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"Women Wearing Hats" by Brian Forrest; <http://brianforrest-art.blogspot.com/>

### **Some Thoughts on the Integrity of the Single Line of Poetry**

by Joseph Arechavala

the languor of lust  
immortality  
or steam rising from the cup of tea

metaphor for a dead soldier expressed as a poppy  
or the black and white movie star as a faded rose

direct, decisive  
florid, lavish  
tip of the spear  
flood of electricity  
tick of the second hand

a moment in time, this moment in time

an epoch  
or a thousand years in the future

truth revealed in increments  
pulsing  
reaching, retching  
passion  
a beat up old table  
in the corner of a dilapidated  
house  
a breath  
the debris of regret  
a glance backward  
anger that will never die

but never words,  
never mere words

Bio- Joseph Arechavala is a happily married father of two special needs sons, born and raised and living a humdrum life in NJ, dreaming of fame and fortune as a writer. A 2008 graduate of Rutgers University, he has had numerous stories and poems published online and in print, including *Skyline* and *Pearl* magazines, and his first novel, *Darkness Persists*, has been published. He is currently working on a science-fiction, fantasy and horror anthology.

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### **The Heron**

by Beth Konkoski

I take my son fishing  
because I promised, but  
I am restless, a pacing  
clock counting each cast,  
measuring how long I must  
stay to check this off  
the scrolled, sacred  
list of this day's tasks.  
Across the pond, on impossible  
legs, she stands. Retired,  
waiting. I have to look twice  
to see that she is not shadow  
or reeds in this cup  
of afternoon light.  
The flick of a tail  
will come to her; trust  
woven deep in the DNA  
of her feathers.  
What patience watches  
in the shallows. Where  
would I find such strength  
to stop  
and still myself?  
Look around  
with an almost imperceptible  
turn of my neck?  
What would in fact swim by  
if any day I let myself,  
for even two breaths,  
stand still?

Bio- Beth Konkoski is a writer and high school English teacher living in Northern Virginia with her husband and two children. Her poetry has appeared or is forthcoming in *The Potomac Review*, *The Aureorean*, *Gargoyle* and other literary journals. Her chapbook *Noticing the Splash* is available from BoneWorld Press.

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### **Before She Died**

by Steve De France

mother thumb-tacked a picture of  
a Cheshire cat to the wallpaper.  
I stare at the cat's face. Under its smile  
are littered yellowing photographs  
of my dead family. Its corrupt gaze stares  
down on the dead. This slow smile says  
it cares nothing for the dead.

The wind blows. The house creaks.  
Her rose perfume still clings to the air.  
From her battered dresser, I find bedding.  
Try to sleep. The wind grows stronger.  
Projected on the wall is the shadow-play  
from the gas heater, as it dances on the  
aging wall paper.

Captured in the shadow dance  
is the Cheshire Cat's disembodied smile,  
in the turning flame the smile broadens  
over collected fantails, sniggers past  
scarves & pressed flowers and bibles,  
smirks at her fancies & bright things  
saved from so long ago. In the morning,  
I tear the cat's picture from the wall.  
Her suitcase full of scarves & flowers  
and treasure stuff goes with me.

I turn the key over to the landlord.  
He watches me from watery grey eyes  
until I close & lock the white wooden  
gate. I stop at the corner and look  
back. The old man's still peering at me  
from behind his window. I nod my head at him.  
And like a ghost the window curtain  
ripples as he disappears.

Tonight  
I look at mother's photograph.  
She is eighteen years old in this picture.  
Dressed in white, long black hair cascades

down her shoulders. I study her eyes.  
Her lips just beginning to form a Cheshire smile.

Bio- Steve De France is a widely published poet, playwright and essayist both in America and in Great Britain. His work has appeared in literary publications in America, England, Canada, France, Ireland, Wales, Scotland, India, Australia, and New Zealand. He has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize in Poetry in 2002, 2003 & 2006. Recently, his work has appeared in *The Wallace Stevens Journal*, *The Mid-American Poetry Review*, *Ambit*, *Atlantic*, *Clean Sheets*, *Poetry Bay*, *The Yellow Medicine Review* and *The Sun*. In England he won a Reader's Award in *Orbis Magazine* for his poem "Hawks." In the United States he won the Josh Samuels' Annual Poetry Competition (2003) for his poem: "The Man Who Loved Mermaids." His play *The Killer* had it's world premier at the Garage Theater in Long Beach, California (Sept-October 2006). He has received the Distinguished Alumnus Award from Chapman University for his writing. Most recently his poem "Gregor's Wings" has been nominated for The Best of The Net by Poetic Diversity.

### **When We Least Expect It**

by William Tudor

I met a man who had lost his job.  
His 401K flew to Las Vegas traveling  
first class impersonating a bonus.  
He spoke openly of how fear and panic  
rolled the dice losing his sobriety,  
of how some things from baby teeth  
to second chances, simply don't come back.

I also had a sister whose illness  
arrived uninvited. Spreading freely  
like tiny mushrooms, good at keeping  
secrets in the dark. Whose early morning  
was quietly cut short as her daughter  
drew pictures beside the bed.

And even though my wife has never  
rolled her eyes wistfully, toward  
another man. Has never sighed  
on a summer afternoon, her scent  
rising warm and damp beneath

someone else. There remains  
that chance.

So you see, things can and do happen  
all around. When we least expect it.  
Leaving us lost like small children, or  
standing at the end of ramps with our lives  
scrawled across torn cardboard,  
for everyone to read.

Bio- William Tudor received a BA in English from Wright State University and is pursuing an MFA in ecocriticism/creative writing through Antioch Midwest. He has published in *Dialogue*, a magazine that covered the arts of Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, western Pennsylvania, Kentucky, and northern Illinois. His article "Do We Really Need To Ask?" took 1st place for local humor in the Erma Bombeck Competition in 2010, and his play, "cowboys, Oreos, and words that begin with the letter M" was performed at the Jubilee Theater.

### **Troubled by *The Opus***

by Carole Mertz

To take the body  
of this work study it dissect it catalogue it  
reflect on the entire—a life's work—  
your life's work becomes mine

See how relationships  
intertwine or are left  
incomplete searching new  
awareness of what was included or  
left behind no stone unturned undeterred  
or interred

These moderns how they do  
so corrupt the language  
we're left wondering are we by now  
arrived at the end  
or middle of the thought

we want to know our heart's throbbing  
our mind's pattern  
more fully  
treading on the past's recollections  
for Clarity's sake who doesn't  
visit often

The *opus mirabilis* sits on the shelf begging  
understanding begging your pardon  
alone of all these readers who bleed  
until you tell in proper order  
the meaning of things unseen  
nor can we hold it all  
under wraps before splaying it windward  
where particles of wisdom fall  
on the unsuspected

Bio- Carole Mertz studied in Salzburg, Austria and received her Mus.B from Oberlin College. She began writing poetry in 2008. Her work is published in *Mature Years*, *With Painted Word*, *The Copperfield Review*, *Conium Review*, *Rockford Review*, at *Page & Spine* and in various anthologies. Her article on writing is included in *Writing After Retirement: Tips by Successful Retired Writers*, Smallwood and Redman-Waldeyer, Eds., Scarecrow Press, forthcoming 2014.

### **Native I Am, Cocopa**

by Michael Lee Johnson

Now once great events fading  
into seamless history,  
I am mother proud.  
My native numbers are few.  
In my heart digs many memories  
forty-one relatives left in 1937.  
Decay is all left of their bones, memories.  
I pinch my dark skin.  
I dig earthworms  
farm dirt from my fingertips  
grab native

Baja and Southwestern California,  
its soil and sand wedged between my spaced teeth.  
I see the dancing prayers of many gods.  
I am Cocopa, remnants of Yuman family.  
I extend my mouth into forest fires  
Colorado rivers, trout filled mountain streams.  
I survive on corn, melons, and  
pumpkins, mesquite beans.  
I still dance in grass skirts  
drink a hint of red Sonora wine.

I am mother proud.  
I am parchment from animal earth.

Bio- Michael Lee Johnson lived ten years in Canada during the Vietnam era. Today he is a poet, freelance writer, photographer, and small business owner in Itasca, Illinois. He has been published in more than 750 small press magazines in twenty-seven countries, and he edits eight poetry sites. He has over 67 poetry videos on YouTube.

Author's website: <http://poetryman.mysite.com>

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### **Brooklyn, Brooklyn, Take Me In**

by Erren Geraud Kelly

Williamsburg.

L train.

Bookstores on bedford  
avenue.

An asian chick in red hook  
who belts out R&B tunes,  
who knows more about the blues  
than some black folks.  
Talking art to PBR lovin' hipsters  
in Greenpoint.  
Trolling for coffeehouses  
in Park Slope



and drinking coffee strong  
enough to peel paint  
or wake the dead.  
Hanging out with hip jewish girls  
in Dumbo who sing jazz tunes.  
Following the sound of  
a rock guitar  
as it leads me across Fort Green.  
Looking at Grand Army  
Plaza and  
how much it reminds me of the  
Arc de Triomphe  
in Paris.  
Riding the N train  
to Bay Ridge  
for fried chicken  
and pork fried rice  
or taking the A train

to find jerk chicken in  
East New York.  
Traveling the world  
just by walking  
through the Brooklyn Public Library.  
wearing a Brooklyn Dodgers  
Baseball hat  
and wishing I could see  
grandfather again.  
kissing a girl on a rooftop  
in Bushwick  
as fireworks paint  
the joy of youth across  
the stars.

And then wake up, soberly wondering  
and asking God, why is youth  
wasted on the young?

Bio- Erren Geraud Kelly's works have appeared in *Epiphany*, *Former People*,  
*Convergence*, *Turbulence*, *Aries*, *The Eclectic Muse* and over 150 publications in print and

online in the United States and abroad. Mr. Kelly has a BA degree in English-Creative Writing from Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge. Erren lives in Portland, Oregon.

### **swept up**

by Sarah Henningsen

the fog pays no mind to the world's lines  
her breath blows good morning to all  
curling around early risers like mischievous ivy vines  
and blurring the boundaries  
between what is yours and what is mine

the fog bundles us up in her flimsy gauze  
muddling the space between like an aged wine  
erasing the world around  
so we can walk together, blissfully blind  
beyond crumbling cinderblocks and barbed wire windows  
those rusty tokens holding you in an eternal bind

we could be anywhere now, a castle on a cloud

soon the sun alights the scene  
and arrests the fog with her burning shine  
a fight for the power to paint the world below  
who will step ahead, who will fall behind?

the fog pockets each secret in the folds of her body  
like a lace-clad whore  
her thoughts always on the move, circling in the dark  
she dreams for something more

until the sun settles the final score  
spotlighting the suffering down below  
of the wrinkled poor and their lifetime of chores  
sending the fog back to the seductions of her crystal orb

she is neither malicious nor unkind  
but merely reminds us how clearly her lines are defined

Bio- Sarah currently teaches second grade at a bilingual school in Washington DC. When away from the chaotic energy of the classroom, she loves to find quiet solace in reading, yoga, writing, and scrapbooking. This is her second time appearing in *The Write Place At The Write Time*.

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### **I Can Better See the Trees**

by Cheryl Sommese

I can better see the trees—

the way their open arms dutifully bend  
as frozen crystals gather to adorn that which was bare  
and lonely  
and gray.

The way outstretched limbs spawn vibrant green,  
gallantly proclaiming **spring's entrance**  
to earnest hearts patiently awaiting  
its arrival.

The way orange and yellow flora  
depart their beloved domicile,  
falling on our fears—easing our angst  
swirling about the earth in whimsical wonder.

I don't know why this challenge now befalls me,  
and I disbelieve Divine intervention  
bestowed it to make me whole,

*but I **can** better see the trees.*

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### **Sharon**

*In Loving Memory*

by Cheryl Sommese

She was already in another world  
when I met her,  
favoring angels and crystals and the incredible splendor  
in nature.  
Impervious to surrounding wickedness,  
incessantly seeing good  
in places where *good*  
seemed in sparse supply,  
her feet always appearing  
slightly  
elevated from the soil.

She wandered in a dream-like state,  
valuing the promise of  
a human heart  
like a dotting mother confident her children  
are destined for excellence.  
Malice never peeking from her manner  
as  
it remained removed from  
her life.

I wanted to keep her here,  
her peculiar ability for discerning worth  
in unlikely spaces grew contagious.  
But her failing body could not comply,  
ravaged by the force of disease  
akin to winter's wrath stripping vibrant trees  
of their fruit.  
Her gentle mind seemed oblivious  
to that, as well,  
perhaps remaining positive for loved ones  
in her midst.

She resides beyond now,  
the angels she dearly loved  
tenderly flew her to a land  
of healing  
and beauty  
and perfection.

She was too evolved  
to be here,  
but she undoubtedly lifted those she knew  
for a bit.

Bio- Cheryl Sommese is a freelance writer specializing in ghost blogs, newsletter pieces, and multi-topic articles. Her creative endeavors include short stories, essays, and poetry. Several of her literary works have been included in print periodicals and online publications. She considers poetry to be a particular passion and opened for the emerging poet, Muad Saleh, in two spoken word events in Manchester, NH, and New York City. She has a BA in Communications and an MA in Liberal Studies with a focus on political studies and writing from the University of New Hampshire. Ms. Sommese lives in Londonderry, NH with her husband and two dogs.

### **Bari**

by Kelly Jadon

arrows shot out of jungle  
toward intruders  
colonists, oil men, interlopers  
from *the people*  
with only a tongue  
remembering what happened  
before

dense foliage covers  
primitive dwellings  
housing many  
swinging hammocks  
these are the *short-haired*  
so Conquistadors named  
*Motilones*

separation from men  
loping after golden mirages  
for lightning striking stone  
following deceit away from truth  
solitary containment  
500 years

until a gap for one was rent  
by a bloodied tip in the leg  
who pointed  
down the path  
toward the world's  
steps coming up

old men sat listening  
learning  
eyes filled with intellect  
their words from paper  
given to wee ones  
good news

began a hedge  
*krisis*  
once a wild bramble  
machete clean  
trimmed by cacao  
held more firmly  
rooted in jungle earth  
and Bari means

*Note: In 1960 the Bari were a stone-age tribe located on the borders of Venezuela and Colombia, deep within the Amazon jungle. They faced encroachment from outsiders attempting to take their lands. A U.S. citizen, Bruce Olsen, became a part of the tribe at that time; he has helped them learn to defend their territory themselves as lawyers, nurses and business people.*

Bio- Kelly Jadon is a graduate of Spring Arbor University. She is a teacher, poet, and writer. Her writing has been featured in many publications. Her poetry book, *To Taste the Oil: The Flavor of the Middle East* will be published in 2014. The author also writes the syndicated column "Hometown Heroes" which publishes nationally online. Find Kelly Jadon online at [kellyjadon.com](http://kellyjadon.com)

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### **My Grandmother's Garden**

by Tim Reed

Fingers...deep in the rich soil  
taking life in order to  
breathe renewed life  
into the forgotten...the overlooked.  
Pulling, tearing and tugging  
at the snarled and tangled roots  
which have been choking the beauty  
that has always been held within.  
Overgrown with neglect  
grown in, pulling back...  
being pushed in...from all sides  
to the point where  
blooming seems pointless.  
The seeds she planted lay  
dormant in the decay,  
of time, of life, of lies...  
It has become far too draining  
to pass by...to look the other way  
in "busy" indifference. So...

I plunge my heart, my soul,  
my hands, fingers deep into the rich soil  
taking life in order to breathe...  
breathe, new life into the forgotten  
the overlooked, and the denied.  
Remembering the warmth and beauty  
that filled me, not just by gazing  
upon the floral grace of this  
blossoming garden, but of  
the Love, the joy, and the  
simple beauty that not only  
she put into this garden,  
but that this garden in turn  
put into her.

I will recover it, resurrect its beauty  
allowing it to freely blossom.  
Not because of how hard  
she worked to create it,

but because I, now understand why...I  
was planted, in my Grandmother's garden.

Bio- Tim has acquired many hats over the course of life, though he devotes his energy to three. He is a start to finish carpenter, a Dad, and a poet, because, like everyone else, he has to live, love, and of course, breathe. Tim found the gift of poetry in 1990, during a period of self-discovery. He has continued to use it as a means of healing, expression, and explosion when life meets the criteria of "enough". Tim has been published in three anthologies, as well as having several pieces published in the online journal *The Write Place At The Write Time*.

### **A White Woman's Perspective**

by Suzane Bricker

She rubbed the mangled knuckles of her calloused hands that had become grossly distorted with age and time.

As if the constant rubbing would somehow restore the soft skin of a child.

Her eyes displayed the type of kindness that most people lack, but were covered over in layer after layer of pain that had caused a myelin sheath to shield her from the disappointment of living.

She was a woman of courage,

Even though her body seemed to have betrayed her will to live, a long, long time ago,

And now,

Her existence was based upon taking care of three children who were not her own,

Who were white and therefore,

Could never really understand her struggles.

She smiled constantly, though, and as she did, the kindness and softness of her personality, which peeked out through the myopic lenses of her distorted vision, conveyed a compelling reason for me to want to be by her side.

A lonely child, I wanted only to be around who people who could be trusted, Who had the ability to meet the challenges of life which required a strength I really did not have.

And so, I had decided at an early age, that if I took the time to sit beside this woman, I could feel the type of compassion and companionship I needed to strengthen my soul as well.



That is why, as she sat in a slightly hunched-over position, on the heavily cushioned Danish chair, with the bowed wooden stave supporting the curvature of her back, I knew to just watch her silently, and wait for the miracle to happen.

For, she was my comfort, and the one person in whom I could confide. And, too, she was real, and responded to me so readily and so often; Not like my stuffed animals whose vacuous stares meant nothing to me. She alone was my friend, and her smile, and her love told me so - always.

It was only as an adult that I began to understand why Rita never spoke to me.

Why she turned to the window to wait for her ride; probably just trying to capture a moment of peace.

Away from the world,

Away from the white children whose lives she had placed before her own to earn a living that would enable her to support herself, and a niece for whom she cared.

What I did not know then, was that the specialness I felt when I sat beside her, would be torn from my soul as I traveled through time and experienced life.

And now, as I write this letter,

My own fingers struggle not to cramp up

From years of typing responses to students' questions;

Responses that need to be reviewed and reviewed, over and over again,

To make sure that no errors are transmitted,

And, I watch my words form on the computer

Through eyes that have also lost their focus from mandated hours of walking into the virtual classroom,

And, of making sure that the needs of 20 to 30 students are met before my own,

So that I can earn a meager living full of uncertainties as well.

Now I realize that Rita and I were never different;

We both walked through life with burdens that we could not carry,

That we did not deserve to carry,

And that we did not know how to remove from our heavily-weighted shoulders.

So, when once upon a time, I used to think that Rita's love was deserved by me because of my own existence,

A place in life of specialness and privilege,  
I know now that I was wrong.

And, I also know that if I could just spend 20 more minutes sitting beside  
her chair,  
As she waited for her ride,  
Watching her, and capturing the love that she was able to convey to me,  
I would be able to tell her how much she had transformed my life,  
And how sorry I was that I had not thanked her for making my hurtful  
moments pass a bit faster,  
and for giving me the hope and courage to stay in the moment,  
For now, and;  
For long into the future.

Bio- Suzane Bricker teaches online and on-ground courses in academic, professional, and technical writing. In this role, she was selected to deliver a lecture on distance learning in Nanjing, China, and delivered a global seminar on assisting military students in the virtual learning environment. She also served as a print media journalist, and made contributions to *Newsweek*, and *The Los Angeles Times*. Additionally, she has worked as a grant writer and started her own nonprofit group, which provided professional musical performances to people in hospitals and other institutionalized settings. Bricker's first poem, titled, "My Nephew," was published in the April edition of *The Torrid Literature Journal*. She is a peer editor for the *Journal of Business and Technical Communication* (JBTC) and a fee-based editor for the Hume Writing Center at Stanford University, which is an unaffiliated position.

### **one more prodigal**

by Michelle Villanueva

it was raining when we last spoke  
I strummed string tapestries and you  
awash in coffee spattered songs  
while the front porch steps need painting  
your sister closed her eyes and dreamt  
someday despite this filament  
we will breathe hay air together

the thought seems so fragile and still  
helping the children get ready

I notice meadows believing  
the breeze whispers it possible  
bristled paths back may yet know you

do you sense this ripening fall  
within the sparrow flight you are  
listening these footsteps mere raindrops  
you unlike that once tattered boy  
these marshes that now bear your name

lost within dreams again these pines  
reach forth their branched arms as though yours  
your leaves greet me along this road  
running your winged chants cover me  
with weary hands I hum them home

Bio- Michelle Villanueva is in her third year of study toward an MFA in Creative Writing - Poetry from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. She is obsessed with barbeque grilling, and, if it is anywhere from 10 to 110 degrees outside, she can usually be found outdoors doing just that. Her poetry has been most recently published or is forthcoming in *Foothill Journal of Poetry*, *The Red Rock Review*, and *Floodwall Magazine*.

### **The Amateur Poem**

by Samara Wolpe

This is the worst poem ever written.  
I see it already—in the aborted curve of words  
a petal snipped in thirds by rusty children's scissors  
the kind you have to carry downwards, plastic scissors,  
walk-don't-run scissors, the kind that clotted glue clings to  
and in a way, this is fitting. The bad poem  
is graceless and sloppy, a spilled cup with all the mess  
of wildness, but holding none of the holy havoc  
of a waterfall, save for the glinting specks of cliché  
garish as wet glitter that baby-carrot fingers will sprinkle  
on "works of art". They stay imprisoned by plastic magnets  
until the day he leaves for college and takes the scraps  
of his beginnings with him. This is that kind of poem,

the one that's scratched out in cerulean wax on paper  
ten sizes too thick, the "look-back-on-it-and-cringe" kind of  
line breaks, cut diagonally so half the words are swallowed  
by the trash compost and the rest are saved in a box that  
your mom bought for you, and which sucks up dust  
under the bed, the limbo of "I'm too old for this" and keeping  
the light on until the covers throttle you kind of syllables. That is this poem,  
the Rubik's cube that can't be solved because the colors won't align  
and it could go on consuming paper-cuts of missing minutes except  
that this block of words is shocking me, I never intended to write this poem,  
when I started I was talking to myself in the mirror of this page  
and now it's real and grown and this poem doesn't need  
my sloppy consonants and brittle vowels because this makeshift rambling  
has become full and round at the edges, this clump of words can breathe  
alone and I am obsolete.

Bio- Samara Wolpe is seventeen, and spends the majority of her time writing, reading, and studying the human condition. Her favorite time of day is 11:17 AM.

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### **Tanka Sequence**

by Michael Green

fractured  
the light is  
streaming through  
the bedroom  
window

unsure  
it shyly  
falls upon  
the floor  
golden

i wait  
for the call  
the final scene

the curtain down  
on our love

Bio- Michael Green is a poet and fiction writer living in Kettering, Ohio with his wife and four children. He's a failed stand-up comic, small town sportswriter, construction worker. He has published in *Modern Haiku*, *Red Cedar Review*, *Bitterroot*, *Blue Lake Review*, *Linden Avenue Literary Journal*, others.

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### **Two Years**

by Shira Hereld

the rain reminds me of you,  
drops as small as your hands

you are gentler now than you have ever been

silky,  
slipping between my grasping fingers

time liquefies between us,  
and i am carried away

i fight the current,  
losing ground

there is no way to rescue you anymore

but, i won't understand until  
the last wave crashes  
over your perfect, black hair

(or is it seaweed?)

floating so close and too,

too far away

Bio- Shira Hereld is a rising senior at The George Washington University. She is studying Political Science and Theater. Her poetry has been published in *Wilde Magazine*, *Assisi*:



even though it isn't a shape of any kind,  
much less a square)

And yet,  
because it is an arts district,  
it wouldn't be complete  
without an artistic failure,  
something probably little noticed  
in car-centric Cleveland:

a couple of bus shelters made from metal  
(no doubt supposedly symbolizing  
something or other),  
the metal  
perforated with hundreds of holes  
and,  
to top it off,  
OPEN

An epic failure:  
of artistic sense,  
of sense of any kind  
As though the 'artist' had never ridden a bus  
As though the 'artist' had never stood outside  
in a Cleveland winter----

Bio- Michael Ceraolo is a 56-year-old retired firefighter/paramedic and active poet who has had one full-length book (*Euclid Creek*, from Deep Cleveland Press) published, and has another full-length book forthcoming this year (*Euclid Creek Book Two*, from unbound content press).

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