

# 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).*