

10 poems = (5) poems + 5 = TEN poems....

By Strider Marcus Jones

WHY I LIKE IT: *Poetry Editor HEZEKIAH writes... Strider Marcus Jones plays on words like an inveterate, pathological lyre as he bows and strums us, plucking me, at least, from my melancholy melodies, monotonous monotones and doggerel doldrums with his mellifluous meter and tone. (I spitefully longed to eliminate at least one of his ten poems, but woe is me.) His imagery is imaginatively immersing; his phrasing and figures of speech overflowing; and, his symbolism, story, syntax and sound spill over the page with cascading cadence in a most spellbinding scintillating style. (Besides, he owes me money and cheats at cards.) Here is a sampling of the scoundrels verse: "to watch you / swan turned shrew- / hairbrush out all memory and meaning," "the heart of truth- / intact in youth," A "Savage" homage to Gauguin: "beauty and syphilis happily cohabit," "inseminating womb / selected by pheromones" (Presumably referring Paul's pursuits after he left the banking business.) Lots more gems here, but don't overlook 'IN THE COME AND GO, I MIND YOU' If I understand anything about in-you-end-oh, the double entendres are delightful... Nice tribute to Tolkien in there somewhere too for you LOTR devotees. Strider's light, slight-of-hand writing is as masterful as his pockets are shallow and his head is swelled... (Spacing is poet's own.)HS*

SALTED SLUG

your words stung,
and hung
me upside down, inside out,
to watch you
swan turned shrew-
hairbrush out all memory and meaning,
from those fresco pictures on the wet plaster ceiling-
that my Michelangelo took years to paint,
in glorious colours, now flaked and full of hate.

the lights of our pleiades went out,
with no new songs to sing and talk about-
suspended there
inside sobs of solitude and infinite despair-
like soluble syllables of barbiturates

in exhaust fumes of apology and regrets.

you left me prone-
to hear deaths symphony alone,
split and splattered, opened on the floor,
repenting for nothing, evermore-
like a salted slug,
curdled and curled up on the rug-
to melt away
while you spoon and my colours fade to grey.

the heart of truth-
intact in youth,
fractures into fronds of lies and trust,
destined to become a hollow husk-
but i found myself again in hopes congealing pools
and left the field of fools
to someone else-
and put her finished book back on its shelf.

CHILDHOOD FIRES

late afternoon
winter fingers
nomads in snow
numb knuckles and nails
on two boys
in scuffed shoes
and ripped coats
carrying four planks of wood
from condemned houses
down dark jitty's
slipping on dog shit
into back yard
to make warm fires

early evening

dad cooking neck end stew
thick with potato dumplings and herbs
on top of bread soaked in gravy
i saw the hole in the ceiling
holding the foot that jumped off bunk beds
but dad didnt mind
he had just sawed the knob
off the banister
to get an old wardrobe upstairs
and made us a longbow and cricket bat
it was fun being poor
like other families

after dark
all sat down reading and talking
in candle light
with parents
silent to each other
our sudden laughter like sparks
glowing and fading
dancing in flames and wood smoke
unlike the children who died in a fire next door
then we played cards
and i called my dad a cunt
for trumping my king
but he let me keep the word

LOTHLORIEN

i'm come home again
in your Lothlorien
to marinate my mind
in your words,
and stand behind
good tribes grown blind,
trapped in old absurd
regressive reasons

and selfish treasons.

in this cast of strife
the Tree Of Life
embraces innocent ghosts,
slain by Sauron's hosts;
and their falling cries
make us wise
enough to rise
up in a fellowship of friends
to oppose Mordor's ends
and smote this evil stronger
and longer
for each one of us that dies.

i'm come home again
in your Lothlorien,
persuading
yellow snapdragons
to take wing
and un-fang serpent krakkens,
while i bring
all the races
to resume
their bloom
as equals in equal spaces
by removing
and muting

the chorus of crickets
who cheat them from chambered thickets,
hiding corruptions older than long grass
that still fag for favours asked.

i'm come home again
in your Lothlorien
where corporate warfare
and workfare
on health
and welfare
infests our tribal bodies
and separate self
in political lobbies
so conscience can't care
or share
worth and wealth:

to rally drones
of walking bones,
too tired
and uninspired
to think things through
and the powerless who see it true.
red unites, blue divides,
which one are you
and what will you do
when reason decides.

WOODED WINDOWS

as this long life slowly goes
i find myself returning
to look through wooded windows.
forward or back, empires and regimes remain
in pyramids of power
butchering the blameless for glorious gain.
feudal soldiers firing guns
and wingless birds dropping smart bombs
on mothers, fathers, daughters, sons,
follow higher orders
to modernise older civilisations

repeating what history has taught us.
in turn, their towers of class and cash
will crumble and crash
on top of ozymandias.
hey now, woods of winter leafless grip
and fractures split
drawing us into it.
love slide in days
through summer heat waves
and old woodland ways
with us licking
then dripping
and sticking
chanting wiccan songs
embraced in pagan bonds
living light, loving long,
fingers painting runes on skin
back to the beginning
when freedom wasn't sin.

OVIRI (The Savage – Paul Gauguin in Tahiti)

woman,
wearing the conscience of the world-
you make me want
less civilisation
and more meaning.
drinking absinthe together,
hand rolling and smoking cigars-
being is, what it really is-
fucking on palm leaves
under tropical rain.

beauty and syphilis happily cohabit,
painting your colours
on a parallel canvas
to exhibit in Paris
the paradox of you.
somewhere in your arms-
i forget my savage self,
inseminating womb
selected by pheromones
at the pace of evolution.
later. I vomited arsenic on the mountain and returned
to sup morphine. spread ointments on the sores, and ask:
where do we come from.
what are we.
where are we going.

IT'S SO QUIET

it's so quiet
our eloquent words dying on a diet
of midnight toast
with Orwell's ghost-
looking so tubercular in a tweed jacket
pencilling notes on a lung black cigarette packet-
our Winston, wronged for a woman and sin
re-wrote history on scrolls thought down tubes
that came to him
in the Ministry Of Truth Of Fools
where conscience learns to lie within.

not like today
the smug-sly haves say and look away
so sure
theres nothing wrong with wanting more,
or drown their sorrows
downing bootleg gin
knowing tomorrows
truth is paper thin
. .
at home
in sensory
perception
with tapped and tracked phone
the Thought Police arrest me
in the corridors of affection-
where dictators wear, red then blue, reversible coats
in collapsing houses, all self-made
and self-paid
smarmy scrotes-
now the Round Table
of real red politics
is only fable
on the pyre of ghostly heretics.
they are rubbing out
all the contusions
and solitary doubt,
with confusions
and illusions
through wired media
defined in their secret encyclopedia-
where summit and boardroom and conclave
engineer us from birth to grave.
like the birds,
i will have to eat

the firethorn
berries that ripen but sleep
to keep
the words
of revolution
alive and warm
this winter, with resolution
gathering us, to its lantern in the bleak,
to be reborn and speak.

MIRROR, MIRROR

mirror, mirror,
in the hall
age comes to us all,
and looks wither
through the play
of years slipped away,
away

in the lapsed lingo of street
and road,
where tangents meet
and move with innocence
up summits of experience
told,
whose fruits we eat
then weep
when they implode.
these reflections
in this autumn of adventurous directions,
mean more
standing in the door
of ebb and flow
watching people come and go
wearing introspections
of what they know
after listening to a stranger's small confessions
on midnight radio.

THE COMET OF HER WORDS

he sheds his matelessness

and shapeless

statelessness

undormed

to lie with her undressed

in woods earth warmed.

after drinking

and thinking
in the hollow trunk of an ancient tree
she reads
his tea
leaves-
and he hears
her nature in the pattern
of her years,
saying now we happen
and the comet of her words
weaves its sentences
in his,
let's go of bleakness
walking through wilderness
light footsteps in senses.

IN THE COME AND GO, I MIND YOU

in the middle, where i find you,
i wriggle in behind you
all the way.

in the come and go, i mind you,
what we were is reconciled, you
let it stay.

this template, for being tender,
is our state to remember
into grey;

beyond the time of soil and ember,
into nothingness's timbre-

be it, play.

LOOKING IN LOVE'S GLASS

looking in love's glass

at what we have drank

and haven't drank

to quench our thirst

slow and fast

not the first

not the last-

beauty is flesh
is your womanliness
and i find
your mind
grows branches into mine
we climb-
so compatible
and indelible,
to others forgettable
crashed dream
on screen-
we know
we go
out of scene.

THE POET SPEAKS:

I like the company of people but prefer solitude. I like to listen to people talk, the way they see it and say it. For me, poetry spans our past, present and future. These poems, and those in my books, are about the themes of love, relationships, peace, war, racial, economic and sexual equality, cultural integration, poverty, mythical romance, the magic of childhood and experience of growing old as a Bohemian maverick. The strings of chance and consequences meld with music and art in Spinoza's orderly chaos of the universe.

Life is hard and uncertain for most of us now, but also rare in our corner of the universe, so I strive to express my own understanding of it. Thinking time is my creative cove. My English teacher, Anne Ryan inspired me to write poetry when I was thirteen. The poems have grown with me and reflect much of who I am now. Some poems sleep for years. Mere jumbles of words, themes and rhythms in subconscious gaseous clouds. Their form and meaning evolve in Spinoza's orderly chaos. Other poems just happen, triggered by a single word or phrase, a sound, smell, or shape that relates to something from our past, present, or future. Writing a good poem makes me feel like the artist who can paint, or the musician who can play - joy in creating something that others enjoy and feel inspired to try doing themselves.

My first poetical influences were the Tin Pan Alley lyricists and composers like Sammy Cahn, Cole Porter and Rogers and Hart. I love the fun, rhythm and interplay between lyrics and music. Bob Dylan, Tom Waits and Leonard Cohen influence my poetry in the same way, allowing me to experiment with metaphor, form and rhythms.

Relationships and love are one of the main themes in my poetry. Two books which have travelled with me through life are Anna Karenina by Leo Tolstoy and Tess Of The D'urbervilles by Thomas Hardy. Tolkien's Lord Of The Rings trilogy is a big influence on some of my work.

My favourite poets who have influenced my work include: Shelley, Keats, Yeats, Auden, Dylan Thomas, Bishop, Szymborska, Langston Hughes, Plath, Art Crane, Larkin, Forough Farrokhzad, Neruda, Rumi and Heaney.

What inspires you?

Salford – my home town. My working class Irish and Welsh roots. My Muse and Children. The natural and industrial landscape. Archaeology. Astronomy. Social history. The struggle to overcome adversity and oppression. Contemporary poet, musician and artist friends. Trying to play more than three notes on my saxophone and clarinet. Working on my next poem.

Who are some writers you admire?

Adding to those previously mentioned – e e cummings, Bukowski, Brian Aldiss, Chaucer, Marlowe.

What is your writing process?

I write most days with pen on A4 paper folded into quarters. Strings of ideas and phrases. Any time of day, but I prefer the evening and through the night. Some poems survive the first draft. Others go through minor edits to language, theme and structure. Some get butchered and others are sent to hibernate until I return to them.

AUTHOR BIO: Strider Marcus Jones – is a poet, law graduate and ex civil servant from Salford, England with proud Celtic roots in Ireland and Wales. A member of The Poetry Society, his five published books of poetry <https://stridermarcusjonespoetry.wordpress.com/> reveal a maverick, moving between forests, mountains, cities and coasts playing his saxophone and clarinet in warm solitude.

