

# 4 POEMS

By Frank Modica

*Poetry Editor Hezekiah writes:*

*I have never dreamt of having a vagina, nor have I ever contemplated all the men who have stood before me at a cracked urinal... 'I don't care, I just [read] the poem[s]. 'Some of the WWL's are predicated on the pomposity that—I could never write this. Nothing is more intimate than inspired, uncensored interior monologues, unmetered yet melodic with imagery abounding. Stare stark into the frankness of Modica's mind, all agog if so you must be, but don't miss it... 'I run my fingers over my head, / Hair almost all gone, an empty forest!' But grass doesn't grow on a busy street. Perhaps I will stop wearing socks in my sandals. And if **Antipasti** is anything that is not pasta, does that include the tables, chairs, cutlery and the menu itself? I don't get out that much, but this entry offers some refinement for the most subversive of sophisticates. (Spacing is poet's own) HS*

## EnVy

I had a dream last night  
and I let the memories percolate for hours  
while having every confidence I would remember it.  
When I picked up my pen and paper  
the images came back to me,  
the words spilled out on the page.  
In my dream I was looking down at my waist,  
inspecting my genitals, like I usually do.  
No penis, no testicles, just a huge vagina.  
My vagina opening was bigger than a grapefruit,

reddish in color with a pink vulva that didn't  
match my olive complected stomach.

It didn't seem unusual to me,  
so I accepted my vagina,  
didn't question the disappearance  
of my penis and testicles,  
didn't marvel at the size  
and perfection of its opening.

Some might ask why an avowedly  
heteronormative older white male  
would have such a dream.

I don't worry myself too much with those questions

Was it vagina envy and something crazy

I drank that night? I don't care.

I just write the poem.

## Porcelain

I try to stand tall  
at a cracked, ceramic urinal.  
but I am a short man,  
I have a narrow stance.

I contemplate  
intellectual accomplishments,  
physical abilities,  
and the fragility  
of the white male ego,

and I wonder about  
everyone who  
has stood up  
at the same spot,  
hoping that someone  
will remember them.

## **Life's a bitch**

At night, I run my fingers over my head,  
Hair almost all gone, an empty forest!

Up and down from my bed every few hours  
Restless bladder, mind preoccupied.

My body stumbles against an unstable world, heart  
struggles to grasp frailty-66 years, 25,000 nights.

For wisdom I carry a tablet or my smartphone.  
For comfort I walk with sandals-no socks.

Holding everything so close to my heart—  
Still no master of flesh and bone.

## **Antipasti**

Mushrooms slow dance

with the olives,

grateful for the beets,

holding onto

each other,

happy for the two-step

reflexive moment.

They don't want the

music to stop,

ignore the

sassy tomatoes

with greasy leaves

whispering unfiltered

trash through their spores,

try to evade

the officious artichokes

crisscrossing the dance floor,

who admonish the pickles,

*Keep your hands*

*above the vines.*

**THE POET SPEAKS:** *I've always loved words-how they bang against my ears and the way they jump out of a page when I write poems. I can't sing, play an instrument, or paint, and I'm*

*too lazy to write the Great American novel, but poetry provides an outlet for my creativity. Living in a college town, I'm exposed to sights and sounds from a constellation of cultures. When I ride the bus through campus, I create poetry from the body language and the sounds of speech around me. Reading the poetry of contemporary American writers such as Stephen Dunn and Tony Hoagland provide some of the models for how I want to respond to this non-stop stimulation.*

**BIO:** *Frank C Modica is a retired teacher who taught children with special needs for over 34 years. His writing is animated by interests in history, geography, and sociology. His work has appeared in Slab, Black Heart Magazine, The Tishman Review, Crab Fat Literary Magazine, and FewerThan500.*