

**Letter from the Editor**

Thanks (as always) to all who sent in poems for this issue of the Erato. We had so many submissions during the summer that they couldn't possibly all fit. Here's hoping you find this issue enjoyable and enriching. If you are new to the Erato, turn the page over to read more about the Park Slope Poetry Project and who we are.

**Steve Dalachinsky****The Fall***(for the Lenny Zolla)*

the leaves are altogether  
processing a joyful death  
creating colors  
in an almost unlawful abandon  
these trees that litter the highway  
with their bounty  
of oncoming brittleness  
they are - FOR SALE -  
when they're bare  
when they're gone  
there'll be nothing left  
to collect

i am a young girl  
dancing beneath branches  
in a small field  
collecting flowers  
in my apron

i am a young boy  
throwing a football  
at her head

there are skeletons in windows  
and pumpkins on porches  
when embarrassed i change color  
like the leaves  
my body heat rising  
my blood rushing to my head

we differ you and i  
you will die  
a much quieter death

the sun  
caught between 2 clouds  
disappears

the raccoon carcass  
is all balled  
up.

*poem written on bus to woodstock  
10/17/84, revised 3/16/97*

**Veronica Golos**  
**Prayer Pattern**

We are still guessing at the patterns of things: those geese, every winter; the depth charge of whales. Across, down, under: everything swirls inside the swirled.

What creates what, we wonder. Did whales invent the current? Is the air moved by the grace of the geese? Air and water move in and around and through

each other – perhaps it's the dancer and the dance? Doesn't the invisible spiral through the visible, and wouldn't that be pattern too? What is freedom, then?

A match made in heaven? Or nothing? Perhaps the act of asking. It changes you. That's all. Like prayer forms faith – creates, destroys, re-creates. Well.

Each glistening minute, taken in, eludes us. Time is an aftershock: How whales are mammals. How the geese thread into form. Each empties

into another, then, again. Say what you will, we stay, then go, hands full of earth someone else is pouring.

**Daniela Gioseffi****Since 9/11***– upon surviving the attack on New York, 2001, and after reading Wendell Barry*

When *terror* festers  
and my eyes open at a strange noise  
in the midst of night  
frightened of my coming death  
or what my child's life will become,  
I go to the woods to listen for the loon's  
call on the lake  
and sit by the lull of the lapping waters,  
glistening  
where the great blue heron fed in the day.  
I come alone among the peace of the wild  
world,  
and realize that birds and fish do not  
upset their lives with politics  
or imagined grief to come.

I sit lulled by the lapping water of the  
deep lake and listen  
to the tiny songs of insects,  
until I feel the distance of stars as I reach  
out to them  
amidst the great mystery of endless space  
full of the smell of burning stars—  
and I know that many stars I see —  
millions of light years away —  
have died long ago  
and been seen by lovers longer than I can  
ever live.

I come  
into the presence of a immense uni-  
verse, feel the confinement of my spirit  
left behind  
in my bed, and wait for the great sun to  
rise.

I rest awake in the vast grace of the world  
—free to be in the moment of my being  
without pain or regret,  
breathing deep of dark pines  
as my soul sings the gurgling leap of a  
fish.

Even the owl's feathery swoop  
and the vole's scream as it's gulped  
seems in its place  
and at peace.

**Moshe Adesnik**  
**A Bird**

a bird—she soars  
with no thoughts;  
she will bring to my eyes  
scenes of august tranquility;  
She brings peace from lands afar.  
No knowledge and no doubt,  
only the purest chirp of mindless affection

as she sings to mine ear the light tunes  
of the innocent forest deeps  
and drops from her bowed beak bright  
specks of soil  
from the silver mountaintops that know no  
sadness.

**William Duke**  
**What do I think?**

I think we are here,  
and now  
a fog has lifted on the lake  
revealing a tapestry of Autumn leaves.

Below the surface of understanding  
our spirits embrace.



Daryl Lang

**Evie Ivy**  
**The Swim**

I'll not dispel your mind.  
You'll not perish in a deluge  
of words here.  
A typhoon will not pick  
you up to discard you in far  
waters, lost trying to decipher,  
still clutching this paper,  
reading this as an  
archeologist would, searching  
to find truth or reason,  
because if there's any sense,  
you'll be the one to find it.  
I'll be simple, not use metaphors  
or similes that'll leave you  
in a turning torrent.

There are times I go back,  
turn the hour glass over and over,  
tell myself; life is strange,  
stranger our acceptances.

We were human  
and became stranded  
in our own cloud-built castles.  
In the end, there is so much  
you can hold onto  
each other before you fall,  
and kick your way to land.

**Wil Hallgren**  
**Late photograph  
of Paul Klee, 1940**

Scleroderma, as the flesh indurates,  
glazes toward death, the synapses sizzle,  
a fatal twittering machine of heat.

His head cocks sideways, bones click,  
shoulders arch and lock, a degenerate  
prisoner in himself. He laughs,

perhaps, once more at this Hitler – half-  
laughs – as the hands, the painter's, the  
violinist's  
hands, hook and curl into plated claws,

baked clay. His face a death mask of fear;

but the eyes are lights, glittering shards  
in a tattered mosaic face. His eyes  
say – there are still people; there's still  
Goethe:

*Im Augen legt die Seele.* There is still joy,  
conversation – music, art, and poetry – and  
still there's Switzerland, in spite of these  
Hitlers!

In pain he relishes the company of  
children,  
and dimly hears the marbled babbling of  
eternity.  
He'll die: Locarno, Switzerland, 1940.

*Note: Scleroderma, a fatal disease which  
causes the skin and tissue to degenerate  
by hardening and drying out, is the  
disease from which Klee died in 1940 at  
the age of 61.*

**Amanda DeVecchia**  
**The Unseen**

The dark grey clouds,  
Hover overhead,  
And raindrops fall,  
To their sodden, earthy bed.

Dewdrops glisten,  
On the spider's artwork,  
Sprinkling bits of light,  
Where shadows lurk.

Needs are fulfilled,  
Leaves are greener,  
But no one remembers,  
Rain's pleasant demeanor.

**Medicine**

Everyone needs some medicine,  
To cure this or that,  
Give hair to the baldness,  
Hidden under that hat.

Perfection is rare,  
And still unseen,  
It is not that it has escaped our gaze,  
It just never has been.

**George Held**  
**A New Mantra  
(Triolet)**

Viagra, Levitra, Cialis,  
Mantra of an impotent nation:  
Even jocks advertise their limpness  
The way they once endorsed Vitalis.  
Have feminists created this crisis,  
Or is this most men's real condition?  
Viagra, Levitra, Cialis,  
Mantra of an impotent nation.

**Stanley H. Barkan**  
**Househusband**

So now you're away . . .  
I have to wash & dry the dishes, do the  
laundry,  
shop for groceries, pay the newsboy,  
make sure everyone gets up and out on  
time,  
dispense allowance, settle the screaming  
between  
our son & daughter, drive her to the  
station  
(try to keep her from driving us all crazy).  
So now I know what it's like to be a wife—  
just what you've always wanted.  
So when are you coming home?

**Matthew Anish**  
**Jazz Evening**

A bulb shines  
in  
the  
middle  
of  
the room  
Reflected light  
strikes the eye  
A saxophone sings  
a  
woman's voice rings  
out  
Tomorrow it will  
be  
but  
a  
memory  
but for now  
let the syncopation  
echo  
in the beating of your heart

**Robert Dunn**  
**Sonnet:**  
**Trombone Truculence**

The trombone can really get a fellow's  
goat.  
It sounds like sticking out your tongue.  
You change its size to warp its notes,  
And you might puncture someone's lung  
If you injudiciously stick the slide  
A touch too far, with *molto fort e*.  
Your victim will score an ambulance ride,  
While you might have to face a court day.  
King Arthur's knights once favored  
trombones  
At their festivals, during mounted dances  
(A.k.a. jousts) for sousaphones  
Were poor replacements for gleaming  
lances.  
Tried it, myself—I got nailed for assault.  
Now, I save my trombone for when I pole  
vault.

**Natalia Sucre**  
**Small Torment**

All day today  
my face is a shoe:  
  
just inches from the floor,  
the uneven wear  
  
fast turned an ugly fit,  
pounding pavements  
  
infinite, pounding  
this small old ground—  
  
oh my grinding lips,  
tell me  
  
what have you bound now?



William Duke

**Charles J. Butler**  
**Arrow's Leap**  
(for Megan S.)

Arrow looked back  
thinking:  
I'm going to miss this world  
The running, leaping,  
Hunting, and sleeping  
Sitting  
at rest  
Staring  
into the endless night,  
false dawns, and long sunny days.

Arrow thought:  
I'll miss her.  
She was the world made full.  
Flesh and Bone, Sight and Breath,  
Life,  
and Love.

Arrow sends a bolt two ways  
Some of himself  
to carry with her  
Some of her  
to journey with him  
And then  
A flash.  
He's off into the  
Dawn.  
Arrow is.

**Patricia Carragon**  
**Treasure?**

What can be said of something  
Buried in this nameless alley,  
When it was once treasured,  
Given out of love?  
Or can love be measured,  
When the past is rejected –  
Sleeps in filth, alone and neglected?

What can be said of a memory  
When it was there to serve its owner?  
Was it witness to sadness or happiness?  
Was it cherished for its unique design  
Or did it lose its value under duress,  
When time grew tired of its use  
And dumped it out of casual abuse?

What can be said of myself  
Seen within this ragged treasure?  
Am I a common thread, forgotten,  
Inside seams and buttonholes,  
With memories stale and rotten –  
Or a recycled life waiting to begin  
Within washed and mended skin?

**Joy Leftow**  
**My Mother**

My mother is an artist  
She designs embroidery  
– a dying art – and creates  
any design she desires  
her hands instruments  
of a higher force

She explains to me  
how this one is a fleur-de-lis  
and how in the region  
where we come from  
it is made differently  
from someplace else

With only one eye  
the other is glass  
she sees more than I do  
She is dying  
my heart is unsteady  
I am powerless  
a witness to her fate

My mother's hands create  
embroidery with many  
names and meanings  
She patiently explains  
the subtle meanings  
behind each motif

I listened in awe  
while she explained  
all of this to me  
I had nothing to say

Now there is even  
less to say as  
Each day brings her  
closer to her end  
I drown in helplessness

She tells us she is sick, not stupid  
she knows her death is near  
If only I could relieve her suffering  
I would do so until the end

She alternates between begging for death  
then apologizes for doing this  
She is my mother, she worries  
about me, my mental health  
how I will handle her death instead

I think about her hands flying quickly  
the needle moving as tho she has 3 eyes  
The pattern suddenly emerging  
Then the design is near complete  
like the course of my mother's life

**Triada Samaras**  
**Mom**

Mom always gave me good advice  
Told me what could kill me  
Each day a new carcinogen  
Antibiotic-proof virus  
Automobile safety recall  
And other words of wisdom

Mom always did this just right  
Before breakfast in the morning  
She might say  
Coffee has now been determined  
By the so and so survey  
To cause cancer in laboratory rats

I would shudder a bit as I drank  
Trying to shrug it off  
You know that cereal  
We have been eating recently?  
A child choked and died on it  
Last week in Minnesota  
The toasted almond honey-covered oats  
Would go a little flat in my mouth  
And that awful company  
Should have recalled the cereal  
Yes, Mom  
I would say

Those pajamas that I bought  
for everyone yesterday?  
She would muse  
Wiping the counter of germs  
For the fifth time that morning  
I am going to have to return them

Why?  
I would ask  
Trying to sound casual  
Tasting disinfectant  
Watching Mom wipe  
Because I told you  
Weren't you listening?  
They're flame retardant,  
Not flame resistant!!!!!!!!!!!!!!  
I have to drive all the way  
Back to the mall with you  
Today  
Just to return them.

**erato**

is the Greek Muse of lyric poetry.  
And it's the monthly publication  
of the Park Slope Poetry Project.  
**Publisher:** William Duke  
**Associate Publisher:**  
Charles J. Butler  
**Editor:** Daryl Lang  
**Advisor:** David Parsons

All poems are the property of  
their authors and are reproduced  
with permission.

We accept submissions of poems  
and photographs via email:  
daryl@poetrycentral.com.

Space is limited and we give  
preference to poems that have  
been previewed at the Poetry  
Project's open reading.

**The Park Slope  
Poetry Project**

meets the first Tuesday of every  
month at 7:30 pm in the basement  
of St. John-St. Matthew Emanuel  
Lutheran Church, 283 Prospect  
Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11215.  
All are welcome.

**Directions:** The church is on  
Prospect Avenue between 5th  
and 6th Avenues. By subway,  
take the M or R to Prospect  
Avenue or the F to 7th Avenue.

**Upcoming Readings:**  
**Oct. 3** - Rhonda Lewis + open  
**Nov. 7** - Todd Friedman + open

**Our web site:**  
<http://www.poetrycentral.com/>

**HAS BEANS**  
BROOKLYN

**BEST COFFEE IN NEW YORK**  
17TH STREET AND FIFTH AVENUE

**Internet Access / Cookies**

**Fillmore.com**  
Real Estate the way it should be.

**William Duke**  
718-788-7001 ext 202  
williamduke@fillmore.com