

Best the Bard

What could better capture the essence of this year? “Why, this is very midsummer madness.” (Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night*).

Our language is enriched by Shakespeare’s words that often marry insight and poetry in one happy phrase. The impertinent theme for this month’s Poetry Quarter is the cheeky dare to “Best the Bard!”

These poems spring from a quote from Shakespeare but reach for new heights (or depths) to evoke the here and now.

The Glebe Report’s Poetry Quarter is curated by poet JC Sulzenko.

Maureen Korp

Colossus

They called
him Colossus
standing mighty, frowning
oh, that scowl, that stance, the one all
obeyed

above
his head, soft-lit
the shining aura, showed
all his godliness, shadowing
the base

holding
him in place, there
were tremors, marked faultlines
hemispheric defaults, omigod. . .
clay feet

Man, you
know what happened
next, a storyline told
again, real-time reportage,
fact-checked

once more
so many washed
away, unaccounted
for in the tides when Colossus
lost it.



“Why, man, he doth bestride the narrow world
Like a Colossus, and we petty men
Walk under his huge legs and peep about
To find ourselves dishonourable graves.”
Julius Caesar, Act I

A. Estable

Schoolyard, October 2020

Where once elated shouts would rise,
Wild games find echoes in the skies,

Now, caged and muffled, children stumble,
Hobbled by fear. Pathetic fumble

Of those who claim they did not know:
Cassandra’s curse through science flows.

When tidal waves claw out the sea,
It gallops back. A guarantee.



“O, call back yesterday, bid time return!” *Richard II, Act III*

Kitchen Mus(e)ings

I have made crab apple jelly and am wondering: will it set?
(Other poets – real ones, big ones – never have to ponder this)
Maybe pickles would be quicker? Isn’t jam a safer bet?
But I’ve made crab apple jelly and am wondering: will it set
While I try (without success) to craft a charming triolet?
Still distracted. Is it tea time? Do I hear the kettle hiss?
I have made crab apple jelly and am wondering: will it set?
(Other poets – real ones, big ones – never have to ponder this)



“I have been in such a pickle since I saw you last.” *The Tempest, Act V*



Pat McLaughlin

Story of R&J

Ancient grudge leads
to street brawling
Gatecrashers intrude
matchmakers ball
Young love ignites
across the room

Will this generation buy in?

Balcony garden a
chance place to meet
“Parting is such sweet
sorrow”.* Let’s repeat
tomorrow. Cupid’s
arrow leads to secret nuptials

A fight to the death
Banishment for Montague son
Friar orchestrates wedding night

Friar to the rescue
Sleeping potion taken

Romeo arrives
Juliet appears dead
Romeo takes poison
Juliet awakens
In grief, stabs
herself and dies
Everyone cries

No, but they die because of it.



“Parting is such sweet sorrow.”
Romeo and Juliet, Act II

Mike Schofield

The Asteroid flyby on the eve of the U.S. presidential election

What sign heaven hath laid before our eyes?
What king crowned commands our bended knee?
Does dove or raven nighttime flies?
The answer dawns for us to see.

Before my breast will hearty laughter nourish,
feasting on the jester of absurdity?
And in relief will my sense of humour flourish
and the dread of broken years vanish in obscurity?

Or will the dawning dew taste of a saline tear
As it rises to meet the morning’s desperate sun?
As misery and hate, once forgotten, now are near
to goad my soul into that fearful horizon run.

Heavens messengers woven into tapestries told
of empires washed away by history’s tide.
As sure as the insane be lusted to imagined gold
the drums from Mars, the God of War, must guide

The beacon of uncertainty it’s glaring torch ignited
so bright it illuminates all those rich and poor
be it demon or angel, the loyal squire now knighted
persistent and irresistible comes knocking at my door...



“But I am constant as the Northern Star,
Of whose true fixed and resting quality
There is no fellow in the firmament.”
Julius Caesar, Act III

tipping the toque to Shakespeare

you got your rhymes
your tragic plots
your iambic pentameter
i’m modern times
and modern thoughts
outside the box parameter
bard of avon
bard of avon
four hundred years and count’n
but we’re still ravin’
we’re still ravin’
at your artistic fountain
but me i’m just a regular guy
counting paltry views
social media posted
kissed by a lesser muse

Colin Learn

To Play Our Part

To play our part through seasons and time
Be true to you and I to me
Everything for a horse

Never love wisely and never love smooth
This strange madness
Seen better days



“The course of true love never did run smooth.”
A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Act I
“To thine own self be true.” *Hamlet, Act I*
“A horse, a horse, my Kingdom for a horse.”
Richard III, Act V

POETRY QUARTER JAN / FEB 2021

It could happen to you!

“Roses are red, violets are blue” – an over-used line to be sure, but we use it to launch our theme for February’s Poetry Quarter: It could happen to you!

Send us your poems on the theme of love to illuminate the long winter nights around Valentine’s Day.

Bring light, passion and joy – or their opposite forces – to bear on words you choose to share in poetic form about your loves, your hates and your in-betweens.

(no poems submitted elsewhere, please);
• No more than 30 lines each;
• On any aspect of the theme within the bounds of public discourse; and
• Submitted on or before Monday, January 25, 2021.

Poets in the National Capital Region of all ages welcome (school-age poets, please indicate your grade and school). Please send your entries (up to 5 poems that meet the criteria) to editor@glebereport.ca. Remember to send us your contact information and your grade and school if you are in school.

Deadline: Monday, January 25, 2021

As usual, poems should be:
• Original and unpublished in any medium