

## Poetry Series

# Michael Buhagiar

- poems -

### Publication Date:

May 2008

### Publisher:

PoemHunter.Com - The World's Poetry Archive

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**Michael Buhagiar (13 January 1954)**

See my site [thegreatpesherdotcom](http://thegreatpesherdotcom)

Works:

as above.

## **A Look**

Those eyes so black; that gaze so blank.  
Black like witching moons her eyes  
When stars burn the night with lonely cries,  
That through foam to the floor of my ocean sank.

Eyes like the vaults of a global bank  
That takes all for growth when the tenant dies,  
With heaps of gold that to the ceilings rise,  
That to test its worth my coinage drank.

Eyes wherein smouldered Greek fire.  
Eyes that would prove me a frozen liar,  
Inherited straight from African Eve,

Black as the maw of a low-toned bell,  
The notes of a cello that for summer grieve,  
The hangman as he opens the door of my cell.

Michael Buhagiar

## **A Tree**

It starts with a seed, whose segments gather  
A trust protecting the wealth of their ancestry  
With promise of flowers and a soaring majesty  
And fruits to ravish you, like any other;

—That falls in a desert, whose miles might smother  
With still weight of air and the noon's easy clarity.  
Yet its God, staring hard, has sensed there Eternity  
And, groping in blindness, it takes Him for mother.

Now its roots are foothills, and a breeze's pass  
Might shatter that length; while its fruits are sparse  
And brittle, and no moisture give or need.

Yet, sitting at its foot, a poet meditates,  
And though he cast away the sterile seed  
Its mortal flesh he loves, assimilates.

Michael Buhagiar

## Antiquarian

On the topmost shelf there stands an old man,  
Still straight, his jacket lettered in gold  
About a hard frame; and those blotches and frays  
Sing gladly of harrowing trials of old.  
'The Poems of Blake': a two inch span  
Of spine, and on the cover the Ancient of Days.

Not his tale alone he steps down to tell.  
For the inside page is inscribed in ink:  
'To Lucas with love from Pamela, Christmas  
1918' - in full curves that link,  
Then two kisses, and a line concludes the spell,  
A wave rolling in from a time that was.

Perhaps it was a call to abandon home  
For a dusky Circe and the Blessed Isles,  
And its triumphs were told over ruby wine  
As eyes held eyes in knowing smiles  
By candlelight... Take my hand, old man, and come  
And my hoard of years shall be the measure of thine.

Michael Buhagiar

## **At Fort Arthur, Western Australia**

A solitary cannon to the sunset points.  
Idle gunners talk and smoke  
And hook their heels in the sandstone's joints  
In a world the gaping centuries cloak.

Wind disturbs the waters' shape.  
Piled rocks locked suppress and curb  
The sea's tall lust to press and rape  
The curfewed hulls. God is a verb.

I have journeyed here to the wilder west  
In search of the darker side of my brain,  
Where the sun goes down to a basement club

To emerge at dawn from a lightless quest.  
And I follow now, as the shadows stain,  
To return to myself through dirt plains and scrub

Michael Buhagiar

## **Beethoven's Father**

Towers, turrets, high walls all made  
Of sand gold-gleaming in noonday rays...  
He would send his son with bucket and spade  
To build and build under stringent gaze.

He worshipped him who had built the first,  
Yet could not help staring, against his will,  
At the hard waves slaking the castles' thirst  
As twilight fell; and it tortured him still.

One storm-lashed night of pounding foam  
He stripped and ran to catch a wave  
Which snapped his pretzel spine with ease.

Now the boy all day remains at home,  
And wields a delving pen to brave  
The pulse and roar of night-coped seas.

Michael Buhagiar

## **Before I Met You**

Spring would come with shafts of light  
To make love to dark earth in the morning dew,  
But the frost would bite too deep at night  
And the beds were all bare, before I met you.

To think of love was like shaking hands  
With a friend whose name I no longer knew.  
I would walk alone along moonlit strands  
And gaze deep into rivers, before I met you.

Before I met you, my plans were as birds  
Betrayed to snow as they blindly flew,  
For want of the line of a song without words  
To guide them on, before I met you.

Long absence would fall like a massive tor  
Unseen each day from a cloudless blue,  
As I'd frozen stand before my dreadful door  
To learn again what was deep and true.

My past was a perfect globe of gold  
To where every day my dreaming flew,  
And girls would my soul in their arms enfold  
And say they loved me, before I met you.

Before I met you, my poems were as photos  
Framed in wallets, and I would rue  
The routine smiles and lifted brows,  
And hold my gorgeous children from view,

Before I met you, and love was a pang  
Whose blade struck deep, yet the weakest glue  
I would crave to weep as Caruso sang,  
Before I met you, before I met you.

Michael Buhagiar

## **BIRds in a Tree**

A light breeze rustles the leaves; so calm  
They sit perched along the weathered arm  
Ruffling down, or suddenly they stab  
At some enemy marching sharply within.  
All day they will soar to touch the sun  
With beating wings, or wild worms grab,  
Diving like bullets from a lowered gun.  
When sky and land grow one, and flowers  
Are sketched in charcoal in the lonely hours,  
They will turn to their rooted home and come in.

Through the wide bedroom window I gaze.  
The house lights rise to signal the close.  
My head lies calm on the arm of my dear.  
Soon I must beat up the sun's hard rays  
And dive to plunder whatever grows.  
And so, lest in lust I soar too near,  
And flare with the sun—and the blind worm prays  
For a roar of flame to assail his ear—  
I return, when blood lies spilt on the sky,  
To my love who would stay when the sun men fly.

Michael Buhagiar

## City of Light

Taut muscles of the city,  
Hard gavel without pity,  
And nowhere a breast  
To rest.

Old broom of witch  
And lolling bitch,  
Or evening maw  
And whore:

The city scares  
And breeds hot mares  
Of night that rear  
Too near.

Some thinnest veil  
Or skimming sail  
Gales rip to show  
The shadow.

The past is a grove  
Where lovers love  
In shade far away  
From the day.

All else is dark  
But the city's park  
A forest of lamps  
Stamps

A coin of square gold  
From a circle of old  
And on its face  
In place

Of the long-falling haven,  
The scalp now clean-shaven,  
And eyes that would disown  
My own.

Michael Buhagiar

### **Clapton is God (Homage to Eric Clapton 3)**

Is still alive at fifty: clean of heroin,  
Yet acid back then helped scour the eye  
Of scum that sees two lovers sin:  
The one hell-black, the other sky.

Life in one take: for the steelsprung arm  
Swoops to pluck an Isis and Child  
Who wail in pain as they fly from harm  
While the flames are a roaring boar beguiled.

Its tusks are old moons no storm can defeat.  
For a field of theogony three is enough  
Yet three more and three for those years' triple face.

Lionsnake born to airy Love  
By the spark of Caliban he moves in grace,  
And a goddess raped might kiss his feet.

Michael Buhagiar

## **Correspondences (translation from Charles Baudelaire)**

Nature is a temple whose columns are alive  
And confusions of sounds at times betray.  
Man through a forest of symbols does strive,  
And he knows them somehow as he goes on his way.

Like long-sustained echoes far away  
Moving in a oneness shadowy and profound,  
Vast as the darkness and the day,  
Perfumes and colours and sounds correspond.

There are perfumes fresh as the flesh of an infant,  
Soft as an oboe, green as a prairie,  
—And others compounded, rich and triumphant,

Expanding somehow like a thing of infinity,  
Like amber, musk, bergamot, and incense,  
Which sing of transports of the spirit and sense.

Michael Buhagiar

## **Echo Point 1: Echo Point, The Blue Mountains**

Stone, the emblem of the timeless become space  
- Oswald Spengler

The Three Sisters sing 'You Can't Hurry Love.'  
The floor spreads out in rolling waves,  
All tidal pulses and sailors' graves,  
And swells of broccoli carpet above.

The cliffs surge into awestruck view,  
Like planes of war on a carrier's deck  
That once hid in its vast infernal neck  
Till lips convulsed to gape and spew.

Persephone blooms from hell to the air.  
The gravedigger climbs an invisible stair  
To the stage, in each rustic hand a long bone,  
And grinning strikes a lively tune  
On a row of skulls, as the theatre's stone  
Looms raw, as if for a cathedral hewn.

Michael Buhagiar

## Echo Point 2: Tragedy

Stone, the emblem of the timeless become space  
- Oswald Spengler

Why does the ghostly father flee  
When dawn on Hamlet's terror breaks?  
It is the isles of cliffs from the blue leaf sea  
Surging like golden-hooded snakes.

And why does Ophelia spurn his letters?  
Why is he tortured north north west?  
He has kept the cliffs of gold in fetters  
And now they rebel to shatter his rest.

Why does the broad sword of Pyrrhus smash  
Time and again old Priam's skull,  
His grey hairs and bones and brains to mash,  
And his years of inner peace to annul?

It is the cliffs of gold so deeply cowed  
Beneath the ghostly father's fist,  
Gushing like water hissing loud  
From the ruptured skin of some occult cyst.

Rosencrantz is dead, and Guildenstern  
Too, destroyed by their own device:  
A garland of roses his hard hands spurn,  
To the star of gold his eyes are ice:

A nought that would his quaking neck grip tight,  
A sun stretch out its gold cliff hands  
To guide him up to the shimmering light  
From the fetid crypt where Onan stands.

Why does the dagger pause unthrust  
As Claudius bends his back to his prayers,  
Whose words pile up like stirless dust  
As no dream in the careless heavens flares?

It is the cliffs of gold in the naked steel  
Surging like a prick from its wrinkled hood,  
Which Hamlet's loins must never feel,  
Such is the father's fear of wood.

The old man behind the hanging lurks  
As Hamlet fires the faggots of speech:  
The forge of the gypsy poet works  
Cliffs that yearn to the heavens to reach.

The flames lick up toward Gertrude's eyes  
Where, deep within, the cliffs glow gold  
Like the face of a painted whore that lies.  
Now his pants the bulging tackle hold

As the blade thrusts through the silky flesh  
To fish the old man from virtual sleep,  
A monster calf in a Cretan crèche  
He feeds with blood as the teeth strike deep.

What is the gift the pearl fishers brought  
Which rests at the bottom of Gertrude's cup?  
It is the cliffs of gold Ulysses caught  
In the blue leaf sea, and ferried up.

Though flames may lick and winds abrade  
And the hammer of Thor enraged pound,  
The cliffs of gold must never degrade  
To the seed that falls on stony ground.

Why does the ghostly father flee  
When dawn on Hamlet's terror breaks?  
From the cliffs of gold he shrinks to see  
The truth that slack the old codpiece makes.

Michael Buhagiar



#### **Echo Point 4: Theme in a Bass Clef**

Stone, the emblem of the timeless become space  
- Oswald Spengler

What do the isles of cliffs encode  
Placed like studs of gold with such art  
That this velvet shows an endless road  
To the eye that quests for the hidden heart?

It is this, the secret heart of the matter,  
Rising from the sunless depths of the sea  
That the Holy Grail within may utter  
The Word of God from its every tree.

Thus, the palimpsest yawns the planes to disgorge,  
And the roar they make is the gravedigger's song,  
And the flames of Gertrude's faggots forge  
A bomb that for rudeness of cliffs atones.

For the cliffs are dark when drowned below,  
But, lifting their cheeks to the sun, they glow.

Michael Buhagiar

## Echo Point 5: Eclogue in a Berlin Street

Stone, the emblem of the timeless become space  
- Oswald Spengler

Christopher Brennan  
Deep in the wildest valley of my soul  
I sense something nameless struggling to be born.  
I feel the merest fraction of a whole,  
Rank afterbirth of midnight stains my dawn.  
Old Euler is lecturing on Homer today...

Aleister Crowley I divine that between two poles you are torn.  
Your nerves are shot and fear has held sway  
Since the great god Phallus began to annoy.  
You should chuck your degree and go your own way  
And dwell no more on the sack of Troy.

Christopher Brennan  
How could I abandon that beautiful tongue?  
The Greeks have been my inspiration and joy,  
A diamond that shines from a sea of dung.  
Now so often at my desk while thinking hard  
I feel a sudden jolt as if stung.

Aleister Crowley The Scorpion is your sign, and Death your card...

Christopher Brennan  
They revealed to me forms which the Church holds obscene,  
The Beauty that shattered forever my guard,  
Standing and sunlit and balanced and clean.

Aleister Crowley But where is the Classical symbol for infinity,  
All breasts and hips of an Egyptian queen  
Reclining for a Caesar to enter her sea?

Christopher Brennan  
Your image is strong, it sings of a world  
Rich like the ground of a magical tree.

Aleister Crowley Like leaves in autumn, all yellow and curled,  
Classical beauty is brittle and frail.  
But I drive by night with sails unfurled  
In search of Death and the Holy Grail.  
From the loins of Babalon and the Serpent-Lion  
Has sprung the Word to supplant your braille,  
The fiery Lord of the coming Aeon.  
Know that every man and woman is a star,  
And trust in your own self to guide you on.

Christopher Brennan  
My soul shall be the barque to carry me far.  
But of what shall I sing when the nights grow cold?

Aleister Crowley The only theme of Heru-Ra-Ha:  
The cliffs of gold, the cliffs of gold.

Michael Buhagiar

## Homage to Eric Clapton

A seed once fell onto English terrain  
Where wars had thicked the soil with much blood;  
And its roots struck deep into Satan's brain  
On the side where feeling and melody bud.

And it thrust through years like a rebel army  
Though deserted by sun and the rain close behind;  
And a luthier culled one of its strongest rami  
To craft an instrument with Segovia in mind.

Now the southwind spurs its belly, and there rears  
Chaliapin, Sinatra, Caruso, all capped  
By a song that crowns like cream the milch tree;

And a dark and haggard dryad appears  
From a bole and croaks it is Clapton trapped,  
And by the soaring topmost branch set free.

Michael Buhagiar

## **I Honestly Love You**

If this vow of affection is simply true  
Don't tell me why you had to speak it:  
A spell was settling and you had to break it,  
I know, for it would chill and entomb you.

A fate some ghost from your past was weaving,  
Her lips once offered, then snatched away  
Perhaps...A warmth whose feeling is believing,  
That you sensed, before all, in the light of day.

No... like driftwood washed to an island  
Where thick-rooted green sets free the bough,  
You suffer in silence, and sing to me, now,  
A lament for a time undead, at hand.

For truth, like poetry, must come from the heart,  
As honest as tears that slip to the floor,  
As plain to the sense as Cupid's dart.  
I hear truth's beat, a wounded roar

That floods through your transparent art  
To reach where waters surge and pore:  
With open arms, and with knowing heart,  
From here to forever, I come to your shore.

In memoriam Peter Allen

Michael Buhagiar

## **In the Ebor Cemetery**

From zero to zero an ice wind sweeps  
As dark chords close the movement of day,  
And the sky a mist of moisture weeps  
On the loved one beached in a wave-lashed bay.

A two-barred fence defines the square  
And gums on every side surround,  
Here in the heart of the country where  
There comes no faintest human sound.

In this stone all night the wild winds wail  
As lightning jags through flattening rain,  
And spitting cobras lash the rim.

And this graven name is a thinnest veil  
A deathless heart through which shines plain;  
These flowers, a gallery hung with him.

Michael Buhagiar

## **Jacob's Ladder**

(In Fisher Library, University of Sydney)

The floors to the top are numbered five  
Where shelves of Shakespeare live;  
Ten flights of stairs where I might strive  
For the fruits high branches give.

A lift runs up, and I could choose  
To give these legs a rest,  
And save the time I else would loose  
On that small Everest.

Yet climb I always do, in mood  
Of scaling mountain sides,  
With snow and shelves of rock endued,  
Nor hung with carriage-rides.

Michael Buhagiar

## **Koala**

In the long arms of mother let him sleep  
With her eyes bent above  
To gaze through locks that steep

And guard from the sky's rough love  
As heat he inflicts without care  
Or showers more than enough.

Soon, of hunger deep aware,  
He may wake and take his fill,  
Then sleep, a bulging bear.

One day may fall a chill  
And a glacier creep, when  
Full turn comes the wheel of the mill,

Or a sea fill that valley again,  
Or chunk hot plummet from the deep;  
Yet come what may, until then

In the long arms of mother let him sleep.

Michael Buhagiar

## **Light My Fire (Homage to Jim Morrison 2)**

Let the Shadow inflict collateral damage  
On Venus who alights from a shell to the shore  
To light your fire as the chill winds rage  
And vipers strike from the blossomless floor;

And let the Shadow's gunships even pound  
The trees that surge as the fresh year blooms  
And the land and the folk who, all seasons round,  
Within stony walls find precarious rooms:

It is the door, the door, strong hewn from oak  
Whose roots strike deep as the head branch soars,  
Lets pass fresh air or forbids the strafe.

And if its hinge should fail those rooms would choke  
Or lodging be given to thundering boars,  
As the round dances on in the valleys of Alph.

Michael Buhagiar

## Logos

Facing my bed in the peaceful room  
Of my grandparents' brick suburban home  
A painted smiling Jesus hung,  
As salves so many a Catholic's doom.  
A bearded young man, haloed gnome,  
To the wall and my gaze serenely clung.

His chest, exposed in bloodless surgery,  
The Sacred Heart showed, ensconced in flame,  
While two paling fingers to the sky were held  
As the King and Priest in closest amity.  
Around the crescent base of the oval frame,  
'The Lord is my Salvation' was starkly spelled.

Well, though only a pup, I clung to that bone:  
That monster '-ation', how might I speak?  
O fruit that hangs on the groaning tree,  
Or in the fabled ark lies carved in stone,  
In labouring waves the near light you seek  
From the silent page, which gave life to me.

Michael Buhagiar

## **Love, Hope, Belief**

On the painting by Anselm Keifer  
(Germany,1945-) in the Art Gallery of NSW.

A huge propeller, shed like Palinurus,  
Overlies a ridge or river-bed  
Whose dusty fissures fill the canvas,  
On its triad of rusty blades the faded

Inscription: Liebe, Hoffnung, Glaube.  
Also he's depicted Siegfried Superman  
Relieving a cesspool of its toy Excalibur;  
The goal of his long march to dawn

In bleeding fire; halts who would inherit  
Hermann, hero of the Roman clashes;  
The seven-tongued menorah alight  
In a triumph-crypt encrusted with ashes;

Walkers-on-water; and strutting cocks  
Compelling the seas and the sun in flight:  
Persisting away at the black-box  
Of a ship of dreams dashed out of sight.

Michael Buhagiar

## **Nostos**

The birds sit ranged along the tree's high limb  
As day slips back into thickening dark,  
Their twig toes gripping the still warm bark,  
And massed cries wailing in ecstatic hymn.

Should the storm god louring from rim to rim  
Shower his drenching midnight cark,  
The leaves would remain their sheltering ark,  
Or walls against the tempest's savage whim.

The watcher is those havened birds somehow;  
And someone else that rooted nest,  
Someone warm out of long ago  
Who nursed him next a swollen breast,  
And, with fall of hair, to a singing slow,  
Rocked as fire burned low in the west.

Michael Buhagiar

## **Not Diving, but Drowning**

In psychiatry term in medical school  
There were some who genuinely loved the schizophrenics  
In their condition of perpetually living the Fool  
Which Freud nor drugs nor volts could fix.

—Not the victims of a personal alien hostility  
Who had buried an axe, as may be, in a head;  
But those who had grasped the live electricity  
And stuck fast screaming, and still felt its dread.

To the ice-bound fields of sequestered valleys  
Those lovers were born, who to dig now yearn,  
Yet the livewire cables still lie deep out of reach.

While others, they have heard, make daily sallies  
To drink of that fire, and their flesh does not burn,  
And the earth as they rise tumbles into the breach.

Michael Buhagiar

## Poets Don't Drink Coffee

The tickets collected with an hour to spare,  
We stopped by the Mozart Café in a shell  
On the water, and took in the drinkers and rare  
Miasma of fresh-roasted coffee bean smell.

"How civilized!" she said, in a tone of approval;  
And I nodded, though really not sharing her ardour.  
Then a tide I called took us out through a portal  
To the wind and the gathering dark and the harbour.

Unearthly rapt faces surround a fire  
Where one tells under stars of a hero who lapsed  
And escaped in a shower of spears with the flame.

It once heated a bowl to force ever higher  
A crystal of blue and deep green, now collapsed;  
And I remember her face, though more sharply her name.

Michael Buhagiar

## **Putney Park: Sunset Across the Water**

A million pyres would be as a match  
In hell to this raging sinking Lear.  
Peninsular land lies ready to catch  
The sky god's shimmering ruby tear.

How blue the depthless floor of space.  
Are they lips, and do they sweetly sing  
Soft breath in waves on my moveless face?  
Or the ruffling beat of some passing wing.

The bay drifts wide like lambing flocks.  
Dark peacock's wings will soon unfurl  
Till all subsides in a mindless swoon.

This hill's green arch is our private box.  
Each tree is a rapt and graceful girl  
Uplifting her cheeks to the archer moon.

Michael Bhagiar

## **Requiescat**

A hillock blisters the field of spread.  
Black gold lies ready to yield its prize.  
Zeus has sown his seed in this bed  
And his son will soon astonish our eyes.

Rub it and listen! It begins to purr,  
A genie slinks from his cloistered home,  
A white snout first, then night of fur,  
A nugget of truth from the formless loam.

This was our game: I'd flip the spread  
To hide that form curled up as if dead.  
The ball is the term of the smiling mask.

Now to bury a stiffened corpse is my task.  
And as the bleeding shreds of old day fade  
A sun arises on that game we played.

Michael Buhagiar

## **Rider on the Storm (Homage to Jim Morrison)**

Adios to the lands and great house, Caballero,  
A kiss for the Lady in White and your friends,  
For you ride out to meet the wild Toronegro  
Pounding the plain, and the world on you depends.

Now that sombre shape as the moon is dawning  
Behind you is not yet horned with sails,  
And a blade through the neck will dropp him, fawning,  
In a test which your fool on his ass ever fails.

Though the bull should blast into stormswept hells  
All knights, you shine even there, dimmed never.  
For the bullet has not yet has culled the white horn

Nor the navy lowered its dark-mouthed barrels  
To blast the last steed into kingdom ever  
From a cloistered village, just before you were born.

Michael Buhagiar

## Rymbonao

For Jessica on the occasion of her twenty-first 7 Oct 2006

The years are numbered twenty-one  
Since Jessica saw the day;  
Dead time of ice, then the starter's gun  
Would send the sun away.

The sun is a chariot drawn by steeds  
That sweeps across the sky,  
And in the hands of a hero rich with deeds  
The golden reins do lie.

To us, the watchers in poor seats,  
The length of course we see  
Shrinks as night's old flood defeats  
The light that once was free.

And then, in the awful deep abyss,  
Day will burst his chains,  
And spring the season of colour to kiss  
Till only love remains.

One day the charioteer must die,  
The race be run no more;  
The car in rust and pieces lie,  
And closed the stable door.

A remnant light the empty track  
Till eyes and it expire;  
The swing that sectored forth and back  
At nadir climb no higher.

Yet far off in some land unknown  
On some dark troubled shore,  
The driver's coffin lid may grown  
And creak the stable door;

The racecourse rise with stands again  
And fill unto the brim  
With watchers tense and tall with strain  
To cheer the burning Him.

Michael Buhagiar

## **Sadness of the Moon (Tristesse de la Lune) : translation**

A more langorous moon is dreaming this night:  
Like a beauty on several cushions reposing  
Who caresses with a hand discreet and light  
The contour of her breasts before the closing

Of sleep, on those soft avalanches' satined  
Back, dying, she is given to rapture,  
And roams her eyes on the visions twinned  
That ascend like blossoms, white into azure.

When sometimes she lets fall, in her dreaming bound,  
A furtive tear to this earthly ground,  
A poet - stranger to sleep she has won -

Will catch that dropp in the palm of his hand,  
Of irissy refractions, like a fragment of opal, and  
Put it in his heart, out of sight of the sun.

by Charles Baudelaire  
trans. by Michael Buhagiar

Michael Buhagiar

## Sound of Silence

Each lecture hall was a book of hours,  
Its pages written by different priests.  
We plunged to engage the dismal powers  
And gazed from the decks of dawning towers,  
In a year endowed with moveable feasts.

I kept an inward mental table  
Where to every priest I gave a cell:  
A heaven-kissing Tower of Babel  
Whose apex held a thoroughbred stable  
Of Pegasus-seekers who had come back from hell.

To suffer meekly is to kill creativity:  
The camel must grow to a lion, then child.  
The laurel-bearers, we were growing in gravity  
Yet prowling the stage for the likely absurdity,  
Often swelling in uproar, like a grandstand gone wild.

One there was only, a Phar Lap and Daniel  
Who so shone that Ssshh! was our loudest word;  
—Hissed sidelong, as a cancerous cell  
Was borne on the charm of a whispered spell,  
As gift from the isle of his rapture proffered.

Michael Buhagiar

## **The Ross Valley, Kiama**

A high new moon of mountains cradling  
Rolling stonewalled velvet fields,  
With herds and homes and apt hands ladling  
Milk pumped fresh which fullness yields;

Rows of palms like milk ejecting  
In lofty founts from massaged nipples;  
High thin calls of birds injecting  
Silence; a breeze that dam glass ripples.

And Rex with dainty pearls not hung  
Is thrusting his blade, or charging a rival,  
Or fixing a rambler with Mars-red eyne.

While a corpse is served on a crust of dung  
As a calf in plaints abides its revival.  
A bore's dark eye is lashed with kine.

Michael Buhagiar

## **The Witch Muse (Homage to Eric Clapton 2)**

He glanced at the first bright sliver to glow  
Which many would harvest and worship alone,  
And yawned, thinking only of how she would grow  
To the diva as Woman entrancing the throne.

He would watch her crowned, her husband-tide  
Now brimming, now void, and the kingdom thriving;  
The infant Prince on her lap spread wide:  
While still the Acts through not wholly believing.

The backdropp of black is their shadow play.  
Now the Queen is dead; there creeps from the shadows  
A hag, black-cowled, to claim centre stage  
With a wail as if suns at the death of day  
Were fuelling in her ribs a lyric of crows.  
He gazed till the stage went out into umbrage.

Michael Buhagiar