

Editor's Note: June 2019

Over the past few months, I've charted *frak\ture's* mission to seek the swiftest trade winds to a continent where the only thing broken about the people is bread. I believe such a continent exists just beyond our swirling mass of man-made plastic islands. This journey's provisions include poetry as boat, *frak\ture* as rhumb line, compassion as the North Star, and now you as reader. Welcome aboard!

While steering this editorial, my thoughts drifted out to sea and couldn't strike a better iceberg than [Advice to a Young Poet](#) by Kendel Hippolyte. I recently received Kendel's poem via email from the Academy of American Poets' [teach this poem](#) series. The piece impacts from the very first quote by Czeslaw Milosz:

"What is poetry which does not save nations or people?"

Kendel's piece commands us to seek heightened utility from poetry. It doesn't accuse poets of pied piping but urges readers to interrogate a poem much like they would a car-stalled stranger behind the chain-locked door ajar at midnight. Though the poem's voice continues more like a truncheon than advice, it isn't militant and wouldn't have us ripping pages or purging books. At worst, Kendel might consider certain poems incapable of even saving themselves.

Overall, Kendel's poem reads like a mantra and transforms our perspective once it responds to the initial quoted question with its own:

"If poetry can only save itself,
then who will hear it after it has fled
from the nations and the people that it could not save
even a remnant of for a remembering?"

Many renowned poets stress that a good poem provide such transformation to release the charged static tension stored between the rub of antipodal lines. Similarly, the pieces in *frak\ture's* first issue transfigure between the Fisher-Price Power Wheels of childish joy and the grinding engine gears of our revving Civilization. Specifically, *frak\ture's* inaugural issue highlights the fragility of childhood; childhood not as age but as spiritual buoyancy.

Children are our most important natural resource. Their presence reinvigorates the mundane, empowering it to transform like the bubbles in Robbie Almstead's [Gethsemane](#). Children remind us that wonders lurk under every leaf and that

inspiration is just a rock skip across reflections upon that wonder. Unfortunately, while we age, the world, for many, becomes a barnacle-crusting anchor that stirs the sediment and mucks perspective, but reflection on happy childhood moments is like opening the jar lid on fireflies, euphoria phosphoresces through the body, helping us raise that anchor and drift a little further upon our churn of sea. And if starting to sink, a poem lowered into the waters helps the heart remain buoyant. So long as the art adequately prospers to provide enough lifeboats, we won't cling to poetry like the [Raft of the Medusa](#).



So in the spirit of Czeslaw Milosz and Kendel Hippolyte, this issue asks—what is poetry that does not save our children or provide them refuge? Can poetry fix negligence and declines in child education? Can it heal trauma caused by family isolation in immigrant prisons? Does a poem-a-day keep spiritual poverty away? Poetry is not a panacea, but it is a Pangea. At least in exploring its boundaries, you'll find our hearts are just one big country under the flag of compassion, and *that* is a nation worth saving.

Tremendous thanks to all the poets who provided work for review. You have christened this maiden voyage with kindness and fracture waves lovingly to those ashore. [See you at port for December's issue.](#)

Sincerely,

J. L. Pugh

Editor – [frak\ture journal](#)