

Flea Market

Been at this Flea Market all day
 Watch the seller's tables so's they
 can take breaks
 They throw me a few bucks, a few dollars
 Enough to buy soup for Grandma
 She doesn't have any more teeth left and
 Because she pulled that scam a few years back
 Grandma did a bid in the State Pen,
 Food Stamp Fraud, Welfare Fraud
 She can't get Food Stamps for another five
 years
 So, it's on me to feed her
 I do my best
 She doesn't need much
 I make soup from stock when I gots time
 But she sure loves a can of
 Campbell's Chicken Noodle Soup
 I'm wandering around the Flea Market
 all the sellers back from breaks

And I see it.
 No, that can't be IT.
 My Engagement Ring
 My Emerald, Diamond and Sapphire
 Engagement Ring
 It's still gorgeous
 It still glows
 No setting like it,
 Hong Kong White Gold
 24 Karat from Canal Street
 Chinatown, New York City
 Beautiful
 The day he gave it to me
 the memory
 comes back
 a rusty Johnny Stompanato knife into my heart
 The engagement ring I sold to pay for
 Grandma's lawyers
 Come on!
 I couldn't let her rot in the Tombs
 She's, my Grandmother!
 She may have made a few mistakes

In her time
 But Blood and Love
 and Blood and Family
 Still means something
 Yeah, she made a coupla mistakes, like I did
 When I said yes
 And accepted the Emerald, Diamond and
 Sapphire
 Engagement Ring
 I knew I was making
 A Mistake

--Yarrow Regan



Writers in the Mountains

Imagination Unbound

The WIM *Literary Retreat* is partly funded by the
 A. Lindsay and Olive B. O'Connor Foundation, and
 Delaware County Economic Development Tourism
 Advisory Board.

Writers in the Mountains (WIM) is a non-profit organization
 whose mission is to provide a nurturing environment for the
 practice, appreciation and sharing of creative writing.

PO box 474 Roxbury, NY 12474
 Writersinthemountains.org
 Writersinthemountains@gmail.com

WIM Literary Retreat November 15-17, 2024



Writing Group Villanelle

We Control the Bronx

Here, Here, Here
 I am waiting
 She's there
 human put the, put the glue traps
 down under sink
 Stupid Human two leg two foot
 She, she, she puts cashew butter
 On glue trap
 Saw her not, not peanut butter
 She, she, two legs, two foot two feet
 Better knows we runs this street
 East 197 th Street
 We own Bainbridge Avenue
 We run Pond Place
 We own it, me, my boys,
 I stuck on Trap -she, she, heard me
 Two leg screams, throws boot
 I, me, clever, clever, rat, our brains are in our
 tails
 Not like Big Two leg
 I roll around and around in cashew butter, Ha! I
 escape

From glue trap under sink
 Two leg not got me
 Like brothers and sisters squeaking all night
 Chunk of my fur still stuck on trap
 Evil Two Leg, Big Two foot
 I, I smarter than two legs on two foot
 My brain is in my paws, my claws,
 My brain is in my tail
 I run this street
 I own this street
 East 197 th Street
 We control the Bronx, the BX, the X
 It is ours
 Two legged big ones will
 Go and leave the X to us. It is OURS
 Two legs try, try to kill us, our RAT NATION
 Destroy us, NO:
 We, we will, we will endure and conquer

--Yarrow Regan

Flea Market

A divorcee's diamond ring on deep discount,
 prisms rainbows, size six. It looks tired for
 its age.

--Rianna Pauline Starheim

Wolf Spider Party

Your flashlight beam hit me and all of my
 neighbors. Some of us dashed under oak
 leaves, but most just stared up at the light, our
 eyes glowing. Why were you here at our party,
 celebrating the birth of a million new spider
 babies to weather the winter? Why were you
 screaming and kicking our leaf shelters out of
 your way just so you could hike up the path?

I was mad when you stepped on my
 brother, his spindly broken legs sticking
 to the bottom of your hiking boot.

When the lady with the flashlight brought
 it right down to my sister's shining eyes, Sis
 was blinded for a minute.

"See? They glow. It's not rain. It's spider
 eyes."

She at least had the courtesy to move one
 pile into a warm heap, clearing a spider-free
 place to pee. She and her friend trekked on into
 the night, leaving our family, our eyes glowing
 soft and golden in the starlight, a warm home
 of leaves cradling our many entangled legs and
 a fragrant drink to refresh us
 after their invasion.

--Deborah Medenbach

Flea Market Object

Dusty avenues among overgrown broken
 grasses. The rough wood tables
 barely hang together with rusty nails. They are
 covered in cast off table cloths, stains peeking
 out from beneath grandmother's china and
 chipped crystal.

My eye fell upon a squashed triangle of
 silver, etched on one side in foreign
 figures with a ring slipped halfway around a
 spike jutting from one end.

"It's a shawl pin," the vendor squeaked in
 her downeast accent. "It's from Persia."

I couldn't figure how such a thing would
 secure anything, but \$10 lighter, I
 tucked it in my purse.

It was when I went to the Clark Museum
 and stood before Sargeant's painting
 "Smoke of Ambergis" that I understood. A
 temple maid held her scarf wide
 to embrace the incense floating heavenward.
 There was the shining clasp,
 gathering all at her shoulder.

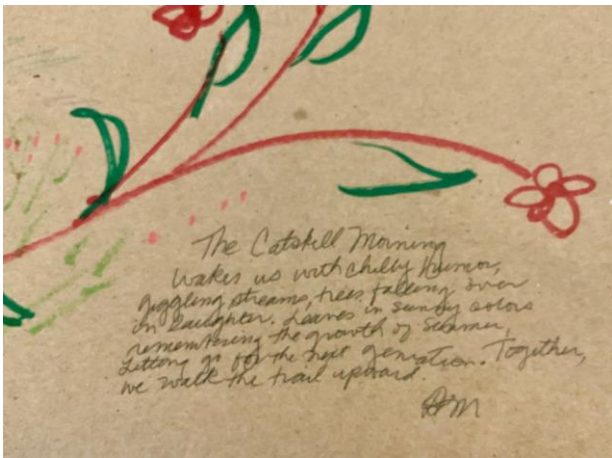
Mine hangs on a kitchen wall. Hers held
 universes, seen and unseen.

-- Deborah Medenbach





Thomas Meditating Photo by Yarrow Regan



Readable Lines

I Ching coins.

I flipped a few over, their embossed brass characters, four on one side, three on the other. The die cut square in the center of each revealed the wood grain of the weathered table, an eye into readable lines.

I shook all three in my promised wish of fist. Clink. Shake. Clink. Shake. And toss.

Another readable line in the oracle. Though I didn't have the book to guide me, that translation with the dove grey slip case I once had back in Brooklyn.

The shop keeper approached.

"You know how to throw I Ching? And how to make coins sing?"

I nodded, slightly embarrassed, so much of the text forgotten, the wisdom portal that Steven offered before he left us, Fern's candle lights still flickering on the windowsill at Lenox Hill Hospital.

"You would do well to have special coins," he told me, sliding the brand-new shiny copper pennies across the marble countertop in that loft in Long Island City.

"But these will do, until you find the real ones, the original ones."

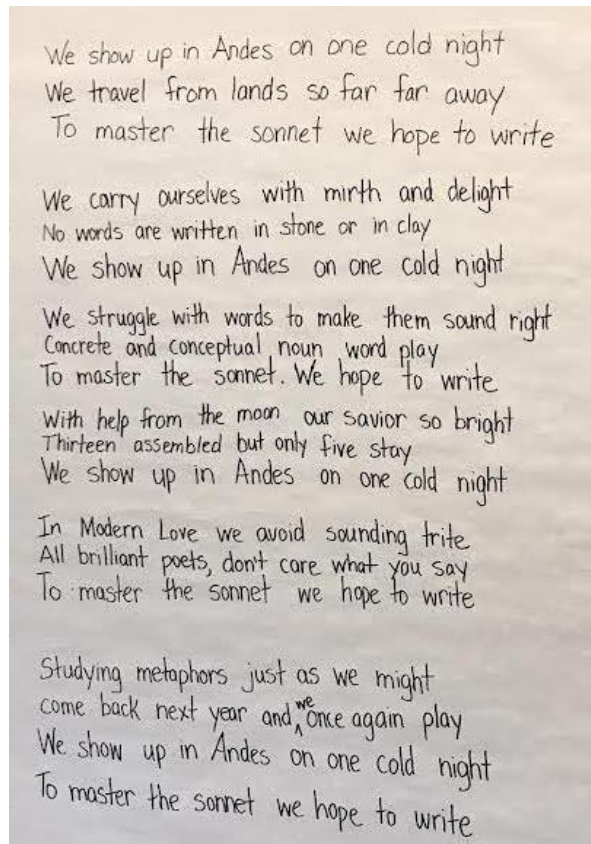
Snapping up the brass coins, I handed a five-dollar bill to the vendor. He slid a faux silk pouch of crimson and gold across to me. I dropped them in, one at a time, like music.

--Kathleen Sweeney

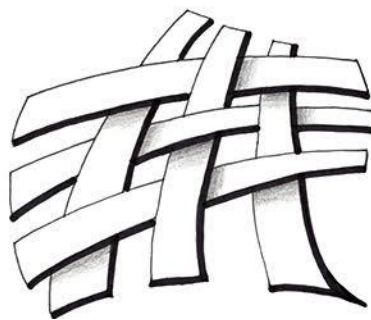
The Gift of Thread

In Medieval Times
The Gift of Thread
Meant
The olive of sunsets
Was a tigress of Green
An outpouring of Okra
Meant the City was sold
To the Lowest Bidder
Not the one with a Heart of Gold

--Yarrow Regan



Group Villanelle transcribed by Joan Kemp



Thread

follow the thread, it may take you somewhere
finger its fineness, it's silky-smooth hair
be patient, be willing, be open to care
and your tiny woven thread will lead you there
many men and women have visions they bare
but if they ignore threads, their lives are
threadbare
yes, I have great goals and visions to share
but its thinly woven threads that will take me
there

--Mark Vilanti

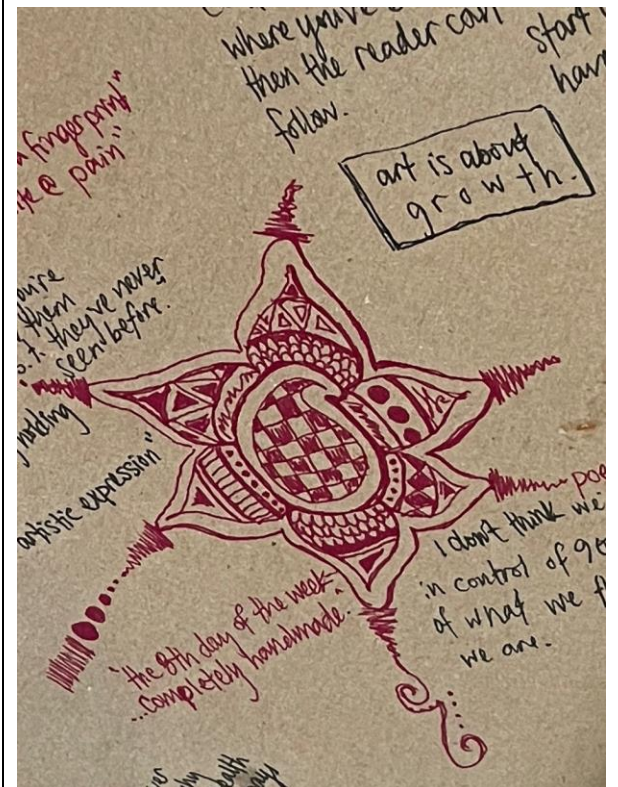
The Arrival

I emerge, belly down, from the sea to a frigid November dawn. Blackened coal not fully washed from my flesh. The ceremony that sent me from ancient lands to the new world. I did not come by boat. I did not rock motionless beyond shivering in the face of a stove that holds fire from the hold. I swam. A million cottony nights. No spark to start the blaze. No windows through which to navigate the way. Nothing but a faith in the future of an unknown but glistening world of opportunity.

I spit the last bit of sand my lips can grab hold of from my mouth with a breath mist and a forced cough. Let the old air out and the new air in... the old air out, and the new air in. I repeat with consciousness as I inch towards a tiny shell as if to anchor myself to something. Anything familiar. Anything like home.

My first glance toward the trees and I see nothing. It is an empty shore. No fanfare or commerce. No people places or things to love at first sight with. It is my non-arrival. The woods beyond the first line are dark and clearly haunted, and I am afraid of everything. I suddenly want the shell to be bigger... enough to warrant a weapon. To hurl. To announce my destiny.

--Todd Spire



Limerick

We're here in a village named Andes
Whose quaintness is sweet as hard candies.
Its writers workshop
Teaches skills nonstop
On how to make all our work dandies.

--Richard Vogt

