

Awen

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Fading

By Donna McCabe

Feeling not quite here anymore
Blending in with the world and its surroundings
Feeling like a chameleon
Wanting to shy away from
The harsh realities that are life
At least for a while
Needing time to heal.

.....

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Elektra

By Paul Murphy

Is expressionist sunlight on the grave's slanted mirror.
Has become a complete index of numerous lies,
Myths, trembling sensuous poetical dreams.
Lank hair torn at its roots, hair is braided, tied back,

Arms, legs, torso tangled together and the knowledge,
Is somehow impaled on the rich white light,
Of the moon's succumbing glories, tenuous like egg white,
Orange rind, wasted purposes, antinomies.

ICU Love

By Howard F. Stein and Seth Allcorn

I do not feel well; a dense fog surrounds me –
My journey ends in the hospital ICU – intensive care unit,
This care, a jungle of blinding lights, IV lines,
Crash carts, intravenous infusion pumps,
Chest tubes, ECG and EKG monitors –
Somewhere in this thicket of equipment,
I lie in a heavy, mechanized hospital bed.

The nurse finds I have low blood oxygen –
Ventilator prescribed,
Frenzy of physician orders to summon
The equipment, then
Another frenzy of action
To get me to breathe.

As the ventilator arrives
And medical staff flurry to hook me up,
A sudden soft touch upon my right hand,
Then warm eye contact with someone
Encased deep inside gown and mask –
The gentleness of his presence
Tempers the frightening hardness
Of this place.

For a fleeting second
Amid all the equipment and personal
Protective gear,
I feel known,
As someone who is a me
Somewhere to be found amid all
This ICU medical plumbing.
I feel a moment of human warmth.
Of being loved as well as inspected.

Will you be here for me
Several days from now? I wonder.
Will I be here for you then?
Being there goes both ways, you know.
Medicated sleep descends
As I lie wrapped
In this warm blanket
Of intensive care –
At last I feel safe.

.....

The Poetry of Music

By Celine Rose Mariotti

listening to music,
so relaxing,
so soothing,
so inspiring,
every note, every chord,
the beauty of the arrangement,
the lyrics,
the poetry of music,
a songwriter's gift to the world,
the notes and lyrics come together
to give us a musical poem,
listening to music,
so heavenly,
so calming,
so dreamy,
the poetry of music.

My Dragon Went On The Wagon

By Mark Hudson

My dragon went on the wagon,
after we saw the band Naked Raygun.
He quit being such a punk rocker,
and started listening to Joe Cocker.

He used to smoke crack every day,
his breath would give him away.
He would inhale a big giant hit,
and blow London to bits.

Inhale, inhale, and exhale,
I had to bust my dragon out of jail.
He smoked some crack – that dragon,
than he ended up on the wagon.

I brought him to a Christmas party,
I thought he'd settle for bacardi.
but when the workers produced the coke,
my dragon's nostrils breathed some smoke.

It caught fire upon the drapes,
as if my dragon always vapes.
My workplace was reduced to embers,
I was laid off in December.

Now the dragon and I are on the streets,
we have no home, we have no eats.
We are peddling for some pennies,
but we really don't have any.

He is a nuisance to say the least,
this gigantic, violent, beast,
he's my sidekick, I am doomed,
as we sit in this hotel room.

We shared a bed, he hogged the covers,
he smoked in bed, and then he hovers.
When he rolls over, I am crushed,
when he snores he isn't hushed.

I decided to do what I will,
he was a dragon I needed to kill.
I grabbed an axe from the fire escape,
and did not let that sucker escape.

I cut him up and his body I killed,
then I fired up my portable grill
Ate dragon meat for a week,
tastes like chicken, but rather unique.

But now I feel guilt for the murder,
just to eat a dragon burger.
this is the end, my only friend,
darkness always seems to descend.

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Evil Men and Their Machines

By Matthew Wilson

I hate 2020, the year the world became small as we
had to stay in. I could not go out and explore the
countryside. I could not have drinks with friends and
worse I could not kill women.

Things were so much easier in the 19th
century, before the discovery of fingerprints and DNA
evidence. A man could indulge his fantasies in peace.

But then London's finest policemen showed
some skill and I had to get away.

To spread my claws in another time.

So no, I should not have chosen the year
2020. 365 days of a terrible virus that has done more
damage than I ever could. I am almost jealous but it
cannot have my infamy.

History shall always remember my
Whitechapel Jack persona.

And 2020 will only last a year.

The End

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Salesman

By Ray Greenblatt

He went home to his mother
an overweight middle-aged man
with no dental coverage,
he went home to take care of his mother.
That's all right
his ex-wife had the house
he had no where else to go
his kids, his few friends
were busy earning livings
working all the time to stay a nose ahead.
And he had reached a realization
that he was tired of selling
nothing was worthwhile enough to sell,
what was worthwhile—
food? clothes? house?
you couldn't sell love
although you needed both
the give and take of it,
you couldn't sell art
because first you had to create it.

After his mother had died
he got up the courage to go to a party
not even knowing many people there,
after feeling pretty juiced
but a bit more relaxed
he opened his mouth
and where it came from
he was the first to shake his head,
page after page of Huck Finn
when Huck was on the river
with Jim on the raft
feeling good in the twinkling night...
people turned their heads
as if the maestro had rapped the podium
and he glowed, and it went on...

Paradigm

By Howard F. Stein and Seth Allcorn

Stuck in a paradigm,
No way of knowing
Beyond its borders,
Quicksand, our refuge.
One way in, no way out.
No doors, no windows,
Nothing to admit light.
No sun, no moon, no stars
To kindle wonderment.
Only darkness –
The paradigm will
Light the way.

Insular universe without end,
Once begun, eternal sameness.
Dream and dreaming, reality by decree.
The paradigm, the only knowledge.
Who dares say, “. . . maybe not”?
The paradigm is existence,
Outside it, nothing real.
No way to test the paradigm
But by the paradigm.
Thinking and thought extinguished.
Fall on your knees;
Worship the sacred paradigm.

Do not ask me to imagine
A paradigm shift:
I am my paradigm.
Without it I vanish.

No thinking,
Thought impossible,
Doubt forbidden.
Only answers, no questions.
The paradigm gives life
Only by first taking it away.

Entombed within the paradigm,
Rest in peace.

Mind Reader

By Donna McCabe

You got in my head
You knew right away how I thought
I get in a tangle
When I know I'm caught
We know each others thinking
A kind of secret telepathy
You're my mental sounding board
When things are getting the best of me
We know each other on a different level
A deeper bond if you will
It's a skill some don't understand
Or never ever will
But I think it's cool and great
We are two that think as one
A mental kind of chemistry
That's worth it's weight in fun.

Forward Momentum

By Harris Coverley

“What if you could only go forward and not back? 'Cause the universe can't allow for a paradox?”

Trent asked me this as I lay back in my chair, a beer in hand.

“What do you mean?” I asked him. “Wait – you're not still on time travel are you?”

He didn't answer me, and just shuffled uncomfortably from foot to foot, looking at the floor, hands in his pockets.

“Listen,” I said. “I've already told you: it's moot. Time travel is an impossibility.”

“But what if it isn't!” he snapped. “And it stands: what if you could only go forward?”

“Calm down,” I told him, putting my beer down. “Like I've also said before: a real scientist would have to be an idiot not to take their chance on such an opportunity.”

Trent stood for a moment, obviously in profound thought.

“Do you want a beer?” I asked him to break the silence, raising mine up as an example.

He shook his head, and then said, “Goodbye Steve.”

“Goodnight Trent,” I wearily replied. “I'll see you tomorrow.”

At that he giggled and walked off into the back rooms of the lab, away from the exit.

I didn't think anything of it, and just carried on with my drink, until there was a sudden grind of machinery and a weird pop from one of the storage rooms.

When I got in there, amongst piles of scrap metal and hazardous waste materials, there was a clean patch on the filthy floor where something solid once stood, and beside that a note which read in barely legible handwriting: “I'm no idiot Steve — Trent”

Unless I'm willing to contradict myself, he certainly wasn't.

Ends

To The Poet Laureate Of England

By SchiZ

He noticed that I was reading one of his books
And quietly asked If I like it in his soft English accent
I looked up and my eyes nearly popped out of my head
I tried to play it cool
I replied with a smile, "I do"
He sat down on the bench beside me
And almost asked me if, I also was a poet
But he stopped and turned away
"I am a poet also" I said "I have been published"
"Where?" he asked
"England and America" I replied "In small magazines"
Then I had a thought
"Would you like to hear one?"
He turned, smiled and said "Yes"
And I recited two...
After the performance, he gave me his card
And told me if I was to be in London, to look him up
Then he took off in a rush...
And put it against my heart
Finally, I am being recognised.

The Woman in the Park

By Diane R. Duff

I saw a woman in the park
She wore a navy fleece:
But there was something sticking out,
What had she got underneath?

Before going down a lonely path
She turned her head from left to right:
As though not wanting to be seen,
Then she disappeared out of sight.

Was she hiding a secret weapon,
Such thoughts ran through my mind:
So I quietly followed her
At a safe distance from behind.

Was she waiting for a victim
But there was no-one else around:
I tried not to be nervous
And dared not make a sound.

Then I saw her standing there,
At least I'd solved the mystery:
With a pair of binoculars in her hand,
She was watching a bird in a tree.

When I Grow Old

By Diane R. Duff

"When I grow old," she said,
"Life won't be a pain:
I want to enjoy myself
Buy a villa in Spain.

"I won't need glasses or false teeth,
Or have silver in my hair:
And I won't need a walking stick,
Or a lift to get me up the stair.

"I can still go to parties,
And have lots of fun:
Not sit knitting all night,
With my hair in a bun.

"I don't want to get ill,
Apart from the odd cough or cold:
But I've got another twenty years
Before I shall grow old."

"It will pass quickly," said her mother,
"If you trust in Fate:
And hope life will be kind
To a woman of twenty-eight!"

Escaping

By Donna McCabe

A journey to somewhere new
In search of new places and adventures
Enjoying the freedom and mystery.

Echoes of Desire

By AC Evans

Boum! One little look, and... boum!
Charles Trenet/Ray Goetz

Yes, it's me! The Albionic Man,
The human junkyard... now,
I have to scribble a few last words...

Allright darlin?
The last transit van from Venus arrived
At The Electric Laser Clinic, no problem.
Here we go again – no signal, and...boum!
Easy way trips in slow motion,
Echoes of desire and mod girls on scooters
Refresh your everyday revolution.
Storm the town hall, body and soul, baby.

We live in a world of shadows
But, encased in zodiac scaffolding,
She doesn't care about life or anything.
Meanwhile, here at Thermo-Station Junction,
A full moon is obscured by cloud,
Banishing memories of extreme caution.
Her bare midriff is a diversion route in free-fall.
Café, gallery, theatre – stay connected, and... boum!

I wrote a new chapter, but did you notice?
A view of blue sky is an abrupt change in feel.
The studio is here – Allright sweetie?
Scary claims, pull handle, push door.
Spark outrage with this strange equipment.
Solutions without boundaries a speciality, and...
boum!
Forget The Albionic Man, that backless loafer,
With his illegible scribbles.

We live in a world of shadows.
But she doesn't care.
No, really... she doesn't care,

She doesn't care at all.
Not at all.

Love's Strange Embrace

By Aeronwy Dafies

Surprised and delighted
By the unexpected
Love's strange embrace
Enfolds my soul
In warming comfort
Taking me to new pastures
I have never experienced before
Sharing with me delights
Of the rarest novelty
Until like a cut rose
The beauty fades and dies
Leaving me with nothing
But ashes, a bitter taste
And memories of perfection

Originally published in [Tigershark](#)

Days of Adventuring

By Matthew Wilson

Sing no songs for pirates
Those devils of the eighteenth sea
Who desires adventure above all things
And stole my mother from me.

I was there when they turned Teach off
When they hanged him from the yardarm
And I joined the navy in their battle
To save the good from a pirates harm.

I was unsure when I first saw her
This wild woman of firework hair
Who resembled my kidnapped mother
Who slashed her sword without a care.

She says she left a dull life willingly
And all the luggage of those days
And now I wonder I I should take her back
Just to rot in Newgate for all her days.

So I have become the thing I hated
First mate of the red queen of the sea
But a boy's place is beside his mother
Even if adventuring will be the death of me.

.....

The King

By Ray Greenblatt

We tote the bucket from the well
buckets after buckets
then heat the water
on open stoves,
it is back-breaking work
but worth it
what else would we be doing
scratching in the earth with a stick.

No matter creases in his neck
splotches on his back
skin in places hanging like pouches,
he was attractive once, I guess,
born to this he knows no different
these kings are all alike
predictable, if you live long enough
at least a council to give some balance.

He is – if you must think about it –
our totem
we caress him with water
we need him,
he is our religion
he leads us,
if it gets too bad
of course, we know how to sacrifice.

.....

Winter's bleak light
Inarticulate sigh of snow
Promise of summer

By DJ Tyrer

Lucky Scarf

By Aeronwy Dafies

Is it just foolishness
To believe
That this tatty red scarf is magic?
I wore it when I grabbed a prize
On a trip to the seaside, long ago
And, on the day I won the lead
In the school play.
After that
I wore it to every exam
Even though it was a boiling summer's day
And, the times I didn't
I didn't do well.
Later, it went with me to interviews and
appointments
And, always saw me right
But, now it's tatty
And, I feel a twinge of foolishness
At wearing it.
Now, I wonder
Is it really magical
Or, was it just 'the power of positive thinking'
Its positivity lost now it's tatty and frayed?

Originally published in [Tigershark](#)

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Carcosa

By DS Davidson

Children's voices echo down misty streets
Absinthe sits unopened on an untended bar
Rapturous applause fills an empty theatre
Chill fingers seem to caress your spine
Overhead dark stars blaze with a frozen light
Soaring towers grope for the many moons
As you walk those misty streets

.....

Fading

By Aeronwy Dafies

Sense of worth
Fading like the winter sun
Moving towards the solstice.
Will I be reborn
In the light of the sun
Or, will I continue to fade
Melting away like the snow
Whilst awaiting validation?
Perhaps like the moon
Reflected in new-laid snow
I might find my value
In your gaze.
Unless the clouds of doubt
Obscure it.

Come Fly Away With Me

By Lynn Dowless

From flying high among the angels I gently descend,
until my feet are firmly on the ground;
in the land of Cervantes, Tapas, and Aide, queen of the wind,
where beautiful Roman castles are still to be found.

For many miles in a world of dazzling art I walk,
breathlessly gazing at the elegant carvings and massive cathedrals,
listening to songs sang by priests doing spiritual talk,
preceding a noontime ringing of grand basilica bells.

This wonderful knell combined with the poetic song
generates an elevating emotion,
drawing me endlessly forward in way that could never be wrong,
as my soul is drenched in this heavenly passion.

Come with me my young friends!
Walk with me down cobble stoned streets of old.
Let us move where this enchanting vapor sends,
viewing real sights more dazzling than any stories ever told.

Let us fly away high on a magic carpet,
or ride proudly upon a purple dragon's back;
to this place where we might forever put aside all regrets,
where a classical creativity of timeless design is still in tact.

There we'll walk by the Sea Of Malaga,
gazing over toward Morocco from the Pillars Of Hercules,
then we'll let the fairies carry us to the grand Alhambra;
behold such an elegance upon which our eyes shall feast!

We'll waltz down narrow red bricked streets with charming Flamenco dancers,
until we find our way among winding avenues of wonderful Seville.
My,
how the company of these smooth gypsy prancers
arouse curiosities zeal!

People are so warm and welcoming here,
causing all to forget about ever going back home.
Come along with me, my young friends, and have no fear,
the land of Don Quixote is where we belong!

This place with miles of beaches unspoiled,
where the dragon and Saint George's elegant princess once played,
we too might live without want, tyranny, or fruitless toil,
in a world where creative people have it made!

Come fly away with me my young friends,
let us go now before the blessed east wind grows cold!
We'll move where the good feeling sends,
far away from these earthbound villains who desire our precious souls,
right along with our personal possessions.

The Impromptu Dance of Dawn

By DS Davidson

The sun, inspired by a sudden burst of rain across its rays, began to dance, spinning across the sky.
Below, the world watched perplex, bemused, astounded, in awe of its pirouetting moves.
Then, growing tired, the sun ceased to dance and sank below the horizon, dawn transforming into day's end.

Awen will return in February.