



# **-THE POETRY RAG-**

**-AUGUST 2017-**

*The Poetry Rag - Vol. I, Issue 10 - August 2017*

*Cover Art by Callie Howell*

*The Poetry Rag* is published by two guys in Fargo, ND. If you've picked up *The Rag* before, you'll probably notice some changes with this issue. We hope you like it. We've got a new creative team putting this thing together, and the new dynamic has resulted in a whole new look and feel to the magazine. You'll probably continue to see changes in the coming months as we fine-tune just exactly what we want *The Rag* to be, but we're glad you're here, and we hope you'll bear with us.

We distribute copies around Fargo/Moorhead, Minneapolis/St. Paul, and wherever in-between that we might end up on our wayward travels. If you'd like some copies to magically appear at your favorite bar/coffee shop/casino/whatever, drop us a line and let us know!

We accept submissions at any time, via email only, at [ThePoetryRag@gmail.com](mailto:ThePoetryRag@gmail.com). If you're interested in advertising in *The Rag*, hit up [Bodie@ThePoetryRag.com](mailto:Bodie@ThePoetryRag.com). If you have questions about the publishing/submissions side of things, hit up [Erik@ThePoetryRag.com](mailto:Erik@ThePoetryRag.com).

Check us out at [Facebook.com/ThePoetryRag](https://www.facebook.com/ThePoetryRag).

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Check us out at [www.ThePoetryRag.com](http://www.ThePoetryRag.com).

Check us out.

We'd like to thank these peoples and places for their help and support. This stuff is a lot more work than we thought it would be, and these are the folks who make it easier for us:

- *The Rag* Street Team (Hitchy, Ro-Ro, Hizzy B & The Bears, Strange, Bosen, Lee From The Block, CC Novocaine, Cassidy, Bobby D, Meeks, Mitts, Mugs, Kiddo, Lil Sis Studio, Rings, and KC & The Hawks)
- American Legion Post No. 2
- Steel Toe Brewing
- Marie and John Bergwall
- Neal and Becky Block
- Uncle Kent & Aunt Con-Con
- T-Byrd & The Y
- What Kingswood Needs
- SOTOS
- All the 839 Kids
- All the poets who submitted work (send us more--we need you)

We want to publish your poetry. All you have to do is give us that chance. You been workin' on a poem or two? Send it to us. We wanna read it. And I bet our readers do, too.

**Here in these pages  
you'll find these poems**

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*London Bridge*

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In a whisper  
she sighed

that's true  
but don't you

want something more  
lyrically profound?

With a smile  
or a frown

I glanced  
at my empty glass  
on the ground

cigarette smoke  
still lingering around

looked up  
spoke drunk

Do you mean

like airplane walks  
over tall bridges

Grandma Mary's  
cinnamon toast?

If your title had a name

I imagine it

in a picture frame.

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**Ryan B. Eido - (Davenport, IA)**

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*[I see her briefly hiding]*

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I see her briefly hiding  
beneath her flesh,  
bygone beauty lingers,

her spirit flickers faintly,  
barely visible to the naked eye,  
her holding a tray,

not feeling hands on her  
as she delivers drinks  
to laughing tables.

At home her oldest  
daughter, 12, guards  
the two toddlers --

husband, the abandoner,  
somewhere and nowhere.  
Long dead, she, her

future is her past  
mangled, mauled and  
deceased, discarded

on a fetid heap.  
The bartender reminds  
her to smile

and she laughs  
tears pooling in  
the corner of her eyes.

---

***The River***

---

I am your shit  
I am your dirt  
As long as the roar I create  
Is no louder than mild wind  
Then behold! Your perfect angel  
Beautiful woman  
If mildly blowing,  
Your storm brews  
Shutting me out  
Trashing my being  
Destroying the person I know so well  
And ruining self worth.  
Five o'clock comes  
Your face is still a mystery.  
I call to ask the time and you speak  
Like I should be happy you might be home by 10 after becoming captivated with the river.  
And how I'm jealous of the way you look at that river.  
Because that's the way you used to look at me.  
But somehow, darlin', with the way that water crashes against the currents  
Like the water spattering on the bay  
Was a lot like your fist crashing into my face  
And my tears splattering on the wall.  
So when you're down there, Please.  
Let me know if you found my heart in the Mississippi.

---

***Here For The Ride***

---

I'm just here for the ride  
I got a few things on my mind  
Take the wheel and drive my friend because  
I'm just here for the ride

Just above the shoulder  
Where the lines meet the grass  
And the rhythm of the road helps  
Reflect on the past

There are no shortcuts  
You got a straight shot  
Our only chance for gas is at  
The next truck stop

Just after the sunsets  
You'll see lights across the valley  
Just keep to the left  
And we'll be all right

There are no shortcuts, you got a straight shot  
There are no shortcuts, you got a straight shot  
'Cause I'm just here for the ride  
I've got a few things on my mind  
Take the wheel and drive my friend all night  
'Cause I'm just here for the ride.

---

***The Shadow of Fall***

---

I heard the whisper, loud as a bell  
the torch it came closer, a hand raised from Hell!  
The eyes they were black and gazed at my own,  
the buckle to scar much deeper than bone,  
The hate from within was outwardly poured, the reasons unknown for a treacherous sword!  
Now lions can maul and tigers can maim, but what difference is there of another insane!  
Which brings us to mind, in thought if we may...yes, someone heard, 'cause we heard they!  
Now time it did pass, and in fall there was placed, by the grave of the soul with the unspoken  
face...one dainty rose in semblance of fear...one dainty rose for each precious year!

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**ED Daniels - (Roanoke, VA)**

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***Pursuit***

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I could run away tonight just to hide from tomorrow,  
if hiding means trying to run from the sorrow.  
We bet, steal, and borrow to eat with winners,  
in a world so corroded and tainted from sinners.  
So pray for your conscience and pray that this heals.  
You'll never forget how hard the floor feels.  
Don't laugh among faces, you can't see eyes.  
They're running the race without sight of the prize.  
Unwilling to compromise; however, will you resurrect?  
The hate you inspire inside me tends to infect.  
I am just gonna have my way with what's mine,  
and leave you with your portrait you painted for the blind.

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**Jessica Rachal - (Alexandria, LA)**

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*Here at my Window, Slowly Going Mad*

---

I've never been as patient as I am here at my window.  
I watch the dogs being walked, and the strung out  
party hounds with their bloody noses.  
Early-morning commuters with coffee and bleeding hearts.  
I've seen the same yesterday, and the day before.  
Here at my window, slowly going mad  
I catch quick glimpses of movement out of the  
corner of my eyes,  
and blame it mostly on the booze.  
I much prefer the dark, as the mailmen are  
sleeping, and the stars never knock on my door.  
I'm out of cigarettes and food,  
and a trip outside is a trip into the bear's den.  
All those humans make me so tired.  
This might be the answer to all my problems.

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*What I Have Left*

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3 cigarettes

A soft cat

Two hours of moonlight

And a dollar and 34 cents.

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**Nora Hyde - (Fargo, ND)**

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*Sky Assembly*

---

Being the real you is something I like  
But I'm the mirror  
We're both a knife  
Silence sitting next to my breath  
While I stand one foot  
Waiting for next  
Catering the best  
The worst  
A distraction  
A Yet  
So I serve  
Being the real you is something I like  
Not what I deserve

Your influence  
I see I hear I smell  
I reach out  
my hands lay at my sides  
Like a problem  
I'm addicted  
The glory of my choice  
Conflict  
You touch your hand  
My face my chest  
Waiting for next  
I cater the best  
Dismiss memories  
My duty  
Collects  
While you wait  
Long time pair  
Lost in a rush of despair  
You turn to the window  
To wait for their

Being the real you is something I like

A mirror at your back  
The metaphor never lost.

---

## *My Oldest Friend*

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Cast into the world with an anvil mind  
my brown and mild eyes  
hold weight from many lifetimes.  
A shadow holds onto my pale  
and bone-carved skin  
like the stars cling to the ceiling at night.  
Druid moons and hope-spun blues  
rush to meet my empty soul  
and my tongue is fat with ancient spells  
casting away the demons  
for a good night's rest.  
This is an ode to my dearest friend  
a most contemptuous and vile amigo  
a liar and a saint  
who brings me peaks and valleys and  
leaves me alone in broken wells  
staring at the blood-soaked sun  
crossing the meridian with a smile.  
I am too kind and too weak to deny  
the warm comfort of an old friend's company, hello's and goodbye's.  
One day the shadow will dissipate  
the way dew eventually goes back into the clouds  
but today I invite it in and share a cup of tea.  
We exchange stories  
and we cry  
for all the time  
we have spent together.

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***Reformation***

---

I'm like an old building full of broken windows. Glass fragments sleep on my dusty floors. My walls are cracked and riddled with holes. The water seeps in and rusts my metal bones. I'm brittle from the inside out. My skeleton bends and folds. One strong gust from the north and I might cave myself in. The people walk by me with caution in their step. I used to be a colossus. Now I'm like a ghost in a shell standing in the shadow of my former self.

---

**Eric Perrine - (Fairmont, MN)**

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*Crooked*

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How can anyone see straight when they were born crooked?

Don't you see the world?  
No, you are just as the blindfolded balance-keeper;  
so beautiful yet ignorant.  
Naive to what is right in front of you.

Comfortable with a blindfold.  
Perhaps it hides the tears,  
perhaps it is a shield:  
to avoid observing the inequalities of the scale.  
Never balanced,  
Never level,

Crooked.

How can anyone see straight with a blindfold on?

This blindfold has now transformed,  
Evolved.  
Brainwashed babies with rosé-tinted pupils since day 1.  
Rose-colored mirrors were originally installed in ships to trick the seasick passengers  
distorting the discolored skin.  
Now our rosé gold iPhones tint our media  
Rose-tinted pixels from our "smart" TVs show us current events.  
Current events that the white/male/corporations/government approve, that is.

Skewed

Crooked

Crooked cops give crooked lawyers jobs who then turn into crooked judges, senators,  
presidents.  
They allow this to continue.  
They encourage it.

Mutating a once possible place of equality and peace into an unrecognizable nation of the blind  
ignorant brainwashed and crooked.

Crooked

How can anyone see straight?

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***Thea, Untipped, Behind the Counter***

---

I answered  
Murray County  
under anonymous spin art  
\$30  
the trigger  
on chicken strips  
and sell  
high alert  
Royal River  
so social and pink and  
had another consult  
was back down with Lucy  
and Klonopin

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**Jakob C. Ortiz - (Huntington Beach, CA)**

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## *Grief*

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my son died.  
age 25.  
suicide.

now i scribble  
my pain on  
lined yellow paper.

i'm told to stop talking.  
"you enable yourself and others."  
no. YOU need a bitch slap.

my daughter sobs her soul out,  
her heaving body battering mine  
as i hold her tight.

people evaporate from my life  
afraid of catching my grief.  
i choose who stays.

yes, i'm angry,  
but not at him.  
he tried so hard.

my rage is aimed  
at those do-gooders  
who do no good.  
the "find closure."  
"you need to heal."  
"i don't want to talk about it."

i stand in my grief.  
i face it and accept it.  
i give it its due.

i have an elephant  
etched on my arm.  
( tattoos tell my story).

he has a name,  
this elephant no one speaks of.  
JOSH.

they, the silent ones,  
think they are helpful.  
they compound my pain.

they speak of their problems.  
i listen and nod my head.  
i want to scream.

MY SON DIED.  
AGE 25.  
FUCK YOU, SUICIDE.

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***Gambling Problem***

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Lucky on the arm  
Between the bow and shoulder  
Lucky on the cuff  
He learned as he got older  
Restless heart and hands  
Have tried to hold on tight  
But the shakes and the mirage  
Lead to forever endless night

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**Jina Marlow - (Morris, MN)**

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***Our Hearts***

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Our hearts,  
Habitual  
Holier-than-thou  
Know-it-all  
Free-range  
Double-speakin'  
Twice as mean an'  
Spittin acid-tongued  
From split-lips didn't know were bleedin'  
Kissin  
Killin  
Top-of-world  
Dealin from the bottom of the deck motherfuckers!  
Hold on to your oh shits  
And grip them rails tight  
Ain't any place to strap in  
On this death trap  
Rocket car  
Thunder clap  
Race ship  
Too hip to be hurt  
Burning that sun  
Cause it got too close.  
Our Tunnel-o-Love...  
(My Equal is sweet,  
Even through the sour patch.)  
It may kill us yet,  
My lover  
My friend  
My...  
  
...partner-in-crime,  
But you know babe,  
It's a hell-of-a-ride,  
Tickets are cheap  
And it's one of a kind.

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**Nicholas Harr - (Fargo, ND)**

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# RED RIVER TRIVIA

Fargo, ND

## September Trivia Themes

SAVED BY  
THE BELL

FRIENDS

SEINFELD

DISNEY

POKEMON

BOB'S BURGERS

GOLDEN  
GIRLS

THAT '70s SHOW

'80s POP CULTURE

GAME OF THRONES

For Dates and Locations, visit  
[Facebook.com/RedRiverTrivia](https://www.facebook.com/RedRiverTrivia)

# *The Poetry Rag's*

## Songwriting/Lyrics Contest

So here's the deal: *The Rag* is sponsoring a contest, open to any/all musical artists--bands, solo artists, duos...whatever. We like music, and we want you to dazzle us with yours. We want to read your lyrics. We want to hear your songs.

Submissions for the contest are open now and should be sent to **ThePoetryRag@gmail.com**. The winner(s) will be announced in a future issue and will receive \$100 cash, and maybe some other stuff we've got lying around. We don't know. We just sort of figure this shit out as we go.

There are two steps to entering:

**Step 1:** Submit the lyrics to an original song, in poem form (open to your interpretation--you can do free form, free verse, prose form--whatever feels good to you).

**Step 2:** Submit a video or audio recording of the song being performed. (This, too, is open to interpretation. It can be a professionally-produced video or recording, a live performance video, or you can just hit the 'record' button on your cellphone while you belt that shit out in the shower. Whatever works for you works for us.)

We will accept submissions for several months. With your permission, we will likely be posting some of the entry videos on our social media and that sort of thing. The whole point of *The Rag* is to get art out there, so if we can bring a few more eyes and ears to your music, well heck, that's something we'd like to do.

We will choose a winner, which will be announced in a future issue, and that artist will win \$100 cash and will also be our **FEATURED ARTIST OF THE MONTH** for whichever issue we are on when we announce the winner (like I said, we figure shit out as we go--we don't know exactly when this will be, but it will be, like, before 2018...maybe).

So that's it! Send us your lyrics! Send us your videos! We want to hum your songs and spread your music around and maybe even give you 100 bucks! GO!

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These are our sponsors. They keep *The Poetry Rag* free. If you use their services, be sure to tell 'em *The Rag* sent ya! Can't guarantee you'll get a discount or anything, but you'll get to say a thing people say in movies! Wanna be a sponsor? Get at [Bodie@ThePoetryRag.com](mailto:Bodie@ThePoetryRag.com); he's your guy.

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### **Red River Trivia - (Fargo, ND)**

- Themed and unthemed pub trivia
- Available for private parties and events
- For info, visit [Facebook.com/RedRiverTrivia](https://www.facebook.com/RedRiverTrivia)
- (218) 329-2999

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### **Lypse Studio - (Sioux Falls, SD/Fargo, ND)**

- Recording/Mixing/Live Sound
- Rowan Toner - Audio Technician
- (320) 305-2327
- [rowan@lypsestudio.com](mailto:rowan@lypsestudio.com)

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### **Callie Howell Custom Art - (Ortonville, MN)**

- Available for Commissions
- (605) 467-0489
- [Callie.Sue.Howell@gmail.com](mailto:Callie.Sue.Howell@gmail.com)
- [Facebook.com/calexyart](https://www.facebook.com/calexyart)

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### **Paula's Steakhouse and Lounge - (Mayville, ND)**

- Good people serving up good food at a good price
- (701) 788-4026

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### **Traveling Vineyard - (Ortonville, MN)**

- Maggie Novak - Wine Guide
- [MaggieJeanNovak@gmail.com](mailto:MaggieJeanNovak@gmail.com)
- [www.travelingvineyard.com/guide/498109](http://www.travelingvineyard.com/guide/498109)

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### **Moondog Production & Engineering - (Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN)**

- Nick Stotesbery - Engineer/Producer
- (320) 305-0401
- [Nicholas.Stotesbery@gmail.com](mailto:Nicholas.Stotesbery@gmail.com)