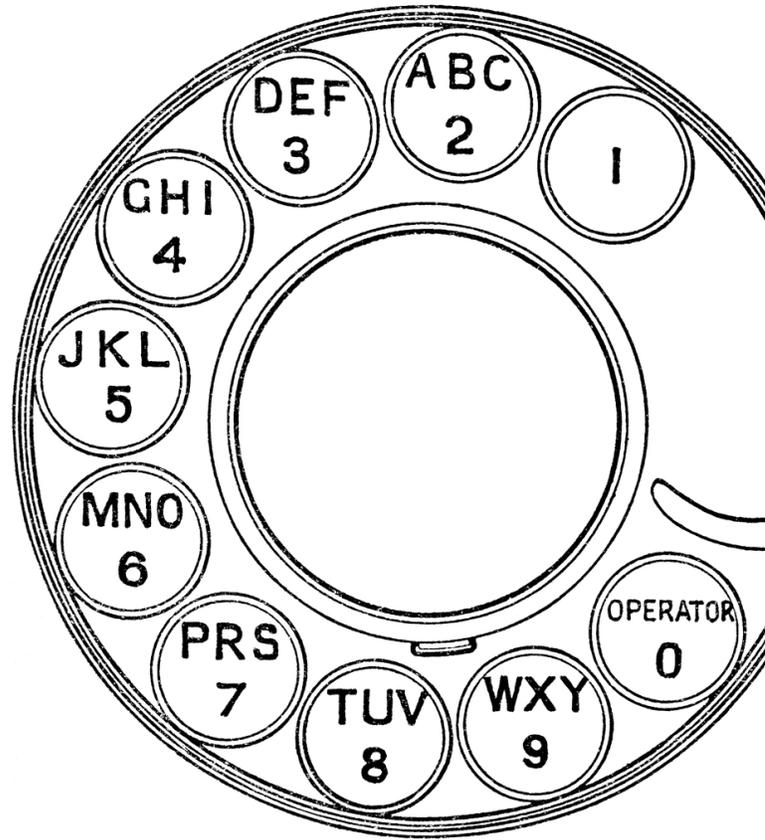


# THE ROTARY DIAL

ISSUE 5  
JULY 2013

[www.therotarydial.ca](http://www.therotarydial.ca)



## CONTENTS

### **Chris O'Carroll**

Quark Sestina 3

### **Kim Bridgford**

Inflatable Doll Goes Home To Meet His Mother 5

Inflatable Doll Goes Night-Night 6

Inflatable Doll Is the Only One She Knows Not on Meds 7

Inflatable Doll Is Mistaken for a Beach Toy at the Country Club 8

### **Michael Follow**

On Fire 9

### **Catherine Chandler**

Horizons 10

### **Barbara Lydecker Crane**

Type Cast 11

### **David M. Harris**

Devotion 12

### **Mary Cresswell**

River Road 13

### **Charles Hughes**

Darkness and Dave (Who Lived Down the Street When We Were Boys) 14

The Lapedo Child 15

Contributors 16

CHRIS O'CARROL

### Quark Sestina

*Physicists have identified six “flavors” or varieties of quarks: up, down, charm, strange, top, bottom.*

Some particles or pulses that make up  
Our atoms are themselves made up of strange  
Snippets of spin. (Not spinning like a top,  
More like a mind that can't get to the bottom  
Of substance conjured by some cosmic charm  
From flickering flecks of charge.) What ties down

These fragments? Makes them matter? Fluffy down,  
Dense diamond – it's all mist, does not fill up  
The space it seems to occupy. What charm  
Binds almost nothingness into a strange  
Simulation of something? We, at bottom,  
Are emptiness with a veneer on top.

Yet oh how real we feel when you're on top  
(Or I am, either way). And going down  
Makes every pulsing particle from bottom  
To top again and again ante up  
For matter's realest deal. Eventful, strange,  
Almost not here at all, flesh works a charm

That voids the void. Your body's urgent charm  
May be a tactile truth layered atop  
A tenuous one. We may be as strange  
As we are familiar. When we get down  
To business, we may have no clue what's up  
Inside the atoms of tongue, breast, bottom,

Or any part. When we say “from the bottom  
Of my heart,” we name a place with real charm  
But not a real locale. And what wells up  
From that place carries us over the top  
Of something that has no real up or down,  
No here or there. For love is just as strange

As mostly insubstantial substance, strange  
As immaterial matter. Bottom  
Line, this flesh in which two lovers lie down

Is no more and no less real than this charm  
The cosmos whispers at the top  
Of its voice: "All quarks, all love, all made up."

To be unreal yet real has the strange charm  
Of spin and tumble from bottom to top.  
Quark me good, babe. Quark me down. Quark me up.

KIM BRIDGFORD

### **Inflatable Doll Goes Home To Meet His Mother**

Her scarf in place, she's Audrey-Hepburn style,  
Arrayed in surface elegance and smile.  
Her lipstick is more natural than not.  
She carries a small handbag. On the seat

Behind her is a Tupperware of bars  
Not meant to overwhelm but show she cares.  
They're "seven-layer" like her soul.  
This day's important:  
She knows the way he reads the sky, is silent;

Yet now she wants him more than any time  
To talk. Immediately, his mother sums her up:  
Dessert, the careful dress, the perfect make-up:  
And thinks this is the way her son should go,  
Predictability is not a crime.  
So what if she deflates? Can't drive? XO.

## **Inflatable Doll Goes Night-Night**

Ah, the bedtime hour: the preparation,  
The cleansing shower, Chanel No. 5  
(The things that make her feel most alive),  
The garter belt and silk. Then the confession:

The pillow talk that speaks in whispered threads.  
She likes the right hand side, but will move over  
If other acrobatic acts will cantilever  
To heights that throw her off her blown-up treads.

She's a sport; a doll; makes Barbie wince –  
Barbie who's framed by her experience  
(Malibu Barbie, Princess, Teacher, Nurse).  
This blow-up baby pacifies each curse.  
She's human sized in function and in role.  
Turn off the light, and make the broken whole.

## **Inflatable Doll Is the Only One She Knows Not on Meds**

Even he, who bought her to fulfill a need,  
Takes Xanax every day. He's evened out,  
He says, which puzzles her: she feels a greed  
For human experience. And every night

He takes an Ambien so that he'll fall asleep.  
He starts each morning with a cappuccino.  
Her friends are all the same: they blur the landscape.  
As long as she is here, she wants to know:

But sometimes in her dreams she's in the crosshairs,  
Punctured, lost, and flattened – usual nightmares –  
Arrives at the wrong house, recycled plastic.  
She knows without the drugs that she's susceptible  
To all the daily woes that humans try  
To lose through pharmaceuticals. And lie.

## **Inflatable Doll Is Mistaken for a Beach Toy at the Country Club**

She knows she shouldn't take it personally  
(People are who they are), yet she's thrown in  
With casualness, an open raft. Chagrin  
Apologizes, helps her out, to try  
To smooth the waves, to find the compromiser.

In country clubs, they like things as they were.

He asks her to be nice about it, win  
The others with her friendliness and sheen.  
Yet sometimes she's depressed. How would he feel?  
But then again he's like them, and he's real.

She nods, and does exactly what she should:  
Apologizes in the name of good,  
And makes a joke: "That happens all the time,"  
For Cruelty demands this paradigm.

MICHAEL FOLLOW

**On Fire**

The fire was upon the deep.  
He let there be a firmament.

Oedipus gazed into the fire  
he started when Jocasta died.

The city burned each night until  
the Trojan horse was wheeled in.

Orpheus saw the red turn gray  
as he led them out of the flame

and Titus lit his son on fire  
then buried him inside the cave.

When Dante saw the trees on fire  
he knew there was another way.

The ghost appeared to Hamlet where  
the stage began to fill with smoke.

CATHERINE CHANDLER

**Horizons**

Beyond the point of no return  
the universe is smooth, curve-fitted, creaking

yet chaos games can forge a fern  
by iterated, formulaic tweaking

and fractal flames will never burn  
but render unto Caesar, roughly speaking.

BARBARA LYDECKER CRANE

### **Type Cast**

TIMES ROMAN considers himself a font  
of wisdom, always running ragged, right  
and left. He parses speech in sound bites  
practiced nightly to his confidante,

PERPETUA TITLING, his golden trophy wife.  
Ahead of herself in planning domestic expansion,  
Perpetua feels she was born to a capitol mansion.  
She's never seen in print with lowercase life.

Chapter and verse, the family's a volume of tension.  
SHADOW GOTHIC, face as white as bone,  
is seeking work engraving burial stone.  
His darker penchants best remain unmentioned.

An artsy type, AVANT GARDE is known  
for tattooing haiku all over her limbs and head.  
Her blue-tinged skin makes Father Times turn red;  
she's hardly his ideal of a Roman clone.

STENCIL might be lurking in the shed  
amid his stash of spray guns, paint and chalk.  
Darting city margins, he's a nighthawk  
scrawling walls with F-bombs and Drop Dead.

Here comes the youngest, babbling baby talk  
and waving to the crowd. FUTURA toddles,  
adoring eyes on Daddy Times, her model  
for learning all the ropes of type-walk.

DAVID M. HARRIS

## **Devotion**

Behind the pews, the cantor calls,  
a solo voice for once; no chord  
or chorus this day in this hall.

*Hineni:* Here I stand, O Lord.

He sings his prayer on our behalf  
on Yom Kippur. He leads us toward  
our comfort with the rod and staff.

*Hineni:* Here I stand, O Lord.

My disbelief won't matter here.  
The cantor's faith is my reward.  
It means to last me through the year.

*Hineni:* Here I stand, O Lord.

But after services I leave,  
break fast, regain my disaccord.  
Uplifted, still I don't believe.

*Hineni:* Here I stand, O Lord.

MARY CRESSWELL

### **River Road**

As the tree's inclined, so our thoughts were bent  
by rough, competing breezes, unusually unseen

but no less strait for all that. The last  
hard skew came from the east and seemed to last

forever. Then the wind changed, as is its wont,  
and from disparate branches, twigs were seen

sprouting at cross-purposes, angled, when seen  
from here, down into the river. But the last

twigs went with the flow (as we say), ocean-bent:  
bent sticks in water, seen as whole at last.

CHARLES HUGHES

**Darkness and Dave (Who Lived Down the Street When We Were Boys)**

Her husband beat her now and then –  
And, then, more frequently.  
But once black eyes had multiplied  
So no one didn't see,  
She waited till a night when he'd drawn blood.  
The cops did what they could.

They clubbed him a few times before  
Dropping him in a cell.  
He slept, practically comatose,  
For days but woke to tell  
The judge how he'd been hit at Anzio,  
How friend turned sudden foe.

Too sick for jail, the judge decided,  
And sentenced him instead  
To the state mental hospital.  
In three weeks, he was dead,  
Leaving his wife an old white house and a son.  
At twelve, Dave was the one

Who found him hanging by his belt.  
I'd say that's probably why  
Dave played these angry, solo games  
Like *making gopher pie* –  
Dave, decked out in his father's boots and hat,  
Stomped gophers, mashing them flat.

It's probably why Dave fished a spot  
Where woods and river met.  
The water there held darkness and light,  
Each perfectly offset.  
He'd pull fish up into the shade, then dig  
Their eyes out with a twig.

## The Lapedo Child

*Whose remains were discovered in 1998 in the Lapedo Valley in central Portugal.*

His bones are red. That drew me in among  
The published facts and educated guesses:  
Male, four years old at death; the burial some  
Twenty-four thousand years ago and done  
Carefully (tenderly might be more apt);  
Head slightly raised, feet crossed, his left foot on  
His right, a snail-shell pendant at his neck  
(A name tag? Toy? Or maybe a holy vessel?);  
And for a shroud an animal skin his people,  
As if to register indelible grief,  
Reddened with ochre, pigment that would bleed  
And bleed all the long while the shroud decayed.

The find is interesting to scholars who  
(Because his skeleton is early modern,  
But with Neanderthal-like legs and jaw)  
Say he's a puzzle piece, that he shows how  
Much different lines combined to make the species  
The well-stirred mixture we are now.

I see

Him less as scientific evidence  
And more as an every-child, a hybrid, yes,  
Touched by the double stain of love and sorrow,  
Which travels like a family chin and – in  
The inexplicable providence of God –  
Spreads from each generation to the next.

## CONTRIBUTORS

**Chris O'Carroll**, a native of Cambridge, Massachusetts, is a writer and an actor. His poems have appeared in *Angle*, *First Things*, *The Flea*, *Lighten Up Online*, and *New Verse News*, among other print and online journals.

**Kim Bridgford** is the director of the West Chester University Poetry Center and the West Chester University Poetry Conference, the largest all-poetry writing conference in the United States. As the editor of *Mezzo Cammin*, she founded The Mezzo Cammin Women Poets Timeline Project, which was launched at the National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington in March 2010, and recently celebrated its third anniversary at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, in affiliation with the exhibition *The Female Gaze*. Her collaborative work with the visual artist Jo Yarrington has been honored with a Ucross fellowship. Bridgford is the author of seven books of poetry, including *Bully Pulpit*, a book of poems on bullying, and *Epiphanies*, a book of religious poems. She has appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, *The Connecticut Post*, on NPR and the website of *The News Hour with Jim Lehrer*, and in various headline news outlets.

**Michael Follow** lives in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and his writing has most recently appeared in *Vallum*, *Abjective*, *The American Scholar* and *Anderbo*. You can read more about him at [michaelfollow.com](http://michaelfollow.com).

**Catherine Chandler** was born in New York City, raised in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, and has lived and worked in Canada for many years. She has held the academic appointments of Spanish lecturer at McGill University's Department of Translation Studies where she also acted as International Affairs Officer. Winner of the Howard Nemerov Sonnet Award, she is the author of five books of poetry, including *Lines of Flight* (Able Muse Press, 2011) and the upcoming *Glad and Sorry Seasons* (Biblioasis Press, Windsor, Ontario, 2014). Catherine currently divides her time between Saint-Lazare, Quebec and Punta del Este, Uruguay.

**Barbara Lydecker Crane** has published, or has poems forthcoming, in *America*, *Atlanta Review*, *Blue Unicorn*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *Comstock Review*, *First Things*, *Light Quarterly*, *Measure*, *Mezzo Cammin*, and *14 by 14*, among others, and in six anthologies. In 2011 she won the Helen Schaible International Sonnet Contest. Last year *White Violet Press* published her collection of humorous poems entitled *Zero Gravitax*, and this year *Daffydowndilly Books* will publish her children's collection, *ALPHABETRICKS*. She's a member of the *Powow River Poets* and the founder of the *Light Brigade poet troupe*. Barb lives with her husband in Somerville, MA.

**David M. Harris** is originally a New Yorker, now living in Tennessee. His M.F.A. is in fiction, and most of his poetry is free verse, but occasionally something more formal squeezes itself out.

**Mary Cresswell** came from California to Wellington, New Zealand, in 1970. After retiring from life as an editor in various government offices, she took to using her own words and now writes poetry. Her third book, *Trace Fossils*, was published in 2011.

**Charles Hughes** is a tutor at St. Leonard's House in Chicago and a retired lawyer. His poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *America*, *Angle*, *The Anglican Theological Review*, *The Comstock Review*, *First Things*, *The Innisfree Poetry Journal*, *The Iron Horse Literary Review*, *Measure*, *The Sewanee Theological Review*, *Verse Wisconsin*, and other publications. He lives in the Chicago area with his wife.