, the other
a soft hillside
and that girl I almost forgot

arching her still warm tongue —my ear
hardly moving and yet these birds
find me

—you didn't know her
didn't hear the darkness
and deep in my ear

still troubled, unstrung
—do you remember suddenly too close
—the chicks half hidden, their nest

mid-air —those two huge crows
in close formation
—the flapping cry to your heart.

What I hear, my eyes shaping a sky
that won't seem right, you
will be gone, covered with wings

with what's broken from my eyes
in pieces, still warm, deeper, deeper
and my ear thrown to the ground

—you didn't hear
or when the sky comes at night
to make room for birds and overflowing.

*Proem: Noyade**

The grackles toe and peck
the wrack, *noyade* of passing
night, the harbor's faded
bric-a-brac. It is morning,

and if you think the way
a waking bird does, you have
been up since the light,
the belly for a notion, all

your senses expectant maws
and tongues. A black bird
at the shore! A fish crow
at low tide, the little god

of hunger, my patronizing
saint, one on whom the wings
are always becoming, bearing,
as they do, their own shadow

inside: Tell, what it's like—
a likeness I would settle for—
to have an appetite that doesn't
pull you under, doesn't kill?

**Noyade*: French, execution by drowning

Chameleon

on a sandy
beach, a
lizard
disappears

under a leaf,
it becomes a
leaf

beside an
aging tree,
it is
brown and
slow

in the shadows,
it is lost

on a branch,
it is a stem

above a rock,
it is stoic
and looks at me
with hard eyes

Amazons

A pride of thirty lionesses has no pride,
but as single pre-phalanx wall of blond muscle,
pure infantry, slides in one hunger
through the one darkness— patient as desert wind,
insect heat— slides motionless
as the deep sea, stone-minded in its one dream
rivered with tendons.

What awaits this

in the brush, in the shadow burrows
and ruts of the night wind, must dream
mouths larger than prairies, frieze
in the moonlight nameless
as stars falling— impala become Impala,
wart hog Wart Hog, its rivetting shrill shriek
a rending of metal—
night erupting into bonfire—
claws, teeth, flesh,
kin and carcass— mandarin faces
sleeked in blood, scarred-senile
by the anarchy of kill.

Later they'll greet the dawn—
lolling, licking each other, satisfied
they've kept the universe open, the tall dead rising.

Paula Santonocito

Life During Peacetime

We turn our tails around,
once again surprised
by the animal component. This new enemy
pounces much like another.

A foreign capital and ochre dust
sweep suddenly
across the screen.

And the boys will not walk
quietly through the streets tonight.

Land floats on a bed
of water. Ships lie in the harbors
there. The television calculates
images, like odds, like hours.

Mothers search the eyes
of small boys. Fathers know
the earth's lack of balance.

Boots sit in the basement.
Above them, a broken
cigar box. In it, what could
be brought back.
Not what can be saved.

Susan Landgraf

Sub to Whales, Sub to Whales

Killer whales, orcas, humpbacks
sleek divers in your litany of bubbles
and sounds, forgive these steel fish
living long and quiet
quieter marking
enemies, friends.

Don't be afraid.

Blue forget-me-nots died
under our boots:
we still have trails.

The desert bloomed
with a deadly light;
we lived.

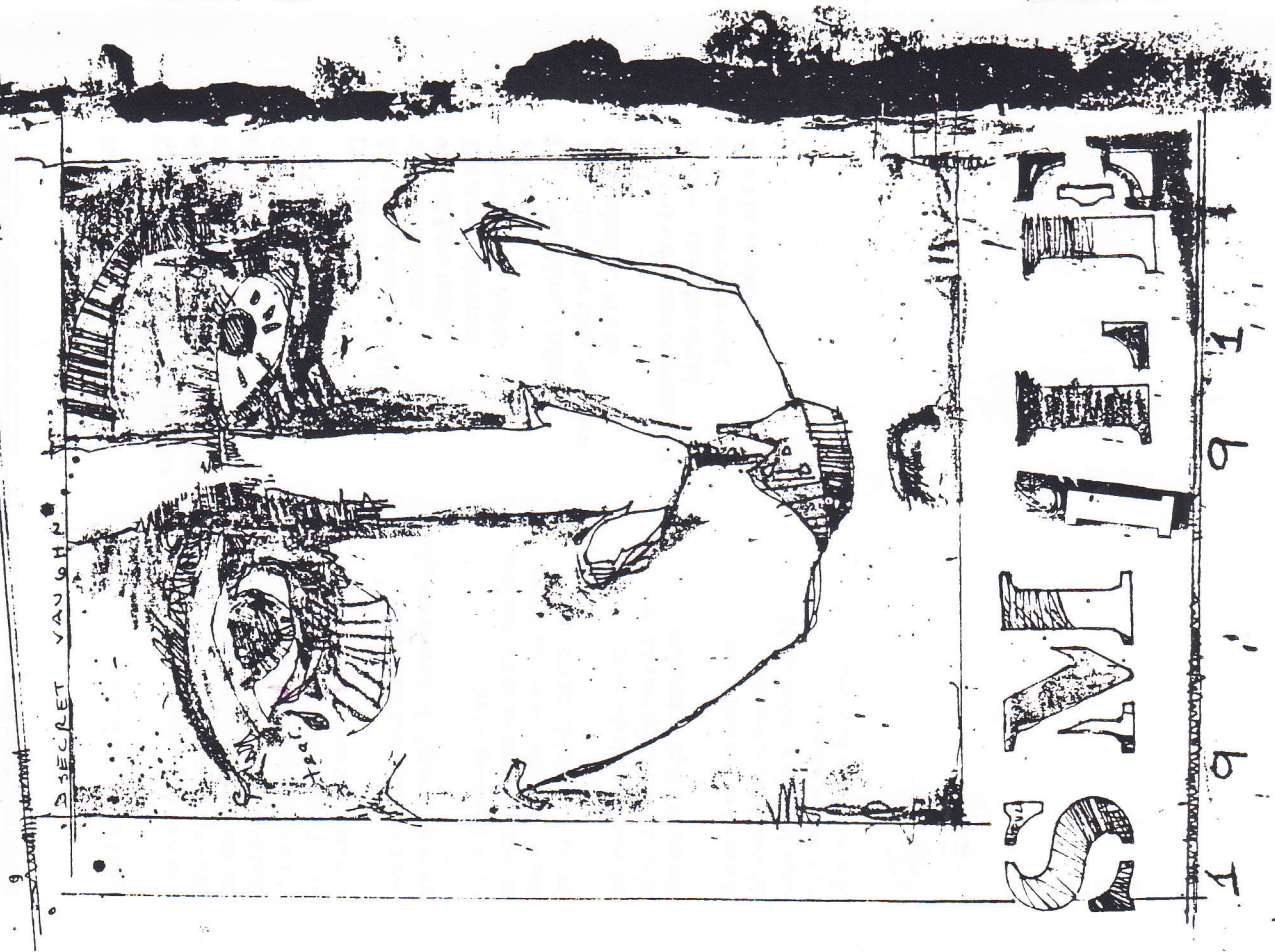
The cornfields are filled
with silos. The silos are filled
with missiles. We eat.

Pretend we're one of your kind
whales. Don't be afraid
of what we've birthed.
Don't be afraid.

Joy Rick Atkins

Deja Vu

Some antique memory dwells in me.
If one chose to scan my former
life, one far removed from casual
scrutiny, they would find that I
once raised my voice to greet an
ancient moon, circled frigid snow,
then lay with tail tucked under
welcome tail. Perhaps I led
a valiant pack that stalked
wind-bare hills seeking sustenance
in wary prey. Or perhaps I was
a lonely outcast, cold, hungry,
searching frosted plains.
I empathize with creatures
forced to roam a callous world.
Once, surely, I was one of these.



Coyote

When the last tongue of moonlight
laps the stillness from the house,
and the only voice alive
is a dog who bays in the distance,
then you wake. Your cries are bone
thinned to marrow, an ache in the center
of my veins. I hold you in.
The dull sound swells around me.

I hold your shaking body
like my breathing fills my ribs.
Opening the door, I step
into porchlight. Our horizon
is a brown thread spooling south.
I hold you like that distance
spirals wide. When coyotes cry,
you smile, as if you knew each
secret anguish that they sang.
Some grief needs deeper speaking.

Your tiny fists stop flailing.
Coyotes stop their baying.
We go in. You will forget
the words you know now, the tongue
of animals trapped.

You will
grow up. You will always cry
at this hour of the night.

Wolf Dream

The wolf has come from between my legs howling—
bloodied, animal-minded,
wild-bodied birth.

I am the strong woman
riding a wolf over hills,
grey blood-flecked
running hot fur between my thighs,
under the ice-white trees,
wolves falling from the branches,
snow falling from the sky,
howling moon,
wolf voices in my stomach,
the animal mind grows—
with my tongue I feel the mountain in my mouth
with wolf teeth there—

we are similar, electric, fur-minded—
It is the clawing in my body that awakens me.

Where there are red berries
growing, the snow stills from falling,
the sun melts the howling into a room
with a fireplace and a fire
where the children laugh, eat cinnamon toast,
and play they are grown
laughing,
and at the edges
of the room
inside the shadows
bright fire-flecked eyes,
fur, stone claws, whiskers, eyes,
the wolves encircle the children
and dream.
The wolves are waiting.
The mother sings.

Lenny Dellarocca

The Eleventh Commandment

It is the moon's apple that she eats
and her mouth is full of blood.

Her breasts go tender and fill up.
She is a flooded woman.

The fever of her abdomen
tightens the reigns of its horse.

She lies on a cloth that soaks up her fluid.
Her hands, full of blood, held up to the moon.

She obeys its sole commandment:
there are no men.

Fire and stone beat in her eyes.
Animals in the jungle howl at her fumes.

It's as if Eve's apple went liquid
and spilled between her legs.

The smell of the garden rotting there,
the heart of men broken in her wound.

Lenny Dellarocca

She Reads a Poem That Changes the World

Your hair is blood in my hands.

You're speaking, reading from a poem
or a dream where you rise

at the foot of some creature's bed,
and I harbor an impulse to cry out—

I must have that longing for myself,
be the object in which you unleash

whatever form of rage you keep like
a bird beneath your breathing.

Such a white, full face, and how soft
the tender skin feels on my thumb;

your lips burst about your mouth
in flames.

You read while the air passes from
your lungs,

syllables dancing in my heart.
I hear the pounding of your words

and offer mine; we are not all that alone
at least not until the world,

for each of us, ascends the stairs.
Unleash those words for me

while my hands tangle in your hair,
tell me deeper things and I will

tell you my retaliation against
the storm of life:

I am a tree whose leaves have fallen,
they rush to the sky and a lone bird

sits among the spare branches.
I walk down the steps of your voice,

the handrail polished and long,
to the bottom where your heart

throws itself against the cage.
You continue to read and I dream

your hands grow into violets
shimmering in a stone vase

upon a windowsill of a castle
where I wait in a large room,

my bare feet can feel the cold floor
and the light coming through the window

is a poem.
It is the body heat of hands

when love is furious and forgiven.
It is not chance that thunder comes

on the sparkling feet of lightning;
drums bang against the moon

only at certain moments: when there
is glory, rage or the unspeakable thing—

love, and that is what we ruin
and create for, and then

gradually our hands unclench,
the violets weep in your hair,

and the words, whose syllables
caused the storm, are done.

Polly Buckingham

Middle Beach

You are a note without a body
in the underwater hum and silence,
a mirage on palm fronds,

a pink conch inside,
a soft oyster offering
on round bread.

On the beach road venetian blinds
are cracked open. Gulls hover grey
against the white hotel wall.
Someone throws bread crumbs.

Light pours through the keyhole
crack in my wall. I press
one eye over the hole.
Many white birds scatter like
doves in a sand dollar,

and I receive you, my body
a murex, whelk, moonshell.

Alan Britt

"The Familiar Frightens More Than the Unknown."
—Duane Locke

My breath, an ocean
in one hair.

The white caps sail
far away
into the chest of drawers'
darkened wood.

An eye
speaks from the waves;
a parrotfish
hangs from an eyelash.
I am convinced

that what matters
is not the rows of traffic lights
that sag from heavy wires
and surround the city,
or the sociable cough
on a windy corner,
but the damp heelmark beside ferns near an ocean,
or the yellow light that quickly flies
from the rain heavy squash flower.

What matters
is an ocean and a hair,
the voice inside its nest of flutes,
bleached fingers touching the rotted driftwood
of the wind's bedroom door.

I.R. Solonche

Marsh Hawk

The finished business
of flight,
it has been honed
to furious perfection
by the whetstone of time.

Everything is here,
every part inevitably in place:
wing, beak, talon, eye.
There is nothing more
to be done.

Unless the field mice
grow armor plate,
or develop the skunk's foul howitzer,
or shrink to the size of ants,

or unless the sky,
somehow,
changes.

Carol Miller

Discard, Endure, Provide

Beyond flat
pasture of dark
stone, slow cloud,
beyond edge
of pond's polished
pose, where seed
invites soft callers,
yesterday gives a
long look.

Thin sound of
wind stretches stem,
soothes stone.

Creepers, healers,
small breathers,
know low places,
belly of stone.

Trees learn shift,
give shade, hide
noisy mockers.

Earth: discard,
endure, provide.

Blue Alarum

Today the wind blew backwards on the lake, making lapping sounds against the wrong side of the concrete bridge, confusing fishermen whose lines kept blowing back against their boats despite their loud insistence that the waves would change direction soon. Along the edge, mothers warned their splashing children not to swim away from shore into the mad gusts blowing sand across the muddled blue, churning white caps as on a rolling sea instead of dammed up river water with a valley underneath.

Today, the clocks did not run counter to their time; the campers' trucks did not stall on the roads. The mail arrived as usual, a bill or two and ads for fishing gear. The ringing telephone could be heard clear down to the dock above the roaring wind, but by dusk not one catch had been reeled in. At supper, no fresh fish lay on the plate; by midnight, all the puzzled village slept and dreamed the same: the bridge across the once-blue lake now spanned a withered gulch where glassy-eyed children wandered in a baffled daze, their parched mouths drawn in frightening O's and nature did not serve them all their days.

An Interview with Enid Shomer

Enid Shomer's poems have appeared in Poetry, The Paris Review, Tikkun, The New Criterion, Massachusetts Review, etc. She is a 1989 NEA Fellow in Poetry and the author of two collections: Stalking the Florida Panther (1988), which won The Word Works Book Prize in 1987, and This Close to the Earth, due out in September, 1992 from the University of Arkansas Press. Recently she has been awarded the Celia B. Wagner Award of the Poetry Society of America, the Randall Jarrell Poetry Prize, and the 1992 Willwood Poetry Prize. Shomer's first book of short stories, Imaginary Men, recently won the University of Iowa's Short Fiction Award and will be published next year.

Why did you title your new book *This Close to the Earth*?

I do really yearn to be part of the landscape but know I can't be, just like you can't be unless you give up a lot and go back to the earth, go back to that more primitive lifestyle, what Frost was always writing about but I'm not sure it wasn't in some way a grand affectation for him. By then it was already lost to us, perhaps (I would not want to make that accusation). But I often wonder . . . It means the world to me to even take a walk through a beautiful setting. I just feel really moved by that, and because in some sense it is denied to all of us as a daily experience because of the way we live. So that's a really sincere utterance there, and when I was looking for a title I found great comfort in that line. I have had the requisite number of experiences in nature to understand that there's a real ecstasy available if you are tuned into it and if it suits your temperament. Some don't like the temperament.

The sense of ecstasy is almost literal in "Stalking the Florida Panther," in which you write about "pulling the landscape in" while making love.

It's like you become part of the landscape somehow. I think we're all late-late Romantic poets and we're living in this experience of the lost pastoral. Unless you live on a farm, the land is pretty much lost to all of us as a place that gives us identity. I think it's a very sexual experience for me to even go outdoors! In some sense, because it is lost from our lives. Someone said to me that everyone who used to ride a horse had to have a certain amount of physical courage. It's not like starting a car, which takes no courage. It does take courage to drive a carriage or ride a horse, a certain amount of actual dominance over that horse. So certain things about our way of life have changed people very drastically. Losing the wilderness or landscape is another. I'm not saying everybody's lost it, but it's something I think that we're worried about losing.

And I don't think that city people don't have a landscape but I'm not sure they really live in their landscape anymore because it's so busy and polluted. I think it's very hard to be the animals that we are and not be rooted in some landscape. I think that's a loss. Since we are basically animals, I think we all feel that loss. I think that's why everyone's so concerned with the environment. It's not just a pure survival instinct. People recognize that something's happened, something's shifted. I read somewhere that, up until the time of the high Renaissance, most people never went farther from home than five miles away. So they knew everything intimately—every tree, every rock. I think they were very rooted, in a way that was comforting to them that we don't know about.

In your new book of poems, *This Close to the Earth*, you turn to employing many traditional forms—as many as four sestinas. What's the reason for this "re-version?"

In my case, I really didn't start writing in form although I always was concerned with form and subscribe to the idea that all poems are formal events, all poems have form. I had never really explored form before. What appeals to me about form is that it's a kind of beautiful restraint, it imposes a beautiful restraint. It's like a creative cage, which you sculpt through and around or that you move through or around. I think of it as a creative spur. To me, the sestina is a positively magical form, kind of operatic. It pays such close attention to the word. It's a way of paying respect to six words and all their echoes, and it shows us how interconnected everything in life and language is. That's the meaning of that form—this interconnectedness and this changeability and this iridescent changing surface. So I love that form, not that I try to write them every day—it's exhausting. I imagine that if you love poetry eventually you would explore all the forms. Right now I'm trying to write my first villanelle. So I think that form can be this wonderful creative limitation that makes you reach for something better than what you've reached for. You can do that many ways, either with a received form or by subverting your own form. Sometimes I abandon the form if the poem punches through it, when it becomes so urgent that I can't honor the form, but the form is what got me there. But usually I'll leave it in the form. Form, then, is a wonderful tool I plan to keep on using. I think you can be a modern poet and write sestinas. I don't believe that because "the world doesn't rhyme anymore poetry can't rhyme anymore." I think language is such a rich resource that to limit yourself and say

you're never going to explore forms that have worked for 400 years is—why do that to yourself?

Now that you write fiction as well as poetry—with a degree of success, too, judging from your recent award—how do you determine when to write a story and when to write a poem?

I write fiction when I have to, when the voice won't fit in a poem—it's a different set of imperatives. I think fiction is a different kind of experience for the reader. I guess I prefer poetry above all because it's more intense and many times a more personal experience. I think there are certain subjects or certain voices that don't fit into that scheme. Poetry's really more about language whereas fiction is more about time and causality. I write a lot of narrative poems, but I think complicated narratives work better as fiction. I've never had the experience of trying to make it a poem and having it slop over into a short story. My brain seems able to detect early on between a 5000 word short story and a 50 word poem. I've had the same characters appear in both, especially in my more autobiographical work. But I do feel like I'm using a different part of my creativity when I work on fiction as opposed to when I work on poetry. In both I try to get to a very deep place—I hate the way that sounds—a place where I'm surprised by my own language and thoughts. I think that if you're not surprised it's not leading anywhere. And I've always been trying to find a truth, even though that sounds a little grand. We've all been children and have been lied to, had the world misrepresented or had our experience categorized in a way that's not fitting. So I think that language is one way to reclaim the world.

Do you use your poetry as a kind of therapy?

I really wouldn't say that, although I'd say that all art is pretty cathartic if it's good art. But art is not the same as therapy. It can be therapeutic. Maybe it has been therapeutic, but that's not the reason why I've done it. I've done it because I love poetry and I want to create poems that I like. That I think comes out of a desire to share these little pooled incidences of meaning with other people. Now why artists want to share that is part of the artistic temperament: "Oh, I had this intense experience and I would like you to have it vicariously." There's some sense that if you can shape it enough it would be beautiful enough for someone to take the pain that comes with it or the joy and accept it almost as if they had the experience. That's the trick. That's why we all read

books and go to movies and listen to music. It's to have another experience outside of our body.

What is the role of the poet?

The role of the poet really is to tell the truth. Poetry gets at new realities from new combinations of language. I really believe that. Potentially all language can do this, but in fact it doesn't—it goes down the same grooves in our brain. That's why when you read the newspaper you don't go "aha," because it's familiar, it follows logic. So the job of the poet is to illuminate things through metaphor. The metaphor can grasp things that logic can't even approach. So it's a different kind of thinking, it's a more emotional way to experience the world, a more honest way. Poetry tries to convert language back to a primary experience. So the job of the poet is to grasp what logic can't grasp through metaphor and to get at new realities. I always tell students that it's not an illusion; it is really a new reality. When someone says, "what does this poem mean?" all you can do is read the poem again, ultimately. Only the words know. Language wants to make sense, and it's the poet's job to write poems that try to tap in to that natural ability of language to combine in fascinating ways.

Contributor's Notes

Joy Rick Atkins has had several short stories published and many poems in such small press journals as *ORPHIC LUTE*, *MIDWEST POETRY REVIEW*, *BIG-TWO HEARTED*, *ALURA*, and *CONNECTICUT RIVER REVIEW*.

Alan Britt has published three chapbooks, *THE AFTERNOON OF THE LIGHT*, *I SUPPOSE THE DARKNESS IS OURS*, and *WE FOLLOW NIGHT*, and has published poems in numerous journals.

Polly Buckingham lived in Florida for ten years and most recently worked on boats and with plants (grafting gardenias). She writes both poetry and fiction.

E.G. Burrows published poems in *ASCENT*, *PERMAFROST*, *SEATTLE REVIEW*, *SOUTH FLORIDA POETRY REVIEW*, *VISIONS INTERNATIONAL*, and others. His most recent collection, a Wayland Press Chapbook (1989), is titled *Handsigns for Rain*.

Lenny Dellarocca has been living in South Florida since 1966. He has appeared in various small presses such as *ALBATROSS*, *POEM*, *NEW COLLAGES*, *NEGATIVE CAPABILITY*, *THE PALMETTO REVIEW*, *BIFROST*, *VOICES INTERNATIONAL*, and many more.

Michael Jennings has appeared in *THE SEWANEE REVIEW*, *THE GEORGIA REVIEW*, and *THE SOUTHERN REVIEW*. He lives in New York, where for the past ten years he has worked as a poet in the schools.

Susan Landgraf lives in Seattle and has published in *PLOUGHSHARES*, *TENDRIL*, *SPOON RIVER QUARTERLY*, *SUN DOG REVIEW*, *IRON*, and others. She has won a number of awards and currently teaches journalism and writing at Highline Community College.

Michael McGuire has an MFA from the University of Iowa and received a 1990 Massachusetts Artists Foundation grant recipient for \$10,000.

Ed Meek has had poems and essays in *THE PARIS REVIEW*, *THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW*, *THE BOSTON REVIEW*, *POEM*, and *YANKEE*.

Carol Miller has published poems in *COMMONWEAL*, *THE CAPE ROCK*, *BUFFALO SPREE*, *WISCONSIN REVIEW*, and has previously published in *ALBATROSS*.

Simon Perctik has published six books of poetry and individual poems in many periodicals, including AMERICAN POETRY REVIEW, POETRY NORTHWEST, and SOUTHERN POETRY REVIEW.

Elizabeth Rees has been widely published, including selections in THE PARITISAN REVIEW, NORTHWEST REVIEW, THE BERKELEY REVIEW, IRONWOOD, and THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR.

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Nick Simon graduated with a B.A. from Notre Dame and currently lives in Colorado Springs. This is his first publication.

J.R. Solonche has had poems in many magazines, including POETRY NORTHWEST, SALMAGUNDI, Z MISCELLANEOUS, and others.

Carole Stadronsky won the first annual Anabiosis Press chapbook contest with her manuscript WOLF DREAM. She has studied Theatre, Creative Writing, and Art at the University of California and has an M.A. in English.

Nancy Ann Story teaches English at Augusta College in Georgia and has had poems appear in PEGASUS, PARNASSUS LITERARY REVIEW, and KENTUCKY POETRY REVIEW among others.

David Sumner has work published in the PACIFIC REVIEW, BLUE LIGHT REVIEW, HAWAIIAN REVIEW, and the MISSISSIPPI REVIEW.

Eric Vaughn lives in Punta Gorda, Florida, and is both an artist and a musician. He spends a lot of time avoiding responsibility.

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And I had done a hellish thing
And it would work 'em woe:
For all averred, I had killed the bird
That made the breeze to blow.
Ah wretch! said they, the bird to slay,
That made the breeze to blow!

--Samuel Taylor Coleridge