

Segue

online literary journal

IAN
HAIGHT



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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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Living in This World

Smoky thoughts
lull the candle
of the body.

In feeble night
weary eye
lash fluttering,
flashes from a dim crevice—

horizons
with dim purple streaks
from a dull
seen as such
sun.

Miasma

I: Awake in Day

Below on the street, eyes
straight and glassy
a woman walks the summer
street of tar. She works from rage
that subsides with exhaustion
of night. Prone
on the oil-slicked road, pale
teats flat, eyes bled,
dead, a dog stares.

II: Watching TV

Gorilla heads, piled
with their mouths open
seem to laugh in falling rain
that withers into pools
where worms lie
in smiling curves. Men's shaved
and bereted heads shoot
the flesh heap. While I stare at static,
somewhere, deer leap
through grassy fields
under the moon.

III: As I Cook Dinner

The doorbell chimes.
A thin man holds a sunflowery
dish of butterscotch candy, bows,
asks if my birthday
is today. Wind pricks
my arms. The TV drones
awfully gentle

Moving On

I plant
little seeds
in a cultivated
field
of cleft mountain.

Grass
at an ankle's height
shiffle purrs, breezing wind
lifts
any cooled warmth.

In this shading oak
held moment
there is no knowing.

Author Notes

*Ian Haight has been awarded translation grants from the Daesan Foundation, Korea Literary Translation Institute, and the Baroboin Buddhist Foundation. He is the co-translator of *Borderland Roads: Selected Poems of Kyun Ho (White Pine, 2009)*. His poems were awarded the John Woods Scholarship, and were selected as finalists for the Pavel Strut and SLS fellowships. Poems, essays, and translations appear in Barrow Street, Writer's Chronicle, and New Orleans Review.*

About the Work

There's nothing too magical or mysterious about how I became interested in poetry. I think I liked writing haiku as it was introduced to me in elementary school. I lived in what was then a small farm town and came from a family that placed a high value on respect and admiration for the natural world. I liked the idea of making images I had a reverence for conform to a formal structure.

In my early college years I was smitten with romantic impulses, and studying the Romantics suited me well. Add to this I've always been interested in "the spiritual" or mysticism. The same holds true for meditation. The idea of bringing all these interests into language and a discipline of art was inspirational to me, and I began to consider seriously writing poetry.

"Living in This World" is a poem I wrote approximately twelve years ago, based on notes I wrote thirteen or fourteen years ago (?). It was inspired by a point of view derived from what happens in meditation. "Moving On" was written around the same time, perhaps a little earlier. It was inspired by my desire to be successful with my meditation/spiritual practice. Both poems went through at least twenty revisions, but looking over what past copies are readily available, the changes were fairly minor and involved the loss of clichés and abstractions.

"Miasma" is the oldest of the three, starting from notes I drafted maybe twenty years ago. It's gone through over fifty drafts. Keeping it simple, the current form is primarily the result of taking images I didn't want to lose and trying to determine a way they could work together. The meandering simplicity of Cavafy's city poems offered some clues. Later the poem evolved into a quasi renga, using the requirements of that form as a binding agent. But finally with years of dissatisfaction leading to fiery impatience, in one of those most beneficial fits I decided to cut just about everything irrelevant and unproductive and see if anything remained that could be called a poem. Thank you, *Segue*, for publishing it.

Ian Haight on the Web

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