

Michael Lee Johnson

**I'm a Riverboat Boy,  
Poem on Halsted Street (V2)**

As sure as church bells  
Sunday morning, ringing  
on Halsted and State Street, Chicago,  
these memories will  
be soon forgotten.  
I stumble in my life with these words like broken sentences.  
I hear and denounce myself in the distance,  
mumbling chatter off my lips.  
Fragments and chips.  
Swearing at the parts of me I can't see;  
walking away rapidly from the spiritual thoughts of you.  
I am disjointed, separated from my Christian belief.  
I feel like I'm at the bottom of sin hill  
playing with my fiddle, flat fisted, and busted.  
So you sing in the gospel choir; sang in Holland,  
sang in Belgium, from top to bottom,  
the maps, continents, atlas are all yours.  
I detach myself from these love affairs drive straight, swiftly,  
to Hollywood Casino Aurora.  
Fragments and chips.  
I guess we gamble in different casinos,  
in different corners of God's world,  
you with church bingo, and I'm a riverboat boy.  
No matter how spiritual I'm once a week,  
I can't take you where my poems don't follow me.  
Church poems don't cry.

## Vodka Omelet

Make it clear in my mind, Jesus,  
am I whacked-out on Double Cross Vodka  
or have I flipped out calling myself  
Limburger omelet chef?  
I hate question marks and angels  
with crazed wings.  
You know the type, John the Baptist  
toking weed, stoned out of his mind, storyteller,  
foul smells from poor hygiene, eating habits  
open mouth, swallowing grasshoppers,  
so silky, smooth as sweet honey.  
Add 3 eggs in a skillet, Parmesan/Romano blend,  
2 cheeses add-on, shiitake mushrooms, turmeric,  
chopped kale, hint hot chili peppers, cheers.  
Scramble me, I'm cracked.  
I rock faith in jungle music, dance nude.  
Everything is a potential poem to me.  
My omelet, my life, my booze, master cook,  
vodka  
omelet  
2:38 a.m.

## Family Feud

Break  
in the rain,  
thunderstorms;  
bolt angular lightning  
slithers away west.  
Walking,  
nanosecond flash  
family memories,  
personal,  
revert,  
tautology fault of style  
acerbic chats  
daggers in heart these words,

confused,  
 dicey dungeon sharp spike.  
 A labyrinth, ruined passages,  
 secret chambers, cellmates, now  
 for life.  
 Wind storms move away,  
 young willow trees natter—  
 smallest branches, still snap.

## **I am the Dustman, Clutter Collector (V3)**

Surreptitiously  
 I am the dustman.  
 I am this lazy spirit  
 roaming, living within you  
 weaving around your mind,  
 vulture consuming cleaning  
 thoughts, space, your slender body.  
 I feel it all day,  
 this night alone.  
 I am your street sweeper,  
 garbage collector of thought the alternator  
 village dweller, walkway partner.  
 I am key door holder to entrance  
 man, to Summit house.  
 For years of abuse, I am dust eater.  
 I hang high outside on lampposts,  
 edged inside on top wall pictures.  
 I dim your lights yellow inside out,  
 ghost inspector.  
 Inside I roll the house over.  
 I am a damp cloth, Mr. Clean,  
 I smooth over, clutter-free,  
 tick-tock clocks, books,  
 antique silverware,  
 pristine future furniture pieces  
 solid state advances  
 fragment mistakes etched in mind.  
 Investigations exacerbate our relationship

unhinged. My snaking gets me kicked out.  
I still remember those piled up old newspapers,  
future books, scattered across your  
living room floor.  
Shake myself, scrape out a new home,  
cheaper, exasperated.  
I am the dustman; dustpan shakes out.

## About the Poet

Michael Lee Johnson lived 10 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 published in more than 1072 new publications, his poems have appeared in 38 countries, he edits, publishes 10 poetry sites. 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. 214 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>.

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