

# RENECA REVIEW

---

Hobart and William Smith Colleges Press

**Editor**

David Weiss

**Associate Editors**

John D'Agata, *Lyric Essay*

Katherine Jackson, *Art*

Kathryn Cowles, *Poetry*

Caroline Manring, *Assistant Poetry*

**Assistant Editor**

Joshua Unikel

**Copy Editor and Consultant**

Laura Glenn

**Managing Editor**

Cindy Warren

**Contributing Editors**

Stephen Kuusisto

Rosanna Warren

**Founding Editors**

James Crenner

Ira Sadoff

Deborah Tall

# CONTENTS

Fall 2011: Volume 41/2

Unsolicited manuscripts of poetry, translations, lyric essays, and criticism of contemporary poetry are read annually between September 1st and May 1st. Manuscripts sent at other times will be returned unread. No manuscript can be returned unless accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. No simultaneous submissions, please, and we ask that you submit work only once during our annual reading period.

Poems published in *Seneca Review* are indexed in *Index of American Periodical Verse*, *Annual Index to Poetry in Periodicals*, *Humanities International Complete*, and *Poem Finder on the Web* ([www.Poemfinder.com](http://www.Poemfinder.com)). Library of Congress National Series Data Program ISSN 0037-2145.

Published semi-annually by Hobart and William Smith Colleges Press  
Copyright © 2011 by Hobart and William Smith Colleges

Printed by Canfield & Tack

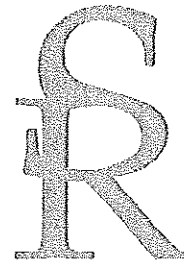
One Issue: \$10  
One-Year Subscription: \$20  
Two-Year Subscription: \$30

*Seneca Review*  
Hobart and William Smith Colleges  
Geneva, NY 14456

[www.hws.edu/academics/senecareview](http://www.hws.edu/academics/senecareview)

To submit online, go to: <http://senecareview.submishmash.com/submit>

COVER ART: Allie Kushnir, *One*, Digital Photography and Composite Imaging,  
9.75 x 6.75"



- 4 THE ANIMALS OF MY SORROW  
*Ethan Kenvarg*
- 6 RECENT STUDIES SHOW UNDERDEVELOPED  
HIPPOCAMPUS IN CHILDREN OF TRAUMA
- 8 DEAR MORPHEUS  
*Lisa Fay Coutley*
- 9 A FOREIGNER AT THE THRESHOLDS OF FOG  
*Jenny Gropp Hess*
- 15 THE LITURGY OF SOME HOURS OR  
CHRONO-RAMA-BOOM-BOOM  
*Melanie Conroy-Goldman*
- 19 PROPOSITION  
*Eric Dean Wilson*
- 23 THE JUSTICE AND MY FATHER  
*Ralph James Savarese*
- 27 CARNIVALE  
*Stephen Kuusisto*
- 30 COLD ANCIENT OCEAN  
*Richie Hofmann*
- 31 SAY IT  
*Timothy O'Keefe*
- 32 ON FAME, AFFLICTION, NOMENCLATURE,  
AND THEFT (AN EXCERPT FROM *DYSGRAPHIA*)  
*Noah Eli Gordon*
- 57 CAUTION: THE MOVING WALKWAY IS ENDING  
*Brandel France de Bravo*
- 65 CHICAGO 2
- 66 CHICAGO 3
- 67 CHICAGO 5  
*Dave Snyder*
- 68 INITIATION RITES
- 70 THE PASSERSBY PASS BY
- 71 TRIUMPH OF POVERTY  
*Albert Mobilio*
- 72 NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

## THE JUSTICE AND MY FATHER

---

*Ralph James Savarese*

Long before he'd put his trust in antitrust litigation,  
defending high-profile companies from the charge  
of monopolistic behavior, he'd dreamt of being on the court,  
and there he was, though not exactly in robes,  
offering up his considered opinions: "Out!" "Out!" "Long!" "Long!"  
My father was playing Justice Stevens  
in the annual Washington Golf and Country Club championships,  
the 1%er version of a constitutional battle.

The match seemed like something out of the WWE, complete  
with floodlights and a bellowing announcer:  
"Weighing in at 200 pounds, the CORPORATE LITIGATOR  
with garish headband and flashy, graphite rackets;  
weighing in at a meager 150, the FORD APPOINTEE  
with minimalist whites and old-fashioned *Jack Kramer*."  
The racket, like the man, kept from warping with a nearly  
moral press. The audience for this contest:

straight from the crotch of Mammon. Junk-bond jocks  
and cum dividend panties, supply-side racketeers—  
Reagan's Izod citizenry milling about the court, waiting for oral  
arguments to begin, as invariably they would begin  
whenever my father fell behind. Great Ilie Nastase-like outbursts  
and finger gestures, the lunatic smashing of rackets.  
It should have been a massacre yet wasn't, to everyone's surprise.  
At six foot four, my father had planned

to serve the justice right off of the court, but the justice  
proved a formidable adversary,  
finding a rebuttal to the slice out wide, the bomb down the T.  
It was one of those matches in which a perfectly  
respectable journeyman rises to persuasion, buoyed by the crowd,  
which, almost in spite of itself, applauds obstreperously.  
A drop-shot here, an overhead there, a topspin lob well  
within the lines. They hardly knew

what they were clapping for, those tony Washingtonians.

The more they clapped, the more perplexed  
my father became, delivering his commentary on the match  
in noxious expletives and grunts, engaging  
in highly audible deliberations: "How could anyone lose  
to this guy? Look at him: he's terrible!"  
An originalist with respect to line calls, my father believed  
that the fuzzy, yellow globe was almost

always out — at least on his side of the court. ("Nowhere do  
the Founding Fathers speak of topspin.

Nowhere do they mention two-handed backhands.")

And on the other? Well, just the opposite.

That side was a living rectangle, pliant, ready to accommodate  
any wayward or newfangled shot.

Before long, my father had stolen the second set. And still,  
the justice pressed on, surrendering points

he had won without a word — with only the rejoinder of his next  
miraculous shot: a backhand volley  
angled into the corner, a forehand buggy-whip down the line,  
beyond the reach of the attacking originalist's outstretched arms.  
Never had there been such an activist judge: shot-making  
without precedent. "Fuuuuuuuuuuck!" came the litigator's  
steadfast reply. "Fuck your mealy-mouthed civility! Fuck  
your chicken shit athleticism!"

"St. Imperturbable," I called him for the way he suffered  
my old man's antics, for the way he persevered.  
O, how I wanted him to triumph — my stomach in knots as I pictured  
the ride home from the club. Rage at a hundred  
miles an hour, the top down on car and cranium alike, my father  
complaining that *he'd* been hooked  
by an unscrupulous opponent. What greater joy than the prospect  
of such misery in a Porsche? The car handling

so much better than he; a cop pulling us over ... Across the court  
sat the justice's daughter. Thoughts of treason  
tugged at my groin. How many times had I seen her at the pool  
in the skimpiest of bikinis? Justitia herself lounging

by the ancient waters of fairness: bare-breasted, blindfolded, sword  
in one hand, scales in the other. How many times  
had I played mixed doubles with her, always dreaming of the perfect  
match? 15-love, 30-love, 40-love, and beyond,

the two of us married forever ... It was a seventh-grade relationship  
that never quite began. If only I had had the courage  
to talk to her at the club, I could have married out of money and  
into noble principle, or so I thought back then.  
(Ours, of course, was a strictly private judiciary, admitting neither  
Blacks nor Jews nor any ordinary capitalists.  
Poor Clarence, no matter how white his shorts and shirt, could  
never have gotten in.) At five-all in the third,

the justice was clearly struggling. His strategy had been to remain  
on the court for as long as possible; he was in much  
better shape than the lumbering litigator. Little did he know  
what a marathon it would be—the years piling up,  
the administrations: Reagan, Reagan again, Bush, Clinton, Clinton  
again, Bush, Bush again. He wouldn't have  
recognized himself at 80. Who plays tennis with a cane?  
"Hang on, Stevens, hang on!"

the crowd is crying, like some sort of chorus. They're doing  
the *Dikaosune* wave, standing up for justice  
with a capital — no, a lowercase — *j*. Contradictions be praised!  
A Republican appointee who moved left?  
A Republican appointee who *stayed put*, dug in, on a court, a landmass,  
lurching right. (How to spectate in the middle of an  
earthquake? How to follow the bouncing ball?) When the dust  
settled, it settled for him, a less than superhero.

Justitia, what do you believe, now that you're a real-estate  
attorney and queen of commercial office space?  
Have you forgiven your father his patrician airs and country club  
membership — Marx knows how many other  
disappointments? Have you forgiven his tepid apology for capital?  
O checker of titles and escrow accounts,  
private property's essential servant, have you forgiven yourself?  
Love wants no laws, no briefs, certainly no politics.

A few months back, I saw the two of you walking together:  
the lobbyists' K Street pyramids glimmered  
in the sun — paean to transcendental money. How tenderly you  
took your father's arm and directed him through  
traffic, the gridlocked cars impeding the crosswalk. It was as if  
you were ushering him into memory, that gossamer  
afterlife. I could almost see you standing beside his grave:  
the headstones at Arlington like whitecaps

on a lake, your anguish coming in waves . . . My sister claims  
that, given the chance, I'd push our pharaoh  
in front of a bus. "He's getting old," she writes in an email.  
"Have you no pity?" In the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*,  
Ammit, the Devourer, awaits those whose hearts are out of balance.  
Let Ammit eat us unsentimentally. This world,  
like the next, needs indigestible sorrow. It's late in the third-set  
tiebreaker—the justice down, yet again,

match point. A storm has taken the capital; the court's slick  
with reason. Though the trees tremble and the rains  
hold sway, the justice will not retire, the contest now like Canadian  
triples, what with that second Italian  
aiding my father, swatting at balls, yelling, "Out! Out! Out!"  
There he is, the justice, moving wide  
for a backhand, falling, slumping over. "God save the United  
States and this court!" mocks the litigator.