

# SWIM

SUBUD WRITERS INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE

Issue Number 9

June 2017



# Editorial

Lots of neat stuff in SWIM 9. It's quite a long issue, so take your time with it. Be sure to read the Braids excerpt – it's wonderful!

Here's an announcement:

## Subud poetry anthology

Sponsored by SICA International, Stefanie Brown and myself intend to collect poems from our brothers and sisters from all over the world for an anthology to be printed in time for next year's World Congress.

We invite you to submit 2 of your best poems for the anthology, it being our intention to include at least one from each author.

*Please follow these guidelines:*

- \* Poems should not be longer than 40 lines each
- \* Put your name after each poem
- \* Include a brief bio, and details of any publications you'd like us to mention.

**Deadline: October 31st, 2017**

Send poems to both of us:

[emmanuelriddlemaker@gmail.com](mailto:emmanuelriddlemaker@gmail.com)

[stefaniebrown@live.com](mailto:stefaniebrown@live.com)

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# SWIM

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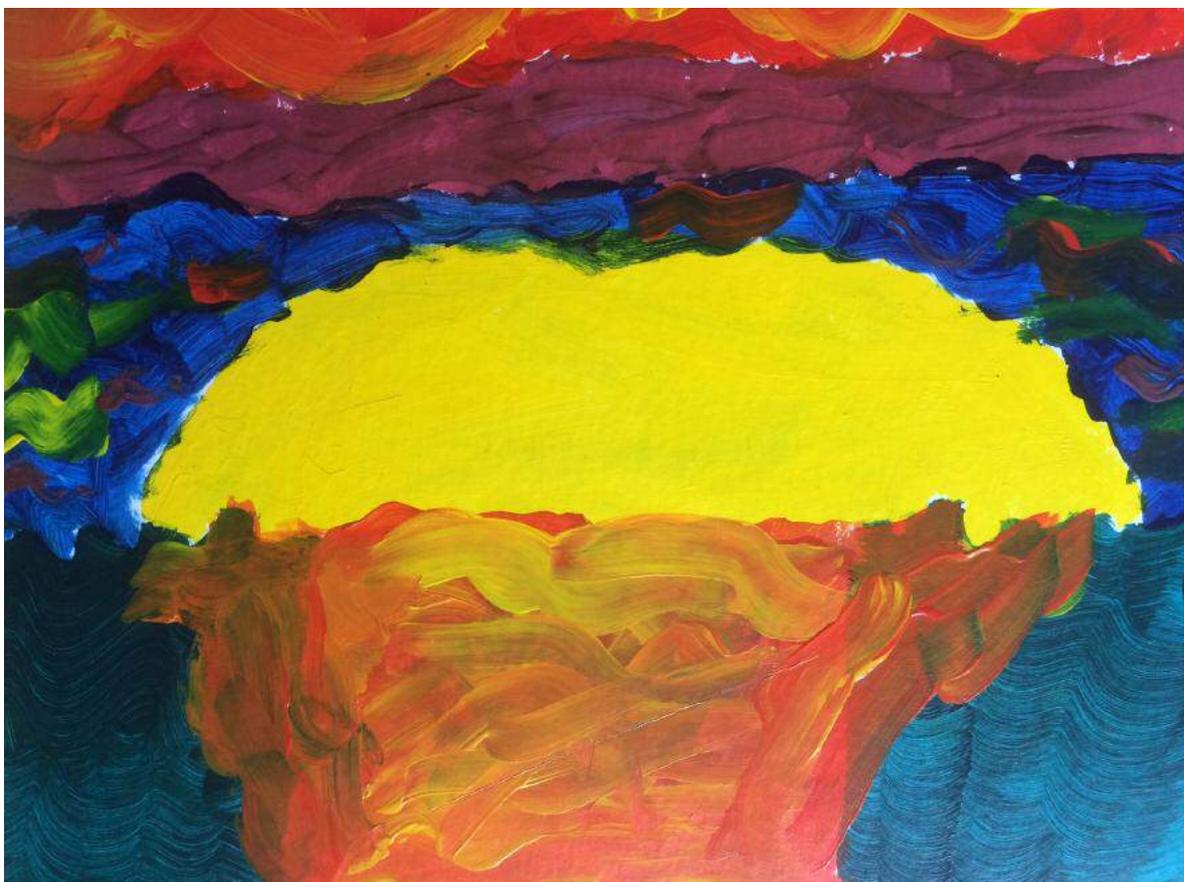
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## Paintings by Marcia Lynes



Starry Night



Sunset

## Refugee Kids' Paintings...

During the time that "The Jungle" still existed, two young guys from London went out and put up a big white geodesic dome which became home for many different activities: music, art, dance, even Shakespeare. These pictures are from a series painted by refugee children. They were recently part of an exhibition at the Lewes Subud House, which also featured the Pulitzer Prize winning photographs of the refugees' journey; to remind us of how far they had come.

*Adrienne Thomas*



## Hymn of a 10-month old after her first winter

Hymn of a 10-month old  
after her first winter  
Grampa let me  
eat dirt today.  
Gave me dandelion  
leaves to chew.  
Laughed and  
pounded the sod,  
as my feet felt earth  
for the first time.  
Prickly grass, lots of bugs  
while the dog ran around,  
panted his joy and  
gave me wet kisses  
in the backyard.

*Andrew Hall*

## 5 Haiku

Spreading like a smile  
limpid cascade fills the house  
Bach played on piano

Curtains lift and fall  
silence drifts into room  
two worlds meet softly

Both true and untrue  
ripples caught in photograph  
glint of timeless realm

Stirred by unseen hand  
in autumn sky massed manoeuvres  
pure bliss of starlings

Always out of reach  
words to distil the wonder  
fragrance of pink rose

*Myrna Michell*

## The Sea Goes Up, The Sea Goes Down

It was a big bright day when we went to the beach, a day full of sunlight and wide blue sky with fluffy clouds like puffs of breath. When I stood in the sea waves rippled around my ankles but oh my goodness it was coldy coldy like the sea was trying to freeze the insides of my bones and I squealed and ran splashing back to the sand and Mommie dried my feet and ankles with a big towel and I lay on the hot sand and gave my toes to the sun so that it could warm them.

Then Mama and Dadgrand sat on each side me and started burying me in the sand, scooping it up with their hands and pouring it over my feet and legs and tummy and chest and arms. Mama kept telling me not to laugh and that made me laugh even more and sand falling off my chest and more sand being put on me.

When they finished there was only my head left uncovered.

It was nice lying on the beach with sand all over me. I was watching pelicans flying to and fro with their great big beaks, and it made me think that the beak says I Wanna go this way I wanna go that way I Wanna dive down into the sea splash and the rest of the pelican says okay whatever you're the boss.

Dadgrand said he was keeping guard in case the sand monster came crawling along the beach to grab me. He was holding a piece of driftwood and trying to look like a Power Ranger.

The sand seemed to be getting warmer and warmer and I was feeling sleepy sleepy when suddenly

Aaaaaahhhhh!

Coldy coldy coldy on my feet!

I stood up, shook all the sand off and looked at the sea. The waves weren't in the same place they were still little ripples but they climbed up the beach and that was why they splashed over my toes.

"Tide's coming up," said Dadgrand.

"Will it keep coming up?"

"Till it goes down again."

"You mean the sea goes up and down Dadgrand?"

"Yup."

"Every day?"

"Yup."

"Huh."

"Here, Popsidoodle... look at this."

Dadgrand showed me a long line of stuff all along the top of the beach—crab shells and feathers, seaweed and seashells, pieces of wood, bits of plastic.

"This is where the sea reached last time it came up," he said.

"Why does the sea go up and down Dadgrand?"

Dadgrand's not very good at explaining things like why my heart keeps beating even though I don't tell it to, or why people's eyes aren't all the same colour. So he was talking about the moon, and scratching things in the sand with his Power Ranger stick and I was rolling my eyes so he stopped.

"You wanna story?"

"Yes please Dadgrand."

He took a deep breath and another deep breath and he looked across the sea and said, "A long way away, right out in the middle of the wide wide ocean, in a place where no ships go because if they do they never come back, way out there where the sea is deepest, there lives an enormous giant.

He is so big that his feet rest at the bottom of the sea and his head rises above the surface. When he sneezes storms go crashing around the world. When he farts the north and south poles change places. When the moon's full he sings to the lady giant who lives on a planet over on the

other side of the universe. We don't hear it when he sings. If we did hear it we'd explode. Because the giant is so big, when he breathes in his chest grows really huuuuuge and it makes the sea go higher and higher all over the world. So when the tide comes up it's because the ocean giant is breathing in. Like if you blew up a balloon under the water in the bath the water would rise.

And when the giant breathes out his chest gets smaller and smaller just like mine, just like yours, and the sea drops, and the tide goes down."

"How long does it take the big big giant to breathe in and breathe out Dadgrand?"

"It takes him about six hours to breathe in," said Dadgrand "and about the same to breathe out."

"Huh."

I found out that the deepest part of the ocean is seven miles deep. That must be where the giant is. So the giant's as high as seven miles. I can't think how long or how high seven miles is. Higher than any mountain. What does he eat, that giant? Does he swallow whole whales for breakfast? Does he walk around at all, or does he just stand there like the Statue of Liberty only high as the sky? It's sad that he sings to a lady giant who's on another planet on the far side of the universe. If she's as big as him she's probably the only lady giant he could love in the whole of everywhere but she's such a long long way away. Maybe she's standing alone in a deep deep sea on a far-off planet waiting for the big big giant to sing to her. Maybe she sings back to him.

"Dadgrand," I said next time we were on the beach..."I think those giants you told me about are sad. And it makes me sad. I want another story about the up and down sea. Pleeeease!"

Dadgrand took a deep breath and another deep breath and he looked across the sea for a long long time.

"What's wrong Dadgrand?"

He wasn't looking sad but I could feel it inside him.

"I'm okay, Popsidoodle. "

"Was it the dead seabird we found on the beach, Dadgrand?"

He took a deep deep breath, stretched his arms to the sky, made a WAAAAAA! sound like he was yawning.

Waves kept moving forward and back and moving forward again as though they were trying to reach us.

"Here's a story."

Another deep breath.

"Everything, all of life, came from the sea. It all started in the sea. Little creatures and tiny creatures and bigger creatures... Where they began, where we all began was in the sea. The sea is like a great big hug wrapped around the world. I think the sea loves us. The sea is like our mother, the mother of all life, and she will never forget us even though we don't live in her any more.

When we come to the beach we come close to her. I think she's glad we come here to swim or go fishing or build sandcastles or bury one another or just sit and watch her waves rolling in and out. When we go home we leave footprints on the sand all along the edge of her. She's the big Momma and she wants to know our stories, how we are doing. So every day she rolls back up the beach and touches our footprints, strokes their sandy edges, and swallows them. She gets a taste of each one of us. Our stories, the flavors of who we are, live inside her. Like the stories of the birds that leave their footprints in the sand because she loves them too.

So that's today's story about why the sea goes up and down."

Dadgrand looked across the waves. There were seagulls way up there in the sky. Just along the beach a big black dog splashed into the sea after a ball. I snuggled up to Dadgrand. He put his arms around me. He was singing very quietly.

"What's wrong Dadgrand?"

"Did you like the story?"

"Yes it's beautiful, Dadgrand."

A white bird, kind of like a seagull but skinny, dived into the sea really fast and came up again and I saw a tiny silvery fish in its beak.

I was thinking of the sea as a great big mother wrapping all the world in her big splashy arms, and loving us, like Dadgrand said. And I was thinking that the Big Momma loves all the creatures that live inside her, the crabs, the fish, the great big whales, the sharks, the seals and the dolphins. I thought how lucky I was to be sitting here on the edge of her, hearing waves tumbling and sliding across the sand, and the tiny birds squeaking to one another as they ran across the sand poking it with their pointed beaks.

I leaned back and looked at Dadgrand's wrinkly old face.

"What's wrong Dadgrand?"

He shook his head.

"Nothing's wrong."

"Tell me."

"Nothing's wrong."

"Tell me! TELL ME TELL ME TELL ME!"

He shook his head.

"No."

Before Momma came with the picnic I helped Dadgrand clean the beach. We walked along with a big bucket picking up plastic bags, plastic forks and spoons, plastic candy wrappers, all sorts of stuff. We found a dead bird lying on the edge of the sea. It was black with a white chest. Waves were rippling over it as though they were saying goodbye. When Dadgrand picked it up it made a little squeaking sound like it was still alive. Dadgrand said it was the air coming out of it. The feathers were smooth and soft. It was beautiful. We dug a big hole in the sand and buried it. Dadgrand made a cross with driftwood.

I think Dadgrand's sad because there are so many bits of plastic in the sea, and they make the big momma sick and her children, like the black and white bird. And he can't tell me because I'm only a little girl. He doesn't want to make me sad as well.

So when Dadgrand and I were back at the beach I said, "This is a true story Dadgrand. "

I took a deep breath and I took another deep breath and I looked out across the sea and said, "There was a little girl called Popsidoodle who had a grandfather called Dadgrand.

Dadgrand was feeling sad and Popsidoodle knew it was because he found lots of dead birds on the beach. Her Momma told her that Dadgrand said they were hungry because the sea couldn't feed them like it used to. And also, lots of them had bits of plastic in their stomachs.

Popsidoodle didn't want Dadgrand to feel sad so one day she went to the beach with her Momma. She drew a great big heart on the sand with a stick, and she drew a picture of Dadgrand's sad face in it, and her Momma wrote "Dadgrand's sadness" under it.

She made the heart look pretty with seashells and crab shells and pieces of driftwood. Then her Momma took her home.

In the evening the sea came climbing up the beach. It collected a sandcastle, and footprints and birdprints. The waves rolled higher and higher up the beach.. They rolled across the heart that Popsidoodle made. They carried Dadgrand's sad feeling into the big big sea where there was lots of room for it.

Next day the heart was gone. So Dadgrand's sad feeling was taken away by the great mother who loves him and Popsidoodle and the big whales and the tiny little crabs that live in seashells. So Dadgrand didn't need to feel sad any more. The end."

Dadgrand took a deep breath and another deep breath and looked out across the rolling waves. Then he smiled at me, right into my eyes.

He picked up his old bucket and said, "Let's go clean the beach Popsidoodle."

And we did.

*Emmanuel Williams*

# GOD'S GRACE

In 1969 I was living in London, working in an office, bored out of my brain, having watched the swinging sixties pass me by and not having the confidence to do anything else. I longed for adventure, even as a child I had been drawn in my imagination to foreign lands and peoples.

When I was thirteen I saved up enough money to go on a school trip to Nice, my first trip abroad. By the end of the holiday I was hooked and could not bear the thought of returning home to the UK, so I hid in the school and was finally found by a very irate teacher. Of course this delayed our departure and I was not very popular to say the least.

So when at nineteen I met Emanuel with his Italian charm and expansive nature I fell in love with love and as I always did, threw caution to the wind, not because I was really wilful but I was searching for something and mistakenly trying to find it vicariously through someone else.

Emanuel lived in a communal flat in London where everyone was taking drugs of some kind or another and even though I was very impressionable I felt that what I held in my imagination was far more interesting than getting wasted.

When Emanuel said that he was going to India for a year as part of the hippy experience my heart sank and I dearly wanted to go with him but he left the UK to go back to Italy first.

In the end I could stand it no longer and he agreed that I could go with him to India, but I would have to get to Italy first. I left my job and amazingly a colleague and her husband offered to take me down to Dover where I boarded a ferry. They seemed to get a buzz out of what I was doing.

I must have looked a strange sight in my red ballerina shoes, an old check shirt holey old jeans and carrying a string bag. On the ferry I met an Italian father and son who said they would give me a lift in their little red sports car but once on the road we ended up in a ditch and I ended up hitching all the way to Bologna on my own, sleeping in a family's huge house on the French border when they found me wandering about in the mountains.

It was an amazing feeling being out on the road, so exhilarating, free from the confines of my life in the UK. However, when I eventually arrived in Bologna Emanuel decided that I was not 'strong enough' to go to India. I was somewhat surprised to find the 'hippy' living at home with his parents in bourgeois comfort. What a letdown! He refused point blank, and after only a few days I ended up hitching all the way back to the UK. By the time I got to the French border - I think it was Chambercy - it was late evening and no shops were open so I drank from a fountain and lay down on a bench in the park looking at the stars.

Once again I was in luck as some students saw me and gave me a bed for the night in their flat. However, when I woke the next morning I really didn't feel well. In drinking from the fountain I had picked up a tummy bug. As I left their flat the next day I must have looked drunk as I walked out of the town, swaying from side to side. I staggered into a field at the side of the road where I was violently sick and fell asleep for a couple of hours and ended up getting heat stroke as the sun came up.

Somehow I managed to hitch a lift to Paris and ended up at an airport where I got another lift from a middle aged man. Again, I fell asleep and the next thing I knew I was in what looked like a forest. Completely disorientated I looked around to see the driver unzipping his trousers to expose himself. He was also muttering in French and sounding very aggressive, making a grab for me.

And this is where it becomes unfathomable because all of a sudden a motorbike drew up beside us and a policeman looked in the car window and asked the man to get out. We both quickly got out of the car and the policeman motioned for the car boot to be opened. As I stood to the side I could see an array of vile, sexually explicit magazines and other paraphernalia strewn across the boot. It was a bit like a surrealistic French film!

The policeman motioned for us to get back in the car and from the little I understood the policeman would follow. As the man drove out of the forest I couldn't believe how far into its depths he had taken me; it was like the story of the big bad wolf, but I hadn't had time to be afraid. We arrived at a police station and after I was questioned, signed a form and told that the man would be charged,

I was then escorted back to a road where I would continue my journey hitchhiking.

I often receive the meaning of things after the event and this was no exception. It wasn't until years later that I was made aware of the magnitude of the situation, almost like a premonition in reverse. I would not be here today had it not been for the Grace of God and a policeman on a motorbike. And looking at it logically there was no reason for the policeman to have decided to follow us; I could have been a passenger in any car. It is not the first time that I have been let off the hook when somehow a part of me becomes disengaged and I become open to the elements of deception or simply my own misjudgement.

*Seraphina Manferrari*

## THE LAST BARRIER

In a dream, I was holding my mother's hand while we were walking through some woods.

We came across a small aqua coloured gate. We tried to go through it but we couldn't get near because it was guarded by ferocious dogs.

Suddenly, two women came along and opened the gate for us and we were ushered through and as we moved forward, I noticed that the dogs were made silent and stayed on the other side of the gate.

*Chairani Gregson*

### Attribute of Love

The most wonderful attribute of Love  
Is that it is infinitely expandable.  
When my son was born  
I did not stop loving my wife.  
When my first daughter was born  
I did not stop loving my son.  
When my second daughter was born  
I did not stop loving my first.

I have never stopped loving  
All the friends and relations of the past.  
And as I am getting older  
And fear grows less  
I am beginning to feel love  
For more and more unlikely people.

But isn't it strange how jealous we are!  
Our own love may expand  
But we expect to bottle other people's;  
To keep it just for ourselves  
Like a bottle of perfume  
Ready on the dresser.

*Anthony Bright-Paul*

### Hereafter

If it is true  
That at the end  
We are sucked down  
A long dark tunnel  
And emerge  
Into ineffable light  
And there is this Presence  
Full of Love  
Who asks us  
Without words  
What we have done  
With our lives...  
What shall we say?

And I, who was born with a caul,  
Who instinctively knew  
There was a meaning to life,  
Who have squandered away the years...  
What shall I say?

Yes, Lord, what shall I say?

*Anthony Bright-Paul*

# Jon Panopoulos

Untitled Painting



## HAIKU

Rapidly kicking roiling water  
Eyes closed in pool  
Swept out to sea

*Barbara Roos*

# The Braids of Toh Kaminari by John Panopoulos

Although Dad (John Panopoulos) identified so thoroughly with his Greek heritage, he only took a single trip-of-a-lifetime to the land of his roots. In the wake of that journey and inspired by testimonies and folktales, landscapes and faces, he picked up his writers pen and wove the Braids of Toh Kaminari. Almost two decades and 600 pages later, with the help of his beloved Olivia, his final draft was produced.

The Braids reflects who my father was in so many ways. Each passage is a treasure trove of wisdom and humor, personalities and contrasts, a masterful dance of love and hate, light and darkness, the spiritual and the physical, and even truth and fiction

This is the culmination of Dad's life's work. His final masterpiece. God bless him.

*Alicia*

## Prologue

There are times in certain places when the mystery is closer – when it is known that the far greater part of life is out of sight but not necessarily out of reach because sometimes, uncalled for, it chooses to break through into ordinary affairs in ways that can be seen and heard and felt and otherwise sensed.

At those times, in those certain places, when the mystery is closer, people are not especially more intelligent or more stupid than at other times and other places but, in the past, certain facts were unknown that today are common knowledge even amongst children. For instance, much of what we know or think we know of astronomy, the galaxies, the differences between the giant and dwarf stars, the fantastic theory of black holes, the orbits of the planets, etc., and the microscopic worlds of germs and cells and viruses were all beyond their ken. In their ignorance, all they could do was, on occasions when they were not too sick, tired and sore from work, to look out at the world around them and see a bit of the beauty that we are immersed in. Anything smaller than the tiny, nameless, gray creatures scurrying amongst the rocks and dead leaves, seen only by young and excellent eyes, could only be guessed at. And to think that something that small, probably an insect, had eyes and legs and organs and probably fed on something even smaller, was a marvel of the mystery it lived in. In short, although their knowledge of the workings of the physical world was narrower than it is today, their feelings about it were deeper.

But life was hard – there were rocks in the wonderful earth – there was sickness – there was madness – and - flitting like a fish amongst the currents of The Great Unknown - there was the Devil.

It's been given to saints to explore various aspects of the mystery but it never was necessary to be a saint to have an encounter with it – nor does one have to be especially good because not even the crust of criminals and reprobates can keep the unimaginable, with reasons of its own, from, on occasions, breaking through – it's just that in the case of crusty folk, the advent can be more traumatic and their purification can be longer and rougher and in general more difficult than that of the innocent.

The now abandoned hamlet of Toh Kaminari was on a slope in the foothills of the mountains of Arcadia. News of the world beyond the surrounding mountains came infrequently and late. In those mountains, everyone - even the greatest of sinners - was religious in their core; and knew that God should be their first concern and that family and country came next. And yet, in spite of their religious upbringing, almost everyone had, to some degree, been involved in vendettas...

\* \* \*

## BOOK ONE (excerpt)

### VENGEANCE IS MINE

#### 1 - The Oath and The Vow

Vasili Doulos stood – one foot on a rock – leaning forward with his hands clasped over the muzzle of his rifle – his chin resting on the back of his right hand – he was looking down a steep rocky incline onto a small patch of soft earth in which Kostas Liaros was hoeing and hacking at the weeds amongst the vegetables – something he himself had done a thousand times.

Kostas Liaros was one of the few males left of the branch of a family that had carried on a vendetta with Vasili's clan, off and on, for many years. The names of the twenty-four stalwarts of Vasili's clan that had died in that feud were inscribed in fiery letters on a stone in his heart – and his heart was speaking evil desires to his mind, which his soul was struggling to overcome.

Vasili had sworn on his grandfather's grave with his cousins and older brothers, to kill every male of the Liaros family and any of their relatives whose family had anything to do with the vendetta. And here he was, looking down at Kosta, one of the last of the Liaros' in these mountains.

But there was a story Vasili did not know. . .

Weeks before, when a neighbor came to tell him a favored, young cousin of his had been killed near Kastri, Kosta had snatched up his gun and in a furious agony of grief and hatred had run off in the direction of some of the Doulos families' major land-holdings to seek revenge. He did not run long before there appeared before him in the mottled light under an olive tree, in his tear-blurred vision, the silhouette of a standing figure. He snapped up his rifle to shoot it down, and just as his finger squeezed off a shot the figure shouted, "Stop, Kosta!"

In that instant he recognized the voice and jerked his rifle aside just in time for the bullet to barely miss killing Father Seraphim, the beloved district priest. He threw aside his gun and they ran toward each other and embraced, Kosta weeping. The priest brought him over to a large flat rock where they sat - Kosta doubled over crying and talking hysterically – as the priest held him and rocked back and forth praying to Jesus for help. As they sat there under the olive trees, Kosta's state swung from the misery of grief to the misery of hatred. And the priest, who had been trying for years to bring about an end to the feud, but had only succeeded in slowing it down and managing to forestall an incident now and then, prayed, preached, consoled, pleaded and commanded and, in the end, convinced Kosta, not to commit murder.

Just before nightfall they got up and walked back to Kosta's house with Father Seraphim's arm over Kosta's shoulder. The priest stayed with him all that night and the next day, and sat up praying next to him when he went to sleep again that evening.

And, in his sleep, Kosta had a vision.

He was in a hell doing the work of the devil – hacking people to pieces with an axe - ignoring their screams and pleas for mercy – his hatred compelled him – his action revolted him and yet, he could not stop – in the depth of his abhorrence he looked up and there, standing before him, was an image of indescribable horror.

At that moment, he realized that in order to recognize horror, there had to be something in him that was not horror - so he started to pray, while looking for that one thing inside himself that was not horror.

And there, while calling on the Holy Name, he saw in the back of his heart a tiny spot of blazing light of great depth that he could look down into.

He then looked up and saw, floating above the filthy mounds of hell, roiling with the bodies of the damned, a blazing cross of Light – it moved – he followed it, calling on the Holy Name over and over.

Father Seraphim heard him desperately praying in his sleep and put his hand on Kosta's left shoulder. It was the first part of Kosta's body that came back to life. He sat up, kissed the priest's hand, and told him his experience.

Father Seraphim turned his face to heaven for a moment.

"This is your miracle! That Light was the Holy Spirit! The cross belongs to the One He conceived in your heart. You're on your way out of hell!"

"Nothing so real has ever happened to me before – the horror and then the glory of it!"

"He went down before to save the souls in hell, why not you?"

"Father – is this salvation?"

"It's a beginning. You have a journey ahead of you – you must ask for guidance and wait."

"Father – how long must I wait?"

"You must forget 'How long' and just wait."

"Father – I can't do that! Just wait?"

The priest closed his eyes, put his hands together, and waited for several heartbeats. "Alright," he said at last, "I will show you something to do that will help purge you and help keep evil from entering your heart while you wait – it's what monks do, year in and year out."

"But I'm not a monk, Father - I have too much hatred and fear and anger – and besides – I have work to do."

"You can do this while you work and clear your heart of everything but the Light."

"Everything, Father? All the evil?"

"All of it."

"But how long, Father? How long?"

"Forget 'How long'."

Kosta closed his eyes and considered as deeply as he could the implications of such an indefinite commitment.

"Alright," he said at last, "what is this miraculous medicine that comes without 'How long'?"

The priest, seeing that he did not have his mind on the death of his cousin, and murder, and while still reverberating from his vision, taught him how to use the Jesus prayer and how to wrap his heart up in it like an infant in a clean, soft cloth.

"And now," the priest said at last, "we have work to do."

They walked a short way off the path to a grassy clearing where the priest had tethered his donkey with a long rope to a stout sapling.

The donkey twitched his ears and eyed them with suspicion. "It's alright, Narses", said the priest and scratched him on the forehead and patted his neck.

"This is Kosta. He's our friend." He reached into the saddlebag and fetched a turnip and held it out and, while the donkey worked at eating it, he had Kosta mount him.

Although he didn't like it, after a little coaxing and cajoling by his master, Narses accepted the burden that was, after all, not quite as heavy as the priest.

With the priest holding the reins, and Kosta astride, reciting the Jesus prayer to keep murder from his heart and mind, they strode off to Kastri to arrange for the funeral rites of the murdered one.

~

The church was full, even though there were some that stayed away from the funeral service not wanting to appear sympathetic to one side or another of such a long-standing and bloody vendetta.

Later that afternoon, after the burial service at the gravesite, there was another large convergence of families at the plaza in front of the church. The ladies had prepared a feast and set mounds of fragrant food upon the tables. There was a barrel of red wine, a barrel of golden wine, and bottles of water-clear raki. Everyone sat at the benches and talked about the shooting and some even cursed the Doulos family while waiting for the benediction before the meal.

The priest came out of the church wearing white vestments usually worn during Easter liturgy, with a purple sash denoting penance. Everyone silenced – he was making a statement as he stood wordlessly in front of them holding a smoking censer.

"This is not a wake," he said at last, "this is the witnessing of the end of a bloodshed that has blighted these mountains and valleys for a lifetime and a half. I call on you to witness, with all the >

angels and devils and ancestors hovering about us at this moment, the event which is about to take place”.

Kosta reached down under his bench, pulled out his rifle, and stepped out to the center of the plaza next to the priest.

Everyone watched in startled silence.

Kosta grabbed his gun by its long barrel, swung it overhead, and struck the flagstones with the butt of it over and over, shattering the stock and destroying the mechanism. He continued beating the flagstones with the steel barrel while the priest shook his censer, rattling the bells on it and sending up puffs of incense chanting “Kyrie Eleison. Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy.”

Kosta threw down the bent barrel – he stood for a moment with his eyes closed and then shouted to the heavens – “I swear for the sake of the souls of my brothers and all those who have gone before me, never to touch a gun or hurt anybody for as long as I shall live!”

There was a moment of awesome silence.

“Irimi imin. Peace be upon us!” shouted the priest.

“Peace be upon us!” shouted the people.

They jumped up and cheered and ran and crowded around Kosta and embraced him and each other.

The priest circled them shaking the censor shouting, “Kyrie Eleison, Lord have mercy. Irimi imin, peace be upon us,” over and over again.

“Irimi imin,” responded the people, “Kyrie Eleison.”

The musicians amongst them struck up their instruments and everyone started to dance in rings all over the plaza. The eating and drinking and celebrating went on into the night.

The older folk declared it was the greatest event since the Declaration of Victory and Independence from the Turks. The vendetta that had bloodied their mountains and hills, and brought bitterness into the lives of so many for so long, was over.

Father Seraphim went into the church to give thanks. But good news did not end with the celebration by the fires around the church plaza that starry night because, after everyone finally went home by the light of the moon, many happy, heaven-bound children were conceived in the wee hours of that blessed evening.

\* \* \*

## 2 - Two Eunuchs

Without exactly knowing why, Father Seraphim, astride Narses, took a different path than the one he usually took on his way to Toh Kaminari to perform the Sunday liturgy. It took him up alongside the mountain and through the pines far above the orchards and vineyards. It was a bit of a climb; Narses didn't like it and snorted his complaints.

As usual, he knew exactly how his donkey felt.

“All right, all right, you've trained your master well,” he said, and slipped off his mount and held the halter. “I'll walk – but not for long.”

Narses shuddered in appreciation.

Seraphim chuckled and talked aloud as he walked. “Ah, Narses, you're growing old. I wish I had another like you so you could spend the rest of your days in our meadow – but, there'll never be another like you, you'll never have a son because of the mighty sin done you – imagine the stupidity of gelding such a noble beast! The world, indeed, has lost a noble lineage.”

Hearing what he had just said aloud to Narses, he realized with a flush what his father felt when he had been ordained as a priest without taking a wife, thus designating himself a celibate for life.

“My only son. The branch has been cut off...no more flowers, no more fruit,” said his father glumly, as he proceeded to inebriate himself.

“I had no choice, Father.”

© John Panopoulos

## Portraits

I have done a lot of art related work with "Our Place", an organization and new building that meets many of the needs of the homeless - shelter, meals, showers, social assistance and counselling, and regular clean clothes.

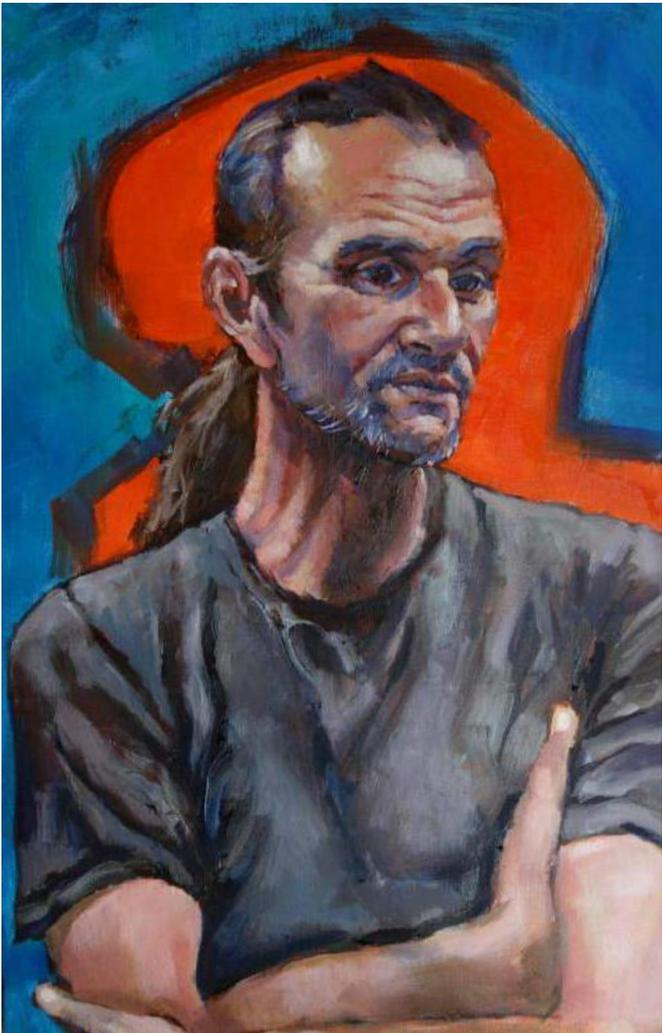
Over the last ten years I have painted many portraits of the homeless and over time we have raised over 30,000\$ through the sales of these paintings to individuals, companies and businesses, etc.

I have included 3 portraits. Each one is 22" x 26". Each person has their own unique story. Many of these portraits have been donated back to the shelter and hang, framed around the dinner room (my own special gallery).

It gives me a great deal of joy to work with the Our Place family – I feel blessed by the opportunity to do so.

*Elfridah Schagen*





## *Ariadne*

Every blossom, every thread,  
each and every thought  
every bird and tweet and wing  
every second thought, every second lost every  
shadow erased and ignored and called  
false or irrelevant  
every fish thrown back into the sea  
wanter or unwanted, dead or half dead  
or alive  
but scarred in more ways than one  
every breath, sigh, exclamation  
exhalation and poisoned future  
cut short  
is mine  
as well as  
yours  
there is no end, no end, no end to this thread  
Ariadne knew it  
but Theseus didn't believe her  
and that is the truth  
hidden in the silence and the quiet  
whispered by the trees of Naxos  
to the trees of Paros  
and Syros and Sifnos  
to the twins of Delos  
to the Sun and the Moon

*Daphne Alexopoulou*

## Ground Zero

I wish I could say be gone  
and may goodness guide us  
to incidents and accidents,  
or other happenings of importance  
glimpsed with half closed eyes.  
My ears are useless in the big noise,  
a noise that has become  
alive with ugly consonants.  
In times like these,  
grinding teeth produce little of beauty.

The Big Nameless One,  
who should never be forgotten  
or laughed at,  
left broken steps and barren gashes  
and overgrown weeds under the ashes/  
the new urban landscape.

Gardens need hope to grow.

Maybe there were butterflies  
and moths in the ash flakes,  
maybe the white desolate sky  
is beautiful.

Instead, I look up at nothing in particular  
and feel anger,  
I'm cross at my mere helplessness,  
angry at my own feet rooted on the spot,  
angry at my hands that are holding nothing,  
offering no solution.

Thing is, my nature is always to be shifting, moving,  
imagining that other world behind the curtain,  
knowing where the story has to end.

So I turn the page.

One  
small river of blood  
started where the white dove  
broke into tiny pieces,  
Ground Zero in this particular story,  
then the rain fell and we forgot.  
I'm waiting for that red rose to bloom,  
waiting for hope to resurface.

*Daphne Alexopoulou*

# Communiqué

*To all sentient beings on earth.*

We, the inhabitants of the planet you call Jupiter, are recently in receipt of your probe, which we cannot return as it has disintegrated and been absorbed into the molecular structure of our planet.

Whilst we appreciate the gesture, we wish to communicate that we desire no further contact with your species.

We do not send this message in a spirit of unfriendliness, but wish to point out that communication between us is almost impossible. You are a carbon based life form, currently in 'biological' mode, whereas we, originally an ammonia based life form, have long since evolved into one transcendent being existing on the plane of pure consciousness.

Consequently, it has taken enormous resources to interpret your probe, divine your technologies and language construction in order to send this communiqué in the form of binary radio pulses – we have not used comparable technology for over a billion of your Terran years. In fact, science and technology play no part in our lives, which is replete with culture and the arts

We do, however, feel we owe you an explanation. We did in fact visit your planet two billion Earth years ago, when we too were in 'scientific' mode, naively believing that exploring the physical universe would lead to answers concerning its structure and origins and, therefore, the true nature of reality.

As an experiment, we seeded the rudimentary animal beings then inhabiting your planet with the potential for developing culture, science and technology.

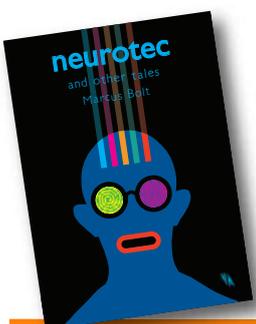
Unfortunately, the carbon based life forms, as we later came to understand, have a tendency to create exponential technological growth but, because of their innate, competitive animal nature manifesting as greed, use it aggressively during personal and territorial power struggles, which invariably lead to wars of self-extinction. (In fact, the disappearance of your dinosaur species was not due to a large meteor strike, as you currently surmise, but to a catastrophic biological war. These creatures were much more intelligent than you assume, because you tend to relate intelligence with brain size – a common misconception throughout the galaxy.)

We have long since abandoned such fruitless experiments, along with the quest for 'knowledge', realising it is inappropriate to meddle with evolutionary forces and that the answers we sought are unknowable – no creation can ever 'comprehend' its creator.

Your kind must now find its own way, but we hope that, over the next billion years, you might survive, and that you will, through natural evolutionary development, eventually outgrow your biological mode to become a transcendent unity, which is the ultimate goal of all self-aware species.

We wish you 'bon voyage', while expecting no further contact from you, nor response to this communiqué until such time as you are fully matured and we then naturally come together as one. Fare well, The Jovians

*Marcus Bolt*



*From 'NEUROTEC and Other Tales' by Marcus Bolt*

*29 short stories with a psycho-spiritual, sci-fi feel, available from [www.lulu.com](http://www.lulu.com)*

# DELIVERANCE

A book review by Amelia Williams

**Author: Miantae Metcalf McConnell, Subud Montana**

## DELIVERANCE

- *First African American Woman Star Route Mail Carrier in the United States*

Available on Amazon

I enjoy books of true stories, especially about the lives of women, and especially about 'firsts'. What I found inside these pages was a masterfully rendered resuscitation of a most imposing woman.

Mary Fields, known also as Stage Coach Mary, was a freed slave in the mid 1800s who eventually made her way to Montana. The book opens with an event that in many tellings would be a pinnacle turning point. For Mary it was just another of the extreme challenges she met in her life. Deeply researched and compassionately reconstructed, Miantae reveals a character endowed with a deep feminine sense of compassion and community, while displaying a self-sufficiency and physical capacity that rivaled the abilities of her male counterparts. Her life was a tapestry of alliances and challenges that included the Ursuline nuns, Catholic church, Native Americans and their children housed in re-education schools, politicians and the communities of everyday people in early Montana - with their prejudices and moralities, and especially the Suffragette movement. Underlying all this is Mary's connection to the earth and creation, her place of belonging when the human side fails her.

The 'mail carrier' part of the subtitle didn't grab my particular interest – UNTIL I was shown the dangers of carting mail through Montana winter snows with wolves and angry white men with guns ready to knock off a black woman en-route. But Mary achieved other 'firsts' that were perhaps even more challenging and important to our historical heritage.

The story is compelling in itself – but anyone can tell a story. What takes this beyond is Miantae's blend of attention to details, natural and human, with a depth of understanding as she carries us inside the feelings of a situation. I was especially moved by an episode where Mary has survived a vicious attack. While her friend Hattie is rightly appalled, Miantae reveals the friend's inner process to arrive at a suitable response. Reading this felt like being taken inside a receiving, beyond the here and now, and I'm surprised that each time I reread it I still feel the welling up of tears . . .

"Hattie winced, groping for the natural course of justice that should follow. Eyes closed, she wished for something tranquil. A damp thickness of moss and fallen lichens appeared to her, water trickling from cavernous rock cleft between spired mountain peaks – a beloved place she had visited once. She took a breath. Gravity seemed to settle her. Speechless and bare, she pressed herself into the imprint.

Admiring heights above, she mused, could the violent creating of mountains – converged continents thrusting, ruptured – be the catalyst for fountains of life channeled from beneath – precious drink coursed through fissures, slabs and shelves, elevated?

What was it like, the journey of water? Why did this suddenly matter?

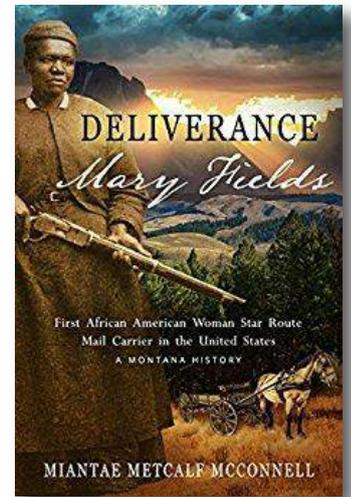
She rode the surging reply. Fluid, she joined the gushing elixir and moved upward through darkness, squeezed by forces unseen in precipiced corridors, scraping dead matter from roots and centuries...

Emerged to brightness, vast sky weightlessness, she and water touched the apex and splashed. Entwined, they tumbled onto earth. Infused and sparked by sunlight, color transcended their essence. Propelled, they transited.

Thinning, they stretched over polished arcs of stone – dropped far and fast into chiseled pathways, and corded, wielded into mass and swiveled through thickened webs of pebbles.

She touched one hand with the other.

Suddenly released, she and water leapt, and filled a glacier cirque – roaring, swirling, faster, bub- >



bling, slowed – a blissful repose.

Pooling, they explored new form and a level surface, they themselves the fold between above and below. She breathed.

Refracted prisms glowed in spherical drops, upon and in the water, on rocks and trees and clouds, sparkling. Kinetic coupling danced in the cove, the loch, the basin, the place reflecting movement of orbiting planets and galaxies, mirroring, miring indigenous sight to a linked heritage.

A clearing coursed through Harriet's heart. She felt her rapid-river veins surge. An element transformed, she would change as needed, adapt and join the women ushering change. They would congregate with open hearts, glide upon ancient currents of knowing – a confluence – navigate to prised inlets, oceans and reservoirs that would sustain and nourish and replenish. . .

Women are the sustenance by which human life exists, her consciousness rose to speak.

She opened her eyes and followed one thought: A woman's body designs life, labors to birth, and suckles children. Without voices from our bodies that experience such creation, life is sure to fail – our nation, our frontier, will topple.

We must forge together."

Not all the writing is so deeply poetic. Much of the telling is an imagined reconstruction of conversations and relationships based on much research. But Miantae was raised in Montana and writing from this sense of place, steeped in its history, she infuses the documented details with the breath of life.

Read this because Mary Fields deserves to live on ... read this because 'firsts' matter ... read this because courage and inspiration travel time, planted in us for the ready. . . read this because we need to be reminded that one person makes a difference.

*Amelia Williams*

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## RESOURCES FOR ARTISTS OF ALL KINDS

Having contributed to SWIM one is confronted with the notion of taking the next step, admittedly into the unknown, after having a realization: namely, this is what I am meant to do.

Any Subud artist who has yet to cast his or her work into the material world of sales and disappointments may nevertheless wish to consider outlets for their works.

One is bound to mention The Writers' and Artists' Yearbook for British writers, including painters and photographers, and The Writers' Digest and Writers Market for U.S. contributors. These yearbooks are considered the best for serving artists of all stripes, and give how-to-do-it information as well as lists of publications. There are many, many more and they can be found easily by getting one's search engine into gear.

The Review Review, Morgen Bailey's extensive lists of outlets, and Who Pays Writers? are just three of the useful links that offer information of outlets for all kinds of artistic endeavour. I entered 'poetry outlets' in my search engine and got an astonishing number of lists.

Many magazine editors have adopted Submittable to ease the submission process. You will be asked to make an account and log in. The good news is that it is free of charge. This means that submission charges, if any, will be dependent on the requirements of the publication you are approaching. Some ask for around \$5 to cover administration, but reading fees do exist and can amount to a fair amount of money. Once having established a list of publications to which you have submitted (you can call it up at any time by logging in), you will find a 'Discover' menu button at the top of the page, which also leads to a list of current calls. After becoming a Submittable user there is the option of receive their newsletter, Submishmash, again free of charge. This is sent out, per e-mail, a couple of times weekly and contains a list of 'current opportunities', which means calls for submissions put out by publications or institutes. The range is wide and includes not only writers and poets, but also photographers, painters, audio-visual artists and even offers of retreats and artist support.

Probably the most extensive resources opportunity is given by Duotrope. Again, one will be required to make an account and log in. There is a \$5 monthly fee, which is a really good investment. There are not many publications not listed and the information about each one is given on a separate

page, and is extensive, right down to how much they pay, or otherwise. The Duotrope people also send out an e-mailed newsletter containing dozens of calls for submission as a part of the deal and at no extra cost above the initial \$5.

\*

It has been suggested that one should send off 100 submissions each year as a matter of form. This means perseverance of the highest order and an inbuilt attitude of Inshallah. I wish you good fortune, chums. Go for it!

Lawrence Brazier

## A LITTLE LEXICON OF Ls

**The letter L** is, I find, an interesting one: a bit odd in some ways, and even a little mysterious. For instance, EL, Eli, Elam or Ilam, and Lah are all names – in Hebrew, Aramaic, Akkadian and Arabic respectively – of what, in English, we call God. Now I have a great interest in God, in various religions and their cosmologies: and I think it's remarkable that, corresponding to the Christian Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, there are at least two other Holy Trinities, Triads or Three-somes. First, long before the Christian Trinity in time, came the Hindu *Trimurti* (or Three Perfect Ones), Brahma, Shiva and Vishnu. Then, some seven hundred years after the Christian Trinity, came the three supreme Attributes of Allah, the One Muslims God: **Robbil, Rahman, and Rahim**. Now, this common, supreme Threefoldness in the heavens intrigues me – because there are also the three classes of existents in Nature: Animal, Vegetal and Mineral (or Material). To add into this mix let me throw in another thought: the old esoteric saying: "As above, so below", and, in the Christian Lord's prayer: Thy Will be done **on Earth as it is in Heaven**.



So do they mirror each other – heaven and earth? – the Higher/finer Threefoldness above us, and the lesser/coarser Threefoldness below us human beings who are stuck right in the middle? If so, then I would conclude that our human business – our cosmic task, even – is somehow to connect them, bringing them closer together by acting always ethically. Perhaps, I might venture: to spiritualize matter and materialize spirit. (And dare I suggest that this is why we are born into this world?)

However, in speculating about these things, especially about such a universal, archetypal pattern, I have wandered from my original purpose: which was to explore and tease out a little more information on the letter L itself, from myths, folk lore and the groves of academe.

My first port of call, as always, is to my beloved (but battered) Shorter Oxford English Dictionary – not so short, actually, with its 3,801 large pages packed with information. And in here the letter L on its own gets two full columns on its history, usage and functioning – some of which is in such jargon I can't understand it. But combining bits from this OED with the work of American author Richard Firmage, from his fabulous book "The Alphabet ABCEDARIU" (1993), I have come up with a few unusual things.

For instance, L was the ELEventh (and is this interesting?) letter of the ancient Roman alphabet, but is now only the twelfth letter of our own. I find L is an intriguing letter, but a wee bit odd – as I'll come to in a minute. As to its history, L is descended from the Phoenician (old Semitic) letter lamed and the ancient Greek lambda. And it "is considered expressive of liquidity and smoothness", says the fabulous Firmage, "because the tongue 'slips' in pronouncing it."

After the letters I and O, which seem the simplest and most basic letters of our alphabet, L, with its single change of direction, is probably one of the next. And although this change of direction

makes it look angular and a bit sharp – and a lot less fluid than, say, the letters S or O, or even C – according to the fabulous Firmage, the letter L is what’s called a ‘labial’. That is, after being formed by the tongue, it “slips and slides off the lips.”

So I wonder: is this, lovely slipping liquidity why, when we have forgotten the words of a song, we sing “La la la la la”? Also, practising our scales for singing, again we sing: “La, la, la la la”. And there are other things, old and new, like this. The ancient Greeks, as they rushed into battle, shouted “Alalalalala!”; and Homer in The Iliad tells us that loud cries of “Olulu, olulu” were uttered in the temple in honour of the Goddess Athene. Today, as for untold centuries, “Aloha” is the lovely greeting – and farewell – of Hawaiians: and “Hola!” the Mexicans’ greeting. The French say, “Ou la la” when surprised at something; a bit like the “Holy Moley” of astonished teenagers today. *Alif, Lam, Mim* are mysterious symbols at the beginning of many chapters of the Qur’an – but today not even scholars know what they mean. A Hullabaloo is a loose and noisy confusion while “Holus bolus” means quickly. And of course there are the hails – of “Haloo” and “Hallo” (or even the hellish Hello) of English greetings. I keep finding more examples of the lovely, liquid labials of the letter **L**....

On yet another tack, thinking now about the L’s sharp, angular, shape, it doesn’t seem to sit well with all these examples of that lovely, fluid, liquidity. If the letter **S** didn’t convey sibilant, snake-like sounds so well, I think it would convey this fluid sound better. But **C** – or **U** – perhaps would have looked as good – as fluid. Ah well, stuck as we are in our cultural habits, we put up with the dissonance between the **visually sharp L**, and its limpid, liquid, fluid, flowing, **sounds** – without even noticing it.

Here’s another odd thing. In some words like ‘build’, and ‘bulk’, and ‘milk’ we pronounce the L quite distinctly: yet why do we leave it silent in ‘stalk’, ‘talk’, and ‘walk’?

Also, there are some interesting, you might say **vital** words beginning with **L** – law and lore; like and love and lust; look and listen; little and large; lord and lady: and especially life, land, light, laughter and levity! And, of course, the very word “letter” itself – without which we would have no writing, no history and probably no civilization – and perhaps fewer L words for God in other languages.

Finally, I want to go back now to those ancient names of God: El, Eli and Ilam or Elam, and also ‘Lah’ the Arabic word for God: Al Lah, meaning in English The God. And, as I went to church last Sunday for the Easter Service and blessing, I was very conscious of singing, in the hymns, over and over, “Alleluia, Alleluia” – with all those lovely Ls – which we sing when we’re joyful, grateful and praising! The Arabic equivalent, not too dissimilar, is Alhamdullilah – with even more Ls – meaning “God be praised!” And don’t let’s forget the hymn “Holy, holy, holy” – and last but certainly not least the Dzikir, the seven-beat Muslim mantra “**Le-illa-hah, ill-Allah**”. So, I’m wondering, does the letter L have some kind of spirituality or even holiness about it that we don’t recognize? I don’t know, but I like to think so.

So the letter L, with its lovely, labial liquidity, would seem (to me at least), to bring a certain liveliness into our vocabulary and the sounds of our speech: and even into our lives and our culture, no less. And with all those religious connections, does it somehow indicate a latent spirituality in our language? But my real question is: Does it help to increase our remembrance of the presence of God? I like to think it could, were we to become more aware of the lovely, liquid letter L in our lives.

*Salamah Pope*



## WRITING PROMPT

*And here’s your prompt for this issue... see the cover for a larger version.*

*Send your writings (stories, articles, poems) to me at:*

[Emmanuelriddlemaker@Gmail.com](mailto:Emmanuelriddlemaker@Gmail.com)

## On The Way Home From Tesco

A grey slouch of a man  
joint smoke leaking out of his cupped hand  
makes his way home along Lower Mount Town Road.  
Track suit bottoms and hoodie top  
headphones clamped, world shut out or in  
passes bungalows crouched low, behind floral borders  
high walled, dead eyed houses, lurking in dark trees.  
Tucked under his arm  
a box of cakes, toilet rolls.

Ahead of him, the grey cold, stone church, on the corner  
offers Eucharistic Adoration on Tuesday afternoons.  
On Sundays lace capped old ladies nod off in the Latin mass  
dream of an altar rail tipple to ease the sharp pain  
the fish hook guilt stuck in their throats  
common currency of priests and nuns.  
But their ancient bones know, sin is purged by,  
cooking sherry, the analgesic of choice  
to a respectable lady of certain years.  
He takes a toke.

*Marius Grose*

## Valley Song

The derelict coal wash stands by the road  
a shaft drops deep to the silent dead mine.  
Unworked seams of coal black lode  
strand small valley towns in backwater time.  
Streets are quiet, like someone has died  
small shops trade slow on the square.  
Church and Chapel, have room inside  
God is busy elsewhere.  
Rusting mementoes, the shovels, the drills  
rivers once black, flow clean and clear.  
Cut throat winds raze the glowering hills  
steel shuttered pubs serve no one sour beer.  
Corroded memories of industrial might  
that stuttered, and staggered, into starless night  
we packed up and buried, under prim lawns of green  
left peoples' futures to fade in fitful dreams.

*Marius Grose*

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### Bapak

Lost in the Amazon

and Other Tales

Adventures with Bapak  
and Ibu Siti Sumari

Mardiyah A. Tarantino



This delightful little book contains a series of short, vivid sketches of events remembered from the years the author lived closely to Bapak and Ibu Siti Sumari when on the South American tours over 40 years ago. The book also includes snippets from the seven years when the family lived in Cilandak. It contains much spiritual advice and guidance given to her by Ibu as trust and intimacy built over time, up to Ibu's death in 1971.

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