

7 POEMS

By Wayne F. Burke

Poetry Editor Hezekiah writes: Here is some poetry from the Green Mountain State. If I land on Vermont (when I roll the dice), I always buy it. Burke might have a monopoly on making it even greener. In reference to 'Winnie the Pooh,' This is the Eeyore blues, the donkey with the pin-on tail, in rapture. These are Winners: "Allergy Shot:" and 'lollipops' 'nothing happening for me / lately / on the poetry scene and / I do not like the / silence, or the / still air of these late summer days,' Well it is happening NOW! These verses read like a poet confounded, as all the while, I am, so too, astounded. Please abide 'Squiggles' and the 'Yetz brothers' and 'Vacay et al' — unless, you want to miss out?—there is no earthly reason to ignore these pages, at the peril of disappointing yourself...read this stuff...but only if your eyes are as thirsty as your ears...HS

Vacay

an entire beach of
white sand
to myself,
no radios
no voices
no rabid teens,
only the sound of
the ocean waves splashing
Paloush
and spreading in a sheen
all morning long
until noon
when a guy with lunch-pail
sits on the top a wall marked
PRIVATE
and begins to run his mouth
into a cell phone
but only
until he has to return to work
while I
remain
on the quiet empty beach
I paid for.

Allergy Shot

nothing happening for me
lately
on the poetry scene and
I do not like the
silence, or the
still air of these late summer days,
the waiting-room atmosphere,
and the dog-eared magazines;
the nurse in starched white
tells me follow her
into an office of mahogany furniture and
shadows, a telescope under glass
a bench with paper covering that
crinkles as I sit,
a needle the nurse sticks
into my arm
without any warning
and the thing gets stuck when
I flinch,
she cannot pull it out;
calls the crabby doctor over
and, afterward
no one offers me a tissue to wipe my tears
only a lollipop
I refuse
until my grandfather
standing by
says
“take it.”

Squiggles

the Yetz brothers, new to the
school, threw a party
their mother paid Mr. Squiggles to attend
the artist from the Cowboy Bob TV show
who turned kids' squiggles into pictures,
I had never met an artist before and
was excited to do so
(I wanted to be one—else a baseball player)
at the party the
mother announced
Mr. Squiggles would be late,
meanwhile
my grandfather had shown up at the
prearranged hour--
I said I could not leave
yet
he said I had to
I yelled no! No!
He carried me out on his shoulder and
threw me into the back seat,
I cried all the way home
and in the driveway
he asked why I was so upset
I told him Mr. Squiggles had yet to
arrive
he asked why did I not say so
because
if I had
he would have let me stay longer.

Life-Buoy

church over, another
Sunday morning in the books:
the ride home uneventful
until
beyond the lime kiln
my sister announces
that she is going to kill herself
and us
and turns the car toward the oak trees
in front of the grammar school.
My brother, up front
dives across the seat,
gets into a tug-of-war
with my sister
for the steering wheel;
he rises like a buoy
in a sea
as roadside trees rush to greet us--
the car wobbles and
a tire hits curbside
and my head hits the roof--
shrieks of metal screams
car engine noise and
sputter,
beached like a whale on the
sidewalk:
my sister sobs, shoulders
quaking--
my brother says "kill yourself
but not us"
Mrs. Gray from the corner block
at the window, arms
crossed and a face of flint:
"are you alright?"
"Oh yes," my sister says, perking-up
"we are fine."

H.S.

sitting in my car
outside of the laundry
while waiting for my clothes
to dry;
fans of bare brown trees
spread on the ridge line,
gray November sky;
kids from High School
walking on the street:
I was one
once,
years ago
when bell bottoms were
in style
and nobody but bikers, jailbirds
and sailors had tattoos,
and telephones had
a dial
and the pool hall
was open
and so was the Drive-In Theater.
The seventies, baby
platform shoes
and hair to my shoulders,
cocaine
Farah Fawcett
The French Connection Deep Throat
A Clockwork Orange
Nehru jackets
I never wore
and The Hustle
I did dance to.

Flagpole

in bed early

11:30 PM

try and get some reading done
or maybe write something
worthwhile

but

fuck-it

I am too tired

for either, and

start to think of a girl

I used to watch undress

as she stood in her window,

and though

I know it is not healthy for me

to go there,

I go;

watch her stretch and

bend, then

raise the old flagpole:

I used to be her dildo

she my girl

we met

11:00 PM

each night

a cold and distant relationship

that ended

only because

she moved elsewhere.

The Old Ballgame

the baseball got wet in morning
dew
and became slimy,
hard to throw,
and if lost
in the high grass of the
cow pasture
behind the backstop
everyone had to look
among the snakes and cow flops
hot or dry;
the bats we used
were old, worn
my Frank Robinson-32 model
cracked and nailed
together
it burnt my hands whenever
I hit the ball,
some days it was hard
to get nine players
to a side,
some guys had to be
begged before they would play;
the games were fierce,
often bloody;
we played our hearts out,
argued, fought
slid head-first;
some of us
needed to win
more than others.

THE POET SPEAKS:*More perspiration than inspiration went into the making of these poems. Their “being” a result of becoming serious with myself—putting my guts out on the page. And afterward, brutally editing the results. My style is anti-formulaic in the footsteps of the free-versifiers; my chief concern rhythm and pace: how to move the poem down the page, how to create an organic whole out of disparate parts. My language usage strongly influenced by the fairy tales I heard as a child plus the vast store of folkloric sayings used by my semi-literate grandmother (“no fool like an old fool,” “no rest for the wicked” etc.)...Poetry is important only*

to the extent someone attaches importance to it. As reflection and repository of the loftiest most beautiful and fulsome sentiments, poetry is the best and truest record of humankind—thus its significance.

BIO: *Wayne F. Burke's poetry has been widely published online and in print. He has published six full-length poetry collections, most recently DIFLUCAN (BareBack Press, 2019). He lives in the Green Mountain State, aka Vermont (USA).*