

TWO POEMS from **DEATH EAT**--by **Ron Seitz**

THE STILL POINT

In Memoriam Dom James Fox

and wait
with light leaking fingertips
a blank smear of silence down the page

because here is the wall awaited
the last breach-stop before death
as the dare darkens

to stone stare behind empty eyes
a hand cramped with cryptic pen
moving along the curved edge of sleep

sinking deeper into blind motion
masking inward the face flesh
humming its prison against the ear

sound now beyond the domed enclosure
mind
where a name must be written

with parted lips
caught breath
cold upon the open air

where the voice
holds its says
in solitude
where the split of That and Thou
heals
to One and Nothing

**RON SEITZ**

Photo by Sally Seitz

□ **Ron Seitz** is a poet and professor of English at Bellarmine College and a frequent contributor to *The Merton Seasonal*. His collection, *Gethsemani Poems*, was published by Larkspur Press in 1985. These two poems are from his new collection, **DEATH EAT**, published in April 1987 by Spotlight Press, Cincinnati, Ohio.

A BROKEN POEM

for Thomas Merton

1

out the open window and over the concrete schoolyard
the singsong drift of licorice breath with a bucktooth lisp
mouths wide to chalkdust inkwells and the American flag
a straightback pale nun with round glasses
O CAPTAIN! MY CAPTAIN!

*always and forever
an old ruddy-cheeked sea captain
who lay in a pool of blood
on the saltwet deck of a large sailboat
alone with the tossing waves and creaking mast
the gray sky jumbled
his white beard blowing in the wind
so softly*

and everyone looking at a firstglance Moses with hand
on chin
thinking poets lived long ago
and were real old men with long hair

and the name was Whitman or Longfellow
or maybe that Fenniemoore Cooper
(at least we hoped so because he wrote the best stuff)

and that's all for now--
I won't see him again

2

as a boy I lay awake long nights reading Edgar Allan Poe
(a shadowed thumping from inside my wall)
November gloom in upstairs room
(a brittle tree limb thwacking my window)
chimney moans and floor creaks
the **RAVEN** real

Poet Laureate
in a world of cowlicks comicbooks and knickers
singing gray in winter of graveyards and death

roll the hoop
run after with flapping sole
and too forget

3

the High School and
 the poetry of whiskers cowbells cinema and sex
 racing down country roads bared to moon
 wine songs blowing the stars awry
 a freewild hunger for living
 (the poem is in the moving)

Words' worth written longhand on blackboard for afternoon
 sleep
 slammed shut in a thick book with wide pages
 and goodbye

4

the Army and I sang of Olaf
 (e. e.'s face floating in darkness beneath cellophane)
 an olive-drab bard at 18
 swaggering thru hushed libraries
 epic poems scrawled in frenzy
 (tympanic rhyme schemes)

all in Byronic collar
 lips pursed
 a knowing silence

and the shadowed bald head vanished smiling a yes
 of was

5

on to College and
 sweet Keats opened as a flower
 (a nickel buys a whole bunch from the old face
 in black shawl)

then handclasped to Pope
 embracing them all--
 all the textbooks singers
 (from Lon Chaney's **BEOWULF**
 to the Lady Poet locked in her room)

and a goodly farewell it was

6

finally free and open
 to **DEATH BY WATER**
 and the past was scattered ashes

T. S. walked the hairline with
 "hurry up please it's time"
 and poetry was no longer a woman's face
 (the word and you -- that's who)

Pound broke down with **CANTOS**
 and I slobbered at the odd alphabet
 (tasteless because of the expense)

mad Lindsay (beating a drum) met America
 in preacher's sweat, sprung suspenders
 and died

Hart Crane's last poem a leap
 from the **BRIDGE**
 his voice swirling water beneath dark skies

and sang his wave of sound too
 Thomas
 reading aloud
 our green dying

a lucid jewel of pure poetry was
 Rimbaud
 putting a match to, cracking
 the shell of my vision
 forever scattered

and you, Ginsberg O Allen!
 hairy loss to heaven
 teeth dropping from your head--
 sing the final dream chant of victory

7

Poets all of them

good seeds gone to weeds
 bad seed blown over continents

and today
 in the light of your "waterfall of silence"
 I stand

with a broken poem in my eyes