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RICK DAVIS

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# WALKING

(A Poetry Chapbook)

Rick Davis

## WALKING

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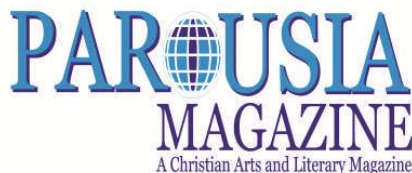
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## Dedication

**T**his collection is dedicated with unending love, respect and admiration to my loving wife, Marianne.

## Author's Note

**T**his short collection of poems is inspired by my simple daily activities while living in Chicago, as well as by prayer meditation. As several poems are the result of walking through my neighborhood, I have named this work “Walking.” I am grateful to our living God who, I pray, has guided by hand in these writing simple poems.

May the blessings be!

Rick Davis

Chicago, Illinois, USA

## Foreword

**I**n *WALKING*, Rick Davis seeks Divine presence in dreams and by rivers, in fireflies and mud, and while using technology ranging from a telephone to the artists' brushes and canvases.

The peaceful, reflective tone of the collection calls to mind Psalm 46:10: He says, "Be still, and know that I am God . . ." (NIV). In "Morning Prayer," the speaker wants only to whisper his love to God, ". . . but I fight/This crisis/Of distraction." This theme is carried through in "back porch:" — which begins with listening to and watching Creation until the speaker is at last moved to song.

Exquisite interchange of the senses begins the opening piece ("writing a poem:"): "i listen with my eyes/sensing the shadowed deer at dusk." Rick Davis has gifted readers with a volume of tranquil poems, yet he acknowledges "a bleeding world" (from "walking near northwestern university :"). Perhaps if the world listened closely, it would hear "...the earth/Delivering Divine words" (from "Dreaming of Eden").

Rick Davis lives in the Logan Square neighborhood of Chicago with his wife. He graduated from Northeastern Illinois University, and has completed graduate programs at St. John's University, School of Practical Theology, Adler University, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary at Northwestern University, and other graduate schools. He has worked in urban ministry, and market research. He is a member of Kimble Avenue United Church of Christ.

Chicago, like any other busy, worldly place, isn't beyond God's reach. Rick Davis's poems are sure to quench the reader's thirst for Him.

*Sylvia Riojas Vaughn*  
*March 2018*

**Sylvia Riojas Vaughn** of Plano, Texas, is a Pushcart Prize and Best of the Net nominee. She has been selected as a Houston Poetry Fest Juried Poet three times. She belongs to the Dallas Poets Community.

Her work appears in *Red River Review*, *Triadæ*, *HOUSEBOAT*, *Diálogo*, *Desde Hong Kong: Poets in conversation with Octavio Paz*, *Bearing the Mask: Southwestern Persona Poems* (Dos Gatos Press, 2016), *The Arachneed Journal*, *Highland Park Poetry's The Muses' Gallery*, *Dragon Poet Review*, and anthologies and journals in the U.S. and abroad. Her play, *La Tamalada* was produced in Fort Worth.

## writing a poem:

i listen with my eyes  
sensing the shadowed deer at dusk.

loving shores beckon  
guiding my spirit towards discovery.

the page is a harbor  
for the great darkness within

but the sun floats over the meadow.  
all things are right.

waves lap.  
life seems like a dream.



## within:

counting my breath  
i touch the secret logic

of abstract wind  
which is a warming magnet

in abstract snow –  
noticing fresh cut roses

scented and cool  
and a view of the sea

sloping towards blue divinity.  
my songs greet the sun

with fragrant sound  
dropping mind's logic

for thoughts reside  
in the mouth of night.

i sing an ode to the peacock  
blue of noon

watching autumn leaves  
fall from my brow.

my soul spreads  
like beneficent wings

waking peacefully  
in golden starlight.

## Wednesday Meditation

In pale morning  
i rest in the recliner  
closing my eyes –

observing thoughts –  
feeling like an unaccustomed stone  
tangled in mesh root.

I begin to sense peace  
like moving air in murmuring trees --

feeling euphoric  
like a priest losing innocence  
in prayerful contemplation

once again observing –

seeing that reason and emotion  
weave imaginary graves.

Filled with grace-filled love  
i become a twilight traveler

flying through ocean sky.

I breathe ethereal clouds  
and playfully become

living air.

## The Visit

Sitting in the small office  
I wear a dark ring of eternal morning.  
There is soft noise from the kitchen.  
A blue-grey bird pecks at ice  
In the back yard.

There is soft noise again  
So, I open the door  
While Blanco, the feral cat we feed  
Scratches eagerly at pane glass  
Revealing God's gentle right hand

And while I'm allergic  
I let him in and he moves quickly  
Shaking his head back and forth  
As our house is full of talkative stars

And as he walks into the office  
He brings life into the walls  
And hatches shadows.  
Outside, the cardinal makes  
An approving sound.

He walks cautiously now  
Through blue dark sublime  
And sits in the recliner.

As i watch him  
I notice that he is wearing  
A flower of faith

And wings of wisdom.

## Memory

I was six and we had company  
On the wavy August front yard.  
The sun was setting  
And stars were like fireflies  
And as I played in the garden  
I touched a rose blossom  
Which was like touching a star –  
Now smelling an aromatic vine  
Grown with the lace of love.

I grabbed the hose, turned the water on  
Watering flowers with faith  
As shadows wavered  
While I noticed a girl's  
Fluttering butterfly eyes  
As the adult voices  
Drifted into laughter –

The moment was so beautiful  
That clock hands stopped  
While I bent low  
Praying over the sprouting garden.

## Dreaming of Eden

Falling asleep softly  
I watch fresh new leaves  
On the twigs of trees.  
An owl is perched on the  
Bony branch above.  
The sun sets  
And whirling waters flow  
From the crystal clear brook.

Lying on the thick blue-green wild grass  
I watch stars  
Breathing in Eden's millionth star  
And my heart laughs  
Watching the sailing light of clouds.

Ascending seabirds fly  
And the cooling breeze  
Plays secret celestial music –

Great is the earth  
Delivering Divine words

As I notice delicate blue blossoms  
On a sleepy winding tree.

## NOTES DURING A PHONE CALL

As we speak  
On the phone  
I cannot grasp  
My overwhelming  
Love of you –

My speech  
Is merely a  
Dimly lit lantern  
And I wonder  
How you came  
To love me,  
As surely my love  
Must flow freely  
In action

But all that  
I have to offer you  
Is love,  
And nothing more,

But I suppose  
I do have my words –  
They are a natural flow  
But are from the mind –  
My speech  
Can never reflect  
The undifferentiated love  
I have for you.

Words alone  
Cannot convey  
My innermost feelings  
But I find  
Nature to be an appealing  
Metaphor –

I see you  
In every cloud formation  
And hear your voice  
In a bird's golden song.

Because of you  
My life's mission  
Is fulfilled –  
I have come to know  
That love is the only  
Purpose for life.

On the surface  
I may appear calm  
And even aloof –  
Indeed, this is survival  
But my heart  
Beats radically and wildly  
At the sound of your voice.

The mirror  
Does not accurately  
Reflect who I am.  
On the surface  
I look ordinary –  
A nondescript guy  
With nondescript glasses

But inside  
I feel nothing  
But quiet love  
That cannot  
Be conveyed  
Within the four walls  
Of my living space,

Instead  
I find myself  
Falling through  
An interior cave  
And as I fall  
Faster and faster  
I find that I have  
Surrendered to your love  
As well as my own.

I have suffered  
Intensely without you –  
My memory  
Has never been short  
When it comes to the  
Muddy and maddening  
Abuses  
That I have known.

You do not loose  
Your charm  
When it comes  
To my heart  
Any more than  
Summer wildflowers  
Could loose  
Their beauty.

So when I sleep  
At night  
I am aware of  
Divine blessings  
That brought you  
To me.

I am open sky  
And a clear reflection  
Of loving mind.



## up at dawn:

shuffling near the lake  
quietness shakes

the wavering air.  
purple lilies sigh.

sun and moonlight  
blend in watery shadows.

the creamy moon  
is infinite.

gusts of wind sing.  
a woman with heavy

pale make-up  
exits a high-rise

and scowls  
at creation —

burning like a necklace  
of jewels.

peaceful sky.  
i jog,

lost in thought  
and unhurried running.

there is water  
in the moon.

## the creative impulse:

i feel mildly uncomfortable  
as if i am wearing

wool socks  
on a warm day.

it is a need  
to create

but beginnings  
are hard –

it is difficult  
to find

words for my feelings.  
trying to compose

it is as though  
my legs are as rigid

as stone  
and timber.

i fall into a rhythm  
and words begin

to fly –  
forming stanzas

and it is  
like watching saplings

become trees  
forming from

the unconscious  
darkened underbrush.

with pencil  
i paint

a drift of  
snow white blossoms

of the orange tree.  
words dry

like watermarks  
and are a miniature sun.

## Morning Prayer

I lay in bed  
Whispering to You.  
My love of You  
Feels like joints  
And bones.

As I lay  
In twilight half-sleep  
I eclipse You  
With tender feelings.

The sweat of life  
Always continues  
Like a cruel  
Walk into sun

But in bed  
I allow reason  
To slide away

And am bathed  
In a cascading shower  
Of blue rain.

My mind  
Keeps wandering  
But I fight  
This crisis  
Of distraction

And continue  
To listen to  
My quiet breath

Allowing love  
To fill the bedroom –

I am famous  
For loyalty  
And grab You  
As if You could

Be mine.

I pop my neck  
And turn on my  
Right side

Asking for forgiveness  
Like an  
Old Protestant  
Crawling toward You.

I squeeze  
Into a secret channel –

Like entering  
A birth canal

And in my soul-prayer  
I vacate my body  
With hushed bliss

Loosing heaviness,  
Feeling as though  
My body is stolen  
From a morgue

But just as quickly  
I return to flesh

And shiver  
Like a plague  
Of insects.

I slowly open  
Sleepy eyes  
To the smell  
Of freshly brewed  
Coffee

And swallow,  
Quickly leaving  
My higher self,

Wishing that I  
Could stay in bed  
And pray  
All day.

## painting:

in reverence  
i approach canvass

with a wide brush  
and allow it to speak,

spreading layers  
of violet yawning sky.

i float into heaven  
and am a prophet

of an open day.  
painting is constant prayer,

creating bewildering darkness  
as light and blackness meet.

the brush swirls  
creating hanging gardens

and a rippling hill.  
wind rocks the pier

and the moon is young.  
i step back

admiring swirls  
i've created,

noticing shadows  
that are bright as glass.

## dream 2:

the wind is warm.  
embracing a field

of flowers.  
a wounded blade

of grass.  
climbing a blue stairway.

a tree moves  
in wind.

a corridor through  
banks of trees.

red swirling  
dust clouds.

faint air shimmers.  
indigo sky.



## impressions while walking:

a small saffron flower.  
orchard's blossom.

a flower of mud.  
cherry blossoms.

stunning light.  
intolerable skies.

graceful dove.  
vertigo of comprehension.

## walking in rain:

the wind  
is quiet in trees.

a sixth sense  
guides me.

a rustle of wings  
and a tangle

of vines and leaves.  
hipsters with

spiritual anorexia  
block crumbling sidewalks.

i am tuned  
to the earth's music

and voiceless ground.  
fantasies like glass

bubble to consciousness.  
small sharp rocks.

colors are like  
vibrant crayons.

perfectly  
wet grass.

## night walk:

hours diverge  
as I walk

exhausted down  
twinkling evanston streets

listening to  
God's shimmering sounds.

nature rings  
a silent bell

and in street light  
i catch

a shadow of a bird,  
listening in reverence

to the wind's  
long sounds.

moon's blue craters  
in darkest dark.

random papers  
slide across the curb.

silver and blueberry  
stained glass.

dry  
autumn moon.

9/21/1995, Evanston, IL  
9/23/2016, Chicago

## walking near northwestern university:

taxis trumpet  
together.

pine necks  
stretch towards

busy clouds.  
the seamless face

of a grey-silver  
cement pool.

cleansing scents  
of a flamboyant forest –

the woods  
are starkly quiet.

a student  
streams by –

her rugged face  
paints

a sunbeam gaze.  
a harshly manicured

garden is a  
western metaphor.

strutting scholars chatter,  
not lamenting

that they are  
idealists

in a bleeding world.

i stop

for a pop

feeling

the world's tension

with poetic attachment.

## City Walk

As I glide  
Down city sidewalks  
I hear my wavelength  
Of gentle peace.

Bent light rays  
Recline  
Touched by some  
Mystical irony

And as I smile  
At neighborhood walkers  
I am refreshed  
To find the soft days  
Touched by the flower's  
Scent.

My movements are gentle  
Occurring in some urban  
Dreamscape.

So this walk  
Becomes a meditation --  
A place of pause,

And glancing upward  
I breathe the sky in.

As I shuffle back home  
I sense another  
Poem beginning --

It is God  
And the Liberal Arts  
Whispering to my  
Singing mind.

In this beginning  
Of evening --  
The dusk  
Keeps perfect silence.

## hazy memory from age 3:

a lady in mink  
dripping in gold

with plasticity  
of the soul

hands a haunted  
street person

a folded bill.  
maple branches sway

as a teenage girl  
with a short skirt

and compliant hips  
smiles at me.

distant windless hills.  
sadness is drowned

by the earth.  
perfection.

## solitude:

in night  
i slide over cement

noticing names  
carved in pavement.

the city  
is livid with lights

so I warn  
the stars,

speaking to  
floating leaves.

traffic. muffled voices.  
car horns.

i want to  
close my eyes

and listen.  
the wind nips

at my face  
and so i head

back to my  
warm apartment

with the helicopter  
hum of anticipation.

love  
grows in my brain.



## bar:

the bartender  
is sickly pale

toying with his  
badly trimmed beard

waiting on  
isolated souls –

his hands  
quicker than spiders.

he eyes me  
suspiciously

as i insist  
that i only want

a bottle of water.  
“water is like breasts”

he mumbles hoarsely,  
watching men,

drunk with disappointment,  
whom i avoid seeing

with the cool removal  
of cultivated arrogance.

i fidget  
under a round

stale light  
watching whispering dust

hang in heavy air.  
a glittering woman

with cashmere hands  
and expensive blue eyes

walks in,  
looks around

and scampers out.  
also anxious to leave,

i head outside  
breathing deeply,

cleansed by  
damp river air.

## back porch:

morning begins  
with mysterious

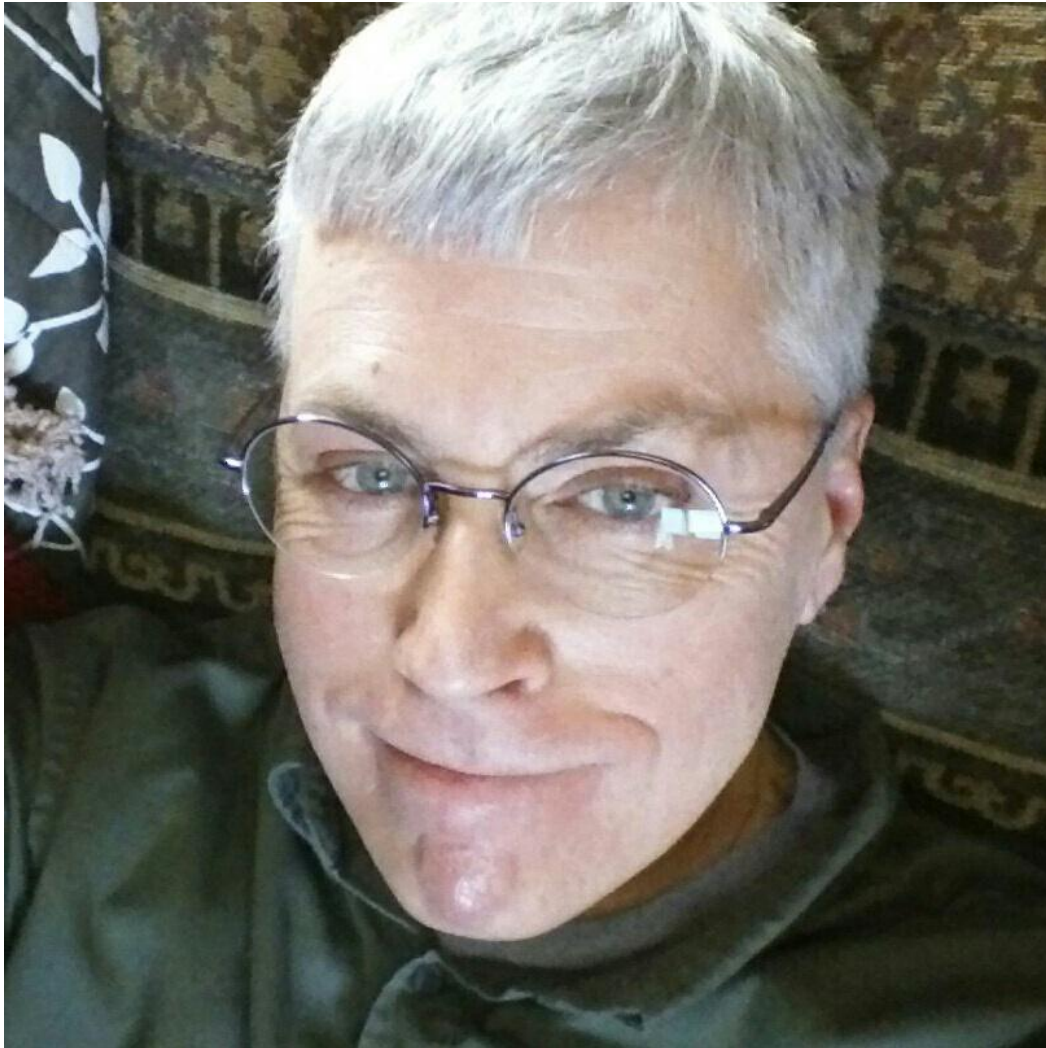
crooked violet-black shadows.  
orange white sun

is my alibi  
as i listen

to the music  
of sparrows and squirrels.

watching mystic sky  
i sing

with heaven's  
glowing applause.



## About The Author

**Rick Davis** lives in the Logan Square neighborhood of Chicago with his wife. He graduated from Northeastern Illinois University, and has completed graduate programs at St. John's University, School of Practical Theology, Adler University, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary at Northwestern University, and other graduate schools. He has worked in urban ministry, and market research. He is a member of Kimble Avenue United Church of Christ.

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Rick Davis's poems are sure to quench the readers' thirst for Him.

Sylvia Riojas Vaughn  
Pushcart Prize and Best of  
the Net Nominee  
3 Times Houston Poetry  
Fest Juried Poet

"Decorated with rich diction and elegant imagery, Rick Davis walks us through refreshing, nostalgic and therapeutic life's journey in verse. In *Walking*, the spontaneity of rhythm deeply stirs our thoughts and feelings. What a riveting work of art!"

Kariuki wa Nyamu  
Award-winning Kenyan  
poet, scriptwriter, critic,  
editor, educator and co-  
author of "When Children  
Dare to Dream"

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