

POEMS LOOK ODD ON THIS SITE - WHY?

THIS SITE is presented in the current WordPress manner; that is, the layout of the words and paragraphs is 'responsive'. This means that the layout, which is formed by a clever combination of HTML and PHP, rearranges itself so the text reads clearly at any screen size, from a large desktop computer monitor to a tiny phone screen. Recent research tells us that more than half the people who visit the Internet, where this site lives, do so from a very small phone screen, and they deserve to be able to read the texts they encounter. Now phone screens are growing larger every year, but they are still very small, compared to the average desktop monitor screen.

This presents a great advantage to our Journal. Everyone can read all the text easily!

But poets may hate it. Their carefully-designed line breaks, word spaces and indentations will be crushed and damaged when someone chooses to look at the poem on a small screen. Sorry! At least those visitors can read all the words. And according to one person who checks websites using his phone screen, if the site is difficult to read clearly on a phone screen, he will read it that evening on his larger desktop monitor.

Visitors will not be able to read the page on a phone screen easily if the text is presented as a PDF file (Adobe's 'Portable Document Format') or a full-screen JPG photo of the poem. In those cases, they can only see either a fragment of the whole page, or they can see all the page, but in tiny type far too small to read.

So what does a 'responsive page layout' do to a poem at various sizes? Here below is my version of a poem by Charles Baudelaire (1821-1867) at a 'normal' large screen size, and then the same poem seen through a very small screen window, such as you'll find on a phone, then enlarged a little. You will note that for the smaller screen, new line-breaks are introduced, so all the words of each 'line of poetry' will show on the screen at once. Frankly, the small screen makes the poem look a bit of a mess, but so what?

So, if you wish to send poems to *JPR*, choose poems which will not become meaningless when disfigured in this way, or just put up with the consequences. Remember, most people who check a page on their phone screen, later look at it on a larger desktop monitor anyway.

John Tranter – that's me – is the poetry editor of *The Journal of Poetics Research*.

Continued...

The poem as seen on a desktop monitor, on a big screen:

Elevation (after Baudelaire)

Above the factories, the steelyards, the golf links
laid out like a child's game, above the plots
of the canals and the plans of swimming pools
you rise with the morning sun and the other
successful bankers in First Class, above
Bangkok or Dubai, en route to that
restaurant at L.A. International – the one with
lava lamps and sullen waitresses – The Encounter,

The poem as seen on a phone, on a small screen:

Elevation (after Baudelaire)

Above the factories, the steel-
yards, the golf links
laid out like a child's game,
above the plots
of the canals and the plans of
swimming pools
you rise with the morning sun
and the other
successful bankers in First
Class, above
Bangkok or Dubai, en route to
that
restaurant at L.A. International
– the one with
lava lamps and sullen waitress-

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