

# Awen

Issue 117 August 2022

Free for SAE (\$2 overseas) or as PDF download:

Atlantean Publishing  
4 Pierrot Steps  
71 Kursaal Way  
Southend-on-Sea  
Essex, SS1 2UY  
United Kingdom

atlanteanpublishing@hotmail.com

© Atlantean Publishing/all rights revert to contributors

<https://atlanteanpublishing.wordpress.com/>  
<https://atlanteanpublishing.fandom.com/>

## All Those Years Ago

By Celine Rose Mariotti

It was years ago  
All those years ago,  
Where did the time go?  
Where did Grandpa (Iannotti) go?  
Where did Grandma (Iannotti) go?  
Where did Uncle Dominic go?  
Where did my great Uncle Ralph go?  
Where did Skinny (my Dad) go?  
Where did Angie go?  
Where did Grandpa Mariotti go?  
Where did Grandma Mariotti go?  
Where did Uncle Tony go?  
Where did the time go?  
Years pass; no one knows  
Memories linger on,  
Memories I'll never let go  
All those years ago.

.....

## My Atlantean Husband

By Stephanie Dewitt

Open to the air, tower under the moon  
Light of our soul pair, presence to the Spirit we attune  
Of the time cycles, we do know  
For body and time, we did sow  
Away Atlantean husband, became the sea power  
Pillars of time fell, and the earth was lost to the tower  
Today we meet again, under a shadow's rhyme  
And we bring light to the stars of time  
The soul of my Atlantean husband denies no expression  
For pure in heart, he loves a lost tradition

## The Desired Explanation

– Geraldus Cambrensis on Poets and their Readers  
(a found poem; Lewis Thorpe tr.)  
with Cywydd Deuair Hirion commentary  
by Duane Vorhees

"They roar out violently,  
are rendered beside themselves,  
and become  
(as it were)  
possessed by a spirit.

"They don't deliver  
the answer  
in a connected manner.

"But the person  
who skilfully observes them  
will find

"--after many preambles  
(and many nugatory  
and incoherent  
though ornamented  
speeches)--

"the desired explanation  
conveyed  
in some turn of a word.

"These gifts  
are usually conferred  
upon them in dreams.

"Some seem to have  
sweet milk  
or honey  
poured on their lips.

"Others fancy that  
a written schedule  
is applied  
to their mouths."

*The two dragons' shrieks wreaked the rue  
of all those whom their noise sliced through.  
The Red Dragon won after wine  
led to their entombment as swine.  
A verse that roars soars over souls,  
overshoots its mark, fails to foal;  
it intends to strike like bright light  
on shadow, but just extends night.  
But verse that whispers cures and corns;  
it gives birth, preserves, inspires, mourns.  
The worth it instills builds and bonds  
our souls to all those lives we don.*

The reference is to the struggle between the Welsh dragon and the Saxon one. Their loud struggle caused chaos and infertility until the king caused them to turn into pigs so they could drink his mead, and he buried them after they fell asleep. The story is mainly from *Lludd and Liefelys* in the **Mabinogion** but also from the **Historia Brittonum** and other sources. Cywydd deuair hirion is a Welsh verse form of 7 (or 8) syllables per line. After the caesura in the first line of the couplet, the next syllable has to rhyme and the last word has to use the initial consonant of that word, and then the 2nd line forms a couplet.

# THE INVISIBLE LEGACY OF HARRY CHAMBERS, POET

By Neil K. Henderson

When is a poet not a poet? That is the question. If critical opinion is anything to go by, the name of Harry Chambers should be revered by a wide and appreciative audience. But such are the vagaries of literary endeavour that even the most brilliant talents often lack due recognition. Harry Chambers, poet *extraordinaire*, is one such overlooked phenomenon.

As early as May 2012, “a special mention for the arresting symmetry of *Veins On A Leaf* by Harry Chambers,” in international poetry annual *Metre Meter* roused my interest. “Great stuff!” the letter insisted, as if to underline the remark. Sadly, I had no access to the previous issue cited. However, the same writer went on to include “Harry Chambers’s *Veins In Alabaster*” in a prestigious list of commended poems the following year, confirming that *Veins On A Leaf* had been no flash in the pan. Editors and readers alike would have done well to seek further work from this poetic *wunderkind* who had sprouted almost unseen in their midst. (In my case, he was literally unseen, as my copy of the relevant issue seemed to be missing some pages.) The odds were that if he went on as he’d started, he would soon stand tall in the ranks of the elite. But things did not go as foreseen.

Another year went by without so much as a sniff of Harry Chambers, and then came this comment in *Glimmerings Of Light* from poetry expert and critic Henry Mistonpike, which must have drawn frustrated gasps from those keyed up for more: “*Who Do I See In The Mirror?*” by Melissa Kenge was a particular favourite, striking just that balance of pathos and hilarity which one looks for at the gritty ‘kitchen sink’ end of the of the morality poem spectrum. Indeed, it reminds me in its realism and humour of a poem I read once, called *Veins In My Nose* by Harry Chambers, though there aren’t any veins in Melissa’s poem (or noses either, for that matter).”

Who this Melissa Kenge might be, or how near her work resembled that of Chambers, were of secondary note. The main priority was to track down the new Harry Chambers poem *Veins In My Nose*, in order to accord it full and direct appraisal. This turned out to be a major detective saga, resulting at the end of another year in many rumours and alleged sightings, but no positive evidence – far less an actual published copy – of the poem itself. Even the two odes named before could no longer be unearthed. Then a new trail opened up.

“Harry Chambers made me blink with the temerity of his *Vein Of Whimsy*,” raved an ardent enthusiast on the website of *Amazing Gloriosity*, a prose-based ezine with occasional poems. This was enough to make observers sit up and stare, but what came after brought a further jolt. “Melissa Kenge

managed to enthrall me with her *Glass Half Cracked* and the slightly disturbing *My Head Is A Carpet*.” There was that name again, and suddenly it began to look as if Harry Chambers had a rival.

It has been said that there is nothing like the mystique of the elusive to attract admirers. And where there are admirers there are bound to be imitators. It is usual, of course, for these admirers to mimic the style or content of those they would emulate. In the case of Melissa Kenge, however, it seems the mere elusiveness, and nothing else, was what she aspired to equal. Like her literary contemporary and presumed hero, she was nowhere to be found in the organs of the muse. Naturally, the search was extended to include shared references with Harry Chambers, but he appeared to have vanished.

“This is fantastic!” concluded Henry Mistonpike on the website later. “We are in the realms of Quantum Poesy now. He is clearly a poetic Will-O’-The-Wisp, like subatomic particles that can both exist and not exist at the same time. I find that intellectually dazzling.”

No wonder, then, if our ardent enthusiast should “blink with the temerity” of Harry’s *Vein Of Whimsy*. But this wasn’t the only form of ‘vision distortion’ occasioned by the work of Mr Chambers. Were its ‘presence’ not miraculous enough in itself, it has been linked with a phenomenon of predestinative psychogenic influence.

“Harry Chambers came to me in a dream,” Mistonpike was to claim elsewhere, “and recited one of his poems. Being a dream, I can’t recall the poem’s contents, but the title was *Veins Ain’t What They Used To Be*. Which turned out quite prophetic, since the quarterly reviews arrived the next day and there weren’t any of his poems in them! *Veins ain’t what they used to be, indeed.*”

But, then again, some things never change. No-one doubted at this point that he – or at least his name – would be back. His imitator, on the other hand, hadn’t gone away. Witness this critique: “*Lilies Of The Valium* by Melissa Kenge evinced a pharmaceutical bouquet reminiscent of Baudelaire. It was certainly less futuristically reflective than her usual *oeuvre*.”

Not only was she still around, but was even gaining a reputation. Could it be that she was ousting Harry Chambers from his rightful place, like a cuckoo in the creative nest? Perhaps she was less an imitative admirer than a jealous rival after all. But then they jointly exploded onto the same glittering stage of eulogistic approval, *Noble Clouds Of Radiancance Quarterly*.

“And talking of arresting symmetry, Harry Chambers was in fine vein with *Veins, Veins, Veins*, and the more laid-back *In The Vein Of Spain*,” the piece rejoiced, reminding readers of that early reference to *Veins On A Leaf* which first signalled Harry Chambers’s arrival. Somewhat later, as if in afterthought, the reviewer continued: “Melissa Kenge was both surprising and predictable with *Super-*

*Duper Pooper Scooper* on the one hand, and *Three Legs To My Trestle* on the other.”

One would have expected the elusive pair to capitalise on this outpouring of publicity, but Melissa Kenge – perhaps outshone by the blinding return of her rival’s fame – temporarily disappeared from view, while a modest allusion to “Harry Chambers’s *Dyed In Vein*” in a later issue conveyed a quiet irony, punning on his stalker’s apparent critical demise. A coincidence, perhaps... but *could* there be a touch of revenge, if not from Chambers himself, at least from his allusion-making supporter? It is tempting to speculate.

But a different significance of this latest title may deserve more serious thought. Could it be that Harry Chambers himself is “dyed in the vein” of his own mysterious weavings? Considering the preponderance of “veins” in the titles of his works, is it not more than likely that Harry Chambers – or his invisible presence – is himself a “vein of whimsy” running through poetry publishing in general, and rhyme-and-rhythm outlets in particular, ever since the 2011 *Metre Meter* with *Veins On A Leaf*, critiqued in May 2012?

“Where did he creep in from, one has to wonder?” said *MM* editor Minderella Tumshie, when confronted with those early unattested references. “Is he some kind of poltergeist? Whatever the case, he certainly has a place in *Metre Meter*. In fact, when you think about it, he’s ideal. Just as zero is the most perfect expression of numbering, so invisible poetry is the most perfect expression of rhyming. Nothing rhymes with nothing every time.” And, of course, in the case of Melissa Kenge, nothing could be easier to imitate.

If, indeed, imitation has actually occurred. Here critical attention should be closely applied to the works of Ms Kenge, seeking any clues as to direct influence, or even – we hesitate to say – deliberate or accidental plagiarism. Certainly, she has never used the word *vein* in any of her titles. But this is the only indication, albeit a negative one, of departure from the Chambers mode. It is impossible to form an educated opinion – much less to prove the case – one way or another in the absence of anything material which can be read. Indeed, if all poets turned to the invisible form, literary criticism of verse would cease completely. However, it is at this point in our speculations that further reference to our ethereal subjects appears.

Issue 50 – the Golden Jubilee number – of *Metre Meter* lays a hidden Easter egg in the next issue’s correspondence. “*Sprained Vein On The Drain Plain* by Harry Chambers exuded a strangely warm intensity,” gives a poetry buff as his opinion. Then, “Melissa Kenge was back on form with *In My Wooden Drawers*.” The message concludes on an alarming note: “And now the race is on, to see who will be reprinted in the 100th issue! Such stamina as theirs will be hard to keep up with, but they keep us all on our toes.”

What is one to make of this? Once more the legions of the battle-scarred and weary amass their scattered wits in readiness to resume the search. But what will it prove? Who are these poetry buffs and reviewers who see Harry Chambers and Melissa Kenge one minute, then every other reader strains his eyes in vain – or should that be “in vein”? – for what appears forever out of reach? Are they invisible too? Has poetry appreciation reached a point of total and utter oblivion?

Let's not overreact. Indeed, one recent publication, *Blissful Nothingness*, has actually devoted itself entirely to the celebration and promotion of invisible poetry – even including two anonymous poems dedicated to Harry Chambers himself, the first actually reproducing the most piquant of Chambers's original titles:

VEIN OF WHIMSY  
(For Harry Chambers)

Veins, veins, veins, veins,  
Veins, veins, veins, veins,  
Veins, veins, veins, veins,  
Veins.

I am not in the vein  
For whimsy.

Clearly the author has wholeheartedly embraced the sentiments (and at least one significant passage) from Chambers's earlier works. Then there is the following:

BLANK VERSE  
(For Harry Chambers)

Which speaks for itself with crystal clarity.

The magazine has had generally favourable reviews: “*Blissful Nothingness* evinces that ultimate state of mind in which true freedom lies, not unallied to the rejection of success in the *Vein Of Whimsy* homage, with the same standard taken up and carried to extremes in *Blank Verse*. Blissful nothingness showed again in Harry Chambers's bright undiscovered *Purple-Veined Okapi...*”

From this we are led to speculate on some cryptic esoteric in-reference or coded subtext which the reviewer wishes not to share with casual readers, and which may, in a very real sense, be the epitome of ‘blissful nothingness’ as a concept:

“...As for Harry Chambers's metrical minions, arrayed in crocodile line along the way, all stand up to close inspection, given the pristine cloak of invisibility with which their muse is garbed. The future for the unseen form is aflame with hidden starlight, leaving *The Ash Of Clouds*,

*A Lost Horizon* and Melissa Kenge's *Buttered Doorknob* still to come.”

And there she is again, invisible or not – the elusive Melissa Kenge. *Is* she conceivably competing with Harry Chambers for fame – or even ‘immortality’ – culminating in the Centenary issue of *Metre Meter*? If so, and given that both poets are undetectable, how is anyone to recognise them?

Henry Mistonpike: “Perhaps they don't exist at all in the physical sense. Perhaps they are psychic constructs of the collective consciousness...”

No. They exist, all right. I myself have seen them. On a moonlit night, on a visit to the frozen north, I was roused by the unearthly pall of an inaudible recitation echoing soundlessly across the ice. Looking up, I beheld two silhouetted figures racing over the thinly frozen surface, one clearly in pursuit of the other. The man in front looked to be on skates, while the woman behind hunched over a sledge contrived from a wooden packing case. She was lashing out at what I assumed to be dogs, though I couldn't see any. It may have been the race for exposure in the Centenary *Metre Meter* or she could have just been stalking him, but whatever the cause, she was hot on his heels. Such was the heat of the pursuit, in fact, that cracks in the ice began to show like aggravated tracteries of veins. Undeterred, the pair raced by. On she chased relentlessly – on and ever on, until at last one massive vein opened up and swallowed them.

Whether they will ever re-emerge is not for me to say, so let us simply cherish what the fleeing poet left us. What remains is so much more than a series of hints at a greatness gone from sight. There is something worth remembering in it all. Perhaps the words of an unrecalled reviewer may define a poetic legacy that is no less real for being outwardly unseen: “All these struck an inner chord, as Harry Chambers says, *Like Veins On The Membrane Of My Soul.*”

Ends

**Still Life with a Mask**

By Ute Margaret Saine

*Painting by Claudio Bonichi, 1943-2016*

A white mask with blank  
eyes infinitely looking  
into the mirror

Hollow eyes  
swimming in a sea of dreams  
full/empty alike

Outside life passes  
the floating gaze does not grasp  
the mirror's empty

**We Need Sunshine**

By Celine Rose Mariotti

The weather has turned sour,  
Conglomerates have too much power,  
People are depressed with their mind,  
We need sunshine.

Living day to day,  
Looking for peace to come our way,  
People don't tell the truth,  
Too many are so uncouth.

Music isn't music any more,  
The singers and musicians of today  
Can't write or play music or sing  
Like those from years before.

TV shows of present day are  
Low on quality,  
Lack imagination,  
And have no story.

Things are not the same  
As they once were,  
What's right or wrong  
Has become a blur.

We have to pray  
That sanity will be  
Restored,  
We will soon hear  
The Saints in Heaven roar!

We need a sign  
We need sunshine.

**DNA**  
**(Diversity needs All,**  
**All need Diversity!)**

(A kind of Palindrome)

By Arthur C. Ford, Sr

Fortunate are we,  
for diversity!

Night and Day are the same  
for through both, we'll all to blame,

There will always be confusion  
As cultures experience fusion

We live with imperfection  
Love brings us resurrection.

Grey-brown sea churns  
White foam frosting waves  
Gull cries on breeze

By DJ Tyrer

Originally published on *Three Line Poetry*

## A Ragged School (The Story of John Pounds\*)

By Ed Chaberek

Debt removed by his glory light,  
In the morning when the glowing rain  
Brings salvation to the dust, children  
Dance. "And I smile," Jesus says,  
Looking down as he renews all life again.

John Pounds brought 'taties' hot  
From the folds of his ragged coat, fed  
Children who grabbed fast and ran  
From the twisted man. All crowded  
In Portsmouth ruin. John fed, grew, and

Life began anew, "Look down from this  
Mercy Cross as I," Jesus bids, torn  
To rags He gives salvation to the dust. Life  
Begins again in drawing to His knee. (John  
Takes his new mother home.) John

Pounds built the crippled children  
Shoes freely from the Cross. John grew  
Wedges, heels, ways to walk  
Straight in any storm, to preserve  
The Word, to read, to write. Ragged

Schools. He smiles from the Cross,  
The care of each for each, lights  
Darknesses of heart, fills us up  
With eternal wedges, heels of way and walk. Pews  
Abrim with once-again graduates of

Ragged Schools. With Him, we all... John  
Pounds died in life, the glory walk  
Never died in him. 500 children brought  
To rest heads forever on Jesus's knee, to  
Graduate as we from Ragged School.

## Ligeia's Unholy Tomb

By LindaAnn LoSchiavo

*"The greater part of the fearful night had worn away,  
and she who had been dead, once again stirred..."*  
— "Ligeia" by Edgar Allan Poe [1838]

Ligeia's what they called her. That bar-room  
Was known for vices, everything for sale.  
I'd wooed that chick with coke, beef jerky, ale  
For all her friends. She's single (I'd assumed),  
'Til Edgar Poe showed, said he was her "groom."  
Inviting him to duel, I watched him pale.  
Drama ensued — and thereby hangs a tale.  
They're ghouls, those two! They'd met inside a tomb.

Bloodthirsty Poe bled beauty dry. Pre-doomed  
Ligeia, Annabel Lee, and Berenice —  
Insidiously felled and pushed offstage —  
Had met goth's Mr. Goodbar on the page.  
Belles fuelled his quill; their death gave him release.  
Some vampires kill with ink — refill, resume.

\* *Note: John Pounds began what came to be known as his Ragged School in Portsmouth, England. Terribly crippled himself, he felt the pain in others with an intensity few feel. As a convert to Christ, he took on a ministry to the homeless children of Portsmouth, and supported a total of 500 children in his lifetime — and, every one of them became a Christian. John was chosen as Portsmouth's 'Man of the Millennium', selected from a group that included such names as Lord Nelson and Charles Dickens. (Information supplied by Richard A. Lewis of the Assembly of God church in Superior, Montana, USA.)*

## Repetition

By Jane Hutto

The thing you can presume,  
However drab yesterday, is to  
Expect a rising in the east--  
Something to watch for.  
Underpinning all expectations,  
Notwithstanding your plight,  
Reality begins with a sunrise.  
Over the treetops it climbs,  
Slowly taking a measured,  
Enduring path — one you can  
Affirm will be there.  
Given to us since Creation,  
Always on time and so brilliant,  
I revel in such constancy!  
Neither glee nor woe  
Take away from its  
Heady brightness — need  
I expect anything more?  
Surely as I'm alive  
Day begins, so we,  
A speck in the universe,  
Youth or aged, may proceed.

## Various Excuses

By Ute Margaret Saine

A smile is  
one thing  
the only thing  
we have

the only thing  
we know  
and learn  
how to give

a smile is  
beauty  
that surrounds  
and nourishes

beauty  
that shares us  
like bread  
as we share

a passion  
which is the best  
excuse for  
our actions

heaven  
if you are  
heaven or sky

I need  
some of your clouds

or are you just  
a bird in the sky  
flying happily by

over  
a smiling woman below  
with a lust for life