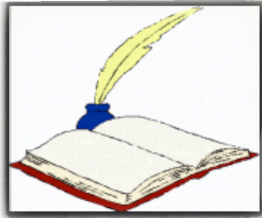


Steve Peterson Celebrates National Poetry Month — April, 2019



Guest Contributor
Steven J. Peterson



In response to our celebration of National Poetry Month and old friend, and former *ConVivio* contributor Steven J. Peterson, offers two of his favorite poems.

Steve has appeared on *ConVivio* before as a Guest Storyteller. His previous appearance on *ConVivio* can be found at:

<https://convivio-online.net/gratitude/>

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Steven writes:

Since I read your *ConVivio* post requesting poems, I have been thinking about poems that I like. I recalled that in the 1980s I read a lot of poetry, but have not read poetry with any consistency in the past twenty years. Makes me wonder how decades slip by so quickly.

I recalled that when I was in high school I was charmed by Dylan Thomas's "Fern Hill," especially the opening line: "Now as I was young and easy under the apple boughs," which made me think of the first "serious" play I attended at Moorhead (Minnesota) State College, these days called Minnesota State University at Moorhead (MSUM). The play was "Dylan" by Sidney Michaels, written in 1964. I saw it performed in April of 1966 near the end of my junior year of high school, about six weeks before my family moved from Minnesota to California. I thought it was a "great" play, but what did I know? I was two months away from my seventeenth birthday. I would like to see that play again. But never mind about that.

Below are two poems I like, "The Red Wheelbarrow" and "Where They Were and What They Were Doing."

Steve

The Red Wheelbarrow

by William Carlos Williams
Published in 1923

so much depends
upon

a red wheel
barrow

glazed with rain
water

beside the white
chickens.

Where They Were and What They Were Doing

by Matt Cook

I was looking through Milwaukee newspapers
From the day after John F. Kennedy was shot-

There was this auto body worker
Who brought his BB gun to work that day;
He was arrested for shooting his BB gun
Out the windows of the body plant
At passing automobiles-

That's where he was and what he was doing
On the day President Kennedy was assassinated.

There was this *biochemist*.
He was giving this speech at some university in town-
He was *inviting* the audience to imagine
A strain of pneumonia bacteria
That was wearing a *heavy armor suit* that was actually made of *protein*-
That was his public speaking metaphor.
His *point* was that the protein would act like
A shield against white blood cells.
That's what *that guy* was up to that day.

And just outside of town somewhere,
A car slammed into a truck on a rainy highway.
The car guy *died* of head injuries;
The truck guy was in *satisfactory condition* with neck pain.

In satisfactory condition with neck pain-
That's where that guy was, and what he was doing.

The day President Kennedy was shot,
These kids broke into a junior high school.
They stole twenty dollars worth of stamps,
And smashed up an aquarium.

That was their story;
That's where they were and what they were doing.

"Where They Were and What They Were Doing" by Matt Cook, from *In the Small of My Backyard*. © Manic D Press, 2002.