

## Four Poems by Bernard Foyuth

### **Francesca's Room**

After *Francesca's Room* by Mel Leipzig (US), 1991

Deceptively simple, to note the clutter  
that steadily, if not oppressively, reflects our life  
back on us. But I think of how important  
the movie posters, the empty glass, the burnt  
orange phone with its twisted cord,  
etc. etc. can be, defining Francesca as much  
as the paint that fills her contour lines.  
If we were to remove her from the scene  
like a collage asset, cut her shape from the white  
bedsheet, she would be diminished;  
the room is a part of her, an emanation  
like a candle's scent or an ultrasound of the soul  
inside. Looking out my window at this morning's  
new fallen snow, I'm struck by the way  
it isolates and oversimplifies each thing: blue house,  
dark SUV, as if they were educational objects  
in a book with few words and sheer white backgrounds.  
F is for Francesca, and that's it, move on to G, to H,  
but with the room around her, she focuses  
a gestaltic essence, and a commerce of light  
brims over its details.

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### **Ode to a Community College**

After *In the Hallway, MCCC (Study)* by Mel Leipzig (US), 1987

The story told here is a story of light,  
how it spills across hallways, expanding space  
in liquid geometries like a trick of mirrors,  
planes of light reflecting our many potentials, revealing  
the intimate light in each of us and our everyday  
splendor. Too much light, but ever changing  
in partnership with labile shadows. Icarus rises again  
and again to this light, not falling to ambition,  
but only failing as humans must on the wavelengths  
of continual progress. This is the light of proud  
work, a textbook's gloss, the martial radiance of caffeine;  
light in the mops of custodians; the unflagging support  
of maintenance staff; nursing students' brains

fizzing with mnemonic devices for the next exam;  
even the light of commerce, when the burgeoning profit  
is shared. A generous light that we pay forward.

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### **Factory**

After *NJTPK Factory — Exit 13* by Liz Aubrey (US), 2012

Here we see it as they see it  
in their dreams after a long shift,  
the factory swaying, tilting  
ponderously, like a sequence of AI-  
generated images revising a picture's  
contours frame by frame, a languid  
dance of fidgeting angles, half-balanced  
stases staggering into each other,  
fatigued, ice melting but always solid.  
They dissolve into its hypnotic machinery  
each morning and each night, before  
an endless horizon weighted with ashes  
piled up since the Gilded Age.  
Now it morphs into computer circuitry's  
arcana, an idol with the keen, irregular  
eyes of a trickster god, channeling  
lives and careers shrunk down to byte size.  
They are in flux, revolving and revolving  
in the proverbial revolving door,  
nothing definite but their output, white  
smoke frothing from restless chimneys,  
a toupee for a gigantic head.

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### **Idyll**

After *Backyards in Gloucester* by Linda Osbourne (US), 2020

Late afternoon lets fall its iambs here  
as well, the unassuming sunlit space  
between backyards. I had some other phrase  
in mind for what the metric feet of light  
were doing; now it's vanished like so many  
sublime things that deserve our memory:  
a splash of wind-tossed branches on the air  
contrasting with a bush's knotty darkness;  
the blue-grey deepening of boundless light

preserved here only as an afterimage,  
a hypnopompic remnant of a dream  
so thin the pebbled surface of the canvas  
shows through it, as if haughtily refusing  
to be ignored. But still an afterimage  
is precious, and the dream itself enough.

**Bernard Foyuth** was born and raised in New Jersey, lives here still, and has been writing poetry for many years. In the academic arena, he holds a BA in Written Arts from Bard College and an MFA in Poetry from the Iowa Writers' Workshop. He currently works at Mercer County Community College as a writing tutor, and he loves helping nurture students' creative as well as academic efforts.

## A Poem by Mark Krajnak

### *Asbury Park After Dark*

After *Silverball, Asbury Park* by Marge Miccio (2021)

The waves crash outside.  
But inside, it's all  
ping ping  
clang clang  
click click.  
The old vices  
telling their stories once again.  
Lighting up faces. Eating quarters  
like the Tums the front counter attendant consumes.  
Springsteen called them  
*dusty pleasure machines*.  
Now they are vintage works of art,  
with flippers and bells.  
It's midnight in Asbury Park.  
A salty tradewind blows in  
from the sea. The smell  
of sweet crepes creeps  
through the air.  
Do you know where your dog is?

Mark Krajnak is a visual raconteur inspired by light, shadow, people, and attitude. For more than twenty years, Mark specialized in corporate and digital communications for major pharmaceutical companies, traveling the world to help tell their stories. Now semi-retired and focused on his photography, Mark believes in the power of the image. For more than fifteen years, as JerseyStyle Photography, he's been a freelance photographer, specializing in portraiture, corporate events, and live music. As a writer/editor, he's contributed articles to *Asbury Park*

*Vibes*, *Backstreets.com*, *Letters2You.net*, the Bruce Springsteen Center for American Music and has published a photography blog since 2008. Find it at [jerseystylephotography.wordpress.com](http://jerseystylephotography.wordpress.com)

## Three Poems by Barbara Krasner

### **The Quiet Ones**

After *Small Garden Flowers* by Linda Osbourne (US), 2019

In the small garden behind our house, that U-shaped bed below the concrete retaining wall, I finger the petals of foxglove and delphinium, telling them to sit up, spruce up. They have just as much majesty as those red roses vined across the garage. The hollyhocks are here to support them all. Yes, they will all die. The American beauties will return with vengeance. Dramatic exits and rebirth don't matter.

Quiet ones that fade  
reappear as never left  
Beds always ready.

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### **Shadows en Plein Air**

After *Mel Painting the Garden State Sculpture* by Terri McNichol (US), 2016

He is all sunshine in his yellow jacket, the light beaming down on his hat and back. As he paints, holding the canvas, his shadow butterflies in grisaille. He sits on the edge of his metal folding chair, not bothered by discomfort, only by the certainty of fading light.

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### **The Sentinels**

After *Four Students* by Mel Leipzig (US), undated

I.

Each student sits sentinel to the canvas, because no one can protect like the creator. Each student awaits judgment of line, shape, composition, color, texture. Each student wonders what might have been done differently, better?

II.

Tom, in the orange shirt, is open to criticism. Isiah will listen and then decide for himself. Tonya is just regretting all the coffee's she drunk. Can she wait it out or rush to the ladies' now? Rafael knows what he's painted is good, Even if no one else thinks so.

III.

Lush summer trees sway in the breeze. Only for them does time move.

**Barbara Krasner** is a New Jersey-based poet of ten collections, including [Poems of the Winter Palace](#) (Bottlecap Press, 2025), [The Night Watch](#) (Kelsay Books, 2025), [Insomnia: Poems after Lee Krasner](#) (Dancing Girl Press, 2026), and the forthcoming *The Wanderers* (Shanti Arts, 2026), and *Memory Collector* (Kelsay Books, 2027). She serves as co-editor, *Kelsey Review*, and teaches in the English and History departments of Mercer County Community College, where she also is director, Mercer County Holocaust, Genocide & Human Rights Education Center.