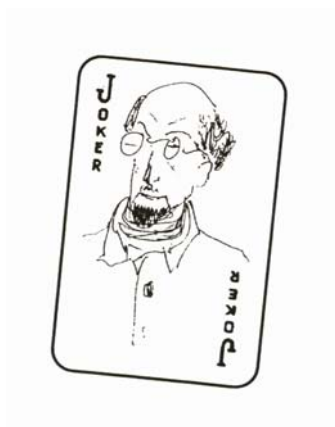


THREE POEMS

BERNHARD FRANK



T H R E E P O E M S

BERNHARD FRANK

The Poetry Collection is proud to celebrate National Poetry Month with this publication of Bernhard Frank's *Three Poems*, the first of a planned yearly series featuring the work of poets living in Buffalo. Bernhard Frank has had a long and successful career as a teacher, poet, translator, and editor, and the Collection thanks him for the donation of the *Buckle* Collection, which began in 1984, and for his support through the *Buckle* Endowment. His gifts ensure that the Poetry Collection will continue to serve as contemporary poetry's library of record.

Cover image of Bernhard Frank by Ann Colley from *Buckle* 3 (Fall/Winter 1999).

"For Persephone" previously appeared in *News from the Republic of Letters*.

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FOR PERSEPHONE

Half the year you spend on
the Vineyard breathing-in
the salt spray the glo-worm
glitter of morning's ocean.
At noon sunscreen clad you lie
amid Dionysus' clones along
the strip of beach basted
roasting. At night amid the
glitterati serving grape leaves
& ouzo you listen to the owls.

The other half you return to us
in this our dank and blustery
city regather like rags about you
the friends you had abandoned
for warmer climes surprised
that some have scattered cooled
or died. Your mother failed to tell
that time in the nether region goes on
without you that each year will
find you a little more estranged
a little more forgotten that
one day you will return an alien
to a foreign land.

WELCOME TO CASINO NIAGARA, or How to Spend a Rainy Day

The water, under a Jack-the-Ripper
fog, crashes in free-fall; a fine-
sifted rain slicks the deserted
pavements.

But follow me in from the cold,
past the palatial gates of Casino Niagara,
where free coffee and spine-tingling
entertainment await:

Guards are
here, but no barbed wire; the sheep
voluntarily come to the trough.

The lights—
northern—blink in nervous staccato,
smoke swirls from flayed victims—
a sea of grey heads ashen faces:
Despair etched on boredom.

They do their aerobics on phallic
handles—pull & pray—puff—puff—
pull & hope: Here purgatory paradise
and hell intermingle.

A bell lets loose,
lights go amok, indifferent tokens
clatter down, down the cataracts of
envy into the maelstrom of greed.

HYPOTEARs

The doctors say that
I've run out of
tears which (at my
age) hardly surprises

having seen worlds
collide & gene-
rations perish Ducts
like wells do have

their limits & years of
drought Well, you
understand. They say
I can purchase them

though for \$13.69 at
any Rite-Aid drug store
& hardly know the d

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About Bernhard Frank and the *Buckle* Collection

After receiving a PhD from the University of Pittsburgh, Bernhard Frank taught comparative literature and creative writing at Buffalo State College from 1965 to 2000. His books of poetry include *American Gothic*, *The Homer Ladies' Journal*, *The Print of Memory*, and *Louder Than the Dark*. Frank has also published the novels *John in the Wilderness* and *Mandolin with Rain* as well as translations of Hebrew poets, Rilke, Baudelaire, and others. Recently, he began the Tippling Scholar Editions, the first three of which bring together his writings on Dickinson, Rilke, and Thomas Mann.

Frank edited the semi-annual magazines *Buckle*: *A Poetry Journal* and *Buckle &* in Buffalo, New York, from 1977 to 1982 and from 1998 to 2006, respectively. The titles for these magazines come from the poem "The Windhover" by Gerard Manley Hopkins. All ten issues of *Buckle* and seventeen issues of *Buckle &* included poetry, poetry translations into English, and illustrations, and published such authors as Dennis Maloney, Marge Piercy, Jon Daunt, William Dickey, Alice Fulton, John Tagliabue, Joan Colby, and John M. Bennett. The *Buckle* Collection contains editorial correspondence, manuscripts, business records, and other items from both of these literary magazines as well as books and magazines inscribed to Frank.

Published in an edition of 300 copies,
of which the first 50 have been numbered and signed by
the poet.

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