

My brother emails me his latest poems. He's three years younger than I am, retired although still in demand as a guest preacher. What is amazing to me is that he sends me more and more poems. Even more amazing, they get better and better. "I hear a voice/that makes no sound/a deep incision/I only feel.../calling to me,/from a place /I have never been/eternally yearn to know/and dwell." I had always heard that poetry, like mathematics, is a young man's game. But what that must mean is that lyric poetry is a young man's game. Poetry as a way of getting at eternal truths without being didactic seems to be an old person's game. Is this because young poets use the tried and true forms, but as they age they look for a new form, a new subject?

The summer issue of "Write", the magazine of The Writers' Union of Canada, has an article by Lakshmi Gill. I knew her name because forty years ago she was associated with Mount Allison University, I forget in what capacity, but I hadn't heard of her for quite a while. She writes about a new form she has invented for her own poetry, something called "sagama," the Punjabi word for confluence. Gill describes how she invented the form, gives examples of it. It involves a "Catalyst", a one-line insight, and a "Receiver", the working out of the insight.

A chunk of Brian Bartlett's *Branches Over Ripples: A Waterside Journal* was published in The New Quarterly. Bartlett is a poet, but his last two books and this manuscript have been variations of a nature journal. In *Branches Over Ripples*, he sits by various bodies of water, observes nature, meditates, and writes. In the two journal entries in the magazine he is sitting beside the Great Village River in Nova Scotia. He's been staying at the Elizabeth Bishop house in Great Village. To honour the naturalist Peter Matthiessen on the occasion of his recent death, Bartlett has brought along *Nine-Headed Dragon: Zen Journals 1969-1982*. Matthiessen discusses zazen--sitting meditation. Bartlett ponders how his own sitting meditation is different from zazen. He's not sitting in a comfortable temple; he's out in the wild in early April. His arm gets a long scratch, he sits on cold damp earth, his bare hands get chilled, he falls, he sinks into the crumbly snow up to his knees, his car gets stuck in the mud, but he perseveres to tell us about the pair of pheasants he sees and hears.

Deborah Carr's essay on Shepody Mountain is on the long-list for CBC's prize for Creative Non-Fiction. She has been able to buy a piece of this land of her German ancestors, and she is learning to love it. She's finding out everything she can about it—its flora, fauna, history--inspired by the well-known conservationist whose biography she has written, *Sanctuary: The Story of Naturalist Mary Majka*. Her essay is part of a longer work although in a CBC interview she said, "I don't have the shape of it yet." To understand this land feels like her "calling." She sums up her essay this way: fear, courage and renewal. She admires Majka's courage, her lack of fear. The winning essay will be published in "Enroute".

I mentioned Shane Neilson's contributions to The Fiddlehead, including the opening of his long poem "Dysphoria." He writes about it on Facebook, "A single feeling animates everything I've done in life - good and bad. I've tried for over a decade to convey that emotion in words but couldn't get it right. The feeling needed to worsen and intensify and I needed a new style derived and authored by the feeling itself.... I also needed a place that understood and appreciated this kind of writing, which is new. Thank you Fiddlehead..." "Emotion distilled into ampoules, the inoculate/roaring at the head of the needle—who needs//depot when the body's flooded with the feeble?"

In his New York Times column on toughness, David Brooks writes, "The people we admire for being resilient are not hard; they are ardent. They have a fervent commitment to some cause, some ideal or

some relationship. That higher yearning enables them to withstand setbacks, pain and betrayal....There are moments when they feel swallowed up by fear. They feel and live in the pain. But they work through it and their ardent yearning is still there, and they return to an altered wholeness." Brooks quotes Nietzsche, "He who has a why to live for can bear almost any how."

This year the University of New Brunswick annual Poetry Weekend is October 1 and 2 with three sessions each day, 11 AM, 2 PM and 8 PM at Memorial Hall. It's free. Poets of all ages come from all over the place to read; some of them have books available. Ross Leckie is the impresario.