

Poetry Is Never Isolation

By David E. Cowen Bram Stoker Nominee for Bleeding Saffron (Weasel Press 2018)

We certainly asked for it didn't we? All those wonderfully written novels about the world going to hell. We just ate them up. Well, here we are now all living in a Josh Malerman/Stephen King novel and if we look out the window we'll likely become very unhappy. Why? Because either the sun is shining or the clouds are billowy and beautiful, glowing with the sun just so, but we have to stay inside or otherwise we too will become Malermanized and Kinged into an apocalyptic nightmare. Or so that is what it seems like some days. Nature just plugs on ignoring the fact that we are inside trying to figure out if binging on the lost episodes of *Lost in Space* is really worth it as the last bottles of wine are opened and the last slices of bread and cheese are being eaten and we desperately look online to see who will deliver more.



Isolation is not an empty chair sitting on your lawn. As writers we have the infinite capacity to not only find other worlds in the works of others but to certainly create them as well. Poetry is part of this as well. I find comfort knowing that poetry is a good friend to me right now.

The poetry of isolation is ancient. Social distancing like egrets



dancing on old logs a constant companion. But for a writer, especially perhaps for poets, social isolation is how

we often create; how we tap into the almost magical source of language and emotion that will often manifest in our words. Being alone is part of our nature as writers. Finding solace in words we love is how we persevere. So here are some poems of solitude, isolation and downright dark poems from classic (aka public domain) poets of the past with photos of my own making to cheer you up.

Sonnet 29 By William Shakespeare

When, in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,
I all alone bewep my outcast state,
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,
And look upon myself and curse my fate,
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
Featured like him, like him with friends possessed,
Desiring this man's art and that man's scope,
With what I most enjoy contented least;
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,

Haply I think on thee, and then my state,
(Like to the lark at break of day arising
From sullen earth) sings hymns at heaven's gate;
For thy sweet love remembered such wealth brings
That then I scorn to change my state with kings.



Ode on Solitude

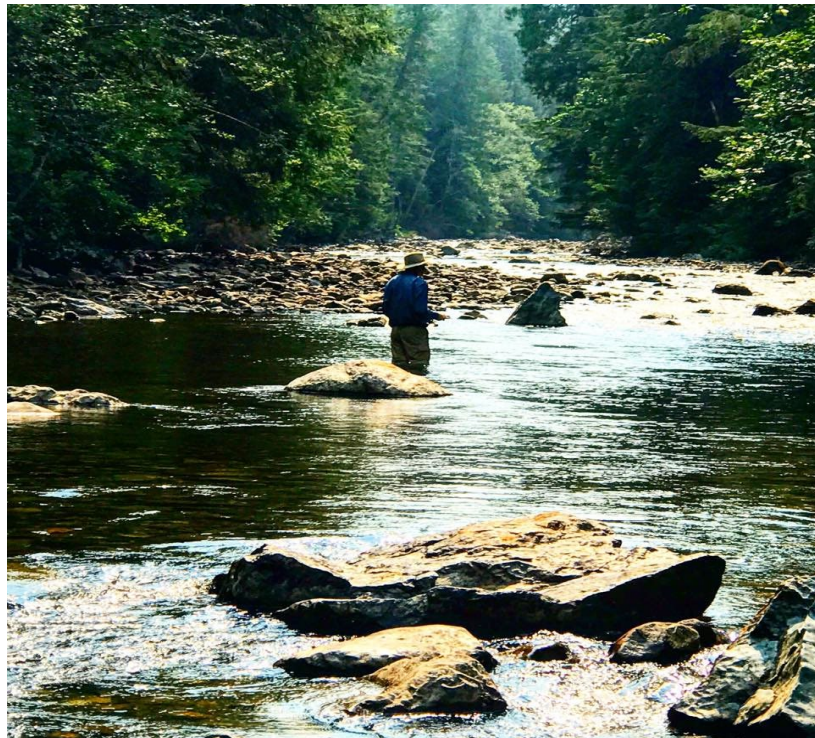
By Alexander Pope

Happy the man, whose wish and care
A few paternal acres bound,
Content to breathe his native air,
In his own ground.

Whose herds with milk, whose fields with
bread,
Whose flocks supply him with attire,
Whose trees in summer yield him shade,
In winter fire.

Blest, who can unconcernedly find
Hours, days, and years slide soft away,
In health of body, peace of mind,
Quiet by day,

Sound sleep by night; study and ease,
Together mixed; sweet recreation;
And innocence, which most does please,
With meditation.



Thus let me live, unseen, unknown;
Thus unlamented let me die;
Steal from the world, and not a stone
Tell where I lie.

“Alone”

By Edgar Allan Poe



From childhood's hour I have not been
As others were—I have not seen
As others saw—I could not bring
My passions from a common spring—
From the same source I have not taken
My sorrow—I could not awaken
My heart to joy at the same tone—
And all I lov'd—I lov'd alone—
Then—in my childhood—in the dawn
Of a most stormy life—was drawn
From ev'ry depth of good and ill
The mystery which binds me still—
From the torrent, or the fountain—
From the red cliff of the mountain—

From the sun that 'round me roll'd
In its autumn tint of gold—
From the lightning in the sky
As it pass'd me flying by—
From the thunder, and the storm—
And the cloud that took the form
(When the rest of Heaven was blue)
Of a demon in my view—

Acquainted with the Night

By Robert Frost

I have been one acquainted with the night.
I have walked out in rain—and back in rain.
I have outwalked the furthest city light.



I have looked down the saddest city lane.
I have passed by the watchman on his beat

And dropped my eyes, unwilling to explain.

I have stood still and stopped the sound of feet
When far away an interrupted cry
Came over houses from another street,

But not to call me back or say good-bye;
And further still at an unearthly height,
One luminary clock against the sky

Proclaimed the time was neither wrong nor right.
I have been one acquainted with the night.

Remember the HWA is not just a group. It's a community. If during this time you feel overwhelmed reach out to your extended HWA family. Share your thoughts and share your works.

**BE SAFE AND WELL EVERYONE AND
BE KIND TO EACH OTHER.**