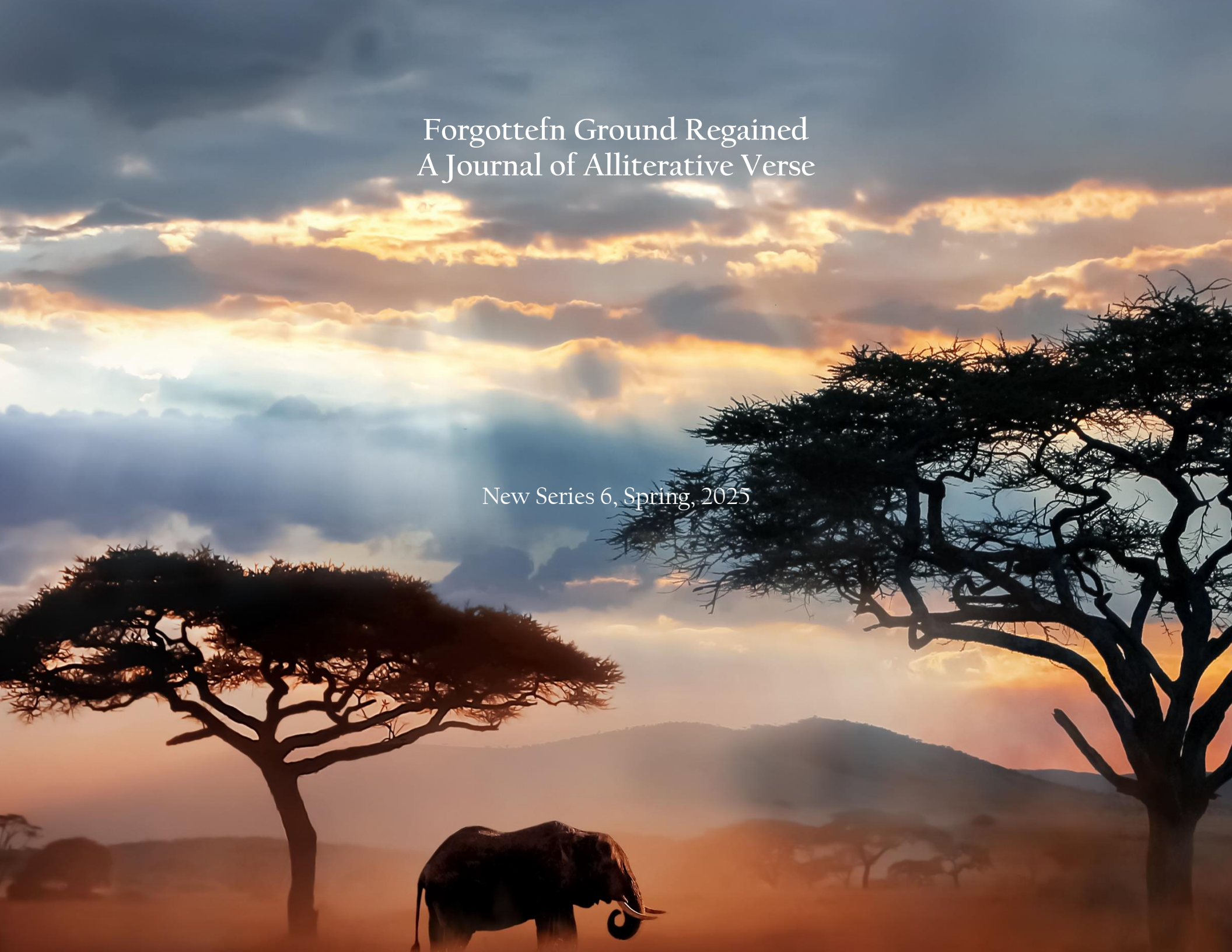
Forgottefn Ground Regained
A Journal of Alliterative Verse

New Series 6, Spring, 2025



Masthead

Forgotten Ground Regained (ISSN 2996-6353) is owned and edited by Paul Douglas Deane at 183 Millerick Ave., Lawrenceville, New Jersey and published at alliteration.net. Submissions in or about alliterative verse are welcome.[1] You can email the editor at pdeane@alliteration.net. To join Forgotten Ground Regained's email discussion forum, navigate to the following link: https://gaggle.email/join/forgotten-ground-regained@gaggle.email. The journal is now open for submissions for the Summer, 2025, issue, with an emphasis on the theme, "Protests, Opinions, Prophetic Voices, Flytings and Poetic Battles". You can read the full call for submissions later in this issue.

Contributors

Judd Bemmels is an evolutionary biologist with a special affection for trees. He first became interested in alliterative verse after reading translations of the medieval alliterative classics and through the Heathen (Germanic Neopagan) community. His poetry is inspired by an appreciation for the natural world, an interest in folklore and mythology, and time spent in the woods where he has lived, including British Columbia, the Midwest, Deep South, and Germany.

Adam Bolivar is a formal poet of dark fantasy, a weird fiction writer and a playwright for marionettes with a particular interest in alliterative verse, balladry and "Jack" tales. He is the author of *The Lay of Old Hex* (Hippocampus Press, 2017), *The Ettinfell of Beacon Hill* (Jackanapes Press, 2021), *Ballads for the Witching Hour* (Hippocampus Press 2022) and *A Wheel of Ravens* (Jackanapes Press, 2023), a collection of original alliterative verse. A native of Boston, Massachusetts, he now resides in Portland, Oregon.

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[1] Note: In poetry that follows the rules of Old English alliterative verse, editors usually mark the caesura, or break between half-lines, by adding extra space. However, in some Old English manuscripts the caesura (when marked) was indicated by a small, raised dot, or *conus*. Therefore, in poems where the poet chose to mark the caesura, I prefer to use the conus where no other punctuation is present, unless the form of the poem makes another format more effective, or the author specifically directed otherwise.

[2] **N.B.:** No part of this publication may be used or reproduced in any manner for the purpose of training artificial intelligence technologies or systems. Where no image credit is provided, the image is from the Microsoft Word stock image library.

Jesse Keith Butler is an award-winning poet based in Ottawa, Ontario. His work bridges traditional and contemporary poetic forms, rooted in his experience of the life of faith. His first book, *The Living Law*, was published in 2024 by Darkly Bright Press.

Michael Champagne teaches classical languages and literature privately in Breaux Bridge, Louisiana. He first learned about poetic meter a week before starting an English Literature degree and spent the next decade exploring the linguistic foundations of poetry in English, Latin, and Greek. His essays, poetry, and criticism are occasionally to be found at michaelchampagne.com.

Frank Coffman is a retired professor of English and journalism at Rock Valley College in Rockford, Illinois and founder and moderator of the Weird Poets Society.

AJ Deane is an actor, director, and Pushcart-nominated SFF poet. He is also co-founder of QuirkHouse Theatre Company and a member of the 2024 Mercury Theatre's Creatives cohort. He lives in Suffolk with his wife, two cats, and many books. Not enough books, of course.

Paul D. Deane is a computational linguist by vocation and poet by avocation. He has edited Forgotten Ground Regained (the website) since 1999, and its quarterly journal since 2023.

Matthew Dickerson is an author and professor at Middlebury College. He studied Old English Literature at Cornell while earning a PhD in Computer Science. His published fiction includes the medieval historical novel *The Rood and the Torc* (2014) and the fantasy novel *The Gifted* (2015). His other books include *The Voices of Rivers* (2019), *The Salvelinus, the Sockeye, and the Egg-Sucking Leech* (2024), and *Birds in the Sky, Fish in the Sea* (2025). He has also published numerous books and chapters on the writings of J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis.

Joshua C. Frank works in the field of statistics and lives in the American heartland. He has been published in *The Society of Classical Poets*, *The Lyric*, *Westward Quarterly*, *New English Review*, and many more, and his short fiction has been published in several journals as well.

Rahul Gupta, whom Tom Shippey once described as, "...the most accomplished, imaginative, and technically-correct exponent of alliterative verse since Tolkien", obtained his Ph.D. from the University of York in alliterative poetics. He has published poems, prose, and verse-translations in journals such as *Agenda*, *Long Poem Magazine*, *Temenos*, *Spectral Realms*, *Society of Classical Poets*, and anthologies including *Speculative Poetry and the Modern Alliterative Revival* (Fairleigh Dickinson, 2023) alongside C. S. Lewis and Auden. His main work is an Arthuriad in Old English- and Norse versifications.

Kathryn Ann Hill is a copyeditor and a writer of Christian verse with a focus on the Incarnation and the Sacraments. She has published over ninety poems in various publications and eight books of verse, five of those containing (mostly) alliterative verse on Biblical themes: *The Song of Joseph and Selected Poems*, *The Song of Daniel and Selected Poems*, *Tree of Life: Sixty Poems from Twelve Years*, *A Verse Vigil and Selected Poems*, and *Now God Is Flesh: Poems and Pictures for Christmastide*.

David Jalajel's poetry publications include *Moon Ghazals*, *Cthulhu on Lesbos*, *Rhyme & Refrain* and *Snapshots from the Ark*. His poetry has been published in a variety of online and print journals, including *Otoliths*, *Shampoo*, *experiential-experimental-literature*, *Recursive Angel*, *The New Post-Literate*, *Gulf Coast*, *Anti-*, *Lynx*, *Mizna*, and *Eclectica*.

Math Jones is a British poet & a practicing Pagan, author of *Sabrina Bridge* (Black Pear Press), & *The Knotsman* (Arachne Press). His work has appeared in various journals, & anthologies, including *Speculative Poetry & the Alliterative Revival* & on *Forgotten Ground Regained*.

Liz Kendall is a poet and non-fiction writer based in Surrey. Her co-authored book *Meet Us and Eat Us: Food plants from around the world* celebrates biodiversity in poetry, prose, and photography. Poetry publications include Candlestick Press, The Hedgehog Poetry Press, *Flights*, *Mslexia*, and *Amethyst Review*. Find her online at theedgeofthewoods.uk, on Facebook @rowansarered, on Instagram @meetusandeatus.

Steven Knepper edits *New Verse Review: A Journal of Lyric and Narrative Poetry* and is Bruce C. Gottwald '81 Chair for Academic Excellence at Virginia Military Institute."

Leonard Kress has published poetry, translations, non-fiction, and fiction in *Missouri Review*, *Tupelo*, *Massachusetts Review*, *Iowa Review*, *American Poetry Review*, *Harvard Review*, etc. Among his collections are *The Orpheus Complex*, *Walk Like Bo Diddley*. *Living in the Candy Store and Other Poems* and his new verse translation of the Polish Romantic epic, *Pan Tadeusz* by Adam Mickiewicz. *Craniotomy Sestinas* appeared in 2021. He currently teaches at Temple University.

John C. Mannone has poems in *Windhover*, *North Dakota Quarterly*, *Poetry South*, *Baltimore Review*, and others. He won the Dwarf Stars Award (2020); was awarded an HWA Scholarship (2017) and a Jean Ritchie Fellowship (2017) in Appalachian literature; and served as judge for the National Federation of State Poetry Societies (2018). His collections include *Disabled Monsters*, *Flux Lines*, Weatherford Award nominee *Song of the Mountains*, *Sacred Flute*, and *Dark Wind, Dark Water*, a forthcoming horror fiction collection. He edits poetry for *Abyss & Apex* and *Silver Blade*. A former physics professor, he teaches mathematics and creative writing in a Tennessee magnet high school.

Daniel D. McCollum is a PhD student studying Upper Midwestern and Catholic history at the University of Aberdeen, as well as an amateur film maker. He hails from Wisconsin and still considers Fargo his home away from Home. Most of his poems recount the misadventures of he and his friends in that mythic frozen city.

Tim Miller's books include *Bone Antler Stone* (High Window Press) and *To the House of the Sun* (S4N Books). His poetry has appeared in *Crannog*, *Southword*, *Londongrip*, *Poethead*, and others across the US and UK. He is online at wordandsilence.com, and can be heard on the podcast *Human Voices Wake Us*.

Shelly Nir is a bibliophile with a degree in classical languages and an abiding interest in ancient/ medieval history and literature, and enjoys experimenting with the traditional poetic styles of the societies she studies. Her poetry has appeared in *Andromeda Spaceways Magazine*.

Margaret Noodin is an American poet, a teacher of the Anishinaa bemowin (Ojibwe) language, and professor of English and Native American studies at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Her publications include Weweni: *Poems in Anishinaabemowin and English* (2015) and *What the Chickadee Knows* (2020).

J.M. Pitt is a poet and translator from the hinterlands of Nebraska. His poems have appeared in *Snakeskin* and *Blue Unicorn*. He enjoys reading, writing, walking, birdwatching, and gardening.

Jeffrey Rensch took a(n) MFA degree at Stanford in 1974 (50 years ago!) with Helen Pinkerton Trimpi and other excellent teachers. After a longish career in technology, he retired recently to resume his career as a poet and curious reader.

Liv Ross is an urban monk, a poet, an essayist, and a reviewer. She serves on the *Traces Journal* editorial team as Reviews Editor for Poetry. She also practices gardening, pipe-smoking, leather-working, and mischief. She has been published in *Fare Forward*, *The Front Porch Republic*, *Silence and Starsong*, *Solum Journal*, and *VoeglinView*. She can also be found on Instagram as @liv ross poetry, or on her Substack account, @theabbeyofcuriosity.

Mahendra Singh is an illustrator, author and art director in Montreal. Recent projects include a graphic novel version of Lewis Carroll's *Hunting of the Snark* (Melville House), a kid's picture book, *The Extraordinary Adventures of Little Krishna* (Feral House) and a political novel, *American Candide* (Rosarium Publishing).

Lisa Timpf is a retired HR and communications professional who lives in Simcoe, Ontario. Her poetry has appeared in *New Myths*, *Star*Line*, and other venues. Her haibun poetry collection, *In Days to Come*, is available from Hiraeth Publishing. You can find out more about Lisa's writing projects at http://lisatimpf.blogspot.com/.

After 20 years teaching English, **Dave Wynne-Jones** obtained an MA in creative writing at Manchester Metropolitan University and has published two poetry pamphlets, *Kidstuff* and *The Way Taken* (Delfryn, 2022). Other poems have appeared in anthologies compiled by Renard Press, Live Canon, Vole, Broken Spine and Bristol's Lyra Festival and in magazines such as *Orbis*, *Dark Mountain*, *Dreamcatcher*, *Dawntreader*, *PN Review* and ezines *Wildfire Words*, *Morphrog and Ink Sweat & Tears*. He is also a regular performer at Spoken Word venues.

Introduction

In this issue, we move into a space where feelings run high: things people consider sacred, even if other people consider them myths or legends. It's a space that was beloved to the Inklings. Both J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis loved the Northernness of Germanic legend and song, though Tolkien was a Catholic, and Lewis a Protestant, Christian. Before the last century, Greek and Roman mythology had much the same resonance for anyone who learned (as was then required of gentlemen!) how to read Latin, if not also Greek.

This issue of *Forgotten Ground Regained* includes poems written by people coming from a variety of backgrounds, including professing Christians, at least one Jew and Muslim, adherents of a revived Germanic Heathenism, and people with no religious background at all. I believe, however, that they share an understanding that poetry can bring to life what it means to live within a sacred tradition and to experience, deeply and richly, the riches that come from what some will term myths and legends, and others will term Sacred Writ. I am a committed Christian. You will see that instantly when you read my own contribution, a paraphrase of the 4th Psalm. But I believe I have arranged these poems in a way that not only respects the perspectives of each tradition, but sets them in conversation with one another.

Here's a quick map to the poems by tradition.

Jesse Keith Butler's excerpt from "The Lawgiver", "Beneath the Buzzing of my Brainstem", and "Immersion" represent a Biblical perspective. Similarly, Shelly Nir's "Rock of My Refuge", John C. Mannone's "In the Beginning", my poem, "Where Echoes Call and Crash", Jeffrey Rensch's "The Leaf", Daniel D McCollum's "A Hipster Hymn to St. Demetrios", David Jalajel's "Seraph's Milk", Liv Ross's "Hannah, Prophet of Hope", Steve Knepper's "Gawain", Kathryn Ann Hills' "You Delight in Mercy and Manifest Love", Matthew Dickerson's "Water into Wine", and to at least some extent, Liz Kendall's "Ancestor Doors", draw in some way shape or form on Biblical (or at least, Judeo/Christian/Muslim), themes.

Another set of poems draw on the Norse tradition preserved by the *Poetic Edda*. These include Math Jones' poems "Listen, He Whispers" and "Yggr", Judd Bemmels' "Skaði and Njörðr", and Tim Miller's "Y›mir" and "Winter". Adam Bolivar's "Mistletoe" and J.M. Pitt's "Maxim" draw from the Old English tradition, while Rahul Gupta's *Grim Goes Fishing* (based on the Havelok legend from the Lincolnshire coast of the author's birth), offers an Anglo-Danish texture that combines Beowulfian narrative with Norse kennings and mythology.

Close kin, but from a different mythos, are the Irish legends embedded in Frank Coffman's "Samhain at the Graveyard" and "Keening of the Banshee". Slightly further afield are the classically inspired poems: Leonard Kress's "The War Worth Waging (based on a Horace ode), David Wynne-Jones' "Jilted Princess Finds Solace in Wine and Cats", based on the Greek tale of Theseus and Ariadne, and two alliterative fragments from Michael Champagne, re-presenting the openings of the *Iliad* and the *Aeneid*.

That leaves a range of poems reflecting other perspectives. Mahendra Singh's "Invocation" provides an alliterative version of a Hindu invocation traditional to Vedic theater. Joshua Frank's "Colors" translates a classical Japanese (and Buddhist) poem. Lisa Timpf's "Earth Mother" takes a rather more New Age perspective. A.J. Deane's "Loggen Crown" is a fantasy poem and hence somewhat more ambiguous as to the mythos it inhabits.

As always, the poems cover a range of styles, from traditional alliterative long lines to alliterative free verse. Many of the poems are best described as inspired by, and in conversation with, the alliterative tradition. They make structural use of alliteration, but often in innovative ways. The Norse and Classically inspired poems tend to be strictest in their use of traditional Germanic alliterative meter. As is his policy, Rahul Gupta's "Grim Goes Fishing" follows Old English metrics, except for one section in Old Norse fornyrðislag (describing a Viking longship). Another section near the end deploys Old English-style hypermetric lines. His poems follow Siewersian meter as closely as modern English allows and is therefore worth emulating if you want to produce Beowulf-like effects.

This issue contains one review: Margaret Noodin's review of Matthew Brennan's long alliterative verse narrative, *The Sea-Crossing of Saint Brendan*. As usual, I have a "Publications Noted" section at the end of the issue. Take a look! There are some really good discoveries in there. And finally, check out the call for submissions.

Jesse Keith Butler

From "The Lawgiver"[3]

א

Blessed are the blameless who live in your law
The strong single-minded The simple who focus
Toward this one purpose they half understand
While my skin was seared with the glory I saw

Blessed are those who walk steady and clear
The highway you've sliced through the wide wilderness
Blessed are those If they've ever existed
I've kept your commands Don't abandon me here

ב

The young will be true when they serve you alone
And give up their government to no other gods
With seventy elders I crested your mountain
You stood on a pavement of sapphire stone

We looked upon God We ate and we drank
Then you called me into your flickering cloud
I stayed forty days as your fire filled my mind
Don't let the markings you've made there grow blank

ג

O Lord let me live and I'll follow your word
Uncover my eyes to the splendour of your law
Your presence expanded and spiralled above me
All alone on the mountain My strained vision blurred

I cowered in the cleft In the grasp of your grace
While the shadow of your glory singed the grass off the slope
I would rather be ashes than fade from your presence
I'm a stranger on earth Please don't hide your face

ד

Raise me up with your word from the grip of my grave
My despair has brought me down to the dust
Give me life in your law Lift this dead leaden weight
The gods we've imagined won't manage to save

I ground up their sin and I forced them to swallow
They gagged and gasped as they guzzled it down
I watched you withdrawing deep into the desert
But leave us the wake of your wisdom to follow

ה

Turn our eyes away from empty desire
And let us live again in your way
We've known your reproach The earth opened wide
The unearthly snakes slithered up spitting fire

On the way from Mount Hor to the Red Sea
I cast your bronze serpent and lifted it up
Set your servant firmly in your word
In your goodness give life again to me

ו

Stretch your love out to me steadily strung
With precision Like fire in an unburning bush
You don't speak in vain I am who I am
Don't take your word of truth from my tongue

My uncovered feet found wide open space
West of the wilderness On the mountain of God
Now I'll testify to your name before kings
And hold up unhidden my unburning face

[3] *Excerpted from "The Lawgiver," first published in* The Living Law: Poems. *Wichita, Kansas: Darkly Bright Press, 2024.*

Jesse Keith Butler

Beneath the Buzzing of My Brainstem[4]

Beneath the buzzing of my brainstem breathes
an unseen life—an inner light-source, pure
and pulsing as the seared shell of a star—
unblurred, blossoming, bellowing heat. Beneath

my surface stirring swells a silent ocean—
as subtle as the tide singing through a seashell—
unsounded, unfathomed breadth shoring this brittle
crust of consciousness from crumbling, from crushing

its own mass to sand. There's so much I never see,
while I scamper after some new stimulus—
short-circuiting through the swirling shallows. Unless
my grip is loosened. Unless you lessen me—

and, for a moment of expansive quiet,
I feel the fist that holds my heart in its hollow
unclench, and unspanned space comes spilling through—
as my ribcage opens, like a flower to the light.

Photograph by Mike Pennington

[4] First published in *Ekstasis Magazine*, Issue 9.

Sargasso (image by Coughdrop12)

Jesse Keith Butler

Immersion[5]

After T. S. Eliot

Yes—

We've lingered in the chambers of this sea-
slag-crusted wreckage—derelict, depth-raked, decrepit.
We grasp up past forgetfulness—hardening like a habit—
for perfect sun-furnished surfaces, flapped over distantly

by seagulls. Wreathed with seaweed, red and brown
like clotted blood, we've sunk deeper into ourselves.
The tide cringes back from us. The moon halves
its heft. Our unwinding dreams drift and drag us down

until human voices wake us. And we drown,
gasping and ghastly. And we drown, swamped in our clothes.
And we drown, grasping helpless hands. But all this time life grows
up soundlessly in us—deep, undisturbed, down

below our brittleness, it brims to daylight—the upsurge
of something pure and urgent and eager to emerge.

[5] First published in *The Chained Muse*

Shelly Nir

Rock of My Refuge

Rock of my Refuge,
  Your praises I proclaim.
Far, far away,
  In familiar fields,
The orchard sheds sweet scent,
  And the breeze bears soft blossoms—
But here amid the stones and scarps and scree,
  Among the caves and the clefts and the canyons,
Somewhere in the starless night
  The wolf in silence watches me.

Rock of my Refuge,
  In hymns I hail you.
Far, far away,
  In a humble house,
My mother labours at her loom,
  And my bride is baking bread—
But here amid the cliffs and crests and crags,
  Among the peaks and the plateaus and the pinnacles,
Somewhere in the starless night
  The kite in silence circles me.

Rock of my Refuge,
  A psalm to you I sing.
Far, far away
  My heart's own home
    Waits for me unwearied:
My mother's arms will clasp me,
  My bride to her bosom will hold me,
    And children's laughter will lift my heart—
For here amid the rocks and ridges and ravines,
  Among the grottoes and the gullies and the gorges,
Somewhere in the starless night
  God in silence guards me.

John C. Mannone

In the Beginning

When winds of stars blow with their light
The deep black dawn glows deaf to dark
And kindled sparks flow, slaying night
A start, then spawn shows life's first mark

At first, something sacred spoken sounded
    out of nothing, no not a thing
      not even time or space

And out of heaven hovered a holy wind
    over the face of the formless void
      and from it came such grace

Then star's fire filled the emptiness
    and there was light

And then the grasses grew,
    and flowers flourished
      and rested in the night

Then fish had filled the fledgling seas,
    their scales silvery and bright

And birds began to bring their song
    their feathers fraught with flight

And critters crawled
    and slithered, snakes
      while others only ran:
    and all were great in their own right
But of the beasts, best born was man

    who has the power, who has the might
    to honor or destroy everything in sight

Audio Version

Paul D. Deane

Where Echoes Call and Crash (After Psalm 4)[6]

I walk alone where echoes call and crash
Against a sky whose silence overpowers all my pain.
Please hear me, help me, Lord, relieve My heart:
O God whose ways are right and good
In mercy grant my prayer.

I stand alone, astounded at the faithlessness of friends
Who trade God's truth for shadows, His glory for their shame.
How long will liars twist the truth,
Delude themselves, delight in idols and deceit?
But God reserves the godly to Himself,
Delights to hear their prayer.

Angry, alone – how hard not to hate –
How hard to hold back, not to slip into sin.
When I walk my heart burns, when I lie down my loss
Is too bitter to bear. Be silent, my soul, And rest!
Give God His due and trust
Yourself into His care.

They say, "Will God save us? Or give us good things?
How long must we wait for proof of His love?"
Lord, lift the light of Your face on me, fill me
With gladness greater
Than their harvest songs:
True comfort is in prayer.

I can lie down alone, for Your Spirit and power
Are my constant companions to soothe me to sleep.
My safety, assurance, security come
From God,
Faithful, Eternal, Omnipotent Lord
Whose presence shines in prayer.

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[6] *The Editor:* I wrote this poem as part of a sequence of alliterative takes on some of the individual Psalms (Psalms 1-8) that I wrote between 1997 and 2000. At the time, I was experimenting with different arrangements of alliteration and variations on the 14th century bob-and-wheel, with and without rhyme.

Jeffrey Rensch

The Leaf

I felt his hand – the harrow of fingers
as I dropped down the dreary night
praying his touch betokened God
and not a demon – but the fingers dug
into my disconsolate dream,
drew out my blood and brooding – bitter tears,
tears of morose remorse – useless!
Outside, this forest was fully his
and the leaves shoved underfoot – his own.
I picked up the most cracked – which crackling
leaf could hurt my hand the most.
Then something crawled – along – into –
under my hand, gone hiding there.
I'd held the dry-cracked hand of Christ
and had not reckoned what I held.
I let the dead leaf blow away
but I couldn't sleep without my Lord.
And the wind let it all blow loose,
the denial and then the deep regret,
all equally part of the as if past.

Photo by Paul Piaget

Liz Kendall

Ancestor Doors

The blade of my father's first letter knife;
cheap plastic grip, but intact for all that.
The lip of the lid of the button box
that lived its life in my grandmother's flat.
The tarnished and scratched silver tablespoon
that doled out the dog's rank food from its tin.
The cracked maroon covers of Tennyson,
a child's rogue practice at writing within.
Those worn turns of phrase and words from the past
creeping in through the cracks in a tired tongue.
The memory ache in the heart and flesh
that yearns for bed when soft church bells are rung.
These are the shapes of the ancestor doors.
My ancestors. What are the shapes of yours?

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[7] Originally published in the Society of Classical Poets, July 18, 2024 (https://classicalpoets.org/2024/07/colors-by-kukai-translated-by-joshua-c-frank/)

Joshua C. Frank, translator[7]

Kukai **(空海) (774-835)**

Colors

Colors, fragrant like the flowers,
Fade to ash in final hours,
Extinguished, gone, returning never.
No earthborn life can last forever.
Depart today from your dependence,
Across the summit of transcendence:
Just quell your lusts and quit your schemes
And drunkenness and lazy dreams.

Original Japanese:

いろは

いろはにほへと
ちりぬるを
わかよたれそ
つねならむ
うゐのおくやま
けふこえて
あさきゆめみし
ゑひもせす

Iroha

Iroha nihoheto
Chirinuru wo
Wakayo tareso
Tsune naramu
Uwino okuyama
Kefu koete
Asaki yume mishi
Wehimo sesu

Daniel D. McCollum

A Hipster Hymn to St. Demetrios

Fargo, ND: Fall, 2010

War-weary Demetrios warden of Sirmium
Oh, saintly slayer of the sinner Kaloyen
Myrrh-moistened martyr of soldiers
Who was proudly pierced by the pins of war
At the dictate of Diocletian the damned Caesar.

Your image is now immortalized in amber wood
Where you ride a rose-gold and rearing steed
Your lace lying lazily in your legionnaire arms
While emboldened besiegers battle in the fore.

Thank you, oh theopolimistes for your thoughtful kindness
In forgiving we fickle and foolish young men
Who once wound our way widdershins, thrice round
The Bill Meyer's Building the abode of our companion
Your image aloft with incense bore before you
As we mouthed and muttered a Monty Python chant.
And passerbys pointed and laughed at our peculiar procession.
Our whimsy-welcome to you oh wise and patient one
Into the abode of my bestie, boorish but sincere

For all of our foolishness you were faithful to us
Protecting our persons from perils absurd
Which came from our calling to carouse and party.
Though the smudge smoke often smelled skunky
Like a frustrated, yet forbearing frater you watched over us
As we matured into men and were made whole.

War-weary Demetrios Warden of Sirmium
We hail you holy-one for humoring us children.

David Jalajel

Seraph's Milk

This ale is our crown,
(English style),
the unrivalled extraction
of a resin when honeyed.

We'd purchased in perpetuity
the painstaking incantations
for this language-loving
Londoner's beer
with gnomic blood.

So these beers are prayerful,
and for many sippers
our seraphs' nectar
is the milk to recover
a clambered skull.

Watch as our brewer
imbues these runes
with a rime of smoke –
to smoulder and temper
and claim the elixir
we'd casually described
in the 17th-century
as a "stout mead".

Actually, we'll keep it
aging in our oaks
from Holland, from where
we'd inherited our talent,
rather Groningen, where
we'd begotten our skill.

Leonard Kress

The War Worth Waging

(after Horace, Ode 1:27)

Don't fight over drafts
that are meant to drink,
guzzle till it's gone,
give free reign
to those who quaff,
who quell tempests
and call for an end
to those curt contests
of boisterous barbs
ending in bloodshed.
Sheath your scabbards
and pocket your pistols.
Get back to your barstools
and ban all brawls,
banish what's dull,
double-down with Dionysus,

I'll tell you my tale
of a torrid skirmish,
my near undoing,
my dodge of death
when that poisoned arrow
pierced my passion.

No weapon of war
could ever wound more.
I might have died,
dumbstruck and dire,
a tragic end,
wrecked and weakened
left by my slayer,
slack and slumped over,
my vicious attacker
violently venting—

Abandon my bed
give up your belief,
your derelict drama
that once I desired
your hideous hands
and hidebound come-ons
groping my goodies,
my grand assets.
Did you really think
I wanted this thing
for more than a minute,
a few quick moans.
Quit fooling yourself
fantastic and fancy,
when in fact
you're fragile and foolish

But you, my friends,
my fiercest foes,
don't dare to think
I'll divulge her name.
Your disbelief
would double my doom,
and more than mangle
my makeshift musings.
We know that I don't
deserve her desserts,
but the gods still insist,
and goad me on,
this pursuing her love
persisting long past
these waning wars
and waxing defeats.

Dave Wynne-Jones

Jilted Princess Finds Solace in Wine and Cats

(Ariadne at Naxos)

I found it.
I found the way,
the winding thread
held tight in sweating hands
through each slow step
of deepening darkness,
further into the Labyrinth.

Passageways and apartments
bulked unexpectedly
like buried memories
through which a synapse trail
danced with electric purpose:
to eliminate the man-animal,
eater of human flesh.

The shame! A mother
mounted by a bull!
With a sword-thrust
the children are freed
to sail to safety
and your seed
fills my womb
Theseus.

But the beach is empty,
desolate.
Agony echoes from the cliffs
and it's mine.
Shadow animals threaten
at the edges of vision
with strange cries,
hot breath on
the back of my neck.
Fur brushes an ankle
and the scent of civet
accentuates the taste
the wine on my tongue
and staining these red hands.

Ariadne by John William Waterhouse

Liv Ross

Hannah, Prophet of Hope

You kept so clean,
so ordered and neat
the bones of a dream
never quite laid to rest.
Such audacious grief,
heart-sickened by hope deferred.
The Spirit speaking behind silent lips
was not spirits
like the priest inferred,
but the soberest longing,
a request to preface
the double-sacrifice.
Accusation turned to acquiescence
in the face of faithful grief.
Your heartache caused you to stumble
like Jacob's broken hip.
Yet still you pressed
until hope was promised
and your head was lifted up.

Michael Champagne

Alliterative Iliad Fragment

Of rage unrivalled of wroth Achilles,
Peleus' son, that Pátroklos loved,
Sing, Muse: the murderous fury
That cost the Achaeans countless lives,
Hurled to Hades their howling shades,
Their bodies a feast for death-fowl and dogs,
And the will of Zeus was worked thereby.
Tell us, Muse, of the Tyrant and Runner,
How their harsh words hastened the doom
Of that mighty city remembered no longer.
What god goaded their fiery feud?
Leto's son, beloved of Zeus,
Apollo, the lord of lyre and plague.
Wroth with Atreides, he ravaged the ranks
Of the Argives, all because Agamemnon
Spat in the face of Phoebus' priest.
Chryses had fallen at the feet of the king
With winsome gifts, gold for ransom,
His staff wreathed with royal laurel.
He'd begged the men, but most of all
The Atreides brothers, tried in battle.
"Agamemnon, Menelaus!
All you Argives geared for war!
Would by Olympus you lay waste
To Priam's city, set it ablaze,
Reap of its wealth the richest plunder
And by safe seas sail home.
But release my daughter, my little Chryseis!
Here! I will pay a heavy ransom.
Honor the god. The gift is worthy!"
The Akhaians shouted sure assent:
"Respect the priest! His price is enough."
But Agamemnon, mad with lust,
With scarring contempt scorned the man:
"Priest of Rats, pray to your God
And get out of my sight. If I see you ever
Slinking between the sleek ships
I'll- but as for your girl: she's gone. She's mine.
I won't return her. She'll wither with age
In the halls of my home, far from fatherland,
A slave at the loom, a lust-toy by night.
Now get. I'll let you live this once."
In awful terror the old man fled,
Fleeing the fleet of ships and shores.
He walked in silence past whispering surf
And at a safe distance sent prayers
To Leto's son, the Lord Apollo:
"Bend your ears, hear me Bow-Master,
Who guard Tenedos and the towns around it,
I've built you temples, burned offerings
Of rich, long bones and bull flesh,
If ever you were pleased by the pleasant odor
Grant this wish: Would that the Argives
Be smote by arrows as oft as I've cried
In anguish and anger for my dearest daughter."
His voice carried through the vaults of heaven
And Phoebus Apollo felt his tears.
His heart was torn for the taken girl
And he seethed as knocked his silver bow,
Descending by night, he sent his arrows,
Tipped with rot and rat-gore plague,
Down to the camps of the Danaan hoard.
He smote the pigs, smeared in blood,
The pilfering dogs in the pits of the slain,
And the men at last. They languished and died,
The sickly pyres were piled with corpses,
Burning by day, burning by night.

Michael Champagne

Alliterative Aeneid Fragment

Of arms, armor, and errant man
I sing: fugitive of fate-doomed city.
From shattered walls to the shores of Lavinia
He came, driven over dreadful deeps
By Juno's whim. In war bested,
He stole from Ilium all he could carry
Of his household Gods. To Hesperia coming,
He founded there the fabled town
Whence came the Latins, the lords of Alba,
And Rome unrivaled in ruling and war.
Why, Muse? What was the cause
Of Juno's hate in that just man?
What offence fueled her anger,
Such that she would not suffer him rest,
A man as pious and patient as he?
Can heaven's hate so hotly burn?
There was of old an infant city
Far from the Tiber. Tyrians dwelt there.
Wealthy it was, in war adept,
And Juno loved it not less than Samos.
There her throne, there her chariot,
There she fought (Fates permitting)
To rear a nation to rule the world.
But she'd heard a rumor, heinous to her ears,
That the ilk of Ilium would issue a race
Destined to lordship: Libya's bane.
Daughter of Saturn, she sat in remembrance
Of all her efforts on Argos' behalf
Against the Trojans. Troublesome insects.
Nor forgot she Ganymede,
Or Paris' insult. Incensed by these,
She hurled over ocean awesome storms
To all that remained of the men unslain
By Achilles. From Latium they were led far,
Fate-compelled in foundering ships.
No facile task, the founding of Rome.

Steve Knepper

Gawain

A Solomonic sign adorned his shield,
Five tines pentangled on a flaming field:

Five joys our gentle Queen took in her childe,
Five wondrous wounds of Christ in which we're healed,
Five virtues that the valiant knight must wield,
Five fingers in both prayer and skirmish skilled,
Five senses sanctified and sealed.

Still, only stumbling in the trial of three
Could mend the mar in this stout armory
With sin's green sash, badge of humility.

AJ Deane

Loggen Crown

This country, called The Loggen Crown,
Seized in battle and bought in peace,
We Moss-Hair Men have made our own;
As we are Loggen's without cease.
The fields are fletched with our forefathers' grain.
Our bone-braced sod and bloodied soil
Gives rise to harvest reapings hale,
And feeds us fecund with our toil.
Formed of the fallow, we are earth.
Soft springtime tears fall tall from skies
To bless us fields with beauty fair
And bounty bring to lichened lives.
History's heart deep in all dwells.
Through gilded veins, feel glory glow,
Breathe leaf and berry, bark and loam;
As we Moss-Hair Men take root, and sow.

Frank Coffman

Samhain at the Graveyard

(in the Irish meter of *Rannaigheacht Mhor*)

The sun sets behind the hill.
Dull through clouds the moon is cloaked
'Cross welkin wide scant stars fail,
Their frail glimmering is choked.

Below, the graveyard stones are dark,
Stark silhouettes. Somber scene
The umbrai of trees' shadows mark.
Harken! Shades that once were men!

Out from graves beneath this loam,
Their final home, come forth ghosts!
Ghastly horrors! Now's the time—
Samhain[8] *Night* frees phantom hosts.

Now is torn the hazy V*eil*
Between Our Realm and the Next.
Boundaries betwixt worlds fall
For all this night we are vexed.

We who glory 'neath the sun,
We've been blessed with Life's sweet br*eath*,
After nightfall's bell has rung,
May meet some who've met their death.

So, on Samhain wary be;
Wear masks, set balefires, altars make.
Some from *Beyond* you might see
Those who from their deep sleep wake.

[88] pronounced *sah-win* in Gaelic

Author's Note

This poem is written roughly according to the rules for the Old Irish verse form **Rannaigheact Mhor** (pron. "ron-a-yach voor") [*The Great Versification*, literally *Versification Great*] perhaps the most frequent of the five major types of Irish syllabic meters.

Each stanza is a quatrain consisting of four seven-syllable lines.

Alliteration:

- At least two words alliterate in every line
- As in Germanic alliterative verse, syllables starting with vowels alliterate

Rhyme

- Every line ends with a rhyming monosyllable. The basic rhyme scheme is ABaB. That is, the 2nd and 4th lines should rhyme perfectly (though rhymes with very similar vowels, like *scene/men* are allowed). However, the 1st and 3rd lines can be linked using looser (slant) rhymes, such as h*ill/fail*, *loam/time*, *Veil/fall*, or *sun/rung*.
- A key word in line 1 must display rhyme or consonance with a word in line 2 (*hill/dull*, *dark/stark*, *loam/home*, *Veil/Realm*, *sun/sweet*, *be/balefires*).
- The last word of line 3 must rhyme at least loosely or show consonance with a word in line 4 (*fail/frail*, *mark/harken*, *time/night*, *fall/all*, *rung/some*, *see/sleep*)

Loose rhymes follow the rules of *Commharda or* "Correspondence" which allow rhymes to end with consonants from the same equivalence group. That is why *veil/realm* and *sun/rung* count as rhymes. The Irish equivalence classes don't exactly work in English, but their flavor shows up in this poem in loose rhymes like *rung/some* and *time/night*.

Frank Coffman

Keening of the Banshee
(an Irish *Séadna*)

Many mounds fleck Isle of Erin,
Over great green country spread.
Darkly tower against the evening
Tumuli of kings long dead.

And in common country graveyards,
Gone from Earth's griefs, mortal woes,
Lie the lowly who've been taken.
As with kings—who'll waken those?

All alive whose lines are native,
Know the baleful *Banshee's* keen
May moan with their death nearing.
Hag they're fearing may be seen!

Combing out her blood-red tresses,
Twisted crone, dread, hollow eye.
Wails of woe a weird wind carries.
Her screams harry one to die.

Sometimes seen 'neath grove's thick shadow,
Shrouded, hooded, cloaked in grey,
Or near a corpse-mound past nightfall,
Shrieking out her call—most fey.

E'en across the night sky flying,
Frightening, shrill, across the moon,
Some poor soul will low be lying,
Sad portent—one dying soon.

Hear the howling of the Banshee.
Beware! Death is drawing near!
The Crone of the Mound is calling,
And her keening all should fear.

Author's Notes

1. It is believed by many that only those of pure Irish stock hear the Banshee's call. Those of lines from the Saxon or Norman invaders cannot hear it. One must be a descendent of true Milesian/Goidelic stock. Most who have traditions of Banshee visitations are among families with the traditional O' of Mc/Mac surname prefixes.
2. *This* poem is written roughly according to the rules for the Old Irish **Seadna form**

   Each stanza is a quatrain consisting of alternating 8 and 7 syllable lines. Lines 1 and 3 end with a 2-syllable word; lines 2 and 4 end with a 1-syllable word.

   Alliteration:
   - At least two words alliterate or show consonance in every line (*NOTE: I often drop this requirement for the 4th line of each stanza, where it is difficult to maintain along with the other requirements for the stanza form.*)
   - The rhyme word at the end of line 1 must alliterate/consonate with the first stressed word of line 2 (*graveyards/griefs, native/know, tresses/twisted, shadow/shrouded, flying/frightening, Banshee/beware*)
   - The same alliteration must be carried forward to the next-to-last stressed word before the end of the stanza *[**NOTE:** I have not kept with this last restriction]*

   Rhyme
   - The rhyme scheme is ABCB (that is, lines 2 and 4 must rhyme: *spread/dead, woes/those, keen/seen, eye/die, grey/fey, flying/lying, near/fear*)
   - The last word in line 3 must rhyme with next-to-last stressed word in line 4 (*taken/waken, nearing/fearing, carries/harry, nightfall/call, lying/ding, calling/all*)

   ***ALSO:** While I have adhered mostly to "true" alliteration in this poem, the Irish forms allow certain closely related consonants to be treated as equivalent for the purpose of alliteration]*

Math Jones

Listen, He Whispers

Why is the thought,
  Winging from the edge
Of the known-till-now;
  Not a kind one,
But shudders through,
  Shakes you awake,
Lands with an ice-flake,
  Lends you worry.

A thought that falls,
  And flings you from sleep,
From a dream of comfort,
  With a dread hand,
So the world unfurls
  Unfriendly concerns:
Fear in a heartbeat,
  Hurt night-cares.

Mood-heavy, mired,
  And much in doubt,
I and others,
  Under clouds,
Gape, gap-toothed,
  At a grinning giant:
High, heaven-blotting,
  Behemoth of rock.

To measure immensity,
  Marvellous otherwise,
Here, is horror.
  How can the mind
Of anyone cope,
  Caught, overwhelmed,
By hugeness: human might
  Hobbled by disparity.

Were I a thunderer,
  Thor's hammer
Nestled in my hand,
  Nudging the sky,
Driving with the might
  My mother gave,
Through the earth,
  Thrumming girdle,

I might make
  This mooncalf shake,
Disperse this fear,
  Despair on the run!
With mood so great
  That the meanest put-upon,
Will strive for the impossible,
  Stop the imposition.

Were I a lover,
  Lord my mentor,
I might seek
  To send a friend
To woo the daughter,
  Win and bed her,
Befriend the fiend
  With a fateful wedding;

Or cute as a kid,
  Be kept a secret
By its doting wife,
  Dumb and hidden,
Till stealthy sleep
  Slays the husband,
And glad with gold
  I go my ways.

Or were I a lover,
  Lady my mentor,
Brisingamen bearing
  Brightened fiercely,
Fire of the earth
  And fire of the sea,
Sun and moon
  Sauntering behind,

I might make
  This mean one quake,
Drawn by dream
  And drowned in need,
Their stone-heart open
  From opaque sterility
Into weeping welcome,
  Their wounding mend.

Such tales told
  In tribes of old,
Held now still
  To help the child
Through terrors of doubt;
  Tears in the night,
My hands reach out,
  Raised in need...

And here my friend,
  Honed by travelling,
Step by step,
  Steep-ways battling,
Pauses beside me,
  Pats on my back,
Brings me thought,
  Brings me remembrance,

Settles the brim
  That brackets his face,
Kicks at a pebble,
  Picks up a stone –
"Bellowing Sand,
  They say is the name
Of the first of the giants:
  Fell at the start

"To be made, for you,
  A middling way.
This broken scree
  At the brim of the sea,
The finite vault
  That envelopes the sky,
All these come
  From the corpse of a giant

"I slew, slaughtered,
  Sliced and divided,
For a boundary put around
  Of bony mountain
And splattered ocean,
  Sparing you from this:
The enormity of truth,
  Annihilation of memory.

"Only to be looked upon
  One eyed,
And here is a breach,
  A break, in the wall
I'd caused to be made
  To keep out
The overbearing arch
  Of the eaters' reach."

Sits on a cliff-edge,
  Settles his birds,
His wolves on his knee,
  Waits for an audience.
"Listen," he whispers,
  Leaning on the wind,
"Words must wait
  For wisdom's reckoning."

Broad on the air,
  The bellowing roar
Of the too-great-to-grasp
  Grapples with attendance:
Need must bring knowledge
  If noticed at the root,
And the world in its rawness
  Wishes to be heard!

"Ask me then, Odhin.
  Easily I'll tell you
The bitty answers."
  Boastful giant
Calls for a wager,
  Claiming a prize:
"I'll take your head
  If I top you for knowledge!"

"Since you know
  So much, tell me
Why, the sun?
  Why, the moon?
What reason the stars?
  What right has the fire?
What meaning the ice,
  Moaning into the void?"

A quiet anger,
  An even engagement,
Felt in the sand,
  Fierce in the grain:
"The secret you told,
  To your son, lying,
Is it this, Odhin,
  Else unknown?"

Sits on the cliff-edge.
  Sailing beneath him
Is a sheaf in a shield
  On a ship all ablaze.
"Listen," he whispers,
  Leaning on the wind,
"Words must wait
  For wisdom's reckoning."

Math Jones
Yggr[9]

Not myself, the serpent-wyrm
Wrapped in my roots, wreathed in doubt,
Gnawing at times. Nor the eagle
Roosting, taloned, top of my head,

Causing winds with crashing wings.
Nor the rodent racing between,
Blistering squirrel, squirming with news
To rouse them both to bloody agitation.

Nor cover of mud, cast by others
To mend the rents made by harts:
Noble they may be, but near to killing me,
They, in hunger, hurt and expose.

Saved by the sisters, sat at their well:
They spin 'becoming', spoil the plans
Of the eaters at edges. Urd, Verdandi,
And scowling Sculd, scare up a future.

And then there is one who wants to know,
Rides me, speared, speaks to me,
Learns my language. Look to him!
Known, I stand; nothing will shake me.

[9] In Norse mythology, "Yggr" is one of the names for the god Odin, meaning "terror" or "the Terrible One".

Judd Bemmels

Skaði[10] and Njörðr[11]

After nine winters together in Þrymheimr[12], Skaði noticed that Njörðr had become increasingly anxious. She asked her husband what reason he had to complain. Thus answered Njörðr:

Many a season · I've sunk in the snow
As the years drag on · in Jötunheimr's[13] wilds.
There is little to marvel at, no mirth to be made
In the rime-clad forests · on the frozen frontier.

The feasts are few · and far between,
And the guests distrust · a traveler's tales.
It's no wonder the wolves · with wounded hearts,
Whine and wail · through winter nights.

Lonely are the lodges · and long the sighs
When the ice sets in · and the spirit idles.

Skaði asked Njörðr what might make him happier. Njörðr replied that he was homesick:

Happiest were the days · with hand on helm,
Bounding over whitecaps, bouncing on the brine.
There was wealth to be won · crossing the whale-roads
With a salt-breeze commanding · the sails to swell.

But always the waves · would return me to the wharves
Where neighbors would gather · from the nine worlds' nations.
More treasured to those travelers · than the goods that were traded
Were the stories that were spoken, the friendships that were sealed.

In Nóatún[14] was never · a monotonous hall—
The roost of gulls · glimmered with gold.

Skaði agreed to go with Njörðr to Nóatún. After nine summers together, Njörðr noticed that Skaði had grown glum and listless. He asked his wife what reason she had to complain. Thus answered Skaði:

I've squandered my homeland, my heart's inheritance
Gained in Nóatún · only noise and nonsense:
The stench of seaweed · stuffs my nostrils
And the gulls' gossip · gluts my ears.

My spirit languishes · by the salty sea,
By these bustling boatyards · where braggart merchants
Gab about gold · and exchange of goods.
What do they know · of the wildlands' wealth?

I flounder like a fish · flung up from the water
To die on these docks, to drown in this air.

Njörðr asked Skaði what might make her happier. Skaði replied that she missed the land she once called home.

The boulders were my brothers · at the base of the sky;
The streams, my sisters · skipping down slopes.
I sang to the mountains · and the mighty moss,
Gave comfort to spruce · in a summer storm.

And on winter days I'd wander · on my wooden skis
Till twilight called me · to that cozy hall
Where father and I would sit · in our furs by the fire,
Waiting to hear wolf-song · warbled through the night.

I had all I could ask for · in the upland halls—
The backwoods were sacred · and the soother of my soul.

Skaði and Njörðr saw then that their hearts were in different places. And so they separated

---

[10] Skaði: *giantess from Norse mythology associated with skiing, hunting, and wild mountainlands*
[11] **Njörðr**: *Norse god associated with seafaring and wealth*
[12] Þrymheimr: *Skaði's home in Jötunheimr*
[13] Jötunheimr: *the realm of the giants*
[14] Nóatún: *Njörðr's hall*

Tim Miller
Ymir

You're walking on Ymir now, you know,
and the sky is still his split skull
and the oceans we boiled were once his blood.
Only the ice isn't him, the glaciers
formed by flowing rivers that froze
into a steeping slag of solid cold
and grew and gathered into a huge gap
dividing and blending into an ice darkness,
a winter dusk, a dim, cold blackness
only gap, only gorge, only a gulf
at the bottom and beginning of time.
No words, no awareness, only a well
of cold cutting wind and creeping rain.

But on the border of that broad abyss
was heat and humid light that made the hoarfrost
drip and pool and develop into the design
of a man's body, a mountain of bones and moisture
that rose near the roots of that Real Tree
and the Nine Women who lived in that Wood –
a man who when he slept sweated a whole species
from under his arm. This was Ymir,
father of the first families that fled from his body
as a dripping of clear drops that drew
moisture and warmth to become men and women.
A cow then came from that dripping chaos
born of the brine of that melting breach,
and milk ran in four rivers from its udders,
and Ymir drank from those dugs every day.

Other bodies were brought into being,
licked into life as the cow lapped blocks of salty ice
until its tongue and the salt and stinging frost
became the heat's heart, and a wholeness.
And these salt bodies and these sweat bodies
were the ones that rose up and ruled over Ymir,
and they beat bowls into shape for his blood
and those vessels became the voluminous sea
and the earth was bound by the border made from his body,
and his teeth turned to stone
and the bones of his body became mountains
and our starry sky is his skull
and that space set aside for sun and moon
and the stage for the seasons
were just the blood-stained dome of Ymir's head,
and the gore of his gashed flesh our great earth.

So just as the skalds and storytellers are said
to produce their poetry from the cup of his skull,
the fire for feuds – and the fights between families,
and how we all feign to flee from formlessness –
they are all baked into our bodies, this brutality,
the viciousness of this essence, with no escape.

Tim Miller
Winter

Rain is no terror, nor torrent or deluge.
Heat is no hammer, we've never hated it,
dry grass, drought, inundation and downpour –
these are the concerns the south shrinks from.
For the north and for now and until the end
there is only an enormous winter,
fields and forests frozen to ice
and the sky a scarred, snowfilled gap
where cracks and crevices collect and become blue.
No flame for the furrows, or fire for the firmament,
no warmth anymore will wake the waters,
no berry will glow or blade break the ground:
winter without summer, and winter without spring,
three winters to weave our weight and flesh into ice.

Adam Bolivar
Mistletoe

Géac[15] the Gandring · yonder journeyed
To fell giants · with fatal art,
Dealing deathstokes ·· with droll banter
Mocking their dullness, mirthful his slaughter,
For ettins had sacked ·· his old homeland,
And to turn tables · tickled him wildly,
The sport pleasing. From spectres he learned
Of a sword and a ring, singular in nature,
By a dwarf hoarded · in a dark cavern
Past a haunted heath · like Hel's landscape.
Following counsel, he found the cave
And pitched a tent · in a place favoured
To cast shadows, craftily snaring
And binding the dwarf, blinded by sunlight,
To Géac's keeping · yielding his treasures:
Dripring which drops · each day a ring,
And Mistletoe of lore, the mighty sword
A deathdream warned · would drink godblood,
Allsharp its edge · and allpiercing.

Mahendra Singh
Invocation

Aid us, Lord Shiva, eight-fold creator
of first-born things: Fire and water,
of sacred ritual, of sun and moon,
of eternal sky, our earthly mother,
of the air we breathe, bringer of life,
bless us, Lord Shiva, lord of destruction.[16]

J. M. Pitt
Maxim

Learn old words · to unlock your heart,
add to your word-hoard · and aid your Bildung;
study grammar, grasp noun and verb;
be always earnest · and eager to learn.

Lisa Timpf
Earth Mother

Maybe our mythos about Mother Nature
is rooted and real, though radically different
from the woman once worshipped, with wondrous power
for healing the harms and the hurts of the world.

What if Earth-Mother is fungal in nature,
mycelial meshwork, a massive brain
self-conscious and sensate, stitching together
a nurturing network of natural things?

Mycelia surge and send their signals
messages travel for miles and miles.
Touching the tree roots, they sense old traumas,
memories marshalled beneath the ground.

Perhaps there's a reason we don't see Earth Mother
walking the forests, the farms, and the fields.
Our image mistaken, and missing the mark,
yet safe under soil, she lives. She lives.

---

[15] Géac, a speculative Old English version of Jack, is pronounced yawk.
[16] This poem is my version of Arthur Ryder and William Jones' translations of the opening *nandi*, or benediction, from the classical Sanskrit play, *Shakuntala* (ca. 450 CE). In India, most theatrical performances are prefaced by a request for divine favour. In this case, the author, Kalidasa, was a devotee of Shiva and so the play's *nandi* is addressed to the latter. Classical Sanskrit prosody is based on syllable length (like Latin and Greek poetry), the alliterative metre was my idea. Kalidasa would probably have hated it!

Kathryn Ann Hill

You Delight in Mercy and Manifest Love

Micah 7 in Alliterative Verse

I moan in woe—what misery is mine!
Like a late gleaner who goes to the fields,
I can grasp no figs or grapes worth eating.
The godly men are gone from the world;
not an upright man remains on earth.
All are lurking to ambush their foes;
these wicked brutes are bent on blood.
Every brother strains to snare his brother.

Both hands are at work to hurt and harm;
princes and judges deliver injustice,
plotting with powerful ones who proffer bribes.
The best of these men is a wounding briar
or a tangled thornbush that traps and tears.
The day of your watchmen, the day of your prophets,
the day you are punished, perplexed, and panicked,
this terrifying day now takes its toll.

Neither trust nor confide in a friend or neighbor;
safeguard your words even from your wife.
For an arrogant son dishonors his father;
a mocking daughter dishonors her mother;
a daughter-in-law flouts her mother-in-law:
the foes of a man are found in his home!

Therefore I will look to the Lord my God;
for my very God, the God of my salvation,
will surely hear and help me in my need.

Isidore Konti: The Despotic Age

I will bear God's anger spawned by my sinful acts,
until He pleads my case and justifies my cause.

Who is a God like You, O Lord, who forgives offenses
and pardons the sins of Your people's remnant?
You do not stay angry forever and ever—
You delight in mercy and manifest love.
You will show compassion again to Your people:
our trespasses You will tread and trample underfoot.
Into the depths of the sea You will cast our sins.
To father Abraham and father Jacob,
You will fulfill Your vows in faithful truth.

Matthew Dickerson

Water into Wine[17]

Of the Shaper of Life a lay I now sing,
a tale that is true I will tell in this hall,
with fair words speak of a wedding feast
when powerful magic made potent mead-wine
and great high glory of the God-son was seen.

The Maker of Mankind, Middle-earth's Chieftain,
Father-Spirit of life once lived as a man.
He moved among mortals, a holy Messenger,
to lead men to life, the Son of the Lord.
He wanted to grant, to give to earth's race
the high Heaven-kingdom as an eternal home.

As a mighty chieftain He chose twelve thanes,
hearth-companions to hear His commands.
The Protector of People, the powerful God,
wandered far by foot with His followers.
Hill-forts He visited, clans and their villages,
chieftains in mead-halls, merchants and peasants.
Wise men were eager to hear His words.

To a wedding he went, the wondrous God's Son,
his followers too, twelve honored friends.
And His Middle-earth mother with the mighty One traveled.
a bride to be given, a beautiful maiden,
at a great high house, a rich guest hall.
Earls came from far, nobles to the feast.
Warriors were merry, the people with mead
drank and celebrated the day of the wedding.
Proud servants poured wine from their pitchers;
they had good mead to make the guests happy.
On the benches was bliss. The sight was beautiful.

Editor's Note:

This poem was composed in-character by Kristinge, Son of Finn, the main character in Matthew Dickerson's 2014 novel, *The Rood and the Torc: The Song of Kristinge, Son of Finnc*. He is a monk who was originally trained as a bard but discovers that he is actually the son of a king. This poem represents Kristinge's attempt to tell the New Testament story of Jesus turning water into wine in traditional alliterative verse, and in so doing, represents Jesus as a Germanic chieftain.

This is, in fact, what early Germanic translators of the Bible did – see, for example, the *Heliand*, or Old English renderings of gospel stories into alliterative verse.

Then the wine ran out; the wedding drink finished;
not a single drop for servants to bring
to the thirsty crowd could then be found.
The vats were empty: the vast stores consumed.
For the guests it was sad the celebration would end.

More greatly would grieve the groom and his bride.
The great host of the feast had failed in his duty.
On him shame would fall if no wine could be found.

Then the loveliest lady did not wait long,
the Middle-earth mother of Mankind's Lord
went speedily and spoke with words to her Son,
told Him what happened how the host had no wine.
From her Holy Heaven-Son she asked for help.
She prayed for the people. She knew of his power.
But the Ruler's son His answer had ready.
To His mother he spoke, "What is it to me?"

On earth was still secret that He was God's Son.

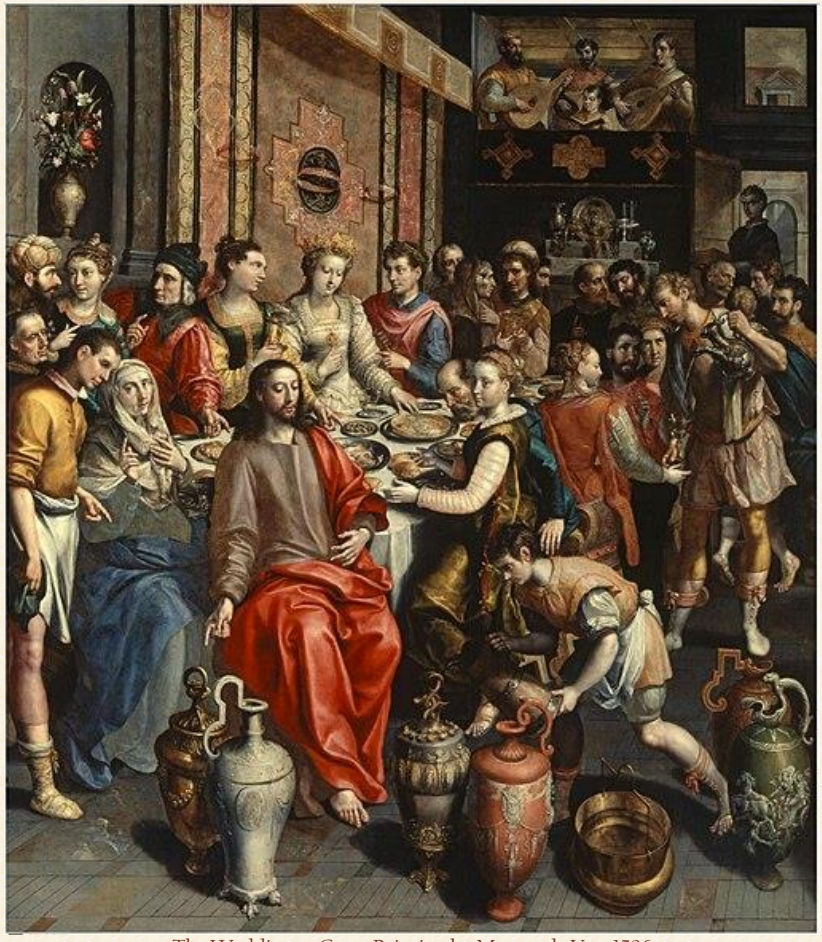
[17] First published in *The Rood and the Torc: The Song of Kristinge, Son of Finn.* Wings Press, San Antinio, Texas, *2014.*

"Why do you speak so in front of strangers?
What is warriors' wine and the wedding drink?"
He spoke of his kingdom. "My time is not come."
But His wise Earth-Mother trusted well in her mind
even after these words that He would not refuse.
She spoke with servants, warned them to silence,
commanded they listen and obey the holy Lord.

Six vats of stone were standing there empty.
Very softly He spoke, the mighty God's son
"Fill these with water drawn from the well."
The servants obeyed, those with the barrels
filled them with water, spoke not of His words.
God's mighty Child then choose that moment
to show His great power among those people.
What was once water He made into wine.

The drink was then poured, drawn with the pitcher
and placed in the hands of the head of the wedding,
who after the host ruled over the people.
As soon as he drank his delight was great.
He could not refrain but spoke to the crowd.
He said that most earls the best wine serve early.
"When men are merry, and drunk from the mead,
they serve cheap wine. That is the custom."

"But Lo! This host the best held for last.
To this folk he served first the cheap wine.
When guests were full, were drunk from the feast,
then brought, of all wines the best I have tasted."
Now again was bliss for groom and for bride.
The host had heard high words of praise.
And many a thane was then made aware
that the holy God's Son a great sign had performed.



The Wedding at Cana: Painting by Marten de Vos, 1596

Rahul Gupta

Grim Goes Fishing: from a New Lay of Havelok the Dane[18]

'...it will not be amisse, to say something concerning y^e^ Common tradition of her first founder *Grime*, as y^e^ inhabitants name him. The tradition is thus. *Grime*, a poore Fisherman, as he was launching into y^e^ Riuer for fish in his little boate vpon *Humber*, espyed not far from him another boate, empty (as he might conceaue) which by y^e^ fauour of y^e^ wynde & tyde still approached nearer & nearer vnto him. He meetes itt, wherein he founde onely a Childe wrapt in swathing clothes, purposely exposed (as it should seeme) to y^e^ pittylesse rage of y^e^ wilde & wide Ocean. He, moued with pitty, takes itt home, & like a good foster-father carefully nourisht itt in his owne occupation: but y^e^ childe contrarily was wholy deuoted to exercises of martiall sports, & at length by his signall valour obteyned such renowne, that he marryed y^e^ King of England's daughter, & last of all founde who was his true Father, & that he was Sonne to y^e^ King of *Denmarke*; & that *Haueloke* (for such was his name) exceedingly aduanced & enriched his foster-father *Grime*, who thus enriched, builded a fayre Towne neare the place where *Haueloke* was founde, & named it *Grimesby*. That *Haueloke* did sometymes reside in *Grimesby*, may be gathered from a great blew Boundry-stone, lying at y^e^ East ende of *Briggowgate*, which retaines y^e^ name of *Haueloke's-Stone* to this day. Agayne y^e^ great priuiledges & immunityes, that this Towne hath in *Denmarke* above any other in England (as freedome from Toll, & y^e^ rest) may fairely induce a Beleife, that some preceding fauour, or good turne called on this remuneration...'

—Gervase Holles, MP, Mayor of Grimsby 1636 &c., MS. Harl. 6829.

Blind night-abyss. Black tides rising
wash and welter. Wind-tang a smart
reek raw with brack. Rumour of surf-
upheavals' eddy in-draws its moan.
Saltbillows seethe. The sands whisper.
Work of waters.
The waves cresting
dive downsunken. Deep wellings climb.
Groundswell's regurge grinds trawled shingle.
Its sway an aura, Sea wields the shock
of its brunt being; and its bulk that mass
endlessly other, forever moving
astir unstanched. The streaming flux
writhes restlessly; the rough element's
throes thrive to warp throngs of changeling
forms phantomlike: floodwaters spawn
bodies born flotsamed; their blurred guises
merge manyshapen, then melt drowning
in the void vortex— as their voices call
to a brink brimming. Brine-gush lathers,
chafes chesil-pebbles, churns to breakers'
spindrifted spume; the spray-drizzle
stings staiths ashore.
Storm is gathering.

From Ægir's eelbilge to Ymir's crown,
heavenroads of hawks: in the helm of the sky
—Blue-One's brainpan that burdens dwarves—
murk is mounting; Moon's bridlepath
is gloom-shrouded. Gust-flurries awhirl,
housed high above seas in hidden eyries,
the weavers of winds waft nightshadow's
veils of vapour. It devours twilight;
swirls swoop over and swallow the stars,
glide grimplumaged; groping wingspans
fan out the fume: a frown of darkness.
Pitchblack it prowls; a pall thrumming
with glowers and growls; glints that smoulder.
Thunders throne him: Thor's juggernaut
rolls full-career; he is riding the winds,
steers the tempest in his storm-chariot,
pilots cyclones. He plies the swinge:

[18] This poem was first published in *Lincolnshire Folk Tales Reimagined*, edited by Anna Milon and Rory Waterman. Five Leaves Press, Nottingham, UK, 2025.

the goat-goader giddies-up fiercely;
spoked axle-spins spurn floors of cloud
—whiplash whistles— his whickering pair,
Toothgrinder, Toothgnasher, his team of goats,
bite their bridles, their bleats snorting.
Drum dinning hooves; he drives them hard;
the rims rumble on the roof of the sky.
Black bands like smoke boil in spirals,
writhe around him, as he rallies his hosts,
the weathers enthralled to the thunder-weapon:
brow-moons ablaze, the bane of ogres,
the wagon-driver who wields Mjœlnir
the oak-striker, with his iron gauntlets
clasps its handle that crackles with zigzags,
heaves high and aims the hammer of the lightning.

The cloud-arrows, cruelly volleyed
rainbodkins rake the rearing flanks
of the brine-whelmings, on the blast of a gale
from the icy East with an edge like a chisel.
Rumpus mutters; rock-slidelike snarls
stammer, are stifled: then with stutters and cracks
the bang throbbing from the thunder-burst
shakes main and shore with a shuddering boom.
Launched lightningbolts lash the ocean,
forked flicker-barbs. As fleet glimpses
dreampictures dazzle in the darts of levin:
walls of water; waves surge in peaks,
horns honed by wind, heaving ridges
flash, ravenflint; floodwaters swell;
Spearman's expanse: spate churning froth.
The whistling squall whips the currents up;
streams strive aloft: storm beats downward,
tall tides rampant entangle with clouds,
rollers roiling; horizons drowned
obscure borders of Sky and Earth
—the ocean-walled urn of tempests;
the gale-enwreathed garth of mortals.
Whalemere howling with hungry growls,
the waters teem with worm-kindreds;
the mere-monsters' mood is whetted:
seldcouth seadragons, scenting carnage,
floodpower-fathomed, flounder dredging
wide wavebedrock and wade to shore;
garfish gambol in their greed for prey;
knuckerholes gnawing.
North musters sleet,
hard hailshowers' harvestless grain;
kernels coldest.
Then those keel-riding
harbour-horses on the whales' acre
—fish feeding-grounds— must fear for their lives,
when tempest towers at the tossing prow;
spume-sprayed the hull spins steerboardless,
the bulwarks swamped by brack-welter,
the mare of the mere's mast-yards topple,
clinkered lapstrakes crack and splinter:
brineguests must bathe— abandon ship
and fail to breathe the fishes' air
—jump jetsamed in giant's-woundthawing;
beersmith's-yeastsurf; abyss of eels;
the gannets' larder: the engulfing chasms'
ill-eddying swirl. That ale they quaff
bitter bloatswillage brewed by Ægir:
dark frothy dregs; their drowned bodies
trapped entangled in the trawling nets
Rán reels under, roaring Ægir's
brinecold bedmate.
Bloodshot the foam
at rock-skerries rife with lobsters;
water weaponful: wide-gaping jaws
bare battletushes; a broil of spines,
fangteeth and fins. Flood bloodied scuds.
Rich pickings rise in ruddled slurry.

They flock to the feast: fulmar and tern,
for orts and offal; the ernes stooping
with whetted beaks, white-tailed eagles
delve deep their talons, dewy-pinioned;
swart-sallowbrown, the swan of wounds,
hazy-plumaged; the horn-nebbed one.
Scream of scavengers. Scolding jargons
chide, rame and chirm as they choose morsels;
the squabbling skua, the skirl of whaup,
grey herring-gulls' gabble and yammer:
mews' glee at meat.
Morrow-tide weakly
leavens the darkness, and lulls the storm.
High heavencandle is huddled in cloud.
Then come up to the reefs Rán and Ægir's
ninefold nestlings, knotter of meshes'
billows-daughters, to bleach their hair.
Spools shrugged into spume in spilling hanks
of rippling ringlets reach through the waves:
flax flosses out fronds and tendrils,
the curls coiling to cove and wharf;
tress-tentacles tickle all the coasts
and dishevel ashore.
A shifting firth;
an arm of the sea.
East wind dropping,
the heaving surges hush to stillness;
the surf-struggle sinks abating.
The walls of land that weathered tempests,
staiths stormbeaten, stayed the onslaught.
Meretowers melt.
Mews are wailing.
In wide heavens winds veer and yawn.
Sweeping breakers swirl back foaming.
Shoals grind the shelves of a shingle bay
where a grey river greets the ocean.

Amid the frost-phantoms of a foggy dawn
Grim goes to work, at the gloomy hour
of livid twilight: leaves his homestead,
threads through the dunes' thigh-high tussocks,
saltmarsh, siltdyke; in silence till
the fisherman flushes the fowl nesting
from rush-reedbeds, redshank and snipe;
lagoon-grottoes' gluts of lamprey,
samphire-dingles— a salt presence
gropes goosepimpling with a gruesome allure—
winds wide mudflats; wades down to the shore's
kingdom of kelp. Cold grey as flint
the horizon rims a rink of slate.
A withering wind; wolf-tooth-bitter.
Marine redolence of rancid weed.
Breakers' thunder. Brute threat of sky
and with a loom, the sea.
The long combers
wash the beaches; waves arch their necks;
race rolling back, and rear again;
prance pawing hooves, their pluming manes
froth faxwaxen; fetlocked with spume,
nostrils neezing, with noise of onrush,
lapping, lathered, the leaping steeds,
ply over ply, are pool-folded.
Above the white horses wheel mews shrieking;
alderman eyes augury-birds'
gliding gaggles; they graze in mobs;
their skeins pucker, then scatter aside,
spin spiralling, and speed away.
All eddymingled, the eagre-streams;
Barbwielder's bath blends its settlings.
Strewn over the strand, storm has broadcast
Ocean's harvest, the after-math
of wrack and wreckage, careened in ooze:
dulse-hung driftwood; in dimpled ruts
bladderwrack blackens. Barnacled spars

lulled lopsided in lakes of slime;
oak earls have taught the art of swimming
surf tumbles and sifts, and salt scorches;
goods for salvage, the gear of the drowned;
ribs wrenched from hulks; rags of sailcloth,
lanyard-belayed amid the lobster-creels:
idle awnings.
Their eyes on stalks,
crabs creep sideways, clacking pincers.
Lugworms uplift little sandcastles.

Yet there at the sandbar is the sound-plying
tidegoer tamed by tether-cables:
his ocean-otter, anchorbond-fast,
stays for her steersman, her stem bridling;
rocked at roadstead by the rising swell.
Gulfcunning Grim at the grey margin
hauls out of hithe, and heaves to launch
the clinkered coble— the currents grinding
shell on shingle; shore-defying
brawn shoves abeam— the beast of the slipway
runs her keelstrake into rushing surf.
The prow plunges; planks are bucking;
he climbs aboard, casts off moorings
to ride the rollers.
As he rows he sees
fleet-floating ones on furrowed ripples
bathe breastfeathers in the brown gullies
of the swans' sailroad: the swimming fowl,
preening pinions with piping cries.
Above the floods' darkness the frowning sky
lours leadenclouded, a ledge of grey
in piled layers, its pending roof
stretched stonemantled upon steely waters;
ironhued to the eye, edged with lustre
at the wan weathergleam, windowed eastward:
bleak beams glaring, bleared and sallow.

Then once the masttree's mere-arraying
sail's cinctured tight, sea-stays are braced
—cordage creaking— and clews are trimmed,
the bunt bellies in a breeze astern:
the prow perking, pilot thirsty
for Ægir's ale. Underway the craft
drives deep water. Drenched with spindrift
rein-rigging hums. He rides his steed
of the track of gulls: the tarred wader's
keel is cutting, the cold fathoms
burst brine-surges on braided strakes,
well-clinkered wands of the wake-carver.
Mind on mereflood —mews reel aside—
the coxswain cuddles the kicking tiller.
She wafts then on wavehome at winds' urging,
floats foamybosomed, flying birdlike,
the tide-treader; timbers dinning,
the surfwood soars the sound-channels,
crest-glider's cruise; until her keel pierces
open Ocean: Ymir's bloodstream
fosters foison of folk with scales,
haddock and hakes' harvest-acres,
redfishes' realm, ruled by mackerel,
saithes' seafastness.
With song-magic
Ránlover's runes enrapture air
to raise the wraiths of roke-vapour
and foam-frettings, as frosted puffs
blow burred by cold to blooms of steam;
spun out of space, spider-gauzes
are fused fuscous, furring æther;
tissues toughen, teaselled to sheer
thistledown threads, the thatched weftage
clammy clusters of cloud-smother:
this hedge of hazes is the haar of that sea.
Its blankness blinds the bear-warrior;
fogbound in fume the fishing-boat

—waylaid by walls of wisps of smoke—
drifts in doldrums.
In the dewy hush,
with currents becalmed, chorus voices;
mist-muffled howls. The moan from the Odd
of Raven's-Ayre narrates to Grim
—whelps of whelmfloods whoop and gibber—
brother of Byleist and Bifrost-guard's
single combat for that sea-kidney
—amber amulet owed to Freyja,
the dwarves' trinket— a duel on the reefs,
gnomecorpse-Náinn's canoeshed-doors:
jewel-jousting amid the giant's blood,
guised as selkies.
A gleam twinkles;
a shadow that shimmers shows through the fogs:
swart silhouette, swathed in dimness
yet the prow's profile plays glowing through,
as lighted taper the lantern-horn;
amid skeins scudding the skeleton hulls,
the mast falters, mainsail drooping;
she swings nearer on the sullen wallow.
Whorl-necked she hoves: a white, dazzling,
leeward-listing, longship of war.
He climbs the keel of that kings' galley.

None stands stationed at stern or beak.
Craft captainless. Uncrewed the thofts;
no hand to halyard; hulk gybes and yaws.
A dragon-dromond adrift on the tides.

Bulwark-bucklers, bright lindenshields
—preybird-painted— pegged still on racks;
grey gear in heaps. A ghost-vessel;
and this ship's shining in a shell of ice.

Lookouts won't ladder the lensed pinnacles.
The cold clenches, clustered on spars;
its freezing feathers fleece the stanchions:
mossed with moonbarbs; mirror-splinter grist.

As if tackled with ice. Timbered with ice.
Antlered with ice, this elk of the flood.
Ice on oarports. Ice-stark sailcloth
chimes on yardarms. Chill droplets have

eked icicles, the ooze frozen
to sparkling spikes spiral-twisted
like narwhal-horns; the knotting beasts,
carved in keelposts, crystal-lacquered.

Frostbitten filigrees. Fossilized in glaze,
its rind renders the rig's cordage,
shrouds encrusted, and sheets to bony
wires of silver: winter cobwebs.

Iron ice shackles her oak planking;
hoary harness to helmet ships.
The frost-fetters flicker gemstones
rainbowed with rime. A rapt silence.

Foot-falls' clangour —frore mists of breath—
keel-climbing Grim is crossing thwarts.
The eastern airt opened with glades
of culver-colour and coral blushes,
mists are moving. Murk is fading.
Beneath the awning a nestled bundle
cries out and kicks the clouts aside:
a baby boy in the bosom of a longship.
Grim views in gold, on the gold swaddlings,
serpent-symbols; silken vestments;
rune-written torque wrapped in sendal;
the waif is wound in a war-banner,
gonfanon-garbed in the gold samite,
ancient oriflamme of Ingvi's Folk:
a royal heirloom to robe a babe in

from some tribe's treasury, travel beside him,
into the floodtides' might —far departing
cradle rocking on the cold waters—
a boon from whoever embarqued this infant
from a forlorn seashore, launched him drifting
across the currents —castaway child—
with that banner to bless him.
The boarder sees
his fair features; fiercely piercing
ice-bright his eyes, of eagle keenness;
on Grim's finger his grip is strong.
It is then that the sunlight sears through the fogs.
Heatwending high the heaven-candle
climbs clear of wrack and cloud-tatters:
the sea-farer's circling promise;
enemy of ice. Egg-field dwellers,
mews, mount the air: the massed seafowls'
whiteplumaged hosts whirl and cackle,
the gulls gathering to greet with clamour
the bright beacon. Her burning rays
melt mist and fume. Murk is vanquished,
the welkin-wanness, by the weather-jewel.
Lightwonder laughs as lurking dusk,
narrow shades of night, the numb wintry
dark's downfallen, and dawn rises
—Old Ægir smiles endless dimples—
on a Yule morning with the youthful sun.

At their topmost tower, two messengers
in wide-pinioned wind-riding flight,
hover high aloft: they hail with trills,
glide down and gaze with golden eyes,
and soar circling; then sweep away
—errand-eagles— to the elf-roundel.

Thus as west Wáda voyaged, the pilot of Wingelote,
cleaving the cold waters, giant king of the Helsings
—nor was it neap on the whaleroad, but a depth of nine ells when
he bore from the brine Wéland, a child on brawny shoulders—
as Sheave on his shield-cradle washed ashore on Angeln;
as from Finn Folkwalding's hall, avenging feud with slaughter,
the hero Hengest was driven to Kent and hungered for land;
from the east as Ingvi the Lord crossed in his ocean-chariot
from Fródi's fruitful kingdom —where drudging frost-giant girls
heaved at Hamlet's millstone, turned the harsh axle-tree;
the tides from their turning changed to the briny taste of weeping:
fettered there the frost-maidens turned that Fródi throneless—
so to Humber's haven Havelok the Dane,
a freight salvaged by Father Grim,
was wafted to Lindsey, on wings of storm,
to our folk-founder, to this fisher-town,
our anchorage, from over the waves,
the swans' sealanes, seeking England:
thrower of menhirs; the throne-claimer.

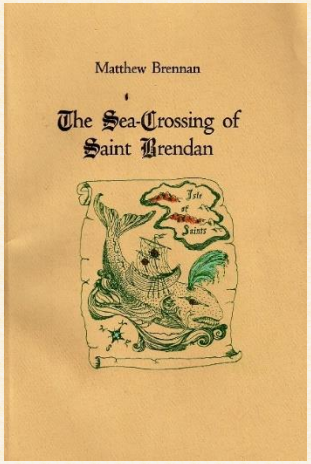
Margaret Noodin, reviewer:
Matthew Brennan. The Sea-Crossing of Saint Brendan
(A translation of the classic Irish sea adventure). ‘
Birch Brook Press, 2008.

Matthew Brennan’s version of Saint Brendan’s story is, as the last section declares, “a tale about breaking the bold world’s boundaries” (p. 59) and well worth the journey back to the late sixth century when he sailed the Atlantic in an ox-hide boat. Although the details about Naomh Breandán, the abbot from Cluain Fearta, Ireland, was first recorded in the Latin *Navigatio Sancti Brendani Abbatis*, it was told many times over as a global epic, by people of many nations. It is this tradition of vernacular lyric entertainment that Brennan takes as his inspiration.

Gesturing toward the ancient Irish rosc and Anglo-Saxon alliterative verse, Brennan organizes his lines in two halves divided by a strong pause with each containing two stressed syllables. However, like many who used these forms before him, he allows some variation to emphasize the musicality of the verse and stay true to the content. This produces a rhythmic story that perfectly imitates the seas on which it is set.

> *Finally at sunset*
> *before darkness fell*
> *we rowed from the creek*
> *right into the swells.*
> *The light behind us,*
> *like a heavenly halo,*
> *silhouetted our cells*
> *and the band of brothers*
> *who waved good-bye.* (12)

True to the tradition of time-tested adventures, the poem includes fantastic encounters. Brendan and his sailing monks meet Jasconius



the Whale, a murderous monster, and a grampus-like gryphon. They visit islands of sheep, birds, blacksmiths and a hermit. But it is the vivid descriptions of the Island of Ailbe that delighted me the most. In a monastery where food magically appears, the monks use cut crystal, and candles are always lit, we find the kind of utopian interlude that balances the weight of many terrifying tales. Every reader might yearn to find youth in such a place:

> *The weight of the world*
> *never has touched them.*
> *The temperature never*
> *boils or freezes*
> *and their bodies are blessed*
> *with the bones of boyhood*
> *and muscles of young men.* (32)

But the story is not one of lingering in paradise and reminds us instead that life is the journey and bright perfection is best saved for eternity. If your path ever crosses one of the limited letterpress editions of The Sea-Crossing of Saint Brendan, take time to enjoy it and set sail briefly on Brennan’s “sloping surf.”

Publications Noted
Awards

- Pat Masson's The Last Valkyrie from Issue #2 is a Rhysling Award finalist & will appear in the Rhysling Anthology.

Articles, Reviews, Discussions on Blogs

- NPR, The Academic Minute, Interview with Dennis Wise on *Speculative Poetry and the Modern Alliterative Revival*
- Robert Keim, A Comparison of Beowulf Translations
- Jack Laurel, The Muse of Song
- Colin Mackenzie, Dróttkvætt: A Note on the Metre (blog post in Scots)
- James Paz, 'Storm-Thoughts and Ice-Songs: A Creative-Critical Response to Old English Eco-Poetry', forthcoming in *Postmedieval*. Includes an alliterative verse "eco-poem".

Poem and Book links Added

- Bob Beagrie, A Festival of Words and Images. *Starbeck Orion, Issue #8: A Festschrift of Bob Beagrie*.
- Adam Bolivar, "The Lyre of Lúca" and "To Haunt Ancestral Tombs" *in Spectral Realms 22*.
- Patrick Bond, For Thine is the Crow, in *needle writers*.
- Lisa Cooper
    - March in New York, "The Ruins of the Monastery at Oybin", and "Dusk" (first printed in *Ekstasis*) in Hasty Corporeal Ink (Wipf & Stock, 2024)
- Paul D. Deane, The Song of David and Abishag, in *The Brazen Head*.
- Jeremiah Dodds' 2014 translation of the Poetic Edda (retains alliteration without strict Old Norse meters)
- Damien Donnelly, video of "Eat the Storms" from his2020 pamphlet.
- Christiana Doucette, Stand of Birches (alliterative free verse), in *oneartpoetry*.
- Heny Gibbs, ed., The Romance of the Cheuelere Assigne (Middle English text), 1868.
- Rahul Gupta, The Beginning of Winter (from his *Arthuriad*), on *Forgotten Ground Regained*
- Bryn Hammond (imitations of Mongolian alliterative verse) From *Against Walls* (Amgalant, Book I):
    - "He leaves by high passes …"
    - "His head is forfeit …" (based on Wulf and Eadwacer)
    - "The tribe of the Ongirat …"
    - "Of captains, of comrades, seen in the world …"
    - "I am Toqtoa …"
    - "I splash with milk liquor … "
    - "Through great fear have I lived …"
    - "The black crow has his fate …"
- Nicholas Korn, *The Wild Sonnets*
- Jared Toby Philips, "To My Champion" in *A Mouth of Honey and Blood: Poems and Proverbs for the Gods and Ungods*.
- Kit Whitfield, *All the Hollow of the Sky*, a fantasy novel featuring, among other things, a pig that declaims in alliterative verse
- Timothy Witchazel, *Joshua and the Battle of Jericho*. Self-published on Amazon.
- Patrick Connor Wood, Rapture, in *Amethyst Review*

Links to Online Performances and Translations

- A.Z. Foreman, For Two Old English Poets, in *The Brazen Head* (translations of Deor and Beowulf's "Lament of the Last Survivor")
- Seamus Heaney reading his translation of Beowulf

Poems Posted on Blogs & Social Media
Published under the Author's Real Name

- Poems submitted to Alex Rettie's 2025 Alliteration Contest
    - Winner: Kelly Scott Franklin, Maker's Marks
    - Stephen Bauhart, Alberta Prairie Breeze
    - Eric Colbrun, Untidy and Simple
    - Paul D. Deane, What a Perfect Poem and Welcome to Our Website
    - Andre Demers, The Gardener Mind

  - Michael Helsem, Prayer Breakfast
  - Steve Knepper, Farmhouse Cellar
  - Liv Ross, In the Spirit of Bezalel
  - Grant Shimmin, Spring Song and Meeting the 'Hood Patrol on My Two-Wheeled Commute
- Jacob Allee, The Valorem: An Alliterative Poem
- Jarom Scott Andrews, first page of a supernatural folk horror script featuring the opening scene of *Sir Gawain an the Green Knight* in both Middle and Modern English
- Joseph Fasano, Sudden Hymn in Winter
- Jason Green, Audio Assignment Instructions
- Paul Guernsey, Bear Spray (AA/BB alliteration)
- Jack Hart
  - Three Skaldic Poems and a Rant on Form
  - The Skillful Huntsman (now through part 6)
    - Part 1: Intro and Second Thoughts
    - Part 2: Meets & Flights
    - Part 3: Deals in the Dark
    - Part 4: Moonlit Mansion
    - Part 5: Dread Dispatches
    - Part 6: Maiden's Meeting
    - Part 7: Wind's Whispers
- Michael Helsem, poems posted at Pearltrees, plus experimental poems under #rumramruf on Bluesky
- Ken Hunt, The Anguillosaxon Chronicle
- Math Jones
  - 'Were you wolf, would you bite …'
  - 'There is a worst / that will happen …'
  - 'Each frenzied grain, each fibre ….;
  - 'Stories told, Tolkien dreams …'
  - Social media announcement (with samples) of his ongoing alliterative verse version of the *Prose Edda.*
- Jack Laurel
  - Grendel's Downgoing
  - Widsith or Unferth
- Colin Mackenzie, 'The goose-gate's gairie quickly …'
- Siodhna McGowan, Spring Equinox (alliterative free verse)
- James Moffett, Concluding Tolkien's Fall of Arthur
  - Concluding the Fall of Arthur: The writing begins, Update 2, Update 3, Update 4, Canto VI Finished
  - Haestingas: *A retelling of the valiant fall of England in verse.*
- Rose Novick
  - Monostich Sequence 2, Monostich Sequence 3
  - Monostich Sequence 4Monostich Sequence 5
  - Monostich Sequence 6, Monostich Sequence 7
- G.T.A. Ogle
  - Rusk the Inscriber
  - The Four Daughters of the Auspex
- Mark Antony Owen, At Pagham
- Andy Perrin, "The winter copse …"
- Ben Quant
  - Completed
  - Driving through 1066
  - Fragments from a Forgotten Saga
  - Hertfordshire Chain Walk
  - Moon Odes: A Duel of Sorts
  - Pétanque
  - The Crows
- Alex Rettie, Delivery
- Michael Smith, The Battle of Maldon, 991: mirthless, men-less, and mudbound
- Todd H.C. Smith (SCA persona Colyne Stewart), *The Lion-Wolf of Ealdormere* (Book including poems in various Norse alliterative styles)
- Marian L. Thorpe
  - War in Winter
    "Hrothgar and Hryllingur" (a reimagined Beowulf, planned arc completed in 22 parts)
  - Part 1, Part 2, Part 3, Part 4, Part 5, Part 6, Part 7,
  - Part 8, Part 9, Part 10 Part 11, Part 12, Part 13, Part 14.

  - Part 15, Part 16, Part 17, Part 18, Part 19, Part 20,
  - Part 21, Part 22

Posted under Pseudonyms on Blogs and Social Media

- Fiona of Clare
  - Guthrinc's Lament
- Lord Ishmael Reed
  - Court Baron Poem for Master Eldred Ælfwald Þegn
- B2Mem
  - Hail Now the Horse-Lords
  - The Way through the Woods
- Runskra
  - "Steel sky darkens / storms come howling …"
- Thaliarchus
  - 'A wit healthy | would fly ware and cowed …'
  - "Billionaire baldmost … "
  - 'Every flower upflowing …'
  - 'The frosty-haired among that fire-trained host …'
  - 'Then his journey, I judge …'
  - 'Hard-seeking homes …'\
  - 'A nerve awry | knocks him earthward …'
  - 'Now slip slice-path through slam-siege again …'
- Wifewolf (@rimahadley.bsky.social)
  - "In colors clear …"

Call for Submissions

The Summer, 2025 issue of Forgotten Ground Regained is open for submissions. I am especially interested in poetry that fits the theme, "**Protests, Opinions, Prophetic Voices, Flytings and Poetic Battles**". Submissions should be sent to Paul D. Deane at the following email address: pdeane@alliteration.net **by July 1, 2025**.

Requirements

Submissions should make skillful, systematic use of alliteration in ways that use alliteration to reinforce the rhythm and connect important ideas. Overall, I prefer poems that have a stronger impact on readers when they are read aloud. I therefore encourage authors to include links to audio or video versions of their poems in their submissions.

I accept simultaneous submissions but require authors to notify me in a timely fashion if a work is accepted elsewhere. I reserve the right to withdraw acceptance if a work has been accepted or published elsewhere without my knowledge.

I will consider reprints but am far more likely to link to them (if published online) or to publish them directly on the site than I am to publish them in one of the quarterly issues.

There is no hard upper length limit, though poems more than five to six pages in length are likely to be published separately on the website, with links provided from the Fall issue, rather than being included directly in the pdf magazine. Note that I love both the lyrical and the narrative turns in poetry, so longer narratives will be given careful consideration.

I would love to see people experimenting with modern English versions of Old and Middle English alliterative verse, with Old Norse forms like *ljoòahattr* and *drottkvætt* or modern Icelandic *rimur*, or with new alliterative forms designed to highlight modern English rhythms and speech patterns. While my first preference is what traditional scholarship calls alliterative-accentual verse, I am also open to alliterative free verse or to alliterative versions of traditional forms, such as the ballad, as long as the alliteration is clearly a structural rather than a decorative feature of the form.

I am open to work both by contemporary poets and to projects that would normally be considered to fall outside the literary mainstream, such as speculative poetry, SCA Bardic Arts projects, and fan fiction.

Submissions must be in modern English, but authors should feel free to submit poems that take advantage of the diction, rhythms, and syntax of particular language varieties and communities. I do not discriminate against Scots, Appalachian English, Black English Vernacular, Indian English, or any other language variety, though I do ask that authors be prepared to supply notes to explain any terms or expressions that outsiders to their communities may not readily understand.