

Editorial – Things continue to move slowly at Atlantean as I haven't been too well, but **Bard** has passed 200 issues for the year's second centenary celebration. Hopefully plenty more issues will be out during the course of 2022!

And, remember, online issues of **View From Atlantis** have been appearing regularly and haiku continue to be added to **The 5-7-5 Haiku Journal**. So, why not submit some haiku and check out what the next theme for **View** is...

Best,

DJ Tyrer,
Editor

The **Atlantean Publishing Blog** (including PDFs, prices and guidelines) is at :

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The new webzine from Atlantean Publishing, which celebrates the 5-7-5 syllable form of haiku. Submissions are welcome via the editorial email address with 5-7-5 Submission in the subject line.

<https://575haikujournal.wordpress.com/>

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Available as a PDF for **free** from the blog.

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In Appreciation of... Columbo

By Harris Coverley

Even though I never really stopped, I've started watching *Columbo* "properly" again recently, and I've got to tell you, it's still pretty good. Not *great*—I wouldn't go that far. But *good*.

I first watched the show when I was eight—my late grandmother spent most of her days indoors with me, and it was on her TV roster. I liked it then mainly because Columbo's car—a '59 or '60 Peugeot 403 Cabriolet—was such a sweet ride, but after a few episodes I came to appreciate the show's uniqueness.

For those not aware—maybe you're unsure what a television is, or how to use a remote control to move from one channel to another—*Columbo* has the format of the *inverted detective story* (or a "howcatchem", supposedly named in relation to the show itself) which as a narrative structure stretches back to the pulps of the early 1910s. Other than a few high profile films such as Hitchcock's *Dial M for Murder*, it is fairly uncommon, and as far as I can tell has never been used as the basis for another TV show.

We see the murderer commit the murder, along with how they attempt to cover it up or divert attention from themselves, and it is up to Lieutenant Columbo of the LAPD—played by the immortal Peter Falk—to prove their incontestable guilt. The murderer is almost invariably white, rich, arrogant, mostly male, and with a certain degree of cultural or institutional power—homicide almost never leaves the wealthiest suburbs in *Columbo's* world, and should it enter the ghetto it is not there for long. The victim also is usually not all that sympathetic, often being a parallel of the murderer.

The murderer's elite sensibilities are contrasted with Lieutenant Columbo's unkempt, Italian working class mannerisms. He is a gruff and simple New Yorker, set against the glamour and fruity excess of Los Angeles.

Columbo, in spite of his apparent lack of education and seeming cluelessness, has a profound intellect, is extremely adept at analysis, and may have an eidetic memory, or something

approaching one. The collective result of this is a near-supernatural ability to have an infallible suspicion, on little evidence, who the true killer is while the victim's body is still warm. Columbo is extremely devoted to his cases, remarking to one suspect (played by Faye Dunaway, who for her role won a Primetime Emmy) that his longest investigation lasted nine years and four months in the episode "It's All in the Game" (S10E7).

In spite of the grisliness of his work, going up against some of the coldest killers on offer, the detective enjoys his job deeply, now and then saying as much, and relishes his process of detection even when it is clearly stressing him out. He gets to know his suspects, gets used to their quirks and desires, and frequently makes a friend of them. In the episode "Try And Catch Me" (S7E1), Columbo is coaxed into giving a speech to a ladies' club by the murderer, wherein he admits: "Even with some of the murderers that I meet, I even like them too... *sometimes*...like them and even respect them. Not for what they did, certainly not for *that*, but for that part of them which is intelligent, or funny, or just nice, because there's niceness in everyone, a little bit anyhow. You can take a cop's word for it." He rarely carries a gun, and meets most aggression with good humour or strategic disengagement.

Columbo's optimism puts him at a deep contrast with my other favourite TV sleuth Kurt Wallander (played by either Rolf Lassgård or Krister Henriksson, *never* Kenneth Branagh—let's keep Nordic noir *Nordic* please). Wallander is forever pessimistic and fatalistic, even when he solves a case, the weight of the evil that has transpired bearing heavily upon his soul. Columbo on the other hand takes everything in his stride, and insists in the aforementioned speech on the innate goodness of most people: "I don't think the world is full of criminals and full of murderers because it *isn't*...it's full of nice people just like you." Rather than uncovering the blackness just underneath the surface of society, he is more of a cleaner of untidy segments—an analogy I'm sure the proletarian-minded policeman would appreciate. Whereas Wallander is ultimately forced to sympathise with his suspects by sheer force of their pathetic desperation, Columbo tries to forge connections with his suspects right off the bat, even if they are hostile to him or plainly irritated by his

continued presence in their post-homicide lives. However, he knows full well that he can get under people's skins if he wants to and has the right information.

The show ran for ten seasons from 1971 to 2003, the final season lasting a period of thirteen years as an irregular series of specials, making for sixty-nine episodes in total. Despite a relatively small number of episodes, there were a number of "repeat offenders": Patrick McGoohan, a good friend of Falk's, played the murderer a record *four* times, and other "serial" killers included William Shatner and Jack Cassidy.

I've never experienced a bad episode. Of course, as with any show, some episodes don't work as well as others. Sometimes the solution may feel imperfect, or the guest acting lacking. But regardless, you'll want to know how he solves it—there is for the Lieutenant no such thing as a 'perfect murder'.

If you've never seen it, go watch it. If you haven't seen it for a while, go back and have another look, you'll enjoy yourself.

I think that's all, so I'll leave it at that.

Oh wait, sorry, just one more thing: how can a guy remain at the level of lieutenant for *thirty-odd* years? Didn't he ever seek promotion? Was it ever offered? Or maybe it had something to do with that case that went on for nine years, and all the other unsolved...ah, it's probably nothing...don't worry about it...

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A Timeless Wonder

By Celine Rose Mariotti

When you step into a dream,
Things aren't what they seem,
You see a world that doesn't exist,
Everything is covered in a mist,
You see our loved ones
Who have passed away,
You wished that they could stay,
We see people in our
Dreams we don't know,
We travel in our dreams
To places high and low,
In our dreams,
What we desire comes to be,
Everything is the way
We want it to be,
A dream is something
To ponder,
A dream is a timeless wonder.

Letters of Comment

Hi DJ!

Honoured to appear in the Centennial Edition and congratulations for reaching this watershed moment!

All very best

AC Evans

Dear DJ

I just picked up the **Bard** 199 mailing. It already looks amazing (Harris Coverley sends me to YouTube over 'technique' and Bob Ross, a jaw-dropping discovery).

Yours,

Christine Despardes

Dear DJ,

Congratulations on reaching **T'Supplement's** centenary issue. It doesn't seem like a hundred years since you started, but I've become a pensioner since the last issue and time keeps whizzing by. (It's a century, Jim, but not as we know it.) Anyway, well done and do carry on!

Lots to get one's (real or NHS) teeth into in this special 100th issue. Harris Coverley's *Old-School Paperbacks* grabbed me straight away, being a bit old-school myself. I actually have a copy of Wyndham's **Jizzle** in the edition mentioned, and the cover does seem of a different era from the content.

But, I was particularly intrigued by the pencil dedication in G.K. Chesterton and its "portal into... another man's life". It reminded me of a charity shop find I made here, which offers a portal into not one, but two lives. The book is an autographed copy of **Good As Gold** by Joseph (Catch-22) Heller. The author's bold felt-tip message (on the first 'blurb' page) reads "To Dave, with good wishes. Joseph Heller". But this is only the start. Opposite this, on the inside cover in finer ink, is "To Dave, with more than good wishes. Deborah Valianti". (Even Heller's punctuation is retained.)

This Deborah must have queued up at a book signing to get the book autographed especially for Dave. ("More than good wishes" indeed.) The dedication isn't dated, but the book is a 1980 Corgi reprint and had never been read when I found it. I don't know what Dave thought of this, or where the

signing took place, but it seems rather melancholy that it should fetch up unread in a Cancer Research shop in Anniesland, Glasgow, in 2008, priced £1.50 (I kept the receipt). I've read it since.

As Harris says, that's what paperbacks are for. I wonder if Dave died, having carefully preserved the treasured gift till it was dumped by someone clearing his home. Or, maybe he found it in a cupboard years later and couldn't recall who Deborah Valianti was. All life, death, romantic drama and disillusionment may be here.

As for AC Evans's *Fear Of The Dark*, the Jung quote that darkness "cannot be argued out of existence or rationalised into harmlessness" immediately got me thinking of the PC and woke brigade. Before the proliferation of political correctness we had 'common decency', which comes from within and is a shared human characteristic.

Most people have *some* common decency, however little. It is part of being human and results from empathy with one's fellow man. This empathy necessarily allows for the element of darkness in human nature, whose counterpart we recognise in ourselves.

PC, on the other hand, is not innate but is imposed from outside by those who want to shut out, not so much the darkness itself, as any means of identifying it. Those who don't conform to this mindset are labelled 'politically incorrect' as though they have some social malfunction. The 'correct' can then set themselves up as superior, while individual conscience is replaced by majority consensus. It would be tempting to advocate a defensive campaign of 'PC disobedience', but that might lead to untold horrors. So fear of the dark wins out again.

I enjoyed the various reviews, and AC Evans's *Carnival Of The Absurd* had me reaching for my **Encyclopaedia of Symbolism** for examples of Ensor's work.

Your piece on Tekumel and M.A.R. Barker got me thinking about Henry Williamson. He was an avowed Nazi sympathiser, an early member of Mosely's British Union of Fascists, attended Hitler's first Munich Rally and remained unrepentant till his death in 1977. Most of his prolific output glorifies Hitler to some extent (I read this on the internet) and is justifiably 'unavailable'. But who would cancel **Tarka The Otter**, possibly the most brilliantly written, unsentimental, non-anthropomorphic novel from an animal's point of view ever attempted? This and Williamson's other nature writings are surely worth preserving

as literary art, even while the author's right-wing leanings are not forgotten. He is dead, after all. His books about animals can't hurt anyone.

Yours, leaning incorrectly and falling off his chair,

Neil K. Henderson.

Dear DJ,

Congratulations on the 100th Issue of **The Supplement**. 100! A magic number. A century in years. A perfect score on a test.

This milestone (which is not a destination, just part of a continuing journey) was made possible by all the steps leading to it. Not just the first issue or the twenty-seventh or the ninety-ninth but all of them... and their contents. Every article and review and poem. Each advert, call for submission, contact info, and (yes) letter of comment contributed in its own unique way to the road thus taken.

Again, congratulations. Onward the journey.

As to the contents of Issue 100 they do no disservice to **The Supplement** or its legacy. Harris Coverley's *In Appreciation of Old-School Paperbacks* mentions a dedication from 1946 in a G. K. Chesterton paperback he owns.

This sent me to my bookshelf to retrieve an, alas, hard-back copy of *Nine Plays* by Eugene O'Neill, which I purchased at a used book sale more than a decade ago. The dedication in this 1940 edition reads: "Wishing you many pleasant hours, and a Merry Christmas! Olivia. Dec. 25- 1941." One is struck by the poignancy of that long ago bequest, and how it has endured while the world around it has changed.

Mr. Coverley's monetary musings in *The Game goes on...* begs the question whether mega-successful writers, such as a J K Rowling or Stephen King – who nowadays literally type out pound and dollar signs with every keystroke – feel the same level of artistic satisfaction as in their more pecuniarily modest days?

Your own article *Another Turn to the Right* raises "yet another debate about separating art and artist." I'll weigh in on the subject with a paraphrase (from vague memory) of *testimony* given on an episode of the long-running NBC crime drama **Law and Order**: "Edgar Allen Poe was a drug addict; Dostoyevsky was a degenerate gambler; Richard Wagner

was a thief, a liar, a racist, and a womanizer. Despicable men all. Yet each a genius who made the world a better place with his art!"

I'll conclude with a *Reader's Reply* to an *Editor's Reply*. In my letter of comment in Supplement 99 I did not mean to denigrate **Catcher in the Rye**. I only meant to say I did not find it to be *the black book of doom and satanic verses* the media was making it out to be. I do not think it is Salinger's best writing. That, in my opinion, is to be found in his **Nine Stories** collection, in particular the pieces entitled *A Perfect Day for Banana Fish* and *Teddy*.

Best Wishes,
David Edwards

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Always Bizarre –The Aesthetic Transformation of Perception By AC Evans

The aesthetic transformation of perception is closely linked to the purification and transmutation of language: the *alchimie du verbe* of which Rimbaud and the Surrealists spoke.

The transformation of perception arises from the disclosure of the Essential, the revelation of the Quintessence, and from the elimination of all inessentials, all deadly serious prosaic elements.

It is this 'alchemical' or Hermetic theory of poetic language and aesthetic image, to which Mallarme was alluding when he referred to the task of giving 'a purer meaning to the words of the tribe' and which lay behind Bajou's desire to re-designate the Decadents as the 'Quintessents'. In this sense the poet can become a shamanistic custodian of the modern – or the traditions which comprise the modern, for traditions enshrine ways of seeing the world and, contrary to popular belief, are never static, mutating in response to deep-running, impersonal, evolutionary currents. In this sense the 'visionary' role of the poet, uniquely attuned to these mutations, is not metaphorical – he, or she, may become the instrument of change – change, through transformation of perception.

In his seminal *Lettres du Voyant* Rimbaud defined the visionary role of the poet of the future as 'the supreme savant', the initiator of universal transmutation, the harbinger of a new era in human evolution, *un multiplicateur de progres*.

The poet would define the amount of the unknown awakening in the universal soul in his own time. He would produce more than the formulation of his thought or the measurement of his march towards progress.

Poetry, like all art, should be founded on a special vision of the world, a different way of seeing. To a degree any artist will transgress accepted ideas of normality, if only by presenting familiar objects and situations in an unusual way. Poetry is bound to conflict with consensus opinion because the special

vision will incorporate the negative as well as the positive. As Sartre once said 'literature is, in essence, heresy'. When an artist – a poet, a novelist, a composer, or an artist in any medium – adopts a different way of seeing the world he or she has taken the first step towards total idiosyncratic vision attained through various stages of initiation. This 'initiation' or rite of passage will involve a state known as 'the dark night of the soul' in which enhanced awareness of 'supernal' perfection, the Ideal, or, to use Mallarme's phrase, 'the dream in its ideal nakedness', leads to a similarly enhanced awareness of human, existential imperfection. For Baudelaire awareness of human or worldly imperfection was called *spleen*, for the alchemists it was the Nigredo or 'blackening'. Celine used the term *noircissement* to identify the same state of mind – a night-world of horror, viciousness, pain and dread. It is this 'core of horror' which, since the eighteenth century, has given rise to a current of militant pessimism in modern art and literature, represented by the works of Sade, Baudelaire, Lautréamont, Nietzsche, Jarry, Artaud, Genet, Burroughs and Beckett, among others. Here one may think of that 'nocturnal language' of which Anais Nin once spoke regarding the writings of Anna Kavan – that lexicon of dreams and alienation.

It is of some historical significance that this nihilistic vision is closely linked to the emergence of new stylistic trends. Most of the authors and poets in this current of development contributed to a revolution in syntax and to the deconstruction of traditional conventions. Barriers between fact and fiction, between spoken and written language, between poetry and prose, have been dismantled in order to express a vision of transmutation – in order to *effect* a transmutation. This disruption of syntax, literary form, musical tonality and pictorial representation is symptomatic of the dissociation and psychic dislocation brought about by the first stage of initiation. For many it has become a metaphor of cultural collapse, of the

rejection of the *telos*, of the atomization of the world – a break-down, not a break-through.

In addition to the ultra-nihilist vision there is a second way of seeing which, like the first, was derived mainly from Baudelaire: modernity.

Many of Baudelaire's followers regarded themselves as more modern than their contemporaries, despite their frequent denunciations of modern beliefs. Although they loathed modern society, they admired modern technology because they regarded the artificial as superior to the natural. This was reinforced by an adherence to Naturalism, a concentration on the depiction of 'slices' of modern (urban) life, a challenge to the taboo of 'morality'. This Naturalism complemented a need to cultivate intensity despite all social limitations: indulgence in perversity could be masked as Naturalistic research or 'field work'.

For Huysmans, the most powerful of the Naturalist writers, such methods offered some way of coming to terms with the otherwise banal exigencies of everyday life. His transition from Naturalism to Decadence, from *Downstream* to *Against Nature*, represented a need to augment dry Naturalistic description with some 'deeper' more acute vision, even though his subsequent transition from Decadence to Catholicism, from *Against Nature* to *La Cathedrale*, represented a retreat into a comfort zone of 'faith'. The traumatic identity crisis caused by the arrival of modernity; the erosion of hitherto established cultural norms, the feelings of isolation, of powerlessness and meaningless self-estrangement, can often lead to a resurgence of, or relapse into, religion (the 'flight into faith'). This is a circumstance which can apply to both the individual (such as Huysmans in this case) and to the collectivity as a whole.

In most of his critical writings from 1845 Baudelaire, inspired by Poe and Gautier, advocated the theory of 'the heroism of modern life'.

He argued that the artist must oppose the false charm of nostalgia by extracting the essence of beauty from the everyday world – to look for the 'classic' in the remote was an error. In her discussion of his aesthetics in her biography of Baudelaire Enid Starkie wrote: 'Thus all forms of modernity were capable and worthy of becoming classic, and if they did not do so the fault lay with the artist and not with his age.' The implication of this view, its implicit relativism, and the doubt it casts on orthodox definitions of the real, renders 'the heroism of modern life' a disruptive, perhaps magical, idea.

From the alchemical perspective, if the essential beauty of the everyday is equated with the philosopher's stone, Baudelaire's theory corresponds to the ancient Hermetic doctrine that the ultimate substance must be distilled from a despised and neglected *prima materia*. Thus, Rimbaud and Verlaine, in London in 1873, sought the marvelous and the fantastic in immediate urban images, in 'modern-Babylonian' architecture, in The City, in station hotels, in the docks and great iron railway bridges.

This potent urban psycho-geography prefigures the Surrealist poet Aragon, who in 1924, wrote of those other places, 'sites... not yet inhabited by a divinity', but where a 'profound religion is very gradually taking shape' as though surreality precipitates 'like acid-gnawed metal at the bottom of a glass'. For the Surrealists these privileged locations were in Paris: the Pont des Suicides at the Buttes-Chaumont, the Porte Saint-Denis, the Tour Saint-Jacques, or the vanished Passage de l'Opera. For us London may take the aspect of a modern Babylon, of a 'concrete jungle', redolent with psychic portents and hermetic symbols. Like St Giles High Street, Hungerford Bridge has always possessed features associated with Gateways to Otherness, where – to use Questioning jargon – the 'veil between this world and the next is particularly thin'.

As the filmmaker Georges Franju once remarked 'Doesn't this mean that poetry is in reality... and that it is less a question of expressing it than of not preventing it from showing itself?' And so the poet becomes a shaman of multiple dimensions, creating the classic from the mundane, distilling the essential from the inessential, revealing 'heroic',

interpenetrating parallel realities, or, to use Franju's terminology, to allow the *insolite* (unusual) to emerge beside or in-between the interstices of the accepted Real.

But, in order to experience, or even portray the 'heroism' of modernity the poet must unlearn preconditioned responses and engage in a critical, initiatory process of dissociation. August Weidmann has shown how this process of 'dissociation of sensibility' was a key tenet of Romanticism and fundamental to modern conceptions of art. The Romantics however, tried to gain access to a 'primordial vision', whereas it can now be understood that deviation from conventional perceptual norms is, in fact, a way of transmuting the world around us.

In his struggle to apprehend Poe's 'supernal beauty' filtering fitfully through profane sensory mechanisms, the poet uses his or her art to deconstruct, or dismantle, a preconditioned worldview. Understanding of ecstasy, or The Ideal, generates a blackening, or *noircissement*, as the horror of existence overwhelms the subject with disgust, inducing a hellish night-world experience. However, this dissociation brings a more fantastic, if not more positive, vision – the everyday world loses its narrow, constricted frame of limitation and becomes, thankfully, bizarre.

The artist-poet, through an aloofness or detachment, fleetingly attained in reaction to the disgust provoked by the Nigredo or unregenerate night-world state, perceives that, divorced from everyday functions or associations, ordinary situations, objects, even people, may take on a surreal perspective. They acquire an ephemeral, but nevertheless quintessential, glamour, or enchantment of absolute Beauty.

But, it will be seen that this 'absolute' Beauty, this 'threshold aestheticism', is a *coniunctio oppositorum*, a union of opposites in the Hermetic sense. It contains not only the essential 'gold' of supernal beauty, but also a fearful purity of supernal horror – it is not only

Naturalistic, but anti-Naturalistic – it is not only soothing but a force which consumes with a unique intensity. It is not only sublime; it is also of The Abyss. It is not some transcendental enlightenment, but more a much sought-for diversion from the banality of the mundane. It partakes of both elegance and the grotesque. "If I am not grotesque," said Aubrey Beardsley, that most perfect example of the aesthetic sensibility, "I am nothing".

Beauty, said Baudelaire, is always bizarre.

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Review by Christine Despardes

A Little Piece of Harm

By Chris Jones

£5, LongBarrowPress.com

It's mid-day in Sheffield and suddenly the city's in lockdown pending an arrest. Someone shot a police officer and fled.

A gritty urban noir in verse, this, that revolves around a crime it is not seeking to solve. It spins an engaging story brilliantly, in an unexpected artisanal manner.

Roads are closed and transportation is shut down while the central character, Pete, the narrator, is a stranded bystander trying to get far from where he is, to his house,

There are 14 poems, 14 episodes in a long walk overnight, each told in a different English fixed form, plus a few renga.

Early on, Pete meets a lady friend whose young son is facing a bullying crisis in school. While she and Pete walk in the general direction of her house she pours out her painful day to him in an exquisite terza rima dialogue.

"if some crazed gunman was out there alone.

It was then I suggested to Tim we go.

And now I read this message the boys are home."

SMS texts between Pete and his estranged wife (in Canada now, with their young son) are in English renga, the only form that shows up more than once.

*'I'm back now. Sorry
for my vanishing act. When Finn
stirs tell him I'm home.'*

*'Since we've spent the last twelve hours
baking, painting, reading books*

*not imagining
where you are, I think you should
speak to him yourself.'*

When you get to "The Speed of Light" you find it told in eight Shakespearean sonnet stanzas. This episode is a dialogue between Pete and a stargazer he happens on at two o'clock in the morning while crossing elevated empty terrain.

*He flicks his torch at me. 'Who let the crowd
in?*

*I'm sorry, mate, but I just have to laugh:
Most nights my company's a lazy fox,
The lonely wind, a badger looking lost.'*

All of the booklet is on this high level of quality.

Having previously watched the filmed version of *King Charles III, Harm* seduces my ear with the possibility of a flash verse drama in formal verse on the small stage, surely a pleasing possibility for both mind and ear.

I bought the book immediately. There is a link to Chris Jones' website on the first page of the publisher's site. Posts on his past and current artisanal activity and products are there, along with plenty of interesting literary ideas, and enhancing notes about historic, riparian Sheffield – now cast as a character in a stellar verse narrative.

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Murder Mystery

By Aeronwy Dafies

Something strange
Inhuman
Creeps deserted corridors
Seeking life
Seeking blood
Driven to kill
A random victim
Police seek a murderer
Of mundane flesh and blood
Not comprehending
This is a killer
They cannot arrest

Review by DJ Tyrer

The Feathertale Review

26

ISSN 1911-2734, \$15

www.feathertale.com

PO Box 291, Ottawa, Ontario, K4M
1A3, Canada

This particular issue of *The Feathertale Review* comes in the form of four little booklets within a rather nice golden card slipcase that feels surprisingly sturdy and contains the usual fare of thoughtful, amusing and strange writing and art.

In the first booklet, my favourite pieces were *Dear Author*, by Rolli, which I am sure expresses sentiments familiar to everyone reading this review, and a most-amusing cartoon, by Kenzi Inouye, of a birdwatcher discovering a message from his feathered, ahem, friends. Two more cartoons by Kenzi Inouye were my favourite pieces in the second booklet, an excellent example of *Keeping Up Appearances*, and third, a visual revelation of what happens when you don't *Say When...*

It was the fourth of the booklets that I found most inspiring with the poem *Things I Saw From My Window During The Pandemic* by Brett Popplewell, the absolutely-brilliant tale of office misery and rhinos, *A Person of Passion* by Michelle Kaeser, zany zodiacal guidance in the form of *Anxious Astrology* by Madame Kate Barss, and a silly interview with Prince Charles.

Really good fun and well worth reading if you want something both different and amusing. Highly recommended.

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Atlantean Publishing will be **closed** to submissions during July and August – *however*, we will remain open to submissions to **View From Atlantis** (see the site for submission windows), news, letters of comment, and submissions to the **5-7-5 Haiku Journal**.

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The Supplement will return in September – so send your letters of comment, opinion pieces, articles, news and reviews and help fill the next issue!