Poetry & Arts Places in San Antonio

All good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility.


BOTANICAL GARDENS-33 acres of formal gardens, pools, fountains, and natural areas; Native Texas Area, South Center Periscope.

CARVER CULTURAL CENTER-Center traces its historic roots back some 85 years. Facility is both a gallery for contemporary art exhibits and a theater for performing artists.

Jazz at The Landing-NPR’s acclaimed radio show, Riverwalk Jazz, is produced in San Antonio at The Landing, one of the country’s oldest jazz clubs.

GUADALUPE CULTURAL ARTS CENTER-Dedicated to the development, preservation, and promotion of Mexican- American arts.

INSTITUTE OF TEXAN CULTURES-The institute is concerned with the people who produced Texas events - people who created the robust kaleidoscope that is Texas today.

LA VILLITA- Restored Mexican village captures charm of the past amid narrow streets, and authentic adobe houses with arts and craft shops.

MAJESTIC THEATER-Opened in 1929; closed in 1974; restored and reopened in 1989 as a performing arts center, the Majestic is said to be one of the finest “atmospheric” theaters ever built.

MEXICAN CULTURAL INSTITUTE-Exhibits of contemporary Mexican artists.

McNAY ART MUSEUM - Works of artists who charted course of 20th Century painting, museum houses post-Impressionistic paintings.

Poetry Venues - Please see the Events section.

SAN ANTONIO MUSEUM OF ART-Six-building complex of renovated historic buildings opened in 1981 to house ancient art of the Americas collection, past and present.

SOUTHWEST CRAFT CENTER-Housed in restored city’s only remaining example of French Provincial architecture. Craft Center established alternative art school at site in 1971.

WITTE MUSEUM OF HISTORY AND SCIENCE-Extensive exhibits covering natural history and natural science of the Texas dioramas of Texas flora and wildlife. Rebuilt on grounds are four early Texas houses and furnished log cabin.

About Voices de la Luna

Letter from the Editors

Jim Brandenburg and Mo H. Saidi

Greetings from Berlin and Puerto Rico, where Jim and Maria spent some of the summer; and from Chautauqua Institution where Mo and Brigitte participated in writing and arts workshops and enlightened their intellects listening to symphonic music and studying nature. For those of you who lack topics to inspire your writing, traveling to other countries and conversing in a different language could be exhilarating. Summer produces great opportunities to attend literary events abroad or in other parts of the country.

Jim and Maria’s journeys were truly an inspiration, and of course, Jim promoted our magazine, Voices de la Luna: A Quarterly Poetry and Arts Magazine, everywhere he went. He met with Hejo Müller, our German editor in Berlin. Jim also recommends taking a walk in any town you visit. In Old San Juan a poster advertising a Tuesday Night Poetry venue caught his eye; there he heard some fabulous poetry in Spanish and English, and met Lady Lee Andrews, an amazing person and excellent poet. She agreed to serve as one of our international poetry editors for Voices de la Luna. You can read more about her endeavor in this issue.

Mo attended four weeks of poetry and prose writing workshops at Chautauqua, including an advanced writing workshop where he presented his new long prose piece, The Sixth Child. Several authors connected with Chautauqua literary workshops gave their commitment to support Voices de la Luna and submit their work to our magazine. We are honored to include poems from Professor Jim Daniels and an introduction and a piece of flash fiction from award-winning author and Chautauqua prose writer-in-residence, Sherrie Frick. Brigitte attended four painting and two drawing workshops while continuing her copy editing work for us.

Voices de la Luna is growing and gaining support nationally and internationally. We have expanded our publishing capabilities to include four formats: website, digital reader, eMagazine, and a limited print run of the magazine in hard copy to satisfy the demand by supporters and subscribers.

Implementing the expansion to four formats was not easy; it was a challenging journey, that took many days and nights with consultations with software service people in India and valuable support from Pete McKinnon, the Technical Director of Voices de la Luna.

Please send subscription requests to: Subscriptions, Att. Josie Mixon, 14 Morning Green, San Antonio, TX 78257. You can download the subscription form from voicesdelaluna.com.
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Jim Brandenburg and Mo H. Saidi

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Harmon W. Kelley, MD

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Featured Poem
Why Am I So Brown?
Trinidad Sanchez, Jr.*
June 15, 1943 - July 30, 2006
from http://teachart.msu.edu/whybrown.html

A question Chicanitas sometimes ask
while others wonder: Why is the sky blue
or the grass so green?
Why am I so brown?

God made you brown, mi'ja
color bronce--color of your raza, your people
connecting you to your raices, your roots
your story/historia
as you begin moving towards your future.

God made you brown, mija
color bronce, beautiful/strong,
reminding you of the goodness
de tu mama, de tus abuelas, your grandmothers
y tus antepasados, your ancestors.

God made you brown, mi'ja
to wear as a crown for you are royalty--a princess,
la raza nueva, the people of the sun.
It is the color of Chicana women--
leaders/madres of Chicano warriors
luchando por la paz y la dignidad
de la justicia de la nación, Aztlan!

God wants to understand . . . brown
is not a color . . . it is: a state of being
alive and full of song, celebrating--
dancing to the new world
which is for everyone . . .

Finally mi'ja
God made you brown because
it is one of HER favorite celebrations!

Trinidad Sanchez, Jr., was a Chicano poet, author and activist who wrote about race, culture, and social issues. His other well-known writings include “Jalapeño Blues” and “Authentic Chicano Food is Hot!” He co-authored “Poems by Father and Son” with his father, Trinidad V. Sánchez, who also was a poet.

Trinidad Jr. was a native of Pontiac, Michigan and the ninth child. His most popular book of poetry was Why Am I So Brown? In 1995, he won the Albuquerque Poetry Slam Competition and went on to the National Poetry Slam the same year. His anti-gun, anti-crime poem “Let Us Stop the Madness” was selected as one of the winning poems of the People’s Choice Competition.

Ref: www.metromaniapress.com/trinidadbio.html
Poetry & Arts in San Antonio  
Harmon W. Kelley, MD  
Chairman of the Board

In December of 1986, my wife and I were first exposed to great art by African Americans in the exhibit, Hidden Heritage-African American Art from 1800-1950. This exhibition had a profound influence on the direction our art collecting would take. Previously, we had paintings of hunting scenes hanging on the walls of our home. Fascinated by the exhibit at The San Antonio Museum, we decided that we wanted to acquire works by these very fine African American artists. Over 20 years ago, it was very difficult to acquire works by these great artists; they were not represented by known galleries, and not included in collections of major museums. Truly this was a challenging process.

After contacting Art Dealers of America, we were given the name of a dealer in Washington, D. C., Thurlow Tibbs, who would become our sole dealer, advisor and friend. He literally led us by the hand, advising, educating us and informing us. We purchased the very first piece in our collection, The Visitor, by Henry Ossawa Tanner, painted in 1913, from Mr. Tibbs. Soon many others followed and, although it was not our initial intent, we were building an outstanding collection. Initially our collection focused on African American artists. Over 20 years ago, it was very difficult to acquire works by these very fine African American artists; they were not represented by known galleries, and not included in collections of major museums. Truly this was a challenging process.

As we became better students of African American art, we started venturing out on our own. We built an extensive library on African American art to serve as an immediate resource for us. Also my wife, Harriet, studied docent training at The McNay Art Museum and received a solid course in art history. This enabled us to see how the African American artists were connected with the other artists. Many had studied with major artists in Mexico and Europe, as was the case of Robert Scott Duncanson, who actually shared a studio in Italy with the Hudson River School artist Sonntag.

In 1994 Douglas Hyland, director at The San Antonio Museum of Art, organized an exhibition of our work for a national tour. African American Art from The Harmon and Harriet Kelley Collection traveled to major museums across the country; the last venue being The Smithsonian. Currently, The McNay Art Museum has mounted an exhibition from our collection, The Harmon and Harriet Kelley Collection of African American Art: Works on Paper. The exhibition of 100 pieces can be viewed from 7 October 2009 to 10 January 2010. They include prints, drawings, and watercolors. It’s hoped this exhibit will provide a rare opportunity to promote greater understanding and appreciation of the contributions that African American artists made to the history of our country.

Our love of the arts led us to become associated with Voices de la Luna: A Quarterly Poetry & Arts Magazine. We are appreciative of the support from all the contributors, and sponsors that have made this publication possible.

Technically Speaking  
Pete McKinnon  
Technical Director

The technological advances of Voices de la Luna: A Quarterly Poetry and Art Magazine resulted from the continued passion to present our magazine in user-friendly formats. While a labor of love, we were often frustrated with the plethora of available software. Sometimes, after exhaustive research, we purchased software that we ended up selling when it turned out not to have the features we needed. The founders and co-editors, Mo Saidi and Jim Brandenburg, knew what they wanted to achieve in the magazine. Nevertheless, there was a laborious technological learning curve.

At Voices de la Luna we have experimented with several media options. After creating the website, we networked with many IT people and magazine editors. We gathered information, held meetings and compared notes on software suggestions. Some products were more user friendly than others. Some software was just too powerful, with functionality we would never use. Another challenge was choosing the best software to interact with our web design and options we wanted to offer the reader. We not only wanted a website, we wanted the ability to offer readers different versions of the magazine. We also wanted to make archived copies available from the website’s drop-down selections.

The magazine web presence we wanted to emulate was The New Yorker. Every design and technical discussion came down to “How does The New Yorker do it?” How did The New Yorker create a page-turning archive? This is what intrigued us the most. We called and asked them question after question. The technical companies they referred us to wanted to help us for $500 or more per month; a cost we could neither afford nor were prepared to pay without researching other options. We continued down the list of suggestions from IT contacts each of us developed; and, while we may not be able to do exactly what The New Yorker does, we were determined to get close.

Our trial and error methodology brought us to two products – Adobe Acrobat 9 Pro; and, Adobe InDesign CS4. These turned out to be exponentially worth the purchase price. With Adobe Acrobat 9 Pro, we not only could emulate the page-turning eMagazine of The New Yorker, we were able to offer readers the additional option of a digital reader. Adobe InDesign CS4 allowed us to format the magazine for print and it interfaces with Acrobat, allowing us to upload files directly to our contracted printer. With the use of templates, copy and pasting from the web design pages became easy. The best part was that we were able to develop the eMagazine and digital reader at no cost. We no longer have to think about outsourcing the technical functions of our magazine. We save thousands of dollars each year just with these programs alone.
Questions for Bryce Milligan
Interviewed by Mo H. Saidi

Author-publisher Bryce Milligan was born and raised in Dallas, Texas, but has lived in San Antonio since 1977. A prolific writer, he has published four books of fiction, six collections of poetry, two children’s books, many plays and essays. He has edited, designed and published over one hundred books of fiction, poetry and nonfiction through his publishing company, Wings Press, one of the country’s most respected literary presses. Milligan’s first novel, With the Wind, Kevin Dolan (Corona Publishing, 1987) received the Texas Library Association’s Lone Star Book Award. His book, Brigid’s Cloak, (Eerdmans, 2004) was named by Publishers Weekly as a “best of the year” book. In his free time he composes and plays music and even builds musical instruments.

The following responses have been heavily edited. To see the complete interview, go to www.voicesdelaluna.com

Mo H. Saidi: You function well in truly diverse genres. You write, you sing, you compose, and you play music. Which one do you consider your most successful artistic endeavor?

Bryce Milligan: Aesthetically, I feel that my poetry and songs “succeed” better than anything else I do. Objectively, my criticism and essays have garnered more awards, while my children’s books have sold better and been reviewed more often. So it depends on how you define success.

You have written a lot about Texas and Irish history. Talk about your fascination with these two locales.

As a child, I was fascinated by Irish folktales told to me by an uncle (a harpist with a Celtic bent), stories of Texas wildcat oilmen, the Great Depression and World War II (my father and grandfathers lived these), and by Texas history. I dragged my parents to visit the Alamo and Goliad and San Jacinto when I was a seven-year-old kid in a coonskin hat. I thought every seven-year-old kid was obsessed with history.

With plenty of material about the Alamo already in print, what inspired you to write the novel about the Alamo?

I was inspired to write that one by my son’s interest in the interactive fiction genre (he was in second grade at the time), my own interest in the historical period, and the challenge it presented. Writing a book that literally re-lived a year of history, day by day, decision by decision, was fascinating. That also allowed me to avoid the most famous characters and focus on the Chicano and Black characters.

What moved you to write the children book, Brigid’s Cloak: An Ancient Irish Story?

My daughter, Brigid, wanted to put on a puppet play one Christmas when she was about four or five years old. But I found that there were very few stories about her namesaint. So, Brigid’s Cloak was first a puppet play. After it first appeared in Cricket, Tomie De Paola wanted to illustrate it as a book, but he also wanted to re-write it, so I turned him down -- which was possibly one of the biggest financial mistakes I ever made. But, it was created as part of that family experience, and that’s worth more than any mere money.

In his inauguration speech President Obama said, “We are a nation of Christians and Muslims, Jews and Hindus, and Nonbelievers.” Can you comment on his statement?

He left out a whole lot of other folk of other persuasions -- Native Americans, for example, or Wiccans, or followers of Confucius.

How did you meet your wife, Mary Guerrero Milligan, also a short fiction writer and librarian?

We actually met in the second semester of our Freshman year at the University of North Texas. Mary was one of the most interesting, intriguing, intelligent and beautiful young hippies I’d ever met. It took me a few years of being stupid to quite understand that, but we got married four years later. She has very valuable ideas and opinions about what I should publish through Wings, but she is far too busy with her own work to pay attention to the daily publishing grind. As a librarian, she is much better at doing online research than I am, or at least in locating sites and sources I can’t seem to find, so she often guides me in those mysteries.

Can you share some anecdotes from the time when you performed as a singer in the Dallas coffeehouse, the Rubaiyat?

The Rubaiyat was a tiny Dallas coffee house that, according to the Fire Marshal’s notice, held 78 people. Several singer-songwriters like Ray Wylie Hubbard, Townes Van Zandt, Michael Martin Murphey, Willis Alan Ramsay, and others -- had practically grown up in the club, or had found it a regional creative haven. I started sneaking down there when I was 15 -- on my Honda 90 with my guitar strapped

Being a native-born Texan, do you hunt and own guns?

Well, I grew up hunting, but resisting the Vietnam war made me a pacifist, and marriage made me a vegetarian, so hunting is a thing of the past. On the other hand, I do have a thing for literature relating to Robin Hood. I have an often visceral relationship to literature, sooo . . . using an English longbow and hand-fletched wooden arrows, I can split a willow wand at 80 feet on a good day. But I avoid lethality in all cases.
to my back -- and was singing short opening sets within a year or so. In the end, though, I never got to play a full gig there either, since the place shut down for the second and final time while I was in college. But I would say, without doubt, that I learned more about writing, editing, and performance, not to mention life in general, at the Rubaiyat than I ever did in a classroom.

What is your next creative project?
I’m writing a series of novels about a poet named Enheduanna, who lived in Ur around 2,300 BC. Her work was so well known in the ancient world that it was being taught in Babylon 1,000 years after her death. We only discovered her again in 1927 when Leonard Woolley began the archaeological digs at Ur. Other than that, well, I always try to make everything I do as creative as possible, so it is hard to say what the next “project” may be. I’m learning to play the harp right now, and I’m restoring a 1912 Washburn guitar, and I’m designing a dozen Wings books for 2011, and . . . .

Mo H. Saidi: Thank you very much for your time.

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About Wings Press
627 E Guenther
San Antonio, TX, 78210-1134
Phone: (210) 271-7805
http://www.wingspress.com/wingspress.cfm

Wings Press attempts to produce multicultural books, chapbooks, CDs, DVDs and broadsides that, we hope, enlighten the human spirit and enliven the mind. Everyone ever associated with Wings has been or is a writer, and we know well that writing is a transformational art form capable of changing the world, primarily by allowing us to glimpse something of each other’s souls. Good writing is innovative, insightful, and interesting. But most of all it is honest.

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About Pecan Grove Press
Phone: (210) 436-3442
FAX: (210) 436-3782.
http://library.stmarytx.edu/pgpress

Pecan Grove Press is a part of the Louis J. Blume Library of St. Mary’s University in San Antonio, Texas. A poetry press, its founder was Karen Narvarte of the university’s English Department and it has been directed by H. Palmer Hall since 1992. The press is headquartered in the Louis J. Blume Library of St. Mary’s University and is a member of the Council of Literary Magazines and Presses [CLMP].

During 2008, the press published its 100th book.

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Our Mission
Our mission is to publish a quarterly poetry and arts magazine with international flavor and a commitment to inspire, educate, and heal community members through the arts.
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Voices de la Luna, 15 Sept 2009
Called a “world-class writer by Alex Haley, Carmen Tafolla is the author of numerous works of poetry, fiction, and non-fiction for both adults and children. A native of the Westside barrios of San Antonio, Texas, Tafolla was told by her junior high principal that she had potential to make it all the way to high school. She did, and followed up with a B.A., an M.A., and a Ph.D. from the University of Texas, Austin. In 1999, she was awarded the Art of Peace Award for writing which furthered peace, justice, and human understanding.

Appropriate for both adolescents and adults, Carmen Tafolla’s collection of short stories for young readers introduces people from the neighborhood, with familiar virtues and vices. The stories are funny and entertaining, and the characters are well depicted. The voice of each story reflects the mood of the main character.

Maria Pilar, the young girl of “The Queen of Means” who marries a drunkard priest comes across as mean and furious as any shrew, but beneath her mask she hides some positive virtues. Her birthday present to her grandmother’s eightieth birthday is an obnoxious spray packed like perfume and Maria seems to enjoy other people’s misery with unabashed rudeness. But Maria becomes a loving, if spunky, wife and turns an entire village into a civil rights success.

Carmen Tafolla is blessed with the ability to hear and see how ordinary people interact with one another and writes with a delightful wit. When Maria Pilar gets married, she notes, “. . . I guess some men are so stupid they’ll fall for anything wearing a skirt. Anything.”

The settings of Tafolla’s short stories convincingly enhance her characters. In sixteen short stories, the readers enter into the hot fields of south Texas. The brown leaves of corn plants tell metaphors for the communities in this world. She writes in poetic, terse sentences when she describes how “The ears are stripped of their shucks and laid on a rough cutting board.” In The Holy Tortilla we encounter the mystical appearance of the Virgin of Guadalupe, in The Stuff to Scream With a mysterious neighbor who cannot stop screaming, and in Chencho’s Cow a mischievous cow that kicks the pot at family parties.

The author's natural ability to reflect her cultural heritage and the sonorous dialogue among family members produces a simple yet effective way to enter into her plots. This approach is very successful when the author describes a spirited housewife and skeptical husband in Federico and Elfiria, or the camaraderie among neighbors in “Black Leather Lu.”

As the titles of the chapters and parabolic style of the stories convey, the book is suitable for young readers, but all stories have a common theme of optimism when relying on and trusting in the relationships with family, friends, and community. Most of the stories reflect the life and people in Central and South Texas communities, their casual use of Spanish words and phrases. Her realistic style is as authentic as a fresh and warm tortilla and as exciting as a spicy enchilada.

San Pedro Playhouse
Stu Schlossberg

Majestically rising through the trees of San Pedro Park, the elegant, Greek Revival-style San Pedro Playhouse holds tales as dramatic and colorful as the plays that have graced its stages over the past 79 years.

As a faithful replication of the Old Market House constructed in 1858 and razed in 1925 for a river channel bypass, it boasts a neo-classic facade that hearkens to San Antonio’s frontier days. Fittingly, it was two artists who organized the San Antonio Conservation Society in an effort to halt the destruction of the historic Old Market House. Their crusade failed, but the city agreed to preserve the beautiful facade for use in a future fine arts auditorium. When the time came to retrieve the stonework, however, it was found to have been dumped in a jumble with parts of other structures in an old quarry and unusable. The architects painstakingly labored to reproduce the original facade by tracing profiles, calculating dimensions of broken pieces and consulting old photographs.

The community theater group that took up residence in the grand structure when it opened in 1930 brought its own history to the stately walls. Its theatrical roots reached back to the San Antonio Dramatic Club, founded by Sarah Bar- ton Bindley in 1912. Miss Bindley, a “dramatic art instructor,” had fled the Mexican Revolution for San Antonio and galvanized local citizenry into the first amateur theatrical group dedicated to performing full-scale drama productions locally. They met regularly in the St. Anthony Hotel and, when that group folded in 1920, Miss Bindley went on to found the successful San Antonio Players Club. There was behind-the-scenes drama, however; when she returned with her cast from a successful 1927 theater competition in Dallas, she found the officially chartered Little Theater Producing Company of San Antonio had displaced her on the local theater scene. She eventually joined them.

New director Carl Glick spearheaded the search for a building site for a permanent theater, with Mount Rushmore sculptor Gutzon Borglum, who wintered in San Antonio, being a special consultant on this project. The site selected was in historic San Pedro Park (the second oldest public park in the United States) on the then northern outskirts of town. The opening production was an elegant extravaganza, “The Swan,” and had dramatics backstage as well. The fire chief threatened to shut down the play opening night when it was discovered there was no inspection certificate. Influential theater supporters stormed the mayor’s office and the show went on with fire engines, ambulances and emergency vehicles standing by and firemen armed with extinguishers backstage.

The San Antonio Little Theater (SALT) temporarily shut down when World War II reared its ugly head but the group revived in 1947. Over the years, a number of directors
have steered the group, but none had such far-reaching influence as Joe Salek, who took the helm in the late ‘40s for a tenure of several decades. It was Salek who was responsible for SALT’s reclaiming the San Pedro Playhouse, whose occupancy by the group had been lost in the years prior to his arrival. The building is now leased from the City of San Antonio.

Salek created a monthly newsletter (The SALT Shaker) and drama school, reduced theater seating capacity from 800 to a more intimate 450 by extending the stage into an 8 foot apron, and introduced small scale and experimental productions in the basement “SALT Cellar.” Some of these expanded to a theater-in-the-round on the main stage, including a legendary 1973 production of “Romeo & Juliet” performed in a circus setting complete with trapeze and “big top.” Its youthful director, Wayne Elkins, later headed the Playhouse himself. The theater came full-circle several years ago with DiAnn Sneed as new Executive Director and British-born Vivienne Elborne (whose husband, Francis, is a former Executive Director) as Artistic Director. The position of Artistic Director was left vacant when Ms. Elbourne left Texas to move East and was filled in 2003 by Texas-born Frank Latson, who promises to bring the Playhouse some of its most exciting productions ever.

Major renovation in 2000 replaced the stage lighting, audio, and stage rigging systems. All seats were refurbished and the theater and lobby got a major facelift. The spacious, chandeliered lobby -- with its decorative molding, towering curtained windows that overlook the park and fancifully trimmed box office -- still evokes a 1920s ambiance. The Playhouse continues to offer top-notch plays and musicals, while its intimate Cellar Theater presents smaller and experimental productions -- all performed by talented and dedicated local volunteers, as was the original group’s aim. Winner of numerous theater awards, Playhouse productions have traveled as far as Russia, Alaska and Mexico.

With 91 years under its theatrical belt, the San Pedro Playhouse is the longest running and most successful live theater in San Antonio and well worth a seat when the curtain rises on yet another stellar performance.

Sunset at Chautauqua Lake
Texas & the Current Healthcare System

Despite heightened attention and effort devoted to improving the quality of care in recent years, the US Institute for Healthcare Improvement estimates that, on average, more than 40,000 instances of medical harm occur every day in the United States (roughly 15 million each year). Receiving inadequate or inappropriate care can lead to pain and death, as well as increased medical costs to treat preventable health problems.

According to recent census data, Texas has the highest rate of uninsured citizens in the nation and the highest number of uninsured children. The state’s high birth rate and the influx of new residents from other states also contributes to the fact that one in four Texas residents goes without health insurance—the highest rate in the country, according to Tom Banning, CEO of the Texas Academy of Family Physicians. “There aren’t enough doctors currently practicing in Texas to care for the folks we have, much less the uninsured,” Banning said. There are 27 Texas counties that have no doctor at all, according to the Texas Department of State Health Services, and residents must travel across counties to find basic medical care.

Ref: http://www.photius.com/rankings/healthranks.html
http://www.gallup.com/poll/121943/benefits-healthcare
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1. US Healthcare Debate:
   http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XmhYOOGy4Rk.
2. Rep. Ron Paul On Health Care:
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Texas and Capital Punishment
Paraphrased by the Editors from Cited References

In 2008, 37 persons in nine states were executed — 18 in Texas; 4 in Virginia; 3 each in Georgia and South Carolina; 2 each in Florida, Mississippi, Ohio, and Oklahoma, and 1 in Kentucky. Of persons executed in 2008, 20 were white and 17 were black; however, all 37 inmates executed in 2008 were men. Lethal injection was used in 36 executions in 2008; 1 execution was by electrocution.

Two different cases can be made. One is based on justice and the nature of a moral community and leads to a defense of capital punishment. The second case is based on love and the nature of an ideal spiritual community and leads to a rejection of capital punishment.

In the summer of 1660, an Englishman named William Harrison vanished on a walk, near the village of Charingworth, in Gloucestershire. His血stained hat was soon discovered on the side of a local road. Police interrogated Harrison’s servant, John Perry, and eventually Perry stated that his mother and his brother had killed Harrison for money. Perry, his mother, and his brother were hanged. Two years later, Harrison reappeared. He insisted, fanci fully, that he had been abducted by a band of criminals and sold into slavery. Whatever happened, one thing was indisputable: he had not been murdered by the Perrys.

Recent scientific reports indicating that Texas likely executed an innocent man have spurred wide coverage and commentary. Cameron Todd Willingham was executed in 2004 for the arson murder of his three children. The fear that an innocent person might be executed has long haunted jurors, lawyers, and judges. During America’s Colonial period, dozens of crimes were punishable by death, including horse thievery, blasphemy, “man-stealing,” and highway robbery. After independence, the number of crimes eligible for the death penalty was gradually reduced, but doubts persisted over whether legal procedures were sufficient to prevent an innocent person from being executed.

In 1868, John Stuart Mill made one of the most eloquent defenses of capital punishment, arguing that executing a murderer did not display a wanton disregard for life but, rather, proof of its value. “We show, on the contrary, most emphatically our regard for it by the adoption of a rule that he who violates that right in another forfeits it for himself,” he said. For Mill, there was one counterargument that carried weight—“that if by an error of justice an innocent person is put to death, the mistake can never be corrected.”

The modern legal system, with its lengthy appeals process and clemency boards, was widely assumed to protect the kind of “error of justice” that Mill feared. In 2000, while George W. Bush was governor of Texas, he said, “I know there are some in the country who don’t care for the death penalty, but . . . we’ve adequately answered innocence or guilt.” His top policy adviser on issues of criminal justice emphasized that there was “super due process to make sure that no innocent defendants are executed.”

In recent years, though, questions have mounted over whether the system is fail-safe. Since 1976, more than a hundred and thirty people on death row have been exonerated. DNA testing, which was developed in the eighties, saved seventeen of them, but the technique can be used only in rare instances. Barry Scheck, a co-founder of the Innocence Project, which has used DNA testing to exonerate prisoners, estimates that about eighty per cent of felons do not involve biological evidence.

Ref: 1: http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/cp.htm
2: http://www.deathpenaltyinfo.org/
3: http://www.frontiernet.net/~kenc/cappun.htm
4: http://www.newyorker.com/

Related Videos:
1. Texas Murders An Innocent Man - Tribute to Todd Willingham:
   http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ae8MrMnkmvM.
2. Texas Death Penalty Vigils:
   http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VQnH-f7WqCw
Editors’ Poems

In the Piano Bar
Mo H. Saidi

In the dim light, she was radiant and bright
sitting among her friends, tasting Pinot Noir.
Lonely and despondent, I was mending my thoughts
munching black olives, listening to a song
Strangers in the Night, we exchanged glances.
I noticed her face, her fleeting gaze
saw gentle demeanor, a pleasing smile
it was so inviting, it triggered a surge
in my fluttering heart, it tempted my soul
Strangers in the Night, we exchanged glances.
I was a lonely dove sipping single malt
so splendid it was when I met her eyes
it energized my core, brought me hope
I took my chances, I walked to her side
Strangers in the Night, we exchanged glances.
She beamed, while I pondered my options
lumbering like Bacchus, I offered my hand
responding to my call, she accepted my bid
l clasped her arm, she soared like a swan
Strangers in the Night, we exchanged glances.
She landed in my arms, we danced to the song
lovers at first sight. Ever since that night
for better or worse, we have lived together
under that dim light. One fateful encounter
Strangers in the Night, we exchanged glances.

A Poem based on the music of Strangers in The Nights:

AUBADE
Joan Seifert

Your ship was scheduled to leave in early morn.
We had been to Chinatown that last evening,
bought a joss stick; laughing, asked its incense
to conjure some delay, a new promise of our future.

But your ship left early in early morn
and you were on it.

Dawn came, heartless,
then came again across the earth.
Soon enough you would know both worlds.
It was demanded— c’est la guerre.

I watched dawn ebb to aridness
through cold, expected tears.

Ghost of Yeats
James Brandenburg

Dying in darkness
my mind evaporates
my body decomposes

But in darkness
I am reborn
something comes together
and like an infant
I come out screaming
“Waah, waah!”
I scream me into being!

From shadows
appears the moon
in her light
I fall into the
cavernous earth
into the womb
of Mother Earth.

Mother Earth,
connect my anima
to my creative spirit!
spill me out into the
light of the moon
from the entrails of earth!
I rise up
screaming my bowels.

Jim Brandenburg reads the poem: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lQ0uChPMIuo

Oh Say, Can You See?
Pete McKinnon

See the flag, wavering
in the background,
proud,
waving to someone,
calling to a nation.

See the youngsters, marching
to the battlefield,
bloodied,
shooting at someone,
fighting for a cause.

See the leaders, smiling
to the cameras,
victorious,
shaking hands,
kissing babies.

See the world, suffocating
all around us,
dying,
waving hands,
drowning in flags.
Why Poetry Matters
Letting the World Come to You

John Hammond

Poetry matters, among many other reasons, because it is by its nature revelatory, surprising, and liberating. It re-connects us with the familiar world we mistakenly think we know, while offering glimpses of the mysterious and untranslatable worlds we know we don’t know. In so doing, poetry also becomes a communal experience, in which the poet shares with the reader a mental receptivity or alertness that underlies the poem’s fresh vision. As Jane Hirshfield says in Nine Gates, “Poetry’s work is the clarification and magnification of being … [it is] a different mode of knowing.”

There are, of course, other ways of knowing, so it may be helpful to compare the way of poetry with that of science, as described by Richard Preston in his book First Light, a delightful account of astronomers at Mt. Palomar Observatory. Preston says people have the incorrect belief that science is the accumulation of self-evident facts. In reality, he explains in wonderfully poetic terms, the work of science “is about mystery and not knowing … It is like trying to crack a monstrous safe that has a complicated, secret lock designed by God.” He says, “Some of God’s safes are harder to open than others [and so] you may spend a lifetime playing the tumblers and finally die with the door still firmly locked … [but] sometimes there is a faint clicking sound, and the door pulls wide open, and you walk in.”

Poetry is also, of course, about mystery and not knowing, but what the poet seeks is more likely to be hiding in plain sight, and it is vision itself that must be unlocked. You might say that poetry is more like “entering” than “breaking and entering”: it finds a clearing in the mind that is inaccessible through force of logic or luck, experiment or calculation. This is akin to a spiritual state of mind, a kind of concentration that respects the individuality of all things, leaf by leaf.

David Wagoner’s poem “Lost” speaks of just such a mind-set: “Stand still. The trees ahead and bushes beside you/ Are not lost. Wherever you are is called Here./ And you must treat it as a powerful stranger,/ Must ask permission to know it and be known.” This is how to see the world truly, like Raven and Wren for whom no two trees, no two branches are the same. “If what a tree or a bush does is lost on you,/ You are surely lost. Stand still. The forest knows/ Where you are. You must let it find you.”

“Stand still” is the poem’s only refrain, the human challenge in a hurrying, multi-tasking world to allow the forest to find us. Poetry offers a way to stand still, to scoop up experience as it streams through our hands and bring its cold taste to our lips even as it spills away.

Jane Hirshfield’s “The Envoy” also beautifully illustrates this openness to the world, while acknowledging that there are mysteries we will never know. One day she confronts a rat in a room and two days later a snake: “I don’t know how either came or left.” She also confronts uncertain feelings—“terror? happiness? grief?”—that enter her body and then leave, and sees that we stand at the edge of many worlds, fabulous and unseen yet ever-present: “There are openings in our lives/ of which we know nothing./ Through them/ the belled herds travel at will,/ long-legged and thirsty, covered with foreign dust.”

Open and permeable to experience, the poet can now speak with a language that seems magically to reveal a new the world we thought we knew, as though seeing it for the first time.

Consider the surprising yet natural metaphors that emerge in Albert Goldbarth’s “The Shawl.” He recalls himself at age twenty traveling on a bus at night: “He could see himself now/ in the window, see his head there with the country/ running through it like a long thought made of steel and wheat.” He is “discovering himself/ to be among the tribe that reads. Now his, the only overhead turned on. Now nothing else existed:/ only him, and the book, and the light thrown over his shoulders/ as luxuriously as a cas-"mera shawl.”

Here is Margaret Atwood infusing an abstraction with new life in “Secrecy”: “Secrecy flows through you,/ a different kind of blood./ It’s as if you’ve eaten it/ like a bad candy,/ …like the reverse of uttering… and now it’s in you, secrecy./ Ancient and vicious, luscious/ as dark velvet./ It blooms in you,/ a poppy made of ink.”

Or we may see our lives freshly in a story that goes down an unexpected path, as in Wesley McNair’s pitch perfect “The Rules of the New Car.” The speaker, with a burgeoning family, buys a new car and establishes rules: “The first to go/ was the rule I made for myself about/ cleaning it once a week, though why./ I shouted at the kids in the rearview mirror,/ should I have to clean it if they would just/ remember to fold their hands.” As other rules disintegrate along with the car and he aches for all that is lost, the poem moves into a beautifully paced, unexpected coda: “Then one day, for no particular reason except/ that the car was loaded down with wood/ for the fireplace at my in-laws’ camp … my wife in the passenger seat,/ the dog lightly panting beside the kids in the back,/ all innocent anticipation, waiting for me/ to join them, I opened the door to my life.”

There is the irony, of course, of making rules in an unpredictable and messy world where, as they say, “Life is what happens when you’re making other plans.” But in a larger sense, McNair’s poem leads to another form of the acceptance and openness described in “The Envoy” and “Lost,” all seeming to say: “Let the world come to you, and you will find yourself.”

Reading or writing a poem can show us a way to do this- - to stand still, glimpse the secret openings in our lives, and re-discover the world that waits in front of our noses to be seen.

Voices de la Luna, 15 Sept 2009
A Day in the Life
John Hammond

In the 66th summer of my life, the circling world refuses to stop while I dream of bicycling through the old neighborhood:

for at this moment, the local theater crew is still counting receipts and sweeping up popcorn after the midnight movie,

stars scattered over New Zealand’s Bay of Plenty are bearing witness to a couple exchanging rings and vows,

a Beijing taxi driver is delivering a fare as birds change their flight pattern over the Caspian Sea and the sun awakens an ancient French village to another day,

someone is catching the tube at Kings Cross Station, or dying in a hospice in Gulf Port, Mississippi, or jumping rope on a sidewalk in Prague,

and somewhere a night watchman is writing the book we’ve been waiting for – pausing now and then to peer out into the night, its shapes turning silver beneath the slowly ascending moon.

Everyday Mysteries
John Hammond

The elevator repairmen Have been at it for months – Possibly years, as we lose Our sense of time, adjust To drills and faint clangs Amid tall silences that punctuate Our days, and we have begun To ask the important questions:

Do they belong to a cult? Are we being surveilled? Is this weather-related?

We record our thoughts in secret Notebooks, should they call us To testify: a long table, The flash of cameras, our lawyer Leaning close to cover A microphone whispers Cautions as the Committee Gavels our nightmare to order.

Madman
Jose Caraballo

Madman: because I lost my way between the twilights of life. My vague shade sleeps in silence. Loneliness sits at my corner between faded gloomy lights. I wrap myself in empty thoughts. I try to solve the problems of my world. They call me “madman,” a romantic without a moon. Then I regain my thoughts and become a poet. Without wealth I am the master of the world, proprietor of nothing, the one that sails the oceans without a rudder, a miserable silhouette. Yes, I am a madman.

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Music & Poetry
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Dance Me to the End of Love
Madeleine Peyroux

Dance me to your beauty with a burning violin
Dance me through the panic till I’m gathered safely in
Lift me like an olive branch and be my homeward dove

Dance me to the end of love
Dance me to the end of love

Let me see your beauty when the witnesses are gone
Let me feel you moving like they do in Babylon
Show me slowly what I only know the limits of

Dance me to the end of love
Dance me to the end of love

Dance me to the wedding now, dance me on and on
Dance me very tenderly and dance me very long
We’re both of us beneath our love, we’re both of us above

Dance me to the end of love
Dance me to the end of love

Dance me to the children who are asking to be born
Dance me through the curtains that our kisses have out-worn
Raise a tent of shelter now, though every thread is torn

Dance me to the end of love
Dance me to the end of love

Dance me to your beauty with a burning violin
Dance me through the panic till I’m gathered safely in
Touch me with your naked hand or touch me with your glove

Dance me to the end of love
Dance me to the end of love
Dance me to the end of love

The URL of the video: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9PSuzsq7WJQ

Across the Universe
The Beatles

Words are flying out like endless rain into a paper cup
They slither while they pass
They slip away across the universe
Pools of sorrow waves of joy are drifting through my open mind
Possessing and caressing me

Jai guru deva om
Nothing’s gonna change my world
Nothing’s gonna change my world

Images of broken light which dance before me like a million eyes
That call me on and on across the universe
Thoughts meander like a restless wind inside a letter box they tumble blindly as they make their way across the universe

Jai guru deva om
Nothing’s gonna change my world
Nothing’s gonna change my world

Sounds of laughter shades of life are ringing through my open ears exciting and inciting me
Limitless undying love which shines around me like a million suns It calls me on and on across the universe

Jai guru deva om
Nothing’s gonna change my world
Nothing’s gonna change my world

Jai guru deva
Jai guru deva

The URL of the video: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rj-4t9drUlM

A Quotation

Poetry, indeed, cannot be translated; and, therefore, it is the poets that preserve the languages; for we could not be at the trouble to learn a language if we could have all that is written in it just as well in a translation. But as the beauties of poetry cannot be preserved in any language except that in which it was originally written, we learn the language.

Samuel Johnson
lexicographer (1709-1784)
Cigarette Man
G. Ann Court

Hair matted with last night’s
sleep on an abandoned boat in the bay
he walks up the slight slope of Main
making no eye contact, leaving in his
wake the hint of Marlboros found almost
intact at the feet of college kids.
Rings in their ears and noses reflect mid-morning sun as
they sip their lattes outside Sarasota News and Books.
From their looks at the man in the grease-stained coat
I am sure they will no more offer a pack-fresh smoke than
Poseidon would give up his claim as
mover of earth and lord of the sea.

I think as I watch how I would know,
as a woman whose life has taken some turns,
how to handle a panhandler looking for help, then
Cigarette Man stops at my side, looks at the sky,
as if weighing the odds the gods might favor
his presence in this particular spot,
removes his jacket, folds it neatly, sits cross-legged
near where I hide behind my New York Times,
finger the slick grain of its magazine’s rotogravure,
hope to assure my invisibility until I have
drunk the last sweet cloud of milky foam that
caps my heated drink, so sweet from honey
guaranteed organic by my barista in the store.

Today, the local Herald reports, in the section
devoted to good news in our town, that
our bay front will be cleansed of anyone who
refused to comply—were just getting by on
boats not approved by those who decide that
men without Izod shirts should be banned.
Should the police sweep extend to this end of Main
where we sit with cappuccinos again and again—
just getting by in our condos that happen to be
only one short block from the place where
Cigarette Man will lose his home near the shore?

Poetry & Art Therapy

In the city of Berlin, graffiti dominate railroad embank-
ments, cover the walls of apartment houses, block the
view out subway windows, and shine on the remnants of
the Berlin Wall. As intrusive as graffiti are, some of us ac-
cept them as a sign of the times. They express the pain
and fear of our troubled youth, who have dropped out of
school, cannot find a job, and have lost any hope and vi-
sion for the future. Graffiti are these young people's way
of dealing with boredom, of drawing attention to them-
selves, of getting back at the establishment, and for some,
graffiti are an expression of healing and works of art.

As beautiful as some of the graffiti are, their tragic root
causes are the breakdown of the family unit and the young-
ster’s almost total disengagement from society. Parents are
disengaged from their children, and children are disengaged
from their parents and from society. Graffiti are the mon-
sters from our unconsciou, and they carry a message about
our consciousness. All the grand, statistical approaches to
problems, our scientific, rational solutions and technological
advances merely foreshadow our potential destruction. Our
reliance on politicians and priests to solve problems leaves
out the one component in our lives that brings us true joy
and happiness; that component embraces passion and cre-
ativity. Perhaps graffiti represent the hidden voice in our un-
conscious that is screaming for attention. We have lost our
way, we have lost our balance, and we have lost our spiritual
path. The journey of the soul is missing, and the youth sense
our lack of connection and are trying to get us back on track.

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Thanks!

Dr. Hans Paschotta,
Psychiatrist
Angelika Paschotta,
Math Therapist

Voices de la Luna, 15 Sept. 2009  15
I was born there
in the center of the city
the city with a bear in her coat of arms

I was born
in the shadows:
in the shadows of Sophia’s Church;
At that time
excitement filled the air;
extinction of the ROARING TWENTIES

Later shame infiltrated the land:
the burning of books
in the shadows of the Linden Opera.

Where were they then,
those offering resistance?
where were they?

Filled with fear
were those listening to
“Boots Colliding on Cobblestone”

Finally--the moaning of many
the occasionally quiet moaning of all too many
as gas rather than water--CREPT INTO THEIR CHAM-

BERS.

Oh, yes, I was born in that city--
in that city apparently not armed
despite a defiant bear in her coat of arms.

Translated by Voices’ Editors

---

Next door to the Brandenburg Gate, the landmark of Berlin, is “The Room of Silence,” in the center of the city near the former frontier between opposing military forces and hostile ideologies. The room invites everyone, regardless of background, color, ideology, religion or physical condition to experience silence for a while. The room is an invitation to tolerance, a continuous reminder against violence and xenophobia, a small step towards peace and spiritual unity.

It is especially significant that the Room of Silence is located in the Brandenburg Gate, because that gate was conceived as the Gate of Peace 200 years ago. On top of the gate the Goddess of Victory and her quadriga enter the town, however, a relief underneath shows the Goddess of Victory leading the triumphal procession of Eirene, the Goddess of Peace, and on the southern side Mars, the God of War is shown sheathing his sword. Over the years the gate’s message of peace receded into the background.

In the wake of World War II--and after the Berlin Wall went up in 1961--the Brandenburg Gate was the symbol of a divided city and a divided world. When the Wall fell in 1989, the Brandenburg Gate became a symbol for a peaceful future in Germany and in Europe. Its Room of Silence recreates the original spirit of the Gate of Peace.

Excerpted from City of Berlin Brochure.
Berlin's Memorial*
  *Hejo Mueller

Back then
we bathed mornings
in Wannsee

and afternoons
in Mueggelsee

(beginning of the seventies)

The wall sluggishly
dries from the sun
in August heat

Look! On both sides
violet colors
radiate in intensity
from fallen pine timber

Yes, it is still one city!

For Herbert de Bruin
Translated by James Brandenburg.

*The Wall was built in 1961 and fell in 1989.

C.G. Jung & Arts
Interview with Lady Lee Andrews

Lady Lee Andrews and Poet's Passage
  *James Brandenburg

When my wife and I were strolling around the main square in Old San Juan, Puerta Rico, the sign Poet's Passage caught my eye. A notice underneath advertised 'Open Mike every Tuesday Evening'. We entered and saw poems hanging on every wall and books of poems on the shelves. There was a huge room for poetry readings. Next to the door hung a cage with a parrot and three love birds. They had unique names—the parrot, Pablo Neruda, and the three love birds, Emily Dickinson, Robert Frost, and Edna St. Vincent Millay. Even the birds were poets here. The creative force behind everything is Lady Lee Andrews.

James: How did you come up with the concept of Poet's Passage?
Lady Lee: My desire was to create a place worthy of poets and their work; this turned into 'Poet's Passage,' a Poetry and Art Museum—a living resource of poetry and art. Anytime during the day, you can meet poets and artists here. We opened Christmas 2006 and Poetry Nights began in May 2007.

Poet's Passage sounds to me like a metaphor for passage into the unconscious. C.G. Jung talks about poetry connecting the poet and the audience to the unconscious. Does this idea of poetry and the unconscious resonate with you?
Yes, very much so. I connect with the unconscious when I write, and I can see the effect of the unconscious on our poets.

How do people react when they walk through your passage and read and listen to poetry?
I have seen people be deeply touched; I only hope this effect applies to everyone.
How did you get financing?
A local bank lent me $2 million to buy the property and start up. They believed in the project as a viable business.

You must have tremendous powers of persuasion.
Poetry has convinced people for generations. I merely took up the challenge to prove it. Poetry pays my bills.

What is the main focus of your business?
Our focus is on poetry and art that poets create. We feature some film and dance, as long as it is connected to poetry; poets create the visual arts in the shop. This is a place where artists can exhibit their art. We issue press releases, and sponsor the opening night where poets read from their works and s How did you get financing?
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Does your Open Mike appeal to tourists?
About 50 percent of my Open Mike participants are tourists; the rest are regulars. The Open Mike has been a constant since we opened two years ago.

I understand you received a grant to take poetry into the schools. How is that working out?
We participate in 'Poetry Out Loud', a poetry contest funded by the NEA and the Poetry Foundation; you can find it on the internet. The Poets Passage and the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture bring it to the schools. The project was an overwhelming success and will continue this year. We believe our approach made the difference: the students come to the Poet’s Passage for instruction and are transformed by the free and artistic atmosphere here.

Do your poetry students work in Spanish and English?
I conduct my classes mostly in English, but my students write in both English and Spanish.

Have you done any other work with youth and poetry in the community?
My entire work is an outreach to our community. I mentor poets--young and old. Poets share their lives with me--their problems, their joys, their ups and downs, and their souls. Even our Open Mike is an outreach to our community.

What is the effect of poetry on those who participate in your programs?
Poetry at the right time, with the right words can save a life. I have seen many poets’ lives changed/healed by their experience with poetry. Especially for poets, we also need to hear as much as we need to be heard.

Can you give specific examples of how poetry has transformed people’s lives?
Love for poetry can lead one to marriage: it did to me.

How has poetry transformed your life?
Everything in my life has been transformed by poetry: the whole basis of my success is poetry.

How do your activities impact the community?
We offer a neutral place to meet. When our neighbors got to know us, we all became like a family.

What vision do you have for your future work?
I wish to create more places like this one. I also wish to create a school upstairs in which poetry is integrated into the curriculum on equal footing with math, science, social studies, English and Spanish.

Is there anything else about your life or your work that you would like to share with us?
Growing up, I saw a lot of fighting--a lot of violence. At a very young age I learned to focus on other details and started to write. At first I wrote only in Spanish, but after I read The Emperor’s New Clothes, I started writing in English. My father, who died when I was seven, spoke English at home, my mother always spoke Spanish, so I thought in both languages.

Where did you grow up?
I was born in Old San Juan and then moved to the tropical rain forest near El Junque. It was there that I discovered words as a child. My mother taught me how to read, and for most of my life, I was home schooled. I had no formal education in poetry; I read everything by poets that I could get my hands on. I was a poetry termite. I published my first book of poetry when I was eighteen.

And you have not stopped since.
And I have not stopped since. Poetry is my life.
Little by Little
Lady Lee Andrews

I'm letting go
Little by little, but I am.
It sometimes hurts.
I sometimes cry.
I sometimes erase it all
And sometimes I try and I can't.
But I'm letting go; I am.
That's just the way I am.
I can't help it anymore.

My mind races unlike the hare
Who had patience to compete.
I'm racing to defeat myself.
It's torture in a shell
My heart has been to hell
I'm letting go.
Little by little, but I am.
I learned that now I can.

Sometimes it's good.
Sometimes it's sweet.
There are times too
That I never meet a standard.
Where questions flow unanswered
And it's okay in itself
I'm taking down the shelf of expectations.
Crowded by imitations.
I learned that now I can.

I'm letting go, little by little,
But I am.

The Song of Poetry
Lady Lee Andrews

An ovation
Each Time
The waves
Fell on my words.

Against the rocks
They hit
So clearly

And the flying of birds
Singing "bye,"
Gave an air
Of delight,

And the sky
Is forever.

I read like a dream.
Each poem like a stream
That flowed like
The life within me

It seemed
So simple

To express nothing less
To exist as the best
I can be.

With no choice to accept
What nature has kept
Part of me.

You Are A Rose
Brent Parke

Early bloomers – those daffodils.
Their prissy prettiness soon expired.

Not you.

Your roots dig patiently
to form a lingering rose.
Content to stand in the sun,
to be admired for beauty's sake.

With cautious, fearful hand
Approach the long-blooming rose
With tenderness and care,
Lest hand and heart be pierced.

Late bloomers – those roses.
They'll not be rushed.
Beauty keeps its own time.
The Fish
Elizabeth Bishop

I caught a tremendous fish
and held him beside the boat
half out of water, with my hook
fast in a corner of his mouth.
He didn't fight.
He hadn't fought at all.
He hung a grunting weight,
battered and venerable
and homely. Here and there
his brown skin hung in strips
like ancient wallpaper,
and its pattern of darker brown
was like wallpaper:
shapes like full-blown roses
stained and lost through age.
He was speckled and barnacles,
fine rosettes of lime,
and infested
with tiny white sea-lice,
and underneath two or three
rags of green weed hung down.
While his gills were breathing in
the terrible oxygen
--the frightening gills,
fresh and crisp with blood,
that can cut so badly--
I thought of the coarse white flesh
packed in like feathers,
the big bones and the little bones,
the dramatic reds and blacks
of his shiny entrails,
and the pink swim-bladder
like a big peony.
I looked into his eyes
which were far larger than mine
but shallower, and yellowed,
the irises backed and packed
with tarnished tinfoil
seen through the lenses
of old scratched isinglass.
They shifted a little, but not
to return my stare.
--It was more like the tipping
of an object toward the light.
I admired his sullen face,
the mechanism of his jaw,
and then I saw
that from his lower lip
--if you could call it a lip

Video of the Fish:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xd9rfQnPGo

Selected Poems
Part I

Youth Poems

Birth
Cyra S. Dumitru

And when the words
have built up inside me
filling my body from my stomach
to my mouth
they spew forth
though not immediately into sound

They are a dance
of letters and numbers
shaping
into paragraphs and sentences
a feast of images and emotions

When at last
the pen is done with me
when the page has taken
all it can
my eyes retrace the journey, the aftermath
and I am humbled

for it was not I
who created those words
not I who gave them meaning
but merely the vessel
they grew in
until fully shaped.
**The House Finch**  
*Annie Parker*

Once a bird landed  
upon my hand and fed  
from the water I held in the other—

its feet were sharp,  
and its weight absent  
as if instead  
of a bird

I held  
a whistling cloud  
of air—

the pulse of flight perched close  
to the prison of my palms—

ruffled freedom prickling  
my fingers  
with its claws

---

**Where I'm From**  
*Julie Hawkins*

I am from innate ambiguity,  
The soul that has no boundaries.  
From the slums of a broken home,  
The fighting, and crying.

I am from the stench of alcohol  
and cigarette smoke in the air,  
lingering into my nostrils from the bar next door.  
I am from the starry night sky,  
Every Wednesday night with my best friend.  
From the tears shed each birthday since he left.  
To the illusion,  
From which I convince my heart  
it will all be okay someday.  
I am from the beauty within the soul,  
The beauty that needs to be appreciated  
before it can be found.  
From the indifference in my voice  
when I say, 'I love you, too.'  
I am from life,  
Where I examine the victims of their own sick,  
and twisted games.  
And death,  
Where I mourn the passing of power.

I am from independence,  
Writing my own story.

---

**Birdsong**  
*Eric Lee*

A bird with a voice like dripping water begins,  
drop by drop, to fill up my head.

A bird with a voice like a car alarm  
unlocks my gift of song.

A bird with a voice like a lawn sprinkler  
shower me with love.

A bird with a voice like a cell phone  
calls me out of my reverie…

Everywhere, all around…the Birdsong.  
Mellifluous, ululating:  
a raw cry.

A bird with a voice like a hyena  
makes me giggle.

A bird with a voice like a fart  
reminds me to smell the flowers!

A bird with a voice like a buzz saw  
cuts off all thought.

A bird with a voice like inexhaustible longing  
reminds me of you…
Our Prayers
*Unknown*

Our Prayers
Are
Centers
Where
We all
Become
One
He who stops
The war
Has
Won

My Little Music Box
*Aryam Mendoza*

My little music box
Is where
Dogs can laugh about anything.
Where
Cats can wear red robes and play violins.
Where
Cows can sleep next to the Moon and Stars.
Where
Plates and spoons can skip across the empty meadows.
Where
The melody is just right.
For, here in this little box
There is room for escape.

Stuck
*Alexandra Osfolaza*

I've got the same song stuck
in my head
right between
my left eye socket & cheekbone
I've got the same song stuck
In my head because I've been up & about to the same twist & shout.
since this morning.
I've got the same song stuck in my head because I prefer that melody to your memory.

Simple
*Laurethe*

Simple words
A quiet room
The perfect time
To describe
The things
We feel now
The Melody dies
On the tear
That falls
On deaf ears.
Espánich Trambesti
Alexandra Osfolza

Mi español
Ha cambiado de sexo
Desde que conoció el tuyo
Ya no se comporta
Como café recién coláo
Sino como mantecado de melao
Bien derretido.
Mi español ya no viste
De sedas y linos
Que rozaban sus curvas
Como algún día
tus dedos
harán las mías
Ahora viste
de corbata
y chaqueta
prefiere que le
digan
Castellano.

Transvestite Spanish
Alexandra Osfolza

My Spanish
Went and had a sex change
Since it met yours.
Now, it doesn’t behave.
And it’s more like
Well-melted
Brown sugar ice cream
Than the fresh-perked
Coffee
It used to be.
Now, it doesn’t wear
Silks or screens
That caressed its curves
Like one day your fingers
Will do with mine;
Now it wears crisp jackets
and tight ties,
and prefers
to be called
Castellano.

Selected Poems
Part III

For My Desk
Naomi Shihab Nye

We judge books
by their covers
every day.
You do, I do.
Human beings—
we’re stuck with ourselves.
Always working on
that new project.
Never keeping up or catching up
With what we miss.
 Feeling remiss.

Each morning
birds speak first.
Sparrows gossip joyously.
Gray dove continues to land on a feeder
too small for her.
A purple martin mother
and purple martin father
solve it all.

A History of Depression
Oscar Houck

Snow gathers and banks against the house,
the accumulation of pale, blue memory.
At dusk, blue bleeds into lavender,
lavender darkens to a bruised purple, then indigo,
the fading day and the coming night
engaged in their hushed code of exchange.
Once you find beauty and comfort in melancholy,
you’re lost.
The Trouble with Angels
Dario Beniquez

The trouble with angels is that we never know where they come from. You can’t see them, either.

Although, some people say they have. But when was the last time you saw a digital photo of an angel. So how do you know, how they really look without a picture?

Some pictures taken of them are like UFOs. They appear as burst of lights in the sky, or blurred figures in the distance. Those who have heard them report their voices sound mysterious, barely intelligible, almost as if listening to them through tin-can telephones.

And then, there are their appearances, always, at the strangest hours like at 3 o’clock in the morning; why not at 10 o’clock in the morning? What’s wrong with normal time? At 3 a.m. it could be a cat burglar. Who knows? The trouble with angels is that there are too many of them.

One time an angel asked me to go on a trip with it, its pocket full of credit cards. What kind of angel carries credit cards? The last time I saw that so-called angel it was running from the law, apparently it was short of cash, and had held up someone.

Angels are strange creatures, bright, dark, winged, wingless, conflicted, and hungry for companionship. If you see one or think you see one give it my regards, but act cautiously.
Select Poems
Part IV

MOLLY DIED ON A MONDAY
Connie Beresin

On a Monday gray with streaks,
She died on a windless Monday,
A Monday too gray to hang sheets,
No wind to billow cotton,
No wind to billow linen pinned on hemp line,
Cotton clipped with gray wood pins,
She’d pinned them to the taut hemp line.

We are burying Molly on a Sunday,
On a Sunday full of sun,
With her family gathered, a ring at the graveside,
Three deep, a ring at the gravesite,
Her family gathered round,
Bilowed out like sheets in the wind,
Pinned tight three deep in a ring,
The sun warming them like her sheets.

They will dig the grave themselves,
Shovel after shovel of rich loam,
Dig the grave themselves with sharp blades,
Toss pink and yellow roses on her tomb,
One by one as the sun fades,
They toss pink and yellow roses,
Catching the sun.

BY X’IAN’S SOUTHERN GATE
Agnes Meadows

Where old city walls marry ghosts of lion
Guardians, roofs held together with moss
And drizzled with bird droppings curve
To greet the sparrow spangled dusk.

Here you can buy paper cut-outs of the Great Leader,
Other heroes of the Little Red Book, have your fortune
Told in jade pebbles shaped in your zodiac sign.
Old women will massage your feet and head as they

Chatter on oblivious, beaming and nodding like dash-board
Toys. Here, strange things rest on plates waiting for the
Careless mouths of office workers journeying home on
Buses overcrowded with opinions, gridlocked in ideologies.

Children, precious as timeless good fortune, play by the
Curb-side, each one free as an outstretched hand, wild birds
Caught in the net of no revolution, laughing as if they know
Their dreams have the possibility of fulfillment.

Old men smile at me, confusion in their eyes, the weight of their
Own Long March carved onto their walnut faces. This is not the
Tomorrow they were promised. And I can only smile back in
Apology, for I have not known what they have known, nor do I

Carry the empty basket of times best left unremembered.
And I cross the street, throw myself unheedingly into the path
Of oncoming cars, reckless with anticipation of adventure,
The scent of pleasure, the taste of evening.

Hearts Hardened by Privilege
Lou Taylor

“To those whom much is given
Much is expected”
Was Jesus speaking in metaphors?
Did he mean for us to shut the doors?
To use our gifts for nothing more
Than to become colossal bores?
When we arm ourselves with respectability
Worship the idols of comfort and stability
We imagine we are safe
Protected from strife
But instead miss the goal
Which is to not just exist
But to live a life
Filled with soul
We are led down a road
We don’t want to take
Too hard a journey
We are asked to make
When we see ourselves
In those we despise
We are asked to
Open our eyes
Repent of
Our arrogance
And take one step
Toward Paradise
Select Poems
Part V

The Bihl House
Carolyn Patteson Sanchez

I stand among the oaks and pecans, proud of my heritage, acknowledged at last.

Having witnessed so much in my lifetime, stones of my exterior walls survived the fall of the Alamo, a day never to be forgotten in Texas history.

Then my stones were placed on the walls of St. Ann’s Church, ripped down by a great flood.

At last Mr. Bihl saved my stones. He gave me life by erecting this wonderful building, calling it home.

A young family was raised within these walls. Laughter and joy abounded.

Years passed. My young family grew. They eventually moved away.

I was soon used for various mean, a rent house, a drug store, a grocery store, even a gang hang out.

Some wanted to ignore my history. They wanted to tear me down.

Others fought for me. I survived. Yes, I survived!!!

If I were to talk, Oh, the history I could reveal.
Your imagination will have to prevail!

I still stand proudly among the oaks and pecans.

Yes, I survived!!!!

My doors are open wide. In stroll my “Goldens” (we don’t call them seniors).

They paint, create crafty items, exercise. I am their haven.

They laugh and visit. They are at home with me.

My art community enjoys exhibits featuring new and established artists.

I am not at my beginning nor am I at my end.

I am in full stride, proud beyond belief.

My aura is wrapped around my “Goldens,” my artists, my poets.

As I stand between the oaks and pecans.

---

Latter Day Mexican Americans
Juan Manuel Perez

Our Lady Mary of the Connect the Dots
Down at the Church of the Latter Day Mexican Americans
Asked me if I wanted to place an order for tamales
To help fund the spaceship they were going to buy

To visit God
What?
To see if he was really fair skinned with blue eyes
Or if he was brown and poor like the rest of us

To ask him if Hell was mainly for brown Indians
From the country formerly known as Aztlan
Or was it just a haven for country singers named Willie or Hank
Or maybe to ask how much more Anglo we must pretend to be

To at least smell the lemon pies made in Heaven’s kitchen
I was going to say:
No, Sister Mary
I don’t want to buy any damn tamales.

Besides, that clunker of a ship
That your preacher is looking into
Won’t fly past Uranus.

Then I got to thinking that I would really like to know

If they make lemon pies in heaven
So I quickly responded:
How much are a dozen?
**Turkish Delight**  
*Margot Van Sluytman*

Contentment sings.  
During lush nocturnal  
Travels where an  
Azul Mediterranean  
Throbs with wreckless  
Waves, the sticky consistency  
Of the Gods’ manna melts  
As Turkish Delight, dusted  
With simple sweet flavour,  
Drenching even our pores  
With rosewaterd sublimity,  
Betimes cinnamon and mint.  
The fragrance of Greek Islands  
The call of Turkish architecture  
Envelope us here, in this  
Alchemy of our savage  
Sugared explosions.

---

**To Bless Your Landscape Of Dream**  
*Catherine-Grace Patrick*

May the blessing of starlight’s twinkle,  
Sing you through the dark.  
May your guardian angels weave for you,  
A crown of sheltering hope.  
May the fertile fields of dream  
Lead you to a garden space,  
Where, there, you’ll reap  
A bountiful harvest  
Of lily-scented peace.

May the light of love protect you.  
May the spirit of grace enfold you.  
May the flowering colours of courage  
Blossom for you, with the coming of dawn.

---

**EVERGREEN LOVE**  
*Valerie Martin Bailey*

Some loves are delicate; a fragile flower  
In need of special nurturing and care,  
Blooming in a bower—  
A garden, green and fair.  
Ah, but our wild, sweet passion grows  
On stony ground, in winter snows—  
A sturdy evergreen that cannot die;  
It thrives beneath a blue or stormy sky,  
Rooted deep within the bedrock of our hearts.

---

**Suburban Script**  
*Jim Daniels*

Midnight dog barking capital letters,  
insistent as a heart attack. Ritual  
drumming and copulation, blood-frenzy?  
Not here. A dog keeps the world  
awake. It wants to get inside  
and somebody’s not listening  
or not home or dead. The rest of us  
wait it out in the darkness  
our breathing lower-case, italicized.

---

**Cancun Beach**  
*Dennis Gittinger*

The moon’s a Cupid’s quest to charm the deep  
And mesmerize his waters toward the shore.  
Now with fair tides so blue fair tidings sleep,  
And pass the day in dreams of what’s in store.  
Each night upon the sands the waters swell;  
The sea invades the cave beneath her dunes.  
They come, exchanging gifts they know so well,  
And satisfied, withdraw to chase the moon.  
Yet even as he leaves, he leaves a kiss.  
Her lips, still warm and wet from their embrace,  
Part silently to take and give the bliss  
Mid whispers of another time and place.  
We part and taste the sweetness of our sorrow.  
The setting free’s what promises tomorrow.

---

**Dancing in the Waiting Room**  
*Angus Macmillan*

All our living  
is in waiting.  
In these moments  
we find our myriad selves:  
anxious, hopeful, trembling,  
wishful, fearful, impatient.  
All our dancing shadows  
are there  
flitting in the half-light  
of unreason,  
crowding together  
in fevers of movement,  
ever still, never one.  
Then a voice says “Next,”  
and a new dance  
begins.

Translated from Gaelic by the author.
Poetry & Dreams

Dreams & Symbols
James Brandenburg

Poetry and Dreams have much in common in that both contain symbols and metaphors. On my journey to become a dream analyst, I am more and more fascinated by the use of dream material in poems. Josie Mixon's poetry is an integral part of her dream imagery. She has given us permission to publish two of her poems that reflect symbols and imagery from her dreams.

Water Symbol
James Brandenburg

Water is a symbol of the unconscious. In the shared dream, Josie's mother and Josie's daughter are disappearing into the waterfall, another sign of the unconscious. During most of her life, Josie's relationship with her mother was not a positive relationship. It was only shortly before her mother's death that Josie and her mother reconciled with each other. After the dream, Josie still had some unresolved issues with her mother; in fact, she was very angry with her mother. Josie is working on the last phase of her recovery; she is healing her wounds from sexual abuse committed by a relative. The abuse began when Josie was eleven years old and lasted for several years. She had a child from this abusive relationship when she was thirteen years old. The unconscious is offering Josie the opportunity to move on with her life, but she still has anger issues which involve forgiveness. In Jungian psychology, forgiveness revolves around our own shadow work, as we often project our shortcomings onto others. Josie now has sufficient insight to understand that in order for her to forgive her mother, she needs to do her own shadow work and thus forgive herself. This is the final phase in Josie's recovery.

Dream of My Mother's Death
Josie Mixon

Two weeks after my mother died I had this dream. The dream began as I was hiding behind a shrub watching a movie like occurrence before me. It was foggy and misty. Before me walked my mother wearing a white/gray colored linen gown holding my daughter's hand who appeared to be about 4 or 5 years old wearing a clay (terra cotta) colored linen gown. The temperature was mild/cool and damp from the mist. They were both barefoot, I noticed their footprints on the sandy clay colored soil. The grain was not fine it was thick like the grain from the Great Sand Dunes in southern Colorado or raw sugar. My mother was to the left and my daughter to the right. My mother looked as she did when she died (65 yo) but my daughter appeared 2 – 3 years older than she was when she died (almost 2 years)....They walked past me very slowly and my daughter held a brass colored bell in her hand with a wooden handle which she held with the tips of her fingers. They walked to the right following the edge of the pool or pond towards the misting waterfall. I saw their faces when they walked in front of me and they appeared to be focused as if in a trance. They disappeared into the mist leaving nothing behind but footprints. Words were not spoken. I woke up soon after the dream and I got up immediately because I feared the image would leave me so I drew it on a small canvas. I never cried for my mother again after this dream.

CONFRONTING THE DEMON
Josie Mixon

The old, wooden bridge creaks
With the weight of my soul
Still, it separates us
The inferno below
Scorches the details of my youth
In attempt to consume this bridge
My footsteps have been slow
In bringing me to you
But I am coming to you
The heat has evaporated my tears
So don't bother looking for any
The souls of my feet are blistered
As is my heart
Slowly I have walked towards you
At times taking one step forward
Two long steps back
Pausing only
To pray for strength
My long, black hair disintegrated

In this hell I stand in
But I am closer than I have ever been
Much closer than you think
The end is near
The time has come
And finally, finally
The end
Is mine!
NEARNESS OF YOU
Josie Mixon

Along the corridor
Of my thoughts
I found you
Not waiting for me
Like I wasn’t looking for you
Still, here we are

Last night I bathed in moonlit waters
Thinking of all that is
All that has been drives me here
Further than I have ever been
But still the oceans depth calls out to me
Just a little further out
Where I feel the temperature change
The only rage lived within me
Not in the waves
They twirled, turning and spiraling
Wrapping their arms around me
Like the arms of an octopus
A welcomed invitation
Fear crept in but anger was stronger
So I stood my ground
Even with mothers’ hands
Wrapped around my ankles

The nearness of you held my hand
As you felt me fading into tomorrow
Measuring the distance between us
I knew your love was stronger than my hate
So I chose to stay
Within the nearness of you

Poetry as Therapy

Incest
Voices Editors

One of the most terrible things to happen to a child is sexual abuse by his or her own parent, or sexual abuse by a relative. Incest happens all too often in our society. The trauma for the child is horrific and often lasts a lifetime, especially if the child/adult does not come forward and receive treatment for the abuse. Treatment may involve years of therapy and a long process of healing. In this section, two victims of incest are writing about their abuse and have stepped forward to share their stories with others. Writing about incest is sometimes the initial step in the outcry, and writing about this issue can continue throughout one’s lifetime.

Incest Survivor

Joyce Collins is an incest survivor. Her father first raped her when she was six years old and continued well into her adolescence. Her psyche coped with this trauma by splitting into two -- a child who experienced every moment of the abuse and another child who felt nothing of it. In her book, Miss America Day by Day, Marilyn Van Derbur, who is also an incest survivor, calls these personas the night child and the day child. Her two personas were not aware of each other’s existence, until her repressed memories surfaced at the age of 37--some twenty years after the abuse had ended.

Joyce has been writing poetry since she was 15, most of it sad, much of it philosophical--all of it insightful even though she didn’t yet have the ability to comprehend the insight. In retrospect, it is as if she were writing for a future self whose task was to re-integrate her night child and day child into one whole person. The title of her new book, The Way of Reckoning, is also the title of the first poem she wrote after her memories surfaced. It is the quintessential example of a poem written for the future self, describing both the violent upheaval she was beginning and the revelation of truth that would result. Another poem on page 31 is from her book, Ode to Inigo Montoya.
The Way of Reckoning
Joyce Collins

Reptiles drop their tales in fright
and live to grow another
Humans split the limb alike,
But bind it with a tether,
So long and thin as time goes by,
We think of it as other

But memory grows its tendrils out
from wounded limb to well,
and bides its time till boundary thins
and tendrils’ touch is felt

Then all hell breaks loose—
or that’s the way it seems
as tendrils hook, then pull apart
the self I know as me

A foulness spills out of my bowels
and takes my life-force with it
Where food once fed is nauseous dread
My stomach yields its content

My head is wracked with migraine pain
and fear is strong for madness
All these confuse and mis’ry bring,
but none compare the sadness

Illness say doctors—Nay!
I know the past is beckoning
I am not sick from bug or germ
It is the way of reckoning—
to tell the tale and tell it whole,
each unto the other, until they realize
they are we and we are the survivor

The Windows of My Soul
Selina Patlán

Many have heard the expression,
“Your eyes are the windows to your soul.”
Could this be why I am afraid to look into the eyes of a stranger?
Not only because I am afraid of what I might see in their eyes,
But because of what they will find in mine.
I have so many dark secrets that only a few know of me.
Secrets of pain and suffering…
Is it then true that by looking into the eyes of a stranger,
That you can uncover a lot about that person?
I like to put on the expression of someone who is strong
and fearless!
Someone who has overcome hardships and has seen some
Of the cruelties of the world
but yet still wakes up each morning with
her head up high!
Yet…
I fear that by looking into the eyes of another…
They will uncover the truth of my pain and weaknesses.
For my eyes are the windows of the soul.

I almost pulled the trigger…
Selina S. Patlán

I was lost once…
I couldn’t find my purpose or any reason to continue living.
I was so close to pulling that trigger.
I could even feel the cold hard metal between my bare
warm fingers as it was haunting my thoughts.
I felt alone and assumed that
no one would ever be able to understand.
I was lost and I couldn’t find a way out to escape my pain.
I didn’t have a weapon, but I was close to pulling that trigger
that haunted my thoughts.
I saw it as the only way out from having to face my prob-
lems.

I couldn’t stand the voices in my mind…
They would whisper, urging me to do it,
“Justdoit,”theysaid,“You’llfeelbetterandforeverbeinpeace.”
I almost pulled that trigger that would have ended my life
and everything that I stood for.
But at point of almost doing so, just when I held it up to my head
with my heart pounding wildly as if it knew what was to come…
That’s when I saw the light at the end of the tunnel.
I was finally able to see that beautiful rainbow that came
after the storm.
I have heard about it before, explained to me many times,
but I never fully understood until the point of no return.
I almost pulled the trigger…
But instead I choose to live!
**Ode to Inigo Montoya**  
*Joyce Collins*

Hello, my name is memory  
You raped your daughter,  
who loved you dearly  
I do not lie

Hello, my name is will.  
On her you imposed me,  
While you drank your fill  
It drained her dry

Hello, my name is shame  
I served you well  
Wracked is she with guilt and blame,  
but ne’er you cry

Hello, my name is terror  
With me you broke her mind  
Day and night I pursued her  
Nameless and faceless was I

Hello, my name is rage  
I was that daughter  
Now I am not her  
Prepare to die

---

**Photograph of the Poet at 21 Months**  
*Lianne Mercer*

The small girl  
stands looking  
into her hand,  
puzzled at  
how it gently encloses  
this blessing  
this beetle  
this new word.

In the mist  
of memory  
this child exists  
in black and white,  
breath invisible,  
head bent,  
curious  
perhaps ready  
to release  
her secret gift  
perhaps wanting  
to play with it.

Her future rests  
in small fingers  
captured holding  
this moment  
of choice --  
six tiny legs  
tickling her palm,  
mimicking dances  
of words to come.

---

**Poetry Support Groups**

**A Note about This Section**  
*Voices Editors*

Lianne Mercer is a certified poetry therapist who runs peer groups and poetry therapy groups in San Antonio and Fredericksberg, Texas. She resides in Fredericksberg, Texas. Attending a peer group run by a certified poetry therapist is a way of fulfilling part of the requirements to become a certified poetry therapist. For more information on the certification of poetry therapists, visit their website at www.poetrytherapy.org.
Spoken Word
Poems Written & Read by the Authors

Grisel Y. Acosta Recites Her Poetry

Grisel Y. Acosta is an instructor at The Writing Center at the UTSA. She studies Latino literature; poetry; oral tradition/songwriting and folktales; language and identity; intersecting cultures and identities; education reform. Her publications: House of Walls, in Private International Photo Review; Pressure Mix, in Check the Rhyme: An Anthology of Female Poets and MCs; Cubanita, in After Hours Literary Magazine; Chica!Go! (Part I), (an excerpt) by Urban Life Center. Her hometown: Chicago. Info from: www.utsa.edu.

Silence Is Not an Option
October is domestic violence awareness month.
Viva Bookstore
8407 Broadway
San Antonio, TX 78209
Saturday, October 17, 2009
1:00PM to 3:00PM

Silence is Not an Option is an annual poetry reading promoting awareness of domestic violence. Josie Mixon, survivor of sexual abuse and domestic violence, once again hosts this year’s event. She is an activist and the author of two books “Reflections of My Battered Life” and “Of Flesh and Bone I am Woman Surviving Abuse.” She has appeared in person and her work is documented in several publications promoting awareness for all victims and survivors who cannot or will not speak for themselves.

Featured readers at “Silence is Not an Option” are survivors of abuse and express their experience through their written work. Dr. Josephine Mendez Negrete author of “Las Hijas De Juan Daughters Betrayed” and a professor at the University of Texas in San Antonio is the honored guest this year.

Several agencies including the Rape Crisis Center, The P.E.A.C.E. Initiative, and the Family Violence Prevention Services, Inc will be on hand distributing information on the services they provide.

Admission is free. Contact: 1-800-826-1143

The Sun
Jordan Samz

Hands in his pockets, looking sharp,
giving birth
kicking. He eats skin, he sleeps in rocks, he smokes hydrogen.
The sun walking to the corner store to buy light beer.
The sun burning against the white columns of Córdoba.
All churches.
He’s floating in the tight cave of the Cordobesa’s stomach.
Oh! How he runs
through the hairs plumming her arms
I wish he would crash into the windows of the bus or the windshield of the plane.
But instead he falls,
gathering light like a lost coin, and drowns
in the canal that hugs
the city like a blue-gold ringing the ochre twilight.

Señor Sol*
Jordan Samz

Las manos en los bolsillos, mirando agudamente.
Dando luz, dando
patadas. El come piel, el duerme empedrado. El fuma hidrógeno.
Señor sol caminando hacia el kiosco para comprar cerveza rubia.
Señor sol quemando contra las columnas nevadas de las iglesias Cordobesas. Flotando
En la panza de la Cordobesa petisa. Corriendo en los pelos amarillos
plumando sus brazos. ¡Que choque con las ventanas del ómnibus;
la parabrisas del avión! Pero al final el cae, agarrando la luz como un cospel perdido,
y se ahoga en el agua de la cañada que abraza la ciudad como un anillo de oro
en el crepúsculo dorado.

*Jordan Samz wrote both versions. He translated and read the poem: 1. The English: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rP6PdMRmoyw, and 2. The Spanish version: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LyRGdxICqP0
A Video Interview with Rabbi Sam Stahl
To view the video go to:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J7uv-us_Wso

Rabbi Stahl Speaks of Arts as an International Language to Advance Peace in the Middle East

Samuel Stahl has been Rabbi Emeritus of Temple Beth-El in San Antonio since 2002. He has written two books: Making the Timeless Timely: Thoughts and Reflections of a Contemporary Reform Rabbi and Boundaries, Not Barriers: Some Uniquely Jewish Perspectives on Life. Rabbi Stahl served the San Antonio, Texas Temple Beth-El for 26 years as its “Senior Rabbi.” Previously, Rabbi Stahl served as a chaplain in the United States Army and as Rabbi of Congregation B’nai Israel of Galveston, Texas.

The Mujeres Writing Group
Belza Ramos and Janie Alonso

In the summer of 2002, a group of women from the community were invited by the staff of the Center for Women at Our Lady of the Lake University (OLLU) to reflect on their lives as daughters, sisters, wives, mothers and women of faith. As they gathered, they began opening up voices that had long been quieted. Their reflections brought tears and laughter. This resulted in powerful stories that had to be written. In April 2003, the first anthology, Encuentros de Mujeres: Women’s Collective Cultural Memory in San Antonio, Texas was published. They had discovered the beauty and power of their words. The second anthology En Nuestras Palabras - In Our Own Words was published in 2007. Their passion for writing led them to reach out into the community and they took their experience to Women at the Well, a halfway house for women released from prison. There were six sessions intended to help develop personal insights.

The third Anthology unveiled June 2009, Women’s Voices – Voces de Mujeres, included fiction, non-fiction and poetry with two stories written by the participants from Women at the Well. The Mujeres ventured into the literary community, reading at the OLLU Literary Festival, LatinLetters, Guadalupe Cultural Theatre, V-Day, Luminarias, and International Women’s Day. The Mujeres Writing Group meets every other Friday evening at the Center for Women. It is open to any woman over eighteen years of age at any writing level. We would love to hear your voice. We are the Mujeres!

What’s going on in Iran?
www.bbc.com

One of Iran’s defeated opposition presidential candidates has said some protesters held after June’s disputed poll were tortured to death in prison.

Mr Karroubi called for the formation of an independent committee to review his evidence in “a calm atmosphere”. On Sunday, the defeated presidential candidate claimed that both male and female opposition protesters had been raped in detention, with some suffering serious injuries.

Mr Karroubi said the people who had told him about the allegations of sexual assault held “sensitive positions”. The claim was supported by a number of human rights groups but quickly dismissed as “totally baseless” by the speaker of Iran’s parliament, Ali Larijani. “Based on parliament’s investigations, detainees have not been raped or sexually abused in Iran’s Kahrizak and Evin prisons,” he said.

The rise of Iran’s citizen journalists
Digital Planet
Dave Lee
BBC World Service

It has been 40 days since Neda Agha-Soltan, a young Iranian woman, was killed during an anti-government protest in Tehran.

Within hours, graphic scenes showing her final seconds of life dominated newspapers and bulletins over the world. Yet this moment wasn’t recorded by a professional journalist working for a big news organisation. Instead, a regular bystander captured the powerful footage and uploaded it online.

The clip of Agha-Soltan’s death is just one of hundreds of pieces of citizen journalism to come from Iran in the past few months. With journalists forced to stay in their hotel rooms, or even leave the country, these amateur recordings quickly became the only means of getting uncensored news out of Tehran.

Please see the related Video Clip at:
1. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4QZ-Gb1Q8Ao

A Scene from Iran Election Protest:
Poet Laureates

Karla K. Morton
the 2010 Poet Laureate of Texas
Interview by Valerie Martin Bailey

The Texas Commission on the Arts nominated Karla K. Morton and several others to be poet laureate. Gov. Rick Perry, Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst and the Legislature made the final selection and named Morton of Denton as the 2010 Poet Laureate of Texas.
The Interview has been abridged. To see the complete interview, go to www.voicesdelaluna.com

Valerie: It was a privilege to meet you at the Poetry Society of Texas annual summer conference this past July. I was impressed not only by your amazing poetry, but by your warmth, charm, and indomitable spirit. How long have you been writing poetry, and how did you get started?
Karla: It seems as if I have written my entire life, but my very first attempt at poetry came from a 5th grade homework assignment—to write a poem about your favourite colour. It was white. I have been hooked ever since.

You seem young to be the Poet Laureate of Texas. You must have an impressive body of work. Tell us about some of them.
Oh, Thank You! I am widely published in journals across Texas, such as descant, Southwestern American Literature, Concho River Review, The Langdon Review of the Arts, AmarilloBay, Ardent, Oak Bend Review, and others. For about 20 years, I worked to get published, focusing on the credibility of these amazing Texas journals. Also, I am featured on the national television show, The Art of Living Gallery, which showcases art as a healing tool for the body and soul. Redefining Beauty, published by Dos Gatos Press is due out September, 2009. This is a poetry book about my experiences going through cancer/chemotherapy/radiation. Becoming Superman, a chapbook by Blooming Tree Press is also due out in September. This is a book I’ll take along to kids during my Little Town, Texas Tour across the state. Also due out is Names We’ve Never Known by the Texas Review, Fall 2009, and The Texas Christian University Press’ Texas Poet Laureate 2010 book, due out Spring, 2010.

Share with our readers where you were and what you were doing when you were notified that you had been appointed the poet laureate for 2010.
Wow, it was soooo surreal! I was driving down I-35 and decided to call my home phone number to check my messages. There was one there from Gaye, with the TCA (Texas Commission on the Arts). It was a very monotone...”Please call me back. I have information you need to know about the Texas Poet Laureate position...” I thought, Oh, she’s letting me down easy. So, I dialed her back, but this time her mood was bright and cheery, and she said “I want to be the first to congratulate you on being selected to be the 2010 Texas Poet Laureate!” I screamed. I cried. I had to pull off the side of the road. Thank goodness I was sitting down, or my knees would have given way.

Does a poet laureate ever suffer from writer’s block, and if so how do you get your creative juices going? Hummmmm, good question. Writer’s block. I don’t know if I buy into that term. Let me give you another way of think

ing about things. What does that term, “writer’s block” really mean? That at this very moment, I have nothing to write down? Okay, if that’s the case, then pull out what you wrote yesterday and go over it. Begin editing, then the day before that, then the day before that. What I suggest and what I do, is have a time set aside, a routine, if you will, every day or every other day or whenever works for your schedule. This time is your “writing time.” If you aren’t creating, then edit, re-write, or gather poems to send out to journals. It’s a process; it’s a discipline; it all works together. Yes, there are days when I focus on editing and re-writing and I’m not creating, but I don’t call it writer’s block. And to get my juices going? I read. I love reading everything, especially other poets. I find other poetry to be great triggering points for me.

You have written a book, Redefining Beauty, to chronicle your experiences in dealing with cancer. Were you able to write throughout the experience or did the poems come later?
The majority of the poems came during the experience, though a few I wrote after. When I was diagnosed, I needed something more than fact books. I needed something with some grit to it...something more than kittens and rainbows. When I couldn’t find it, I simply wrote my way through it.

Tell our readers how you think your experience with cancer may have made you a better poet.
I have a quote in my bathroom that reads: “You are not a human being going through a spiritual event. You are a spiritual being going through a human event.” Everything we experience, everything we go through, shapes us. I wrote a poem called “Picking Up the Accent” that talks about how everything we go through “curls the hand around the pen.” It is life—life and practice that makes us better poets.

State poet laureates don’t get a cash prize, but they get a resolution and a title they can use throughout their career. How do you plan to share this honor with others? Can you tell us some of what you will be doing in the next year?
Beginning September, 2009, I will begin my Little Town, Texas Tour, where I will travel to schools across this great state, bringing in a day of arts and poetry to the schools, and share from my Becoming Superman book. It was school that introduced me to poetry, and what better way than to go back to the grassroots and inspire other kids and bring poetry into their lives? Also, along the way, I plan to stop at cancer/oncology centers to share the Redefining Beauty book. If even one person is comforted by this book, then its done its job. Plus, I’m really looking forward to reading for events, festivals, and groups all over Texas. Call me, I’ll come!

Where can we get your books?
My current book, titled Wee Cowrin’ Timorous Beastie (a 17th century Scottish epic set to the amazing celtic music of composer Howard Baer), can be found at CD Baby, Hastings Books and Records, Amazon, or my website: www.kkmorton.com. The other three books will be available from the publishers, bookstores and my website.
Kay Ryan Poetry
The United States Poet Laureate

All Shall Be Restored
Kay Ryan
from http://www.poetryfoundation.org/archive/poem.html?id=172272

The grains shall be collected from the thousand shores
to which they found their way, and the boulder restored,
and the boulder itself replaced in the cliff, and likewise
the cliff shall rise or subside until the plate of earth
is without fissure. Restoration knows no half measure. It will
not stop when the treasured and lost bronze horse remounts the steps.
Even this horse will founder backward to coin, cannon, and domestic pots,
which themselves shall bubble and drain back to green veins in stone.
And every word written shall lift off letter by letter, the backward text
read ever briefer, ever more antic in its effort to insist that nothing
shall be lost.

Physician Writers:


Archibald Joseph Cronin (1896-1981). Scottish novelist and physician, a prolific writer of best selling novels depicting the medical profession. Several of his novels were made into movies, including The Stars Look Down (1935; film 1939), The Citadel (1937; film 1938), and The Keys of the Kingdom (1941; film 1944).

Somerset Maugham (1874-1965). Trained as a physician at St. Thomas’s Hospital in London but, like Michael Crichton, he never practiced medicine. Maugham wrote over 60 books, including Of Human Bondage (1915), Moon and Sixpence (1919), and The Summing Up (1938).

Michael Palmer (b. 1942). Graduated from Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine and trained as an internist at Boston City Hospital and Mass. General Hospital. Like Robin Cook, Palmer writes popular novels with medical themes, including: Natural Causes, a 1994 best seller; Silent Treatment (1995); and Critical Judgment (1996). His novels have been translated into two dozen languages.

William Carlos Williams (1883-1963). American poet, essayist and short story writer. Williams was a practicing pediatrician, and delivered more than 3000 babies in a working class, ethnically mixed neighborhood of Rutherford, N.J. Williams posthumously won the Pulitzer Prize for his two-volume work Paterson. His poetry emphasizes everyday life and speech. Williams also wrote 50 short stories, the best of which is considered The White Mule (1937). Many of the short stories deal with his life as a doctor.

POET LAUREATES OF TEXAS
1932-1957

1932-1934
Judd Mortimer Lewis, Houston
1934-1936
Aline T. Michaelis, Austin
1936-1939
Grace Noll Crowell, Dallas
1939-1941
Lexie Dean Robertson, Rising Star
1941-1943
Nancy Richey Ranson, Dallas
1943-1945
Dollilee Davis Smith, Cleburne
1945-1947
David Riley Russell, Dallas
1947-1949
Aline B. Carter, San Antonio
1949-1951
Carlos Ashley, Llano
1951-1953
Arthur M. Sampley, Denton
1953-1955
Mildred Lindsey Raiborn, San Angelo
1955-1957
Pierre Bernard Hill, Hunt

Cary Clack Book Signing

Cary Clack Born in San Antonio, Cary Clack is a graduate of St. Mary’s University in San Antonio and a columnist for The San Antonio Express-News. His Latest book, Clowns and Rats Scare Me, is a collection of 84 columns written for the newspaper since 1988 when he became the first African-American journalist on the Editorial Board of The San Antonio Express-News.

Preview the video clip of Mr. Cary Clack describing his book at:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ChkKAfu9P0M

Voices de la Luna, 15 Sept 2009 35
Melville, Thoreau and the Uncivilized “I”  
Palmer Hall

A friend asked: Are you healthy? Happy? And I honestly don’t know the answer to the second question. I am doing, mostly, what I want to be doing. I have writing time, reading time, time to do what needs to be done. But what I need is living time. Lebensraum. A friend has been keeping me informed about his teaching of Moby Dick, that great granite book at the heart of American literature. It’s been interesting, if a bit depressing, to read about students rejecting Melville. He was similarly rejected in 1851 when that fine book came out. I am not certain anyone outside of graduate classes actually teaches all of Moby Dick anymore and I regret that.

It is time, I think, to get up and leave the desk, walk outside, go to the beach. Perhaps I have “a dark November” in my own soul. I need to get my small tent and my canoe and light out for Huck’s territories. I want to go to Matagorda Island or the Big Thicket, maybe up to the Davis Mountains, and not take water or food and live for a week or two, just me and the place. I am not Henry David Thoreau or John Muir or even Edward Abbey. I do not want to make the trip a grand metaphor for simplification, to drive life into a corner for examination, but I am trapped by so much here that there is no time for a there to impinge. That’s when Ishmael sets out to find water...not to drink, but to gaze out at with the rest of what passes for humanity. That’s when he wants to go to sea.

I’ve been reading my friend’s notes about his students and their meeting with that “ungodly godlike man” Melville named Ahab and the ineffable effing power that makes up that whale of a tale. I last taught Moby Dick fifteen to twenty years ago and it was a great experience teaching under ideal circumstances. We were establishing a new program in the evenings and the class was a study of Nineteenth Century American Prose. I had a grand total of four students (ranging from 22-45 years old) sign up for the class, so we met in the conference room right outside my office. I provided coffee each night (two nights a week for 14 weeks) and the students brought snacks. We will not normally let classes make at my university with only four students or we will ask the teacher to take on the small number of students as Independent Studies students for a pro-rated salary of $250 a head, but this was the first semester of a new program, so the powers that be let the class “make” with only four.

What a wonderful class size! No one could hide behind anyone else; everyone had to and did do the assigned readings before every class. Each night, a student did a report on some aspect of the day’s reading and we sat, drank coffee (and Diet Cokes—me) and talked about literature. Moby Dick was, as I had anticipated, the rough part of the class, but mostly because of its length. The students had no trouble understanding the chapters and, as with most students, preferred those chapters containing more narrative. But they loved the book and dove deeply into its texture. I suspect the only real way to teach Moby Dick these days is to have a very small number of students or, perhaps, an already interested graduate class in a doctoral program at a large university. It worked for me this once and I have had no opportunity to teach the book since.

Back to what I was doing before. What I want is not an experiment, only a sloughing off of the things that get in the way. Not writing. I do not want to go onto a barrier island with a chair and a notebook (not even a laptop) and sit in the warm sun listening to the waves for the purpose of writing about it. What I want to do is look at driftwood, run my hands over the barnacles encrusting old logs sinking into the water, find shallow pools left when the tides recede and sit beside them looking at what was left behind. I want to wade through the low tide water and pick up starfish and sand dollars while they are still alive and look at them. Have you held a living sand dollar in your hand? Have you seen the tiny cilia circumscribing the flat oval, let it move slowly over your palm, slight tickling sensation? This is as sensational as seeing a whale at sea when you do not expect to see one.

I have read that biologists, classifying insects, used to taste them, put them in their mouths to see what would happen. Darwin apparently got sick when he placed the wrong kind of beetle in his mouth. What they did was go beyond merely looking at the wee beasts to classify them: they experienced them with multiple senses. I do not want to taste the insects, worms, whatever, but I also do not want simply to read about them. I watched Henry Louis Gates a few years ago on PBS. He wanted to experience elephants and went on a photo-safari in Africa to do so. He and two hunters walked up to a herd in the veldt and the elephants almost charged them. Am I losing the thread? Getting lost? Elephants are the whales of the African veldt. Can’t you see Joseph Conrad writing Moby Dick? He sets it in Africa and the whale is a giant albino elephant with malevolent pink eyes. He had once lifted Captain Ahab by his leg and ripped it off. Ahab’s replacement leg is made of elephant ivory.

It is necessary sometimes to cut loose, to lose the veneer of civilization, to go into the woods, into the wilderness wherever it might be, unclothed, no food, no water, just yourself and what exists all around you. This sounds perilously close to what Thoreau talked about, but it is not. I am not speaking only of a desire for solitude. But without solitude, the experience of listening to the sounds of the sea and gulls and small animals moving nearby cannot happen. The profound simplification of Henry David Thoreau must be balanced and that balance is Herman Melville.

I want to eat only the fish I catch, the edible plants I harvest on the island. I want to build my fire of driftwood and cook the meat I killed and eat it immediately, fat dripping on my fingers. Living on Matagorda Island does not...
require a refrigerator or range. At my feet as I stand in one of the small bays are blue crabs and shrimp, bait fish and large fish. Wild onions grow there and sea weeds to wrap around larger fish and bury in a bed of coals until the meat flakes off in perfect white chunks. I see whales there sometimes, well, mostly the smaller kind—porpoises for the most part. After all, Melville classified them as whales. I can almost see Melville on Matagorda Island. He is Typee, not Ishmael, walking down the beach and coming into contact with Caddo Indians, not cannibals, but not civilized. "I will take a savage bride!" he yawps, prefiguring Tennyson by a few years.

If it rains, well then it rains. If the wind blows sand in my eyes, I’ll turn around, like the cattle that once lived there, and face the shore or perhaps a giant sand dune. Or get in my tent, though that would defeat whatever the purpose of my coming to the island happens to be. On hot days, I will swim in the Gulf of Mexico or in the bay and wash off in one of the fresh water ponds after first looking for gators and snakes.

Melville, in spite of all his travels, was never here, but for the past few years they have been dredging Pass Cavallo to find the remnants of ships sunk there when the Spaniards landed and you can still find cannonballs (only if you’re very lucky) from the Civil War days. Jean Lafitte, a bigger pirate than any Melville ever met, did land here.

I’m not sure I could teach Moby Dick today and get good student evaluations at the same time. But I don’t think I’d stop. It’s necessary every few years to follow that phantom spat out around Cape Horn and out into the Pacific. It is essential. If kelp beds get in the way, then the students can damned well grab the oars and muscle the ship through. In spite of becalmed ships and gams along the way, narrative does return and the plot sails, once more, into deep waters. And on the third day, the great whale rises and Ahab is regenerated through violence.

As for me, I think I’ll get back to work. Enough dreaming. Sometimes I feel like Bulkington, an actor who can fill a chapter, who can dive deeply: the one who could have been Ishmael or even Captain Ahab, but never quite made it. He is Jack Chase, high up in the mainmast, just returned from Argentina after having jumped ship, and he has nothing to do with great white whales.

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**Persian Marchers: A Novel**

Chapter One

Mo H. Saidi

He had been sobbing ever since they had left the doctor’s office. His mother had taken him to the physician caring for the families of Education Department employees, and the doctor had told them there was neither remedy nor hope for relief from the embarrassing scaly, warty blotches on his scalp. Now he was hiding in the storage room at the top of the stairs. When they reached home, instead of eating lunch and then returning to school, he had quietly climbed up the narrow staircase and entered the dark and damp storage room. He had not even dropped his backpack in the hall, like he usually did; he was pushing it against the plastered wall where he stood.

The thought of going to school and facing a constant barrage of taunts and ridicule from the other schoolboys terrified him. His stomach was trembling when he thought of the hated lady teacher who never included him in the discussion, never looked him in the face, never asked him any questions. He deeply disliked Cyrus who during their chess games or tutoring sessions would either stare at the warty blotches on his scalp with condescension and disgust, or produce that hateful enigmatic smirk, which always irritated him severely. As far as he was concerned, the only reason he continued to accept tutoring by Cyrus was the quick game of chess that Cyrus would play with him at the end of each session, even though he would always end up losing.

Whenever he remembered the doctor’s comments they wrung his heart and brought a bitter taste to his mouth, “The ringworm patches in your scalp have healed completely, but you will never see hair growing and covering these blotches again. The scars are going to be there forever; and you had better learn to ignore them.”

His mother was surprised when she discovered him cowering in the dark storage room, where she had gone to fetch onions, potatoes, and rice for dinner. She opened the door wide and observed his exhausted face that was swollen with streaks of tears. Softly, gently she mumbled, “Don’t pay attention to those rowdy kids at school.” Her words reopened his emotional wounds and a wave of bitter thoughts washed over him. He wished he would never have to go to school again. Tears flowed down to his pale lips and curled over his chin. He did not move when she went downstairs.

A short while later his mother returned to his hideout with a small tray of flat bread, a bowl of stew, and some sprigs of basil and leaves of Romaine lettuce. “I am not hungry,” he muttered and covered his head with a piece of rug. "Madam Bibi wants to see you downstairs in the living room," his mother said. “Eat your supper, wash your face and call me when you are ready to come down. You are a smart boy, even smarter than Cyrus.”

He shook his head in disagreement. “He always beats me in chess, even when he plays without a rook or two knights,” he said.

“Because he is older than you and has played that game for several years.”

“I hate to lose to him.”

“You don’t need to go to school anymore,” Madam Bibi told him. “I want you to go to the madressah from now on; there you will wear a turban. No one will ever see your scarred head again.”

His mother nodded, squatted closer to Madam Bibi, bowed her head, and kissed Madam Bibi’s right hand. Her eyes welled with warm tears. “He will be a good talabeh, I promise.”

Madam Bibi raised her voice and addressed the boy again, “Listen, Hassan; you don’t need to go to public
He will never forgive them.”

“I am afraid Hassan will never forget all their insults; and Cyrus nodded, “Ah, the kids will miss him.”

“He is going to the Ayatollah Ansari’s madresseh.”

“No more tutoring for him here,” Hassan’s mother said.

“Are you ready for tutoring, Hassan?” He ignored Cyrus and walked directly to the small room in the far corner of the backyard, his mother looking for him for a while. “Are you ready for tutoring, Hassan?”

“No more tutoring for him here,” Hassan’s mother said. “He is going to the Ayatollah Ansari’s madresseh.”

Cyrus nodded, “Ah, the kids will miss him.”

“I am afraid Hassan will never forget all their insults; and he will never forgive them.”

The end

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**Short Prose**

**Flash, Micro, Sudden, and Short-Short Fiction**

**Introduction to Flash Fiction**

*Sherrie Flick*

Flash fiction is an elusive form. It hides, pops into view, and then rushes away. Throughout history it has come into favor and then faded into obscurity under many aliases: short-shorts, micro-fiction, sudden stories, smokelongs, and more. Right now there’s a resurgence of these little stories, their popularity rising as online literary journals proliferate. What is flash fiction? A little story from one sentence to 1,000 words. The stories flash, zing, and zag as they condense the world onto a pin top.

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*Sherrie Flick’s debut novel *Reconsidering Happiness* is just out with University of Nebraska Press. *I Call This Flirting*, her award-winning chapbook of flash fiction, was published in 2004 (Flume Press). Her work appears in the anthologies *Flash Fiction Forward* (Norton) and *New Sudden Fiction* (Norton) as well as *You Have Time For This* (Ooligan Press). A recipient of a PA Council on the Arts grant, she lives in Pittsburgh where she directs the Gist Street Reading Series. www.sherrieflick.com

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**Silver Spur Café**

*Sherrie Flick*

(Smokelong Quarterly)

Jake drinks his coffee as folks troll by asking about his back, the café door slamming with the coming, the going. He says he can bend a little. It’s better than last week, but it’ll never be the same. Elijah, wire-rimmed glasses, feed cap, is settled low next to Jake with his heavy coat too thick for the spring weather, deep dark eyes.

Time passes. The clack of silverware, the ceramic-formica click of a coffee cup finding its final destination.

When Virgil scrapes in at the table and rubs his scruffy brown beard, Elijah stares at a point out beyond the restaurant, beyond the macramé owls on the walls, out to the flat line of horizon. Eventually, Jake turns to him, “And when’re you going to start that business you went off to school to learn about? What’ve you done? Nothing. Just sitting around.”

“I didn’t go to school for that,” Elijah says. Jake says, “You’ve never worked a day in your life.” Virgil unfolds, pats Jake on the back, once, twice.

Elijah is dark and quiet with long fingers that never come clean. His old coat, down packed tight, has a bulging front left pocket.

The waitress, Suzy, is all blond confidence and good, loud voice, “Elijah, Julie says we need some ones.” She refills Jake’s coffee, leaves Elijah’s untouched. “Hey, what’re you guys doing with this magazine?” Gravity brings her pretty finger down. “I need a ‘kini.” She picks it up. “Now there’s some nice ones.”

“You can have it. We were just looking at the girls,” Jake says.

Elijah reaches into his coat pocket, hesitates, and says softly, “How many does Julie need?” Suzy bustles away with the magazine and a smeared plate.

Elijah hesitates—looks toward the noisy kitchen where pots bang and steam rises, then settles back into his seat, arms by his sides.

Earlier that morning the brothers had huddled together in their dark kitchen, the sun reluctant, waiting. The creaky, cold house had once been their mom’s—prim and pristine with lace doilies and knick-knacks. Now it’s filled with the boy-man smells of dirt, oil, sperm, meat. The wooden table is sticky with crumbs. Their rough hands push gently at it’ll never be the same. Elijah, wire-rimmed glasses, feed cap, is settled low next to Jake with his heavy coat too thick for the spring weather, deep dark eyes.

He says he can bend a little. It’s better than last week, but it’ll never be the same. Elijah, wire-rimmed glasses, feed cap, is settled low next to Jake with his heavy coat too thick for the spring weather, deep dark eyes.

They lean together—shoulders touching—turn on the reading light so it’s a spotlight to the shiny pages. Sand and water and bright blue air with tiny, skinny women smiling up. Pink, blue, and white polka-dots; tiny strings, like presents. Cautiously, they turn the pages.

Elijah says, “That one sort of looks like ma, when she was young—in those old pictures we have.”

“Yeah. Kind of,” Jake says.

They carry the magazine with them to breakfast, like a comfort, it occupies the third seat.
Many novel writers avoid writing shorter fiction. Some believe it might distract them from focusing on longer works, while others find that the more concise style needed for short fiction doesn’t allow them the freedom to explore the characterizations deeply enough.

There are also plenty of writers who mistakenly believe that the short story markets are dwindling so they simply don’t bother.

The truth is, there are always markets for short fiction. Even if you choose never to sell your flash fiction there are plenty of great reasons to try your hand at this form of writing.

There are so many advantages for novel writers in the short fiction markets that can actually help your writing career.

Short stories can be an excellent way to build a published portfolio for any writer. Not only can they give future editors an idea of your writing style, but short stories can help to introduce new readers to your fiction.

While the pay for short stories isn’t high, there are other benefits to attempting shorter-length fiction work. Having your short story included into an anthology or collection of short stories can be exciting. You could choose to enter your short fiction into any number of writing contests. You’re also able to re-sell a short story as a reprint to a different publication at a later date.

Perhaps the biggest benefit to writing short fiction is using a character you created for a novel-length piece to give you a clearer insight into a part of the character’s past. You could choose to give a character from your novel a specific task to complete outside of your main story and turn this task into a new short story on its own. You might even decide to write a short story to introduce your fictional world to potential new readers or editors.

Having a short story accepted for publication into a magazine, periodical or ezine can be a huge boost in confidence for any writer. Spending so much time and effort writing a novel can often reduce confidence levels in your own talents and abilities. This is where writing short fiction can help to keep your moral levels high.

Editing short stories can be particularly challenging. Word limits can be restrictive when you want to tell your story as clearly as possible while still keeping the conflict levels high. This can mean that by cutting your words too far you risk losing the depth in your tale, but not cutting enough can mean losing the crispness you were striving for.

No matter what reason suits you best, learning to write short fiction can be a great way to hone your writing skills. With shorter forms of fiction you’re restricted by your word counts. This means learning to tell your tale using a minimum amount of words can test your ability to tell a story concisely.

While there are plenty of good reasons to write short stories, the biggest reason of all is that it should be fun!


**The Miracle Worker**

Fred Zirm

Agnes was Helen Keller in high school. During the curtain call, she was blinded by the lights and deafened by the crowd chanting, “Agnes, Agnes, Agnes.” She was speechless, too—her more usual role as the shy girl named after Saint Agnes, a martyred Roman virgin. She knew when boys heard her name they thought of elderly aunts or of Agnes Moorehead, Samantha’s snobbish mother on Bewitched. If they thought of sex at all, it was because of the joke Agnes overheard about Moorehead being a good name for a porn star.

Still, Agnes remembered the crowd chanting her name and headed off to college to become an actress. There some people thought of Agnes de Mille and assumed she might be a dancer, but in Dance 101, she felt like Helen Keller again, flailing her way across the floor. The end of her freshman year, Agnes was cast by a visiting director as the mute in The Madwoman of Chaillot. Typecast, she thought, although the director had no way of knowing about her triumph as Helen Keller back in Old Town Alexandria. Discouraged at first by her lack of lines, Agnes gradually discovered she loved moving as a mute on stage to music only she could hear. The visiting director seemed pleased with her performance as well, calling her “Agnes, my little lamb.” She knew he had the etymology wrong—Agnes came from the Greek for pure and holy, not the Latin for lamb— but hearing him call her that still made her happy.

Then Philippe, the visiting director, visited Agnes in the dressing room, once after all the other actors had gone and she sat reliving the show in her mind. He stripped her of her costume, and Agnes shed her muteness as well, crying with pleasure. For a while it seemed like love as she spent long evenings in Philippe’s apartment, talking of life and art. He took to calling her Anais, French for Agnes, and it made her feel as exotic and liberated as that famous diarist. Nin said, “Life shrinks or expands in proportion to one’s courage,” and Agnes felt large and brave.

Philippe even gave her a gift, a lovely glass jewelry box with a ballerina on top who would twirl to Tchaikovsky’s Serenade. Agnes knew she was no ballerina but was pleased with her performance as well, calling her “Agnes, my little lamb.” She knew he had the etymology wrong—Agnes came from the Greek for pure and holy, not the Latin for lamb— but hearing him call her that still made her happy.

Philippe was a visiting professor and not looking for any permanent position. After he left, Agnes felt sick and headed back to Old Town. At first she thought it was heartbreak, but the family doctor let Agnes know Philippe had left her another parting present.

Alone in her old room, she wished she were Angelina Jolie and could refuse this hackneyed script: Seduced and Abandoned II—This Time It’s Personal. Agnes shook her head and placed her hands on the bump of her belly. Silently, she began to twirl in place, round and round and round until the dizziness became her own.
Did you know?
In the 1800s, long sea voyages were very difficult and dangerous, so people were understandably hesitant to become sailors. But sea captains and shipping companies needed crews to sail their ships, so they gathered sailors any way they could—even if that meant resorting to kidnapping by physical force or with the help of liquor or drugs. The word “shanghai” comes from the name of the Chinese city of Shanghai. People started to use the city’s name for that unscrupulous way of obtaining sailors because the East was often a destination of ships that had kidnapped men onboard as crew.

**viand**  
\[\text{VYE-und}\]   noun  
1: an item of food; especially: a choice or tasty dish  
2: plural: provisions, food  
Example sentence:  
Adam couldn’t help sensing as he read the opening line of the invitation to the Smith’s annual wine-tasting and dinner party: “Join Us for Vino and Viands.”

**canicular**  
\[\text{kuh-NIK-yuh-lur}\]   adjective  
: of or relating to the dog days of summer  
Example sentence:  
My canicular cravings are few, but they are irresistible: a cold drink, a soft hammock, and a good read.

**fugacious**  
\[\text{fyoo-GAY-shuss}\]   adjective  
lasting a short time: evanescent  
Example sentence:  
Julie’s bad mood was fugacious; she cheered up considerably when her son phoned to say he would be coming home for a visit.

**shanghai**  
\[\text{SHANG-hye}\]   verb  
: to force aboard a ship for service as a sailor; also : to trick or force into an undesirable position  
Example sentence:  
“I’m being shanghaied!” cried Uncle Jim at the family picnic when Aunt Marie pulled him away from the volleyball game to start the barbecue.

**Antaeus**  
\[\text{an-TEE-un}\]   adjective  
1: mammoth, 2: having superhuman strength  
Example sentence:  
In an emergency, an average person can become an Antaean powerhouse, capable even of lifting a car to rescue someone trapped underneath.

**canicula**  
The Latin word “canicula” meaning “small dog,” is the diminutive form of “canis,” the word that ultimately gives us the English word “canine.” “Canicula” was also the name for Sirius, the star that represents the hound of the hunter Orion in the constellation named for that Roman mythological figure. Because the first visible rising of Sirius occurs during the summer, the hot sultry days that occur from early July to early September came to be called “die caniculares,” or as we know them in English, “the dog days.”

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Visual Arts

**The River Paintings**  
*Donna Simon*

Donna Simon has been involved in the San Antonio art community for many years as a painter, founding board member of SAY Si, a Kronkosky Fellow at the McNay Art Museum, art teacher, and lecturer for the Contemporary Art Appreciation classes at the Chautaugua Institute in upstate New York. Donna is a dedicated supporter of creative talent in San Antonio and is eager to share her knowledge and enthusiasm for the contemporary art scene in San Antonio, Texas.

[www.seeingartsanantonio.com](http://www.seeingartsanantonio.com)

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**Selected Photos**

*Photos from the Bell Tower in Chautauqua to The Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve in Kansas*

The Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve is a public/private partnership with The Nature Conservancy, the National Park Service and the Kansas Park Trust. This partnership is dedicated to preserving and enhancing a nationally significant remnant of the tallgrass prairie ecosystem and the processes that sustain it; preserving and interpreting the cultural resources of the preserve and the heritage associated with the former ranch property; and offering opportunities for education, inspiration and enjoyment through public access to its geological, ecological, scenic and historical features.

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**A Note from President Truman’s Library**  
*The Missouri Compromise*

The choice of Roosevelt’s running mate in 1944 posed a challenge for Democratic Party leaders who distrusted Vice President Henry Wallace and feared that Roosevelt might not survive another term. As a moderate border-state Senator, Truman was a “Missouri Compromise” --- a nominee acceptable to both liberal and conservative Democrats. Truman repeatedly said he didn’t want the job. Then, at the Democratic National Convention, he heard Roosevelt’s voice booming over the telephone: “Well, you can tell the Senator that if he wants to break up the Democratic Party in the middle of the war, that’s his responsibility.” The call to duty did the trick: Truman agreed to be nominated.

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**Select Photos from Big Ben, Texas**  
*by Maria Brandenburg*

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**Texas Summer Flowers**
Voices de la Luna accepts English language poetry and prose submissions from anywhere in the world. Submissions are accepted only by e-mail attachment in Microsoft Word or similar format for Mac users. Include your name, e-mail address, mailing address, and telephone number on each poem submitted, and on the first page of each prose manuscript. Youth poetry submissions should be clearly marked as such, and should also include the writer’s age, name of school, and grade level. Please note that youth writers must not yet have graduated high school and be no more than 18 years old.

Brief biographical notes are interesting to us and help us understand who we are reaching. However, contributors’ notes will not be published (at least not in the print version), nor will they figure into the selection process. Work will be selected for publication based solely on literary quality and the way each individual piece of writing meets our current needs.

Simultaneous submissions are acceptable as long as we are informed by e-mail immediately (with title and submission date) if you need to withdraw the work from our consideration. Submissions may have been previously published, as long as the writer provides that information and currently holds the rights. If work has been translated, make sure to include the translator’s name for credit. In some cases, we may publish short poems in both languages side-by-side.

Readable, well-crafted, formatted submissions are expected. Submissions in “rough draft” form will not be considered.

We do not pay contributors. We contact writers only if work has been accepted, letting them know that their piece will appear in the up-coming issue. This notification will come immediately before an issue goes to print, not sooner. Writers from the San Antonio area can pick up free copies of the magazine at a very large number of convenient locations, which will be indicated on our website. Out-of-town and overseas contributors will be mailed a copy or copies of the issue in which their work appears, as part of our distribution list.

We have a small editorial staff and many submissions. We cannot provide feedback on submitted work, nor will we offer reasons why a particular work has not been accepted for publication. We may hold work over for a future issue, especially work that arrives when the issue we are currently working has already been filled. Please do not contact us about the status of a submission. If we’ve had your work more than six months and through at least two quarterly issues, and have not contacted you, it is unlikely we will be using those particular pieces. Just remember to withdraw your work in a timely manner if you surrender the rights elsewhere. Remember, you can send new work each month, while we are considering your previous submissions.

**Prose**

We are looking for short fiction pieces of up to 1200 words, works in which a heart struggles against itself, in which the messy, unmanageable complexity of the world is revealed in “sentences that are so sharp they cut the eye.” As Takashi Murakami puts it: “We want to see the newest things. That is because we want to see the future, even if only momentarily. It is the moment in which, even if we don’t completely understand what we have glimpsed, we are nonetheless touched by it. This is what we have come to call art.” Please submit fiction to Awinstead@voicesdelaluna.com.

**Poetry**

We are devoted to publishing mostly poems from unsolicited manuscripts. We do not base our selections on a writer’s publication or award history, but on the poems themselves. We will accept up to 3 original poems per month. To fit into the format of our magazine, please limit the length of your poems to 28 (or fewer) lines of no more than 60 characters each. We believe it is up to the poet to break longer lines in the way that s/he sees fit. Please submit poetry to Joans@voicesdelaluna.com
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