

Glasnevin, Oct. 2007
On visiting Gerard Manley Hopkins' grave

Is this truly where you lie
typhoid struck
below un-coffin-forming
yew and holly and redwood
new among ancient roots?

On this chill and bright
homage-paying day
above your grave
mushrooms, massed, ooze ink
to pen your elegy.

Your words your stygian chrisem
bless and mark us all
with light and shade
in Christ and in desire
through ecstasy and death.

Yet they're edible at first
before the ink appears
a déjeuner sur l'herbe
served up here direct
by Fr. G.M. Hopkins S.J.,
host

Robert E. McGowan

La Fiesta:
La Peñita De Jaltemba, Mexico, New Year's Eve 2006

Two hours in amid the lights
Beside the three deep bar
Pozole tamales rice and flan
Still fill the *mesas*

Spent replete in need of sleep
We quit the party early
Retire to our b and b
High upon the basaltic bluff

This year's last full moon
Strews sintered silver
From bay shore below
Far as the world's edge

Beside us to the south
Behind the beach
The sea is swallowing a graveyard
Now half consumed

Some white sarcophagi and crosses
And statues of the Holy Mother
And Christ and plastic flowers
In red yellow and blue remain

While bayside graves the hurricane exposed
Brick and concrete tetrahedrons
Lie like boats aground
Derelict and atilt

Tonight from gusts
And seasonal high tides
Hungry waves lick the tombs
Tile shards and rosaries on the sand

Rocks crack and boom on crypts
Admonishing the guests: Sra. Gomez and
Garcias, Frias, Venturas and Cortez
Recuerdo de sus padres y hermanos

Crack no sleep this nuevo año
Boom come out rejoin the feast
¡Pruebe! like the living
You could try perhaps the crabs

Robert E. McGowan

Uncle Art

Pale hatchet faced
Uncle Art
from Chicago
worked in abrasives
until retiring
to a trailer park
lined with royal palms

messy things he said
dropping fronds all over
walks and lawns
so he cut his two down

Jesus Christ
he laughed
my neighbors were
all pissed as hell

no wonder no one
there strewed
branches
in his path
but some may have sung
hosannas
when he passed

Robert E. McGowan

Spell check

Critiqueing

Change

Critiquing

Buxtehude

Ignore

Danemark

Ignore all

Musik

Suggestions

Music

Musk

Change all

Passacalia

Options

Passacaglia

Add

Bach

Resume

Close

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**Fire Proof:
New Orleans, Sept. 1873**

my hand hue'd certificate
from a garden district
curio shop shows
red and white pump wagon

hose carriage and grey smoke
in this foxed gravure
specks look like ash
from a building up in flames

not our stationary (sic) store
just one door down where
firemen save our paper
in boxes and in bales

and where on our behalf
way up a ladder one reaches
toward a blue-winged angel
who's handing him a scroll

this very contract
with station number five
assures incendiary fate
strike elsewhere down the block

documents god's policy
to save us not from water
but from fire next time providing
one has paperwork in hand

poetry final

Alex Grant

[1]

Describe the sound when a penny drops into a wishing-well. Consider the relevance of the following factors: acoustics, knowledge of wells, odds of fulfillment, presence of stars. To be written from the coin's point of view.

[2]

Imagine gravity traded as a commodity. From a bird's perspective, make a case for public ownership, apportioned by weight. Set on an uninhabited island.

[3]

Explain the attraction of the moon. In no more than thirty-two lines, suggest a new name for the number zero. Combine the responses in a 12-line pantoum.

[4]

Establish a seamless association between the following: an executioner's birthday party, fractal geometry, attention deficit disorder. Result must be tacitly non-judgmental, and be suitable for a sixth-grade audience.

[5]

Bonus question—substantiate your findings.

With permission from Alex Grant

*Response to Alex Grant's
Poetry Final*

How Much Time Do We Have?

1.

She thought of him and
Threw me
Down the rocklined hole

Head, tail, head, tail
Blip-ip-ipp
Onto Orion's spear

2.

Here's the deal
Each according to his mass
Is for the birds

In other words
It's good to be a dodo
Until the dogs arrive

3.

Oceans find the moon attractive
They like its pull
Its white all-color light
Where om is for naught

They like its pull
Over lovers on the sand
Where om is for naught
And everything is light

Over lovers on the sand
Where om is for naught
And everything is light
Oceans find the moon attractive.

4.

A butterfly landed on the tumbrel
Changing its direction
Breaking a piñata that
Where was I now
Like the guest of honor
Spilled its insides

5.

My findings are based on
Testimony by expert witness
Aka poet

Robert E. McGowan