

[Home](#)

[Spring 2010](#)

[Winter 2010](#)

[Autumn 2009](#)

[Summer 2009](#)

[Spring 2009](#)

[Autumn 2008](#)

[Summer 2008](#)

[Spring/Summer  
2008](#)

[Winter/Spring  
2008](#)

[Editor's Note](#)

[Guidelines](#)

[Contact](#)

# Two Poems

*by Russell Evatt*

## Man as Memory

Except now he is

the boy, watching television on a Sunday  
with his father in-between trips outside

to play football with the neighborhood  
kids. It was fun, certainly, until he stood

before his father's recliner  
and held out his hand, pinkie finger

snapped harshly out of line from the others.  
It was numb, as if his hand did not

exist—except it was in front of him,

shaking. The father wrapped his arms  
around the boy so he couldn't move

as the pinkie was popped into place.  
And then this hate for football as he looked

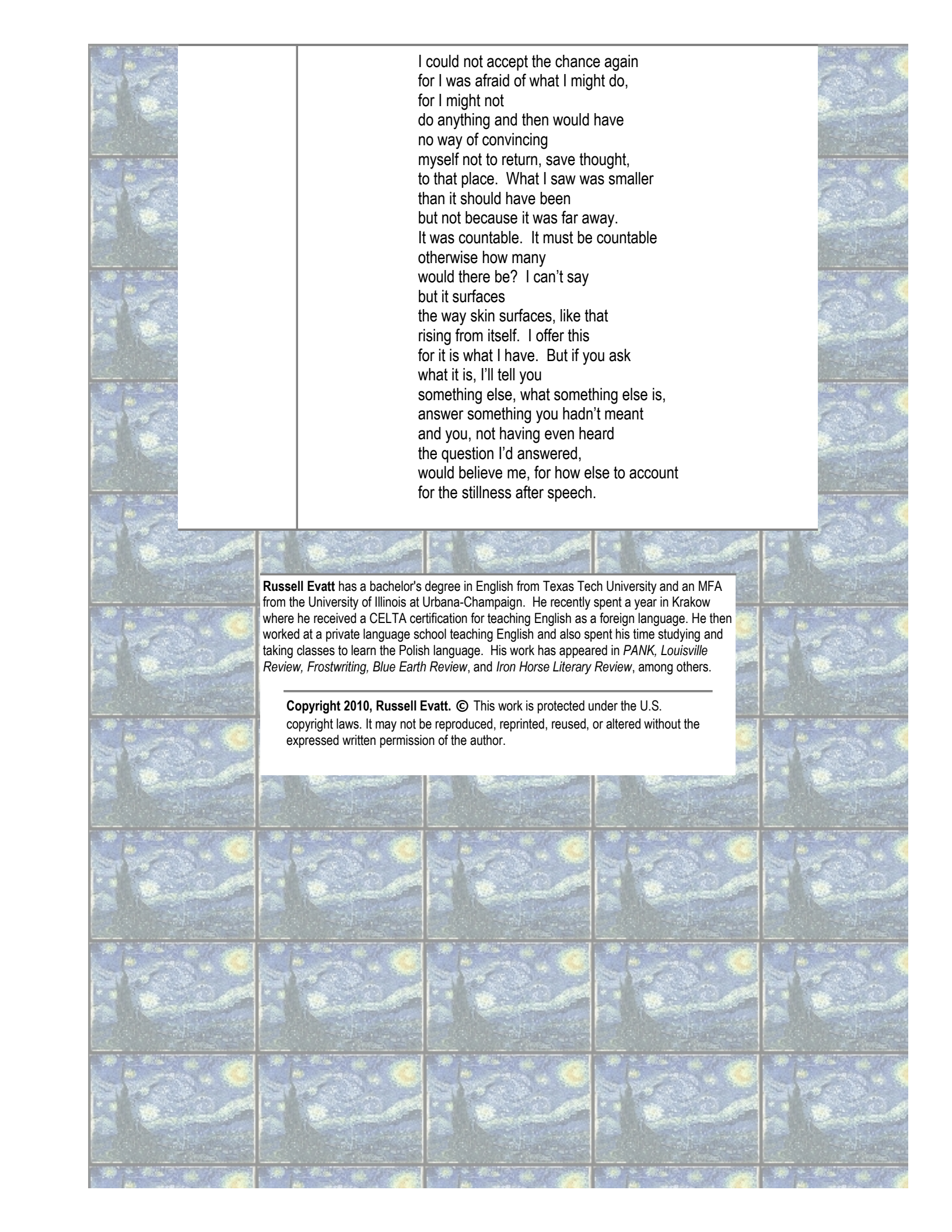
at his hand, and now it hurt. But  
this would not last, not even until next Sunday.

With fingers taped together he'd be back  
outside, however timidly, playing again

because that's just what he needed,  
to get out there, not let anything stop him.

## Lack

When I could no longer see  
what I wanted, I turned  
my gaze to the ground, so as not to step  
on the curled snake, that soft  
stiffness I had envisioned my foot  
pressing on in dreams and picked  
my way back, not looking to see  
where I was going but watching my  
feet instead, always moving away  
from what I wanted.



I could not accept the chance again  
for I was afraid of what I might do,  
for I might not  
do anything and then would have  
no way of convincing  
myself not to return, save thought,  
to that place. What I saw was smaller  
than it should have been  
but not because it was far away.  
It was countable. It must be countable  
otherwise how many  
would there be? I can't say  
but it surfaces  
the way skin surfaces, like that  
rising from itself. I offer this  
for it is what I have. But if you ask  
what it is, I'll tell you  
something else, what something else is,  
answer something you hadn't meant  
and you, not having even heard  
the question I'd answered,  
would believe me, for how else to account  
for the stillness after speech.

**Russell Evatt** has a bachelor's degree in English from Texas Tech University and an MFA from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He recently spent a year in Krakow where he received a CELTA certification for teaching English as a foreign language. He then worked at a private language school teaching English and also spent his time studying and taking classes to learn the Polish language. His work has appeared in *PANK*, *Louisville Review*, *Frostwriting*, *Blue Earth Review*, and *Iron Horse Literary Review*, among others.

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