



3 Poems by Stanley H. Barkan

ON THE BRINK

On the brink of fall,
the leaves decide their deciduous fate.

Autumn comes like a red-haired witch
riding the winds on a thick-strawed broomstick.

The forests stun the eyes, visioning postcard vistas:
layers of gold and orange, reds and purples.

Soon all the trees will shake off their colored complements,
and the black bony fingers will thrust themselves stark

against the whiteness of the brink of winter.

LONG LIFE!

(for Claire Nicolas White on her 100th)

As I am now 88 years old,
I think about the meaning of this number.

An 8 turned on its side signifies infinity or eternity.
Two 8's would mean double eternity.

When someone wishes me "Long Life!"
I think about from whom it is offered:

An Italian says, "Centanni!" meaning,
May you live to 100.

When an Albanian says, "Till 111," it's
wishing you to live to that age.

Jews say, "May you live to 120, or
in Yiddish, "A hundert un tsvantsik,"

This is the number of years Moses lived.

Robert Browning wrote:
"Grow old along with me,
The best is yet to be."

Given my many aches and pains at 88,
I think he was an idiot!



So please don't wish me to live so long—
neither 100, nor 111, nor 120—and certainly
not for double eternity at 88,
so long as there's no great improvement
in my health.

Better to wish me “Good health!”

Thank you,

WHEN I AM DEAD

after Santo Cali

When I am dead,
come to see me in New Montefiore
in the great necropolis of Long Island
and place pebbles on the tombstone on my grave.

Come to me in summer at noon
when the sun is brightest and its rays
shine all over the few trees
whose leaves shadow all who lie there.

Let the spirits of my cats howl under
the sheds in the backyard of Casa Barkan.

When I am dead,
may my granddaughter Tasha
sing her original songs
that tear at the heart and soul.

May my granddaughter Roxy
play her drums slowly, slowly
while my son Scotte plays his guitar
and sings sweetly, sweetly.

Let the ghosts of my cats yowl under
the sheds in the backyard of Casa Barkan.

May my daughter Mia sing her woeful songs
and read her poems of Nordic gods,
the crying of Freya and the thunder of Thor
waking the winds of Aeolus.

May all the CCC poets come or zoom to recite
their poems in their original languages:
Chinese for Anna Keiko,



Dutch for Germain Droogenbroodt.

Let those who wrote poems dedicated to me recite or zoom them:
Sung-Il Lee & Kyung-nyun Kim Richards in Korean,
Jeton Kelmendi in Albanian, Luis Cruz-Villalobos in Spanish,
Carolyn Mary Kleefeld in English.

Let the souls of my cats meow under
the sheds in the backyard of Casa Barkan.

Let close poet friends read their original poems:
Kristine Doll in Catalan, Lidia Chiarelli in Italian,
Peter Thabit Jones one of his Welsh stones,
Joan Carole Hand one of her best, Bill Wolak one of his sexiest.

May first grandchild Mattie play her abandoned cello,
and grandsons Jeremy & Justin
read poems from my original books,
while their mother Jackie reads of her father and me in “Dos Abuelos.”

Let all others pick poems from my books
each to read one of their choice
before what is written on my stone:
“Markers Monumenting Memory”

May the neshumahs of Pyewacket, Pumpernickel, Dorothy, Nero, Tricksy
gather together and mew atop the sheds in the backyard of Casa Barkan.

Bio:



STANLEY H. BARKAN is the editor/publisher of the Cross-Cultural Review Series of World Literature and Art, that has, to date, produced some 500 titles in 70 different languages. His own work has been published in 35 collections, several of them bilingual (Albanian, Armenian, Bulgarian, Chinese Croatian, Dutch, French, Italian, Macedonian, Persian, Polish, Romanian, Russian, Sicilian, Spanish, Urdu). His latest are *Bird Mitzvah / Still More Mishpocheh* (in English and Spanish, 2023) and *Face pf Time* (in English and Albanian, 2025). He was the 1991 New York City’s Poetry Teacher of the Year (awarded by Poets House and the Board of Education) and the 1996 winner of the Poor Richard’s Award, “The Best of the Small Presses” (awarded by the Small Press Center), for “25 years of high quality publishing.” In May 2006, he was invited by Peter Thabit Jones, poet-editor of *The Seventh Quarry*, to be the solo featured poet at the Dylan Thomas



Centre in Swansea, Wales. In the Spring of 2008, he organized the historic—the first such since the death of Dylan Thomas in 1953—Dylan Thomas Tribute Tour of America, featuring Aeronwy Thomas, daughter of Dylan Thomas, and Peter Thabit Jones.

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Reviews: www.thepedestalmagazine (Apr 21-Jun 21, 2010, Issue 57, Reviews)

Interview: http://poetrywriting.org/Sketchbook7-1JanFeb2012/Sketchbook_7

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