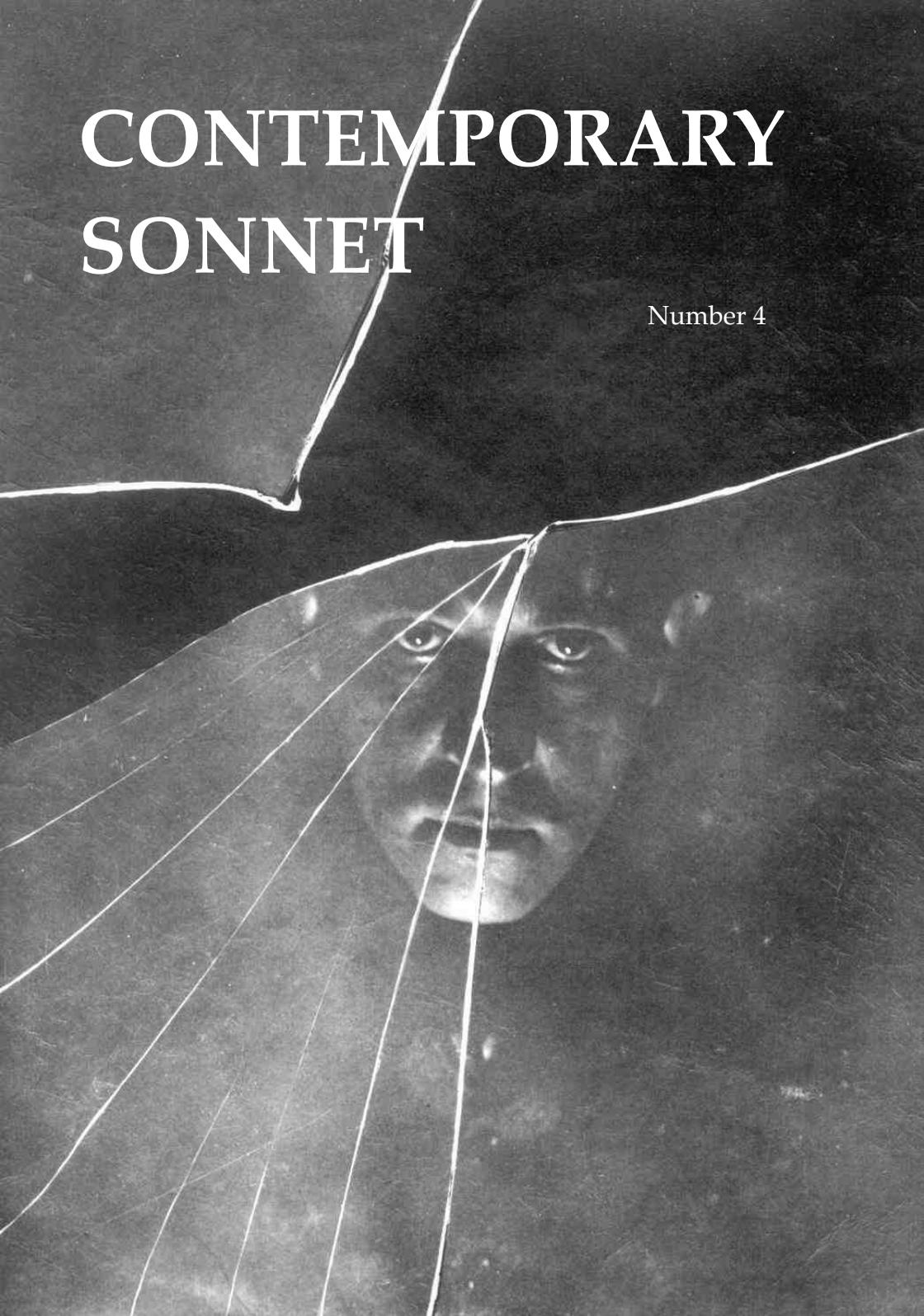


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Wiley Clements

Shall We Gather at the River?

Re: Hymn by Rev. Robert Lowry, Bucknell U. (1826-1899)

How peacefully the Susquehanna flows
as seen from lecture halls where Lowry taught.
Is this the stream intended when he wrote
the hymn of joy that everybody knows?
We hear that Brooklyn was his home when he,
inspired by the Spirit or the Muse,
composed his river paeon. Did he choose
the Susquehanna for that eulogy?
Once a student here, he came to preach,
to live, and for his *alma mater* teach
and write *belles-lettres* by this shining river
whose crystal tide goes murmuring forever
between these banks where angel feet have trod,
and by this church in which he served his God.

Jared Carter

Annular Eclipse

A strange declension, along about noon.
I remember, and go out, into a dim,
Elusive world, neither twilight nor dawn.
When I was small, we stuck a straight pin
Through a piece of paper, and tried to catch
The circle on another sheet, not daring
To look up into the sky. Now, I watch
Not the sun but the filtered light flaring
Across the driveway, where the tabby cat
Sprawls in the appletree's unsteady shade.
Crescent shapes dance there, leaf-shuttered,
Masking her lines, canceling her so that
For a moment everything is one: glade
Immemorial, mystery unuttered.

The Right Word

Opening the book exactly at the page
You sought, happening on the right word
The first time—in a mean, shabby age
When it no longer matters whether sword
Or pen is mightier, when sleaze and rage
Will get you by—chance still aims you toward
Some other realm that cannot be engaged
By their machines, their rants and ciphers blurred
By arrogance. Agreed, it is not often
This occurs. The proper words come hard,
Or not at all. The task remains, and makes
The quest no less demanding. Some would soften
The odds with cash, or promise of reward.
But giving back the right word ups the stakes.

Paul Christian Stevens

Disclaimer

The Anglican Dean of Sydney, Phillip Jensen, told a newspaper that, “disasters [such as the Boxing Day Tsunami] are part of God’s warning that judgment is coming”. —ABC News

According to the lights of Sydney’s Dean the deaths of countless innocents must mean that, far from reason for despair or mourning, rather, God’s offering a timely warning addressed to fag, transvestite, wanker, dyke, sheep-shagger, paedophile and village bike: delivering His Thoughts on fornication by means of oceanic eructation.

Almighty God asserts that such collateral tragedy as flows from use of natural disasters for communication tool must not be deemed unusual or cruel; nor is He liable to litigation should His Intent prove lost in the translation.

C. B. Anderson

Standing

Fresh olive-branches can't replace the boughs
We hung and swung on in the thrash of youth
If distillations of implicit vows
Dissolve ideals like decency and truth.

We all were young once, laughter on our lips,
But then we took our place among the dying
And counted pleasures at our fingertips
As sins we only missed for lack of trying.

Though we're at war with Heaven, does that mean
We're allies of the Devil? Maybe yes,
And maybe no. The man behind the screen
Says nothing when his naughty boys confess.

The doing dirty and the coming clean
Lie unacknowledged in the same latrine.

John Milbury-Steen

The Cruise

Her eyes are blank. Her bib is stained with food.
She doesn't know if she is dressed or nude.
She takes me for her only son, long dead.
No longer does she know the thing she is.
Ten years ago, she found her future was
futureless when she was on a cruise.

She was in port at large to see the small
humanscape of restaurant, lodge and shop
relieving that grand scale of ice and ridge,
but she attended tragedy instead,
the local Alzheimer's group, agenda: courage.
She sat at the immense crevasse, the edge,

and stared at emptiness, the blank of age,
silent upon a chair in Anchorage.

The World Arises

The world lies sleeping on a lumpy couch,
Wrapped in some well-used inconsistencies.
Lacking a fleeting kiss, a warming touch,
It dreams a vision of no rest, no ease,

Yet morning always comes. The world gets up,
Brushes the sands of reverie away,
Gulps down some coffee and a little sup,
Walks out to face the cold impassive day
As if its fears for that new day were gone.
Dark and monotonous, the tasks it faces
Have no good end, cannot assure bright dawn,
And but for brilliant shards, some streaks and traces,
Occasional assertions of the right,
Have no expectance of a coming light.

Norman Ball

Production Values

Like villains called to suffer at the end
we hang on for a fatuous horizon.
Sky-high production budgets often bend
reality to frame, advertising
moviedom —the cinema of sun.
But harder times insist a bulb will do.
The hangman's loop of ceiling cord is wrung
to coax confession—cheap, effective. You
come blessed with inward eyes. Ambivalence
conspires with film's irresolution. When
the fury dies at credit's end, your sense
of endless sunset fills the screen. Just then
behind that hill in silhouette, we find
a hill beyond a hill in-like, in-kind.

Jean L. Kreiling

Well Fed

The Amalfi Coast, Italy, May 2008

More hungry than we knew, we feasted here
on apricots and cherries and cheap wine,
then stretched our leaden limbs along these sheer
gray cliffs, adapting to their sinuous line.
The jasmine breath of earth infused our own
as new buds bloomed on ancient mountainsides,
and when the salt sea breached our veins of stone,
it challenged and re-charted human tides.
Anointed by the sun's benevolence
where banks of bougainvillea blazed untamed,
we too became a source of radiance,
reflecting blessings we could not have named.
Embraced by lemon-terraced hills, we flourished—
not merely sated, but profoundly nourished.

Peter Austin

Yvette

Yvette was governed, turn and turn about
By two opposing voices, each of which
From time to time its rival put to rout.
The first provoked a tantalizing itch
Persistent as the aching of a tooth
To skip domestic habitude and roam
(The birthright, it philosophized, of youth).
The second urged the coziness of home.

Confounded by the former, she secured
Admission to a college, far away
Where, it was said, the setting sun had lured
The likes of Turner, Whistler and Monet.
And there she sobs, in foreign-smelling digs
For mom and dad, and dog, and guinea pigs.

Iftexhar Sayeed

Somewhere

Somewhere a man coughs blood and loses weight,
His sons are servants at a city house,
He sold his land to pay his father's debt,
Also because disease had killed his cows.
Somewhere a television ad instructs
Some sedentary young man on his wants,
And graded education reconstructs
In filial career the paternal points.
Somewhere they must have met and must have passed,
Similarly concerned with getting on,
They had not been discourteous but fast,
They had not been indifferent but alone,
One had not looked, the other had not asked,
Or vice versa, and the day had gone.

Hassan Melehy

I Haven't Always Been a Nice Guy

I remember a party long ago
On a trip back to town when friends were still
Glad to see me: of those who came, I knew
All except one, a woman somewhat ill
At ease, fifteen years older than me, nearing
Fifty (as I am now), and kind of crassly
But sweetly eager. When I caught her staring,
I sat with her, proposing politely
That we go to her place. We did, then fucked
With gusto; for ten days or so I kept
Showing up there, right up to my trip back
To Nashville. Weeks later she called and said
She wished I wouldn't leave her all alone—
I heard her sobs and just hung up the phone.

Biographical Template

He lived a little while and then he died.
The while he lived he ate and drank and shat
and fucked. He might have married, maybe not.
Who knows? I think he might have had a child
or two, and though the evidence is slight
it seems he did at one time have a job,
but when he started it and when he stopped
is not reported. We can only write
down two events of which we're really sure:
There was a day on which he had been born.
There was a day on which he lived no more.
And if he suffered torment, hunger, scorn
or lived in happiness, how can we care?
The documents we have do not suffice;
his life has gone the same way as his life.

Moving the Boulder

So many people I'm connected to, and never
could have met, miles and years and continents
and millenia far from me as they are—or were,
and nothing to identify, nothing to show our bonds.
Were there women as sweet as my wife? Of course.
Children who were as loved as ours? I have no doubt.
Those who looked up and out at the sprawled universe
and tried to name starlight? They were always all about.
I see people like them, friends, and strangers, all
a little like me as well. And people whose eyes
were sealed with stone—and the most terrible
aspect is: that has also been one of my ways.
If it's too much to shoulder, to surge into light?
There are so many others to help move that weight.

Notes

Wiley Clements has had work in *Per Contra Spring*, *First Things*, *The New Formalist* and *The Pennsylvania Review*. A full-length collection of his poems, entitled *Yesterday, or Long Ago*, was published in 2004. He lives in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania.

Hassan Melehy's verse has appeared in *Blue Unicorn*, *Borderlands*, *The Hat*, *The New Formalist*, *Red Rock Review*. He is the author of two books of literary criticism, *Writing Cogito* (1997) and the forthcoming *Words, Dreams, and Vanities* as well as essays on film and cultural criticism. He has also written scenarios for several short films.

Jared Carter's most recent book is *Cross this Bridge at a Walk* from Wind Publications in Kentucky. His work has appeared in *Lucid Rhythms*, *The Formalist Portal*, *London Poetry Review*, and *The Pennsylvania Review*. Additional poems and stories may be found on his web site at www.jaredcarter.com

Paul Christian Stevens was born in England but lives in Australia with his wife and numerous children, dogs and citrus trees. He has an Honours degree in English and teaches literature. He edits *The Chimaera* with Peter Bloxsom, and he is widely published online and in print.

C. B. Anderson has, in the past five years, placed hundreds of poems in numerous North American and British journals, most recently *Blue Unicorn*, *Nassau Review*, *Umbrella*, *Lucid Rhythms*, *Candelabrum*, *The Recusant*, and *Soundzine*.

John Milbury-Steen's poems have appeared in *The Beloit Poetry Journal*, *Hellas*, *Blue Unicorn*, *Kayak*, *The Listening Eye*, *The Neovictorian/Cochlea*, *The Piedmont Literary Review*, *Scholia Satyrica* and *Shenandoah*. He currently teaches English as a Second Language at Temple University, Philadelphia.

Sally Cook is both painter and poet. Her essays and poetry have been published in journals such as *The Chimera*, *Chronicles*, *Iambs & Trochees*, *Pivot*, and *The Formalist Portal*.

Norman Ball is a Virginia-based writer whose work has appeared in hundreds of venues in recent years. A collection of his essays *How Can We Make Your Power More Comfortable?* will be available later this year from Del Sol Press. Much of his music and video work can be found at <http://www.youtube.com/user/desertrun>

Jean L. Kreiling teaches music at Bridgewater State College in Massachusetts, and previously taught English at Western Carolina University in North Carolina. Her prize-winning poetry has appeared in several print and on-line journals, including *Dogwood*, *Ekphrasis*, *The Evansville Review*, *The Formalist*, and *The Pennsylvania Review*.

Peter Austin lives with his wife and three daughters in Toronto, where he teaches English at Seneca College. His work has appeared in *The New Formalist*, *The Pennsylvania Review*, *The Lyric*, *Iambs & Trochees*, *Chimaera*, *Lucid Rhythms* and *Road not Taken*.

Iftekhar Sayeed teaches English and economics. He was born and lives in Dhaka, Bangladesh. He has contributed to *The Danforth Review*, *Axis of Logic*, *Enter Text*, *Postcolonial Text*, *Southern Cross Review*, *Opednews.com*, *Left Curve*, *Mobius*, *Erbacce*, *The Journal* and other publications. <http://www.geocities.com/if6065/farvardin>

Lars Malmqvist is a Danish poet who writes in English. Originally from Copenhagen, he currently lives and studies in Cambridge, England. His poems have been published in *Orbis* and *Inclement* in the UK.

J. B. Mulligan has had poems and stories in *Tattoo Highway*, *Argestes*, *Tonopah Review*, *Loch Raven Review*, *Short Story* and *The Externalist*, and two chapbooks: *The Stations of the Cross* and *This Way to the Egress*, and has appeared in the anthology *Inside Out: A Gathering of Poets*.

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