



JUNE 2020 NEWSLETTER

Website address: www.voicesisrael.com

Amuta No. 58-019-703-6

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear All,

This month, still in the throes of Corona lockdown, most of our groups met by Zoom; Haifa preferred email, circulating poems and comments on them via a distribution list and voting via WhatsApp. While this method turned out to be more time-intensive than a single meeting, it did enable people to consider everyone's poems more thoroughly and make more helpful comments than usual. The Upper Galilee group's monthly "Formal Elements in Poetry" class, taught by Reuven Goldfarb, was also held via Zoom, for the second month running. Congratulations to Reuven, to the local coordinators, and to all our members for managing to keep activities going during this difficult time.

Our Annual General Meeting, already two months overdue, was similarly held by Zoom, on May 26th. Susan Olsburgh, our outgoing President, and Linda Suchy, our Secretary, were efficient co-hosts orchestrating this technological venture. Twenty-seven people attended, including two members from the United States – one of the few bonuses of holding a virtual AGM. There was lively discussion of the resolutions proposed. As usual, our indefatigable secretary Linda recorded the proceedings and decisions for the minutes.

At the AGM we said farewell to two key officeholders: Susan Olsburgh, who stepped down after completing five energetic years as Voices President; and Susan Rosenberg, our long-term Membership Coordinator, who decided that at the age of 96 it really was time to retire! We showed our appreciation and heartfelt thanks to both of them with a Steimatsky's gift certificate and a bouquet of flowers. (We had hoped to present these in person at the AGM, but there is a limit to what Zoom can do, so they were delivered to their homes instead).

Judy Koren was elected our new President – hello to all our members! Susan Olsburgh has left me a very large pair of shoes to step into and I hope to be equal to the task. We also welcomed Edit Gavriely who was elected the new Membership Coordinator. And once again, the formal agenda of the AGM was followed by an enjoyable Open Mike session at which members read their poems.

We still need to present the Reuben Rose 2019 awards and the first Bar Sagi awards. We hope that by the fall, life will be back to normal, and are planning a joint Anthology launch and dual awards presentation later this year. But regarding the biennial Netanya Poetry By The Sea workshop: rather than rescheduling it for late fall or winter, it seems better to just skip this year and hold it in the usual month – May – in 2021.

Meanwhile, to all our poets: if the lockdown has given you time to submit poems for publication and you are wondering where to submit – remember to check the Literary Magazines section of the website's "Useful Links" And do notify Linda Suchy of acceptances and publications so that she can record your successes in the Newsletter!

Take care and stay safe!
With best wishes,

Judy

Judy Koren, President, Voices Israel



**JUNE 2020
MEETING DATES, TIMES AND PLACES**

<p>HAIFA MEETING VIA ZOOM SUNDAY, JUNE 21 AT 7:30 PM GUESTS WELCOME CONTACT WENDY FOR DETAILS</p> <p>Coordinator: Wendy Blumfield Tel: 04-837-6820 Mobile: 054-524-0412 wendyb@netvision.net.il</p>	<p>TEL AVIV MEETING VIA ZOOM TUESDAY, JUNE 23 AT 7:30 PM</p> <p>Coordinator: Mark Levinson Mobile: 054-444-8438 nosnivel@netvision.net.il</p>	<p>JERUSALEM MEETING VIA ZOOM TUESDAY, JUNE 16 AT 6:00 PM</p> <p>Coordinator: Avril Meallem Tel: 02-567-0998 aemeallem@gmail.com</p>	<p>UPPER GALILEE MEETING VIA ZOOM WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10 AT 5-7 PM</p> <p>GUESTS WELCOME Call 04-697-4105 or write poetsprogress@gmail.com to for a link & guidelines.</p> <p>Coordinator: Reuven Goldfarb Tel: 04-6974105 Mobile: 058-414-0262 poetsprogress@gmail.com</p>
<p>BET SHEMESH / MODIIN NO MEETINGS PLANNED</p>	<p>NETANYA & SHARON MEETING VIA ZOOM MONDAY, JUNE 29 AT 7:30PM</p> <p>Coordinator: Susan Olsburgh Tel: 074-704-2736 olsburgh.susan@gmail.com</p>	<p>WESTERN GALILEE MEETING VIA ZOOM SUNDAY, JUNE 21 AT 7:30 PM</p> <p>Coordinator: Phyllsie Gross Tel: 052-874-6880 phyllsie@hotmail.com</p>	<p>LONDON UK FOR INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT ESTHER.</p> <p>Coordinator: Esther Lipton eblipton@talk21.com</p>
<p>GUSH ETZION PLEASE CONTACT MINDY IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN THE GROUP RE-STARTING.</p> <p>Coordinator: Mindy Aber Barad Tel: 05-4667936 maber4kids@yahoo.com</p>	<p>SOUTHERN FOR INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT MIRIAM</p> <p>Coordinator: Miriam Green Tel: 05-7388640 miriamsgreen@gmail.com</p>	<p>ASHKELON FOR INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT CHAIM</p> <p>Coordinator: Chaim Bezalel Mobile: 054-674-5900 bezalel.levy@gmail.com</p>	<p>BERLIN, GERMANY FOR INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT BRITTA.</p> <p>Coordinator: Britta R. Kollberg brkollberg@yahoo.de</p>

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CALLS FOR SUBMISSIONS

Submissions open – deadline August 31, 2020. See <https://aestheticamagazine.com/>

The **Aesthetica Creative Writing Award** is an international literary prize that is a hotbed for new talent in **Poetry** and **Short Fiction**. Now in its 14th year, the Prize supports both emerging and established writers. By entering, writers can showcase their work to key industry figures and organisations including **The Poetry Society, Granta, VINTAGE** and more. Winners are selected for both categories and awarded with £1,000. Publication within the *Aesthetica Creative Writing Anthology*, is also awarded to a further 60 writers whose works are highly commended. Aesthetica is proud to champion new writing talent and supports its writing alumni beyond the Prize, offering print and digital publicity and continued exposure across our channels.

Winning Writers is calling for submissions through membership in FanStory. Membership is \$9.95 a month. FanStory regularly sends information on all the writing contests available some with deadlines clear to the end of 2020. Here is a link to their website: <https://www.fanstory.com/index1n.jsp>

Winning Writers is offering total prizes of \$12,500 to the winner of the North Street Book Prize for self-published books in several categories, including poetry **Deadline June 30, 2020**. Winning Writers has also published a comprehensive list of the best free literary contests available to writers. See [Winning Writers](#)

Devour Art & Lit Canada is calling for Panku Poem Submissions for a future book: "In These Strange Pandemic Days." Only uplifting, fun, light, amusing and/or entertaining pandemic poems in the form of a Panku will be accepted. No deadline indicated. Just send in your poems ASAP to pankupoems@gmail.com. See guidelines at [pp. 124-125 of Issue 007 of Devour: Art & Lit Canada Panku Issue](#).

Fish Publishing has announced their "Lockdown Prize." The theme is Coronavirus (the writer's response to the strange times of 2020). **Deadline: June 15, 2020**. For guidelines, click the following link: <https://www.fishpublishing.com/competition/the-lockdown-prize/>.

Poetica Publishing has announced their call for submissions to the **2020 Mizmor Poetry Anthology**. **Deadline is August 15**. The Theme: Braving the Spiritual Wilderness. Editors are looking for poems reflecting on the spiritual connection between human beings, nature and the environment." [Guidelines](#)

Inner Child Press requests submissions for their next anthology *The Heart of a Poet*. **Deadline June 30, 2020** <http://www.innerchildpress.com/now-open-4-submission.php>

Palette Poetry is accepting submissions for the <https://www.palettepoetry.com/current-contest/>. Winning poet receives \$3,000 and publication on Palette Poetry. Second and third place will win \$300 and \$200 respectively, as well as publication. **Deadline is June 14**. through Submittable.

Blue Light Press has several competitions available as well as workshops and classes. Go to <http://bluelightpress.com/> to read about the possibilities they offer to poets.



VOICES ISRAEL GROUP OF POETS IN ENGLISH



CONGRATULATIONS

To – **Judith R. Robinson**, who was named Featured Poet in the current issue of PoetryMagazine.com. See http://www.poetrymagazine.com/poetry_magazine_zawinski_judith_r_robinson.html

To – **Stanley Barkan, Helen Bar-Lev, Lidia Chiarelli, and Carolyn Mary Kleefeld**, whose poems and/or paintings have been published in the 2020 Anthology of Immagine & Poesia. See [Immagine & Poesia 2020 Anthology](#)

To – **Ruth Fogelman** whose latest three poems, "Jerusalem's Air," "City of Dreamers and Dreams" and "Precious City" have been published in The Deronda Review in honor of Jerusalem Day.

To – **Pesach Rotem**, whose poem "A Thorough Scrubbing" was published in *Headline Poetry & Press* at <https://headlinepoetryandpress.com/2020/05/05/rx-poetry-a-thorough-scrubbing-by-pesach-rotem/>.

To – **Channah Moshe**, who has two poems published in Prosopisia "Agam Hachoula" and "Ahead."

To – **Ada Aharoni**, whose poem "Time in Abadan" and a story "Nona Zina's Time" about "The Second Exodus of the Jews from Egypt" in the mid-20th Century, have been published in the new ARC Magazine, number 22, published by IAWE - Israeli Association of Writers in English.

To – **Helen Bar-Lev**, whose Poems of Love and Loss, "Now or Before or Soon" and "Quickly" have been published in the Reiter's Block magazine dated April 21, 2020.

To – **Shoshana Kent**, who has published her first book through Amazon (her second to date as she self-published a history of a Jewish day school in Vancouver, BC, Canada years ago). It is an illustrated poem called "I Don't Know Age" and it is for children as well as adults. Here are the links for the USA and Canada. Check [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) or [Amazon.ca](https://www.amazon.ca) for purchasing possibilities.

To – **Esther Berlot**, whose memoir chap book "Changing Conversations" was published as a new voice in poetry by Moonstone Press in Philadelphia. Her Chapbook lists at \$10.00 which includes shipping and can be ordered directly from Esther for no shipping cost. Or, if ordered through Moonstone Press there is a \$4.00 shipping charge.

To – **Michael Stone**, whose poem "Beauty Unrolling" has been published in the Spring – 2020 issue of [The Avocet, A Journal of Nature Poetry](#).



VOICES ISRAEL GROUP OF POETS IN ENGLISH



To – **Immanuel Suttner**, who has launched his second collection of poetry, “Ripening” (Quartz Press). With several poems having Jewish or Israeli themes. Available for purchase from quartzpressbooks@gmail.com. Or you can order from Immanuel (manosuttner@gmail.com) for mailing to Israel for \$25.00 including postage and packaging. His previous collection is “Hidden and Revealed.”

SPECIAL CONGRATULATIONS

To – **Reuven Goldfarb** on celebrating his 75th birthday. Until 120 in good health!!
Happy Birthday Reuven!

SUSAN OLSBURGH PRESENTS THE RESULTS FROM THE PAULINE POEM CHALLENGE IN OUR MAY 2020 NEWSLETTER (THANK YOU SUSAN!)

Joint 1st prize Phella Hirschson and Judy Koren both suggesting "until this lockdown ends" as a better ending to the poem.

Joint 2nd prizes Miriam Webber and Don Mulcahy
Congratulatory cards and puzzle emailed to the winners.

If you enjoyed that challenge, **Miriam Webber** has suggested the following puzzles to keep your mind occupied during lockdown.

1. How many words can you make out of the word "CORONAVIRUS" using at least three letters, no capitals, no foreign words and no dictionary. Plurals are permitted.
2. Write a poem using only the nine letters in the word "CORONAVIRUS" - as many times as you like. **HAVE FUN!!** ??????

CLASS ANNOUNCEMENT FROM REUVEN GOLDFARB

FORMAL STRUCTURES IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE POETRY

My next class in the ongoing series on Formal Elements in English Language Poetry will occur on **Wednesday, June 24, from 5-7 pm on Zoom**. The focus in this session will be, "The Soliloquy and the Dramatic Monologue in Shakespeare, Tennyson, and Browning." Please notify me of your interest in attending at least a week in advance so that I may send you electronic copies of the selections early enough for you to absorb them before we meet online. Anyone wishing to attend may contact me for an invitation as well as for copies of the poems, via poetsprogress@gmail.com or 04-697-4105.



GROUP POETRY SELECTIONS

I WEEP

They struggle to breathe
In their isolated rooms
And I weep
I mourn the procession
Of coffins in Italy and Spain
I weep as I remember
Waking from an operation
And struggling for breath
And how close I was to death

They struggle to breathe
And I weep
Others struggle to help them
And sweat under masks
Under choking robes,

In exhaustion
And I weep
Tears of admiration
Touched, moved
I weep in gratitude

I mourn
The world that was
And the world
That will be
I weep
Seeing the purification
The earth's recuperation
I weep in gratitude

Naomi Yalin, Haifa group

Exercising at the Beach

Today,
as in the good old days,
we trot and frolic by the sea.
We wave to the waves of time
that come and go
splashing that today
is the promised tomorrow
that we dreamed brighter shall be.

Hayim Abramson, Jerusalem selection



Watching My Mother Mending a Sock

She bent over the hole
spanning it with parallel hanging bridges
which swayed under her breath, as did the hairs
escaped from her bun.

When the hole
was entirely covered, she resolutely punched
the needle through the fabric, made new bridges
perpendicular to the first.

My breath stopped
as the needle disappeared into the dark abyss,
pulling the thread behind it, resumed in relief
when it reemerged

triumphantly to light,
skipped one bridge, disappeared, crossed all the bridges
which by now were slightly less loose, then returned
in the opposite direction,

again and again,
until a tight, supple crisscross covered what had been
an unsightly hole, and all of my mother's hairs
had returned to their place.

I did not know at that time
that everything had an up- and a downside, that ideally
the downside should be no less neat than the upside,
which is rarely the case.

I was under the spell
of the needle plunging head-down, pulling the thread
behind it, and I never knew what went on where my eyes
could not follow.

At that time there was only
the flicker of the needle tip, the alternating limpness
and tautness of the thread, and my mother of course,
guiding this dangerous team on its way.

© Iris Dan, Haifa selection



Medical Personnel

When my daughter succumbed to COVID-19
there wasn't a nurse or doctor to be seen
on the Corona ward, where she wandered
with low saturation, tachycardia and fever
making tea for an 80-year-old and explaining
to a 90-year-old where she was; noticing
another elderly patient shaking with the cold
she opened cupboards to find a blanket. I'm told
to clap my hands for the medical personnel
Seriously? Despite them, most are well

Channah Moshe, Jerusalem selection

after pandemic
obsessive Father Death Blues*
grim reaper motif

tripod set to go
subject without focus
no selfie today

watch from distance
shrivel of ancient mothers
beyond time and space

judih Weinstein Haggai
Southern Group

*Father Death Blues, by Allen Ginsberg
<https://youtu.be/7TGuYpxosc0>

The Search

What will survive of us is love—Philip Larkin

What is love, we ask; I seek an answer.
May love be likened to a welcome ache,
the soaring gravity of the ballet dancer,
the joyous opposites of give and take?
Surrendering is gladness, lost is found,
the bitter-sweet of urgent blessed tears.
In Beethoven's hush, a universe of sound,
from silence wells the music of the spheres.
Though I, in language strive—on lexicon,
to make sense of the highest sense of all,
am I denied the words, mute as a swan—
to soar like Icarus, condemned to fall?
Yet—from such touching distance I must vie
to pin the incandescent butterfly.

Amiel Schotz, Southern Group



SWEET MEMORY

Each crunch of my breakfast matza
reminds me of
how he loved
his mother's home-made marmalade
and the time he
wanted to show me,
his new bride,
the basement pantry;
its shelves
stocked with jars
all the foods she prepared
for Pesach
and clearly labeled in her hand,
"Pesach 1943"
his love of it all:
the food,
his family,
their home,
their customs,
and anticipating the holiday;

"That's a funny way to spell Peaches",
I had said.....
With each crunch of breakfast matza,
I hear his laughter.....
oh, yes! I hear it still
and the tread of his feet
on those old wooden stairs,
leading me.

Susan Rosenberg, Haifa selection

"Where I like to put my spoon"

I love soup with everything in it,
To paddle things that float in pots,
Scalded in broth rife with colors—
Carrot submarines, pepper canoes,
Broccoli trees and potato orbs...
The enticing smell wafting up.

I adore thick goulash in caldrons,
Simmering long over coil or fire
After being brought to boil
With cubes of beast or strips of fowl
With lentils and legumes in
And nary a spice left out.

Ethelea Katzenell, Southern Group

Almost post Corona Era?

At "London Mini Stores" in Tel-Aviv,
all the gay chairs of the poshe coffee shops
are sad. They are turned upside down.
People only take away.
They are full of colorful memories
of the recent past.
I am flooded with memories
of that gloomy distant youth of mine.

*

Chez "Perla", in the old city
of Be'er Sheva,
three men are sitting outside, close,
talking passionately, drinking beer.
In this neglected neighborhood,
in this pub on the "Midrachov",*
human urge for closeness
breaks the boundaries of prohibitions.
I can breathe better here.

Shulamit Bat Or, Southern Group



Question Mark

You who crossed my path by chance,
Shared with me a passing glance.
A certain frisson in the air,
Or did I imagine it was there.
How many times has this occurred,
Random encounters with so much inferred.
Endless possibilities in a quantum state,
Were you the one who would have sealed my fate?

Peter Bernstein, Tzfon-Yehuda

Atonement

I'm not very nice,
To the multitudes of mice,
That foul every inch of my house.
But if I got me a cat instead of a glue trap,
Perhaps I'd be less of a louse!

Thanks for the Memory...

*On receiving a photo of her lap-top screen from
a fellow member of our Zoom group meeting.
To be sung to the tune of Bob Hope's 1938 hit:*

Thanks - for the memory,
of late-comers and glitches, the voice problems and hitches,
But even so it's good to know we met, and this enriches,
How lovely it was!

Rumi Morkin
Haifa group



ISRAEL IS A SUNFLOWER

Written for Israel's 72 Independence Day

Israel at the young age of seventy-two
Is a beautiful sunflower!
It raises its head full of
Smart pips and seeds up high
In the blue lofty sky

Pips and seeds of colorful discoveries
Of science and cultural peaks
Of poetry, painting, moving movies,
Great music and great stories and
Medical seeds to ban the Corona

Brave pips of courage, strength
Love and hope that the seeds
Will soon succeed
To invite our Palestinian
Cousin and neighbor to Tango

It needs two to Tango
Even for a sunflower.

Ada Aharoni, Haifa Group



Simon Marks Jewish Primary School, Hackney, London

While skimming through the paper
with my lunch on Friday last
I came across an article
that linked me to the past,

about a Jewish primary school
that caters for all races,
the picture showed the children
seated, all with happy faces.

A former Jewish Day School moved here,
back in seventy-three,
this school takes all denominations -
teaching harmony.

The neighborhood is poor, but all
wear uniforms in blue,
the girls in skirts, the boys wear skullcaps,
neat striped neckties, too.

A keen desire to learn,
high aspirations are the aim,
respect for all diversity:
"We are not all the same."

But more than this, the school's *address*
was what had caught my eye,
I have a photo of that house,
just one, to testify

that seventy five, in Cazenove Road -
nobody else could know -
was once my mother's family home
one hundred years ago.



75, Cazenove Road 1918

Rumi Morkin, Haifa Group



Moon-ready...

I await her portrait, full-face
illuminated by her brother sun:
her shiny-as-soap-washed white-yellow face
her tattooed face
her pock-marked face
her Sea-of-Tranquility birthmark-stained face.
I await this beacon that holds from her lookout
such sway over my caverned waters.

How lonely Earth would be without her –
her guidance, her nightly nurture.
In prehistoric and ancient eras, her queenship
was never in question.
Now, the Hebrews keep their contract, still
still loyal to the phases of her rule;
'though, to many, relegated to figurehead status
she is only accorded accolades like bygone stage divas.

But she must know how dear she is - that we
could not do without her - for she stays her elliptic throne.
Whatever name she's been called - asteroid, cosmic
debris, piece of rock - will neither break her bones
nor fade her glowing essence.
How long, really, has she entranced us with her radiance
and silver-armored arms that break open our darkness?

Astrologers put more credence in a woman's moon sign;
I believe it!
Each night, except the veiled nights of her privacy,
she cradles us in her true sovereign's embrace.
Don't believe those rumors that her stark light befits a
cold heart! She is pillowed with us and minds our dreams,
always.

There's not a single living person on this earth who doesn't,
eventually, look out at her, imagine her outlook upon us,
and pay her homage.

Donna Bechar

Netanya/Sharon Selection



OUTLOOK

Until the age of 6 I hadn't seen the sea.
 It was a total mystery for me.
 They said it had much water, like a lake,
 but even more.
 They said you cannot see the opposite shore.
 They said that you can cross it by a ship,
 and such a trip
 might take
 a lot of time
 even if the weather were fine...
 I'll never forget the first time they took me
 to the shore of the Black Sea.
 That train was running much too slow for me...
 They said the seashore would be seen quite soon
 through the wagon window, just about noon.
 But time was running much too slow for me...
 I hurried so to say "hallo" to the sea... but no...
 no sign of it... only the sky
 became suddenly so high
 and so intensely blue,
 with such an unexpected hue
 far away...
 "- Here it is!"
 "- What do you say?
 I can't see anything at all!"
 There was an empty ground
 with nothing all around
 as if the sky would fall...
 "- I can't see anything at all!"
 They told me the Black Sea was sky blue
 on that particular day,
 but it might get many a hue
 of green and violet and gray,
 and during winter days if it gets furious
 it might look black... But that seemed so curious...
 Then the train entered a town
 and at the station we stepped down.
 I first felt its smell... then its breath... then its voice...
 I met birds and children that seemed to rejoice...
 ... When THE BLACK SEA
 finally embraced me,
 I got its first salty kiss
 in an abyss of bliss...

Luiza Carol, Netanya/Sharon selection



Basic Training

For days, we had no bullets but we knelt
and disassembled and reassembled
our novice-level rifles, Mauser clones
older than the men who were training us.

When target practice came, after so long,
and the thing fired with a roar worthy of
a top-budget Cinemascope western,
the revelation of ability
was like the joke where the boy doesn't talk
until his teens and then says the soup's cold.

"So tell me," I said to the old rifle,
"were you in the War of Independence?"
"Maybe I was," it said, "but whenever
I'm disassembled, I forget my past."

When I'd progressed to hitting the target,
one day the rifle said, "You're a good man.
Would you mind taking a look at my left side?"
"Does it, I mean, hurt?" I said. My fingers
seemed to discern a crack. Visually
I wasn't sure. Had the old wooden stock
begun to separate along the grain?
I rushed my lunch, knocked at the armory,

and was received there with a silent frown.
"Is a crack like this dangerous?" I asked.
The man replaced the rifle, glared at me,
and thrust a paper out for me to sign.

I found myself repeating from the joke:
"Up until now, everything was okay."

Mark L. Levinson, Tel Aviv selection



POEMS FROM OUR OVERSEAS MEMBERS

If only we could

ride out the Corona in the saddle of famed hyperbole,
 but, seriously, would you call it Splendid Isolation?
 If only the only thing to fear were fear itself, or we
 didn't have to fire until we saw the whites of its eyes,
 leaving me on patrol priming my radar ears awaiting
 my husband's arriving car post reconnaissance, then
 flying downstairs to beat my beloved's hands to all
 the apertures. I intercept the gauntlet-- doors, buttons,
 knobs. "Welcome home, soldier!" He's in no mood.
 "Go back upstairs! You shouldn't be down here. I've got
 this!" My blessed non-obsessive mate, but I know he's
 changing gloves the CDC sanctioned way, then kneels
 on newsprint wiping off peril in cellophane which he
 believes farfetched but complies to be PC, the abundance
 of caution hack, hedge against feeling helpless. I know he
 dropped his clothes into a virgin garbage bag when I hear
 the tattoo of bare feet streaking upstairs where I lit my
 warrior's way to COVID's new, nonsectarian Mikvah,
 the shower, where he scrubs and purifies post early
 morning mission, geezer hour, Whole Foods detail.

Diane Ray, Seattle WA USA

The Supermoon

flounced over Seattle, a picture in pink
 on her pedigree, as real and surreal
 as everything as we climb through yet
 another day on the Corona, cobbling
 our new normal atop discarded shards
 of the usual windblown in a cyclone
 of what it's.

And so we join the other careful mortals
 venturing forth on Golden Garden's
 sands to see one free Lunar Spectacular
 standing warily apart, socially anti-social
 in our singlehood, pairings, pods of family
 in the hush between the lush silk moon
 and the next unknown.



What's in a Name?

Say *corona* -
there's music there
the rhythm stately
and with its relatives
coronet and *crown*
the word sounds regal.

But where is the majesty
when today the name evokes
only a panicked world upended?
Scenes recur from history -
dwellings boarded up
their occupants within,
beaked figures pointing
fingers at the Other,
the thick miasma of fear.

There is no majesty
in this disease
for no king smites the globe
as does this virus
unless
one believes it be a scourge
inflicted by the King of Kings,
punishment of man to hasten
the messiah's coming.

No, no majesty there.
Yet in the unexpected acts
of strength and kindness
springing up like mushrooms after rain,
acts that lighten suffering
lift the fear
offer hope

in these there is
true majesty

Lilian Cohen, Melbourne, Australia

Vacillation

The persistence
of unresolved issues
that unwanted apparel
of leaden suit,
iron mask,
diver's boots
mouth-gag
blindfold
weigh like a planet on the soul
on conscience, focus,
on peace of mind

Fear,
of that hideous intersection
of tangled threads
of radiating alternatives
is the night composer
orchestrating
the restiveness
of the undecided,
always there at bed-foot
on rousing,
a gesticulating spectre
crooked finger pointing
mocking the cowardice
of indecision

Better to reach
out blindly grabbing a limb
the nearest branch
of the option tree
taking a stab
at the lottery of treacherous fate
than to suffer the perdition
of chronic indecision,
its iconic hissing serpent
lurking, goading, always
from a concealed lair

Don Mulcahy

Strathroy, Ontario, Canada



“A thin veneer”

A dusting of early snow - a very thin veneer
the dog and I walking the back lanes
her cataloguing the environment
with prehensile nose, eyes, ears,
the occasional exploratory paw-scratch
me brooding over the barbarism of nine eleven

At the newly vinyl-clad garage
a King Charles spaniel leaps high
vainly pounding at the gate with bear paws to get out;
the garage door is open, the interior illuminated
though dark relative to the brilliant sunlight outside

In the proximate gloom of the interior
two figures, impressionistic men, are toiling
a parked green Volvo concealing the nature of their labor

They work hard, move around busily
without speech, and there is the sound of sawing

We draw closer, see an antlered deer head
on the grass verge, with eyes frozen in a vacant pitiful fix

I veer reflexively to the far side of the lane,
to avoid the obscenity
to evade the naked Neanderthal in all of us
and the bleeding of innocence into the snow

Away from the noble trophy of a cowardly act
remembering Madelener then,
our European microbiology professor
who had survived the Nazi scourge:
“cifilissation ees only a ferry sin feneer”

Don Mulcahy, Strathroy, Ontario, Canada



V. SARAH'S FATE

He took my son!
My only son.
My little laugher.
Huh, he came out laughing,
a joy to come into the light.
He was my light.
I never dreamed I could
have such pleasure.
Especially after all those years
barren,
castigated by my own servants.
Laughed at by them.
Sneered at by everyone else.
And then, without a word,
he just goes off with him,
takes him to some mountaintop,
as if he were a lamb or kid
for the slaughter,
like those pagan tribes
he so abjured.
Oy! I can't accept it.
If he could do this to me,
his helpmeet, his treasure,
after all he put me through,
with his One God,
setting everyone's face
against us,
and even lying about me
being his sister,
and exposing me
to all manner of advances.
This is it!
I'm finished.

SAYING NOTHING

*Sometimes, when I talk to my mother
and she says nothing, I answer her anyway.*
— Hans van de Waarsenburg

She wanted to say something,
but she said nothing at all.
It was as always.
So I, too, said this kind of nothing,
and she answered: "Yes, that's true."
It was true that I had said nothing,
but she agreed with me anyway.
I know that the Talmud says:
"A word is worth a guilder;
silence is worth two."
So I continued with the preferred value:
two guildens for one.
Still my mother answered: "I agree."
Again I uttered nothing whatsoever,
but Mother insisted that I was right.
Was she trying to tell me something
more than the nothing I professed?
Nothing, like the hollow of an eggshell
with three pinpricks to suck out the yolk
of nothing, nothing, nothing at all?

Stanley H. Barkan, New York, USA
