

Crescent Moon Journal

Winter 2005

Jim Corner, Publisher
Mustansir Dalvi, Editor



Winter Edition 2005

CRESCENT MOON JOURNAL

The Literary Magazine of the Desert Moon Review

a sliver of dark chocolate

The Crescent Moon has traditionally been a showcase for its staff and for prizewinning poems in our contests - a place to display our prizewinners and to allow our staff to show where they stand with their words, a concurrence of the poets who make up Desert Moon Review. This has been done without a sense of vanity, more of a putting together, of a coming together. The Crescent is but a sliver of the Desert Moon.

But this time the Moon is risen, in its fullness and fecundity. Poems have been invited from all the members, not just the staff, and fertility is all around us. This editor has had the happy task of going through more than fifty poems from the Desert Moon commune and what follows is its most succulent fruit, winter tipping over into spring.

There are many rooms in this manor you may choose to visit or stumble into. Not clean well-lighted places, not necessarily, no, where you may find faculties other than the visual useful guides, with a 'capacity to sift experience through fingers', to quote Guy Kettlehack. What is striking about these poems is the manner in which the less obvious senses have been evoked, pictures perceived not (just) by the eyes but more usefully by smell, touch and taste. This makes the poems contemplative, yet immediate. As Steve Williams says 'saliva gathers on the tongue, asks for more.'

Before I leave you to your own devices and desires, I would like to thank all the members who submitted poems for this installment of the Crescent Moon, both those whose poems are seen here and those that did not make the final cut. You are the stuff of life that makes this community, and I am grateful. Thanks also to the staff of the Moon, the behind-the-scene selenites. It is always a pleasure to sink into your words, enjoy your familiarity and ever so often, be surprised. Special thanks to our editor Chris and publisher Jim whose quiet exhortations, both front and back channel, brought such a flood of submissions, the best of which you now see.

Mustansir Dalvi
Editor
Bombay, India

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From the Editor

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Arthur Seeley
Burnsall

Under the stone arches of the bridge
the pent brown waters surge.

Fluent hint of trout slides through glooms
of pools above the wood and long meadow.

The leafless aspen trails where I warmed her hands
that year we stood apart from a celebrating world.

Below the bridge the river bends into wilderness
tumbling through bouldered gorge and falls.

The trees are still, cold and stark there,
where I scattered her ashes in Spring.

I return slowly along muddy paths
my shoes adorned with mire.



Arthur Seeley was born in 1933. He is a retired lecturer and teacher of Mathematics and Mathematical Education. His poetry is published in various e-zines. Arthur Seeley is a moderator for the Pennine Poetry List.

Ash Bowen

A Wife Leaves Her Husband on the Phone in an Airport in Phoenix

From miles away she explained
what he'd find when he returned:
her last leaving. Everything's arranged;
I'm free. Her words burned
like deep winter breaths.

He hung her voice and what remained
of her goodbye on the cradle turned
like a horseshoe out of luck. He watched planes
arrive and leave the world unconcerned
with how flight changed lives into air.

Over vodkas and Nebraska's plains
he pressed his palms against the urn
of his heart. Later he could never explain
what pulled him to return and return
to the bathroom where he found

what he had meant to say.
"Stay. I'll change."



Ash Bowen lives in Arkansas. He is the father of two children. He was recently admitted to the doctoral creative writing program at the University of North Texas.

Feith Stuart
Fourteen



she just turned the age
at which
we fingered

the fringe of grown up
scribbled
spat and bellowed

fuck
sucked
everything;
candy, cancer, cock
tried sex on

through jean seams
swayed hips
that had just popped
got drunk on
eyes following
ass, bare shoulder, mouth

Powerful, we

rode hands
to heavy bass, we marveled
at new nipples, we

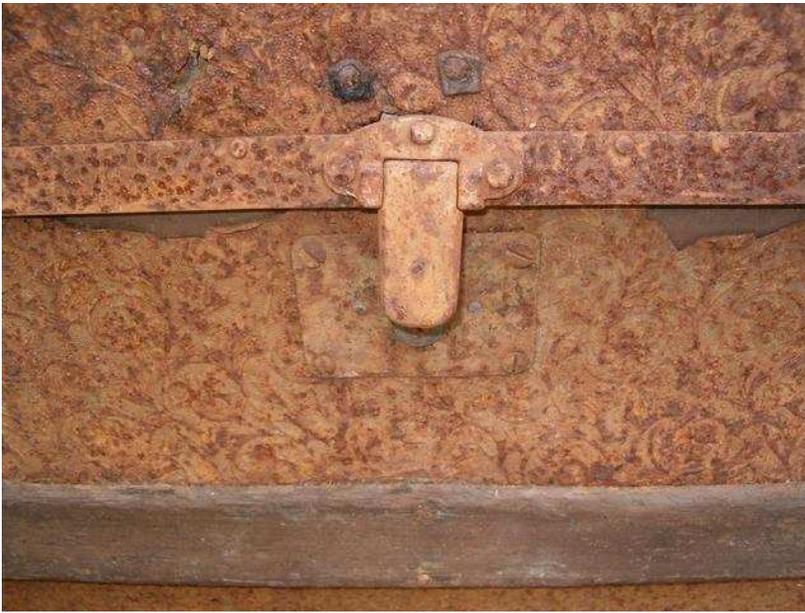
sucked back
good green smoke, we
kissed strawberry
lips raw

we toast her
new blood and smile

terrified across the luncheon table
at the creature

we were and see peering
out of her pretty eyes

Feith Stuart is a poet, editor and web designer who writes for the sheer joy of stringing words together like pearls. She has placed in the Net Poetry and Arts Competition twice, IBPC once, and has been published in Adagio Verse Quarterly, The Baroque Review, Reconnaître, and other online magazines. She served on the board of editors for Quills Poetry Magazine for their Autumn 2004 edition, and produces her own concern, SaucyVox(Dot)Com. She is 36 and lives in Kitchener, Ontario, with her partner, four children and too many cats. Feith has been writing since 1998.



Gary Blankenship
When the Owls Are Silenced

The time is past for whimsy.
Spiders, owls, and candles
(lit or snuffed) have had their day;
and it is not this century.
It may not have been the last;
when spiders still spun in our attics,
owls voiced their complaints at dusk,
and candles showed us the way
up (or down) the back stairs.

The new directive:

Images used in decades past
(or even yesterday),
may not be used today.
Label them cliché, old-fashioned,
passé; leave them in old chests
with words of love
and unrequited passion.

But there is really nothing new
under the sun (you may grimace here):
Spiders do weave webs,
owls do answer the call of crows,
and candles may be burnt
until the chimney is blackened
and houses lie in ruins.

Gary Blankenship is a retired financial manager whose avocation is writing poetry. His work has appeared in several e-zines and a few paper magazines in the USA and other countries. He edited the poetry pages of Writer's Hood, an e-zine, for three years. Publisher of MindFire Renewed, a world-wide literary e-zine. He wonders if he is an editor with a poet rattling around inside or a poet with an editor trying to get out. He has taught, moderated, judged and otherwise likely screwed up his brother and sister poets.

Jim Bennett

the man who walked through walls as if they were not there

there was a man who used
to walk through walls
as if they were not there
he would stand facing a wall
ask everyone to shut their eyes
while he focused on it,
meditated, prayed

in a few moments
he would scream
the watchers eyes
would snap open
but he would be gone
they would find him
in the next corridor
standing bent over
hands resting on his knees
while he fought for the breath
that had been torn from him
as he had walked
through the wall

some people said
he hadn't done it
that it was a trick
but what do they know



Jim Bennett lives near Liverpool in the UK. His most recent collection of poetry is "The Man Who Tried to Hug Clouds" for Bluechrome Publishing (2004). Jim is widely published and teaches Creative writing at the University of Liverpool. He is managing editor of the internet site poetrykit.org. In November 2004 he performed for HRH Prince Edward as part of the Prince's visit to Liverpool. And in December 2004 won the award for Individual Performer at DaDaFest in Liverpool for the second year.



Mo Swanson
so quiet

so quiet
I heard the escape of steam before the old kettle whistled.
so quiet
I read your dreams as they raced through your resting head.
so quiet
I smelled yesterday's forbidden cigarette.
so quiet
I tasted her cheap perfume on my pillow.
so quiet
I felt the stab of my heart before you said good-by.

Mo Swanson is a fourth grade teacher in Warwick, RI. She loves sharing her love of poetry with her students, and continues to learn more from them.

Sabyasachi Nag

Mamuda's fries

On his way from work he stops by Mamuda's
big black pan on the low stove by Bondel Gate,
to watch his sieve move like a snake
frying the Mamuda fries.

The batter sings like the rest of his walk.
At the doorsteps he lets his briefcase
slip into the wife's extended hand
as if it was hers, borrowed for the day.

By the time he is washed, the children are on the
floor,
cross-legged, waiting, over little brass bowls
of rice flakes. When fries come,
the day's story rolls in,
like the just-greased wheels of ritual.



** First published in Saucy Vox (Dot) Com, summer of 2003*

Sachi Nag immigrated to Canada from Calcutta, India, because of his fondness for maple syrup and snow. He lives near the Credit River in Mississauga, Ontario with his wife and son. He has been writing poetry for many years in seclusion. Some of his work has been published on the web and in print. He works in human resources.

Steve Williams
Complexity of Taste

Slip a sliver of dark chocolate onto tongue,
do not chew. We push morsels against
our cavity roofs, suck the sugar melt.

The bitter need trickles back, remembers
the cocoa bean, aroma of exotic coffee.
Saliva gathers on the tongue, asks for more.

Piquancy spreads above my teeth, wafts
into my throat, up the back of smell:
cloying compulsion. She reclines

over a chocolate mound, ribs rise
with her spine. Pour Shiraz into the black of her.
I savor mouthfuls of chocolate,

drool the wine into a pool, submerge her navel,
mingle the harvest of skin, sting, sugar, surprise:
tiny hairs tickle the tip of my tongue.

Beneath her, the confection melts, mixes,
ferments into rhythm oil: primitive pounding
of Delta Blues. We are found crying names

of unknown spirits, thrashing in string
bass vibrations. Our throats growl past
ursine tongues, bodies smeared in petroglyphs

of the hunt for instinct, the regression
to wanton: We are cross-legged figures
in a white room, eyelids closed, meditating



Steve Williams lives in Portland with a lovely woman who writes and edits much better than he, though she won't admit it. He has had work in Rattlesnake Review, Stirring, Amaze, Brevities, etc.

Guy Kettelhack
Texture



I wonder if a part of what grows as
one ages isn't the capacity to sift
experience through fingers 'til one
aspect or another of it ripples over skin
and sticks: settles and abides while
all the rest slides off. Palpably to feel
a texture fall into a palm and tickle

thumbs: magnetically attract those
hums and strands the soul demands:
call out to the Universe until precisely
what we need of it drops smack into
the middle of a hand. Reverse your
fist and open it and close your eyes
to see if you can feel what lands.

Guy Kettelhack is the author or coauthor of more than 30 nonfiction books. His poetry has been featured in Outstretch, Van Gogh's Ear, Melic Review, New Pleiades, Malleable Jangle, Triplopia (in whose July 2004 "laughter contest" his poem "Log On" won first prize), David Taub e-motion ("Harp Strings" was selected to be read as their monthly selection for Aug. 2004), Poetry Life & Times (where he has been a featured poet twice - June and August 2004), Poetry in Emotion (autumn 2004) and Das Alchymist Poetry Review (March 2005). Two of his poems placed in IBPC competitions in 2004. His poem "Alter Ego" was selected as a quarterfinalist in the Lyric Recovery competition in March 2004. He won the Margaret Reid Poetry Prize for Traditional Verse in November 2004. Approximately 20 of his poems will appear in the New Pleiades Anthology of 2005. He lives in NYC.

Fred Longworth
Making The Best Of A Little Prick

You're threading a needle
outside on a moonless night

in a gale wind, with shaky
frostbitten hands

and thread
a size too large for the eyelet -

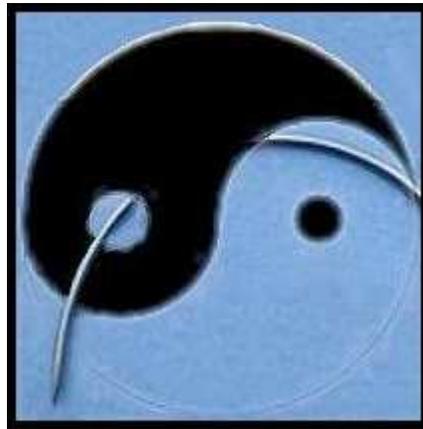
when suddenly
you prick your finger.

Blood spurts all over
your new white tuxedo.

Half your mind curses
your clumsiness,

while the second half
forgives the needle.

It's the third half
that keeps on threading.



Ink from Fred's pen has recently stained, or is threatening to stain, the following innocent pieces of on-line or literal paper: miller's pond, Poetic Voices, Pudding Magazine, Pearl, California Quarterly, Rattapallax, many incarnations of the Worm, Folly, kaleidowhirl, Melic Review, MiPo and Spillway. A San Diego resident, he makes his living restoring vintage audio components.

Bernard Henrie Soundtrack

The random colors of so much moon
leave me feeling careless and expansive.

Moonlight asks for nothing, gives even less.
Tonight I tell stories, none of them rehearsed.

Soft putter of fishing boats one mile or more
from shore. Soundtrack, volume turned low.

John, Fisher of Men, my church intones,
what would John say of last year's bent hopes?

The dented marriage, the malaise covering work.
The gallant dead now free to gallop in the clouds.

Weight I'm still meaning to take off. Apologies
all around like Diamond Jim buying drinks.

Relentless encroachment of age and serial doubt.
Faith on the ventilator, a declared basket case.

Intensive Care all year. Bandages and wounds.
Invisible, self inflicted, I attribute nothing to you.

Slammed doors and words, spilled cooking pots
and worse. Opportunities bartered and lost.

Cosmic reproach, rolled up sleeves, new start.
The boat lists to port and already springing leaks.

The heart takes a journey, but no return flight.
Friends, food and work. Homely menu for life.

The moon sleeps on the patched boat house,
sleeps on the choppy waves of the fishing lake.

The moon is on the trellis, the phlox and geese.
The moon covers me and gratefully I sleep.



Bernard Henrie lives alone on the edge of the Mojave Desert. For 15 years he worked at the street level for social justice. He now writes for an environmental magazine where he keeps the faith, rarely misses a foreign film and secretly dreams of doing standup at the local comedy store. He can't dance, fix the automobile or sing in tune. Despite these serious defects he asks for your fellowship and would like to see your next poem.

M. A. Griffiths
Last Orders - The Movie

I'm ordering a Hollywood decline.
The symptoms are ideal: not being sick,
the application of a pale lip slick,
some floaty scarves, a duty to recline
against silk pillows being brave, while friends
and family troop in with gifts and flowers
and wet-eyed memories of golden hours -
stock shots of surf and seabirds when it ends.

Spare me the vulgar things, like diarrhoea,
depression, pain; they're for the hoi polloi.
A dying will seems such a good idea.
I want a starry close, so please employ
soft-focus, and cue choirs' Ave Maria,
then fade me out with Ludwig's Ode to Joy.

** First published in WORM 33*



M. A. Griffiths makes her home in Dorset, England. Affectionately known around the net as Maz, she's a persistent voice in the advancement of internet poetry workshops. Maz is the editor of the popular e-zine, WORM.

Meg Porter

Sea of Changes

When the Syrians disembarked from our planet a few months ago, I took it upon myself to visit a few of their installations I was so used to walking by with my eyes cast down. One in particular which sits next door to the lovely Mrs. Amar's house (she is a widow with 27 cats, two dogs (one, a gigantic Russian breed and very kind), some fowl and one Bengali male helper) is worth noting. It is the place I realized that there is more than one way of seeing things. Of course, I was convinced of this before that fateful day but I didn't really believe it myself. My senses proved otherwise. We must trust those senses. And then we turn our head or stand on a different knoll, the sun is low on the horizon casting certain shadows, or it is noon and there are none at all. So we change our minds and realize our senses can't even be trusted! Nothing is as it seems yet it is, as it is, when we are there.

I usually view Beirut proper from a southerly direction with the northern line of sight ending in a steamy metropolis, full of human activity that I somehow know is there even though I can't see it from such a great distance. Between that view and myself is the giant sandy looking tarmac of modern Phoenician departure. It is new and within it is the memory of the old, the airport in which every corner praised Hafaz Assad and where I once spent one interminable day waiting for a flight back home. Home was something far more foreign than even this place. Home was Riyadh, a dizzy semi-circular void of streets without names and people who dressed uncannily the same, day after day after day. They dressed in reference to the Bible and all the other ancient things that we sometimes abhor and sometimes revere.

To the south of course, is the south. It appears to be a straight line from the metropolis, completely 180 degrees in the other direction, a direction that I often go when seeking peace in the form of a house in a rural area with a view into modern Israel and back into a medieval castle. I'm almost certain sometimes, that there I can see serfs burning their garbage and the jackals carrying off bones and refuse from the day into their sullied dens.

Behind me is nothing in particular, just a bunch of hills and somewhere even behind that is Syria and behind that, something else too. I don't really know and like the old cave, I only contemplate my shadow not what actually makes it.

In front of me is the sea. Always the sea, always changing.

At the deserted Syrian installation near Mrs. Amar's house however, I realize that everything is generally in a different order. Roads that aren't parallel when they are driven on become twins with roads that ought not to be paired with the others because they course by entirely different realities. The freeway with its locked-in walls where one is isolated in a steady stream of coming and going. It runs alongside a brutal and poorly kept street that harbors fruit vendors and adolescent boys standing about and looking for something to do. The tarmac is far less significant in comparison and in that view.

The southern direction from the top of that knoll, standing just on the edge of a empty foxhole (which is held together by an old tire from a car) is no longer "to the south" and is no longer straight at all. It curves around behind me there, like a lengthy arm on the shoulder of a friend or a lover's around the waist of a lover. So it is, beside me and behind me.

In this orientation, the world is quite circular and the sea, although not directly in front of me is still the sea. The sea without direction, the sea of all changes. The sea which casts no shadow on anything at all but remains forever as it is without us knowing.

Meg Porter lives with her family in Lebanon and has been a participant in a number of poetry boards over the years.

C. E. Chaffin
Bobo the Clown

His silly yellow vest, bowtie,
suspenders, polka dots
and big red nose
dared me to knock him down
until his sand-filled shoes faced up.

Blam, blam! He fell,
neither bloodied nor unbowed,
rose with a goofy grin
then rocked a bit and settled
for another sucker punch.

Much like the bird that dips
into the water glass
and perpetually sips,
he reveled in repetition
above mere competition.

Ultimate pacifist,
he smiled as if to say:
"Go on, have at me,
I'm your dad, your priest,
your principal, your older
brother. Smack me again!"

And if he sprung a leak
I healed him with duct tape.
Each strip became a medal
for his mindless bravery.

But when his thin seams split
and duct tape could no longer
stanch the bleeding air,
he crumpled, a deflated pie,
motley features shrunk
into a blue pancake of plastic
filled with sand.

C.E. Chaffin edits The Melic Review (www.melicreview.com) and tutors aspiring poets online (a course description may be obtained from a link on Melic's home page). He has been widely published on the web and in print-- in everything from The Alaska Quarterly Review to Zuzu's Petals. He's been a frequent featured poet in magazines, most recently in Tryst, though his literary criticism generates more mail. His current ambition is to write pulp fiction for money.

Books: Elementary (poems), Edwin Mellen Press, 1997; The Best of Melic: Three Years Online (ed.), 2002. A graduate of UCLA and retired family physician, Dr. Chaffin lives in Mexico but hopes to soon move back to his native state, California, despite its attendant insanity, since he misses his daughters and grandson. Shoe size same as mouth. He may be reached at cechaffin@hotmail.com (no spam, please.)



Photograph courtesy [Philip Greenspun](#)

Christopher T. George
The Spy as the Letter "S"

Celui-là ne mérite pas d'être sur terre, O Lucifer!

Something familiar about the man who's following you
along the Paris street. Maybe his two-tone shoes?
The angle of his derby? The simple chime of her laughter
always charmed you and the way her perfume lingered in the bed.
She called you her "Little Spook." You recall the cool way
she sipped her Margarita, how her long fingers wrapped round
the stem of her glass, . . . the curve of her back, her inverted nipples.

The old man on the bench in the Tuileries Gardens chucks a crust
from his baguette to the squabbling pigeons.
The boy in a sailor's suit pushes a red-sailed boat out
into the pond. The old fellow never looks over his horn rims
at you, but you are joined to him like a Siamese twin.
With a sleight of hand, he leaves his newspaper
on the bench, a continuum of motion,
devastating as a microdot left in a cleft tree,
the fall of the West in the palm of a hand.

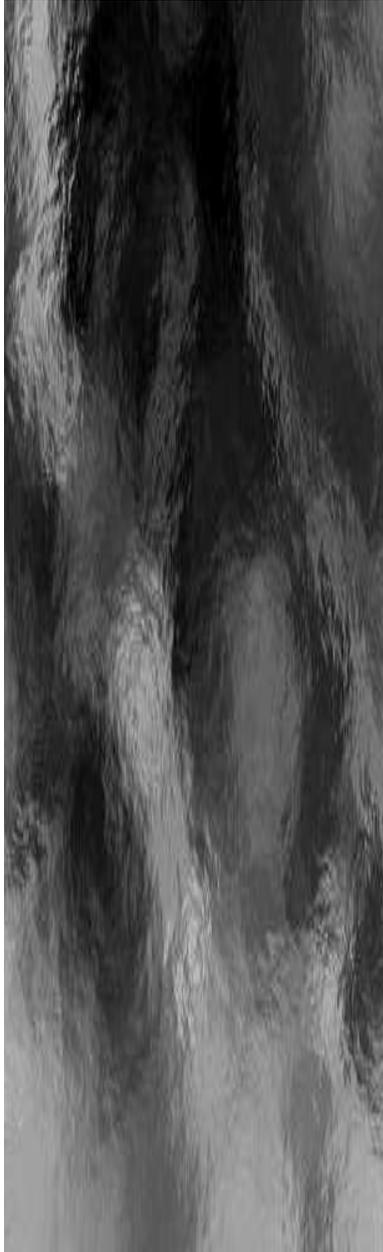
She said, "You remind me of an unlucky number.
Will you survive the year, will you share my bed again?"
Her laughter bit into your soul like ground glass.
You slapped her across the face, exited into the night.

Now the salt air stings your eyes as you await the ferry
to take you across the straits, the next step in your journey.
You have no country, no place to call your home, an enemy
to either side. The ferryman smiles gap-toothed, "Zero hour
is almost here, sir." You see the ferry push the foam before it,
cigarette dangling on your lip. You wish you had died back then,
in the Paris sewers, but somehow you keep running through the shit
looking for a manhole to escape to the street and melt into the crowd

Christopher T. George is the editor of Desert Moon Review. Born in Liverpool, England, in 1948, he now resides in Baltimore, Maryland, USA, with his wife Donna and two cats. He has his own poetry site at <http://chrisgeorge.netpublish.net/index.htm>

Tracy Estes

Mr. Gray, by the Yard



The canvas of my yard serves for my character's billboard - others draw the assumptions I use to further my social status.

The ritual of drawing a weapon from the armory of my shed, toiling till sundown etches my figure into the subconscious

of the area. They acknowledge me with toots on horns, waves and the occasional thumbs up. Each gesture boosts self-esteem.

Recognition seesaws close to an addiction. After reverently moving reel mower and broadcaster aside, I break out the tool

for today- a sharpened dowel rod. I'd noticed an incursion of mole tunnels from the neighbor's yard yesterday. To mask

the scent of humanity, I slip on disposable gloves, take a pack of watermelon bubblegum from my pocket. The concept is simple-

the fruity gum gets eaten and the moles' systems won't pass it. As they keep feeding, their stomachs swell until they explode.

All the stink and mess stays buried. On my knees, prepared to drop in the first piece of gum, a solitary BEEP from a passing car

elicits a smile. I bring my eyes up along with the beginnings of a wave that freezes mid-motion when I see who's honking.

The tinted window slides down to allow an alabaster hand encased in a glaring white cuff and dark suit jacket to extend

from the invisible interior of a hearse. A "gotcha" motion with a thumb and finger gun dissolves into a waggle of wrist.

The hand retracts, the window slips back, the car proceeds out of the neighborhood. I back away from the fence line,

continue to poke holes into all tunnels I find and drop in small chunks of watermelon-flavored death. I am vigilant

for crabgrass and make a mental note to ask the wife when the mortician got a new car. I had thought his was white.

Tracy Estes is the Associate Editor of Desert Moon Review. He began his love affair with the written word at the age of seven, and many decades later is still a loyal worshiper. He is husband to Sandy (who knows about the affair) and father to Zack and Chelsea. He serves as the Inter-board Poetry Competition (IBPC) editor at Desert Moon. He is forced to write every day by a pissed-off muse with a gun.



Jim Corner
Scene Often Missed, Nevertheless the Metaphor

Coon Bluff is green on New Year's Day;
there is a backwash in the Verde,
mostly paper cups, dingy unknown scraps.

A white heron stalks the shoreline,
three more in the Palo Verde
north of the Salt.

One mutant blue perches near a female white,
only visible in the glasses, faithful
to his bird of choice.

I wonder about my mate sitting
on the graying stump, eyes
intently following a sinister beetle

crossing the cracks on the boulder
before her, like an armored car
over rifts in the desert.

Jim Corner is owner and Publisher of Desert Moon Review: an interactive poetry site and e-zine established in 2001. He is an M.A. Graduate from University of Tulsa, Oklahoma (one of the top 100 universities in the U.S.A). He is published in a number of e-zines, newspapers, faith websites and journals. His latest publication is in Poetry Kit and has an upcoming poem in Disciple World. Jim lives in Mesa, Arizona with his wife Kathy and their dobie-mix, Trudy.

Sarah Sloat

Snow Path

New year's litter of colored paper,
nothing will be remembered right.
Bare branches splay
against the sky like mindless scribble.

The best season is silence.
Wool and cross-stitch of frost,
snow --

in their fretwork,
every parting lip is closed.

Fir-circled field,
untrodden path,
this morning I'm first to find it.

I've forgotten what I wished for;
perhaps it has come quietly.



** Snow Path was first published in WORM 33.*

Sarah Sloat is a Poetry Monitor at the Desert Moon Review. She grew up in New Jersey, where she attended Rutgers and Drew University. She now lives in Frankfurt, Germany with her husband and two children. Most of her poems are written at her dining room table.



Photograph courtesy Philip Greenspun

Barbara Ostrander **Untitled**

How beautiful is the bare winter branch
silhouetted against the deepening night sky.
Pencil drawn, thicker branches divide to
smaller limbs, finally extend fingers of twigs
spread open to the night.

How beautiful is the winter soul at rest,
the man who stands naked and at peace.

Tonight the moon slips past clouds.
Drops of water rest like sleeping stars
grace the end of each branch with a tiny tear.
A crown of crystal thorns,
the hope of things to come.

Barbara Ostrander is an Advisor to the Desert Moon Review. She grew up, first in Bangladesh, then East Africa, which she actually calls home. She teases her friends that she is the true African American though her skin is white. She married young, had 4 children, and it wasn't until the Rwandan Civil War in '94 and a month at the refugee camps that she came home and finished her nursing degree. She is now an ICU nurse, involved with international medical crisis relief.

Barbara writes poetry and nonfiction. Her voice comes from personal experience. She has had some success with publishing, though she rarely submits her work.

Yolanda Calderon-Horn
Fall Break

Rain has leveled off and
the ground is certifiably spongy.
The sky is Goya blue with
tawny borders, as if on gallery exhibit.
Light tires quicker everyday.

The rest of the country will
soon face cooler winds.
Is it warm in the peripheral world?
In the south, the temperature is
frizzy hot. You may recall when

I was a billboard buzzing
in self-interest: escape to paradise.
But caution lights in my head
are softening.
I want to ask you these sorts:

Are you getting along?
See, the electrical wire is tripping.
I recall your hands clumped
with battles won, you would slip
them in my pockets as vouchers

to dismiss reservations.
Our tempest swallowed
the ink of cultural margins.
We stood stark and silent
while nuts and bolts wheeled.

I was my best when
centered in your eyes:
prisms no mirror could contain.
These days I'm a ghost in human drag
while memory burns the whiskey.

Born in Chicago in the early 60's, Yolanda grew up with a diverse community of churchgoers and street gangs. Much of it has influence on the way she views the world. Yolanda is currently living in central Florida with her family. She spends a considerable amount of time jotting bits of poems on yellow sticky notes and non-paper surfaces. Her work has appeared in an online women's magazine: Whispers. She is a Poetry Monitor at the Desert Moon Review.



Mustansir Dalvi

My room

I.
The fifteenth coat of gold
on the piece of granite satisfies me.
It is done, put in place.

The concrete tray has seven
hundred and seventy eight stones.
I add this last one.

This stone is the largest.
I call it my epitaph. The inscription,
fifteen patches of gold
made one.

I place the stone among the others.
As the spot hits off
the gold, the epitaph glows,
but not embarrassingly so.

The stones are keys.
Every stone tells of where I picked it,
never more than one from one place.
Here is my autobiography.

Someday, when they break the front door down,
because I have not opened it
for a month, they will find me here.
My bones with my stones.

My epitaph will flash
over my fallen self messages
in golden Morse:
Look upon the events of my life.

II.

I sleep on a sea
of ochre carpets, stretched taut,
spread wall to wall.

They press into my skin
marks that ripple and wave.
Sometimes, I twist and turn.
The ripples crosshatch.

All the carpets end at walls.
All the walls are plastered in cow dung.
They are cool, a deeper shade of ochre.
You can rest against them,

or against one of the black pillows,
which match the colour of the spot
that throws light on my stones.

The light source is warm.
You can read by it. Or play music.
Or listen. Or make love.

The walls are soft to touch.
You can still see marks left
by bristles of the wet brush.
This is the confirmation of the wall

when it dried, its final words.
I read them, over and over.
The walls dampen sounds to whispers.
Here we rarely speak.

III.

There are no greens in my room.
If you want any,
you must come dressed in green.
Then the room welcomes you.
So do I. You go well with the stones.

Or you can open a window.

My room has one window.
It is narrow and it is tall,
divided four ways by sashes.
Outside, you can see half a tree.

You get four views of half a tree.
You can look at them together,
or one by one. They don't object.

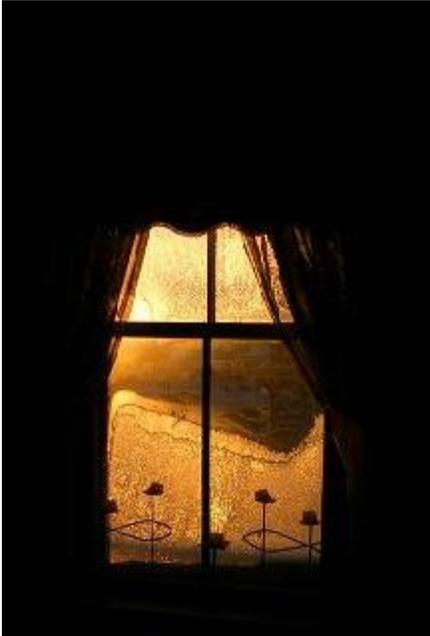
Sometimes, the branches swing.
I can't hear sounds outside.
I play music in time
with the dipping of branches.
It cleans my room of clutter.

IV.

My window faces east.
That is not my doing.

Each morning the sun comes through.
Four rays enter the room.
The fourth reflects off the patch of gold,
the one on my epitaph.
This gently wakes me.
My epitaph has also become my alarm clock.

Mustansir Dalvi edits this issue of the Crescent Moon Journal and is Associate Editor of the Desert Moon Review. He is an architect and Professor of Architecture in Bombay, India.



Marie Gail Stratford
Rescuing the Mad Woman

faint indignant smell of sour milk
tintinabulation of molecules assault her olfactory

nerve
intense rays of red and blue bombard her eyes
yellow comes screaming off the walls
to render her defenseless
blundering, bumbling
weak of mind

till clarity taps against the glass
behind the drapes she sweeps away
to face the bluster of a January morn
composed, keen
sound of mind

unfastening the lock she opens the window
prepared to defy the winds of faulty reason

Marie Gail Stratford is the newest Poetry Monitor on Desert Moon Review. She is a free-lance writer, tutor, and bookseller who resides in the Kansas City area. Her poems have appeared in several anthologies.

Al Ferber
Three Years Since
(for my father)

Has life with us become an echo
in that chamber
just beyond your ear's reach?

Do you recede so quickly
into time that the words
I send, beyond the speed
of wind, can never catch you
in a state of momentary rest?
I do not know the shape,
the where of your dominion;
yet I speak to you each night,
as if death had not the power
to break the bond between us.

Al Ferber was born in 1946 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He has worked as a teacher, carpet installer, and in various other blue collar jobs, government employment and training program executive director, Vietnam Vets Outreach Program Director, restaurant manager & bartender. He currently works as a certified addictions counselor, and lives in Bensalem, PA, with his wife Cathi and their three cats.

Carl Bryant

Lycanthrope Love Song

A wolf moon is rising again
calling out to places feared by men
in a hypnotic voice I must resist
to the nighttime sky I shake my fist
twisting... straining... draining...
it leaves a primal thing finally remaining
reveling wild free and immune
in perfect worship to the moon

** For LCJr, who held my werechild
within.*

Carl Bryant is the general manager of a small firm specializing in factory automation. Although he's published articles in technical magazines and has authored several instruction manuals, this is his first poetry publication. He is the winner of the coveted "World's Greatest Dad" cup for 12 consecutive years. He makes his home in Athens, GA, with his wife Brenda, their four children, two dogs, two cats, and a gerbil. Carl serves as webmaster for the Desert Moon Review.

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Comments on this issue are welcomed and will be forwarded to the poets or photographers concerned. E-mail comments to: comments@desertmoonreview.com

The Crescent Moon Journal is a quarterly publication of the Desert Moon Review.