



# 21ST CENTURY FLOW

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### SUBMISSIONS POLICY

I WOULD like to thank Dhasvinn Rajan for helping design the cover of the third issue of 21st Century Flow.

In this issue are a number of emotionally powerful poems so much so that I put a lighter poem of mine at the beginning about nature to balance it out. I am very thankful and proud of the great poets who have been featured in our first three issues.

Lately, I have been thinking about how much personal experience plays in the building of our character and how much that consequently shows up in art one produces whether it be poetry, painting, or music.

If personal experience is traumatic or life changing even more the impetus to use it for inspiration.

Where we grow up, our surroundings, the environment, the people we encounter there who are part of the landscape are just as important. I have been re-reading the poetry of Richard Hugo, a long time favorite, and he utilizes his own explicit regionalism in a way that is universal.

Also a quick note on the frequency of putting out 21st Century Flow. So far this has been done on a monthly basis but may switch to bi-monthly for at least the next several issues. I have every intention to keep putting out 21st Century Flow.

I hope you enjoy these works from African, American, and European contributors.

Regards and Happy Reading,

Raj Dronamraju, Editor

CRAYFISH HIDING AT THE BOTTOM OF A SPRING STREAM by Raj  
Dronamraju

Melting Maryland snow feeds trickling timid stream  
Noisily slapping stones as the furrow is reseeded  
Sun glints on the water's reflective state at unpredictable intervals  
And what is underneath is visible only in glimpses

Crayfish moving backwards clinging to rocks, hiding under rocks  
Dark brown blotch between the mini-rapids and the sun  
I reach numbing flesh into the cold water  
And I pick up one of the crayfish between thumb and forefinger

Watch it ball up, claws snap into the chilly blue air  
Wet chitinous ridges brush against sensitive fingertips  
Back in the water, the crayfish swims against the tide

Pebbles bring sadness, tear up temporary landscapes  
The sun makes me feel hot inside of cold inside  
My shell is as poor a defense as the crayfish's

*Raj Dronamraju is the editor of 21st Century Flow. He is the author of three volumes of poetry THE RETURN OF THE MAGNIFICENT NINNY, SOLIDARITY WITH THE FLESH-EATING MOSAIC, and TRAVELS WITH THE ANTI-JOHNNY APPLESEED which can be found here <https://raj-books.post-egoism.media/> along with several novels he has written. He is an American living in Malaysia where he teaches English and tries to enjoy life.*

NOONTIME by Hiram Larew

Please  
Love me in the way that the word *unbeknownst* sounds  
Yes  
or just like how spires chime  
And even beyond soap's thumb or noon's drift  
and as puddles jump  
Love to love me like that

And love me as if a handshake will surely grin  
or when echoes curl around  
Like how crowds end  
and winter's sun folds down  
Love me in all those ways and more

With high sashes full  
Love me now but also then  
or love me in the way lunch is served  
All back and forth  
All cups that spill  
or like when light brightly drips  
and clouds sail afar  
Love me to love me as if inside the word *abound*

*Hiram Larew is a global hunger specialist. His work has recently appeared in American Contemporary Voices, Viator, Honest Ulsterman, Voices Israel and elsewhere. --*

*On Facebook at Hiram Larew, Poet*

*<https://www.facebook.com/hiramlarewpoet/> and Poetry X*

*Hunger <https://www.facebook.com/Poetry-X-Hunger-1874313762632994/> text*

LETTER FROM ANYWHERE by Stephen Mead

The heat broke, that carbon-thick mist  
the village had been living in for a whole month,  
kicked-off sheet-upon-sheet  
suddenly pulled back up,  
a reminder for the use of covers,  
of clothes.

After I got dressed, the cat took me walking,  
sun glasses on kitty and me  
that hid our eyes from the stars.

The desert streets were an Edward Hopper ideal.  
lit by diners and gas stations, desolation as romance-----  
don't you remember how that used to be?

Tonight I'm sending this letter from that heart precisely,  
having spent the day scouting for any park to feed pigeons.  
To tell you the truth it was pretty pathetic.

Under tree after tree I went throwing my bread  
while those birds hid in bushes and shrubs.  
Their snickering woke squirrels.  
God, if I'm such a queer duck  
then why is it flight I recall above everything?

Tonight on the tube the news interviewed a man  
who used his wheelchair to travel the planet.  
After that came a story about champion bird callers.  
I wish I'd heard of their technique  
when I was back with those pigeons.

Can't whistle a tune though; a few notes  
and I'm wheezing. Signed:

hay fever, watery eyes, wish you were here.

*A resident of NY, Stephen Mead is an Outsider multi-media artist and writer. Since the 1990s he's been grateful to many editors for publishing his work in print zines and eventually online. He is also grateful to have managed to keep various day jobs for the Health Insurance. In 2014 he began a webpage to gather links of his poetry being published in such zines as Great Works, Unlikely Stories, Quill & Parchment, etc., in one place: Poetry on the Line, Stephen Mead For links to his other media (and even merchandise if you are interested) please feel free to Google Stephen Mead Art.*

CIRCLE 2 by Michele Wambaugh

I

Peering down into the eye of my stomach  
A cutout piece of flesh, Dali-esque  
Twisted tummy tab disappeared  
A velvet blacky backdrop  
An infinity of now  
Bits whirling  
Contorted  
Space  
Star debris  
Arcing outwards  
Beyond our mealy-mouth  
Comprehension, conventions  
Our collective Genesis of Alpha  
The Omega of all matter attempting  
To escape itself, the biggest joke of all.

II

Peering down at the swollen stomach my  
Daughters waiting to be born inside  
The diminutive baby factory alert  
To the voices of ten trillion  
Swimmers of the yes  
We want to be so  
Much more than  
Sperm  
Love debris  
We promise to  
Be ever so much better  
How many chances needed  
To change by bending our brains  
Round strife encoded humanity's DNA  
The miracle of trying once again, is it a joke?

*Michele Wambaugh is a professional photographer based in Houston, Texas. Since 1980, her various series have been featured in solo exhibitions in many museums & art centers in the USA, China and India. Over the years, Michele's work has been published in most major photography magazines and anthologies in North America, Europe & Asia. Her website is <http://www.michelephoto.com/>*

ELECTRON BOY by Jacqueline Smith

crackling with life and never still, you fidget  
on our Sunday pew, tone deaf through psalms  
and dream of League Cup glory.

Saturdays held blackjacks and Caramac,  
Sherbet Dab frosting your chin, racing friends  
on Chopper bikes. You flew from pitchpoles

to paper rounds to bob a job, always keen,  
for our mother never bred a jibber.  
We thought you'd live forever, a pacemaker

set to tame your heart's erratic circuitry. But still  
the road flew up to meet you. Flatline. No blue light.  
Our world broke and no gold veins repair those cracks.  
Beautiful boy, spark running to and fro among  
the stubble, a trace of mist dispersed by sun

*Jacqueline Smith lives in London and works as an interviewer. She has been published previously in *Ambit*, *South Bank Poetry*, *Inkspill*, *Spilt Milk*, *Poetandgeek* and *Cake* magazine. Her visual poems can be viewed on Instagram @ravingpoet64.*



50 CENT by Edward Kofi Louis

'I will kill you like a snake',  
'I will roast you like a chicken',  
'I will fry you like a plantain',  
So roll, roll, roll your boat when,  
You have a killer gun in your pocket.

I was born in the ghetto with,  
The status of poverty without a fish in my hand;  
I was taught in the ghetttto with,  
Much tears than hope;  
I was brought up in the ghetto without the Statue of Liberty to salute!  
So roll your boat with the gun in your pocket;  
But, who is there to cover up your actions?

I was taught in a mud-house without slippers on my feet!  
And, that's the kind of society i came from;  
I had my education on the streets with,  
Fights, hunger and starvation to crown the day! !  
But, your killer gun in your pocket will give you up one day.

Taught by the streets,  
Lived by the streets,  
Learned by the streets,  
Loved by the streets,  
Hated by the streets,  
And, many of us married by the streets;  
The cluster of a phobia into my maturity,  
That is why i do not respect the gun in your pocket today.

Stealing and looting! !  
With plans to make the next move,  
And, as a human-being who lives on 50 Cent a day.  
Life in the ghetto,  
With the status of poverty without a fish in my hand;  
Life to me was just like the mountain of snakes,  
So, just roll your boat with merry on your face.

50 CENT by Edward Kofi Louis (cont.)

Life's fair fountain that eluded me! !  
With stealing and looting as the order of the day;  
And of the plans to make it work.  
I was just living on 50 Cent a day,  
And, joy to me was like the roasting of a chicken;  
Hope to me was like the killing of rabbits! !  
Peace to me was like the frying of plantains;  
And, of an excellent value for many of us when one dies,  
But were still mulling to make a case like a courageous leader.

To live on 50 Cent a day in the ghetto! !  
With the muse of the cluster of a phobia into my maturity;  
Life in the ghetto,  
Life on the run with the bullet train!  
But at times, it was like the straw on a camel's back.  
Life in the ghetto,  
Like the golden cup whose shock aroused! !  
When one equals to a temper of heroic hearts;  
With the negatives to meet all day Long.  
Life in the ghetto,  
Like half-naked Young Lovers who called for help!  
Life in the ghetto,  
Like the peace of one's mind with questions to the moon;  
But all along, i have managed to live on 50 Cent a day.

## SUBMISSIONS POLICY

21st Century Flow is always looking for submissions. We are interested in poetry (and art) with a strong POV from the heart and written in modern language. As we are based in Malaysia and governed by Malaysian law regarding sensitive material, we are not looking for poetry with any four letter words nor controversial political opinions.

All poetry submissions must be included in the body of an e-mail.  
Attachments will be deleted.

E-mail for submissions: [raj\\_dronamraju@yahoo.com](mailto:raj_dronamraju@yahoo.com)

While we do not pay for submissions as we are a free publication, if your poetry or art is selected, you can include one or more links for self-promotion which will be part of your bio.