Three Poems
by Michael Estabrook

Ode to My First Girlfriend

For some reason, when I was 15 and you were only 12, you sat next to me at my father’s wake. You were the prettiest, most ethereal creature I had ever seen. You held my hand in your slender hand, so soft and moist and warm.

Today, 50 years later, a friend told me that your father had just passed away. And though I haven’t seen you or spoken to you in all that time I have an incomprehensible desire to hold you close and tight and feel your precious heart beating surely and softly against mine, in the hope of easing your pain just a little as you had eased mine so long, so very long ago.

Angel

At first it was a comfort truly almost a relief having you back huddled within me where you ought to be but as the days progressed you began to take me over completely overruling my mind overfilling my heart with longing until the distraction of you became painful literally and I had to work at suppressing your presence within me and that felt even worse blasphemy really to attempt such a thing imagine the audacity of me trying to suppress an Angel an activity I have discovered I am resoundingly ineffective at but what choice have I really life is simply too too short and at times God has peculiar and seemingly mean-spirited
ways of reminding us
we are indeed only human and He
is always in charge
watching our every move.

Salvation

At the end of another long day
I'm in bed reading Death in Venice of all things
not certain why
for it isn't poetry after all
but Aschenbach is a poet suddenly
emotionally paralyzed by beauty's mystery
and I am curious when of course
I find that you are here again
filling my mind's eye and my senses somehow
(but honestly you've been here all day).

Not that you are doing anything active really
other than existing your face constantly
in view my vision clouded
by the mists of memory
distracting me from the routines
and supercilious tasks of my life
from my studies my writings
from listening to my music only Maria Callas
proving powerful enough
to subdue your presence within me
long enough for me to catch my breath.

But what can I do I ask you in the long run
I'm uncertain because I cannot foresee
the future I have no recourse no defenses
to fend you off time and distance
may prove to be my only salvation.