Forgotten Ground Regained

A Quarterly Journal of Alliterative Verse

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Psalms and Meditations

Masthead

Forgotten Ground Regained (ISSN 2996-6353) is owned and edited by Paul Douglas Deane at 183 Millerick Ave., Lawrenceville, New Jersey and published at alliteration.net. Submissions in or about alliterative verse are welcome.[1] You can email the editor at pdeane@alliteration.net. **All works are copyright by their respective authors, who retain all rights.**[2] To join Forgotten Ground Regained's email discussion forum, navigate to the following link: https://gaggle.email/join/forgotten-ground-regained@gaggle.email. The journal is now open for submissions for the Spring, 2026, issue, with an emphasis on the theme, "Moments Sensed and Seen". You can read the full call for submissions later in this issue.

The cover image is based on a photograph posted to Wikimedia Commons by Greg Schechter, showing a Red-Throated Pipit in winter plumage in the Negev desert in Israel.

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[1] Note: In poetry that imitates Old English alliterative verse, editors usually mark the caesura, or break between half-lines, by inserting four or more extra spaces between the half-lines. However, this format often leads to readers treating the caesura as a far stronger break than it really is. In some Old English manuscripts, the caesura was indicated by a small, raised dot, or *conus*. This inspired my default house style for poems in the Old English style. Unless the poet directs otherwise or the content of the poem suggests a different format, where no punctuation is present, I insert a conus between the two half lines. But where punctuation is already present, I add just one extra space after the punctuation mark.

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Math Jones is a British poet and a practicing Pagan, author of *Sabrina Bridge* (Black Pear Press), and *The Knotsman* (Arachne Press). His work has appeared in various journals and anthologies, including *Speculative Poetry and the Alliterative Revival* and on *Forgotten Ground Regained*.

Jonathan Lovelace is a poet, aspiring novelist, & software engineer. *A Year in Verse*, the first collection of his poetry, was published in Advent 2014; a second collection,*Dreams and Prayers*, followed in 2025. He maintains a blog at shinecycle.wordpress.com. A graduate of Calvin University, he lives in Southeast Michigan, where he works for a government contractor and enjoys Scottish country dancing.

John C. Mannone, a physicist, lives in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, and has work in *Artemis*, *Appalachia Bare*, *Red Branch Review*, *Windward Review*, *Poetry South*, etc. He has won numerous awards, including the Emma Bell Miles and Jesse Stewart prizes (2024), the Jean Ritchie Fellowship (2017) in Appalachian literature. He is author of five full-length collections (& six chapbooks), including*Sacred Flute* (Iris Press, 2024), a top eight finalist for the Tennessee Book Award (2025).

Sarah Monnier is a former opera singer, a mother to four children, and an enthusiastic amateur cook and baker. She has a graduate degree in English language and linguistics, specializing in Old English, and a particular interest in creating digital editions of Old English poetry. When the world gets too heavy, she writes poetry.

Tom Pain is the *nom de plum* of a poet who describes himself as a "lefty educator and a Philly native in exile". He is co-host of *Ten Thousand Losses*, a Philly sports podcast.

Sean Patrick is a scientist & sonnet aficionado whose work appears in *Grand Little Things*, *Blue Unicorn*, *Corporeal*, *Verum Literary*, *Blydyn Square Review*, *Empyrean Literary*, and *Consilience*. Their sonnet collection *Love, Death, and Other Surprises* is available via online booksellers.

Jacob Riyeff teaches in the English dept. at Marquette University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin and is a Benedictine oblate. His latest book is *Contemplate: Toward an Expansive Heart* (Monkfish 2025), drawing on 1,600 years of western tradition to show the urgent importance of contemplation in our consumerist, digitally-saturated world. His latest poetry collection is *Be Radiant* (Fernwood 2024). He, his wife & three children live between the Milwaukee River and Lake Michigan.

David Rowe is the author of *The Proverbs of Middle-earth*. Born in Sheffield, England, he has lived in four continents, and now makes his home in Charleston, South Carolina, where he is a school chaplain, an Anglican priest, and a lover of a well-made cup of tea.

Lancelot Schaubert is a novelist, poet, essayist, & singer-storyteller. He has published two mostly alliterative poetry collections: *Inconveniences Rightly Considered: Poems from My Twenties*, on themes ranging from love and meaning to urban life, and *The Greenwood Poet*, a collection inspired by Brooklyn's Greenwood Cemetery.

Steven Searcy is author of a poetry collection, *Below the Brightness* (Solum Literary Press, 2024). His poems have appeared in *Southern Poetry Review*, *Commonweal*, & *The Windhover*. He grew up in Huntsville, Alabama, and graduated from Vanderbilt University and Georgia Institute of Technology. He & his wife and four sons live in Atlanta, Georgia, where he is a fiber-optic tele-communications engineer.

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Connor Patrick Wood is a poet and Substacker living in Arlington, Massachusetts. He holds a BA in creative writing from the Univ. of Wisconsin-Madison and a PhD in religion and science from Boston University. Before he left academia, his research on the cognitive science and psychology of ritual was funded by the John Templeton Foundation. He has published poetry at the *Rabbit Room*, *Ekstasis*, the *Amethyst Review*, and elsewhere.

Introduction

In the centuries before 1066, England was one of the first European countries with a thriving vernacular literature. Old English served as a vehicle for poetry, history, and Christian devotions. And that poetry was, of course, alliterative.

The story of Cædmon is a good place to start. He was a cowherd who worked at a monastery – and suffered the additional embarrassment, that he was no good at poetry or at playing the lyre, manly accomplishments much valued for evening entertainment. But then, one evening, as he fell asleep among the animals he cared for, he had a dream. In the dream, he was told to sing of the beginning of created things. At first he refused; but when he woke, he had composed a poem praising God, the Creater of the Earth. When he recited it to the abbess of the monastery, she asked him, by way of a test, to compose another poem. The result satisfied her that his poetry was a true gift from God, and in short order, he was inducted into monastic orders, given a course of education in sacred history and doctrine, and launched into a new, poetic career. Unfortunately, only one of his poems ("Cædmon's Hymn") has been preserved, but his story reveals much about the society in which he lived: deeply Christian and committed to expressing itself in the vernacular. In this society, alliterative verse, which had been the vehicle for Pagan myths and legends, took on a new life as a vehicle for the Christian imagination.

The Christian connections of alliterative verse cannot be neglected when we think about its modern revival. The Inklings, especially C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien, are as well known for their Christian as for their medievalist commitments. Among Tolkien's alliterative accomplishments, we must note his translations of *Pearl* and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* – sophisticated expressions of a Christian society, in a vernacular, 14th-century tongue descended from Cædmon's language, although much changed by the Norman conquest and by the passage of time. And there are quite a few Christian voices to be found in the modern alliterative revival, as can be confirmed by examining my site's pages for alliterative verse on Christian and Biblical themes.

The psalm is a poetic form that derives from the Hebrew Scriptures, and as such, is beloved of both Jews and Christians. As a poetic form, the psalm combines an act of public worship with the expression of deep personal feeling. Not all of the poems presented in this issue are Psalms, nor are all of them Christian, but all of them evoke a meditative, lyrical mode that remind me, at least, of King David's very personal psalmody.

I have arranged the poems in this issue into rough thematic groups. The first group consists of lyrical, reflective poems (Sarah Monnier's "Psalm for the Swing Set", Math Jones' "Song-form" and "Wyrd", D.A. Cooper's "On Odin's Journey", Tom Pain's "Song-singing", Eric Colbourn's "Among the Drumlins", Connor Wood's "What Fire Will Be", and Sean Patrick's "A Defence of Moby Dick".) The second group consists of poems in a meditative mode, mostly on explicitly religious themes (Steven Searcy, "Tree-Hymn", "Giver", "Spark", and "Tabernacle"; Jonathan Lovelace, "Advent Invocation"; Sean Patrick, Engineer's Prayer"; Lancelot Schaubert, "Automobile Fences", Jacob Riyeff, "On the Maker", and John C. Mannone, "Confession".) The third group mostly consists of psalms and psalm-like prayers (John C. Mannone, "A Lost Prayer", and "Not Only Rainbows"; myself, "Like a Tree Standing Tall [after Psalm 1] and "How many, how many [After Psalm 3]; two more versions of Psalm 1, by David Rowe and Donald T. Williams; D.A. Cooper, "I Raise My Voice"; Sean Patrick, "An Alliterative Psalm"; and Kathryn Ann Hill, "The Lord My Rock [Psalm 92] and "You Are Every Mighty and Faithful [Psalm 89]). Finally, I present two alliterative free verse poems by Jane Beal, "Bright waves from the wide Caribbean Sea" and "The Secret Life".

For those interested in such things, this issue shows a great deal of formal variety. A few of the poems attempt to imitate Old English alliterative verse closely (e.g., Williams' "Psalm 1") or Old Norse ljódahattr and *fornyrðislag* (Jones, "Song-form", "Wyrd", and "No Longer Treading"). Most of the remaining poems imitate the old Germanic meter, though without paying strict attention to Siewers types or certain other technical features. Steven Searcy's "Giver" carries out what is, in modern English, a technical tour de force – an alliterative poem entirely keyed to a single letter ("Giver"). John C. Mannone provides us with multiple experiments – an alliterative villanelle which is also a cento ("Confession"), and an alliterative poem with a daisy-chain rhyme scheme, reminescent of a Claire sonnet ("A Lost Prayer"). My two Psalm-inspired poems reflect a period when I was experimenting with split alliterative lines, which I combined with rhyming couplets at points of special emphasis.

This issue is well worth reading whether you value lyric, meditation, or devotional. I trust you will find it contains real food for thought.

Sarah J. Monnier

Psalm for the Swing Set

The gentle rocking · restfully slow and soft,
a patient pendulum, ponderous in its movements,
and a sunset · that sinks lower
with every exhale. Evenings in the fields,
sing, my soul, of the stars behind the light
that fills the firmament, not yet fallen into darkness.
Behind me blushes · a bank of rosy light,
the Belt of Venus, a vespers in color.

This is a kind calm · that closes in on me
in the stillness, in the sleeping,
whispering of what is · wondrous and yet
peaceful, the perfection · of a pause
in the chaos of kindred-full · chaos-full life.
Though all these things · are thrilling and joyful,
yet the yawning · and the yearning for rest
creeps up casually, a crepuscular demand
to be myself, meager and mild but whole.

Math Jones

Song-form

Agitation. Just arrived.
  Stop. We're staying here?
What's ongoing? Where's next?
  Something's passing. Peace.

Call it calm. Keep an eye.
  Make a quiet moment.
Water moves its way in spite.
  Let the onrush leave.

Stop and feel the frayed wind.
  You, the briar brushed.
Catching nothing. Keeping place.
  Road is resting now.

Still-point. Stasis. Steal the time,
  To drop behind, and drink.
Hold the panic, heart beats,
  feet slow faster.

There's no pursuit. Nor imperative.
  Legs are allowed to fold.
Someone's here to summon pause,
  collect the path you've come.

And while the world, whirling, dizzy,
  snatches breath, sneezes,
here's a soft tump, houses travellers,
  offers an end to the journey.

No Longer Treading

Each frenzied grain, every fibre
of a muscled being, made ready
to fly or fight, a flame poised
set to strike; such a body,

learning, at last, to loosen, into hold
of the soft earth, of sunshine too;
taking breaths, broader, deeper,
into shallow lungs; shall feel,

as a swimmer does, the swell beneath
of a broad bed, beckoning the foot
to leave the sea, to land safely,
and the cry of tired, all cares removed.

Tom Pain
Song-Singing

I was away
For your final breath, I found your soul
now song-singing. The sounds of mine
were mourning music, mind-torn grief.

Songs sent · sought your spirit.
Keep in company · and comfort
while walking · the winding road
My sounds softened, our sprits warming.

My sounds beside · your soul soaring.
Mirthful music · melancholy eased,
tracing the tracks · tread again.
All kind must keep, come their time.

Two tune-making, until it nears
the bridge bellowing, brook yelling.
No more I move; you must cross
to come upon kith · and kin long lost

Across the creek · I cannot follow.
Find yourself free · from all cares.
All bonds binding · are broken,
all bonds bound · are beaten.

The path you paced, for me placed:
I will trace tracks · that you tread.
So when my soul · singing-song,
hear and hearken; to me heed.

Across yon bridge, you wait for me.

Math Jones
Wyrd

Wyrd is simply
the way things are.
But how well do you know
the way things are?
It's worthwhile remembering
that weird as you feel,
you too are one
of the ways things are.[3]

D.A. Cooper
On Odin's Journey

With an opening line, it all begins:

We're formed when fire · and frost collide
deep inside · the soundless abyss.
We slay the giant, jealous of its strength,
then make the world · where men abide.

Our fear of futures, of fates decreed,
guides our path, picks our hour.
We steal the magic · of Suttung's mead,
and flood the world · with words of power.

Thought and Memory · mumble into our ear
the things they see, the stories they hear.
The baleful wolf · will be our bane,
our learning wasted, our wisdom vain.

We can't avoid · or evade our ends.

[3] **Author's note:** "one" and 'ways": Alliteration is not about looks.

Eric Colburn
Among the Drumlins

The trees growing in this glen, this glacial kettle,
stand like silent friends that scribble truth
from leaf to leaf, from age to slender youth.
These numberless notes, once written, and noted, will settle
into a rustling floor of red and yellow.
Lying below this lofty life, I love
the way the words so whispered sound above
my mind, the way they make the pell-mell... mellow.

Amid the million moving yellow leaves
sit slivers of a silent, still, blue sky.
Such self-sure shards of blue, slipped through, may show
that when the leaves have left, trees left will grieve
but watch a wider view, perhaps see why
the lost leaves grew, so many long lives ago.

Connor Wood
What Fire Will Be

Forth this fire strains and licks,
stretching shadows in glowing room,
greatly growing beyond my urge:
body and bones, flush and bloom.

For flame forges the link and the knife,
law of living descent to ash
that dooms to downward turn the skin,
takes our tendons and buries the flesh:

but burning brand for woven rhythm,
wildest wick in crackling touch,
carves the cradle's future, renders
flesh for flame, engendering much —

so gently gemlike embers flicker,
end of embrace but not of heat;
never not nourish spike of burn,
spend nor sputter, warmth of sheet

and where all wearing down of evening
dim bring dusk to home and room,
hearth still holds. Travels skin,
trough and touch, in landscapes soon

left to linger in common sleep
completing clasp of time and love;
tempering truth for passion burn,
pressing past organic groove

that orders outward to desiccation —
desire drift toward nothing that sees.
Now I know, body of flesh
and blood and breath, what fire will be:

flame refold for untold years
(until unlearned devouring urge):
devoted delight this song, this muse,
this single skin in which we merge.

Sean Patrick
A Defence of Moby Dick

At sea, where sent · the seething Ahab
his ship – and Ishmael, and she, to die –
and whither whales · have whipped the waves,
there goes a ghost · of great renown,
whom men call Moby · who makes his home
the deep – indeed, a demon-whale –
or thus said they. I think it fit,
that he who hunts · be haunted so,
for ghosts must go · where graves are dug.
Harpoons have power, calves pulled from cows
become his kind – killers of men.
The ocean owes · such offerings.

Steven Searcy

Tree-Hymn

The trees tower, telling the world
the strength of love, straight and true.
Widening slowly, the wooden chorus
rings a melody · to the maker, the king.
They lift new leaves, a living tribute,
holding them high · through heat and chill,
then cast down their crowns in praise.

Be still, my soul—stand and honor
the Lord like these, thankfully ceding
your treasure to him, our holy Father.

Giver[4]

Giver of every gulp,
of every good grin,
giver of green, of growth,
of gulls and gills,
gazelles and grapes,
great giver, mind-boggling,
prodigal, gleaming—
we glean a glimpse
of your grace and we guffaw,
gladly. You grant, and give,
and then you give and give still—
even to greedy grinches,
even to ungrateful grumps.
Good giver, golden,
gorgeous—your glory glows,
great God, and all good gifts
gush to us from you.

Spark[5]

Glow, gentle canticle,
in the endless ether—
ring radiant across
the radius of curse—
flow faster than lashes,
ride with rigid grasp.

The hollows gape
and holler as you flash
in the shallows, a holy
sheen holding steady—
they didn't know about you
and the new brine we breathe.

Tabernacle[6]

So that our weak and wounded eyes could know
the brilliant beauty blazing bright above
and not be burned or blinded by that light
which shines unceasing, God decides to show
himself in part so we might glimpse his love
in full—a veil reveals him to our sight.

Wonderful cloaking! Words cannot convey
the way the incandescent image dims.
He stoops to wrap himself in rags of skin,
to coat his gorgeous gleam in cracking clay.
He hides his holy glow in humble limbs
and meekly mingles in the mess of men.

He drops into our darkened world to dwell,
covert in carnal camouflage. He bends
to enter earth so we can see and hear
his grace. He welcomes pain to make us well.
Enfolded in frail flesh, our Lord descends—
look, look at how our kind king Christ comes near!

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[4] Originally published in *Below the Brightness* (Solum Literary Press, 2024)

[5] Originally published in *The North American Anglican* (2023) and in *Below the Brightness* (Solum Press, 2024)

[6] Originally published in *Ekstasis* (2023) and in *Below the Brightness* (Solum Literary Press, 2024)

Jonathan Lovelace
Advent Invocation

Weary already of winter,
and tired of too-early feasts,
forgetful and frantic by turns,
and tossed by the tumults of life—
Lord of all life, and Life come in flesh,
come build up our better nature,
the seed of your Spirit in us.
Awaken the world to your wisdom,
renewing poor wretches from ruin,
and teach us to treasure your truth.
As dawn makes the darkness diminish,
so send all our sorrows away—
Come quickly, all-conquering King!

Sean Patrick
Engineer's Prayer

O Lord, whose love · may lower expenses,
our patient patron · who paves our way,
assist us sinners, who sit on your Earth.
Lord, let your lessons · level the uneven;
let stones be stowed · and stigmas cleansed;
your power pour · upon the field
like concrete caps · that cover holes.
Lord, grant us grit · to grind away our sins,
and lend us leverage · to loosen screws.
You are the writer · of rigid requirements;
let all your asks · be answered promptly.
You make of marble · what was made of clay,
and engineer · the newest features.
O God, who governs · all good designs —
our knowledge ennoble, now and ever.

Lancelot Schaubert
Automobile Fences

The mist remade all the motley lights
of the night cruisers in their ninety cars
to so many shattered disco stars.
Pile ups don't happen overnight,
but they did then. The dark fog
rendering every little rider —
from fender bender to fractured soul
to mangled mother and mutilated trucker —
to a true disaster: ain't no stars
fixed anymore. So he foolishly left
his car to seek shelter. Might have been clipped.

He jogged through the magic of apparated junkyard
dodging the still oncoming "drivers"
until he came to the guardrail's cold
folded steel, feeling its curves
with bloody knees. Normally folks
find themselves crushed between fencerow
and hood ornament, harrowed by grill.

He saw the fog and started to climb
but providence — or proffer the term
you use for the transcendent — yearned him other:
he waited, still. The fog withered
and on the other side of the guard opened
the maw of the abyss. He pocked his mouth,
koi out of the graveyard's old koi pond.

A man once said, "If you stumble on a fence
and want to move it, walk away
and think for a while. If you can wonder and tell
me why it was made, what it was for,
I will consent to you sundering its trusses,
barbed wire and welded studs."

We Americans love moving guardrails
in the fog and pileups of our freezing night.

Jacob Riyeff

"On the Maker" ("The Wessobrunn Prayer")

I've learned this from wise ones, the greatest of wonders:
neither earth existed, nor heaven above,
neither plant nor mountain appeared—
not a single thing, nor did the sun shine,
neither did the moon glow, nor the glorious sea.
When there was only abyss, no bounds nor turnings,
then there existed only God Almighty,
the most merciful, and with him many others,
godly spirits. And God the Holy,
you the Almighty, made heaven and earth,
gave humankind so many good gifts!
Give me in your grace faith that is true,
a good will, wisdom and prudence,
power to resist ravaging devils
and evil to shun, your will to work.

Background Information:

The author of what is commonly referred to as "The Wessobrunn Prayer" is unknown, though likely a Carolingian monk. The work is largely in a Bavarian dialect of Old High German and is preserved in a single manuscript from Wessobrunn Abbey. The prayer is thought to be from the late eighth century and is one of the few Old High German poetic texts to be preserved with original intent by a bookmaker, rather than being added in a margin or spare manuscript leaf after a book was completed.

Translator's Note

The Wessobrunn Prayer is an early Germanic-language prayer that takes creation as its motivating theme. The first nine lines are clearly in the four-stress accentual meter common to early written Germanic verse. The rest, where the poem turns toward address and invocation, is often thought to be a shift into prose, though others think it's a looser metrical section or corrupted and can be emended to metrical form. I don't personally have a stake in the answer there but have chosen to take the whole as verse for the translation at least and used an emended text that leans toward this as well, though meter is still not always smooth.

After focusing almost solely on Old English for fifteen years or so, I've begun looking at Old Frisian, Old Norse, Old High German, and Old Saxon more, and I'm hoping to continue this branching out. Part of this desire, concerning the sojourn into Old High German in particular, stems from the fact that some of my ancestry on my mother's side goes back to Old High German-speaking areas of Germany, especially the Alemannic dialectal region.

Dat ⁎fregin[7] ih mit firahim firawizzo meista:
dat ero niwas noh ufhimil,
noh paum noh pereg niwas,
ni nohheinig noh sunna niscein,
noh mano niliuhta noh der marẹo seo.
Do dar niwiht niwas enteo niewenteo
7[8] do was der eino almahtico cot,
manno miltisto. 7 dar warun auh manake mit inan
cootlihhe geista. 7 cot heilac,
cot almahtico du himi 7 erda ⁎worahtos,
7 du mannun so manac coot for⁎pi:
forgip mir in dino ganada rehta galaupa
7 cotan willeon, wistom 7 spahida,
7 craft tiuflun za widarstantanne,
7 arc za piwisanne, 7 dinan willeon za ⁎wurchane.

[7] Rune used for Old High German prefix "ga-"

[8] Tironian note used for Old High German "enti" ("and").

John C. Mannone

Confession

Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputes not iniquity, and in whose spirit, there is no guile.

—Psalm 32

A Found Alliterative Villanelle[9]

Some still night when the stars were shrill[1]
glib questions multiplied at tongue's tip[2].
I should be sorry for this[3] but when the sun came[4]

touching the hills with a hot hand[4]
offering flowers[5], [you promised to answer my prayers]
some still night. [But the starts were shrill,

not with love but looking at it[6] [leaning askance].
In the thick tide of night[7], [my untied tongue lashed out].
I should be sorry for this but when the sun came

I had forsaken all but this poor basement of bone[8], [because]
the deep peace of wild places[9] [stumbled past me, past]
some still night, when the stars were shrill.

I came face to face with the proud priests and their intolerant look[10].
The air, a staircase for silence[11], [was heavy with solace].

[magnifying the] memory of a face forever setting[12] [fraught with]
silence, [while] holding with its gloved hand, the wild hawk of the mind[13],
I remembered. On some still night, when the stars were shrill,
I should've been sorry for this… then the Sun came.
[I remembered.]

I should be sorry for this but when the sun came

Poet's Notes

In lieu of end rhyme of a traditional villanelle, alliteration is used. This poem is almost a true *cento* (of the 186 words, 30 were added; however, T.S. Eliot unhesitatingly called some of his poems a cento even though he included many of his own words).

The structure and refrains of a villanelle, however, are kept. The citations of the mostly alliterative lines are footnoted and are from the works of the Welsh poet, R. S. Thomas (repeated *citations* reflect different portions of that poem were used, but repeated lines of the Villanelle are only cited for the first time of use). A few words have been added in brackets for additional alliterative effects and/or for the sake of clarity and rhythm. Words within a citation may have been changed slightly for pronoun consistency or tense consistency.

The villanelle form was chosen because whenever I hear the word villanelle, I immediately think of another Welsh poet, Dylan Thomas. The poem was also inspired by Psalm 32 in its entirety.

[9] **Citations to Poems by Dylan Thomas**: (1) "This," (2) "No," (3) "The Untamed," (4) "Walter Llywarch," (5) "Together," (6) "The Meeting," (7) "Evans," (8) "This," (9) "The Untamed," (10) "Indoors," (11) "Kneeling," (12) "Strangers," (13) "The Untamed"

Photograph by Steffano Suotto

Paul D. Deane
Like a Tree Standing Tall (After Psalm 1)[10]

O Lord, may we live like a tree standing tall
over waters that wash us, refresh us and feed us.
May Your grace keep us green with delight in Your law,
through famine, through fear, past danger, past drought.
Uphold us, Lord, for You are our root;
Prosper us, bless us, grant us fruit.

Then do not sit in the scoffer's seat
or stand at the side of men who mock
the law of God and leave what is good
to walk by the words of wicked men.
As light as chaff they blow away.
They have no root and cannot stay.

By day and by night may we draw near to Thee,
and meditate, mark every word of Thy will.
O God we have gathered, assembled to sing
in Thy presence, to praise Three, and crown Thee, our King!

The righteous will rise, their way I will watch
to pasture, protect them, to save them from sin.
But the way of the wicked will perish in pain
when truth like a howling hurricane
tears loose every lie by which they have lived.
As light as chaff they blow away.
They have no root and cannot slay.

O God, we have gathered, assembled to sing
in thy presence to praise Thee, and crown Thee, our King!

[10] Editor's note: I wrote this poem as part of a sequence of alliterative takes on some of the individual Psalms (Psalms 1-8) that I wrote between 1997 and 2000.

Photograph by Pavlo Prsytai

David Rowe
Psalm 1

Blessèd the believer · not blighted by the boastful:
A lover of the Law is he, apprentice to our Pastor.
Not standing with the sin-filled, nor sitting with the scornful;
A mind meditating · to know more of the Master.

A seed that is sown · in sight of its sustenance;
His growth shall be great; well-groomed his greenery.
Flourishing fruit, not failing nor flavourless;
Season after season · success fills the scenery.

The wicked waste away, their war won't be won;
They are chaff chucked out, and churned into chicken feed.
The unjust suffer justice, rejected by the Judge;
Sinners cannot stand · in the sacred assembly.

The immoral reach their end;
Evil exits the story,
But God knows the good,
And guides them on to glory.

Donald T. Williams

Psalm I

Happy is he · who has not walked
in godless roads · nor gone to stand
in stile of sinners, seeking evil.
Sit he hath not · in scorner's seat
beguiling the witless. But his delight
is in his liege-Lord, the Law, moreover,
the words of His mouth. Whatsoever
words Lord speaketh · will thane heed:
These thoughts he thinketh · than all others more,
by sunlight and moonlight · searching their meanings,
adding to word-hoard · and to his stature.
A tree shall he be, towering, strong,
watered by rivers · of water sweet.
Fruit shall he bring · forth in his season,
precious produce, pleasing his master.
His leaf shall be green, his life shall not wither,
and all that he doeth · ever shall prosper,
blessed by his Lord. But the ungodly
so shall not be. Sifted are they
like chaff in the wind; chastisement just
is then their lot. Thus in the judgment
down shall they fall, nor dare they approach
the chosen people, church of fair Jesu.
The brightness of glory · would blind their eyes,
so long used to darkness. The Lord doth know
the Way of the righteous, and walketh Himself
therein with his servants, than all lords ever
the noblest of noble, knowing His thanes
as if they were sons. But in the way
where tread the ungodly · He turns not His face;
They will not receive Him · and thus walk in darkness,
servants of serpents · and sick to the death,
Forever they perish. Forsake not these words!

John C. Mannone

A Lost Prayer[11]

The ground and grass have gone dry for months
and a snarl of roots strangle the rocky hill.

And the unashamed sheep bleat their shrill
and hopeless cries for food that I have failed

to serve. What silence, this shepherd in Wales
must endure? Many months have gone by.

Depressed knees dig dry dirt, arms ditched to sky,
I pray louder than before; barter pride for hope.

Dear Holy Father in heaven, how are we to cope
with this ravaging hunger that roams around, seeks

whom or what it can devour; when will you speak
to me? Silence stays. *Have you nothing to say?*

For a grim, graceless moment, the sky is full of gray.
But then, the heavens flash; clouds clash before cracking

with recalcitrant rain, a rollick that mocks my lacking
faith. Even the rocks stand resolute, firm as altar stones.

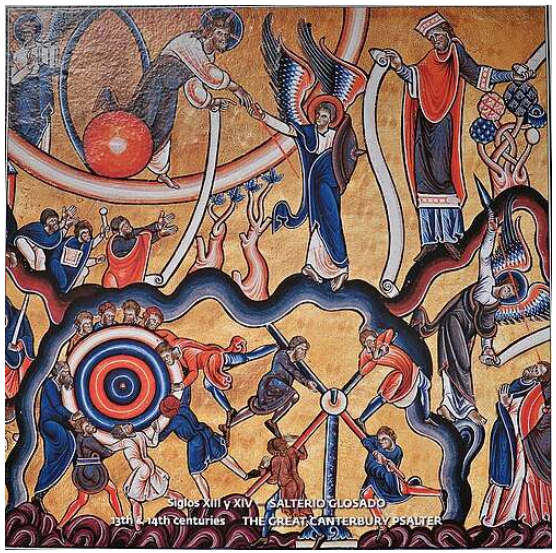
[11] The poem, a psalm-like prayer, was inspired by the Welsh poet, R. S. Thomas, who had a heart for the farmers. During his lifetime (1913-2000), there were several severe droughts affecting Wales, most notably a 16-month-long Standpipe Drought (1975-1976). It is written mostly in alliterative accentual verse (~4 stresses/line) with a daisy-chain rhyme scheme of *ab bc cd de ef gh ia*, which has rhyme similarities to that of the Claire sonnet and in the final couplet, repeats the rhyme of the beginning line (in the spirit of a Duplex sonnet).

D.A. Cooper
I Raise My Voice

My soul delights · in the Lord my God
as I contemplate continually · his everlasting kindness.
But despite his goodness, my spirit grieves;
notwithstanding his many · marvelous works,
misery rules me, o wretched man!
My heart sorrows, my soul suffers—
encircled by temptation, surrounded by sin;
hounded by wickedness, hemmed in by wrongdoing.
But through troubles and trials, I trust my God.
He sustains me in the wilderness, guides me in the waste;
he brings me over the waters · of the bottomless abyss;
he fills me with his love · until my flesh is consumed;
he confounds my enemies · and causes them to flee.
I raise my voice · to the rock of my righteousness.

My soul delights · in the Lord my God.
By day he hears · my hopeful pleas;
by night he visits me · in visions and dreams;
his angels minister to me, answering my prayers.
His spirit carries me · up to his sacred mountain—
I have seen his glory, beheld his greatness.
God is good, gracious, merciful—
so why does my soul stay · in sorrow's valley?
Why do I concede to temptation, give in to sin,
allow my enemy · to linger in my heart,
to destroy my serenity, to distress my peace?
Awake, my soul, and cease to weep!
Rejoice, and praise · my pillar, my support.
I raise my voice · to the rock of my righteousness.

My soul delights · in the Lord my God.
O Lord, save me, shield my soul
from temptation's call, and close the gates
of hell continuously before me. My heart is broken,
my spirit is contrite. Don't seal the gates
to your holy righteousness, of your perfect rectitude,
for I walk in your path, on your plain road.
O Lord, wrap me · in the robe of your righteousness!
Help me to flee, to escape from my foes;
ease my flight, free the way before me.
I trust in you always, not in the arm of flesh;
you are merciful and generous, you are gentle and kind;
when I ask, you give, when I knock, you open.
I raise my voice · to the rock of my righteousness.



From the Great Canterbury Psalter

John C. Mannone
Not Only Rainbows
A psalm to the chief Poet

When sunset gold spreads over the platinum river,
there's a mysterious magic in the near twilled twilight,

everything dissolves during those dire moments,
even vats of vicious worries that have vilified the night.
It's not only rain-bled rainbows that relieve despair
—their shadows surely filling sultry souls with promise.
It was true for Noah's wooden ark when dark clouds
broke and billowed seas with rain and wind before
his vessel moored on Armenian mountains— rocks
gripping the great hull in the grievous foundering,
yet not breaking the bleak vessel in the battering.

When my dreadful deluge came, deepening waters
roiled. My ramparts razed for so much longer than
forty days, heart pounding; prayer, my only parapet
keeping me from going down, drowning in depression.
At first, I had no faith I would survive the fathoms.
I languished out loud my longing, *Where is my refuge*?
In spite of blindness, I saw. The scales from my eyes
fell; I trusted my unfailing faith to save me, to fix firm
my anchor, the Rock of my salvation who shatters not
my soul.

When sunrise gold quilts the calmed silvered waters,
there's a heroic hope in the near desperate dawn.

Selah.

Photograph by Marty Tow (National Park Service)

Sean Patrick
An Alliterative Psalm

They shall be shielded · who share their God,
who kneel and know · all needs are His.
They will be wintered · in wisdom who listen
and steer the stranger · to stay with them.
Their crops will be kept · by the kingdom of heaven.
Who casts a curse · shall curl and die;
who speaks aspersions, their spirit wilt.
Let he who withholds · be halved in virtue,
and he who helps · be halved in sin.
Many were made · and many shall die;
and few the friends · misfortune may make.
And God has given · a garden of fruit
whose vines provide · unevenly.
But he whose harvest · is halved by giving,
will be beloved · and blessed by God.
Therefore befriend · and feed the stranger,
for none are unknown · in the nave of heaven.

Paul D. Deane
How Many, How Many (After Psalm 3)[12]

How may, how many, how many, Lord
are all of the enemies after my life!
They mock me, they make me the fool of their mirth:
'His God has forgotten, he will fall in or grasp,'
they gloat.

But God is my shelter, the shield that surrounds me,
whose presence around me keeps peril away.
I glory in Him who lifts up my head,
who hears my cry from his holy hill
and saves.

Though ten thousand enemies trample the land,
though hated and hunted, though helpless and lost,
I lie down to rest, I rise up secure --
His power sustains me through prayer free
of fear.

Lord, rise to their challenge with champion's strength!
Like a boxer, batter them senseless and break
the pride of the godless till their power is gone!
For no one can match the might of my God!

Our God is protection, salvation and joy,
and grants us true blessings, His grace to enjoy.

[12] Editor's note: I wrote this poem as part of a sequence of alliterative takes on some of the individual Psalms (Psalms 1-8) that I wrote between 1997 and 2000.

Kathryn Ann Hill
The Lord My Rock (Psalm 92 in Alliterative Verse)[13]

It is good to give thanks to You, Lord God,
to magnify the name of the Most High;
to declare Your tender care in the morning,
and every night make known Your faithfulness,
to the pleasing sounds of the plucked lyre
and the lush harp and the lilting lute.

For Your great works, O God, have made me glad;
my heart triumphs at Your handiwork.
How mighty are Your deeds, how deep Your thoughts!
The dull and stupid do not understand
that though the wicked sprout and spring up like grass,
and evildoers burgeon and blossom awhile,
they are all doomed to eternal death.

But You are forever on high, O Holy Lord.
Surely Your enemies shall perish from the earth,
and the workers of evil shall all be scattered.

You have given me awesome strength like a wild ox;
You have favored and honored me with the finest ointment.
My eyes have seen the downfall of my dreaded foes;
my ears have heard the rout of my unrighteous rivals.

Righteous ones shall prosper like a palm tree;
like a lordly cedar, they shall live long;
in the temple grounds, they shall grow tall.

Even when old, they shall all bear fruit;
full of sap and green, they shall say of God:
"The Lord my Rock is righteous and sure,
sturdy and just, faithful and strong."

[13] **A Poem for St. Mark, Evangelist, April 25.** Psalm 92 is also read on the Tenth Sunday after Trinity.

Kathryn Ann Hill

You Are Ever Mighty and Ever Faithful

(Psalm 89:1-18 in Alliterative Verse)[14]

I will ever laud Your endless love,
O Lord, my God of great mercy.
My mouth will declare Your faithful kindness
to all generations, O righteous Lord.
For Your steadfast love was always established;
Your holy faithfulness is firm in the heavens.

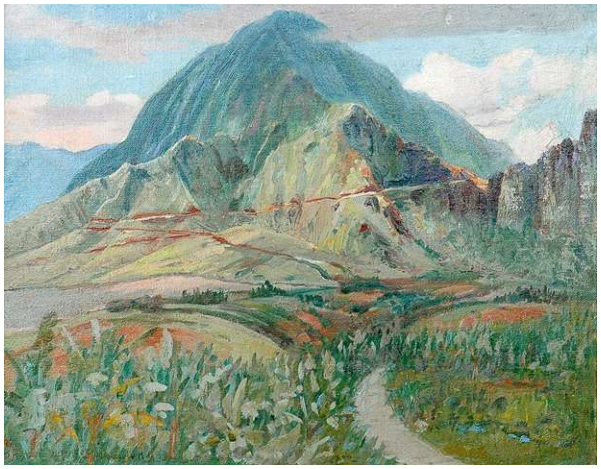
You swore to David, Your chosen servant,
"I will establish your line to live forever,
and fix your throne firmly through the ages."

The heavens praise Your holy wonders;
the saints assemble and sing with joy
for Your faithful constant abiding care.
For who in heaven compares to the Holy Lord?
What angel can be likened to the Lord God?
When the holy ones meet, they fear His majesty;
they surround His throne in reverent awe.
O Lord of hosts in the highest heavens,
You are ever mighty and ever faithful.

O Lord, You rule the raging sea;
by the word of Your mouth, You still its waves.
You have crushed Rahab like a rotted carcass;
You have scattered Your enemies with Your strong arm.

The heavens are Yours, and Yours the earth;
You have filled the world with wondrous creatures.
You conceived and birthed the north and south;
Tabor and Hermon, those towering mountains,
magnify Your name with all their might.
Your arm is mighty in all Your acts,
and Your right hand is lifted high.

Justice and judgment are joined at Your throne;
mercy and truth are Your twin attendants.
Blest are the feasters in their festal shouts;
the light of Your face illuminates their walk.
They exult in Your name from morn till night;
their reverent joy extolls Your righteousness.
Your awesome glory arms their victory;
Your favor to their king kindles their praise.
For our shield belongs to the Lord our God;
our king lives to serve our Holy Savior.



The Pali by D. Howard Hitchcock, 1861–1943. {{pd-us}}

[14] Psalm 89 is the Introit Psalm for the Feast of St. Philip and St. James, May 1; and the Feast of St. Peter and St. Paul, June 29.

Jane Beal

Bright waves from the wide Caribbean Sea
rush onto the sand under the shining sun:
see how the translucent turquoise froths and tumbles
down, turning around toward the roots of the palm trees!

Two palm trees stand praying,
leaning like lovers,
the one against the other,
just two friends speaking softly through their fronds –

lay down under their loveliness,
and remember the romance
of growing up together, gathering
memories like melodies for a new song –

the present is touching the past –

hear me, beloved, with your heart,
and though far away, be not afraid!
In the time of fasting, hold fast, because together
or apart, our promise, like a white pearl, still persists –

gleaming in the days of silence, when delight endures,
or shining in the sweet darkness of the night
when hunger awakens the human heart
so that our eyes open, and regard the iguana,

who has made his weird way onto the windowsill
of our Imaginarium of words and wills, whether
mine, yours, or the Divine, Who bends over the years, and
wipes away the tears, knowing even our secret wishes and fears –

return to me in righteousness!

Now open your window and look within at the waves:
look again, beloved, at these two Living Trees,
two trembling souls in terrible darkness
when the Light finds them on the edge of forever.

Wild it is to take refuge in the wilderness of dreams,
unfolding faster than Truth or Time,
but here will I content myself in ekphrastic contemplation
until you answer my prayers in my arms.

Make me brook no delay, but answer my prayers
in my arms, beloved, answer me: it is
your voice that my love longs to hear, verily,
whispering in the Wind that whistles from
the southeast to the true Northwest.

Friendship

Jane Beal

The Secret Life

I heard you whisper in the womb
I came into being in your breath
I split into existence at the sound
Then together, like a decrescendo,
we glided down

From one, there were two, then four, then eight
As your Spirit sang the melody line in my cells
Sustaining the c-note, grounding the g
Affirming the a, and then, impossibly,
--in the octave of heaven--you sang the t

Your still, small voiceprint formed my flesh
And found a home for me in my mother's womb
In the fluid darkness, in the fulminating water
I heard your heart, then hers, then mine
    and all three together, beating, kept time

That percussion, those three drums, pounded
Out the rhythm of my blood
The blood! The blood! The blood!
A surging symphony in the memory of my blood
    of the weeping worship of the angels – tears and dust make mud –

Here I am!

You sang our chorus over and over again
So there was one finger, then five, then ten
You murmured softly when you made my mouth
I turned in the tune, you told out the number of my toes
    We touched eternity through mortality – my mother knows –

Here I am!

My eyelids flutter in response to the vibration of your vocal cords,
her vocal chords, mine
The timbre and the tone resonate in all my sinews

And drift into all my dreams
I begin to learn language, the lyrics of your love,
the Word, heard

Hidden in the secret dark, you sing faster
You quicken the time as I quicken inside, kicking inside—
A womb within a womb,
my own seed seeded inside of me before I'm even born—
    And birth is coming like the morn

I can breathe the water! The living water sings inside of me
My lungs are full of the rushing-rushing Spirit of Life
I sing out through the flow
My cry fills the water as, at last, I answer your song –
    Your song, O Maker of Marvels, at dawn!

There's a crescendo coming in the refrain
There's a yet-to-be lullaby of pain
You intimate the future in a carefully conducted contraction
—she gasps, I gasp—we ask after the last movement of your making
    Aching in the bars of this bass clef line

Then all the music and the water and the blood, spilling out, sings down
And she is crying, and I am screaming ...
While my angel, standing before you,
Sings the report, humming the translation
    Of my human cry before your heavenly throne

Here I am!

My father holds me in the hush
I forget the song of passage I passed through
But the memory is deep, so deep, in the DNA
That I can never forget you:
    Music-Maker, Heart's Creator
    The Singer who was, and is, and will be

Alive in me from my very first day.

Publications Noted

Articles, Reviews, Discussions on Blogs, other Web Resources

- A Unique "Bawdy Bard" Act – Researchers Discover Extremely Rare Forms of Medieval Literature in a 15th-Century Manuscript
- Electronic Archive for "The Siege of Jerusalem"
- LLM Poetry and the Greatness Question; note by Hollis Robbins
- Long alliterative poem by Christopher Paolini in the works
- Lyrics for the metal band, "Wiederganger" (in German)
- Skaldic Poetry of the Middle Ages (vol. 5) available online
- Story of a Poet: An Interview with Emma Robinson

Poem and Book Links Added

- Kelly White Arnold, Penelope, in *Stone Circle Review*
- Adam Bolivar, Jack's Land, in *Eternal Haunted Summer*
- Millicent Caliban, In A Handbag in *The American Scholar*
- Eric Colbourn, Untidy and Simple in *Poems for Persons of Interest*
- Joseph Charles Mackenzie, Dunblane Cathedral, *Society of Classical Poets*
- Kathryn Ann Hill, As With One Mouth (*FGR*)
- Robert F. Kauffman, *The Mask of Olock* (Excerpt here)
- Cosette E. Larke, "Songs of Sun and Stars", in Andrea Yenn (ed.), *Firefly Tales*. S.E. Collaborative Guild of Authors and Artists, 2025, pp. 373-387
- Amit Majmudar, Me Tangere, in *Nimrod* (Winter, 2026).
- Benjamin *Myers*, Retirement, *in New Verse Review.*
- Dorothy Nielsen, Presentation (*FGR*)
- Dave Oliver, *Beowulf: Age of Poems* (Handiwork Games).
- Rachel Marie Patterson, "Vasospasm", in the Fall, 2022 issue of *Carve Magazine*
- Robert Rendall, "Shore Tully: An experiment in Scaldic metre" (modern Scots poem) in his *Collected Poems*

Links to Online Performances and Translations

- Jason Green, A Class Assignment Declaimed in Alliterative Verse
- Match Hutchinson, *Beowulf* (alliterative translation)

Poems Posted on Blogs & Social Media

Published under the Author's Real Name

- Ashley Bardhan, Le Mort d'Amelia
- Matt Becker, Strix Aluco
- Daniel Bishop, Brim-Tongue
- Laura Bloomsbury, Aftermath of an Affair
- Eric Colbourn, Imperfect (alliterative sonnet)
- Tony Fawcus, Whale Dreaming
- Brenda Davis Harsham, White Wakerobin: Alliterative Haiku
- Nik Hoffman, The Epitaph of Zoomer Methusaleh
- Margaret Fleming, Morning Mixture
- Ronald C. Flores-Gunkle, Cosmos: An alliterative admiration
- Timothy Green, Abandoned Couch
- James Hart, "We're awash with worry ..." and "Brother bear still beckons..."
- Peter J. King, Recollections of a Byzantine Official
- Jack Laurel, An Alliterative Iliad, Part 1 and Part 2
- Jonathan Lovelace, Christmas Marvels
- Jeff Reed, The Dream of the Old Proctor Lynching Tree
- Susan Delaney Spear, An Inkling of Reality
- Jeff Sypeck, The Radish
- Mac Thomason, Braves Saga at bravesjournal.com

Posted under Pseudonyms on Blogs and Social Media

- Aru Guix, "The trot of the train ..."
- Darth Strix, The Old Tongue
- Deor, Haunted Hunters
- Hazelofthewoodland, A Message for My Master
- Interesting_Hat_7526, Ulysses (Opening of the Odyssey)
- Pineleaf Needles, An Alliterative poem based on of the epic story line from The Lord of the Rings Online
- Qyrella Aronen, The Old Tongue
- Rio_Wulfmare, Children of Dusk
- Saga of Tyrdda Bright-Axe, Avvar-Mother on Dragon Age Wiki
- The Red Thread, The King in the Circular Court

Call for Submissions

The Spring, 2026 issue of Forgotten Ground Regained is open for submissions. I am especially interested in alliterative poetry on the theme, "Moments Sensed and Seen". Submissions should be sent to Paul D. Deane at the following email address: pdeane@alliteration.net by **April 1, 2026.**

Note that topics have been set for the next three issues, though submissions are currently open only for the Spring issue:

- **Spring, 2026**: Moments Sensed and Seen
- **Summer, 2026**: Alliterative Verse in Arda [Middle Earth]
- **Fall, 2026**: Speculative Visions

Form and Content

- **Submissions must make skillful, systematic use of alliteration in ways that use alliteration to reinforce the rhythm and connect important ideas.** Overall, I prefer poems that have a stronger impact on readers when they are read aloud. I therefore encourage authors to include links to audio or video versions of their poems in their submissions.
- **Submissions must be in modern English**, but authors should feel free to submit poems that take advantage of the diction, rhythms, and syntax of particular language varieties and communities. I do not discriminate against Scots, Appalachian English, Black English Vernacular, Indian English, or any other variety of English, though I do ask that authors be prepared to supply notes to explain any terms or expressions that outsiders to their communities may not readily understand.
- **I will not publish metrical poetry or free verse that does not make systematic, structural use of alliteration.** I would love to see people experimenting with modern English versions of Old and Middle English alliterative verse, with Old Norse forms like *ljoðahattr* and *drottkvætt* or modern Icelandic *rimur*, or with new alliterative forms designed to highlight modern English rhythms and speech patterns. While my first preference is what traditional scholarship calls alliterative-accentual verse, I am also open to alliterative free verse or to alliterative versions of traditional forms, such as the ballad, as long as the alliteration is clearly a structural rather than a decorative feature of the form. Note that I love both the lyrical and the narrative turns in poetry, so longer narratives will be given careful consideration.
- I am open to contemporary poetry and to projects that would normally be considered to fall outside the literary mainstream, such as speculative poetry, SCA Bardic Arts projects, and fan fiction.

Editorial Policies

- I accept simultaneous submissions but require authors to notify me in a timely fashion if a work is accepted elsewhere. I reserve the right to withdraw acceptance if a work has been accepted or published elsewhere without my knowledge.
- I am not able to offer payment for publication. However, authors retain all rights (except, of course, for granting me a non-exclusive right to publish their work on alliteration.net).
- There is no hard upper length limit, though poems more than five to six pages in length are likely to be published separately on the website, with links provided from the Winter issue, rather than being included directly in the pdf magazine.
- I will consider reprints but am far more likely to link to them (if published online) or to publish them directly on the site than I am to publish them in one of the quarterly issues.
- As editor, I have final say on any and all issues of copyediting, formatting, punctuation, layout, illustration, and the like. I will endeavor to take an author's wishes into account, but in any cases where the author and I cannot reach agreement, they have the choice either to accept my decisions or to withdraw their work from publication in this journal.
- It should not be necessary to state this, but in the age of generative AI, it is best to be explicit. I expect submissions to be entirely the author's work. If a work has benefited in any way from reference to generative AI, I expect the author to provide logs of all interactions, both prompts and AI responses, so that I can judge whether a poem is the author's authentic creation.