

CRESCENT MOON JOURNAL

Spring Edition 2003



Journal of the Desert Moon Review
Jeff Taylor (caine), Guest Editor

A Message from the Editor of Desert Moon Review

First, congratulations to caine, who mastered the most efficient poetry contest on Desert Moon Review yet. The quality of the poems, most of them submitted by friends from other sites, is very classy. Desert Moon scored a third place with Mustansir Dalvi's work.

Caine will also serve as Editor of Crescent Moon Journal's Poetry Month Contest Edition, 2003. Chris George will perform the final proofing and I'm sort of an advisor/spectator. I'm privileged to submit a poem along with the Monitors and perhaps other regulars.

Our dreams about Desert Moon Review for the future will hopefully begin to unfold in 2003. Most of them depend upon participation, fidelity and energy, because it has been obvious to me for some time that we have the talent to go to the stars.

Shalom,

Jim Corner

James D. Corner
Editor,
Desert Moon Review

FOREWORD

by Christopher T. George

It is a pleasure to introduce the poems for The Crescent Moon Journal – Spring 2003 issue, which contains the winning poems in our poetry contest for Poetry Month this year. The contest judges, which comprised myself, caine, and K.R. Copeland, were privileged to be able to judge a strong pool of quality poems submitted by poets who frequent a number of the top internet poetry workshops. I believe the works that we have chosen as winners speak for themselves in terms of the level of excellence of the verse.

The breadth of emotions and vivid, thought-provoking ideas covered in the winning poems are a testament to the skill and talent of the writers. We hope readers of this issue of Crescent Moon will enjoy the contents, which include works not only by the winning poets in our contest but poems by the editors and monitors of our site.

A special thanks to caine, as Guest Editor of this issue of Crescent Moon Journal and as coordinator of our Poetry Month contest.

Best Regards,
Chris George

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WINNERS ANNOUNCED

Here we are again deeply rooted in National Poetry Month, and the annual Desert Moon Review poetry contest.



Earlier today the winners were announced at the Roman Coliseum, everyone from scholars to slaves were rioting in the streets trying to get a glimpse at the winners. Even though no one was seen, their presence was felt.

The editors at Desert Moon Review are proud to announce that we have the exclusive story.

AND THE WINNERS ARE

1. **Affectionately, Sigmund** by Laurie Byro
2. **The Gift** by Melanie McConnell
3. **Sunken Ship** by Mustansir Dalvi

HONORABLE MENTION

The Stray by Andrew Boobier

A Noise, A Noise by Fred Longworth



After swimming through moats of hot oil and selling myself into the Emporors court, I got inside the restricted area. This is what I was able to find out about the winners:

LAURIE BYRO

Laurie Byro's short stories and poetry have appeared in a dozen or so small presses. Additionally, her work has been published in *The Literary Review*, *The Rift*, *Critical Mass*, *Single Parent*, *Silk City Review*, *Aim*, *Chaminade Review*, *Grasslimb*, *Re:al Journal*, *A Summer's Reading*, *The New Jersey Journal of Poets*, *The Red Rock Review* and others.

She is in two on-line zines "Miller's Pond" and "The Writer's Hood." Her children's poem "A Captain's Cat" has appeared in *Cricket Magazine* and a textbook "Measuring up to the Illinois Learning Standards." She lives in New Jersey.

Affectionately, Sigmund

One more time, I'll go on record
and declare my love for this
strange, powerful thing.

Who wouldn't want one?
Rising like the sun
each morning, hopeful and golden—
dawn plays to its advantage,
while my own dark mystery
sleeps among mushrooms, never taking
a rest from its musty retreat.

No risk, it's been recorded carefully,
"a-HA"—he'll chortle with his
Viennese accent while I dream
fields of them, waving like stalks
of asparagus, segregated by skin.
A cornucopia of harvest--
butter dripping down
my envious woman's hands.

- Laurie Byro

WHAT'S ON A MAN'S MIND



MELANIE MCCONNELL

Melanie McConnell lives in a small, Florida, beachside town with her beloved, senior cat. Together they celebrate life. She earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Florida International University in Political Science. Melanie has poetry in the current issue of Tryst and Verse Libre Quarterly, and a book review in the Alsop Review.

The Gift

She likes to trace the boy's neck sinews
with lace gloved fingertips,
press gently against his precise
Adam's apple for choking
his vitality,

wrap both black clad hands
around his vulnerable neck,
grimly throttle it.

When she finishes
he wears her gift;
a purple necklace.
How she spoils him.

- Melanie McConnell



MUSTANSIR DALVI

Mustansir Dalvi is an architect and a teacher from New Bombay, India. He is currently Poetry Monitor at the Desert Moon Review. His poem "Peabody" was awarded 1st Place in the December 2002 InterBoard Poetry Competition (IBPC).

sunken ship

She straddles me, eyelashes stroke my chin.
Against my chest, her breath sussurates,
each exhale falls, late

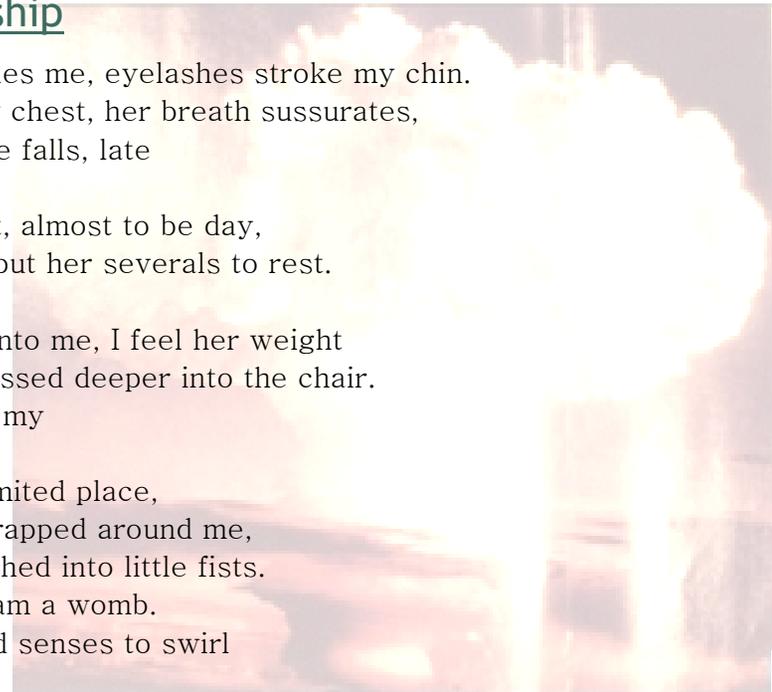
in the night, almost to be day,
so long to put her severals to rest.

She sinks into me, I feel her weight
and am pressed deeper into the chair.
I meld into my

safe and limited place,
her legs wrapped around me,
palms bunched into little fists.
Tonight, I am a womb.
I allow fluid senses to swirl

full fathom five, so she can travel deep
where there is no poetry, only the sunken ship.

-Mustansir Dalvi



While escaping through the palace I came across a vault with information on, and poems by the Poetry Month Judges and Board Monitors of the Desert Moon Review. And now I present them to you.

CHARLES CORNER

Charles Benjamin Cornner has had some of his poems published by such e-zines as, can we have our ball back?, Pierian Springs, miller's pond, and Crescent Moon Journal.

He lives in Cave Creek, with his wife, Hope. To keep from starving, he works full time as a church musician. Surprisingly to him, this has kept him from starving.



Twenty Rows of Two

The bed was a mess to Mom and Dad.
It was their job to say so. But I divined

waves of polyester carrying teeming
flannel to crash on a beach of team logos,

or sometimes an abashed hill
where the pillows retreated during nightmares,

or a Serengeti promontory
where my tabby presided; a diminutive sphinx.

***Company is coming for your birthday.
Throw off the cat and make the bed.***

So I made the crooked straight
and the rough places plain.

I tucked the excess under the pillow.
Sixty pounds of eight-year old

had already formed a shallow depression
in the center, banking the edges of the bed

into the concrete ribbon
of a superspeedway.

Two shoebox garages held the competitors
Qualifying was held. One lap around.

The stopwatch dictated their starting order.
Matchboxes and Hot Wheels arrayed

in twenty rows of two to run the Twin Bed250.
The cars shook with vocal vibration at the green flag.

There were no rails surrounding the straightaways,
so the odd one slipped the surly bonds

of bed and flew hundreds of scale feet
to the semi shag below,

gold and orange hellfire
licking the die cast fallen.

Even the fastest colored Corvettes
might be taken into the pillows

in the final turn, allowing the bee-striped
Renault Le Car (turbo) a rare win,

called by me in the high-pitched
Surprise! of parents, grandparents

and other well-meaning adults,
calling me to their version

of my birthday, full of gifts
but lacking danger.

- Charles Cornner

CAINE

caine is a poet performance artist, from the mid-burbs of Boston. He is a Poetry Board Monitor on the Desert Moon Review, chair of this Poetry Contest, and a member of the avant-rock band TheValoureProject. Has been published in eyeshot.net, unlikelystories.org, Side Reality, The Poet Tree and upcoming in wordriot.com.

Spin

The character actor came home
from work, killed his wife
and toured the daytime talk circuit,
cooking stir-fry chicken for the hosts.

In his defense, Robert revealed
he was meant to be a woman.
The torture of living as a man
left him unfit for trial.

With the charges dropped
he ran for President,
answering all questions with numbers.
Down in the polls,
he began dressing like his mom
and handing out brownies to neighbors.
With most voters preferring apple pie



Robert accepted a role
as a drag queen and moved to France.
Performing cabaret on the Seine,
R. contracted herpes during her act,
starting a craze against cold sores
and making millions promoting women's health.

-caine

LESLIE M. WOLF

L. M. Wolf is a poet and Board Monitor, living in peace with his family.

Pearl of the Serpent

Listen to the land breezes
and think on the sea breezes
and remember, Kaushik Mahajan.

I was your age when the bamboo flowered.

Rats came for the seeds, famine struck.
My father did not survive. We are much the same.

Why do you weep as if beaten?

I have told you that you have your sister's soul.

You know the legends; how you floated at the claw
of an angry kite who shook you out of a culm;
how the gold-giving serpent disappeared

because a father let greed rule grief
at the sudden death of a daughter
who betrayed the serpent with a cudgel.

Like you, I only wish to understand.

I will not belittle your grief although we
are Christian and believe in Heaven.
We are kiki and have lost the clan songs.

Listen and put words to music, Kaushik,
when the bamboo knock together, hollow
and the rats crawl, sniffing the air.

All over the world, the bamboo flower and die.

Sing at my wake and deliver me to the hidden rooms
where servants scatter, after a beating.
This is where our ancestors have gathered.

Bury me here, among the hills of Mizoram.
Go to the silos for food. Once the bamboo seeds
are gone, the hungry rats will eat our rice.

-L. M. Wolf



SIRRUS POE

Sirrus Poe's poems, short stories, essays and photography have appeared in numerous print and online journals such as; KEN*AGAIN, CARILLON, SNOW MONKEY, ANCIENT PATHS, CAN WE HAVE OUR BALL BACK?, SIDE_REALITY and GIN BENDER. His new book, "Releasing the Demons" (a collection of short stories/novellas and poems), will be released July 2003 and be available at your local bookstore or online.

I Wait to Dissolve Within the Quiver of Lips

I penetrate your room,
watch as your chest rises
then falls, watch the quiver
of lips taste stale air of tar
and nicotine extinguished
hours before my arrival.



I approach and you fail
to wake while I tie wrists
and ankles to bedposts.
You are lost in a swim within
intoxicated blood dreams
of how your past could have been

different. Without me
joy would have prevailed
so this is my reason to come
here and correct what might
have been history, to divorce
our connection and be reborn.

The tear of white tee-shirt
and panties damp from cycle
of time cause you to flutter,
then question what is about
to happen. More than eyes
open up once my picture is taken,

burned to the frontal lobe.
“I have come to erase your pain
and give another chance for happi-
ness .” Gagged, a hoarse damnation
chokes before contact against ears
that know the story all to well

for it to have to be told one more time.
Your hair is mangled, an almost metal
wire of flavor covers my tongue. I lap
up chromosomes and minute cells
that helped to build me, an unwanted bud
of spring. I don't look up to you

because I've seen the face of purgatory's
keeper before and you do not want to see
me. You would have called before now
if that were the case, but the file bearing
your first son's name has been stored
in plastic-wrap and cardboard box

to protect it against moisture of feelings.
I eat away at the opening I create for us.
Bite and tear the flesh that brought
you and I together, but now binds us apart.
“Baby, don't make my brown eyes blue,”
an octave lower, slower than when you sing

it to the empty air while I listen
behind a hollow door swallowing bits
of molded cheese. Two siblings catch
snowflakes then pull them together
into balls for tossing while I watch
behind a jack-frosted window. A paint-

by-number Pink Panther dances
around the bed after being released
from its Christmas paper cage. A Puma
knife given by a fourth husband to a stepchild
he only met once carves a road for me to travel
deeper into that cavity that must, that will,

cause you to forget how I hurt you, will give
that newborn freshness to tomorrow. The blade
stops when the handle bumps your chin. I spread
you open, crawl in, lay down and become fetal
as the last stitch I sew closes out the soft light
of a crescent moon and I wait to dissolve.

- *Sirrus Poe*

SESHADRI

Seshadri is a software engineer, located in Houston and works on storage management programs. He enjoys poetry, photography, semiotics, automobiles, graphology, and has a great interest in the cause and propagation of the animal rights movement, not to mention driving around town in his Black Beauty (Mercedes).



The Economics of Guilt

Mortar falls at will like leaves in early October.
The faltering edges stand out, weakened by years
of rain and heat; rough like the callused
hands that set them fifty years ago.

Around the courtyard old men gossip, their raspy
voices punctuated by wheezing pulls on the hookah.
An extended aahh later, Mishraji gets up - his legs
display the map of the world in radiating lines.

The mist hasn't fully lifted; green fields
look like a picture shot through dry ice.
Village women make a line for the well;
more gossip follows in whispers and gestures.

A community of only a hundred - how could there
be so many secrets? And I don't belong here.
A trip to Bihar's impoverished interior only
to take pictures: I should be ashamed of myself.

Romanticizing poverty with a Minolta won't help.
'! Mishraji!' I call out to my contact. He stares.
'I'll pay for the water pump if you want', I say.
Sunlight breaks out on his face. 'A few pictures, please?'

- *Seshadri*

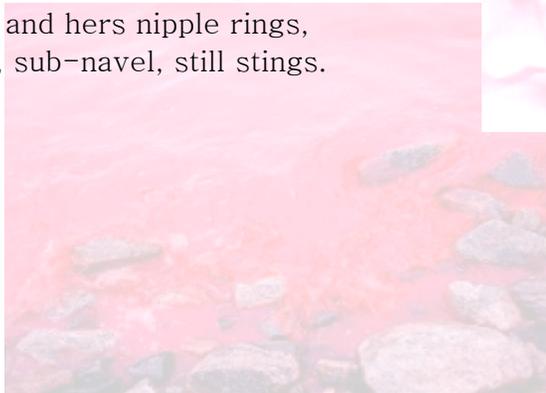
K.R. COPELAND

K.R. Copeland is a prolific poet residing in Chicago, Illinois. Her work, which ranges from formal to experimental, heady to absurd, has been featured in such publications as, Artvilla, Atomicpetals, Can We Have Our Ball Back?, Comfusion, Glass Tesseract, Locust, Miller's Pond, Mipo, Niederngasse, Pig Iron Malt, Snakeskin, Snow Monkey, The Absinthe Review, The American Muse, and, Unlikely Stories. K.R. is also one of the judges for the Beginnings Magazine poetry competitions 2003.

Ring Rang Rung

Your lover left you for another looker,
lustful in snug-fitting low-rise jeans.
He'd seen her at the tattoo parlor,
permanent ink on her B cup things.
A heart and a dagger, a dragon, a sword,
a word that was blurred by the bleeding.
The way that she winced when the needle went in
convinced him her love was worth needing.
They're now wearing his and hers nipple rings,
the piercing he gave you, sub-navel, still stings.

- K. R. Copeland



CHRISTOPHER T. GEORGE

Christopher T. George, born in Liverpool, England in 1948, immigrated to the United States in 1968. A resident of Baltimore, Maryland, as well as being a poet is also a historian and freelance writer. Chris's poems have been published in Poet Lore, Maryland Poetry Review, Pudding, Smoke and Bogg and on-line at Desert Moon Review and Melic Review. He is also a lyricist with a musical of Jack the Ripper – Jack, the Musical written with French composer Erik Sitbon.

Douglas

I deadhead the petunias and geraniums as you taught me.
Two summers have passed since you planted the pink and maroon impatiens, white and orange begonias, alternating colors for greater effect. I photographed you placing them, pink tongue thrust out in concentration. Now from Dorset comes word you are at last deteriorating, your mind lost to time.
A doctor visits but you report you saw three.
But you never did think clearly. Remember when you wore two ties to a wedding? The black shoe plus the brown? "Think clearly, Douglas" was the family joke from that self-help book you bought, then forgot where you left it. I remember

you leaving for your morning "constitution"—snow
beginning
to lay in Baltimore as you passed the brick gateposts
of our apartment building, broly raised in brave salute,
headed for the nursery to buy the spring plants.

- Christopher T. George

JAMES D. CORNER

Jim Corner has B.A and M.A. degrees from University of Tulsa with work at Phillips University. He also earned the Certified Financial Planner degree from the College of Financial Planners in Denver, Colorado. He was ordained to the ministry in 1967.

He has served churches in Oklahoma and northern California. Jim has written poetry since his days at Tulsa University, his thesis is Affirmation in Four Contemporary British Poets, but began composing full-time shortly after he retired in 1996.

He is currently published monthly in Disciples Today, e-zine of the Christian Church (DOC) in America. His poems also have been published by Arizona Republic, Phoenix's premier newspaper, The Disciple (hardcopy), Bethany Guide and Crescent Moon Journal. Jim resides with Kathy, his loving wife, and Trudy, the dobie-mix.

After Midnight with Shakespeare

Morning comes much too early,
when the muse nudges just after midnight.
I open the back drape to catch the hare's romp
on the green, or listen to coyote pups howling
just beyond the wall. Puck would have celebrated
the mellow gauze thrown over the neighborhood;
such a pity that we snooze away the magic.
I know a way we'll never forget each other,
let's run blind and barefoot over the course
to hole one, where the water trap sees itself
mirrored in the half light and grownup children
regale the locusts' song.

-JDC



This is the only evidence I was able to bring out of the palace intact, the rest was lost in the explosion. But if I have learned anything from this assignment, we will be hearing more from these poets.