

DIS•ARTICULATIONS 2017: READER POEM FOR NOVEMBER

written by Terry Wolverton | November 23, 2017



*It's so wonderful to experience the creativity of our readers, and we so appreciate their participation in the dis•articulations process. This month we received four poems inspired by this month's prompts. Collaborating poet **Tanya Ko Hong** selected **Devon Balwit**'s "Song of the Hui Maiden" as the winning poem, but we are impressed with the other entries as well.*

***Lisa St. John** takes the prompt, "Forgive me, but I wasn't feeling so civil about it" to make a statement about the importance of language in conveying cultural values. Both **Danielle Martin** and **Julie Campbell** were inspired by the prompt "There, in the Taklamakan Desert, the silence of a thousand-year-old-skull..." to explore the nature of personal relationships, but using vastly different poetic sensibilities.*

Thank you to the poets who invest their inspiration and creativity into this project and thanks as ever to our devoted readers.

Song of the Hui Maiden

There in the silence of the Taklamakan,
I didn't know the war still inside you,

rising like Tokhtakaz from shifting sands,
baring your throat to the sun's blade, to the

scythe-swiping shadows of the Mazartag.
Tufted larks spark from the oleaster, a cloud

of spent souls pierced by camel thorns.
A gazelle, I hem the edges of your solitude.

I prick my ears for you, teasing you
from eolian dunes. Should you stumble

upon me, I will invite you in. I will offer
you water, hoarded for you, and you only.



Devon Balwit travels mostly in her mind, her poems, her mementos.

“Forgive Me, But I Wasn’t Feeling So Civil”

Civil discourse used to prevent me from saying, “pussy.”
Now that it’s out in the open, let’s open it up. Fierce daughters dream of agency and justice, and ponies.
We’ve been pushed down too far to not show our pink.

Civility is respect for fellow human beings.
The violence of words is measured in blood, not in a lexicon of euphemisms trying not to show their doublespeak (the hemlines—please!).
This one and only race is ... just that.

Civilized dialogue is crucial to empathy.
Who are we if not the stories we bear, the imaginings of possibility, the abstract constructions we call a philosophy?
Moving in straight lines will kill us all.

Civilization is an advancement of more than cutlery.
Extraction of pearls isn’t as peaceful as it sounds, not for the oyster. The conservation of matter is an equation that will balance, unintended or not.
We are our children’s mirrors.

Civilians cannot be silent noncombatants, not anymore, not now.
There is a war of compassion going on. Kill with kindness? You have not tamed the shrew; you’ve taught her.
Bear witness to the ferocity of tears.



Lisa St. John is a teacher and published poet. Her

chapbook, *Ponderings*, is available at Finishing Line Press. She lives in the Catskill Mountains of New York where she writes her blog: lisastjohnblog.com

There, in the Taklamakan Desert, the silence of a thousand-year-old-skull...

Words never heard
Skin never touched
Never to know his random thoughts
Instead I choke on the dust of flesh and bone
The souring remorse of what perhaps never was
And now never will be
All locked in those veins and cells and blood and skin and teeth and hair
that I so loved
Now all gone from this spot
Maybe it was indeed a dream, a young girl's fantasy
Except for when I smile, with more than painted lips, prompted by nothing
that I can hold
Except when the tears burst from the sockets of my eyes
To reveal the hidden truth and the pain that haunts my broken heart
It was real
Until death made me say good-bye
and I found myself alone
traversing shifting sands and scorching lies and mirages that give me hope



Danielle Martin, a former journalist and copywriter, is finally taking the plunge and sharing her secret passion. She is currently working on her first poetry book and hopes to continue flying towards her dreams.

To Myself Who Wants to Disappear, I Need to Say

love your night lie:

I am a lion!

only to Sunday wake

raw in feathered

cuffs, hog-

tied. you shame-bleed muffled

mea culpas

now. hug the down

pillow. silence

invisible

skull-nicking windmill

blades.



Julia Campbell is a student of poetry, writing, and life. Flanked by cats, Piglet and Lucy, she started writing poetry in 2016. She is also working on her first novel.