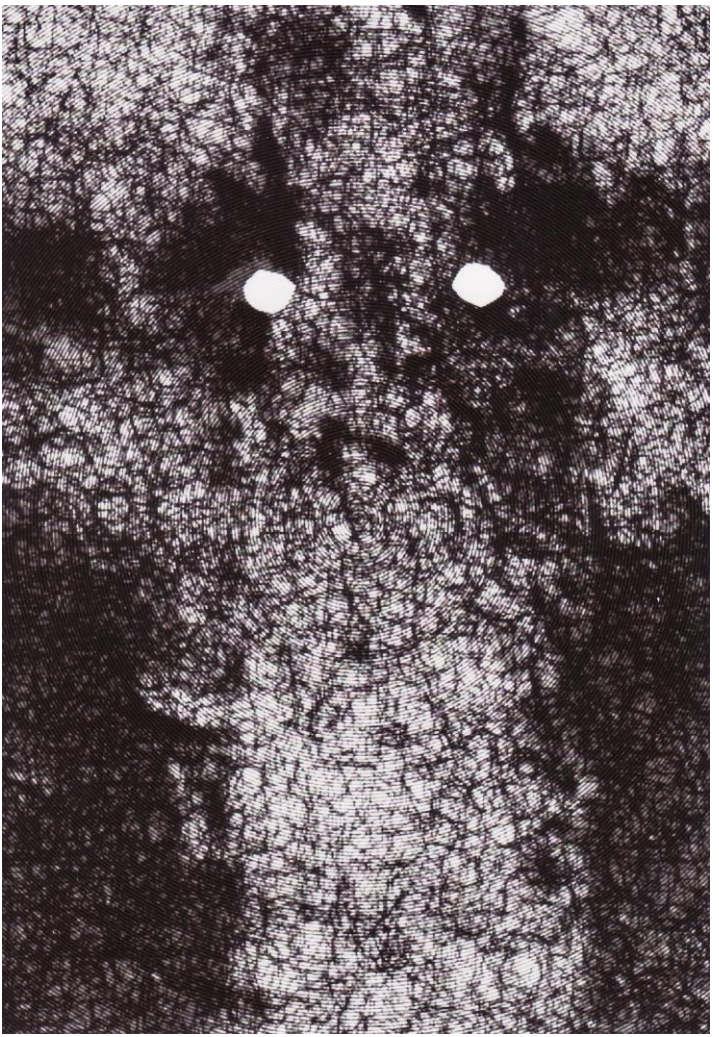
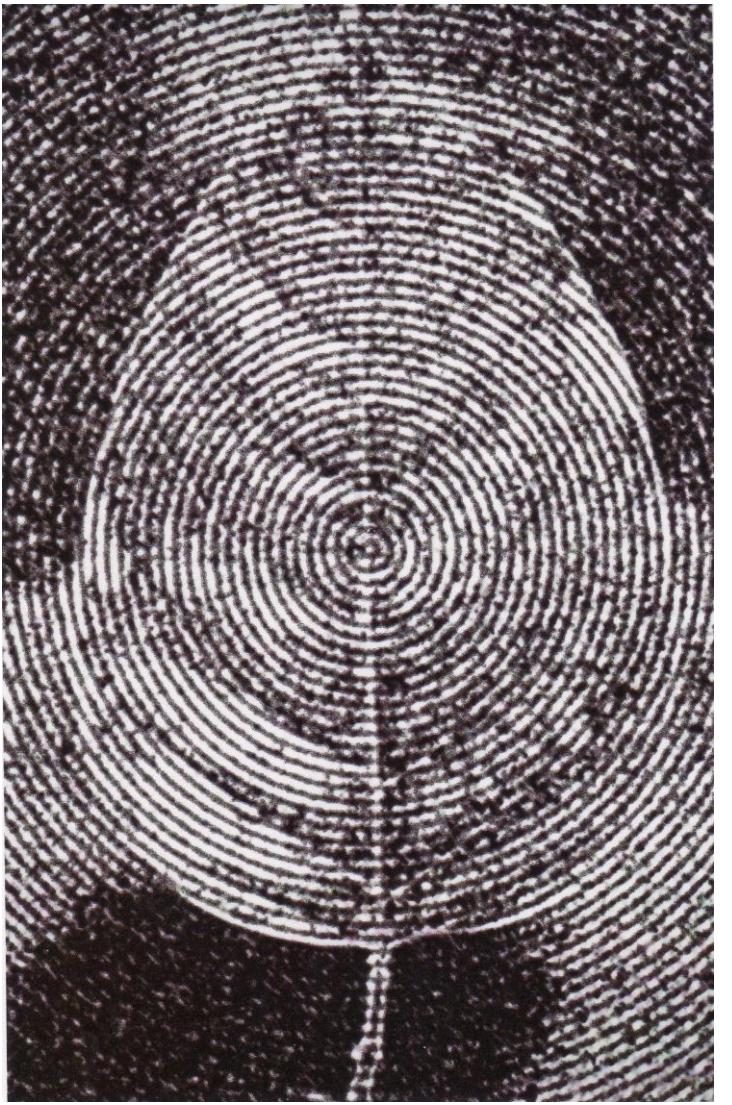
Three Poems

Robert M. Giannetti





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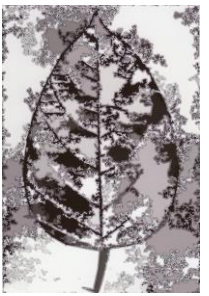

The Poetry Collection is proud to celebrate National Poetry Month with this publication of Robert M. Giannetti's *Three Poems*, the seventh in a series featuring the work of poets living in Buffalo.

2009	Bernhard Frank
2010	Ansie Baird
2011	Jorge Guitart
2012	Ross Runfola
2013	Norma Kassirer
2013	William Sylvester

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Images © 2014 by Sacha Berès.

Images by Sacha Berès: "Saturn," "Palmer-print," "Leav map," "Maze," "Porch," "Nuc-tree."

Sacha Berès's studies at the Academy of Fine Arts in Cracow, Katowice, and Wroclaw, Poland, provided the background necessary to develop his unique abstract style. He has more than sixty exhibitions worldwide to his credit and his works are housed in several museums and collections throughout Europe, Israel, North America, and the Bahamas.

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The Harrowing

The log-sided chimney frame came down today.
It looked sound to the glancing eye
but its insides were rotten to the touch—
a weathered, stately totem at the side of the cabin,
drenched in summer's rains, and dried
brittle in the fall winds and many a winter's stare.

The carpenter delivered the quietus,
tearing off some black, shaded pieces
and revealing the hidden sepulcher within—
the accumulated moisture,
wet particle board and crumbling studding,
pieces of log siding surrendering
to the rough surgery
of his hands.

The chimney was soon down,
its broken remains irreverently tossed
on the ground among the decaying leaves,
their once remarkable autumn colors
dulled and diminished, occasionally lifted
by the chilling wind
across the bare, unobstructed space
where the structure had long endured.
As dusk turned into night,
it gave little promise of what
the carpenter said he would raise anew
in that dark, empty space
at the break of dawn.

A Theme Is Not a Melody

I could never explain to him that
a theme is not a melody—
that the tuneful phrase
was not supposed to go one and on, only
a few notes here and there,
what he called "the good parts" getting lost,
driven at times under ground
suddenly surfacing at unexpected turns
as the "deep" composition moved
through mysterious passages.

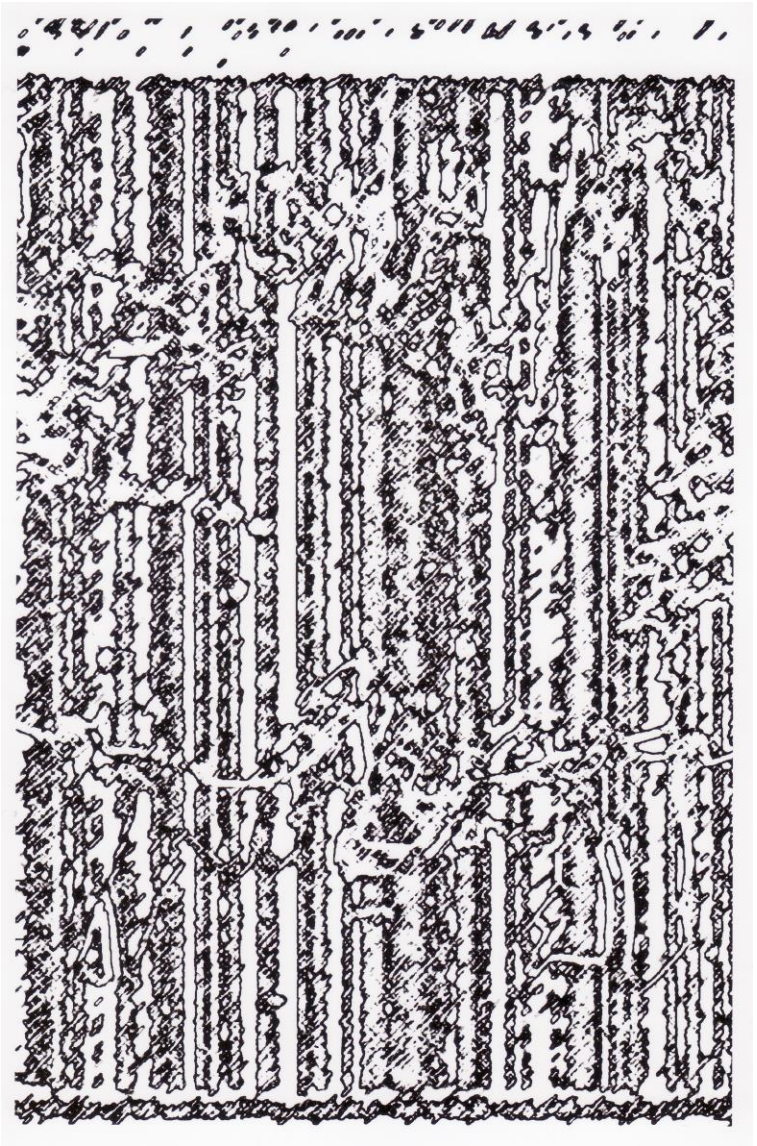
Had he lived long enough
I could have explained it
to him in terms of what
I now remember about
my childhood
and my time with him.

It was never a simple melody in my mind.
And it didn't go on and on—
a few notes remembered
here and there long after his death—
the good parts for a while lost
in a counterpoint of past and present,
their subtle strains somehow recapitulated
in good time and creating a symphonic composition,
its structure perceived only now in retrospect,
but still unresolved,
the key to its understanding modulating
note by note into the mystery
of what has yet to be played
and needs to be listened to.

Along the Road

Deep cloud-cast shadows in a bright meadow,
and back in the tree line dark depths beckoning
in a tangle of underbrush—contorted ganglia
expounding living mysteries of blood vessels,
muscle fibers and cells, whirling atomic particles
in the vast emptiness of inner space.

> And then—
> dried bare branches, dead trees,
> stick figures silhouetted against the sky,
> dramatizing in stark and scattered lines
> a timeless tale of struggle to keep from falling,
> standing for all the eternity they know
> entombed in their upright posture and purpose.



about Robert M. Giannetti

Robert M. Giannetti, of Bob's Olde Books in Lewiston, New York, received his B.A. from Niagara University and a Ph.D. in Renaissance English literature from Duquesne University. Over the course of his career he has served as an Army officer, a college teacher, a garbage man, and for several years as Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Humanities Council. He changed careers in the mid-1980s, becoming managing partner of the Atlanta office of an international human resources consulting firm. After leaving the firm he returned to his roots, refocusing his life around writing poetry and immersing himself in the study and collecting of antiquarian books.

He published his first book of poetry, *Drawn by the Creek*, in 2003, inspired by frequent stays at his cabin in the North Georgia mountains. He subsequently returned to Western New York and in 2011 published another book of poetry, *Winter Vision,* which attracted considerable attention here and abroad. Selections from his earlier work had been translated into Polish and reviewed in a lengthy critical study in a Polish periodical. Giannetti was then invited to Poland following the translation and publication of *Winter Vision* in a bilingual edition that was accorded the honor of Best Book of 2011 in Poetry at the 34th International November of Poetry festival in Poznan. A sponsored book tour to other Polish cities followed.

Giannetti's interests in the book arts and pictorial depiction of landscape led him to a guest curator's role at the Castellani Museum of Niagara University on a long-running exhibition treating the visual and literary imagery of 19th-Century Niagara tourism. He also collaborated with Atlanta artist Judy Winograd to produce award-winning broadsides combining poetry and linocut images, and was editor and book designer of the 2013 American edition of Polish poet Danuta Mucha's *Butterflies of Words.* Giannetti's volume of his *New and Selected Poems* is scheduled for publication in 2014.

His website is www.RobertMGiannetti.com.

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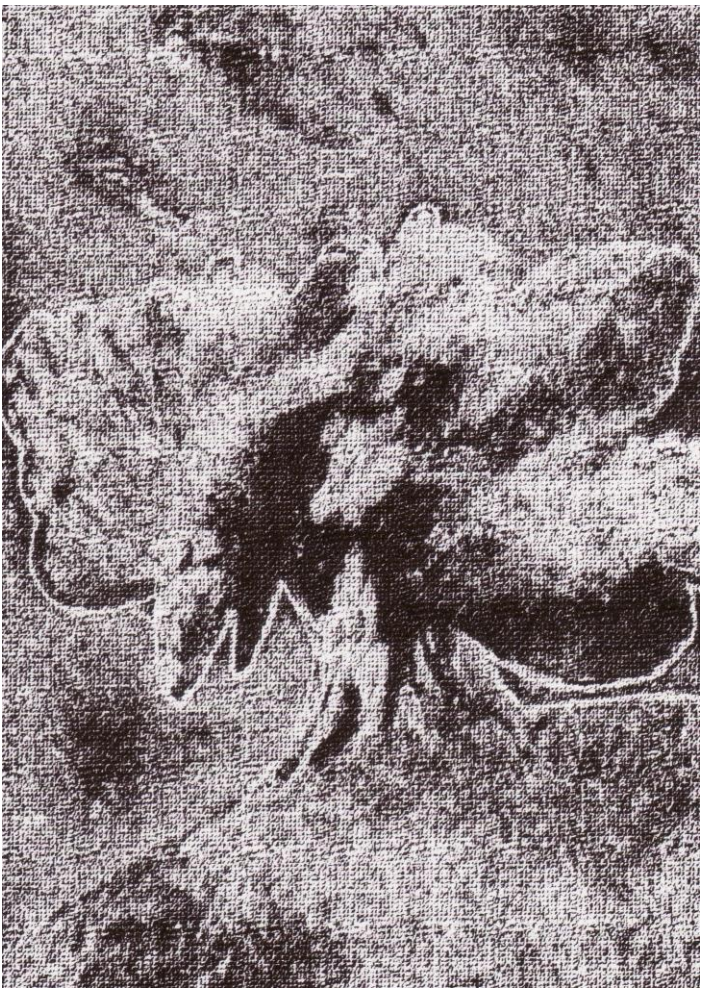
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