

« Mon Bonheur, Ma Valeur »
Poem by Nicole Basso (en Francais)

Mon bonheur, c'est un nombre
Cent trente-cinq, c'était le but
Donc, pour déjeuner, je respirais
Et marchais les corridors seule
Pour dépenser ses calories
Pour dîner, je disais que j'avais pas faim
Et après me cacher loin de la cuisine
Puis, le nombre, c'était
Mille deux cents – moins si possible
Donc, pour déjeuner, un muffin
Pour dîner, de la salade
Ces nombres,
Parfois ils me manquent
Mais ils sont pourquoi j'ai peur
Des miroirs, des balances, d'été
Pourquoi je me compare à toi, à elles
Et je me demande pourquoi
Pourquoi
Parfois je respire encore pour déjeuner
Et me promène pour dîner
Enfin, je me rends compte que
C'est parce que j'ai besoin de la valeur
Et, ma valeur, c'est un nombre

(English translation follows)

“My Happiness, My Worth”

My happiness is a number
The goal was one hundred thirty-five
So, for lunch I would breathe
And walk around the hallways alone
To burn off its calories
For dinner, I would say that I wasn't hungry
And would then hide far away from the kitchen
Then the number was
Twelve hundred – less if possible
So, for lunch, a muffin
For dinner, some salad
Sometimes I miss these numbers
But they are the reason I am afraid of
Mirrors, scales, summer
Why I compare myself to you, to them
And I am wondering why
Why
Sometimes I still breathe for lunch
And go for a walk for dinner
At last, I've realized
It's because I need some sort of worth
And my worth is a number

FREE POEMS



Read a Local Writer!
BE a Local Writer!

Real Connection
Poem by Blynn Teeft

Challenge to listen
To what's really being said
To hear the words
The sound in between
To hear the silence
That scares so much

Challenge to feel
Emotions as they appear
What the body says to feel pain and joy
The emptiness, the fullness
The ability to stay alive

Challenge to be
Courageous and brave
Honest and loyal
Here and now

Now this rampant species is consuming me
As recorded and translated by Graham Atkin

Tell me about your past and your aspirations.
Well I've been circling the Sun for eons.
You can't believe how tedious that can get.
The Sun sends me the occasional solar flare.
To amuse me with the Northern Lights.
But even that became boring.
So I wondered what I could do to occupy myself.
I realized that I was full of elements.
To tinker with and maybe combine into molecules.
So I started by making simple molecules like water.
Then I thought let's be clever.
And make a self-replicating molecule.
So I made molecules with...
Carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, nitrogen and phosphorus.
To my amazement, single cell life appeared.
I felt proud when fungi and plants emerged.
And then came dinosaurs and mammals.
Some of these mammals evolved into apes.
Then came the homo genus such as the Neanderthals.
And then a species calling itself homo sapiens.
Now this rampant species is consuming me.
They are destroying the other life forms too.
And they pollute with their foul gases.
I ponder about how this species can be controlled.
A world war? No, they already had a few of those.
A plague? No, they can create vaccines.
Maybe the extreme weather they created will tame them.
Nope, some of them like warm weather.
I thought about a large asteroid. That could work.
Look what an asteroid did to the dinosaurs.
I will ask the Sun to slingshot an asteroid in my direction.
Once I get rid of them I can learn from my mistakes.
And start again. Yes, I am shocked, I want to start again.

Here
Poem by Lorie Morris

Here you are!
Here I am!
Here goes a time.
Here goes all.
Here goes you.
Here I am.

In Support
Haiku by David Mac Eachern

Giving from the heart
For there's opportunity
Real life insurance

No-hole
Poem by Gordon Young

What is a no-hole?
It is a homemade black hole,
Into which an outreach falls;
From which nothing crawls.
Not even an echo.
It swallows light
And creates a nothing-night
It does not utter “no.”
It just makes “no” grow.

Corner
Haiku by David Du

Who makes this shape in
The world — a shadow jumps up,
A lonely soul dance.

OPEN HEART FORGERY

Vol.13 No.6, July 2022

ISSN 2369-6516 (Print)
ISSN 2369-6524 (Online)

www.ohForgery.com
Halifax, Nova Scotia

*Open Heart Forgery is a monthly journal of poems
& lyrics that aims to energize local writers from
the grass roots up.*

This issue's writers:

AMD Graham Atkin	Kyphosis Now this rampant species is consuming me
Nicole Basso	« Mon Bonheur, Ma Valeur »
Claudette Bouman	Ruts I
Charles Bull	Comrades
David Du	Corner
Shawn Elford	My Higher Power
Harry Garrison	Poker Words
Teresa Kilbride	Robin Red
Scott Lynch	she, cutting my hair
David Mac Eachern	In Support
Don Macmillan	Our Veteran Skipper.
Mike McPetridge	To Make a Difference
Lorie Morris	Here
Blynn Teeft	Real Connection
Gordon Young	No-hole

Editor:	Georgia Atkin
Layout:	Erica Allanach
Communications:	Jim Hoyle
Secretary/Treasurer:	Janet Brush
Website:	Tim Covell

Send us your poems & lyrics for the next issue:

ohf@ohforgery.ca

Rule 1: No hate. No sexism. No racism.

Rule 2: Maximum 28 lines long, 43 letters wide
Larger poems will only be considered space permitting

Rule 3: Only HRM residents please, to keep Open
Heart Forgery a local community journal

*Publication of any item does not imply endorsement of
opinions or beliefs expressed by the author(s), and are
not necessarily the views of any OHF volunteers.*

Print off copies, photocopy it, email the PDF to friends
Beautify the world by sharing these words...

**let our voices be heard...
Forge This Journal!**

Kyphosis
Poem by AMD

Grandfather’s sister was a hunchback;
it is in the family genes.
I am probably the only hunchback
most people who have seen me have seen
other than the caricatured Notre Dame one
and I wonder why the cartoonist
thought it fitting to distort his face as well
with bulbous nose and crooked teeth.
Hugo gave him a wart over one eye
explaining Disney’s half-closed one
but both allowed him a kind heart
more precious than physical perfection
perhaps and perhaps kind hearts are
a hunchback’s redeeming feature.
One must look deeply and not away.

Mother scolded, urging me to stand
straight, buying me an unwieldy brace.
It showed through my clothing
pushed me into turning more fully
into myself. When I was thirteen
my cousin’s friend, on an otherwise
pleasant outing, said you’re a
hunchback, aren’t you, the first time
anyone defined me as other than
round-shouldered. Reclusion runs
in the family too, on the other side,
and unkind hearts have pushed me
into hiding, given me a silent tongue.
I bend my back toward a garden now,
my way to bring beauty to the world.

Comrades
Poem by Charles Bull

Each one homesick for
Heaven, we gaze
Into the pulsing glow of embers
And a flickering flame
And sing to an easy strum, a song
Without words.

Tomorrow we must rise
And face again
The abominable power,
But in our song this night we have each other.
Perhaps this is the heaven for which
We long.

My Higher Power
Poem by Shawn Elford

Feeling uncomfortable in my skin
Don’t belong here on earth
Struggling to exist at all
What am I to do
No answer to be heard
Frozen in time
Mind floating away
From my reality
Asking my higher power
To raise me up
To be happy
In my skin once again
Keep my feet on the ground
Higher power answers my plea
Now I’m whole again

To Make a Difference
Poem by Mike McFetridge

It takes a lifetime to make a difference;
It takes a lifetime to make your mark;
It takes a lifetime of trying and learning;
So the sooner is the better we start.

It takes a lifetime of loving another
To learn the knowledge of loving a soul;
It takes a lifetime of creating music
To learn the value of ol’ rock ‘n roll.

Our Veteran Skipper.
*(Honouring Richard S. Payne, 1954–2022,
OHF poet and retired Canadian Naval officer)*
Poem by Don Macmillan

For years his great ship has been sailing, it’s true
Through oceans, high seas, and storms quite a few
Strength in the wheelhouse, steady hand on the tiller
Two eyes to the horizon, that’s our Veteran Skipper

As the years slip on by, is he still up to the task?
Maintain an even keel? – those questions are asked
While chewing his SCRAM, his answer is clear
Onwards my Jack Tars, with courage, no fear!

But dark on the horizon, winds billow and roar
Our Skipper is challenged like never before
The waves they are lashing, the ship’s in distress
Our Skipper now rises to give of his best

Back in the wheelhouse with all of his might
Hard to starboard he cries, safe harbour’s in sight!
Where cometh his strength, his crew is aghast
Our Veteran Skipper, in peaceful waters at last

*Note: Don Macmillan is an Abroad member of OHF
and brother-in-law of Richard Payne*

Ruts I
Poem by Claudette Bouman

Family ruts are unforgiving
They’re forgetting to know how to breathe
When penetrated by a single look, a gesture
It’s a heart thumping with so much fear
Your adult shadow falls into the shape
Of the child you were when it first happened
It’s being alive in penetrating unhappiness
It’s being frozen by silent looks in presences
Trapped in a lousy life of exhortations
You return to a replay of interior life’s pains
Any sweet rising expectations stagnate
Twist, turn, and stifle themselves to death

she, cutting my hair
Poem by Scott Lynch

she, cutting my hair
deftly navigating an aging pate
hedge trimming
ears and nose as needed
scissors and comb extensions
of her will
as we are interrupted by
an army of raucous bullfrogs
again
and
again
laughing she says:
“it’s a happy sound
just digesting
this isn’t loud
on a good day
patients in nearby operatories
have been heard
to question the rumbling.”

*“Our foibles are really what
make us lovable.” —Johann Wolfgang von Goethe*

Poker Words
Rectangle Poem by Harry Garrison

one pair ALLOW, FLOOD, CYNIC
two pair VIVID, LEVEL, RADAR
three of a kind POPPY, SASSY
straight ABCDE, LMNOP, VWXYZ
flush AEIOU full house ESSES

Robin Red
Poem by Teresa Kilbride

1.

you might be made of steel
I don’t know my metals

someone shaped you like a bird
someone else
painted a red breast and yellow beak
managed an eye with the premonition
of song

every day I am surprised
you are still here

stay then so I won’t miss you
you’re the only one
who breaks my heart.

2.

Still but for high winds coming
when everything gets hauled inside
her flesh and bone kin
hidden in giant spruce
she makes them more real
to the one sitting here
just as a woman on the walkway
skips lighter because she is seen.