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## EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear members and subscribers,

What a year it has been! One filled with thousands of submissions and publications written by close to 800 writers from around the world and read by over 1 million global followers.

We thank you for making our job at Spillwords Press worthwhile, and taking our literary ezine to unexpected heights.

We look forward to a 2018 that already promises to be unlike any other; we have a lot in our pipeline that will ensure our progressive growth.

In the meantime we invite you to celebrate the winners of our annual Spillwords Press Awards of year 2017.

Once again a sincere thank you from our team.

Warm regards,

Editing Team  
editor@spillwords.com

## AUTHOR OF THE YEAR



**RICHARD WALL**

[SEE HIS POSTS](#)

Richard Wall, author and occasional poet, lives and writes in rural England and is responsible for the short stories, *Evel Knievel* and *the Fat Elvis Diner*, *Five Pairs of Shorts*, and *Hank Williams' Cadillac*. Richard's debut novel, *FAT MAN BLUES*, was inspired by a bizarre encounter in a juke joint in Clarksdale, Mississippi, and has attracted international acclaim and celebrity interest. Richard's stories reflect his life-long fascination with the dark underbelly of American culture; be it the simmering menace of the Deep South, the poetry of Charles Bukowski, the writing of Langston Hughes and Andrew Vachss, or the music of Charley Patton, Son House, Johnny Cash, or Tom Waits. His second novel, *LAST RITES AT SING SING*, is underway to be followed by the sequel to *FAT MAN BLUES*. Deep South, the poetry of Charles Bukowski, the writing of Langston Hughes and Andrew Vachss, or the music of Charley Patton, Son House, Johnny Cash, or Tom Waits. His second novel, *LAST RITES AT SING SING*, is underway to be followed by the sequel to *FAT MAN BLUES*.

POETIC  
PUBLICATION OF THE YEAR



**ALETHEIA**  
BY BITUPAN DAS

[SEE POST](#)

Climbing the mountain hollow,  
To Finding thee.  
Climbing like a spider,  
But dark clouds above me.  
Laughing like thunderstorm,  
Climbing arachnid me.  
Gravity is my best foe,  
But like to play with thee.  
But you give me the free fall,  
To meet the dream of me.

Now I can see mountain hollow,  
Black hole every dream,  
Infinity is my address,  
And gravity within me.

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# INTERNATIONAL PUBLICATION OF THE YEAR



## QUESTIONS (PYTANIA)

BY ELIZA SEGIET

TRANSLATED BY ARTUR KOMOTER

[SEE POST](#)

What if you  
rock the memories,  
and hear  
how much they wanted to live?

What if you  
rock the echoes of the past?

How did people differ then?

By faith, by dreams?

Some ate bread from the oven –

I did not –

I think I did not like to.

Tell me, grandfather,  
why, to take a bath,  
were they going by train?

I don't know –

I don't think I remember.

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A gdyby tak  
rozkołysać wspomnienia,  
i usłyszeć  
jak bardzo chcieli żyć?  
A gdyby tak  
rozkołysać echa przeszłości?  
Czym wtedy różnili się ludzie?  
Wiarą, marzeniami?  
Niektórzy jedli chleb z pieca –  
nie jadłem –  
chyba nie lubiłem.  
Powiedz dziadku,  
dlaczego, żeby się wykąpać,  
jechali pociągiem?  
Nie wiem –  
chyba nie pamiętam.

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NON-POETIC  
PUBLICATION OF THE YEAR



**AND LO, A BLACK HORSE**  
BY JAMES DEAN COLLINS

[SEE POST](#)

In my twenties I was a security guard. The job was nothing too strenuous. I was one of five patrol people during the graveyard shift at a major chemical laboratory. My job was primarily to walk around and spot any leaks I would find in office ceilings, report any strange behavior, and things like that.

One particular night in the middle of a cold February I drew patrol in section one. Section one was pretty big, with a couple of low-lit creepy areas. They let me use a pickup truck to check the exterior of the laboratory, and that truck came in handy in the chilly, mid-Atlantic weather. To the left side of the grounds is an old mill by a river, and to the right are railroad tracks and a railroad museum converted from a former train station. The tracks were essentially abandoned due to the manufacturing jobs around my state moving away. The museum still leases a locomotive a couple of weekends a year along with some old train cars. They like to bring families out for picnics.

On this night, I took the truck around the grounds and checked out a few of the offices, always making sure to call in my position and status over the radio (code 10-8.) I left building 308 and looked to the right of where I was facing.

Everything seemed okay with the railroad museum, but just past it, down a set of tracks surrounded by trees, there was a green light coming from around the corner.

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I grabbed my radio and called in an investigation (10-37), got in the truck and left the laboratory grounds for the museum. I parked outside of the small building and got on the platform to look around through the windows. The only light sources came from the exit sign and the illuminated security monitor. The monitor was a four-way split-screen with one camera in the building, one on the platform looking at me, one overseeing the parking lot, and one that was all static.

Static?

I checked the camera from the platform. It was the track camera, and it was pointing down the tracks in the direction of the light. The camera itself showed the light was on and it appeared fully operational from where I stood.

In the distance, I heard a train whistle.

That made me jump. It came from the direction of the light. There weren't supposed to be any trains on this track anymore, at least not at this time of night.

I went to use my radio, but I was only greeted with more static. I thought about how strange that was for a moment but I tried to radio an investigation (10-37). Again, I was met with static.

I went back to the truck and grabbed a flashlight, and then I started walking down the track. The track eventually curved around a corner that wasn't visible from the station. A few feet around the corner, and that's when I saw it, I

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saw the source of light.

An old locomotive stood before me. There was steam billowing out from underneath of it. Its front light was an unholy shade of yellow-green.

I stood there in disbelief for a moment, and then I shined the light on it. I couldn't see into the windows, but something wasn't right. There should not have been a train here.

I moved down the tracks to look into the cars. It had old club-style cars like classic locomotives used to have. I shined the light into the windows again but couldn't see anything. The windows of the cars were yellowed, aged, and covered in cobwebs. I listened and held my breath; I swear I heard people inside talking softly.

A few cars back I tried a door. With some resistance it budged open and I made my way inside. The car smelled terrible. It was a pungent odor that made me dry-heave. There was mold all over the car. The carpet had mildewed. I composed myself and shined the flashlight around.

It was nothing but old benches that people had sat in during some other time. The car was crawling with spider webs and bugs that scurried away from my light. I took a second to wipe the sweat from my brow.

Sweat?

It was February.

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That's when I noticed I was light-headed. I stumbled forward down the aisle of the car. I doubled-over and began to hear conversation in my ear, from both males and females, but I couldn't make out any of it. It was like they were talking backwards.

I composed myself and turned around.

The car was filled with people. No, they weren't people. They were...things. Half-human, half-skeleton sort of awful looking things; and all of them were staring right at me. They had skin on maybe two-thirds of their bodies, but it looked like it was rotting and falling off. They were a combination of men and women. The men were dressed in suits, and the women were dressed in clothing from a period of time I couldn't figure out offhand.

And there they were, staring right at me, smiling their ghoulish, half-skinned smiles at me in unison. They began to shamble toward me.

I turned and ran down the car. I tried the door ahead but it wouldn't budge. They came closer, so out of desperation I kicked at the door, which jarred it loose.

I fell through the entranceway of the car. I looked up and they were still coming after me. I scrambled to my feet and ran down the track. I heard the train whistle, and then the engine roared to life. I heard the flanges moving.

Desperately I tried my radio, but I was still only greeted by static.

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I ran to the museum. I fumbled for my keys and started the truck. The train was still coming. I didn't bother to put on my seatbelt I just tore out of the parking lot towards the lab compound.

I lost control of the truck and went flying through the front gate. The last thing I remember was the airbag deploying when I hit the tree.

The Captain of the base came to visit me in the hospital. I told him what happened and he just nodded and told me to come see him and the Site Commander upon my release.

I showed up at the home office a few days later with a limp and my left arm in a cast. I was okay other than that and the concussion. I waited in the lobby until they called me into the main office. The Captain was there too, and they both gave each other looks as I recounted the events from that night.

"Well Mickey," the Commander started. "I hope you understand that we can't possibly corroborate this story, and we have to let you go."

I started to speak up, but why bother? 12 bucks an hour wasn't worth what I had to deal with. I nodded and shook each of their hands, grabbed my severance, and left. As I walked to the parking lot, I looked into the window of the main office.

He and the Captain were looking at camera footage on his

computer. It was the viewpoint of the track camera from the railroad museum. In the frame, I was running for my life down the track, as a big, green light came up from behind me.

They both looked at it for five good minutes, said a few inaudible things to one another, and then the Commander deleted the footage.

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