

# Segue

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online literary journal

## RICH MURPHY



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*Segue* is published once a year in August. We accept submissions of high quality fiction, poetry, and creative nonfiction between January 1 and April 30 (closed May through December), and writing about writing year-round via email. Before submitting, please read past issues to understand the sort of work we publish, then read our submission guidelines.

Segue

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# CONTENTS

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Mireland Exile	4
Double-Vision	5
Persistent Resistance	6
Author Notes	7

## Mireland Exile

The nets of religion, nation, and language,  
cast by villagers hungry for security, snare  
dolphins, swans, and Stephen Daedalus.  
Ernest, the priest gone novelist, can't escape

a book's bathroom epiphanies that note  
the rusting of his pump. Leopold Bloom  
inhabits every body around himself  
only under the cover of empathy to avoid

the cross hairs of a culture and nature.  
Chimera, who lives to eat its own vomit  
and would have loved the Dodgers  
as it does everyone else in the brothel,

misquotes to survive the hardships beyond  
the lotus eaters. PrrPrr: The god who is not  
in service to character makes do with shapes  
until the reader's laughter runs down cheeks.

## Double-Vision

The crows and their scare, a golden bird,  
negotiate over their field of corn. The kernel  
by kernel pecking order rap love songs  
against the inherited destitution, ensuring

a glazed red wheelbarrow another day.  
The fowl of the silver spoon, stuffed with  
the hay of a human, mimics Christ, the sun,  
while harvesting literacy's richest and most

distant rows. Flapping the permanency  
privilege, the menace of the airwaves perform  
their Icarus while precious metal plugs  
the ears of princes with history's lessons

of highs and lows. The flock scatters when  
the heir of air perches on its limbs, its only  
gift, the round about way to the sublime.  
The direct route to the trailer park or slum

pans resources that the emperors waste.

## Persistent Resistance

The reports from behind enemy lines  
either dictated bodies dead  
or described heritage disinherited.  
Propaganda stepped over the villagers  
one by one without recognizing the triggered  
tongue in cheeks mowing down glory.  
The unfortunate will left everything to will.  
No parachute dropped the disappointment  
and exclamation points that would have eased  
promises and abandonment  
for the partisan underground aiming to spook:  
Oxymoron after oxymoron blitzed with farm tools.  
Bunkers and root cellars blossomed  
into craters: Cogito, cogito.  
The witness pointing a gun and a pen at paper  
subverted with irony and a steely stealth.  
Utopian privileges ricocheted  
surprising heirs in the identity crisis,  
so sarcasm spasms infected the futile soil.  
Rejecting the launch, trajectory, and news  
to this day, the voice without lips suspends  
rhythms where blintz poets used to make love,  
mimicking with hyperbolic invectives in safe zones.  
Contemptuous columns mock  
the sure-footed world legislators  
who crack spines to hold power in place.

## Author Notes

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*Rich Murphy's credits include the 2008 Gival Press Poetry Award for Voyeur; a first book, The Apple in the Monkey Tree; chapbooks, Great Grandfather, Family Secret, Hunting and Pecking, Rescue Lines, and Phoems for Mobile Vices; poems in Rolling Stone, Poetry, Grand Street, Trespass, New Letters, Pank, Segue, Big Bridge, Pemmican, War, Literature and the Arts, and Confrontation; and essays in The International Journal of the Humanities, Fringe, Journal of Ecocriticism, Folly Magazine, among others. Rich lives in Marblehead, MA.*

### About the Work

The Nietzschean idea of the mind of Europe led Paul Valery in 1919 to psychoanalyze the collective mind of Europe in his essay “Crisis of the Mind.” He blames the “disorder on the mind” of Europe for the war(s), suggesting that it would bring down the European civilization. His diagnosis included “[t]he free coexistence, in all her cultivated minds, of the most dissimilar ideas, the most contradictory principles of life and learning. That is characteristic of a *modern* epoch” (98). With the war to end all wars past and WWII just down the road, our hindsight suggests his letter prescient.

Later in 1929 Freud in *Civilization and Its Discontents* would suggest that the mind of Europe has a very extensive memory when he suggests that Rome is a kind of palimpsest: “Let us, by flight of imagination, suppose that Rome is ... a psychical entity with a similarly long and copious past—and entity, that is to say, in which nothing that has once come into existence will have passed away and all the earlier phases of development continue to exist alongside the latest one” (44).

Taken from different position the idea of the mind of Europe not only had deep historical roots going back to ancient Greece but its influence was felt in its European colonies whether the colonialists liked it or not. Critics such as Northrop Frye planted doubt in the idea of an original American literature. He granted the possibility of originality while also pointing out similarities in writers such as Homer. And Hart Crane may have been trying to build a Brooklyn Bridge to Europe and back for traffic in both directions but never could lay the foundation of the work. So while W.C. Williams was throwing a tub of English connotations out on a Saturday night in America, other North American writers and thinkers thought there may be a baby in the bath water.

The Nietzschean idea of the mind of Europe may then possibly have broad implications and applications. My recent poems (these included) are meant to belong to one of two collections in which I channel voices from the twentieth Century in Europe and the USA; reply to “contradictions,” influences, and other “psychical entit[ies];” and comment on affinities as an American poet who thinks of himself as living in a postmodern epoch, free from inferiority complexes. I may find that my next collections of poems are not bridges to Europe but a search in the backyard for a baby.

Freud, Sigmund. *Civilization and Its Discontents*. Trans. James Strachey. W.W. Norton & Co., New York, New York: 2005.

Valery, Paul. “The Crisis of the Mind,” *Paul Valery: An Anthology*. Ed. James R Lawler, Bollingen Series XLV.A Princeton: Princeton U Press, 1977.

## Rich Murphy on the Web

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