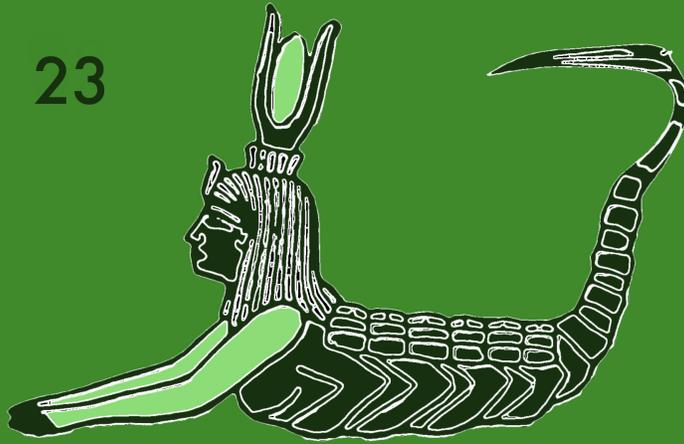


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The Scorpion Prize

anchor
i
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—Philip Rowland

This issue was a pleasure to read in its entirety. The choice was difficult, but I've settled on the above poem by Philip Rowland as the Scorpion Prize winner for its extreme economy that opens into wide areas of—layers of—possible interpretation, “meaning,” and enjoyment, without succumbing to the forced epiphany and contrived imagery that bogs down so much so-called haiku.

Anchoritic, as a stand-alone word, is a rather awkward adjective that would, I think, feel more at home in some stilted academic tome. What Rowland's done, by the seemingly simple gesture of severing the word into three lines, is to show us how an entire world—or, at any rate, a deep glimpse into one—exists within even a most uncommon word. Anchoritic (“ascetic solitude”) thus opens up, breathes, becomes a kind of syllogism to puzzle over.

The “i” floats—or is it being crushed?—between two symptoms of a life of the mind. And the white space of the page provides the perfect room, the cell, for this active poem to move, or to sit still, in contemplation of itself; and so the definition of the word is enacted—shown—by its being turned inside out.

It's an exquisitely strange, living thing.

Joseph Massey

BIO

Joseph Massey is the author of numerous chapbooks and two full-length collections: [Areas of Fog](#) (Shearsman Books, 2009) and [At the Point](#) (Shearsman Books, 2011). Work has also appeared in various journals and magazines, including The Nation, The Cultural Society, Verse, Western Humanities Review, Quarterly West, Asterisk, Tight, A Public Space, Mary, Carve, Northwest Review and American Poet: The Journal of the Academy of American Poets, among many others; and in the anthologies For the Time Being: The Bootstrap Book of Poetic Journals (Bootstrap Productions, 2007) and Visiting Dr. Williams: Poems Inspired by the Life and Work of William Carlos Williams (University of Iowa Press, 2011). He lives in Arcata, California, and can be reached at tongbliss@gmail.com.



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