

# 5 (five) poeMS poems poems

By Mark Du Charmé

**WHY I LIKE IT:** *Poetry Editor HEZEKIAH writes... DuCharme is engagingly antithetical, what appears spurious is deceptively perceptive and evocatively thought provoking—lying, lazing and lolling in a reverie of irony. Here's a taste: "Pray that no one listens," "Something you will almost find / We're not all what we say we were" "Like a history just acquired / Faded / Not yet strange" I suppose an epigram is in the eye of the beholder as DuCharme is beholden to no one. Here's another tender grade A couplet: "By rotten peasants, who'd soon festoon / The youth with brutal music—" And my favourite: "'...there's too much / Miasma in Acapulco, & my / Future is at hand.'" I confess I always like to occasionally, mostly, always publish works I don't entirely understand. When I find minds' that burn too brightly, I seek shade and return to my shadows. (One thing that consistently persists in my existence is being routinely confounded; I find misunderstanding, coupled with an overwhelming inability to take instruction, frees up a great deal of my time.) MD is, at times, an enigma to me and I feel all awash in yesterday's dishwater. Perhaps the long awaited summing-up can be best stated by an obscure, appropriate quote comparing poets to critics: 'Some run the human race at lightning speed, in meteoric rise, and reign like lions. / As others amble, lumber stumbling, and impede, in leaden metaphoric chain leg-irons.' Maybe not, here's one last Mark, "In the torch that wasn't there" ... (To maintain poet's spacing each poem is on its own page. 'HOTS' in action!) HS*

# Body

The eye follows the line of thought  
The body moves when it is all of us  
There is only one poem  
You are in it

Can you make art out of suffering?  
Do losses pile up?  
If you're trapped at the edge of a wilderness  
Will no one listen when you fail to come home?

Home isn't always where one sings  
Pray that no one listens  
Accept the limits of lost speech  
Things are interchangeable

Mostly, some of the time  
The eye follows the line of desire  
The poem moves when it is all of us  
From what source does midnight bleed?

# Image-Driven

In winds we sing like ghosts  
Like lovers' truths  
On pillows  
With songs no more  
Inhering

The songs you'll know  
Are all time-stamped  
In limited allure  
Something you will almost find  
We're not all what we say we were

In breccia of the nonessential  
Whose ghosts are heard in outmoded cries  
Figments of convenient traffic  
A grayscale ravaged, amplified  
By those downwind

Until we are lost, & time  
Is just a process you had to  
Endure  
Only once, bearing fruit  
For the ravished, who'll continue

In wicked usurpation, the  
Image only breaks  
What you'll allow it to  
As yellow fruit neither  
Lost nor singular

Birthed of night  
Before death in breath or mirage  
Like a history just acquired  
Faded  
Not yet strange

# Fuel

The 'you' you are was never here  
Earth speaks joyously  
Here is what the thunder feels—  
How do you retrace ice with loneliness  
Or else listen to psalms  
On the AM  
While refusing to conceal?

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Fieldwork or dislocation?  
Yes, the thunder isn't rare  
We move under gauche trademarks—  
Vital scarecrows who may yet live  
In fear of you  
After curfews howl  
In battered urgency

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The inchoate archangels hadn't been processed yet  
By something less grand than the bland shopping visors

It was easy to spin  
& Groove on the monotypes

Until tomorrow, where there's no known cure  
& Tight-lipped attendees budge

With what you're wearing, at least while under their belts  
Or eyes, which get so excited

By rotten peasants, who'd soon festoon  
The youth with brutal music—

With summer's lost ghost fuel— with midnight's  
Barren cries—

# The Careerist

Locusts arrived to discourse on the troll.  
He never felt moody or old.  
The time had come to take the visors  
Down. On a clear day, you can unroll the fences

& Ladders to an eyeroll. It was juicy, she said, but then  
You flew  
Back to those carefree days of  
Barges full of soap

The long way down. It was great  
Stuffing the plans carefully into  
Bowls hidden for the others to  
Discharge

A window for a goldmine, until ice begets  
A zest for youth & infrastructure  
Even when we are still bedeviled with fortune  
Or so it seemed to Nan. She stuck to it

On a hill by the foundry with crazy  
Roads diverging: "I hear you write poetry"—  
Just a fleck of  
Blood to the

Lips. It all came back now—  
Crazy rumors, idle slipcovers  
Jounced in manic  
Perturbation;—

She lost it. It was trite as  
Petals, something lent to her  
Sister, the one with the deformed  
Earlobe. "I'm sorry to have to

Decline your  
Invitation, but there's too much  
Miasma in Acapulco, & my  
Future is at hand."

# Reverdy, Not Reverb

Certain images  
Admit the  
Sun

The truth of love is  
Vagrant

Can people learn  
From a thing they install

Whatever else it is that they  
Contain, despite warnings

Your rhetoric may not equal  
A perfect example

(This is anthropological sampling  
Of a discourse community  
Filmed in love, not follow-through)

Begin colloquial fan fiction  
Vomit in the faint  
Hereafter

Nuance of digressive weight-loss enjambment  
The killing floor depends on your  
Noncommittal acquiescence

Wind is not driving  
Me to meet you this  
Month

Were I an abortive salesperson  
& You, my unfaithful parking attendant

The heat goes down  
To you not here

There is, of course, the grayscale  
Photograph. There is always a  
Grayscale photograph

Even if it is not quite gray  
Even if it is not quite to scale

Let go  
My heart caged

Equally elephantine & overtime  
Yet still not such a  
Polymath

The time to go will let you know  
In the fake mirth of birth narratives

In the torch that wasn't there

**THE POET SPEAKS...** *I dislike discussing what inspired my poems. For one thing, isn't it enough that I have written them? Must I account for them too? For another, if something seems interesting, or inspired, or maybe even brilliant in my work to you, would it really help you to know what my perhaps trivial inspiration was, or would knowing merely dull your ardor? The question also presumes that I would be a truthful and fastidious "scholar" of my own artistic process, which is preposterous if you know anything about the history of art or poetry. No, I think it best if my inspirations, whatever they are or were, remain a bit mysterious.*

*My stylistic influences are many & varied. In a fairly recent interview, I had this to say on the subject:*

*Frank O'Hara was an early, important influence. Thus, Ted Berrigan, Ron Padgett, and later Joseph Ceravolo became key influences as well. Other poets whose work I admire and have been informed by include (in no particular order) Clark Coolidge, César Vallejo, Pierre Reverdy, John Ashbery, Robert Creeley, Alice Notley, Gertrude Stein, Guillaume Apollinaire, Emily Dickinson, Barbara Guest, Lorine Niedecker, Arthur Rimbaud, Charles Baudelaire, Jack Spicer, Jackson Mac Low, Bernadette Mayer, Stephen Rodefer, Michael Gizzi, George Oppen, Mina Loy, William Carlos Williams, Maureen Owen, Anselm Hollo—I could go on.*

*Lately, I've also been reading more Kenneth Koch, Amiri Baraka, Marjorie Wellish, and (gasp!) Wallace Stevens. And I just realized that I, quite unjustly, excluded Federico García Lorca, Lyn Hejinian and Jack Collom from the list I cite above! No doubt, there may have been other inexcusable oversights. Such is the nature of statements like this.*

*The above, I should hope, answers all you need to know about reading. No one is a poet who does not also read, and read both widely and narrowly, according to his or her interests and passions. Self-expression is a seductive fiction; one cannot express what one has not imagined, and one cannot sharpen or tune the imagination if one contemplates only one's narrow corner of awareness, one's trivial & fleeting perceptions.*

*Why poetry is important to me is both a simple and profound question. If I tried to write a book about it, no doubt I would leave some layers unraveled. When I was a novice poet, it occurred to me that the project must be to make of my body a conduit for poetry. (Breath comes from the body, and, like Olson, I believe that breath— or perhaps a better word is melody— does or should shape the poetic line.) The great difficulties of creating a life for oneself in poetry*

*aside, I cannot imagine why anyone would not want to do that. I cannot imagine, in other words, a more interesting use of time & mind.*

**AUTHOR BIO:** Mark DuCharme is the author of *We, the Monstrous: Script for an Unrealizable Film*, *Counter Fluencies 1-20*, *The Unfinished: Books I-VI*, *Answer*, *The Sensory Cabinet* and other works. His poetry has appeared widely in such venues as *BlazeVOX*, *Caliban Online*, *Colorado Review*, *Eratio*, *First Intensity*, *Indefinite Space*, *New American Writing*, *Noon*, *Otoliths*, *Shiny*, *Talisman*, *Unlikely Stories*, *Word/ for Word*, and *Poetics for the More-Than-Human World: An Anthology of Poetry and Commentary*. A recipient of the Neodata Endowment in Literature and the Gertrude Stein Award in Innovative American Poetry, he lives in Boulder, Colorado.