



## Three Poems

*By Burgess Needle*

### First Rose

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My yard's first rose of the New Year  
Has not yet unfurled  
Is it cautiously hugging itself  
Nervous about what it may find  
The newborn human  
Still sticky with fluid  
Is made to cry as a sign  
of life  
A rose has only to open  
reminding us the world  
continues  
Who knows what risks  
Or insects await  
But open it will  
And in the still chilled air  
Of some future day  
In January  
I shall bend over  
Lower my face to whatever  
May be revealed  
Within the first rose's mystery  
Inhale a familiar  
Yet distinct aroma  
Ah, I shall think,  
That is rose  
By this name  
Not any other

### Last of the Ash Leaves

Last of the ash leaves  
Against a Tucson sky  
Hanging on  
Fighting their mulch destiny  
Now the nest will be revealed  
Now all of heaven will appear  
Except for bare branches  
Limned against  
Blue or gray  
Last of the ash leaves  
Fall on the ramada  
Stick to the Bank Rose  
Entangle themselves in succulents  
Now God's golden eye  
Will be revealed  
In judgment?  
Restraint?  
Forgiveness?  
Last of the ash leaves  
Curl inward browning  
Persephone may not save them  
This cycle is written  
In granite  
Before memory  
Before the idea of Time

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Last of the ash leaves  
Await nothing more than  
    A subtle breeze  
    To embrace gravity  
Finally kiss the earth  
That launched them  
    In another season

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## Vectors

On the teak wood deck of some house  
Near the Thai-Cambodian border  
A *tokay* hangs upside down on the ceiling  
Waiting until evening to give his call  
Tokay tokay tokay  
Seven times means good luck  
Which the malaria eradication team  
Venturing into Lahansai Village needs  
Because death and dismemberment  
Wait for them beyond the town line  
They're asking for trouble  
And the government knows those  
Med techs in blue uniforms  
Are not immune to being shot  
Knifed or blown to smithereens  
As they close in on the spot where  
They'll take blood and label slides  
Looking for a vector to pinpoint  
new outbreaks of malaria  
that's why men in olive uniforms  
With rifles accompany them  
On that dreaded road out of town and  
Everyone techs and soldiers alike  
Stops at the edge of safety to  
Visit the sloped-roof temple  
For last minute blessings  
Before heading off to gather  
Blood or be introduced  
To their next life

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**Burgess Needle's** work has appeared in: *Black Market Review* (UK), *Connotation Press*, *10,000 Tons of Black Ink*, *Blackbox Manifold* (UK), *Concho River Review*, *Raving Dove*, *Boston Literary Magazine*, *Istanbul Literary Review*[Turkey], *Decanto* (UK), *Centrifugal Eye*, *Iodine*, *Prick of the Spindle*, *The Camel Saloon*, *Flutter*, *Origami Condom*, *Ken\*Again*, *Under the Radar* [UK] *Kritya* (India), *Prism Review*, *Snow Monkey*, *Brittle Star* (UK), *Gutter Eloquence*, *Blue Lake Review*, *Eunoia Review*, *Minotaur*, *Nutshell Magazine* (UK), *Clockwise Cat*, *DeComp Magazine*, *Peacock on-line Review*, and *Red Fez*. Diminuendo Press published his poetry collection: *Every Crow in the Blue Sky*. He taught English in Nang Rong, Thailand, for the Peace Corps, been a co-director of the Southern Arizona Writing Project, co-published and edited the quarterly *Prickly Pear/Tucson*, and was a school librarian for thirty. He lives in Tucson with his wife, Barbara.

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