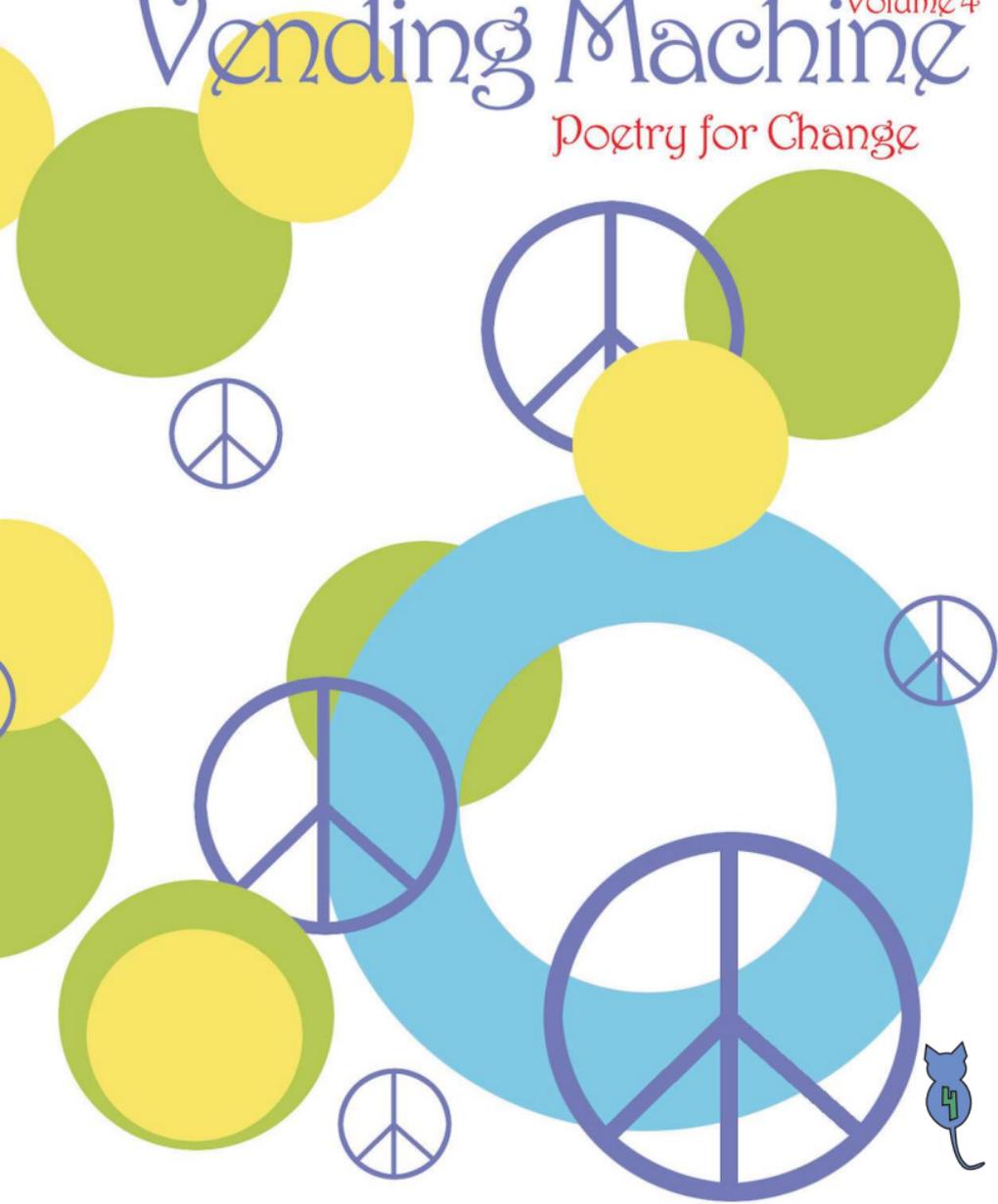


Vending Machine

Volume 4

Poetry for Change



VENDING MACHINE: POETRY FOR CHANGE

"You must be the change you wish to see in the world."

--Mahatama Gandhi

"Change is inevitable, except from a vending machine."

--Robert C. Gallagher

this book is produced for the

Poetic Provisions Food-Drive

Donations collected during the Poetic Provisions Food-Drive go to the **Canton Sunday Picnic** and the **Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank**.

The **Canton Sunday Picnic** is a grassroots meal that feeds the homeless and those in need every Sunday at Market Square Park in Canton, Ohio. Volunteers cook donated food, often supplementing from their own kitchens, for 80 to 100 people each week. In addition to non-perishable food donations, the Canton Sunday Picnic also needs items such as cooking oils, herbs and spices, aluminum foil, paper plates, napkins, and plastic eating utensils.

The **Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank** provides food and other essential items to member agencies in Carroll, Holmes, Medina, Portage, Stark, Summit, Tuscarawas, and Wayne counties. Foodbank lists their most needed food items as: breakfast cereal, peanut butter, canned tuna, canned vegetables, and canned soups.

"VENDING MACHINE: Poetry for Change" volume 4, **November 2013**. Published by The Poet's Haven, Massillon, Ohio. **All material contained in this volume is copyright © of its respective author or artist.** Printed in the USA. Vertigo Xi'an Xavier, publisher; T.M. Göttl, editor; cover by Eileen Matias. For more information on The Poet's Haven, visit: www.PoetsHaven.com.

They last thirty seconds--
and continue
for thirty minutes--
until after a certain amount of time,

subside for awhile--
then start
again--
one contraction at a time.

It is not the same as desire--
or craving
for ice cream--
or a slice of chocolate fudge cake.

It is the human need for food--
a need to calm
those unpleasant contractions--
of the stomach.

Should we--
who practice good morals and religion
and love one another--
suffer hunger to prevail?

It only takes one can of food--
one can of food at a time.
one can of food--
one.

I hope the Mayans are right, or at least REM
And it is the end of the world, as we know it

The end of one lost soul plowing down innocence
The end of focusing on our differences
To the exclusion of seeing
Our common humanity
Realizing that we are One

The end of forgetting
What you do to the least of these you do to me
The end of power and greed defining success
The end of looking the other way
When confronted with what we do not want to see
The end of laughing or worse at those we do not understand

The end of competition being the be all and end all
Winning at all costs, we cannot afford it

The end of carelessness with our thoughts, words, feelings
Each contains an energy that once released cannot be recalled
Be careful what you think, say, and feel, we will all get it
It will boomerang, and then where will you/we be?

Let this be the end of pretense that by watching we are doing
Voyeurism is a pastime and nothing more

Let this Be The End of the world as we know it
We can do better than this,
For our collective survival, we must do better than this
We Are better than this

The Beginning...

Hospital vending—
same machines as in prison.
Need a little change.

That inner peace is a choice.
I believe in Brussels sprouts. And spinach.
And kale and cauliflower and spelt and eggplant.
Because it's made with sunshine and water.
And who doesn't love sunshine?
Who doesn't want to be sunshine?
I believe in the sacred.
That life is mystical. And magical. And beautiful.
And that everything worth doing requires an initial leap of faith.
That every day is an adventure.
That every breath begins with the universal sound for Love.
I believe in turn signals. They were invented for a reason.
I believe we should treat ourselves well, and others even better.
I believe to choose kindness.
In every choice.
I believe it's up to us. Each of us.
I believe in peace by pieces.
Life is a verb.
Love is a lifestyle.
Peace is everywhere.
I believe we should listen more.
I believe there are 8 billion names for God.
And another trillion upon trillion more.
And that all numbers add up to One.
This I believe: we are all here to Love.

come to the river
on the west side of town
by the old hickory tree
within the veils of musky cattails

come meet me by the river
and we'll sit
with our tired legs
dangling in its rippling depths

and I'll tell you how I survived
my own fires
heartbreak and other
unnatural disasters

as the quiet of the river
soothes your burns
and you remember yourself again

Do you remember who you were?
It's such a shame that you've changed,
but I still have faith that you'll fly.
I remember.
You built a house with a wall,
But you let them take it all away.
They rewrote your song,
And changed your tune,
From a major to a minor key.
Look...
They broke you down,
But hold your ground!
I can still see the beauty
Through those sad tired eyes.
Let's share this vision
Through a window mirror.
And melodies will flood your ears
When you remember!
How strong you once were.
How proud. Look at yourself
And sing out loud.
Let's paint a new picture.
A self portrait.
Of the beautiful creature that you are,
And always were.

We are fluff that has been blown on,
We part company with one another
And float into the aloneness.
We wander so long
Borne aloft by breath, aching
To see one another again
Yearning to be stitched together at the foot
And it is like that until one day we come to rest
And realize that we carried the secret
Inside us all along, that we arise
From the core of a golden sun
And the day of blooming
Has been gathering inside
The whole while

We are all "never not broken"
like the goddess who never knew a rut.
Reflective prism light breaks from our scars;
for survival is about enduring wounds.
Over and over we rise from pseudo-death
to ride the back of Fear into the future.
Reality, continually interrupted,
forces us to begin anew;
in this we learn we are limitless.

When I was young, men wore ties.

My father always wore a clip-on bow tie, dark red, almost mahogany. When I was in grade school, it was embarrassing; they were so out of style, and I had not yet discovered that a style could become so retro as to become a fashionable statement. Now I can picture him as he was then, white shirt, red bow tie, and his sports jacket, smiling under horn-rimmed glasses, and it is jarring to see that, in my memory, he is so very young.

As a child, when I wore a tie-- to a wedding, maybe, or a fancy restaurant with a sign no one without a tie admitted-- it would be a clip-on. My father never taught me how to knot a tie.

My grandfather wore silk ties, always in a dark color, blue or dark brown, which he tied in a neat full-Windsor knot. He was white haired, very formal in his way. But he would take his jacket off and then throw his tie back over his left shoulder when he wanted to get down to work.

My uncle Dave was an artist and didn't wear a tie to work, but open-necked sports shirts with a pocket in front. When he did wear a tie, it would be a bolo, with a clasp of some artistic design at the neck; perhaps a stone set in silver, or a little relief figure of Kokopelli playing the flute. He was always my favorite uncle. It was only years later that one of my aunts told me he was gay, oh, didn't everybody know that?

I never really did learn how to knot a tie right, although with a book and a mirror I could bash out something that would do. In these modern times, no one remarks the distinction between a half-Windsor and a four-in-hand.

When I left school, I told myself that if I lived my life right I would never have to wear a tie again. But, yes, I sometimes still do, and always a bolo.

With a silver relief figure of Kokopelli, playing a flute.

The Dreamer

weeps at the base of a locked door
upon which a sign beckons, "roof"

you need a key before you can fly

There are three things in life that you cannot escape;
Death, Taxes, and Commercials.
Commercials are the worst out of the three
Because they go on and on about toys that shouldn't even be called toys
Because they're so high tech.
Then they move onto expensive elixirs that supposedly smooth out skin,
Then on to undergarments that claim they will pull us in -
Giving us those figures from way back when...

But Wait There's More

How about our kids go outside and play? That's free.
How about we drink more water to moisturize our skin?
How about we walk past the fast food restaurants
On our way to do a sit up or two or maybe even three?
And, yes, by the way, that does include me...

But you know what we always say, "Ain't nobody got time for that."
We're too busy trying to charge the next big thing,
Not worried about the interest, they'll let us pay it 'til we die
Then they'll just roll it over to the next generation.

The same generation we've taught to shop at Nordstrom's,
Not at Macy's.
And HELL NO! not TJ Maxx.
Never realizing that it is all the same
Just hanging on different racks.



Made by hard-working and under-paid Asians and Mexicans.
Did you know that in Bangladesh a factory caught on fire
And workers were locked in?
They were told that quota must still be met
Even though people were dying in other parts of the building.

But what can we as a people really say?
They were probably just getting ready for our Christmas season.
You know the time of the year when the floor must be covered with toys
Or its not thought to be a success.
Please explain how we forget that Christ only received 3 gifts.
What makes us think that our children deserve more than this?

What if commercials went on and on about giving quality time as a gift?
How about volunteering on a regular basis?
How about taking the time to notice the look in a stranger's eye
And saying:
"No matter what you're going through today, it's going to be okay.
Just take a deep breath and keep on praying."

Wait around for advertisers to figure out the error of their ways?
I say we better not hold our breath.
You and I, that equals WE, have to be the change we want to see
And it has to start TODAY.

Now is the time we must depend
on prayers from our newly-sleeping trees
for they are relieved to be undressed
and stand ready for their abundant Fall and Winter dreams.

I'm sure they pity us
because everywhere in the world nation-states ply
their never-ending hatred
of the poor and weak.

Those who perpetrate implacable hatred
will themselves become
consumed by it
and lost.

Sunrise comes this morning to illuminate
glinting-frosted, still life photographs
of old and older cars standing silent in their gravel-dirt driveways
out of work.

Those who can, wrap their beloved outside plants
against the very thought of Winter
while food banks reel from desperation and its onslaught:
from the multitudes of dispossessed...

Blessed
by relative financial poverty,
I am wealthy both from love and from forgiveness
I dearly cherish the freedoms they have brought me.

Compassion re-awakens and continues...

drop a quarter in a beggar's hand
plenty of beggars these days
just yesterday I saw a pregnant woman
on the corner near the tattoo parlor
holding a sign that basically read "help me"
blue ink on torn brown cardboard

I'm sure our beggars are nothing like India's
where eunuchs and hermaphrodites turn cartwheels at every station stop
Yuyutsu told me, like he told me the Alps in Switzerland
are a pleasant diversion compared to his Himalayas

or those diamond-hard photos from the thirties
trainloads of black-and-white men, rails again
clinging like ticks to the flat roofs of boxcars
soon to be replaced by ranks of helmeted troops
and bald crowds behind fences in death camps
perhaps I digress

how much farther have we progressed?
the law of unintended consequences seems as strong as gravity
must growing the economy steadily consume the future?
our European forebears have plenty to answer for
as does everybody everywhere
can it be the universal tendency of men and women is toward conflict?

seriously, death is inevitable, like bad weather
death does not need our help
consciousness is sweet and fleeting
this present moment eventually ends, guaranteed
soon we will be all spirit
just like we were before they let us in

you can't teach a dog new tricks
a leopard can't change his spots
ignorance begets ignorance
such clichés have to stop

to stop hate
you must show love
hate will never die, greed will only wither
both can fade and hold less of a place in the hearts of all
no light without darkness
no knowledge of heat without feeling its void

it takes a little revolutionary
to change
just one drop
for the course of human perception to alter

it starts with me

it starts with me having more patience on the road
putting down my phone more often
looking into the faces of those around me
into the eyes of those I encounter

it starts with me having more acceptance of those I know
their hurts, their fears
celebrating their successes without envy
getting over "keeping up with the Joneses"
neither of us really need that much material stuff anyhow



it starts with me loving more
being more open to change
so that change, in turn, will flow through me
I must shed my fear of change
I must be the lotus blossom
the sunflower turning towards the sun
I must be the example to follow
not the squeaky wheel upstaging my neighbor

I should strive to embrace challenges like Malala
who at 12 was light-years ahead of where I was at 20
even now at 16, she is more advanced in her thinking
of combating evil with purity and grace
then I am with all of my years

It is 2013 and we still have so much to do
working on being less - less materialistic, less hate, less bigotry, less fear
moving towards more - more love, more acceptance,
an outstretched hand to help those who need it

I may not be able to change my spots, not on my own
but with you – your help, your grace, your acceptance, your patience
together
we could paint new spots, we could change
we could start the course
each of us – one drop
towards the changes we want to see blossom in this world.

I am Malala Yousafzai of Pakistan.

I am the beloved daughter who my parents named for a Pashtun poet warrior woman.

Malalai of Maiwand died in battle at 17. I was only 12. I was only 12 when the British news man came.

I stand with my family and hundreds of other girls who claim our right to an education. They don't know how we live with the people of the Taliban.

I wasn't their first choice.

Aisha had to break her pencils because her parents didn't want the Taliban to write her death notice. But I am not afraid. My father teaches me every night, even without school.

Aisha was 16. I was only 12. I wanted to be a doctor.

I wanted to be a doctor, but I must study first. Father says I have to become a politician. Then maybe I can be a doctor, someday.

This was not my first choice. But people hate me as if I wanted this attention.

The officials paid no attention until the number of Tali-burned schools climbs to one hundred. They pay no attention as the Taliban men attack little girls on their way to school. I have nothing to pay but attention.

I wrote my diary on scraps of paper for my father to give to the news man. I use a pen, so I cannot erase. I use a pen name, so they will not erase me.

Gul Makai is the name that muddles the Taliban men. Mother whispered fairy tales about the strong, lovely Gul Makai to me at bedtime. My brothers were asleep, but I begged again and again for the stories.

My parents like the name Gul Makai and laugh about changing my name. But when people praise the diary I write for the news, my father can only smile. He cannot say it is me.

Someday, people will use Malala as their pen name when they are afraid.

I do not deserve the honor of this attention. I am one of so many.

I am not the only one who deserves the honor of this attention. See my sisters rising with schoolbooks as swords and shields. Use my name and my face, but this dream is not just me.



I dreamed last night I made medicines for my sick brother, and he got well. I awoke to mortar shells and gunshots three streets away. The hurt people cannot come to me because I have no medicine. Only my dream.

And my voice, on paper and aloud. Father tells me when the fighting is too close for me to go to school. When I stay home, I write more for the news.

I'm so bored. I have read all these books in the house. Bring me something new.

Hush. We're swimming through public opinions here, and you're bored?

Did you forget we are 15? We are allowed to be a child.

No! We cannot be weak. Backing down is not the way of Malalai.

The people will see through you if they cannot see me. They are afraid, too.

They need someone fearless.

They need someone who knows fear and hopes.

The Taliban men see both of us only through a sniper scope.

We will be the scared, hopeful face for girls' education.

[Clutching at faces]

Blood, searing pain!

Screams echo

The hole in my face spews hot magma. I drop.

[Slump over]

Beep beep beep beep... [continues]

I awake in a shimmering bed. I feel fuzzy. Bandages cover half of me. My hand weighs as much as a bomb.

Where are we?

Father said Britain. In a hospital.

Take me home! Pakistan needs me.

I need my home. Pakistan, oh Pakistan please. I belong nowhere else.

They put a hole in my head. I speak louder now. I am stronger than their bullets.

No matter how hard I row,
I stay in the same place.

I'm building endurance.

Forests here build endurance
one tree at a time.
Clear-cutters destroy decades
in an afternoon.
I row faster, faster,

can't grow wings
despite strong shoulders,
can't fly to a place
where trees still stand,

white trilliums
under heavy branches.

It's changing.
It's changing not.
There is no stasis today.
It's changing.
It's changing not.
Each of your poems,
platonic or romantic;
each of your kisses,
platonic or romantic;
each of your griefs,
platonic or romantic
are changing the world.
It's changing.
It's changing not.
You are microscopic and
you are majestic.
It's changing.
It's changing not.
You are not dragon
or downward dog.
You are one tinny voice
against a cascade.
It's changing.
It's changing not.
You are not static today.
You are crashing wave.
You are falling petals.
You are.

Somewheres somethings somehows take the best of live and let live and our duty towards ourselves and one another, and don't sacrifice one for the other.

Somewhere, some how and some hows, in parsing lines that shift. Rules from experience tempered by flow.

We can do transformations on a pocket to turn it in and out and in and out such that it is OK from the turning. So I can think and think and know when it feels OK to stop, or when I should talk and talk and stop and resume what helps or just lay there for a while. Help that way.

When I turn just so, if I turn just so, I feel that it fits, clay on a wheel, turned just so... clay created into something satisfying, even beautiful.

There are rules, sure, but pots don't have to be the same. Pots come into their own as they are, according to the current of the moment.

Does water have memory? Is the memory the channel through which water flows? Does water remember being frozen, being cloud, falling as rain? Is water always new again and new again and new? Is water our substance by which we know newness, purity and endurance?

Student Handbook:

For girls, dresses and skirts
no shorter than 6 inches above the knee.

No pants.

For boys, whatever they hell they wanted
is how it seemed to us girls.

So here's the plan:

Next Friday, all the girls
wear pants to school.

They can't send us all home.

Friday morning, bus stop:

I'm hip in my groovy purple
plaid pants. Fifteen and bitchin'.
And hedging 'cuz over the pants,
a matching mini overskirt.

Fuck them, if my brother can
wear pants to school,
so can I. Never more confident,
I board the No. 53 bus.

The only girl in pants.

Homeroom:

For about 30 seconds.

After homeroom:

Six girls in the office,
five waiting for their mothers
to bring them skirts.

Me, all I had to do
was remove my pants.

Mini overskirt.

The dress code didn't change that year.

"Pants Day: May, 1970"
by Shelley Chernin

sand wears down stone
prods you from inside your shoe

in the oyster, it is the catalyst
that becomes a jewel

one grain
moves a mountain
holds eternity

one voice in a factory
strains in complaint

one sigh, resigned
accepts those hardships
that can't be mitigated

while a grown vision
evolves one obstacle at a time



and a signpost in the desert
leads no one anywhere
shadows blow into stunning drifts
spiders scuttle from crevices

barren yet beautiful, 1,000 years from now
we may still be able to enjoy this
...or we may be underneath it

and although the beings
we wish to be
we must be someday,

the only thing we can count on

is the wonderful, the terrible
and the outrageously strange
occurring, alternately
again and again

Be the Strange.
Dare you entertain
to contain the limitless
deranged?

Be the flame
transformed to rain
invoke change, be one
in unity with sane, insane
inchoate realms undone
and done in oceans of Sun
for "Small Change got wasted
with his own 45." *
World wide weird outside alive.

As rain washed down wind's wild child
flowing to a sea change
Be the Strange.
Leaf clad dancing
'midst sky clad trees
into floral balance
on spiderweb's dewdrop dream
consciousness not quite the stream it seems.

So dance the starway down
to point Lagrange.
Kick your heels out
mustang your range.
Be the Strange.



Rearrange the clouds to blue.
Push to turn the wheel through.
Running past despair
filling lungs with air
jump to fly, till sky
blows back your hair.
Because you care or just
don't give a rat's fat
savoir faire.

Reverse the echo, be the spin
the alchemy to win the song
that trilled before the Big Bang came.
Be the flame, the flare.
Crabwalk, jazz talk
swim or throw your skin
through brilliant, streaming fire
dancing on air.
Be the Strange.

Claim the flying flick of strange
shake off your chain
rearrange your brain.
No merely fleeting, floating
motes of dotting on ranges
of estranged exchequers exchange.

But in totum
uncontained, unrepentant
unconstrained, and
unashamed!
Just
Be the Strange.

I shall not bang or whimper
stain my frame with pain
I make no claim to rain
upon your grave
daisy chain.

Dance in the Moon's gleam
balance on a laser beam
wail out your soul's dream.
Be bread of alien grain.
Be the Strange.

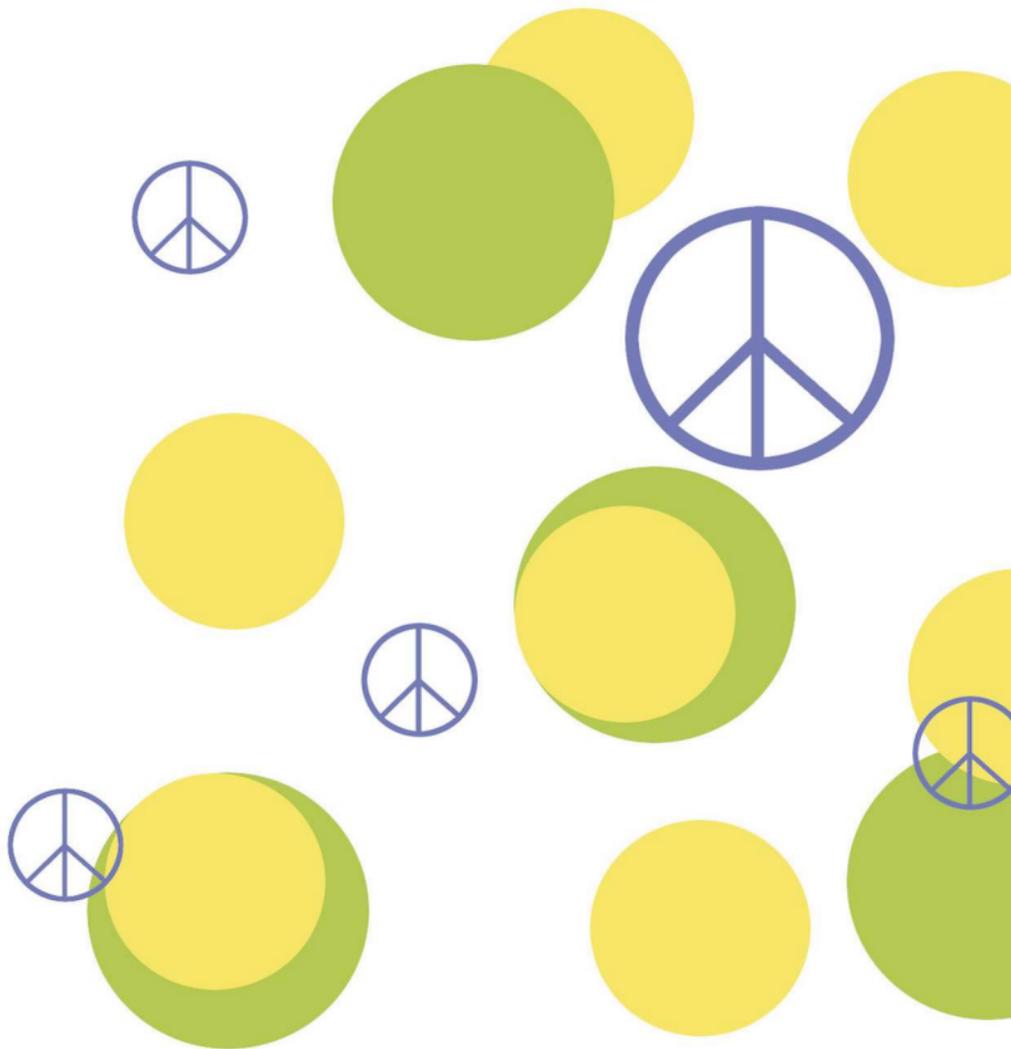
I'm just some cat
to tell you where it's at,
that where you are is where it is
and that is all.
One thing I know...
Into each life a small amount
(at least) of Strange
must surely fall.

(* quote from Tom Waits)

Yesterday, and I'm talking distant past here,
Oracles might have directed
Us differently, might have
Voiced concerns about stability and
Events occurring naturally, might have
Given us advice to keep
Our heads down and stay out of
Trouble, just to work
Toward feeding our families and building
Our homes and surviving our lives. Minor
Changes would have occurred in common, everyday
Happenings of birth, marriage, death;
All major changes would have involved the
Negative aspects of invasion, displacement, war.
Given the times, any change would have been scary
Enough. Now, though, with each passing
Year, the world becomes smaller, and
Our facility with technology helps move
Us toward a universal consciousness. It's our
Responsibility to foster change, to
Encourage growth, to protest the
Vile practices of destroying the environment,
Imprisoning the innocent, denying the
Legal right of marriage to those in love.
With our hearts wide open, we need to heed the call,
Acknowledge distress and address the wrongs,
Yes, and to know that the earth is fertile for those
Sprouts of enlightenment, those crops of compassion.
Believe, become, be strong, and be ready to take
Action. You must
Be the change
You want to *seed* in the world.

contributor index

- Lynne Albert - www.facebook.com/lynne.albert.3 - page 6
- Dianne Borsenik - nightballetpress.blogspot.com - page 28
- Steve Brightman - www.facebook.com/steve.brightman - page 21
- Skylark Bruce - www.facebook.com/skylark.bruce - page 18
- John Burroughs - www.crisischronicles.com - page 3
- Shelley Chernin - www.facebook.com/shelley.chernin - page 23
- Mike Finley - www.mfinley.com - page 8
- T.M. Göttl - www.facebook.com/tmgottl - editor
- Ken Gradomski - www.gradomskistudios.com - page 14
- Chuck Joy - www.chuckjoy.com - page 15
- Lori Ann Kusterbeck - www.sincerelylori.com - page 16
- Geoffrey A. Landis - www.geoffreylandis.com - page 10
- Miranda Macondios - facebook.com/MirandaMacondiosHermitofMars - page 26
- Marc Mannheimer - marcmannheimer.blogspot.com - page 24
- Eileen Matias - www.facebook.com/eileen.matias - cover art
- William Merricle - www.facebook.com/william.merricle - page 11
- Rebekah Moss - www.girlillyllc.com - page 7
- Jen Pezzo - www.facebook.com/kerowynrose - page 9
- Kenneth Pobo - www.facebook.com/kenneth.pobo - page 20
- REDD - www.facebook.com/Redds.Page - page 12
- S. Renay Sanders - www.facebook.com/renay.sanders - page 2
- Kathy Smith - www.thecitypoetry.com - page 22
- Zach - www.zachmusic.net - page 4
- Beverly Zeimer - www.facebook.com/BeverlyZeimer - page 1



printed and published by

The Poet's Haven

for the

Poetic Provisions Food-Drive

