



-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. If you're interested in advertising in *The Rag*, hit up Bodie@ThePoetryRag.com. If you have questions about the publishing/submissions side of things, hit up Erik@ThePoetryRag.com.

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

Check us out at [Instagram.com/ThePoetryRag](https://www.instagram.com/ThePoetryRag).

Check us out at 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

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.

Ryan B. Eido - (Davenport, IA)

[I see her briefly hiding]

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 splattering 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!

ED Daniels - (Roanoke, VA)

Pursuit

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.

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.

What I Have Left

3 cigarettes

A soft cat

Two hours of moonlight

And a dollar and 34 cents.

Nora Hyde - (Fargo, ND)

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

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.

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)

Crooked

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?

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

Jakob C. Ortiz - (Huntington Beach, CA)

Grief

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.

Gambling Problem

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

Jina Marlow - (Morris, MN)

Our Hearts

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.

Nicholas Harr - (Fargo, ND)

RED RIVER TRIVIA

Fargo, ND

September Trivia Themes

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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!

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; he's your guy.

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

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

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

Callie Howell Custom Art - (Ortonville, MN)

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

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

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

Traveling Vineyard - (Ortonville, MN)

- Maggie Novak - Wine Guide
- MaggieJeanNovak@gmail.com
- www.travelingvineyard.com/guide/498109

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

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