



©2006 Catherine Hammond

Tempe Poetry in April 2007

Presented by

WAL★MART

Supported by City of Tempe Cultural Services,
Tempe Public Library, *Hayden's Ferry Review*,
and Wildflower Bread Company.

Moderator: Catherine Hammond

- April 4 – Tom Wayman (pages 1-6)**
- April 11 – James Cervantes (pages 7-12)**
- April 18 – Alicia Beale (pages 13-18)**
- April 25 – Christopher Burawa (pages 19-24)**

The writers in this anthology retain all copyrights to the following materials. You may not use, copy, publish, or otherwise transmit, either in print or electronically, distribute or modify any elements of this work without the express written permission from the individual poets.

april: Volume Seven, copyright ©2007
Catherine Hammond All Rights Retained

Tom Wayman

"Hammer," "Official Errata," and "Marshall-Wells Illumination"
published from *I'll Be Right Back* by Tom Wayman, Ontario Review Press,
(Princeton, NJ, 1997) and used with permission. ©1997 by Tom Wayman.

HAMMER

A hammer is rising. A hammer
thrown up at the end of the day by a carpenter
with blood on the handle where his blisters have been.
A hammer. It lifts as well on the wave of steam
pouring up from the pots of a kitchen—a tiny kitchen
of an apartment, and that of a restaurant
serving a hundred customers at once.

A great cry of tedium
erupting out of papers and fluorescent glass
carries the hammer higher. It goes up end over end
on a tune broadcast to a million people.
And it climbs
on the force of a man's arm alone
flung straight up from the sickness that is his life.
It rises out of the weight of a body falling.

Nothing can stop it. The hammer has risen for centuries
high as the eaves, over the town. In this age
it has climbed to the moon
but it does not cease rising everywhere each hour.
And no one can say what it will drive
if at last it comes down.

Tom Wayman 2

OFFICIAL ERRATA

Where it says *welfare* read *suffering*

"The seasonally-adjusted rate of suffering
fell one per cent last month."

Where it says *defense* read *suffering*

"The Department of Suffering confirmed Friday
the shipment of \$1 billion in new tanks and helicopters
to friendly governments in Latin America."

Where it says *productivity* read *suffering*

"Canadian industry must increase the suffering of its
employees
at least 12 per cent this year."

Where it says *co-operation* read *suffering*

"The administration requires the suffering of every citizen
to see us through these difficult times."

Where it says *efficiency* read *suffering*

Where it says *management* read *suffering*

Where it says *suffering* read *defeat*

Tom Wayman 3

MARSHALL-WELLS ILLUMINATION

for Jim Daniels

One bright morning, I was sent
to the wholesale cash-and-carry hardware,
glad to be out of the pounding and saws
of the jobsite, to drive the city streets
and walk into the wooden-floored building.

At the counter, the lone clerk
I had spoken with several times before
—an old man, surely past retirement—
fussed at his order books, precise
as his usual shirt and tie
concerning *common or finishing*
galvanized or not,
lengths and amounts needed.
The stock numbers were passed
to somebody else for fulfillment
and I stood waiting, in my workclothes and boots.
Motes of dust
rose and drifted in the sunlight
that leaned in from windows down the long room
where a dozen other people toiled at desks.
Then a man entered
from outside, older than me,
younger than the clerk, dressed in coveralls
and leather carpenter's apron.
He pulled a list from a pocket
and stepped aside, as the counter clerk
bent once more to flip the pages of the catalogs
to set the number of each item
on the proper form.

Tom Wayman 4

And the man in coveralls
perhaps for pleasure at the new day,
suddenly shifted his heavy boots back and forth
in a clumsy part of a dance
and stopped, grinning.

The motion caught the clerk's eye, and he frowned.
But the man
stomped his boots
in another quick pattern. He paused
under the clerk's dour gaze,
then resumed: the thick soles toeing the planks
and tipping back on heels,
nails falling from the pouches of his apron
as his arms flew out for balance. The man,
laughing, looked over at me for approval.
And the clerk also faced in my direction
shaking his head to invite me to mock
the ridiculous swaying.

But at this moment

I knew
neither gravity nor
centrifugal force
spins the Earth through space.
Our planet revolves
under the dancing feet of this man
and those like him: through their efforts
the immense bulk of our home
is moved. And I understood
as the boots crashed down, this joy
finds even in the dreadful agreements we labor in
the love required to trample

Tom Wayman 5

what we have been given
under our invincible shoes.

Yet the three of us

hung suspended
in the amber light:
Grandfather Paper and Order,
Father Happiness and Measuring Tape
and myself. The rest of the office watched us
from their file drawers and typewriters
as I saw the planet lurch forward
with each kick of these feet
and the earth also pushed on
by the weight of an invoice
dropped from an aged hand, saw Father and Grandfather
both turned
to ask me to choose
—one motionless, the other beginning to slow.

What could I do
but dance?

Tom Wayman 6

"Cup" published from *My Father's Cup* by Tom Wayman, Harbor Publishing, Madeira Park, BC, 2002, and used with permission. ©2002 by Tom Wayman.

CUP

Because of heavy painkillers
administered to my father
or a deep dream,
before he died he called out from a doze in his wheelchair:
Take, take it.
His tone was desperate, so I stepped closer
to reassure: *It's all right. You were asleep.*
What's the matter?
His eyes now gaped at his world:
the curtain isolating him from the other bed here,
a portable commode, his wheeled tray
holding an untouched lunch of broth and jello.
Then he recognized me and said:
I was drinking a cup of coffee
with nowhere to put it down.
His voice was anxious and bewildered so I soothed:
It was just a dream; don't worry.
But he said: *Take it from me,*
anyway. After a moment
I reached across his lap to seize
a cup of nothing
which I held to my chest as I straightened again.
My father smiled slightly
at the oddity of this event
and slept. Thus his cup
passed to me.

James Cervantes

All poems published from *Temporary Meaning* by James Cervantes, Hamilton Stone Editions, 2006, and used with permission. ©2006 by James Cervantes.

AN EDUCATION

The third generation antelope went off to school
intoxicated with St. Augustine and wild rye.

Great swales capped green beneath the animals
led to the veneration of wild-chance rhythm.

Black-outs occurred as well during peak hours
and off-seasons known as toxic atmosphere.

Despite it all, there was periodic grazing
in magazine racks. Pink nibbles, stark white teeth.

Always late, loping through crowds, bagged books,
and sweet concessions, the learned ungulate arrived.

Serpentine jazz inspired black-stocking hoofers.
There were no wooden fences they could not leap.

BOTH SILENCE AND SPEECH TRANSGRESS

Goods can be defined as final product
or as intermediate goods
used in producing other goods.

Thus the smile without a future,
or its short-lived erasure, when
this moment can be taken into others.

Call the waiter to intervene
or break the lull yourself, begin
to tell the story you'll both forget,

which is important, and is not.
Maybe it's the word-idea of "sunrise"
that makes it into every day.

Both silence and speech transgress
what customers take for themselves.
Like random words in a future letter,

the speechless moment asserts itself
in troubled silence when the check arrives,
forgotten music, forgotten food in every day,
memorable in every sunrise.

ARGUMENT IN THE AFTERNOON

"You are not the wind," she said
four times, to my face,
to the wall, ceiling, and floor.

To get even, I went outside
and spoke to the birds.
Indeed, there was wind

in the green coins of the ginkos,
among pea pods, and slicing
itself on the green blades

of that plant that only she
could name, but they quivered
and quivered in rhythm.

Oscillating, they added,
multiplied, and divided,
shedding exponents

until the wind died. "Math
is like this drive," she said,
as we spiraled up the hill

and a diorama
opened up each time we passed
the view of a farm, then farms,

then many distant farms,
until we were at the top, the center,
included, and finally at zero.

James Cervantes 10

OBJECTS THAT SING

They're in the museums, mostly,
out of reach, which may be why they sing.

Wouldn't you, if you were a jade Shiva
smaller even than your photo in the catalog?

Wouldn't you want to kick your legs
for someone hunkered down eye-level

with you to avoid the illusion
of magnification by the glass,

putting a little nose smear on it
just to see six legs emanate

gracefully and naturally with one
heavenly ululation, that la-la yodel

with quivering uvula?

*

James Cervantes 11

Even when the object's cool
and twice dead, such as a terra cotta

replica of a cut rose with new dust
beneath its petals, there's faint song

accompanied by imagined scent.
How did its maker do that,

make you smell memory's rose
and hear a child bride and boy king

exchange sing-song names in a glass case?

James Cervantes 12

TEMPORARY MEANING

Things sit around, decompose, or get thrown out.
This is what I think of the broken hoe
and a blackened orange while neighbors hammer
and grackles drop and stab into the flooded lawn.
Now, at this moment, the universe clicks into place,
admits quite openly that all is pointless and bestows
a temporary meaning on philosophies.
At what point, I wonder, will it dawn on everyone?
Should I run to the fence and ask, "Have you gotten it
yet?"

Instead, I yell: "Your repairs are useless!"
The mindless hammering stops and it occurs to me
that I am the chance generator of a silent wave
that rolls in all directions, sucks everyone
into its undertow and never spits them out.
Or that I'm the last to catch on and the first one
tossed naked onto the long awaited Mohave beach.
This would explain a sign that says "Psychic Dump."
It would also explain how easily birds
have learned the ring of a cordless phone,
and why every time they sing, I run to answer.

Alicia Beale

All poems forthcoming in *The Manifestation of Orange Poppies* by
Alicia Beale, The Backwaters Press, 2007 and used with permission.
©2007 by Alicia Beale.

INTERPRETING FIRE

When the young men driving the last route to happiness
strike a match and toss it from the window,
the smoke carries away the bodies of memory.
The bier of jackrabbits vanishes. Six crows
stranded in one cottonwood are the only witnesses
to the procession moving across the land.

In the north, the wildfires open their crimson bodies
to hot winds. The mountains stand naked
of juniper and mesquite, graves for giants.
Power lines hum their one electric note in mourning,
some translation of E flat burning. It is the last occasion –
you can read it in the smoke unwinding over saguaros.

When the lightening strikes, stallions drop to their knees
like priests. They yield to the electric whip of heaven
until their carcasses smoke and the foxes come
and the cumulus throne floats by. The amarillo disk
rolls across the sky, the trees turn to cinders.
This is articulo mortis, the indulgence of greed.

You can hear it in the voices of old men learning
the names of colors: amarillo as taxi cabs, amarillo
as bananas, flames from Ecuador. It runs in the family:
niños, madre, abuela. I line up the words until they lie
together like bodies ready for a mass grave.
The words are dorado, oro, esclavitud.

MRS. HUBBARD'S WICKED DOG NAMED BUTCH

I looked at the fruiterers, the tailor's,
the hatter's. I bought him pears,
pants, and helmets of steel.

Still, he wanted to play whist, eat
crab grass, play scales on his flute.

So after twenty years of nipped
fingertips and sky the color
of bruised light and peaches,

I can say it's true - you can only have
one dame, one bone, and one rising
moon. Soon enough, the dog calls out

Bow Wow and you're the servant
of lime pie, loitering workers, tamed cats.

So one night you see the fishmonger
outside his fish house. The instruments
of gutting and skinning make his hands

tight as strings on rump roasts.
You go to plays together where the moon
rises on ropes and pulleys.

It swallows the spires of hope
like a barracuda until it ends in well-being.

But all the time over the re-enactment
of love the chorus of dogs go on and on
barking orders to the baker and shoe-maker.

The cupboards are empty of cakes
and cocktails and sweet dreams.
So at the end you count out the rhymes:

bone and Styrofoam, bow and kowtow.
You call him a dog. You find a new home.

ALL GOOD WESTERNS COME TO AN END

Dressed as the Lone Ranger, the day comes
riding a silver flame, searching for Tonto.
The birds draw on their fatigues to prepare
for telephone poles, electric wires crackling.

The girl next door launches into tantrum sobs.
Her brother makes a bayonet of a butter knife.
Down the street, the salutation of a leaf blower
begins roaring the final story of mutilated florets.

Here is the news about withdrawal: the jackrabbit
vanishes behind Manzanita. Here is the news
about injustice: the hawk snatching the crow
mid-air. The sky separates, ready for peace talks.

When the white lesions blossom cumulus,
my neighbor is still singing to himself
of the insurgent moon. How can I not listen?
This morning the holy shrines of emptiness
open to tumbleweeds, painted horses.

There is a civil war between uncertainty
and shattered windows. This is the place
where the worn-out train thieves come.
Tell me: would you give up your sharp-shooter?

The broadcast crackles with fighting.
Tonto finds a spot on the news to explain
how the sun is on a forced march. At its best,
he can only report billows of black smoke
to mark its progress from bone to blue to done.

PASTORAL

I pray to the goddesses
swift as centipedes
vanishing into earth
for panpipes, a shepherd,
anything other than this sky
inhabited with power lines
and crippled cactus wrens.

But there's no escaping
the rapid speech of blackbirds,
the strike of bird epidemics,
and even though I dig past
potato bug maidens,
there's no getting past
the place where it all started:

in school they teach you
what is outside the window
is of no consequence.
They teach you the conversations
of rabbit and turtle are only
about the race out of the forest
fire started not by lightening

but by a car bomb or
emergency flares, and hare
and tortoise were deep
in the forest where the bees
drone on about sweetness
and light pouring like a serenade
onto lupine and the droning

Alicia Beale 18

is like the wailing
for the wounded, like the mind
lost in the thicket, clenching
sticky stems and snapdragons,
but there are no witticisms
in shepherds' songs,
and like tracer bullets these ideas

burst above heads and the periwinkle
sky is a race-track for the sun
and the great fires have blossomed
and it takes years and multiple degrees
to appreciate the daisies thrust through ribs.
And it takes decades to plow
the calm field where the hero

lies forgotten with arrows
sprouting from his sacred sacrum
where the happy bones of men
are wrathful seeds that wait
for the resurrection of the earth,
the semi-seduction of wet
and green and again.

Christopher Burawa

"Elegy" and "A Face Made of Night" written by Jóhann Hjálmarsson
and translated from Icelandic by Christopher Burawa.

ELEGY

(1985)

Days lose their luster and you ask yourself
which is brighter, the inner or outer dawn?
Was it something in the endless sea and lava flows of
childhood
or was it the ache of brief affairs that aimed you toward the
surf—
when you waded out, fearless, to compare the fraction of
time
on an invisible clock's second hand that rules weather and
chance
down to the smallest features of your face, voicing an
opinion
mumbled anyway and understood to be, at the same time,
happiness and sorrow. How could anyone leave you
like a cloud on a perfect morning?

Were the breakers still speaking to you on the bus ride out
of town,
in the lonely rooms you stayed in on your travels
from this place to the next, did they proclaim something
about time itself to you, that you lived outside of the
rules—
that riotous but unanimous choir always toasting
everything you said?
Toward the tidewater wash you walk, a blurring figure,
transparent, leaving no footprints.

Christopher Burawa 20

A FACE MADE OF NIGHT (1973)

A poem hates mornings,
the shadowless light of noon,
the stillness of holy days.

A poem fears drowning in a geyser.
Like the hot spring
it also thaws ice.

A poem is lonely.
So, why does it love dark alleys?
Why does it hide from the people on the street
except at the close of business
and with the coming of snow and night?

Perhaps we are more relaxed now, or
could it be because we are prepared
to share the bitter thought?

Christopher Burawa 21

The following poems published in *The Small Mystery of Lapses* by Christopher Burawa, Cleveland State University Poetry Center, 2006 and used with permission. ©2006 by Christopher Burawa.

LOVE'S BURNING BOY —to L.C.

I've slowly set the table below a cabbaged shadow of
oaks.
The field of rye wheat believes it's the sun,
A circling hawk obliges as moon.

"You will surely get to heaven, right?"
asks the bantam rooster.
It tips its head, one eye on the hawk,
The other on the lookout for an innocent bug.

I'll quote from the amateur beekeeper's manual:
"If the smoke-gun becomes clogged, relax."
But we don't—
Because the rice pot hisses from the house.

We say instead, "I've got to eat that."

SPILLING INTO THE NIGHTFALL OF ITS BELLY

I've decided to repeat to you
what I've convinced myself of:
that this blue-and-white plate
is better than any I've ever eaten from.

Look, on the pearl and yellow salt lick
a barn swallow opens its spindle-barbed beak
into the intentional smile of its kind,
in a pause from hawking the pasture.

A cow dips to its knees.

Since that day when I mourned
the childhood campfire,
its many tongues,
I've known the midtown lake
was always frozen,
and from my window I watched
its ducks walk back and forth
from their islands
slowly to the feeding place—

the armless figures hurrying by.

PHOTOGRAPH BY A FRENCH TOURIST

The Original (1"x1")

Three old men
stand in full or mid blink
and rubber boots.
They think they are standing straight
but lean where their heads go.
Two hold shovels like oars;
the other holds a turf spade.
They stand apart
as if two men
are missing.

The Blow-up

His left mittened hand holds the spade grip.
His right a fist, in which the bowl of a burl pipe
smolders, the black stem with a worn-whitened
tip, aims dowsel-like down
the hard-scrabble street, where a farmer
walks at the head of his horse
drawing the two-wheeled dung cart,
and pedestrians walk
close to the buildings, and my great aunt
Soffia and her married lover
emerge from a house—

his head turned in a complicated moment.
She wears a sequined flapper hat.
Her dress frays the overcoat.
The famous red snail curl
secured to her forehead
with spit a given.
A man walking the opposite way,

Christopher Burawa 24

across the street and parallel,
may be walking into a wall.

She is raising a blurry hand to her mouth
to stop a cough—
the cough of their undoing.