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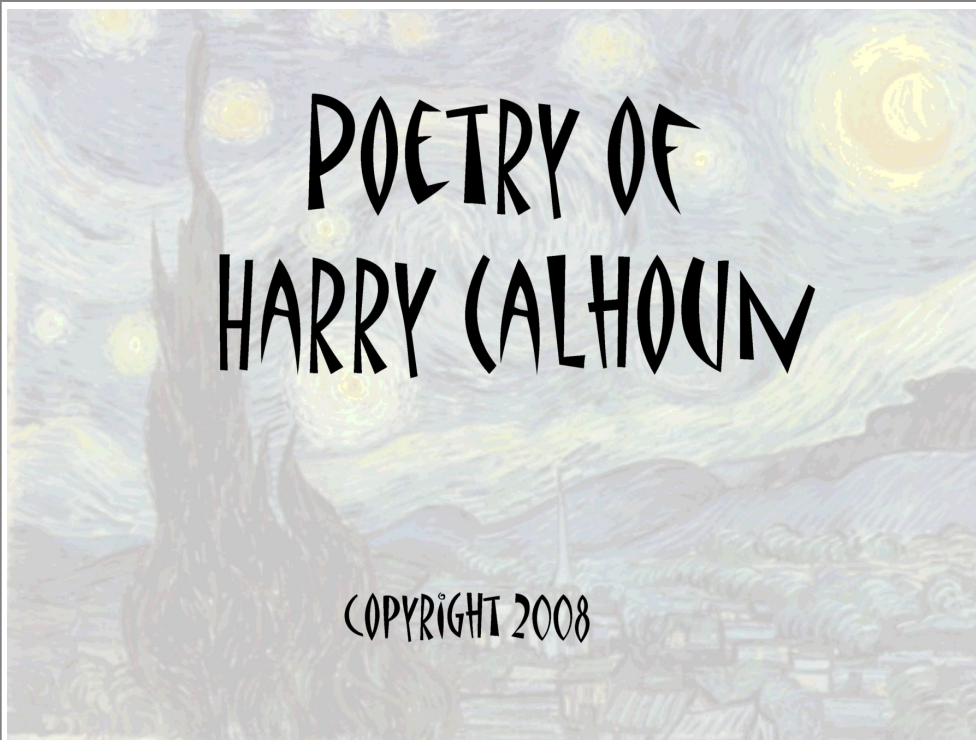
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## **Memoir**

somebody dies  
and somebody says she's your mother  
and from that day onward  
somebody has picked out your tombstone  
and it sits ticking like a bomb or a clock  
outside your bedroom door

and from that day onward  
you are charged  
with writing down your life  
and determining what they'll write  
on your gravestone  
more aware of what's ticking away

than ever before  
and in your weathered old house  
you write of clouds scudding by and rain  
and sunshine and snow, the elements  
of sadness and talent unslowed by age  
a growing burden of sameness and excitement

you carry it on your back  
and turn toward the sun sometimes  
shielding your eyes and hoping to discern

what to keep  
and what to leave out

## **Why we write**

rare rain during last year's drought  
came down hard pummeling the flowers

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and running off the hard ground  
like a murderous thief

yesterday's daylong rain  
came down gentle as an eyelid kiss  
the lawn this morning was soggy  
I felt the miracle of walking on water

saw the trees with their new spring leaves  
hold up the mist in the distance

hard to believe I've seen  
the change of seasons  
only fifty times or so

seems like an eternity

and in an hour I'll be working  
and in 10, 20, 30 years  
I'll give up this anomalous planet  
and I want to remember this

for as long as my forever is

## **The tao of dogwalking**

The left wrist snaps  
when he strains or snuffles.  
*Correction.* Stand fast  
when he pulls the leash taut so  
an acorn of behavior  
cannot become an oak.

My right hand loops leash leather,  
Fashioning a falconer's glove,  
shortening the span of rein  
he's allowed.  
So wrapped up  
in these little things

it's a shock to stop  
and notice autumn surrounding,  
leaves cool fire and suede.  
Woodsmoke seasons the air.  
Alex sniffs and tugs a tad,  
urging me to move.

This isn't the way  
*we usually go.*  
And I realize I've never  
been here before,  
not just this street,  
but surrounded by these leaves,

accompanied by this dog,  
on this particular walk.  
It's taken me this long  
to get here. And tomorrow  
will be another walk,

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another exploration.

Sometimes we need the leash  
for correction. Sometimes the falconer's glove  
as a platform for soaring.  
Moving with the smoky scent  
like an oracle sniffing

for signs to the future,  
shrugging and settling  
for another day's breath,  
tomorrow to rise and again  
tackle the blessed task

of trying to walk each day better.

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**Harry Calhoun** is a widely-published writer of articles, literary essays, book reviews and poems -- with credits including multiple articles in *Writer's Digest* and *The National Enquirer*. A frequent contributor of poems and essays to magazines such as *Abbey* and *Thunder Sandwich*, he has recent publications in *Chiron Review* and *Still Crazy*. He also has poetry forthcoming in *Abbey*, *LiteraryMary*, *Nefarious Ballerina* and *Word Catalyst*, for whom he will write a regular monthly column. In addition, he writes an online wine column about quality affordable wines called *Ten Dollar Tastings*. Recently, he has been pleasantly surprised that people recognize him for having published a now-rare booklet of Charles Bukowski poems in 1985. He's happily married to fellow writer Trina Allen.