

THE



INTERVIEW

Poetry Editor Hezekiah with William Rector

My Dear William. A hearty and glad-handed welcome from the summit of Mount Parnassus! Why does Trickster come to mind? ...If you had to choose which shadow that just might best amuse your unmasked anima-cum-animus ego-persona, wouldn't he (or *id*) be your favorite, faceless, arch-type villain-accomplice? *Hmmm, which is the best exit to usher this editor out.* Welcome to the Rector-verse: misdirected energies, so little matters...a time and space for everything. He's out there. The man's a prankster—pure mischief—tickling phobias, twisting phobias...*über outré*. “To you, / equally bored loner at the reunion, kindred skeptic under the skin, / inky twin...” Anyway, Bill is *Fleas* chosen poet to be probed and prodded—interrogatives and evasions, taunts and retaliations. Or as we prefer to call it, Spot the Heteroclite.

HS: Are you okay with answering a few questions so long as this isn't one of them?

WR: *See below.*

HS: Would you rather it was? ...not one either, really.

WR: *See above.*

HS: Bill, if you found yourself in an unlocked, windowless, empty room could you see any end in amusing yourself and what might incline you to leave?

WR: *You have just described my current manuscript. One of the principal characters is a room. Another is the elephant in the room. Then there's Franz Kafka. Not the real one. There wasn't a real one. The hero of the book is a door.*

HS: Can you say what it is in your nature that preoccupies you with words, phrases and pages?

WR: *No. Like everybody else, I'm a black box. Someday, a brilliant engineer, maybe Elon Musk, will find a way to open these black boxes and discover what caused the terrible crash in which everyone died.*

HS: Do you find yourself writing every day, or is it as necessary, occasionally, blanking your mind in the interest of your mental health?

WR: *I do write every day. Not in the evening so much. The white board at night school...*

HS: Can you say where you were born, raised and where you reside now in the interest of cautioning our readership and the public at large?

WR: *I was born and raised in Cheyenne, Wyoming. A few of your readers may have passed through Cheyenne on Interstate 80 or even attended its world-famous rodeo. Wyoming is a wonderful place to grow up. Solitude is its chief natural resource. It cannot be exported or burned. Currently I live in rural South Carolina. Not many of your readers have been there, either.*

HS: Would you care to name three of your favorite notable authors, one obscure one and someone who has not influenced you in the slightest?

WR: *I love Zbigniew Herbert. Mr. Cogito, his alter-ego, is the essential twentieth century man. Russell Edson has influenced me. Rather than explain why, I strongly encourage readers of Fleas to read an interview of Edson by Peter Johnson: <https://digitalcommons.providence.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1596&context=prosepoem>. Charles Simic is wonderful. The problem is, he makes writing poetry look easy. As far as an obscure author, I offer myself. I read him all the time. I can't stand Robert Lowell.*

HS: I mined all the sources at my disposal, mostly bathroom books, and could not find the quote "Hope's a moth in love with a 15-watt bulb." Tell me it is yours, lie if you must, did you make it up? I have one last space, intentionally left blank, for the tattoo.

WR: *It's my line. I didn't search for it. It appeared on the page, and the poem was done. Please send me a photo of the tattoo. I will make a better book cover than a still life of dead fish and fruit.*

HS: In the fewest words possible, do you have a life philosophy you would like to share with the likes of Fleas?

WR: *Your life is a mystery. Let it remain so.*

HS: Is there anything I have forgotten to ask that you would like to address?

WR: *The confessional poetry of the 20th century has evolved into the grievance poetry of the 21st. On the horizon is a tower. There the poetry of established truth will be written. Re-education camps are already being built for those who do not adhere. Fleas On The Dog is a bastion of freedom. Thank you.*

HS: I'll take that compliment personally if you don't mind, while I try to recall the other editors' names. Let me say how much I enjoyed our exchange. Okay, 'how much'—I said it. I loved the way you rolled your eyes at one of the questions but when you spit on the floor after gently reminiscing about your golden Wyoming boyhood—well, let's just say it's a moment I will treasure forever. I depart with the certainty that your poetry is sublime and you with the knowledge that you're a better person for having known me. I remain, your obedient *savant*,
Hezekiah