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[The Encyclopedia Britannica](#)

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Greetings

On line magazine and editorials



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Up

Welcome to the Word Worth on line magazine site

We will be publishing [Editorials](#), and [Columns](#) on such subjects as xeriscaping, travel, archeology, and many others, and poetry, novellas, and photography in the [Arts](#) section.

The opinions presented are those of the individual writers, and not necessarily those of Word Worth. We do not plan to shy away from some controversial subjects, but we will do so respectfully and rationally. In one of his relatively more recent concerts, Arlo Guthrie said that over the years he had made friends that he might not have expected to make initially. He concluded that there are two kinds of people: those who care and those who don't. He came to realize that you can find both of those kinds on every side of every issue. We concur with that sentiment, and hope to present ideas in the spirit of enlightened searching.

Our [Letters to the Editor](#) page will begin with the second issue and continue from then. Please [write](#) to us with your thoughts.

Letters to the Editor



On line magazine and editorials

Cover

Up

Our apologies to those who may have written to us on the first day. There were some glitches, so we didn't get our first messages. Please write again.

[Write to the Editor](#)

About the November Issue

Aren't Chads fun!!! Our back garden has now been taken over by a marauding cat, would this have happened if Adam had not succumbed to Eve's temptation. Liked the poem. Let us know when Issue 2 is out. All the best from a very wet England.

Richard, England

Delighted to read your editorial on Election 2000 and your recommendation of the Folger Shakespeare Library as a favorite place.

Kamla, Connecticut

About *Natural Born Killers*

Mushrooms--not *amanita phalloides*--an adventure in trust. "There are no more mushrooms; there is a careful of people for every mushroom," Johan said this summer. He and Tiiu got four big baskets full, while Anti, Tähti, and I only got one because we were less knowledgeable. "They are not so poisonous; you can make them safe by boiling them," Anti told me some time ago, so we cleaned and boiled all five baskets full. I could recognize some of them as safe--boletuses (purple!) and chanterelles, and then some other distinctive ones that Tiiu pointed out. Then she made mushroom salad, which I scarfed down somewhat less enthusiastically than the *rosolja* and other good things she had been serving. She noticed, and commented the next morning, "The mushrooms must have been good--we are all still alive!" And so we were. I have great pictures of that fairy-tale forest we went mushrooming in. My Estonian is getting good enough that Johan and Tiiu and I had a very pleasant day together, even though they speak no English.

Cheryl, New Mexico

Editorials



On line magazine and editorials

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Greetings

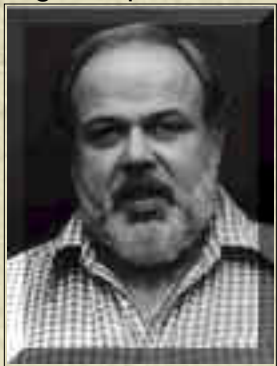
Letters to the Editor

Hale Chatfield, Poet

March 26, 1936 to November 23, 2000

by M. H. Perry

A great poet, like any great artist, must reveal what is extraordinary in the ordinary and what is ordinary in the extraordinary. There is the adage, *There is nothing new under the sun*. The artist must make it new. When we first saw the world, we saw it with wonder—like the toddler looking into the sky on a night of the full moon and exclaiming, "Look, the moon is all together!" or the eight month old infant looking at a dazzling Christmas tree and pointing while excitedly cooing. Artists must bring that sense of discovery, or rediscovery, to the vision that they each present. They must do so with excellence in their craft, their medium. Hale Chatfield was able to renew the vision in words that were finely and remarkably crafted.



His poems ranged over a variety of topics, but they all conveyed a discernment of, as well as a love for, life. He was able to see the complex in the very simple. One of his poems is about settling his child down to sleep on the night of her sixth birthday. He is able to convey the feeling of the child, the feeling of accomplishment on turning six. On reading the poem, one has the vague memory of what a birthday was like as a child. Chatfield was able to evoke the feeling that a young child has on gaining the next number: a world of privilege is going to open. *"I am" you said, / and "six," and then / "years old"*. Chatfield also wrestles with the feeling of the parent who observes the child whom he wants to grow up, but only because of the alternative. What he really wants is for her to be five or six forever.

Sprinkled throughout Chatfield's books are poems to his wife, and she is mentioned in many others. It's easy for people to write about a marriage breakup. It's traumatic. A great deal of life force is poured into it. It's far harder to write about a good marriage. It's very, very difficult to write that without becoming sappy. Yet these are some of Chatfield's finest poems. In this age when teenagers can quote the divorce statistics, people who married young and are married long become interesting. What is fascinating, however, is that Chatfield can make the ordinary experiences of mundane day to day life extraordinary. Alfred North Whitehead said, "The habit of art is the habit of enjoying vivid values." Chatfield had the habit of enjoying vivid values. In his poetry, we see someone who is so in love with life, that the ever present reality that that life must end makes experiences all the more intense.

In a poetry reading in October of 1988, Chatfield said, "When I was younger, I used to be really upset about the fact that human beings have to die. I'm not real happy about it today....It seemed like a sick joke. I just really enjoyed life. I still do." Garrison Keillor has joked about English majors and their penchant for seeing the tragedy in life. Perhaps that's because English majors read all the great

tragedies of the world, or perhaps it's because those who are particularly aware of the ephemerality of life are drawn to the study of the literary arts. Whatever it is, it's a quality in Chatfield's poetry. There is a quiet intensity in the work. The moments of great joy bring with them the stark reality of the necessity that that joy must end. None-the-less, Chatfield's craftsmanship is such that he conveys this without morbidity, but with a sad detachment that engenders its own beauty.

Chatfield's poem, "To My Wife," is about a time when they thought that they had conceived—"...*Have we again/ signed with our bodies' tenderest affinities/ that enigmatic order blank?*" The poem goes on to contemplate the paradoxes of existence:

*... that what we buy
with life is death, that those with whom we joy
to be must always leave us or themselves be left--
and who can tell us what this girl or boy
will be: to us bereaver or by us bereft:*

The poem is so finely crafted that it rises above the emotions of the moment to universal feelings of joy and sorrow—to the kind of joy so sweet that it almost feels like sorrow. The rhyme in the first part of the poem is irregular, and although the meter is tight, it is irregular too. Then at the end of the poem, the rhyme and meter become regular for emphasis. It brings in the tone of universality.

Anyone can rhyme, but few can rhyme well as Alexander Pope told us succinctly so many years ago. Chatfield used rhyme with grace.

The poetry reveals a sense of comedy as in "Dog Biscuit," a poem about a new puppy who, when given two dog biscuits, would leave one placed on the couch perfectly between them and then retire to eat the other. The poem concludes:

*facetious
symmetry; symbol of a ludicrous
religion founded by a dog:
a puppy's comical hecatomb
to two irreverent and jaded gods.*

There are a small series of four poems which Chatfield called "Insect Fables." It's a play on Aesop's animal fables. He set himself rules for the form, and wrote them in a casual voice. As always, there is the mixture of wit with universal truth. Chatfield's poetry is a Gordian knot of love, death, and life all intertwined and sculpted in the air with words. In an essay, "Poetry and Love," he wrote, "Can it be that love—or love in some of its forms—is a verbal and symbolic construction: a kind of poetry?"

Chatfield's poems about love are amazing, and love figures into most of his poetry. Reading them we see his vision of the world; we see the glow that surrounded it in his sight. He now has crossed the portal to the Cosmic Beyond, and the secrets he's gleaned there, he won't tell us. He has told us what he saw here, how he knew the world, and how he loved the world.

Columns



On line magazine and editorials

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Getting There

Havasupai

by Susan Johnson



On one side of the trailhead are hikers arriving in Jeeps, Expeditions, and Land Rovers, unloading backpacks, sleeping bags, tents, water bottles and cameras.

On the other side are grizzled Havasupai

rustlers and guides strapping dusty canvas sacks filled with mail and parcels onto packhorses and mules. It's an intersection where those who wish to appear to live and travel in the wilderness meet those who actually do.

The hike begins in a parking lot high on a canyon rim in northwest Arizona, and will take us to Supai, home of the Havasupai Indian tribe. The tribe manages the reservation and allows a small number of visitors to stay in their lodge or to camp below Havasu Falls, one of nature's masterpieces, each night.

At the precipice overlooking the vast arid valley below, a young Havasupai girl stands with her face lifted to the sky. Blades of hair, black as wisps of night, stream behind her, lifted by warm desert winds sweeping thousands of feet up sculptured sandstone walls. Her inscrutable face gives no hint of the oasis hidden a dozen miles away.

The first mile of descent is a steep sandy series of switchbacks. The girl we saw at the rim rides past us, murmuring to her horse as he finds his way down the path. At the bottom, the trail winds through miles of serpentine canyons offering eons of geology lessons. Carved by centuries of water and wind, the swirls of minerals, colors, and textures in the two thousand foot high walls are works of art unto themselves.

Boulders and caves punctuate the trail. Some of the boulders are as big as small houses, and I wonder if we'd have any warning if one were to fall from the walls above. Several pack trains

hurry past us while teenaged boys from the village wearing Walkman headphones and long black braids down their backs, ride past on painted ponies. One older woman from the tribe, on her way to the rim, walks toward us. She's wearing jeans and a tee-shirt and carrying a purse, as if she were on her way to the neighborhood supermarket instead of being in a remote canyon, hours and miles away from any sort of shelter.

For a couple of hours the only sound we hear is of the wind caressing the curves of the canyon, but then we hear the faint sound of water, soft at first and then rushing. Beneath our feet, the path turns from rock to deep sand and suddenly there is wild grass and greenery.


We are entering the oasis. With every step, our senses detect the change in climate. Old cottonwoods, their leaves twisting and singing in the evening breeze begin to shade the path. Havasu Creek, with its rich blue-green mineral waters, comes alongside the path and we see the first few houses and paddocks of the tribal village.

Brown, barefooted Supai children riding barebacked ponies race each other down the main street, a wide ribbon of deep soft sand. The street is unlit and redolent of horses. After a few wrong turns, we find the lodge where we have long-standing reservations. Our room is plain but clean and I'm grateful for the therapeutic effects of the hot blue-green water that fills our bathtub.

In the middle of the night, we're treated to a magical thunderstorm. Deep rumbling thunder reverberates with the pulse of a thousand drumbeats through the valley. Surreal reflections of lightning, bolts hidden by the towering walls, flash like strobe lights near the rim. The combination of throbbing light and sound create powerful sensations. Like an erotic dream, I wish the storm would never end.

By morning, the sky is blue again, without a trace of cloud. After breakfast at the cafe, we head for Havasu Falls, several deep-sand miles beyond the village. We come first to Navajo Falls, a wide cascade down fern-encrusted rocks ending in a deep lagoon curtained from the path by hanging vines and a lush jungle of trees and shrubbery. Then the path narrows to a ledge along a wall that leads us to our first incredulous look at Havasu.

Above the falls are sheer rock walls the color of molten lava. Arizona's brilliant blue sky and bright sun are reflected in water as turquoise as the gem. It falls from a high cliff into a tropical basin hundreds of feet below. Deep swimming lagoons are edged by sandy beaches and tall trees with fern-like racemes of leaves lean towards the water. Below the falls, the water roils through narrow canyon campgrounds, providing every campsite with its own swimming area.

 We join others who are already in the water. When we emerge, our skin is silky from the slightly abrasive qualities of the minerals that give the water its extraordinary color.

In between hikes to two more distant falls, Mooney and Beaver, there's time to chat with other campers and to consider what it must be like to live in what can only be described as paradise. We marvel that the tribe allows outsiders to visit. The area is both fragile



and sacred. It is also the real thing. While many resorts spend millions of dollars to achieve the effect of beauty, danger and excitement; here, the danger is as real as the paradise it resides in and one must be careful. This isn't Disney World and there are no guard rails or safety nets.

Backpacking has a way of making a person want to travel light, Supai has a way of making you want to live in a way that treads lightly on the earth. It provokes you to consider how you spend your time, surrounded as most of us are by relentless electronic demands and interruptions. Also, perhaps because almost every material thing that comes into Supai is carried on the back of a person or an animal, it makes you think about your possessions. It makes me vow to get rid of excess baggage.

Visiting Supai was like seeing a foreign film. While there, we felt engaged by its natural beauty and intrigued by the customs of the tribe. Now that we're home, Supai continues to haunt our thoughts and conversations. We find ourselves comparing our life to their's, and we find ourselves wanting, more than anything else, to return.

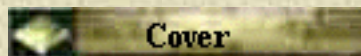
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[To Go to Havasupai](#)

Getting There



On line magazine and editorials



(c) Susan Johnson 2000

When you go:

Supai is accessible only on foot, on horseback or by helicopter. Hiking is, by far, the most enjoyable way to get there. It is nine or ten miles one way to the village and several miles more to the waterfalls. The hike is of moderate difficulty and takes about four hours, one way, allowing for photo-stops, at a moderate pace with a medium-sized pack. Anyone who regularly walks four or five miles a day can easily do this trip with a day's rest between the walk in and the walk out. The hard part is the soft sand. Be sure to carry adequate drinking water as you're in a desert environment. Also, make room in your pack for plenty of film and/or a sketch pad. Once you're in Supai, there is a small cafe and a small store. Both are limited and close at dusk. If you are camping, it's necessary to bring all of your own provisions and to pack out all of your refuse. There's a safe spring-fed water supply and the store sells bottled water for the trip out.

It's possible to hire horses from the tribe for riding or for packs. Riding in is not recommended unless you're able to sit a fast discordant trot on a horse that's being hustled by your guide (who is not optional). Even those who are in superb shape athletically will have a hard time enduring the ride. No time is allotted by the guides for photography or exploration. The Supai equine transportation system is run much like an urban bus route and arrivals and departures are strictly scheduled. It's possible to hire a packhorse for extra provisions and equipment which the guides will deliver for you to the lodge or to the trailhead above the campgrounds.

As for the helicopter... please don't do it. It deprives you of an incredible hiking experience and the transition from rat race to serenity. In addition, it only gets you to the village. There are still several deep-sand miles to the campground and falls. Everyone, the Havasupai and visiting hikers alike, frowns on helicopter arrivals.

The Havasupai speak their own language and it is only polite to learn a few words so you can say please and thank you and hello. Other than the few Havasupai who work at the cafe or the lodge, you will not meet many others as the families keep very much to themselves. There is a small medical clinic.

Although there is limited telephone service, strung in on a single cable, and a certain amount of electricity for home lighting and appliances, life in Supai is very quiet. During the day there are opportunities for photography, painting, swimming, hiking and exploring. At night, there are the stars and the company of other hikers from around the world sharing their mutual appreciation of nature and the generosity of the tribe that shares this place with the rest of us.

Reservations: 520-448-2141

It's necessary to have a reservation to enter Supai. Only a limited number of visitors are allowed in daily whether you are staying in the lodge or at the campground. There's a small tribal entrance fee as well as camping and/or lodging fees. You'll also need to discuss arrangements for hiring horses or pack animals if you so desire. Temperatures in Supai, on average, are similar to those in Phoenix but the rim temperatures will be more like Flagstaff.

Getting there:

Las Vegas: Approximately 200 miles. Take Route 93 about 100 miles to Route 66 just past Kingman and then get off 66 at Old Indian Route 18 and go another 60 miles to the parking lot.

Flagstaff: Approximately 160 miles. Take Interstate 40 to Seligman and then see following directions.

Seligman: Approximately 90 miles. (This town is your last chance to get

provisions or some latte before the hike.) Take Route 66 west about 24 miles to Old Indian Route 18. The Hualapai Hilltop parking lot is 60 miles north at the end of the road.



Links & Contact



On line magazine and editorials



Word Worth's Favorite Sites*

*Word Worth has no connection with, nor control over, the content of the sites which we note as favorites. These are simply sites that we like and want to share with others. The ones that we select as site of the month will appear on this page which will be added to month by month. We tend to choose sites that are of interest to all age groups, but, as always, parents should maintain control over the sites that children log on to.

The Encyclopædia Britannica

The Britannica has long been the Supreme Court of all encyclopædias, and its site reflects that. You can get everything from free e-mail to great stock and investment information. Unlike many free e-mail sites, they promise that they won't sell their lists and subject you to constant ads, and from anything we can see, they keep that promise.

The Folger Shakespeare Library

Nestled into a quiet part of Washington D.C., away from the scurry and bustle of this very busy city, is a serenely lovely building. Shakespeare's contemporaries called him "Gentle Shakespeare." This building dedicated to him evokes that quality, and it is surely one of the loveliest libraries anywhere.

Write to the Editor

[E-mail Word Worth](#)

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The Arts

On line magazine and editorials

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Poems by Hale Chatfield

A Paradox

When I stop hearing
what you say,
I hope you understand
that my mind goes past

what you say
to its own reality:
that my mind goes past
itself

to its own reality
grateful to you,
itself,
and what you have said--

grateful to you
(I hope you understand)
and what you have said
when I stop hearing.

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Look

Look, I've been
writing this poem
for about fifty years

and I'm only this far.
"Well, it's a problem,"
she says. And I

know what to do
with a problem.
Take the guy

at the bar.
If you whip
into the movie

just right , I mean
startle him,
he'll blow that

Pageant In October

He bends
above the bed
to tend the blanket--

the child sleeps: sweet fires
rage within the infant brain

alas, blackbird
alas! (whose feathered being
stirs the vineleaves:
a rustle

along the crumbling wall, a branch
of notes gathered from a harp
of obliterated sunlight

auto patterns of a bent
man's shadow on a child's
wall:
sleep--

sleep in a windful of engines)

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Episcopal
21 Aurora Street
Hudson Oh 44236

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you e-mail to us will
be forwarded to Mrs.
Chatfield

A Lament

Where you were
was gold, light, life;
now there is
a memory of music.

Was gold, light, life
finally as fragile as
a memory of music?
Our words were

finally as fragile as
we were content, but
our words were
nothing but silence;

we were content, but
now there is
nothing but silence
where you were.

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Boeing 737

I am not sure I understand
how energy is absorbent: the setting sun
draws this aircraft (art of air),
yet its light seems to push at my eyes.
I dream of electric tangerines.
Below in Ohio the snowy quilted fields
darken and do not call.
They are still at tintypes,
and older. Where is home?
There have been millions of years.
I try to remember. The fallen sun pulls.
Mediate between earth and sky, this
great lonely metal kite
floats like a life. I could live here.

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popcorn box
into vermiculite:
shoot it out

of your hand
so it snaps
up into the beam

of the goddamned
projector
like fireworks.

That's the effect
that I'm looking for
in this poem.

You take a problem
like that one
and chunk language at it .

"*Chuck*," she says.
I say "CHUNK!"
like when we were kids.

What we did with a rock
in the dump.
At a bottle.

We 'chunked' it.
If this is a poem--
if it gets to be. . .

What you do is you
chunk English at it .
If it breaks right

then you've got it.
The son of a bitch."
Fifty years

more or less
and nothing to say.
Just the damned thing itself.

It could be a freight-train.
I don't care what it says.
She's quiet right now,

when it counts.
She can do that .
I like how she looks.

Once in the rain
she turned up her face
covered with water

and with a serious look
put her hands on my shoulders
and she said simply

"I love you."
Not in a poem.
You can't do that

Lyric Difficult to Title

I don't know
which is better, autumn
or to love--

each has its
dark, its dearth: each has its
flower and its flame.

either wing's engaged to touch
some distant difference
when it melts to flight
though all the glowing air's an integer
and teems with same.

I don't know
which is better, sky full of storm
or strengthily to swim
from world to love.

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in a poem.

I would if I could.
In a poem for her

I want to write
something delicious,
a fine, true thing.

A kid on the street
says something so perfect
it makes your ribs crack .

Then he's gone.
Copy that .
The words in the air

where a boy
disappeared.
If I could I'd write

surf. Sea-foam. Thunder.
This isn't that poem,
so I'll put it away

and try it again.
That's beautiful too,
starting over.

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Future Issues

On line magazine and editorials



Cover

January 20 for the February Issue

The greatest love stories have always been tragic: Antony and Cleopatra, Romeo and Juliet, Troilus and Cressida, and on and on. A great love story that wasn't tragic, however, was the love story of Armin and Adah--two people who were born shortly after the twentieth century began and who died shortly before it ended. Yet, despite their fifty-six years together, their story was, after all, tragic also. We are all mortal, and therefore, even a story of love "until death do us part" is grounded in tragedy, and perhaps ends in the greatest of all tragic loves.

March 20 The First Installment of Banwell Goddard's Novella

Father Heart is a historical work about Philip Hathaway Clark who was born in 1846. His father didn't want him; his mother wanted a girl--desperately. His birth was to be the salvation of a shattered marriage. Instead, it culminated its dissolution. With his mother imprisoned for saving her children's lives, Clark was an orphan at the age of eight.

Archives



On line magazine and editorials



Copies of previous editorials and columns are available through requests to Word Worth. They will be printed on parchment style paper and will be sent for \$7 check or money order [please do not send cash, coin, or stamps].

Send your request to:

Word Worth
P.O. Box 221
East Aurora NY 14052

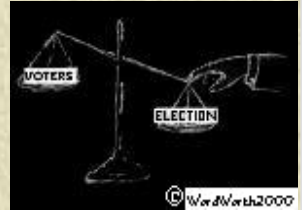
Please be sure to include your name and return address.

Items from the December issue, published November 20, 2000:

Election 2000 by Marion Helz

Election 2000 has vividly demonstrated that there are serious problems with our election system and that the Electoral College is, at best, a scapegoat. The real problem lies with inconsistency and inaccuracy.

It is appalling that one candidate can be ahead by 10,000 votes, then behind



Natural Born Killers

by Susan Johnson

Thorns and thistles were not part of the original landscaping plan for the Garden of Eden. Only nice plants were to be put there, plants that were "pleasant to the sight and good for food" according to *Gen. ii, 9* in the Bible.

Unfortunately, as we've read, the young couple moving into the development (a.k.a. Adam and Eve) provoked the landscape designer, who didn't like being played for a fool. As punishment, the finished planting sustained a few unpleasant revisions.

