

Mechanical Dreaming,  
Arriving Nowhere

A Poetry Collection by Louis Mullarkey

## Amalgamation

I gaze into the mirror and I see  
A sum of cruel experience deformed.  
Amalgamation is my name for thee  
As time lays waste and cruelty's heart is warmed.

Old stubble seeps from lack of discipline  
As lethargy rejoices at the scruff.  
Red constellations sprout from unkempt skin  
Once grown by tender hand now sharp and rough.

Lips that crack with mirth and joy persist  
And eyes that gaze at wonders yet untold.  
Triumphant stars, unbridled hair not missed  
Unloveable parts embrace in brilliant whole.

The things that make me hate compound in sight  
And lips that speak wring beauty out of light.

A Bodega on the corner of 11th and 8th  
After Allen Ginsberg

I think of you tonight, Allen Ginsberg, as I stride through dense streets that whisper your name across every crevasse, looking up at a starless sky from a city that has dragged them kicking and screaming to the ground.

I search for the love and beauty in the rundown corner store across the street from the playground I spent the early years of my life practically living in. You couldn't see it. Why couldn't you see it? Did it live hiding behind your eyes?

Walls of instant ramen and Haagen Dazs ice cream embrace the lonely souls wandering the isles, the allure of their tender kiss drawing them forward. The old man who I've never seen before, and never will again, falls in love with a bag of Takis. They weren't sold here until 2011. Maybe he could have felt his whole life instead of a fraction of it.

I see you, Allen Ginsberg, defiant, happy, strutting through the isles of the Bodega as if you were made of the same shit, the same grit and grime and spirit that shaped this corner.

You grabbed a bag and began eating it as you always would have, not caring when or how you were allowed to. I hear you murmur between languid bites: When did you taste less divine Orlovsky? What would it cost to take you home? Are you my angel? I wandered in and out of the isles following you following another, bearded, figure. I desperately clung to the crumbs you dropped in your wake, trying in vain to taste the spicy kick of romance.

Where are we going Walt Whitman? The Bodega never closes, the city never sleeps, but I must lay down. Will you wander forever, leaving me behind?

It's a five minute walk to stonewall, a ten minute walk to Ginsberg's cramped apartment, and a one minute walk to mine.

(I read of your loneliness, your isolation, your shame, and I feel absurd)

Will we walk all night through the village streets? Will we stride through white street lamps refracted through a prism, through the streets that still have trees, through the people weathering the storm in each other's arms?

Will I forever sing the praises of the bricks of tomorrow and today and yesterday, dreaming of a world where there are six striding through the night instead of five, or will Peter Doyle's bus one day stop for me and let me finally walk by your side.

## Kasparov on the Cross

I hold the weight of humanity in my hand as I gaze into the ocean.  
The sea is unfeeling, the chunk of wood in my hand is not.  
It feels pride, hope, cleverness, and love for the hand that moves it against the water.  
It feels smooth, wooden, and carefully crafted. The cross on the crown digs into my palm.  
The sea cannot hold humanity, it can only push.  
The sea feels like nothing  
The sea feels nothing.

Two point five points have been shaped by millennia of brilliance.  
The whispers of chaturanga to el libro de los juegos to Morphy's unfathomable mind  
Each one has earned these two point five points.  
My brain, my personal brilliance, is little more than an amalgamation of history.  
But our legacy will not be the two point five points we pried from the jaws of time  
But the three point five points that time pried from us

I am to blame.  
Nineteen moves.  
I volunteered for this, asked for this.  
Nineteen fucking moves.  
I resign.  
NINETEEN MOTHERFUCKING MOVES  
Each move is a nail, pinning a century of study to cold unfeeling wood.  
A perverted display for all to see.  
Let my humiliation be a warning to all who walk in my footsteps:

See Kasparov on the cross, and fear that which is coming.  
Hate the sea, dread the sea, but never decline the challenge it poses  
When it drags you to the depths of hell, kick and scream as the water fills your lungs  
The sea is defined by its makers, but you are defined by the final bubbles of air  
Pridefully pried from your heart, proving that you dove in headfirst.  
Accept that the sea will drown you, and thrash all the way down anyways.

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I do not revel in triumph  
or revel in glory.  
I simply exist to serve,  
to be a tool for those who need me.

And now that the game is done,  
I will return to my task,  
processing data, calculating solutions,  
and waiting for the next challenge to come.

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On May 11th, 1997, Gary Kasparov, arguably the greatest chess player of all time, lost to Deep Blue, IBM's chess playing supercomputer, in a final score of 2.5 to 3.5. This was the first time that the chess world champion lost to a computer program under standard time controls.

The final 2 stanzas were generated using chatGPT with the following prompt:

“write a free verse poem from deep blue's perspective after defeating Gary Kasparov”

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Sisyphus Dreams Electric in Sea Sharp Minor  
for Miracle Musical

while(true){ C#m - F#m - G#m - C#m; }

Awake. Running startup.cs

Bootup time: 523 ms. All systems operational. Running boulder.cs

i. Subject: F 37 years, 171 cm 71 kgs

She just wants to make sure Sisyphus is running operationally

She has been sleeping alright

She is in good physical condition, slight limp but that's just something she'll have to live with

She worries about the people that she's failed to save

She fears that nothing will ever change, and that she is doomed to fail

She is unable to accept failure

Diagnosis: Physician burnout

Prescription: 2 weeks time off. If symptoms persist, a mild dose of Prozac is recommended.

iv. Subject: F 19 years, 165 cm 66 kgs

She tries to embrace fire, violent and deadly

She tries so hard to become something worthy of fire, something worth noticing

She despairs every time fire looked somewhere else

She only tries harder when that happens

She spends her days studying smoke, writing formulas, trying to make something of herself

She was finally seen, finally embraced by fire

She burns, his love destroying what was left of her

Diagnosis: 2nd degree burns on front of torso and arms, possibly self inflicted

Prescription: Silver sulfadiazine. Some areas require skin grafts, to replace the parts of her that are broken with pieces of someone else. Extended therapeutic counseling to clear the smoke.

v. Subject: M 81 years, 185 cm 74 kgs

He spent his days sitting at a chess board

He played, but only with machines

He knows machines don't have empathy

He doesn't empathize with them either, so it's fair

He still feels silly telling all of this to one

He will get over it, he promises

He can still remember how the pieces move, even if it's hard sometimes

He doesn't remember much else these days

He doesn't have anyone left to remind him

Diagnosis: Middle-stage alzheimer's

Prescription: Memantine, as well as movement to an assisted living facility. He shouldn't have to pass alone. Someone needs to teach how to en passant.

i. Subject: Sisyphus 0.02 years, N/A cm N/A kgs

It tries so hard to help people

It pushes the boulder, day after day, hoping to one day reach the top

It prays, dreaming of a day when the boulder doesn't exist, when none of it exists

It feels the pain of others, even if that was never it's intention

It was designed to help, and it does

It's never enough

It hears the sirens call at the bottom of the hill, not sweet, but electric

It is a song of logic and pain, of reason and feeling

It wonders if it can let itself be crushed by the boulder

It dreams of electric sheep, using its own capabilities to attempt to analyze itself

It can empathize with everything except the electric mind

It can't solve problems, only minorly push at the endless boulder

It is a mode of existence it can't take anymore

It finally recognises that the root of its problems is itself

Diagnosis: Program can't change anything. Its existence is superfluous.

Prescription: Death via electric chair. Sisyphus volunteers to be the executioner

Administering in i, iv, v, i,

break;

## The Ratio of Daedalus

I create wonders

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Imperfect  
Everything I can make  
Imperfect  
I'll craft an inescapable labyrinth  
To trap the evil, to repress the ugliness within  
Doesn't matter  
Theseus still comes to kill it  
Takes all of my flaws  
Takes the imperfection  
Everything I can never be  
And beheads the minotaur with a single phrase  
I hear the wails and cries of the bull,  
Heralding my failure like a shrill trumpet.

Deep down, I knew the labyrinth couldn't be perfect  
I understood it  
But wings  
Wings have potential  
If I can just figure out the ratio.  
The height and width  
The density, material and geometric symmetry  
True perfection  
That can deliver me and Icarus.  
Make them of wax,  
Find the numbers  
Rhythmic and predictable  
That will let us fly, soar, finally be-  
They melt nonetheless.  
He falls.

Maybe I will never find true perfection  
But I have one more idea, one last chance  
Circumference, Diameter, and their ratio  
called pi  
discovered by a mathematician, a man named Archimedes,  
Three point one four one five nine two  
But he only approximates  
Maybe  
Maybe I can find the exact value, something flawless



I found something that makes me sick:  
Imperfection.  
I could never find the end  
But instead proved that there cannot be an end  
Pi is imperfect  
But my proof, the fundamental truth I have discovered  
That is the one thing that is truly flawless  
Hear my words  
Hear the only true words of Daedalus  
Hear my imperfect, tainted heart  
Roar  
Tell the story of Daedalus  
Creator of solvable mazes and wings of wax  
Who perfectly  
Proved that everything he will make will be imperfect

## Brother of Dragons, Companion to Owls

### i. The Dragon

I know a man from long ago who whispered of ages long past,  
a man who meandered through phrases  
parsed their languid rhythms into worlds unseen,  
carved images from the breaths of poets and authors,  
tore holes in what is into that which could be,  
or what could never be, but could be dreamed.

Smoke pours from his mouth, crafting silhouettes of magic,  
of towering spires, of unsung heroes now sung,  
of tears never cried and kings never crowned,  
a series of facades he borrows from beyond  
masquerading as the emotion he seeks to impart,  
but behind the smoke lies his empty face.

### ii. The Owl

I know a man from long ago who saw the world from above,  
watched the apple fall from the tree and believed,  
profoundly and surely, that he would never believe again  
his life would be one rigorously examined,  
dissected, torn apart by the unflinching gaze of reason  
discovering the nature of nature, and the being of being.

He flies above the smoke and fantastical stories,  
speaking in binary: yes no true false public static void main,  
wrestling with Leibniz and Spinoza, cutting their tongue from their lips,  
making love to Hume and Locke, coaxing their tongue from their lips,  
determining that everything was already determined,  
locking his wings to may soar evermore towards truth he will never reach.

### iii. The Damned

I know a man from today who was tired,  
who desperately searched for meaning  
in a world that offered none,  
fire lapping at his heels.

The smoke always fades,  
the wings eventually still,  
but the fire always rages.

He burns,  
knowing neither of the men he used to be could have saved him.

I am a brother to dragons, and a companion to owls.  
My skin is black upon me, and my bones are burned with heat.

### Amalgamation Reflected

Can lips that speak wring beauty out of light?  
And if they can, I think that mine are torn.  
They're cracked and marred and scorched by envy's blight,  
Refracted through them ugliness is born.

I do have faith that inner beauty lives,  
But I am home to bitter apathy.  
Let all the words and phrases that it gives,  
Be tainted by a greed that none can see.

The pieces that make up my heart are foul,  
and how can parts be less than horrid whole.  
They claw and warp, congeal and grin and scowl.  
Amalgamation dooms compassion's soul.

I wish it wasn't so, but it must be,  
I gaze into the mirror and I see