

## Alpaugh on Visual Poetry

“Ekphrastic” poems are “about” works of art. Keats’s “Ode to a Grecian Urn” is “about” a vase he saw in the British Museum. Rilke’s “Archaic Torso of Apollo” is “about” the fragmentary statue mentioned in its title. W. H. Auden’s “Musée des Beaux Arts” is “about” a Brueghel painting depicting the fall of Icarus.

In the visual poem the word “about” has no agency. Where art is included with and co-equal to text it would be superfluous to describe what readers have before their eyes. The visual poem is neither about the art, nor is the art about the text. Fusing art and text, visual poetry bypasses our discursive faculty via metaphor to appeal directly to the imagination.

# Word Galaxy Press

An imprint of Able Muse Press

is pleased to announce the publication of

## Seeing the *There There*



visual poetry by  
**David Alpaugh**

*In Seeing the There There*, David Alpaugh fuses comic and serious poetry to more than one-hundred photographs, paintings and images that include a beached whale, a three-legged cat, a not-so-dry martini, a grief-stricken Jack-O-Lantern, Blake’s Tyger, Schrödinger’s cat, John Donne’s seductive flea, Duchamp’s celebrated urinal, and a *revolutionary* sonnet, to cite a few of the 89 visual poems that demonstrate Alpaugh’s lack of interest in “poetry as usual.” His always original preoccupations and musings range from the irreverent to the meditative and include people, society, nature, culture, thought experiments, and alternative universes. This unique book offers readers verbal & visual delights, page after illuminating page.

*Seeing The There There* is compelling and wonderful, but how best to describe a book that combines a colorful picture with a poem on each page? There are gut-wrenching truths, accompanied by unexpected rhymes, puns, wit, and humor. Every time you turn a page, another visual and verbal surprise awaits you. This is a one-of-a-kind book. You will want to own it, read it, savor it. It is simply amazing!

—Susan Terris, author of *Familiar Tense*—

David Alpaugh’s brilliance delights us once again in this remarkable collection that takes imagery and verse to a whole new level. As you time-travel through his poetic multiverse, you’ll discover whirling dervishes, a postcard from a volcano, a poppy apocalypse, the fluffiest bluebird, and the heaviest crow. There are intricate ironies and shades of truth that will entice your imagination both verbally and visually. With every turn of the page, there is a unique turn of phrase. *Seeing The There There* deserves a place on everyone’s nightstand. It is truly, in the poet’s words, “a messenger” that “arrives and begs your attention.”

—Connie Post, author of *Prime Meridian*—

*Seeing The There There* is a bright, wonderful book. David Alpaugh knows how to capture a rare poetic moment and create total delight. Each poem finds us in a sui generis universe: surprising rhymes surfing on fresh insight. Never have animated thoughts and choice images spent such quality time together!

—Marvin R. Hiemstra, Poet / Humorist—



### Once Upon A Time

Like the Soul  
is difficult to locate  
no wonder if you've forgotten  
killing seven flies with one blow  
being brought back to life by a kiss  
stealing rampion from a witch's garden  
enough if you remember simply this  
long ago an ownliest bottle opened  
a benificent genie did appear  
and you were granted more  
than three paltry wishes



### David Alpaugh

was born in New Jersey but has lived in the SF Bay Area long enough to be included in the Heyday Press anthology, *California Poetry from the Gold Rush to the Present*, and to have been a finalist for Poet Laureate of California. He has published more than 400 poems in journals and anthologies from Able Muse to Poetry to Zyzzyva and his essays on *Po-Biz* have been widely discussed in print and online. His collection of double-title poems, *Spooky Action at a Distance*, was published in 2020 by Word Galaxy Press. *Counterpoint*, his prize-winning Story Line Press book, was reprinted by Red Hen Press in 2021. He has taught literature for many years at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute's East Bay campus and poetry writing at the U.C. Berkeley Extension.



### PIVOTAL QUESTION

Why must they turn and look back?  
Ruin everything at the last moment.  
Lot's wife... Eurydice's lover....

Their answers only partly satisfy:  
"Had to make certain she still followed."  
"Couldn't believe the city I loved was in flames."

Why, steps away from sure ground,  
This urge to look over our shoulder?  
To risk untold joy just up ahead  
For a furtive glance behind.



### SHOULD YOU

Come across Schrödinger's Cat  
Let me know if it's living or dead.  
Don't waste time looking underneath rocks.  
Don't waste time looking under your bed.  
That Cat's in a sealed box.  
The box is in Schrödinger's head.  
His Cat is both dead and alive.  
But Schrödinger's simply dead.



### DISUNITED WE STAND

But on one thing we agree.  
We much prefer *fiction* to

### REALITY



Seeing the There There  
is available from  
the publisher:

[wordgalaxy.com](http://wordgalaxy.com)

and from Amazon,  
Barnes & Noble  
and other outlets in  
paperback or digital form

To arrange for an IN-PERSON or ZOOM reading contact David at [alpaugh.david@gmail.com](mailto:alpaugh.david@gmail.com)



## MAYFLY

Here Today

Gone Today

No Tomorrow

Marrying  
poetry with  
120 photos,

paintings

and images

Seeing

the

There

There

answers

Dana Gioia's

call for more

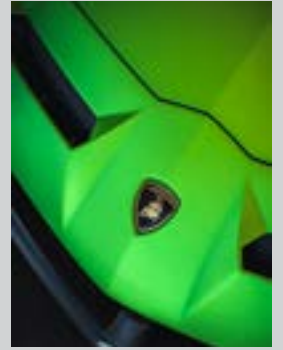
collaboration

between

the

ARTS

## A TALE OF 2 COLORS



### BLACK versus GREEN

One driver gets to drive all the way home.  
Have pizza with his family. Go to bed.

The other's pulled over. Sits in a cell.  
Lies in a hospital ward. (Or is dead.)

EACH CAR HAS A **BROKEN** TAIL LIGHT

**ALL TAIL LIGHTS ARE RED**

But something has made all the difference  
or so somebody said.



I saw two snow flakes  
exactly alike  
but they melted  
before I could post them  
to Instagram

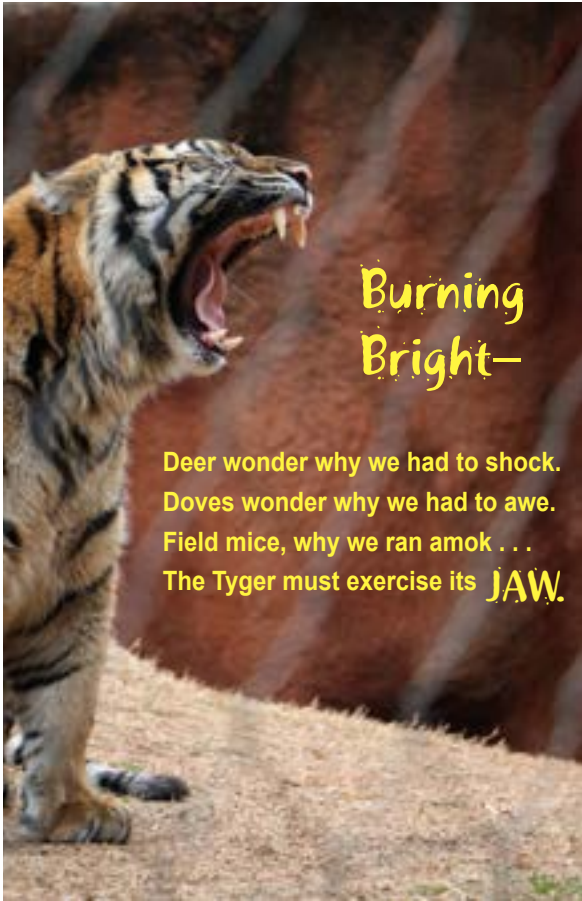


As you stand on a high place  
—**SUDDENLY THAT URGE**—

Your knees weaken.  
You feel the impulse grow.

Will you take a small step back  
Into all the things you are?

It is not the business  
of this poem to know.



## Burning Bright—

Deer wonder why we had to shock.  
Doves wonder why we had to awe.  
Field mice, why we ran amok . . .  
The Tyger must exercise its **JAW.**



## SELFIE

Narcissus was the entrepreneur who tried to take one first; but snapshots being in their infancy his watery camera did him in. Still, the rippling image that thrilled Narcissus was our species' first attempt at a Selfie.

Thus began our war on ephemerality that continues to this day—that Shakespeare fought with his sonnets; millions via photos they display. Horton's *Who* said it for us all, soft, but clear: we are here, we are here, we are here.

A  
few  
more  
of  
the  
89  
visual  
poems  
in  
Seeing  
the  
There  
There



Each of us has an animal within

## SHE'S A ZEBRA

If she only knew  
one of her life's mysteries  
would be solved

Are you searching for the animal in you?



You heard me.  
**5¢!!!!!!**

## OLD FOGIES

Never tire of telling us  
how thankful they are  
to be born when they were  
on the planet that was.

Where a Hershey bar cost all of 5¢  
and everyone had—common sense,  
and songs were—OH!—so beautiful  
and politicians honest and dutiful.

Wailing in the ruins of Time Gone By  
fogies fail to make their grandkids sigh  
(too busy building their old-fogey place:  
a virtual pleasure dome in cyberspace).



## Richard Cory His Untold Story

I'm the doc who diagnosed his cancer; told Dick he had 6 months to live. Minutes later, he met with his lawyer to draw up the will in which he'd give: the royal riches you so envied to Red Cross and Salvation Army. **Richard Cory. Dead Man Walking.** Fooled "people on the pavement." Not me. When the pain finally got so bad he couldn't walk downtown; couldn't even climb out of bed; doctor, friend, I slipped Dick the gun he used to put that bullet through his head.

## Really, Mr. Larkin...



They fucked you up? Ungrateful kid.  
How thoughtless to have so forgotten  
The things your mum and daddy did  
To spoil young Philip Larkin rotten!

Those "old-style fools" you mocked in "hats"  
and "coats"? *Your dotting Gramps & Granny!*  
(Who when you sassed or drove them bats  
Patted you, gently, on the fanny.)

False memory—that inland vogue—  
Looks oh so shallow on your shelf.  
It's time to stand up like the rogue  
You are. Blame no one but yourself.

## The Big SPLASH

Four and a half billion years ago  
"Theia" splashed into our world  
Breaking off a massive chunk  
Of Earth she rudely hurled

Thousands of miles into space  
Where gravitation night and noon  
Built what Anglo-Saxon druids  
First called Mona; then the Moon

Poets, singers use it still  
To satisfy June's rhyming slot  
The Moon comes out each night  
And rules the tides as a forget-me-not

At times we trod the Earth and feel  
That all is well within her clay  
But every church bell seems to peal  
"Something has been torn away"



## INDICTED BY A GRAND JURY

A ham sandwich protests its innocence;  
hires Heinz, Hellmann, Vlasic & Poupon  
to prepare a mouth-watering defense.

The DA's gastric evidence backfires on the people  
(flatulence being merely a misdemeanor).  
Defense witnesses Rye & Pumpernickel

Spread shreds of seasonable kraut over  
an all white jury that toasts its verdict—  
"SCRUMPTIOUS ON ALL COUNTS!"

The ham sandwich has filed a civil suit against  
"those slice and dice bastards" at SUBWAY.™