

Michael Lee Johnson

Showers & Rain

I'd like to see you in showers,
shadows, memories, final hours
that end this rain.

Daisies reveal your simple secrets,
yellow perverted pleasures, complicated,
often unseen mysteries like
COVID-19 virus.

Forget your sins & dance with me.

All petals at some point fall
in season come to despair
same as a desperate ending.

I focus on memories now
represent all short stories shared,
a poem or two no one will remember,
a Hemingway legacy funeral,
one family member,
one suicide at a time.

Death Certificates

We all wait for our death certificates—
aging bodies, sagging arms, necks with wrinkles.

We drag our bodies around shopping malls
in all shapes, funny forms, walk
around in tennis shoes early mornings.

Don't stretch out here too far.

Just get our groceries, see our grandchildren,
Lucky Charms, no witchcraft, but Jesus
finds our way home.

Jasper (V4)

Old Irving Park,
Chicago neighborhood
Jasper lives in a garret
no bigger than a single bed.
Jasper, 69, clouds of smoke
Lucky Strike unfiltered cigarettes.
He dips Oreo cookies in skim milk.
Six months ago
the state revoked
his driver's license-
between the onset
of macular degeneration,
gas at \$4.65 a gallon,
and late-stage emphysema,
life for Jasper has stalled out
in the middle lane
like his middle month
social security check, it is gone.
There is nothing academic about Jasper's life.
Today the mailbox journey is down
the spiraling stairwell; midway,
he leans against the wall.
Deep breathes from his oxygen tank.
Life is annoying with plastic tubes up his nose.
Relief, back in the attic, with just his oxygen tank,
his Chicago Cubs, losers, are playing
on his radio, WGN, 720 AM.
Equipment, enjoyment at last,
Jasper leans back in his La-Z-Boy recliner.
He reaches for a new pack of Lucky Strike cigarettes.
Jasper grabs a lukewarm Budweiser beer from his mini-fridge.
Deep breathes, a match lite, near his oxygen tank.

About the Poet

Michael Lee Johnson lived ten years in Canada during the Vietnam era and is a dual citizen of the United States and Canada. Today he is a poet, freelance writer, amateur photographer, and small business owner in Itasca, DuPage County, Illinois. Mr. Johnson is published in more than 2033 new publications. His poems have appeared in 41 countries; he edits and publishes ten poetry sites. He is the administrator of six Facebook

poetry groups; he has several new poetry chapbooks coming out soon. He has over 533 published poems to date. Michael Lee Johnson has been nominated for 2 Pushcart Prize awards poetry 2015/1 Best of the Net 2016/2 Best of the Net 2017, 2 Best of the Net 2018. Two hundred thirty-one poetry videos are now on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/user/poetrymanusa/videos>. Editor-in-chief poetry anthology, Moonlight Dreamers of Yellow Haze: <http://www.amazon.com/dp/1530456762>; editor-in-chief poetry anthology, Dandelion in a Vase of Roses available here <https://www.amazon.com/dp/1545352089>. Editor-in-chief Warriors with Wings: The Best in Contemporary Poetry, <http://www.amazon.com/dp/1722130717>. https://www.amazon.com/Michael-Lee-Johnson/e/B0055HTMBQ%3Fref=dbs_a_mng_rwt_scns_share <https://www.lulu.com/shop/search.ep?keyWords=Michael+Lee+Johnson&type=>. Member Illinois State Poetry Society: <http://www.illinoispoets.org/>.