



The Crank

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Set in Goudy Old Style.

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STEPHANIE V. SEARS

Taoto

You sleep on fossils, on crystal seepage,
on a meringue of shell and coral flour,
among sorcery's pharmacopeia,
like a self-possessed animal
beyond the adulterated psyche.
Liberated from things
left behind, quite forgotten.

The island is a trophy brandished
by a trough of magma,
succulent and sub-tropical.
The ocean all over the place
transforms huge waves
into swaying pagodas,
rams its saline innards
against shaken cliffs
with a chasmal whoof.
Or in azurean calm, stretches
the rhinestone wings
of a *Pi'iti* blue bird.

The island is your bedroom
of varnished trees and shrubs
grooming themselves daily,
of carnal flowers lighting up
grottos of greenery
with symbiotic lanterns,
their attars ascending
in contralto arias.

Sleep wherever you please,
in that consensus of elements,
like habits readily adopted,
in the attentive embrace of their care.
You come to be in turn
reptilian, sleuth, clawed
and supple indolence on a tree.
At mid-night, deepest of all,
sweating a profusion of stars,
your heartbeat bounces off their light.

You fall asleep anywhere,
against any constellation,
on a pillow of revolving distance,
your head nestled on fern and afar.
Under a net of vanilla breeze,
by a macaroon sea, trading
coconuts with outliers.

Sleep so, until your eyelashes
wear dawn's offbeat mascara.
A small silver lizard explores
so near you can read his mind.
A young bull, head down,
blows you his smoking heart.
Nature lives up to its primal rule:
'Do not disturb.'

(*Taoto*: Tahitian for 'sleep'.)

Night Swim

Exhaustion of summer nights.
To plunge in Canal and Basin:
sea merging with marsh river.
Night's lunar staging nearly exposed us

to those walking the quays,
on stone slack with translucence,
battling towards water.
We swam in baubles of light.

We dove in moon's platinum,
dolphins in a treasure trove.
Ether gave palace steps green auras.
We bathed in impudence.

From the city's surfeit our minds flowered
crimson. Ideas graced with depth
had us sinking as inside
a harpsichord's grotto.

MYKYTA RYZHYKH

Love is religion

Every time I drown in you I forget that I can't swim

Every time I forget that the shore does not exist

Every time I use the right to remember and try to forget

The heart is leather satisfaction

Teach me to steal money not only from talent but also from the body

Teach me how to kiss people I don't like

Teach me the night because the day is long over

Insatiable bodies fuck in all cracks

I no longer have a body

The body no longer has me

Love is walls without a ceiling in a homeless house

CAMI RUMBLE

What Bothers Me about the View

The unhappiness I carry
Tastes like winter sunshine,
Frozen ankles in the afternoon.
Bubbles of caringness pop without sound.
One moment a breathless shimmering,
And then next, vanished,
 Silent, undone.
The neighbor's letterbox is missing a number,
No wonder the deliveries are confused –
While beyond stretch up the arms
Of white-stripped eucalyptus trees soon to be felled.
Today is their last drink of daylight,
 Their last meal.
Perhaps I should read the last rites;
Perhaps there will be relief at the sound of
 Their blank space
When the last crack carries out
Through the field and the fence,
Past the neighbor's mailbox,
Across the road and the porch railing,
Over cold, sharp air
To meet our sorrowful windows.

BETHANY W. POPE

The Sights

Pushing my child south,
down the crowded pavement of a city street,
bodies jostling everywhere and the twilight air
redolent with salt, lake water, barbecue
smoke, and roast meat, I saw a man
thrusting his way out of the subway.
He was young: built up in a way that spoke
of heavy lifting that favors the shoulders,
neck, arms, back and chest,
but leaves the legs thin, and sorely wanting.
His torso was an arrow
that pointed at his crotch
and, as an arrow, he glistened.
The woman walking next to me
was also young, and slim enough, draped
in a silk sheath that seemed unlikely in this heat —
her black hair held high and pinned above
a powdered, moon-white neck.
Her lips were red, lustrous as a raw
slice of rump steak, glistening also
with that dark, blood-muscle sheen.
I happened to glance at her as she and I
parted for his passing, and the look on her face
was nothing but hungry. Raw hunger
almost looks like a variety of pain
(it is pain) and the flicker of her eyes
across his body resembled the hunger
of a god for the burnt fat of an offering.
Gone, in a second, the appetite suppressed

beneath the usual masks, and we walked on
in all of our various directions
no one satisfied, or one molecule wiser.

LEX KWAM

The Snare

A structure like a light-sail, floating there
between the Earth and the Sun – though it is not
Apollo's light we wish to glean this time,

but Lucifer's. The beauty is that he
would help us build it, just as he helped us build
the chariot, the guillotine, the lab.

It ought to be enormous as the moon,
a tribute to the great nocturnal eye
that's known all the illicit acts of men

and women, the indiscretions touched with silver –
that will get his attention. But the snare
won't close without the weight of benediction,

or rather demi-benediction: half-
truths and interrupted prayers, riddles,
confessions of neglects that speak for themselves

(you know the ones); all offered up like wine
for christening a ship. Because what better
way to detain the Prince than with a mirror

into which we've poured our murkiness –
not the good, which makes him nauseous, nor
the bad, which makes him laugh – but the oblique...

Obliquely he will come, a spear of light

that snakes across the sky and turns to face
the looking glass to end all looking glasses.

And meeting the perfect adversary at last,
he'll turn to stone with the words *'I'll make you a deal.'*

GEORGIA GILDEA

The Swan (To Victor Hugo)

a version of Baudelaire's 'Le Cygne'

I

Andromache, I think of you
Kneeling by the Simois river
Making its poor waters shine
And swell with your widow's tears...

I feel a sudden kinship with you
As I wander through the new Carrousel.
Old Paris is no more – the spirit of a city
Changes more rapidly than the human heart.

But I see the ghosts of what has been lost:
Shanties, marquees, barrels, grass
Ancient blocks turned green by puddles,
Jumbled relics shining from old windows.

Once there was a menagerie here
And one morning, under cold, clear skies
At the hour when the working day begins, pushing its clamour
Into the silent air

I saw a swan who had escaped his cage
Scraping his webbed feet on the dry paving stones
Trailing his white plumage on the rough ground.
By a dried-out stream this magnificent beast, opening his beak

And bathing his wings in the city dust,
Cried, with his heart full of his native lake:
'Water, when will you rain down? Thunder, when will you sound?'
I see this unhappy creature, as from a myth

Ill-fated and straining at the Heavens –
My poor swan, pleading with a mocking sky
His head thrown back on his quivering neck
Seeking God.

II

Paris is changing. But my unhappiness
Remains. My very surroundings
Have become unreal
And my memories weigh heavier than stones.

Now, outside the Louvre, I see him again:
My great swan, in his desperation
Deranged, disorganised: an exile
Consumed by relentless longing.

And then I think of you, Andromache, fallen
From the arms of your great love,
Held captive by the ruthless Pyrrhus
Grieving at an empty tomb.

I think of the African immigrant, sickly and disoriented
Searching with a crazed eye
In the city's wall of fog
For the coconut palms of her homeland.

I think of those who have lost what they cannot get back

Ever, ever! Of those who drink up tears
And feed off pain as from a mother wolf!
Of thin orphans shrivelling like flowers!

So too in the wilderness of my soul
An old memory suddenly sounds its horn
I think of sailors washed up on an island
Of captives, of the defeated...of so many more!

DANIEL GOODING

Sirens

Transported on a wailing wave, they hurtle
through the inner streets at dawn in a sudden
dash for the thriving heart; but I no longer
hear them calling my name down this backwater

cul-de-sac. These former captains have not
left port for many a year now, marooned
at the top of a mouldering black staircase;
staring dead down like a figurehead, an old

Odysseus with his ears all bunged up.
Nothing will pull them past their perimeter;
the rocks that will one day break them apart lie
further ahead than mere mates can fathom.

A musicless iceberg moves in overnight,
towing the dawn behind with its great stillness;
as long and drawn out as the black car that rolls
what's left away like a sombre dung beetle.

My still young flesh slips in and out unnoticed;
for me there is no danger in this stonework.
My sole concern is the small black mouse or rat
that slowly gnaws at the edge of my living.

SIMON FRENCH

The Milky Way from Peel Hill

The sky dehydrates itself of light,
leaves only a banjo moon
& its jangle of stars.

You get us lying on our backs,

peeking into the ever on & on.
Desperate to cheat gravity,
find where we fit in
to the great rotations

& we have questions too
for the ear of the Universe.
A galleon wind blows in
from the Irelands. Now

your hair's a mess
& the creek boys
haven't missed us yet. They're washing
stories in the old town beer

& if 10p telescopes
on the harbour wall had night vision
they'd spy me tug off your shorts,
boxers, open your legs,

turning my back on the Milky Way.
Let's leave the stars
to watch us. Shocked.
Perplexed. In awe.

TESSA FOLEY

Being Young

It was lying on one elbow
with a short cigarette in a long hand
talking into the smoke
as it crept out and back into his mouth.

It was a faded, lilac duvet cover
with fluffing on one corner,
shaking it dry and holding an edge
over breasts but keeping a spoonful visible.

It was making do and never any plans,
if there were a future threatening
to be made of bricks, he would have
twisted out of bed and said

Let's go and find the word out there,
but he would stay, all stretched
and bent on top of covers,
taking it in and taking it down.

KATE EVANS

Like Rabbits

We fucked into your mirror, we fucked into an open
skylight over roof-tops, the deepening park.

Rabbits fucked away from the city in truck-paths,
blind-spots, great dark circles of trees while

loggers worked the night shift, discs of sawn oak
craned clear of the forest floor into canopy dimness,

time out of time. Eyes shut, you above and below
me: my science, subconscious. The floorboards

of an unknown box-room, dark blue, then
a window, another one, corporeal, dusty, lighter.

A front door slammed through your chest. What
earth? What else? I thought until I couldn't for a minute.

Patient and shocked, far-off the drone of a plane,
the hackles of a dog, cigarettes on the common,

bark and smoke in coiling waves between steepled
hands, linear plants, piled coppers. Triangulating:

us and whoever would not speak, mute mouthfuls,
two body's whole complications. Side wine, poured

through air, a fiver's worth of reddish glaze. I text
to say: *god, you turn me on*. Like rabbits we were lost

in the suburb's half-lit complexes. Garden gloves
chucked on pine furniture. Inert fingers, flat ears.

The Selkie's Son

She's there until she's not and then she's gone.
Eyes open and close as when
the sea appears and then disappears
behind a fast-moving hill
when we are driving.
Where's the sea? There it is! Every morning
I look for her
with more than my eyes –
with forearms, little chest, wide mouth.
Grey irises like the flagstones
she loves to touch with her bare feet.
When she is away I feel her move
apart from me, head set against deep cloud, slate waves.
Old sealant lets in wind through the window frame.
I am backed up by the elements,
face toward the draft.
It is from the water she will eventually return.
I have learnt to trust
that the heat of my body
& the shock of skin-to-skin
must not burn as hearth harsh as I imagine.

RICHARD COLLINS

Still Life with Bananas and Avocado

*'Peindre d'après nature, ce n'est pas copier l'objectif,
c'est réaliser ses sensations.'*

– Paul Cézanne

On the table harvested from ancient bayous
in a bowl of hand-thrown earth
among freckled yellow phalluses and

desiccated limes hard as golf balls and
kiwis with uncombed trichomes,
like something from the Mesozoic

a blackened dragon testicle with sweet green flesh
a nest for the smooth polished stone
like a beautiful tumor,

or a copper pearl,
a polished acorn,
an espresso truffle,
or a fairy egg.

WILLIAM CLUNIE

the rosenkohl cavalier

a plate of brussels sprouts served
by a tenor singing strauss.i
can only hold the elegance in
until inanities like rain pour
out:who slept with when & where
the weather was,well now
i'm in a mood for condemnation,
my predecessor don't you know,that
is the way of things:poke a stick
before the long dust sleep,yer
day in the sun before it burns
the words,it burns all
the words from here to wales

DAVID ANGELO

Crab Apples

The flowers are lost to summer's fire.
What remains are apples as bitter
as Shropshire rain. The tongue
rolls itself up in disgust.

A younger me dared myself to try one —
every bite dragging me back
to thinking of grandfather pruning
the tree, battling the unruly branches
while it pressed ahead with plans
to conquer the uncertain soil.

And when he succumbed
to the hospital bed, arms flopped out,
he was more of a tree
than the awful thing he failed to trim.

Even now, it speaks to me
in his stolen twang,
offering me its children
as a consolation prize,
each seed as beautiful as pity.

AEESHA ABDULLAHI ALHAJI

An Unforgiving Wilderness

isolated among brethren of hermits
the deacon dies – leaving us in darkness
jumping quantum leaps in wilderness
amidst creatures – rubbing solitary arms – a twist
to shatter burdens crawling out of woodworks
an irony of misfortunes is thrown in
burning dreams of men with boons of rebirth
the journey spells an antidote for souls
neither lost nor far
the truth is an insight to the plot called time
awaiting its passengers & this is how
everything mourns separately.

Z. S. BURKE

Mouse and Crow

The crow watches the hole in the earth for some days before he makes himself known that night. He never follows her trail out into the wider world. No, he spends most of his time wringing the tree's leaves for moisture. What flows is thick with red. Beads fall from his beak to the grass below, their blades black beside the pale soil. Those same red drops clump and harden the clay, turning it a skeletal shade, as if the moonlight itself were cremated.

Crow spends the rest of his time looking for any exits he may have missed, but there are none. Of this he is certain.

A cave in miniature, the mouse's home is little more than sunken earth beneath the great tree's roots but he watches the creature come and go with a devoted regularity. That same mouse disappeared inside the ashen soil not a minute prior. She arrived with another sunflower seed delicately suspended between teeth.

This is the miracle that will get her killed.

Perched on the root - the bark cracked with thirst - the crow caws and coughs, nothing but desert where his voice once rung out like the boatman's morbid poetry. Still, its effect lands undiminished. All is quiet in the cave.

A small voice says 'Hello.' High-pitched but confident, like one of the child-brides that drown themselves in shallow streams only to awaken in the brutal woods across the lake.

'You are the crow,' the voice says.

The crow widens his stance and lowers his head. The blind spot in the earth returns his gaze.

'And you are the little mouse.'

'Maybe. Or maybe I appear that way to you. To an ant, I am mighty.'

'And to you, I am God.'

'Yes,' the mouse says. 'But have you decided yet?'

‘Decided?’

‘Yes,’ the mouse says again. ‘There are many kinds of god.’

‘I suspect this is true, but I know only one to be real.’

‘And?’

‘And what?’ The crow asks, his voice scratching with impatience.

‘Do you mistake me for a parrot?’

‘No. Of course not.’

‘So what then?’

‘Your god,’ the mouse says. ‘Is he kind?’

The crow looks at the sky and wonders.

‘Hello?’

The crow looks down again. Light catches the polished hook of his claw. ‘I’m here.’

‘Are you alright?’

‘Yes,’ the crow says. He feels smaller now, with all this talk of god.

‘What’s wrong?’

‘Nothing. Only that it has never occurred to me that god could be kind.’

‘Yes,’ the mouse says. ‘I suspect that is often the case.’

There is a quiet rustling inside the cave. Even that muted movement is enough to shake more blood from the tree. Its wood creaks in response. There is no breeze. The crow pauses to reflect on who the tree might have been in life but the sounds from the hole disrupt any deeper inquiry.

‘You cannot run,’ the crow says. ‘There is no escape.’

‘I know,’ the mouse says, emerging into this plane’s permanent night. ‘I will not run.’

The crow steps back, surprised. This little mouse is pregnant. Her stomach hangs low. Its heavy swell swipes the ground, painted with earth.

‘I will not run,’ the mouse says again, before lying on her side.

The crow snaps his beak at the soft flesh she presents him. There is blood but no resistance. A taste. He watches the life inside her recoil at his violent interrogation. His hollow parts cry out for more, but her gaze holds him in place. It never breaks from his own.

‘I will not run,’ she says.

‘No matter,’ the crow says. ‘I am not hungry.’ He pulls a feather from his wing, black beyond absence, and lets it fall across her chest.

‘You will not eat me?’

‘Tomorrow,’ the crow says. ‘I wasn’t expecting you to taste so naive.’

‘Were you not?’

‘No,’ the crow says, taking flight for a branch on the far side of the tree. ‘But tomorrow I will be ready.’

*

Tomorrow comes and the crow finds the mouse outside her home.

‘There you are,’ she says. ‘I have been waiting.’

‘Today I will taste your heart.’

‘As you wish,’ the mouse says, ‘but first I should like to see the sun.’

He watches her move at speed towards those abominable sands in the East. Every ray of light in these glittering dunes cuts like glass. Crow follows at a distance, watching her struggle across those vast wastes, often tumbling back to the bottom of a crest as the ground beneath her gives way. All he has to do is fly a little ways to keep up. Every now and again he considers flensing her on the barren soil but the promise of gritty flesh and a long dormant curiosity allow him to maintain his distance. It helps, as well, that the sand sings with hellfire. The threat of pain keeps him in the air.

He wonders how she can stand its constant touch.

Minutes, hours, days. At some point he hears her voice on the breeze, quiet but clear.

‘Look how it shines.’

The crow lands at a distance, marvelling at the yellow petals of the sunflower. Its silhouette glows with a quiet warmth, as if the light of another world overlaid their own.

Dwarfed again by the plant, the mouse approaches with the same quiet confidence she laid at the feet of the crow. She lowers her head at the base of its stalk, as if in supplication. A single seed falls and lands before the crown of her gesture. The sight reminds the crow of rain, a phenomenon long forgotten.

‘If it pleases you, I’d see this seed home,’ the mouse says.

‘Very well,’ the crow says. ‘Your flesh would be rotten with sand if I opened you here.’

She takes the seed between her teeth, gentle, as if it were as precious as the life already inside her. Wordless, she turns, and makes for the tree.

Crow follows, watching the little mouse, wondering at the limits of his kindness, trying to act as god and victim both.

*

This time, she emerges to find crow asleep at the mouth of her home. His giant wing blocks the exit, but only so much as a curtain blocks the stage. Crawling from underneath the starry quills she nudges his beak.

‘I am leaving now.’

‘I will have your heart today,’ he says. His voice still has that jagged sawtooth swerve, like wind cracking through a reed.

‘And I shall see the sun.’

‘Then I will follow,’ he says. ‘For fear I later find you as a spoiled meal.’

*

Time passes this way. The crow thinks it cheap to count the hours, days, weeks, months. He only knows the dawn by the feel of her burrowing beneath his wing. The night by the sound of her breathing deep beneath the earth. A small part of him is aware that a previous life would have seen her give birth by now, at least once. Twice. A thousand times. Once again, numbers are a cheap patina of what he knows is real. And yet, in those still times, when he cannot sleep - and it is well known that few creatures know sleep in this distant circle - he wonders at the miracle of her circumstance. The life that swarms inside her. A litter of miracles, all the more miraculous by being rendered common with a single source.

*

One day, the little mouse emerges from beneath his wing, slower and heavier than before.

‘Today I will eat your heart,’ the crow says.

‘I believe you,’ the little mouse says. ‘But won’t you see the sun with me?’

‘I will keep an eye on you.’

‘No,’ she says. ‘I would see your wings beside me. I would see you glittering with sand.’

‘You would see me burn?’

‘No. I would see you fly, as I do.’

*

Walking reminds the crow of what it is to be human. To fear the ground, which may at any time open up to swallow you. Distant landmarks not marked as property but destinations. Except the little mouse, so quiet in her distress, converts these features into new expressions of a life forgotten. The ground, even when it gives way, no longer takes the measure of teeth. Even the sunflower, so familiar and strange on the horizon, takes on its own peculiar form of life. He wonders if it was always this way. If there was a way to speak to mountains. Or to share a secret with the wind. What wisdom this mouse has, the crow thinks, to know that even a stone has the measure of men.

*

When they return, the mouse leaves the seed outside the door.

‘Good night,’ the mouse says.

‘Good night,’ says the crow. ‘Tomorrow, I eat your heart.’

‘I know,’ the mouse says. ‘If only I could eat yours first.’

‘You would not care for my taste.’

‘No?’ asks the mouse. Her breathing is heavy, but measured. The crow watches all that energy get expended in a smile. ‘That hardly seems fair.’

'No,' the crow says. 'It doesn't.' He lowers the fold of his wing, as if to stop her exiting the stage.

'Good night, crow,' the mouse says, with just enough strength to lift his feathers.

'Good night, mouse,' the crow says, with just enough force to shake the tree.

He spends all night staring at the seed, its perfect shape, wondering what could be hidden in such sacred geometry.

*

The next morning, crow awakens to a struggle beneath his inky bones. The little mouse can hardly lift a single feather. Raising his wing, he sees not one but dozens of little mice. All their words mean *fear*. Every noise a new way of crying. Every little life carries a sunflower seed, almost as big as themselves, its burden dragging like an undertow in the skeletal soil. Its linear markings are the complete timeline of their lives so far.

It seems only natural, how many crawl from the hole. They swarm into concentric circles that mirror the landscape, the seed at its centre. Crow watches the black window of their home and experiences a sadness that eclipses itself with the appearance of each new life. Like the days that lead them here, it seems vulgar to count each sorrow.

All the movement shakes the tree, forcing blood from the leaves.

All the little bodies cry for their mother.

All the little bodies ask for their father.

Propping himself up on those same black wings from which they emerged, he plucks the last seed with his beak, its miracle shell trapped in the vice of his dwindling body.

He thinks of the little mouse and her little question.

What kind of god are you?

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

Stephanie V. Sears is a French and American ethnologist (Doctorate EHESS, Paris 1993), freelance journalist, essayist, and poet whose poetry recently appeared in *New Contrast*, *Expanded Field*, *Lunaris*, *Fleas on the Dog*, *Egophobia*, and *Neologism Poetry*. Short-listed in 2009 for a Pushcart Prize, nominated again in 2023. Her first book of poetry, *The Strange Travels of Svinhilde Wilson*, was published by Adelaide Books in 2020. Her second poetry book, *Anaho*, was published by Arteidolia Press (NY, 2023).

Mykyta Ryzhykh was the winner of the international competition Art Against Drugs and the contests Vytoky, Shoduarivska Altanka, and Khortytsky Dzvony; she was made laureate of the literary competition named after Tyutyunnik, Lyceum, and Twelve, named after Dragomoshchenko; she has also been nominated for a Pushcart Prize. Her poetry has appeared in many journals including *Dzvin*, *Dnipro*, *Bukovinian*, *Polutona*, and *Rechport*.

Cami Rumble is a writer and stay-at-home mom who graduated from California State University Stanislaus with a degree in English. A member of the California Writer's Club, her poetry has appeared or is forthcoming in *TMP Magazine*, *Teach. Write.*, *Oprelle Publications*, *Levitate*, and *Poetry Breakfast*, as well as in several local anthologies. Cami lives in California's Central Valley.

Bethany W. Pope has won many literary awards and published several novels and collections of poetry. Nicholas Lezard, writing for *The Guardian*, described Bethany's latest book as 'poetry as salvation... This harrowing collection, drawn from a youth spent in an orphanage, delights in language as a place of private escape.' Bethany currently lives and works in China.

Lex Kwam studied sculpture in the Netherlands before moving to London and taking up poetry. Their day-job is in human rights law.

Georgia Gildea is a writer from Oxford. She is a graduate of the Warwick Writing Programme (2016) and has an MA in Poetry from Royal Holloway, University of London. Her debut poetry pamphlet, *bed*, was published by V.Press in 2023. Individual poems have appeared in The Cardiff Review, Marble Poetry, and Lunate. Georgia is interested in French literature and is currently translating a selection of poems from Baudelaire's *Fleurs du mal*.

D. P. Gooding's fiction has been featured in Stroud Short Stories: Volume 2 2015-2018 and two anthologies from New York-based publisher New Lit Salon Press, Startling Sci-Fi: New Tales of the Beyond and First Came Fear: New Tales of Horror. He has been a regular contributor to The Guardian and Information Professional, and in 2022 was shortlisted for the Alpine Fellowship Poetry Prize. He currently lives in a small village near the Cotswolds.

Simon French has had two poetry collections published, *Joyriding Down Utopia Avenue* (Coverstory Books, 2021) and *The Deadwing Generation* (Coverstory Books, 2022). His poetry has appeared in many magazines and been placed in competitions. He currently lives in Derby, England and works full-time to help people secure social housing.

Tessa Foley's debut poetry collection *Chalet Between Thick Ears* and follow up *What Sort of Bird are You?* were published by Live Canon. She is currently working on her third collection, *Try to Find Me*. She has been recognised in the Ware Poets Competition, Charroux Prize, and Arts University Bournemouth Poetry Competition. tessafoley.com

Kate Evans is a social researcher and poet based on a houseboat in London. She has an MA from Royal Holloway and her work has appeared in Lucent Dreaming, Perverse Magazine, and elsewhere. She is working towards her first collection.

Richard Collins, Dean Emeritus of Arts and Humanities at California State University Bakersfield, has taught literature and creative writing in Bulgaria, Romania, and Wales (Swansea University), as well as in California and Louisiana, where he edited the Xavier Review (2001-

2007). He was a guest lecturer in China at Fudan University in 2001. His poetry and translations have appeared in Southern Humanities Review, Exquisite Corpse, Negative Capability, Uthona, and Shō Poetry Journal, among others. His books include *No Fear Zen* (2015) and a translation of Taisen Deshimaru's *Autobiography of a Zen Monk* (2022). Currently Abbot of the New Orleans Zen Temple, he lives in Sewanee, Tennessee, where he directs Stone Nest Dojo.

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