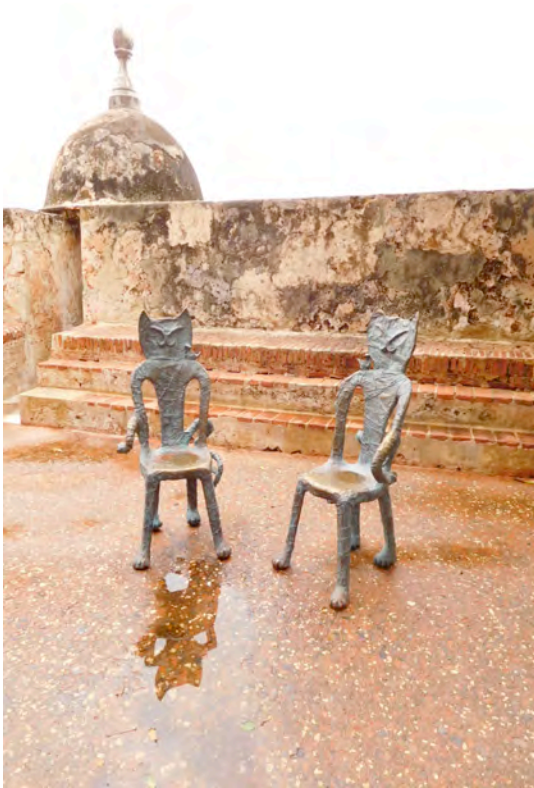


# OASIS

*Rest Awhile*



PHYLLIS B. PARUN

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# **DEDICATION**

In memory of  
all my generous talented teachers



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Blues excerpts

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“An artist’s duty is to not leave this  
life as a barren wasteland.”

*Atasaro Migumori*  
(19<sup>th</sup> Century Japanese poet and artist)









I

New Orleans Born  
*Excerpts*



## WORSHIP

This is my church  
This poem.  
It is she where I worship  
And she who worships me  
There is none other.

It is the solemn word  
The poignant phrase  
The unseen, unspoken beauty  
That I worship.  
The poem, my altar  
The prayer to life, my deity.

That is my church  
Where I worship -  
None other.



Oh, beautiful moment  
Precious illusion  
*Do not flee!*





## *APRÈS DÉLUGE*

So often I long for home -  
for the old New Orleans -  
my New Orleans,  
that New Orleans I was born into  
that I grew up in,  
the New Orleans of my heart  
now in my memories

And even though it is all - still here  
the past and the present  
the living and the dead  
the fantasy and the reality  
side by side.  
Still I long for home  
as if it wasn't.



## *THE POET'S CAT*

Sleeping 'til dawn  
The poet's cat  
Has no visible means of support  
Her only work remains  
    the cleaning of her claws  
    and the eating of  
    uncountable nibbles  
    then begging for more  
    mostly for attention  
    rather than from hunger.

She is the well-fed pet of the poet  
    lying around all day at the foot  
    of the immobile writer  
Who leaves her chair only  
    to change chairs  
While the only sound the cat hears  
    is the scratching  
    of the pen on paper  
    or the spoon clank on  
    the food bowl.

The poet's cat runs  
up and down the house  
her paws pounding noisily  
on the wooden floor  
then sitting patiently on the rug  
designated for brushing her  
she waits for the scratching  
of the pen to stop  
sometimes amusing herself with  
any piece of string she can find.

The poet's cat is kind  
The poet's cat is vigilant  
patiently waiting every morning  
for the Sun to rise  
for the candles to go out  
for the poet to tire  
of the company of words  
and be amused by her.

## DOORS

Unafraid, they leave their doors -  
unlocked

These artists who live in  
wooden houses  
filled with books and paper,  
pens and paintbrushes.

What do these mean to a thief  
these tools of the creative,  
these materials which  
give form to ideas?

They cannot be resold  
Their value is not monetary -  
Nothing there can be stolen.

Unlocked and unafraid  
their doors open  
their souls unarmored  
vulnerable to the world  
These creative ones leave traces  
of where they have been.



||





II

New Orleans  
Between Poetry and the  
Blues  
*Excerpts*



A visit with old friends  
At the Museum  
*Works of art.*

~



## TEARS

Red eyes

Cheeks wet with tears

*I am forgetting you.*

~



## DECADES

Decades go by and  
years come back  
first, as a spot on the distant  
horizon  
then moving full figured into  
view memories from that  
deep within  
placed there long ago  
when we were young  
and innocent  
of life's inevitabilities

~









III

My Dance with Time (2022)  
*Excerpts*



Grandfather opened an upholstery and furniture repair shop in the front of their cottage. Grandfather and Grandmother Wolters had three daughters, Marie Philippine the oldest, Sophie Ada the middle girl and the youngest, Dorothea Catherine, my mother. As children, the three sisters, worked in the Wolters family shop, each developing different trade skills.

Broken chair seats

Worn furniture

*Nimble fingers*

It was 1962. The Vietnam War was on. As my younger brother turned 17, the draft threatened. Our Retired Army Major Father knew from experience what it took to survive war. He knew soldiers and that his son wasn't a fighter, commenting, "he would surely be killed." Deeply concerned, he set about to find a way to save his son from battle.

Off the front room of our home on Gentilly Boulevard, was a closet which Father had made into a small office by putting in a long narrow desk just big enough for a couple of pads of paper. That day he entered his office, pen in hand and closed the door, emerging several hours later with a fist of papers. Calling his son over, he announced that my brother should join the U.S. Air Force, which would just be entering the war four years later, the very year my brother would be discharged, thus avoiding both draft and battle.

My brother did just that and it turned out exactly that way. Father's World War II experience served him well. Stationed in Virginia for a year then on the Aleutian Islands for the remaining three years, my brother had avoided war.

Happy father  
Happy brother - both  
*Alive*



When my Father died I inherited his book collection as my brother had little interest in any book that wasn't a chess book. Father's library was small, consisting of less than 50 books, unlike my enormous 3,000-book research library. How different we were in this regard. Of course, all of Father's were read and reread and very potent ones they were too: sports, games, philosophy of life, poetry, instructional manuals, personal conduct - while there are books in my library with spines yet to be cracked.

When he died  
Time stopped - later  
*It started again*

Father's most cherished book was a small black notebook of inspirational quotes. Its contents were sometimes handwritten while others were clippings from newspapers meticulously glued onto black pages. Father carried this book with him throughout World War II from 1942 through to 1947, from First Lieutenant to Major in Kobe, Japan. This was his personal bible - these poets and writers - his priests.

Recreation athlete  
Army Major - poetry  
*His bridge*

As inspiration, on my 16<sup>th</sup> birthday, my parents gave me the first edition of Janson's The Picture History of Painting. That was the beginning of classical art and my many aesthetic love affairs.

First art book

Michelangelo's women

*Half male*

When I bought a Nikkormat in 1976, the pictures I snapped were just about every subject.. Photography was like framing a beautiful scene. Thinking back on my experience, I realize that my first photographic mentor was my Aunt Sophie, our family photo-documentalist. When Aunt Sophie departed this life at the grand old age of 94, she left behind a legacy of 2,000 slides and photographs and 20 reels of 8mm and Super 8 film with one simple message: "time passes so take the picture".

All things perish  
Beauty lingers  
*Forever longing*

There were few departments. Philosophy was one of them. When Dr. Daniel Anderson, a PhD. Graduate from Tulane University, accepted the appointment as Chairman of the new Philosophy Department, he selected twelve students from the freshmen class. I was one of them – why, I have no idea, as I was no academic. However, it may have been because I showed some youthful propensity for argument that he saw as trainable. I had, after all, inherited the fine art of questioning authority and being a contrarian from my immigrant military-gamesman father who loved the French art of repartee and verbal sparing. .

That pile of books  
Unread thus far  
*In living*

Andy, as he was known to his students, was a teacher of philosophy and also a master of puns. It was not uncommon for him to run puns for 20 minutes while his students appropriately hissed, booed and yawned. Each student had our favorite form of humor. Droll humor and tongue-in-cheek became my favorites along with occasional well-placed sarcastic wit.

Whereas sarcasm can be readily recognized in a written text, tongue-in-cheek rarely can, as it is invisible, and an author's private chuckle which sneaks up on the unsuspecting reader, even educated ones, catching them unaware.

So dear reader beware, I carry on in his honor with glee!

Pining

For old pals

*The past is present*

A few months later Andy died. That telephone call was my bon voyage, his deathbed retort personifying the supremacy of his Socratic method. Like his venerated predecessor, Andy had died of the quintessential Western philosopher's disease. But then perhaps he was right after all, there is no such thing as too much thinking.

Ask a question

Get an answer

*Yet another question*

After graduating, it was my good fortune to be admitted as a graduate student to the Department of Philosophy at the University of Pennsylvania. There were few females in the field of professional philosophy worldwide then which is still true today sixty years later. So for a southern female philosophy student in the USA to be accepted into an Ivy League university was a worthy prize and validation of academic achievement.



With very few female philosophers in the sexist patriarchal university system, I was never able to get a university teaching position because of the subjugation of educated women. Publishing my own writing was the only way I could get heard. We were not wanted. Ruth Bader Ginsberg born five years earlier than I experienced the same doors closing in her face, as did every educated woman of our post WWII generation. Barred from university professorships, law firms, and discriminated against in hiring women were told we were either too qualified or not qualified enough.

Out of the womb  
Full strident women  
Hammered by patriarchy  
Standing tall  
*Out living them*

Remembering what Dr. Anderson has told me, "You may not be able to get a post at a university to teach, but your education has prepared you to think clearly and logically. That is by far a greater achievement, indeed."

Decades passed, three of them, I still felt that western philosophy was fundamentally deeply flawed but I had been unable to identify what those flaws were through the application of western logic alone, a fruitless circular endeavor indeed. It was Ludwig Wittgenstein who had placed the final nail in the coffin of Platonism calling all philosophical questions "nonsense" - and nonsense it all seemed.

The philosophy of the Orient had been lost to the west around 340AD with the burning of the Alexandra Library. Only fragments of what came before Plato had survived in the basement. Thinking of these early manuscripts as insignificant, centuries of western university philosophers minimized their contributions labeling them "Pre-Socratics" as if nothing existing before Plato held any academic merit. Nonetheless, even these fragments led to discoveries.

East West North South

Four dimensions

*Looking for truth*

So I turned to the Orient.



IV



IV

*The Hurricane Ida (2021)*  
*Journal*





*Aug. 29, 2021*

On the 16 anniversary of the devastating  
floor of 2005, hurricane Ida blew in.

*Aug. 31 - Day 1 Monday*

Ida came to town  
Leaving me with  
Shingles flying off the roof  
Rain coming into my study  
And me awake in the night emptying  
buckets of water  
No ATT landline on this first day  
After the insolent hussy left town.

Sun setting now  
Darkness descending  
The cicadas sing their happy song  
Candle lit in the drawing room  
Open French shutters.  
A little cool breeze flows  
I hear my mother, her sisters and my  
brother  
Talking, laughing, and playing games  
All the way back to my early childhood  
I finally feel at home.

*Sept. 4 – Day 6 Saturday*

Downriver power has returned  
Come 16 blocks up river  
*Please*

9/5/21 - Day 7 Sunday

August 29

Katrina and Ida

*Two unwelcome sisters*

9/6/21 – Day 8 Monday

1

Ida took

Mother's family house

*Leaving weepy eyelids behind*

2

One day too soon, the power will  
return

Piercing star studded peaceful nights

*With noisy civilization*

3

When the power went out, there was a daily emergency radio broadcast which I listened to each day. To conserve batteries I used a small double A battery radio listening for any information about Red Cross locations for ice and water, FEMA information, any warnings, operating filling stations and any city and government instructions. One day this news slipped in.

Cardinal Burke said COVID was an anti-Christ Wuhan agenda  
Then he contracted COVID  
He was right, after all!

9/8/21 – Day 10 Wednesday

Two days later Tuesday listening in the dark the emergency broadcast reported a disturbance forming off the coast of Mexico.

Bay of Campeche  
Waving at us  
*Not - waving back*

\*

Since Ida stormed through  
No COVID news for 12 days  
*What a relief!*

9/9/21—Day 11 Thursday

Twelve days of Ida  
In 95 degree heat with no power  
*No – not Christmas*

\*

News reported that Ida left the south  
and blew into New York.

Hurricane disaster living  
Where should I move –  
Oh, I know - NYC  
Take a subway-boat to work

9.20.2021 – Day 21

Hurricanes, fires, earthquakes, viruses  
Tears  
*Nature crying out*

v





v

*Haiku Notebooks*  
*Excerpts*



Haiku

few words

*aha*

precious moment

beautiful illusion

*do not flee*

no tears

grief oozes out

*in art*

maturity  
rear view  
*vision*

born female  
more brother than sister  
*the two of us*

to live and die in Paris, a complete life  
to live and dies in New Orleans  
*fate*

family bonds  
like sisters yet  
*more*

far off into life I went  
far far away  
*from the ordinary*

a child no longer  
elder hood ahead  
success

a brief visit to childhood  
cannot stay long  
*being called forward*

this house  
of many shapes  
*the sculptor's friend*

footsteps ahead  
too big to fill  
*beware*

youth  
blessings and sorrows  
*could not see ahead*

exquisite moments  
this one that one  
*a haiku*

born female  
more brother than sister  
*the two of us*

chasing civilization  
lined with carcasses  
*serious misdirection*

power outage  
listen! the silence of nature –  
*seldom heard in the city*

leaves fall from the trees  
verse slips from the pen  
*it's autumn*



fly lights on prose  
slips on "so"  
*washes feet*

sounds of nature  
sounds of the world  
*rude collision*

first times  
memories of them  
*no repeats*

companion on the road  
how far will you come  
*before turning off*

pandemic mask up quarantine  
human herd stampede  
*stilled*

The artist's plight  
having only mere words,  
a pen, brushes, paper, canvass  
on which to record all the lives  
lived and witnessed -  
such feeble imitations  
*these tools seem*

With limited lifespan  
émigrés, all – from previous civilizations  
dysfunctional nations,  
displaced migrants,  
slaves to wages  
pioneers in some distant,  
unimaginable future  
carrying poisoned food and toxic water,  
loving still - this  
precious murdered, Earth

~



I've lived many lives in this one –  
What's next

*Repeat please*









*PHYLLIS PARUN*  
*Poet - Author*





Phyllis Parun is a deeply honest author and a quintessential example of Cocteau's dictum that *"writing should be an act of love otherwise its nothing but handwriting."*

Born in the mysterious city of New Orleans, Parun is a self-styled creative with an individual intelligence whose voyage of self-discovery destined her to develop first as a visual artist then as a gilding craftswoman and a pioneer community *cultur*er finally as philosophical poet. As a writer she has explored many literary forms: non-fiction, essays on healthy life, short stories, philosophical and poetic memoir. Community activism set her course of involvement in black, gay and women's rights and in the arts of the 1970s then in the healing arts of the 1980s-90s. This is an author who writes with insight and honesty about the human condition as she has experienced it.

New Orleans Born her poetic homage to her childhood family influencers and her city of New Orleans while New Orleans Between Poetry and the Blues continues to the year 2000 sometimes with scathing humor. My Dance With Time features stories from seven decades about the people, eras, and circumstances that shaped her life, inspiring personal tales which will take the reader on a deep journey this and reflection of their own long forgotten memories.

Ms. Parun's published genres include interviews, articles, essays, poems, e-Zines, visual art, and photography in a wide variety of local and national publications. *The Beachcomber* (LSUNO, 1961-63), *AOBTA Pulse* (2006), *American Assn. of Oriental Medicine* (1995), *Macrobiotics Today* (1991-2015), *Gulf Coast Arts Review* (2004), *ArtLit* (2006), *Iris* (2005), *Qi: Journal of Traditional Eastern Health and Fitness* (1995), *The New Laurel Review* (2001- 2015), *The Maple Leaf Rag III* (2006), *Mending for Memory* (2017) and creator of "The New Orleans Living Treasurers Award" and her self published eZine: "The New Orleans Avant-Garde" (2008 ongoing).

## End Notes





*Thank you for reading*

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*Love's Arrows (an EBook)*  
*My Dance with Time (2022)*

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## *Notes*





## *Notes*



## *Notes*



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