

# 21ST CENTURY FLOW



ISSUE NUMBER FOUR  
AUGUST 2019

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### EDITOR'S NOTE

THE SHADOW INVENTORY by Raj Dronamraju

THE END by Gale Acuff

IN WOLLONGONG by Guy Vanderschmidt

GUM DISEASE by Linda Sartoolian

TELL ME HOW I SHALL FACE DEATH (FATHER TO HIS DAUGHTER) by  
Gerlie M. Uy

THE SUBURBS ARE NOT YOUR DESTINY by Tom and Nicola Fadiman

### SUBMISSIONS POLICY

I recently took a trip to Australia where, among other things, I gave a talk to a writers' group on successful habits and techniques for the writing of poetry.

I am struck by how many great Australian poets there are and what a rich poetic history they have. Three examples of great Australian poets are Kenneth Slessor, Henry Lawson, and Rosemary Dobson.

Australia's unique culture (especially its slang), history, and flora and fauna lends itself to verse and provides a deep well for the poet to constantly take sustenance from.

Nature and culture as inspiration is all the poet can ask for outside of stimulating personal relationships but nature and culture are more accessible to the average person.

In this issue of 21st Century Flow, we feature several Australian poets as well as American and Asians.

Regards and Happy Reading,

Raj Dronamraju, Editor

## THE SHADOW INVENTORY by Raj Dronamraju

I took something that would have been better left behind  
For scavengers so desperate their ribs show through their skin  
When I take stock of this acquisition, it's not done through normal channels  
All paperwork is printed out in single copy only and the counting up is done at night

I know there is two of everything  
That which I can confirm by eyesight, by other senses  
And that which I know is being held somewhere  
Waiting for truth to be paid as ransom  
Setting the pattern for each subsequent loss  
Depreciation follows

At a sunrise greeting, I am smiling and recording the morning's transactions  
There are two sets of books and later in darkness I put entries in the other  
There is no order immune from a split between a public front and a private trauma kept  
catalogued in Dewey decimal disassociation  
Poor patience is the thinnest threadbare reward for this fractured effort  
Waiting for a revelation terrifying in the number of its indexed sections

To you I would say what is it that is ready for ambush at this shining moment of self-clarity?  
To you I would say until this moment where did you keep this unhealthy replicating schism?

To you I would add what was the cost of that action, that unsupervised subterfuge?

*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.*

THE END by Gale Acuff

I guess when I'm dead I'll understand all  
I'm supposed to or at least want to, that's why  
I was born and that's the meaning of life  
and is there a God and so on, the big  
questions or at least they're big now, I'm ten  
years old, everything is big save girls but  
when I'm a teenager they will be is  
what Mother says and Father agrees but  
for now I like dogs and cars and comic  
books and cartoons and Land of the Giants  
and The Time Tunnel and the Hardy Boys  
and motorcycles and The Munsters and  
Saturday matinees with two cartoons  
and a Three Stooges short with Curly, Shemp's  
all right but he's no Curly, and the end  
of the world, I mean what I learn about  
it in Sunday School, Jesus comes back  
and I forget most of the rest but when  
He does if I'm dead then my soul will  
wake to Gabriel's horn and then I'll rise  
and join a jillion other souls up there  
in the clouds with Jesus, that's the story  
they swear to at church and Sunday School so  
maybe there's something to it, all I know  
is that when I came home from church today  
I ate lunch, then went to my room and fell  
asleep and maybe I still am, that's what  
being awake really means. I'm wicked.

*Gale Acuff PhD has had poetry published in Ascent, Chiron Review, Pennsylvania Literary Journal, Poem, Adirondack Review, Maryland Poetry Review, Florida Review, Slant, Nebo, Arkansas Review, South Dakota Review, and many other journals. He has authored three books of poetry, all from BrickHouse Press: BUFFALO NICKEL, THE WEIGHT OF THE WORLD, and THE STORY OF MY LIVES, and has taught university English courses in the US, China, and Palestine.*

IN WOLLONGONG by Guy Vanderschmidt

In Wollongong

The hang gliders eat their bag lunches  
Before launching over cliff face and surf  
To discover the M1 Parkway delivers nature's dreams

Amidst sensation, I pull out of my own hazy dream

In Wollongong

The two lighthouses frame the harbor like a billiards rack  
The cue is dropped and the nation translates itself

A spoiled lifetime is the result of not realizing what you have

In Wollongong

The sea cliff bridge tells me who I am today  
I am the fatal lookout

The protection you don't need and the whale's tail flashing blue for a split second

*Guy Vanderschmidt is the author of the poetry collection THE CITY VS. THE BUSH which will be published in early 2020 and is the acting vice president of the New South Wales Writers' Collective. He teaches secondary school English in Sydney, Australia which is where he grew up.*

GUM DISEASE by Linda Sartoolian

My gums hurt  
My teeth hurt  
My gums hurt  
My gums are bleeding  
The house is uninhabited and the chairs are lonely  
The spotlight is on my gums  
I rub them with salt and warm water  
And allow in thoughts of playing children from a past life  
Where he is and where they are are irritants  
And I've got sore gums and am alone  
My gums are sore and bleeding  
I can hear a crowd nearby  
People laughing, talking, fighting  
I rinse and repeat and want to laugh and talk and fight too  
Except with that man and our children  
I don't know where they are nor what happened  
I am only here with sore gums

*Linda Sartoolian is a full-time housewife and writer of poetry. She resides in Atlanta, Georgia, USA and is a firm believer that truth is more important than beauty.*

TELL ME HOW SHALL I FACE DEATH (FATHER TO HIS  
DAUGHTER)  
by Gerlie M. Uy

Shall I sit down in darkness  
with my eyes fixed on the ground  
while I listen to his approaching steps  
as they get louder and louder  
and then they finally whisper to my ear,  
"It's time"?

Or shall I dance in daylight  
with my eyes looking up the open skies  
while I follow his waltzing steps  
as they get better and better  
and then they finally lead me  
where there's a beautiful place?

Tell me how because I want to know  
how to face him without hurting you.

*Gerlie M. Uy is a Filipino writer who burned her poems in high school after learning the fundamentals of poetry in college, only to forget the rules later but kept on creating poems no matter what. So her Rule No. 1 is Keep creating, and Rule No. 2, No burning. Find her at [footandfire.blogspot.com](http://footandfire.blogspot.com)*



THE SUBURBS ARE NOT YOUR DESTINY by Tom and Nicola Fadiman

The Eggs are malfunctioning and he is in the shower turning off the water when he  
hears a noise

The toast is only browned on one side and she puts on her girl guide uniform only to  
find this

The moon refuses to go bed and hangs like a ghost

Isn't it his job to wheel out the trash and the recyclables?

Now the stomach for revenge falls and rises in the ferry ride of too much closeness

And we could be seen in rural townships moving slower in denim and mud and hay  
Or we could be seen in big cities speeded up and urgent and trying not to make eye  
contact

Destiny is carefully brushed down paths, assembled models of intricate shapes

The suburbs are not your destiny

They are your trap

The suburbs should be nobody's destiny

But that is the only hole

That fits so many different pegs

*Tom and Nicola Fadiman are married to each other and live in North Sydney, Australia. They both work in the advertising industry. They co-edited the now defunct North Shore Poetry Newsletter and are preparing their first poetry collection for publication next year.*

## 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.