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Magazine for culture, art, science and education

## Evan Mantyk



Evan Mantyk is President of The Society of Classical Poets. He is a poet, writer, and English teacher in the Catskills region of New York, where he lives with his wife and two children. He previously edited and wrote for The Epoch Times and maintains a blog with the international newspaper.

### Teachers

I.

The greatest writers are the teachers;  
The paper is their pupil;  
Each sheet defiantly stretches  
With a stark blank, diffused will.

But, the teacher writes a story  
To fill minds, however plain,  
Crafting a rich tale of glory,  
Inspiring from the mundane.

So their wills are all together  
Unified in a story arc,  
Pleasing and sturdy bound leather,  
The future craftsman's bench mark.

II.

The greatest writers are the teachers,  
Humbly yielding to blank page,  
Quietly in the void searches  
For future artist or sage.

Seeking the predestined story  
That is waiting to be told,  
Focusing what now seems blurry,  
Sifting the mud from the gold.

Their students are the great heroes  
In the future's giant plot;  
Letting go of their large egos,  
Teachers know what they are not.

III.

The greatest writers are the teachers,  
They, themselves, are each a book;  
The students are the apt readers,  
At each word they take a look.

The teachers' thoughts, views, and morals  
Are the underlying theme;  
How they maneuver life's pitfalls,  
What they deem a lofty dream.

If their tale is moving, captures  
Their students' imagination,  
Then the final scene is rapture  
And helps guide future nations.

## Haiku

### The Persecution of Falun Gong

Meditating group,  
One clear crisp day at Shanghai  
In earth's sunny loop.

What is Zhen-Shan-Ren?  
Truth-Compassion-Forbearance,  
Refiner of men.

Police arrive there,  
Frosted breath flies from warped mouths,  
Evil spirits flare.

The days, weeks, and months  
Spent making dolls for export  
With smiles on their mouths.

Torture in damp dark,  
Floods of blood and brainwashing,  
He floats on faith's ark.

Communist thinking,  
Godless junk and filth piled high  
Leaves morals sinking.

He floats to a shore  
Where the soft sands of heaven  
Disrupt his sweet snore.

Awake half-dead now,  
Joyous that earth's red demon  
Didn't make him kowtow.

The majestic sun  
Behind a wall of gray smog  
On a day soon done.

A Catskill Mountains Trek

Trees infused with mist  
Enchant those just awakened  
Before their breakfast.

A new mountain trail  
On soft leaves of late autumn  
Seems destined to fail.

The deer hunter's tent  
I thought I saw was a rock  
Without an intent

From the mountain's peak,  
Two pagodas stand like Gods  
Who we humbly seek.

At Heaven I peek—  
A feeling, a subtle glow,  
A name I can't speak.

Virtue's lofty peak  
Amidst unknown wilderness  
That seems un-unique.

Descending the cliff,  
A sheer drop to the bottom  
Scares me tired and stiff.

Debris crumbles off  
As I look for a new way  
And try not to scoff.

The narrow path leads  
Down to a long shining lake  
That reflects our deeds.

## A Psalm of Christmas

What the heart of the young activist said to the psalmist  
*After Henry Longfellow's "A Psalm of Life"*

Tell me not in boring numbers  
About today's economy,  
For our consciences grow numb-er  
And become our own enemy.

Money's not real! It's an idea!  
It's a value agreed to give;  
It's a home, clothes, and a meal  
It's a means, not an end, to live!

Not an end after won elections  
Not an end after more degrees!  
But to awaken populations!  
And find something greater to be!

Money is built on more ideas  
Like on what it means to live well;  
Does it involve clean air and trees?  
Or does it make someone's life hell?

Do we care that our Christmas lights  
Are made by prisoners of faith,  
Tortured and deprived of the rights  
We value, or so we sayeth?

What about discrimination  
That occurs outside our borders  
In a trading "partner" nation  
From which our shelves are mail ordered?

The Falun Gong practitioner  
Is the world's silent elephant  
Crucified with modern horror  
That we all knowingly permit.

We can't not buy "Made in China"  
But we can speak loud our brave minds  
And let ring a meaningful change  
That makes our lives a bit sublime.

Let us then speak out loud and strong  
With words of both truth and cheer:  
“Merry Christmas, free Falun Gong,  
And have a prosperous New Year!”

## Watching Shen Yun Performing Arts

How they fly now through the air  
With such poise and splendid flair  
With a grace and force unique  
As if fueled by pure mystique!  
What’s the tale that they unfold  
Costumed bright and bravely bold  
Backdrops grand of landscapes vast  
From what milieu was this cast?

When I leave the brilliant show,  
I can feel a soft light glows,  
Lifts my feet each step I go,  
Carries me upon its flow.  
What lifts them up lifts me now;  
Art is real, I don’t know how.

## Portrait of a God

God of men who’s dressed in white,  
Beard on face of long brown hair,  
Halo pattern traced in light,  
Nimbus flowing through the air.

Glowing skin with mercy shines,  
Ancient toga wraps His frame,  
Fabric rich and much more fine,  
Than what mortals give a name.

Eyes of keenest vision sit;  
Each a crystal ball that holds  
Any deed that we commit,  
Whether it be base or bold.

Hands and arms that move in sync,  
Like the Milky Way they flow,  
Steering hidden wheels that link  
Weather, wellness, wars, and woe.

Giant scroll in hand, He swoops,  
Down to where His people are,  
Like a king to battling troops  
Speaking hope in lands afar.

Words on whispers wafting through  
Some can hear but others can't  
"Just the wind, it's nothing new."  
(Blindly grope an elephant.)

Others hear the words resound  
Holy message from the past  
Shaping future, so profound:  
"Virtue, virtue, to the last!"

## Portrait of a Goddess

Goddess sleek and draped in white,  
Flowing wisps of long brown hair,  
Halo hat of holy light,  
Cherubs floating everywhere.

Beads around her long thin neck,  
Each a world for which she cares,  
Gazing down at each small speck,  
Seeing each one's special flare.

Arm extends and points the way,  
She is leading quite a crew,  
Rushing fast without delay,  
They are building something new.

Angels come alert, aloft,  
Some that soar are seraphim,  
Wings of six, they whirl and waft,  
Waiting Her most worthy whim.

Planting pillars rising high,  
There the splendid arches meet,  
Ceiling opens up to sky,  
Birds with banners softly tweet.

Flowers fill the flying hands,  
Each is put in proper place,  
Sweet aroma's fill the land,  
Bridging heaven's time and space.

Enlightened guests gladly go,  
To the place that she prepares  
Brilliant banners let them know:  
Someone out there truly cares!

### 30 Riddles

Have a try, who am I?  
I.

My mirror image is never that far,  
I have five different points like a star,  
While I have no mouth that I can employ,  
I do make a loud sound when filled with joy.

II.

I'm an acrobat and a chatty chap,  
I travel with friends but I need no map,  
I feed my children the milk of the sea,  
And in France, I'm considered royalty.

III.

Father of a large noted family,  
I made ends meet by fixing people's keys;  
A local man of esteem when alive,  
Eighty years after my death I arrived.

IV.

I am so very dark and moist inside,  
My round structure may crumble on all sides,



Yet people love to visit every day,  
And they often take a drink on the way.

V.

The most powerful thing that can be worn,  
Yet I require little strength to be borne,  
My rarity has increased up to now,  
In England, I still make some people bow.

VI.

I'm among the world's most unwelcome guests,  
I crash whichever party I like least,  
And am known as an dirty reveler,  
Though, I am a beautiful traveler.

VII.

With a saint for a ride, I almost failed,  
Not so sure about the shape of the trail,  
But I pressed on as the road ahead curled,  
Surprised to find what seemed like a new world.

VIII.

Like a rainbow I'm gone in a short time,  
And my bow shape leaves only a moist slime,  
But unlike a rainbow, less of a blur,  
And, at least outside, only one color.

IX.

Turn me upside down and I'm right side up,  
Empty my glass and you fill up my cup,  
I'm always on time and I'm never late,  
I never go backwards at any rate.

X.

A loud sound of joy comes out of my mouth  
Or a loud sound that could cause someone's death,  
Or a loud sound that could start a contest,  
Or a loud sound that lays someone to rest.

XI.

I am the most expensive fruit on earth,  
Though from a plant I did not come forth,  
I traveled a long way from the Far East,  
One on your desk is enough for a feast.

XII.

A composer of the English Baroque,  
Although it was German that I first spoke  
And I wrote operas for Italian,  
Of language and fireworks, I was a fan.

XIII.

Sink this ship last or the war is for naught,  
All other enemies should be first caught,  
This one's the evilest looking of them,  
Shaped like infinity is its emblem.

XIV.

Fifty years after my country's grand birth,  
To the very day when its stars came forth,  
And the same day the third president died,  
Would you believe I also died? No lie.

XV.

I started a great war in ancient Greece,  
And since then my great fame has never ceased,  
A body part, drink, company, and tree,  
All get their names just from little old me.

XVI.

I was found in a lake, but stuck in stone,  
So mighty that others I have outshone,  
Helping to create a future country,  
A timeless symbol or just a story?

XVII.

How come an insect enlarged would not fly  
Yet saints from East and West rise in the sky?  
Why does an apple fall down from a tree?  
It is because of me, not gravity.

XVIII.

They call me the sun, for my great kingdom  
Has something better than plebeian freedom  
It has a planet-like path bound to me  
And the epic vision for France I see.

XIX.

My face is on a U.S. bill you've spent,  
But I am not a U.S. president,  
My skin is fairer than most that you've seen,  
I got a bad burn in 1814.

XX.

I am a fruit and I'm also a bird,  
And a people's name, does that seem absurd?  
At least all three me's are from the same place,  
A big island you can pick out from space.

XXI.

I am the master of the four seasons,  
I can turn the summer storm off or on,  
Defly pulling strings and blowing the winds,  
Such power, three hundred years couldn't rescind.

XXII.

My favorite is a hot summer's day,  
When you take a break, I go on display,  
Just don't look close at my dark ugly spots,  
If you wait too long I might start to rot.

XXIII.

Did I go blind from seeing Heaven's light?  
Did I glimpse paradise and lost my sight?

When I wrote it all down in human verse,  
Was I in human suffering immersed?

XXIV.

An auspicious gift or a deadly plot?  
If you were standing there, right on the spot,  
Would you sense the fall of a great city?  
I gallop over sin, without pity.

XXV.

I am a net for catching intruders,  
A weapon for a cold blooded murder  
An elegant plate for eating supper  
And a mode of transport that is super.

XXVI.

A Columbia University drop out,  
I had British troops to think about;  
I'm the founder of the U.S. coastguard  
And the nation's first financial steward.

XXVII.

Right, left, up, down, backwards, and upside down,  
There's no direction that I have not flown,  
Don't expect my two legs to fly in war  
The sweet life is what I am living for.

XXVIII.

Some claim that I'm nothing more than a dream  
Fiction more powerful than any cream,  
In fact, age is first a state of the mind,  
Just ask Ponce de Leon what he did find.

XXIX.

An Italian who made the flat world round,  
I made a meal that today still astounds,  
And is subject of countless replicas,  
But contains no spices from America.

XXX.

I used to fly poorly, but now I swim,  
Sometimes I would cross the road on a whim,  
I'm medicine for the sick, stuck in bed,  
Even though I, myself, float around dead.

ANSWER KEY: I. Hand II. Dolphin III. Bach IV. Chocolate Chip Cookie (Chocolate Cookie also acceptable) V. Royal Crown VI. Meteor (or Comet) VII. Christopher Columbus VIII. Banana IX. Hourglass X. Gun XI. Apple Computer XII. Handel XIII. Eight Ball XIV. John Adams XV. Apple XVI. Excalibur XVII. A Molecule XVIII. The Sun King or Louis XIV XIX. The White House XX. Kiwi XXI. Vivaldi XXII. Watermelon XXIII. John Milton XXIV. The Trojan Horse XXV. A spider web XXVI. Alexander Hamilton XXVII. A Hummingbird XXVIII. Fountain of Youth XIX. Leonardo Da Vinci XXX. The Chicken in Chicken Noodle Soup

## A Godly Painting

On "Cimabue's Celebrated Madonna is carried in Procession through the Streets of Florence" By Sir Frederic Leighton

A godly painting held over their heads  
As they process through a street in Florence,  
Each face is free from manic glee or dread  
And transcends with a tranquil tolerance;  
They are transformed by the art's deep meaning,  
The ideals that they uphold in their lives  
Of what is proper and what is demeaning;  
Are those mere humans or Gods who walk by?

The cloud's shape mimics the foreground's alignment,  
Forming a passageway from ground to sky  
That leads out of our human confinement  
Beyond a life bound to be sick and die.

But, none truly traveled it, none were Gods,  
It is we who must this new way now plod.

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