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DAY

Poetry
for the
People

Volume Two

Editors

J.M. Beach

&

Eric Wayne Dickey

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Initiation

*Whoever you are, go outside into the evening,
out of your room within which you know everything,
and see that your house rests at the end of the infinite
whoever you are.*

*With your eyes which bring sleep,
free yourself from their used threshold.*

*And very slowly, you'll raise a black tree
standing it before the sky: slender, alone.*

*And you'll have made the world. And it is big
like words that remain unspoken.*

*And like your will grasps meaning,
tenderly, let your eyes go.*

PEOPLE Day: Poetry for the People, Vol. 2
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frontispiece "Initiation" Rainer Maria Rilke
translated by Eric Wayne Dickey

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J.M. Beach

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Poetry: Spring into Life

What is poetry? A simple question with many not so simple answers. Much is mistaken for poetry these days clothed in the intellectual aspires of formal climbs and scholastic maneuvers. Much poetry is forsaken these days as too personal, too political, too free, or too idea laden. Much verse is mistaken for poetry. Much prose forsaken as poetry. Too often "poetry" is believed to be that small and narrow "thing" upon a page that one would know as "poetry" because it could be nothing else. Such are the limitations placed upon this ancient art.

Too often people practice poetry without knowing what they do. Every human being has the potential and the ability to produce poetry. For in effect poetry is action: a refined and practiced action, a conscious or near conscious action, a *way of life*. The origin of the word *poet* comes from the ancient Greek word *poietai*, from *poiein*, to make or create: Poets are makers and shapers. Every act begins as the nebulous potential reality inside the fermenting brain of the creator. Every act materializes out of potential into the necessary formal trajectory of the waiting environmental circumstances wanting to give it birth. Every act is free and determined by the dance of life, the chaos of elemental forces, the necessity on hand to choose the course of the creative act through the moment beyond the past into the future.

In essence we live poetry, we act and we write out of the bounty of our actions, our thoughts. We spill our hopes, fears, wants, tears, joys, sufferings into formal gems through the medium of a pen, computer, clay, paint, photograph, drum, guitar, voice, or the human body in motion. The medium is not the art. The medium of poetry is but the tool to bring the art, the act, into formal recognition, to give it breath and breadth: to spring our soul into Life. Our human yearning the ultimate inspiration, our heart and mind the guiding hands. We peer into the portal glass of our fractured and imperfect eyes to see what life, what meaning, what faith lay in wait for us to create, to live.

Poetry is a Way of Life, like the hodos of Jesus or the Tao of Lao Tzu. As true poets we live our life as our art and express in halting forms and words our experience, what our life means.

We invite you, the reader of our poetry, to see-taste-touch our acts, our creation, our ways of expressing life. Leave all you know of poetry suspended with this introduction. Stand outside your preconceptions and come inside our heart, our act, our *Way*: Let all who would come and follow us through our poetry into a greater understanding of the paradox of being human, being alive.

What you find is entirely up to you. Take what you will, leave the rest.

This book a gift,
Life our sacred trust.

What does not exist,
We must create:
Life,
A poem in our eyes.

J. M. Beach

Corina Anghel

The Italian Wedding Soup

Those pearls of meat hosted the sweetness,
the flavor of another season –
a little bit of parsley, of onion and salt
melt in the softness, the joy
of an Italian wedding soup.

By moving, devouring, transforming this thing
I assure myself of its presence.

I plunge into its dewy foam
where recollections come and go
like rays of sun inside a wooden church.
Breathing hard, swallowing,
I come back to surface – enchanted
like the faces of saints carved on the altar.

I assure myself of my other existence –
a bride of parsley,
of onion,
of salt.
I cross the holy threshold
shivering
waiting for the night after supper.

Roger Weaver

Wine Song

What January Frost does not stun
with cold stars, April blossoms
Hold like snow. Each night
some Penelope unravels life,
then cell by sleeping cell reweaves.
The rain's small hands work
miracles in the dark earth
over dead sticks. Then come
those tiny suns, the grapes,
so we who speak
of the giving of words,
their pure liquid sources,
may drink for all we can't say.

Roger Weaver

What's the Score?

Skeptical, I hear you say baseball
is this country's true religion,
follow you to a nearby American
Legion game where between us
we can't raise the price of communion:
a hotdog. I think I know the score,
but that can change in a blink
when bases are loaded with stripling boys
who want nothing better than
to slide into home safe.
I wonder if this is some sort
of allegory when all the innings are over,
and I follow you out of the stadium,
baptized in dust.

Mike Spring

on fire

Joan of Arc came down the stairs
from her apartment
above the tattoo parlor

she's wearing her usual camouflaged
pants and paint-splattered t-shirt

she says she wants another sword
and another set of wings for her red
dragon-lady whose tail is looped
around her neck
and she wants teeth in the white orchid
on her breast
and wants Badb's* black tongue coiled
on her other breast

as usual, her angel-faced boyfriend
has followed her

he reeks of smoke –
she says it's his problem – he's the one
who's always trying to snuff out her flames

Mike Spring

the woman Miles Davis turned down

she was that bruised
note
he was
looking for:

something to put into his mouth –

a sound as blue as Sugar
Ray Robinson's shadow
dance before crushing
LaMotta against the ropes –

But slow, round
as Jack Johnson's barreling
moan if he met a woman like her

oh, yeah
she was a match for him

and there he walked
along the edge
of a lake front

thinking of her –
the taste of her lips
before he told her maybe
another time –
he knew what he was doing

she was the jass in jasmine
the last opiate of flesh
the leaves of mullein –
no, the green purr mullein would make
if it were a sound

Mike Spring

blue crow

just when the crow thought
it knew everything
about blue

it flew through a blue branch
of shadow – the sound
of the river moving along
the wrists of trees

Mike Spring

sketch with colored pencils

she lifts her shirt
to show me her breasts

her seven year old isn't surprised
only afraid
others might not understand

I shape them with lavender
and the paper responds with an image

the hydrangea beside her
has two dozen blossoms
opening
with purples and blues
and greens –

they are leaning
forward – I sketch the shadows
spilling onto her breasts –
I am working fast
she said she won't
stand here much longer

Chris Gray

Ode To Life Without Joy

When all the world is dismal and bane
and shadows play tricks with the sane.
I often wonder, does it make sense
to carry on, walk in pain, sleep in unforgetfulness.

These are dented pavements,
traversed by the damned and the unlikely.
I must pass here for a moment,
though I am only damned by my delight.

Tumbling in a sleepless amuse,
I stumble on my way, only to walk again.
I am the surprise of the whole universe of eyes.
Galaxies question me.

Now I hope my way to the judgment of the cells.
Life without joy, how should I write this concerto
Beethoven, without attracting the scorn
of this place of abstract art and faded melodies?

When I awake from daydreams,
I hear the slow drum of my heart,
playing its way to a hush.
I wonder then about the grave,
but unanswered mysteries held in the buried
vaults of the dead are never whispered.

Can living be anymore cruel? Can pain be any more obscene?
Sometimes I wake shouting: Joy! Joy, where are you?
Joy, I shout, I want to taste your breath.
Joy, I want to dance with you again.
I want to kiss your lips only for a moment.
I want to grow wings like children grow teeth.
I want to sleep upon your bed and make love to the air.

Joy, this is my last ode to you.

Chris Gray

Accepting the Necessary Evil

You must accept the bones men pile high for fences
If not the material, the manner.

They would learn when it falls like a dozen others.
The sweat of miles has brought us here where we rest.

Never forget though memory is painful, we once built dreams
Upon rivers only to find them castaway

You stand almost alone as a witness of your own gods,
Looking at the bloodies path of innocence.

If you can be young again, strong again, born again with this mind.
But the journey would not be complete.

The purpose unresolved.
And you would be a cheater of defeat.

Now you must pay Solomon's price.
Cry but don't shout.

Shake your head without battling fate.
Be silent, be silent within your own self

Whilst youth commit their necessary evils
Listen.

Amongst the chaos, lies invention.
A flying saucer will be next.

Chris Gray

Ode For Teresa Menefee

The blue moon has fallen to sleep once again
upon the misty bed of time.

Stars hide from me tonight
behind seldom clouds, pregnant with the dew of morning.

But he waves sing about the restless intent of travelers
on a journey to nowhere in particular.

The waves sing about you. They sing about
your yesterdays on shores at a moment before dawn.

Half awake, I think of you, asleep as the sky's blue
on the soft pillow of my imagination.

I think of you at this strange hour before morning,
when even crows are not yet awake.

I will bring you a leaf, if you bring me a flower.
I will bring you a leaf, if you bring me a flower.

Dance because you must dance, the door is closing soon.
Dance because you must dance, the door is closing soon.

Sing. Showers sing. Sing.
Rain showers sing for you in the quiet valley as deer
walk amongst the hush company of raccoon, crossing
a road of a thousand headlights.

Fog hold unto the branches of trees.
Fog hold unto the branches of trees in a last dance before winter.
They look not like you or me, but they love the ballad of the wind.

Beetles and bugs dance.
Owl and moth also dance near wetlands, painted grey
By the geese heading to their own freedom and love.

I will bring you a flower, if you bring me a leaf.
I will bring you a flower, if you bring me a leaf.

Dance. Dance though the music of the bands
Plays not. Dance because you must dance,
Soon the doors will be shut. Dance because you must dance.

Dance. Don't turn the music of the trees off.
Dance. Listen to the crickets chirp
Dance because you must dance

Eric Wayne Dickey

Mourning Glory

Because it was morning,
I'm not sure what happened.
The radio came on as my alarm –
someone scraped the sky.

I'm not sure what happened
as I rose from sleep –
someone scraped the sky,
shook violently, then collapsed.

As I rose from sleep
I stood divided,
shook violently, then collapsed –
my waking deferred.

I stood divided,
because it was morning,
my waking deferred,
the radio came on as my alarm.

Eric Wayne Dickey

Later in Life

As soon as the rain stopped, all the neighborhood kids went outside. They ran like clouds from sun over to the Lister's yard to play with their three kids, Megan, Rudi, and Sara. There was Calen and Craig, my nextdoor neighbor's two youngest, my two, Annie and Mary, and the Grunwald's kids Joseph and Tal. They would always gather under the big oak tree at the backside of the Lister's side yard. Wade, from the next block down, always took a while longer to get there. He liked to stop and squash the worms already drowned in their shallow, watery graves. I didn't know his folks; they never came to the block meetings. My girls and Megan and Sara never looked up at him much; none of the girls did. The boys didn't pay no mind to him either. He was always a little weird, but nobody ever thought that later in life he would kill us all.

Alex Johnson

Was It You

Was it you that I saw descending
that damp
stairwell?

It was dark,
difficult to make out the features
of your midnight skin.

Your eyes reminded me of him,
but you did not recognize me.

I only caught a glimpse
of that same glossy yellow hue.

That suitcase reminded me of days lost,
tattered and worn
as the feet that carry it.

Your hand was so tightly clasped
to its handle like memory

The case banging against your shin
to the rhythm of that tired,
twisted strut.

No,
you couldn't have been him.

He died so many years ago
when he left his seed for dusty trails
and pints of poison.

Alex Johnson

Cages

In the corner, hooded
Catching bird-like words
Sent for intentional misses,
Grasping with untrained claws
Seated on a stool with a mended leg.

"You can't...don't have enough."
Words build subterranean tunnels,
Slide

Down

Join your people,
Fury is a victim
Of low blows, low goals
Outgunned as always
Outnumbered Mosley said.

Objects become tokens for a broken spirit,
The cracked board, a dusty barrier,
No apples for the shepherd that misguides,
Because fury is a victim of an imposed fate.

Alex Johnson

Evolution Conclusions

Life is form
Form is music
Music is feeling.

I sit
Thoughts streaming
Through melodies
of past and present,
Past is present
in every deliberation,
Thought,
Idea,
Past is form.

Wheel, reed, skinned drum,
Animal strings, synthetic hums,
Ivories pounding,
Ivories to plastic
Plastic to digital,
Past is form.

Life is feeling,
Some natural
Some digital rhythms,
Now is composite,
Sankofa.

Past is present
Present is form
Form is music
Music is feeling.

J.M. Beach

Wild Flowers

He spots a growth of flowers out of reach up a hill
And decides that he would rather hope than kill
Even though a hope is like the wind and barely felt
Until moments when against, the current melts
All opposition someday will subside
Only for new powers to mobilize.

We all but push and push against
Either builders or destroyers of relent
Nothing bent but broken comes of use
For to forge a healing from abuse
He spots a growth of flowers, dreams a way
Takes arms against injustice come what may:

To defy the grand tyranny of petty violence
With a frailty that will not quit or silence.

J. M. Beach

Creeping Shadows

How naïvely he believed
In tales told by bedside
Nights of wonder, of light
And darkness, of overcoming
Evil with good, of right
And wrong.

But when the story ended
The light went out and
Darkness descended
With all the force of fate;
Creeping shadows by the moon's glow
Sowing the seeds of doubt:

Fear in the wake of stories closing
Not knowing what happens next.

In the absence of light
Wanders through the corners of the covers
Feeling for words of comfort,
Praying "if I die before I wake..."
For the sake of filling the void;
The story's spell is broken.

He will rise from fallen words and empty
In the night, shattered nerves still shivering

Knowing without light this present darkness,
A darkness not easily overcome.

J.M. Beach

She Dances

In the silence between the distance
She hears her name,
It is cold and unforgiving, foreign,
Seems not to fit.

Her hand grabs the hanging syllables
Tearing sound from sound her name
Apart, it is a destroying art
To clear the space

In preparation for the work ahead.

Step by step her life becomes
More a way to cope than anything,
A broken window, smashed hand,
The petty violences done between

The moon and rising sun,
Endured, her character is armor,
Her strength to keep on walking
The promise of chance encounter.

She hopes to work some magic
Out of sleight of hand, chicanery,
A little make believe
Until a pattern forms, a purpose.

And when the movements back and forth
Become measured by the determined
Beats of her heart, then she will find
Her way: a life will be her art

A music all her own.

J.M. Beach

Voltaire, It Is Not So Simple

Across the tended garden flowers bloom
Pruned, watered with care by his hands

He makes a wish upon each new growth and
Weeds and weeds to see his stalks grow strong

Fenced in with a stone path, isolated perfection
Etched into the unknown terrible outside

The gate, a squeaky hinge but no lock
He trusts enough for it to protect

He waits and waits to see his garden bloom
Against the vermin crows bulldozers angry men

Moving endlessly in the distance coming closer
Petal by petal blade by blade his heart colors

Porous seeps the sweetness, a fragrance
Almost brings a smile to his closed eyes

If he were not choking on the looming air,
Oh Voltaire, how impossible it has become.

J.M. Beach

The Ultimate Ground

She climbs a tree to see if she can't see God
face to face.

Limb by limb her ascent is not so tough
a scratch or two.

Sweat and odor cling and mat her hair
sticky sweetness.

The flesh a tangled movement and a will
she calls it spirit.

Past the spider webs and thickets body squeezes
a bite begins to swell.

The stability of the lower trunk gives way
tree top sways.

She holds on tight ever up she glances
God must be there.

As high as she can go but not on top
the view is heaven.

A gust of northern wind her body breaks the branch
the fall she swears intended.

She waits with baited breath a hand to save her
but flesh and will are torn.

Limb by limb broken and dismembered
she lies in peaceful slumber.

Marc Moore

Play the Fool Say I

Robin Goodfellow surely sporting once again,
Did crush a plume of violet upon my sleeping
Lids, for last night I had a most wretchedly

Wonderful dream of a beautiful gray mistress
In lead of a hopeless hound with a begging
Love for a lady only Helena could know.

I dreamed exactly the woman and it seemed
The hound be I, for it shied in disbelief
When she saw the dog's beauty from within.

Around and 'round the tables turned
Whence the raven into dove, Seeming
Only to display her love through cruelty,

A sport, whence did she when morning came
For this hound's very love still bid.
Play the fool, say I. Let those to fall be womyn.

Chris Anderson

Uncle Wally Looks in the Mirror

When Uncle Wally looks in the mirror
what he sees are cheeks and jowls.
His face is entirely square, temples silver.
Wherever he goes he carries this face,
day after day.

His slacks curve out like a belted tub,
his shirt so tight you can see his nipples.
Shoes, florsheim.

But the thing is, he knows all this.
He carries himself with him wherever he goes.
Every night what lays on his pillow
is that same silver head, that same square face.

His own face.

Chris Anderson

Uncle Wally Goes on Retreat

When Uncle Wally goes on retreat
he brings along his heavy face.
He can't go anywhere without it,
though he wishes he could.
It comes in a little carrying case,
like a laptop.

In the morning, as he leans
against the counter drinking coffee,
he knows that all the others see
are his wrinkles and jowls,
his shiny silver spectacles,
square as a pharmacist's.

But he was a salesman, really.
He traveled all over.
He could have sold you anything,
tongue depressors, prophylactics.

Once in Montana, he might finally say,
once he left a gross of condoms at the city dump
in a box of aerosol cans.

The cans exploded when they started to burn –
he had no idea, he'll laugh – he was driving away –
and the rubbers rained down, engorged with air,
like a thousand tiny parachutes.

Chris Anderson

Uncle Wally Blesses a Dead Man

Uncle Wally is called to the hospital
but arrives a minute late.

The body, though warm, is twisted and shrunk,
foam still drying around the mouth, eyes rolled back.
The grieving wife weeps by the bedside,
the daughter in the hall, stupid with loss.

Uncle Wally hurries in to comfort the weeping women,
taking their hands in his. Then he turns around,
and leaning his belly against the rail,
makes the sign of the cross
in the fetid air above the dead man's head.

Uncle Wally raises himself up.
Uncle Wally gazes on the face of death:
the plastered hair, the marbled eyes.

How sad he feels!
How proud!

Chris Anderson

Uncle Wally Gazes at the Morning Moon

Uncle Wally gazes at the morning moon,
setting in a maple. The winter branches glow
like a night light.

Uncle Wally gazes at the setting moon
and sighs inwardly, he groans, thinking
of the bullet-headed boys and the whispering girls,
the steamy, thronging halls, how chalk dust
kept clouding his blazer.

Uncle Wally gazes at the empty sky
and longs for the chambers of the moon,
the glistening chambers, empty and dry,
one by one like a choir.

Then sphere after sphere, ring after ring,
wider and wider all the way to God,
and the angles are singing, they are singing,
everywhere in space, row on row,
and the words are so sweet, the words are so pure,
they sound like nothing at all.

Chris Anderson

Uncle Wally Fades Away

Uncle Wally fades into the landscape.

First a tree,
then a line of trees,
then a cloud,
then a cloud settling over a hill,
then dew on the grass.

Then animal again, singular:
a Varied Thrush humming in the alder,
a crouching lynx,
a bounding doe.

Then Uncle Wally rises up
and moves out over the water.
He descends into the bay.

A sleek, black head breaks the surface,
shiny and wet,
then sinks back down again,
drifting and drifting away.

Joshua J. Mellon

Chronology

I am

I am
Buddha baby

I am
Indoctrinated into Simplicity
Wounded by annulment

I am
Receiving First Communion
Alone in false apathy
Misplacing my anger

I am
Questioning *Our Father*
Cleaving, purporting arcane beliefs
Investigating my father
Voted "Most Conservative"

I am
Doubting *our father*

Loathing my father
A "lapsed Catholic"
By the acceptance of non-knowing

I am intellectually agnostic
Emotionally atheist
A saved nihilist
By the acceptance of non-knowing

I am
Objectively detesting "fathers"
Heavily medicated
Calmly disturbed

I am
Left with an existence
Whose meaning I must assign

I am
Still

"I"

Austin Kaiser

Half-Life

This chemical compound
This house of cards
This carefully-wrought structure
Could collapse into itself
At any time.
Somehow it endures
Despite itself
Despite us
It retains its form
Is strong in the same ways,
Weak where it always was.
Slowly, it evolves.
Despite having no
Consciousness, it learns.
It adapts to what it needs
By trial and error –
It makes its mistakes.
Sometimes, though,
Things take a while:
One has to marvel
At how it goes on,
All the while decaying
As it grows.

Austin Kaiser

Mother

I wonder how it will feel
When our collective lust for
Self-destruction catches up
With us at last, and we are
Struck across the face of our
Existence, the way an angry
Mother slaps her child
Behind closed doors.

Austin Kaiser

Homeless

I

Baudelaire thought that a life of endless
Mundane pursuits, behind each of which
Lies a vested interest, leads to the most
Vile and lifeless of all ways of living.

Eight generations after his death,
Humanity still doesn't agree.
In many ways, life has been deconstructed;
We find meaning in making life better

But otherwise, it's business as usual.
I once infuriated an English professor
By disdainning Denise Levertov
And her syntax of mutual aid.

I regret that now, and I understand
His anger. There's more to poetry
Than I realized. There are ways
To invest our lives with meaning

Even though we might not see it
Around us, in our day-to-day struggle
To not end up in a cardboard box,
Stripped of our autonomy and our dignity.

II

Why is compassion frowned upon?
In America, we have millions
Belonging to the same club
Who preen and strut,
Proud of their hate
Proud of their lack
Of humanity and knowledge
Who look upon their absence
From the most basic wisdom
As a badge of "courage."
This is the kind of thing
That reminds me of why
I do not love America.

Ian Appel

<sigh>

choking dry dust of these lazy days;
lugubrious heat.
cathode-ray depression, hot malaise
speak of defeat.

creeping calm of warm'd-over decay;
dry crackling leaves.
stagnant vacuum, branches used to sway;
we strive to breathe.

creature comforts cushions from the world
dead broken springs.
acid nightcap, let the dreams unfurl
and nightmares sing.

Ian Appel

fall

something in the air
like the sweet stench of mourning
the smoky signature of death by fire
drifting sound as the trees sing dirges
to their hundreds of spindly webbed fingers
falling to the climb of the light
to the gentle cadence of twilight whispers
interred in the ash and the dirt

alight
day of reckoning
hour of departure and arrival
touch of death and
breath of life
alight

Sarah E. Linn

SPQR

You were the wet nurse of millions, O Roma,
The teacher, the mother of the Roman world,
Suckling your peoples on your marble teats,
Bouncing them on your wise, wide knees.
You controlled their ages and their seasons,
Spun their circles and their cycles. You
Invented the wheel they learned on;
You trained their purpose like vines,
Taught them to search out you,
Build you, follow you, kill for you,
Their lips and their minds following you,
Speaking you eternally: Roma, Roma, Roma.
Roma, who placed them at the top of
Their empire; Roma, by your pride
You earned your own destruction, by
Placing the world in a man's fist,
Then, teaching him how to crush it.

Sarah E. Linn

The Gravedigger

he watches them at their business
sober, ridiculous
their precise steps, codes and orders
even killing this stupid pole,
this Jew, this gravedigger
a matter simultaneously of importance
and insignificance
it is just
he is little more than a dog
in their eyes
no. less than a dog --
even a dog has its usefulness
he watches the careful preparation
of the firearm
the words that emerge from their mouths
and hang
in the air
he sees them freeze
and imagines this wood is not more
and they are no more
and he is no more
there are only the words
and then the words are no more
his grave? a shallow hole
the dogs will pick at his bones
his skull will grin at lost children
and tell them the ridiculousness,
the foolishness
of it all

Sarah E. Linn

in orvieto, in the old columbaria

if forth
if forth from columbaria
the doves
erupted anew
from honeycombed hive beneath
the heavy-mounted hill
if tunneled siege and massive press
creaked out its throaty song
the donkeys baying underneath
the cold and cobbled road
when all along the wind ate on,
consumer of each coddled cheek
it bit, and with its biting built
the duomo triptych-topped
would fiends rush forth
blood burst renewed upon the sullied cloth
or time restart the subtle wheel
that had been hitched so long

about Parke Press

Founded during the Summer of 1999 in Talent, Oregon by Eric Wayne Dickey, Parke Press provides writers a cost-effective place to showcase their work. Simply by formatting their work into a book, Parke Press helps writers conceptualize the direction of their art: Authors discover continuity and cohesion in their work. Fortunately, they are not the only benefactor: The final product strives for quality in design and accessibility for the reader.

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