Dear Lovers and Readers of Poetry:

Although spring has sprung (it comes I think with the new green grass after our first heavy rain), we Californians still receive continued showers and downpours with a stoic patience and perseverance. Yesterday, for instance, my son ran in a soggy Huntington Beach marathon. So here is some reading, and rereading, for you on a rainy day, to inspire your own poems, which you will of course submit through our website, CaliforniaStatePoetrySociety.org, for the next CQ editor. 😊

And please keep sending me via email or through the website your own best published poems for possible republication here, including information as to any prizes they won, and where and when they first appeared. Please remember, also, that starting with 2019 issues of the CQ (Vol. 45 No. 1 and beyond), the Poetry Letter will no longer be available in hard copy mailed with the CQ, but will be published only on our website.

As a fond homage to our most active CSPS champion for years and years, President (Acting), Treasurer, Managing Editor, Editor, and Webmaster John Harrell—who will retire from the President, Editor and Managing Editor jobs but remain as the Treasurer and Webmaster—you will see some of his previously published poems in this issue of the Poetry Letter.

Until next time on our website, I remain

Your Poetry Letter editor,

Margaret Saine

UMSaine@gmail.com

Orange, February 2019

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CANARY

Glorious songster,
Bursting yellow tuxedo,
Little bird singing.

Perspective

One man’s trash glistens
In the silvery moonlight;
He found no treasure.

John Forrest Harrell, Yorba Linda, California
First appeared in The Hand of the Midnight Moon, 2017 (Brendan Printing House)
RECOVERING WHAT IS UNCLEAN

The words slip glibly, cleverly from my lips
And I am therefore sure I have won the day;
But my words are like feathers
From a pillow cut open in the wind.
They go off down corridors, paths and highways
On journeys so tortuous and tangled I can never follow.
If the words are true and just, and wise and kind,
I am fine with never knowing where they wander;
But if they are not true and just and wise,
Or especially not kind,
How will I ever snatch the feathers back to me?

John Forrest Harrell, Yorba Linda, California
First appeared in CQ, Vol. 43 No. 2 (Spring 2017)

This lovely poem is a contest winner by CQ contributor Diane Lee Mooney:

VERANDAH

On your verandah even summer noons
stand down, and hide their glare behind the vines
of honeysuckle filtering in deepest
green and gold the weather far beyond

your railings. Lacy scrollwork’s painted white
by men in overalls and spattered shoes
who tip their hats and call you ma’am. Weather’s
slowed. I float as if in underwater

shimmer, green-ness flickering in an ocean
heavy with the purple scent of heliotrope,
reminiscent of the quiet
years between two wars. And then it’s time
to go. I drain the last of ice and tea,
press your hands, resume my darkening streets.

Diane Lee Moomey, Half Moon Bay, California
2nd Prize Winner, 2017 Soul-Making Keats
Literary Contest, Sonnet Category
This one by John has appeared in a previous Poetry Letter, but I include it here because it was first chosen for publication in the 2008 issue edited by the late Russell Salamon, our dear friend, long-time CQ editor and very prolific poet extraordinaire.

GENTLE CARESS

The hand of the midnight moon paints quiet shadows
   around the cares
   and concerns
   of the city's busy denizens,
   boxed as we are into squares
   of noisy sameness day by day.
For a few nights every month the beacon light tugs softly
   at our hearts and souls
   and pulls them with its mystery
   into the infinite variety
   and elegant calm
   of eternity.
In the respite, if at all, there is remembrance
   and new resolve.
But human memories fail after repeated muggings,
   and what is out of sight
   becomes in time
   beyond the mind as well.
So every month the beacon light returns
   to leave us reminders.
And the hand of the midnight moon paints quiet shadows.

John Forrest Harrell, Yorba Linda, California
First appeared in CQ, Vol. 34 No. 1 (Winter 2008)

DAY’S END

Noisy minds settle,
Melting golden orb reclines,
Glows rose and beams peace

John Forrest Harrell, Yorba Linda, California
First appeared in The Hand of the Midnight Moon, 2017 (Brendan Printing House)
Finally, here is an interesting poem that was first published in an English-language literary journal printed twice annually in Berlin, Germany. The journal features prose and poetry, as well as translations, art and photography. This reminds us that English is the most common second language of poets world-wide. Anglo-Saxon and other native English speakers regularly submit to these international journals—indeed, just as poets from other countries writing global English habitually submit to the *CQ* and the other 1,000+ literary journals published in the English-speaking world.

**The pause of the wake**

sometimes I tend to speak  
to that half self leaning  
to myself, as seeming  
as the skin on my bones,  
hanging from the sleepless  
body by the thinnest nerves  
and always in my reach  
as the glance in my eyes  
that half staring through  
my darkness into the empty  
corner of the mirror,  
restlessly emerging  
from the other side of the self,  
like an inward waning moon  
of which I am neither one  
quarter, nor the full  
for I cannot say how deep it will  
fade under-skin or beyond  
when it catches my last breath  
in struggle with the air  
and whether that is what  
some call soul, whose sleep  
is the pause of the wake  

*Federico Federici, Berlin, Germany*  
*First appeared in Sand, No. 10 (2014)*

Enjoy the rest of the winter, and once again I urge you to make room in your life for some *good writing*!

Margaret Saine