

Retro Duo: A Poetry Suite

by [John RC Potter](#) (May 2024)



Regrets –Jasper Johns, 2013

Regretful

Another year passes...

Up at 4 AM on a daily basis.
Then a day in the work world.
Coming in the door,
in early evening,
with a head that aches,
and feet that throb.
Finding it difficult to think,

let alone to talk,
let alone in a second language.
You came to visit me,
with your parents,
my beloved goddaughter,
the centre of my world.
I tried to be hospitable,
but my exhaustion
slipped through the cracks,
and my patience was
as worn as
an old linoleum floor.
You and your parents left
the room and returned:
you were carrying a birthday cake
and singing to me
in Turkish and English.
İki Ki Doğdun! Happy Birthday!
My heart tugged,
pained,
full of regret.

The Years...

The West, A Nest And You

Dad came home with a stereo console
from the town's furniture store.
In the mid-60s it was a status symbol,
even more so for an old farmhouse.
Mom shook her head at my sisters and me,
at our squeals of anticipatory

music-listening delight.

Papa Bear was particularly pleased because the store manager had given some records at no extra cost, just thrown in for free. Mama Bear no doubt thought ahead practically, to the type of music and the volume at which it would be played when my oldest sisters purchased records suited to their teenage taste.

The complimentary records were easy listening or similar and not the type for kids or those in their teens.

My parents were perhaps not surprised when their son, an old soul at heart, played one album over and over again:

The West, A Nest And You Dear

by Mart Kenny and his Western Gentlemen.

The [song](#) spoke of broader horizons and journeys with vistas and panoramas.

In words that evoked a different age and time, a nostalgic trip into the past; of the mid-20th century, the Dirty Thirties, WWII, and its aftermath when music was in its golden era, at its poetic peak.

I longed to return to a past that seemed to me more romantic, more real;

to the mood and a time when life seemed simpler and kinder.

The Rockies beckoned in their majesty, sparkling rivers churned and glittered, as the scratchy words of the old song played on the new stereo console, and left their imprint forever in my heart, mind, and soul.

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John RC Potter is an international educator from Canada, living in Istanbul. He has experienced a revolution (Indonesia), air strikes (Israel), earthquakes (Turkey), boredom (UAE), and blinding snow blizzards (Canada), the last being the subject of his story, "Snowbound in the House of God" (*Memoirist*, May 2023). His poems, stories, essays, and reviews have been published in a range of magazines and journals, most recently in *Blank Spaces*, ("In Search of Alice Munro", June 2023), *Literary Yard* ("She Got What She Deserved", June 2023), *Freedom Fiction* ("The Mystery of the Dead-as-a-Doornail Author", July 2023), *The Serulian* ("The Memory Box", September 2023), *The Montreal Review* ("Letter from Istanbul", November 2023) and *Erato Magazine* ("A Day in May 1965", January 2024). His story, "Ruth's World" (Fiction on the Web, March 2023) was nominated for the prestigious Pushcart Prize. His children's picture book, *The First Adventures of Walli and Magoo* will be published in the autumn of 2024.

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