Questions for Sandra Cisneros

Echoes of Glory by Robert Flynn
“Pursuit of Happiness” by Trey Moore
Texas Board of Education & Thomas Jefferson
Conversation with Floyd (Michaud) L. Lamrouex
Poetry & Arts Places in San Antonio


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.

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.

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.

LA VILLITA — This restored Mexican village captures charm of the past amid narrow streets and authentic adobe houses with arts and crafts 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.

McNAY ART MUSEUM — The mission of the McNay Art Museum is to maintain an art museum on the premises of the estate of Mrs. McNay for the advancement and enjoyment of modern and early art for the educational advantage of the public. Web: www.McNayArt.org.

MEXICAN CULTURAL INSTITUTE — Exhibits of contemporary Mexican artists.

POETRY VENUES: Please see the Events section on page 44.

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.

SAN ANTONIO OPERA — The opera currently performs at the Municipal Auditorium, while the Lila Cockrell Theater undergoes a renovation. For information visit www.saopera.com.

SAN PEDRO PLAYHOUSE — Call the Box Office for tickets and more information: (210) 733-7258 or visit www.sanpedroplayhouse.com.

SAN ANTONIO SYMPHONY — The mission of the San Antonio Symphony is to inspire, educate, and entertain the people of, and visitors to, San Antonio and South Texas through the performance of live, orchestral music. Visit www.sasympohony.org.

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.

A Letter from the Editors

Mo H. Saidi and James Brandenburg

For the editors of Voices de la Luna: A Quarterly Poetry & Arts Magazine, the quality of the magazine, publishing work in poetry, prose, and the arts is the first priority, job No. One. As stated in our mission, we are a conduit to promote and publish the considered pieces of local, regional, and statewide writers and artists. By doing so we intend to advance the quality of the art, and hence life in our community. However, we are also reaching out to youth, marginal groups, and even the homeless citizens of our city.

We are convinced that writing and producing creative art exhilarate one’s mind in positive and helpful ways; reading poetry, visiting museums, and listening to music soothe our minds. Kim Rosen, nationally known poet and the author of Saved by a Poem, said during the recent National Poetry Therapy Conference in Washington, D.C., that the poem “Kindness” by Naomi Nye literally saved her life. James Brandenburg, the magazine’s co-editor, and Josie Mixon, the associate editor, attended the conference and conducted a workshop, “Reflections of a Battered Life: Surviving Sexual Abuse and Sexual Violence.”

We are staging workshops in the community to educate novice writers on the writing process and to emphasize the healing effects of writing. When we interviewed a homeless poet, she told us that writing poetry forces her to be careful about her choice of words. She added, “Writing poetry helps me deal with issues I normally cannot express to others. There is something cathartic about getting my words down on paper.”

We conducted a workshop in the San Antonio Lighthouse for the Blind in April and witnessed a transformation where a large number of attendees began to write poetry instantly, some of which is suitable for consideration for publication in the magazine. We have connected with Safe Haven, a transition home for the homeless, and will elicit the works of artists living in that quarter. Voices de la Luna is coordinating with Bihl Haus to do a monthly workshop for artists, poets, and senior citizens featuring a local poet and inviting young poets to read in the open mic program.

On Saturday, 13 March, the night of Luminarias, San Antonio partied all evening and night and enjoyed music, watched theatrical plays, and listened to spoken poetry. April was a busy month for poetry because it was the nationally celebrated poetry month; and thanks to Jim LaVilla-Havelin, a published poet and the local coordinator for poetry month, San Antonio also celebrated poetry and the arts in San Antonio. In conjunction with these events, Pecan Grove and The Wings Press published several books of poetry written by local poets.

Voices de la Luna celebrated its second anniversary and staged a fundraising event, “Dinner with Poetry, Music & Wine,” on Sunday, 23 May 2010, at Bourbon St. Seafood Kitchen. With a standing room only crowd, Sandra Cisneros introduced Macondo poet Pablo Miguel Martinez, who, along with San Antonio poets Marian Haddad, Marian Aitches, Josie Mixon, and Bryce Milligan, recited poetry. Voices de la Luna is grateful to the benefactors, sponsors, poets, contributing artists, volunteers, and the event chairs who made the fundraising event an overwhelming success.
Featured Poem

After School Practice*
*Trey Moore†

A listening boy carries a cello
bigger than two of him. He daydreams
from Garner Middle School.
Furious flashing light and steel.
A thin black vinyl protects the cello the bow
of purposeful pernambuco and horsehair.
Nothing protects the boy.

The tender helper’s unsocietal
feeling of matchstick puzzles.
My heart scoops him up with wings.
It will take all of us. We’ll each
have our part. Some will play the cello.

Pursuit of Happiness*
*Trey Moore

Underneath the concrete bridge
Caretaker of our streets
homeless, beaten up
push broom wizened face
grocery basket filled with garden hoses
Stolen land? We are called here.
Not asked.

†Trey Moore received a BA in American Studies from the University of Texas at Austin. He has been published and reviewed in various national and international journals. A native of San Antonio and a fourth generation carpenter, he teaches poetry in Houston.

About Us

Voices de la Luna
A Quarterly Poetry and Arts Magazine
www.voicesdelaluna.com

Corporate Office: 7210 Gumtree
San Antonio, TX 78238
Phone: 210-684-8185

Financial & Editorial: 14 Morning Green
San Antonio, TX 78257
Phone & Fax: 210-698-8785
CEO & Poetry Editor: James Brandenburg
CFO & Prose Editor: Mo H Saidi

Texas Board of Education & Jefferson
Voices Editors

Texas schoolchildren will be required to learn that the words “separation of church and state” aren’t in the Constitution and evaluate whether the United Nations undermines U.S. sovereignty under new social studies curriculum.

In final votes late Friday, conservatives on the State Board of Education strengthened requirements on teaching the Judeo-Christian influences of the nation’s Founding Fathers and required that the U.S. government be referred to as a “constitutional republic” rather than “democratic.”

The board approved the new standards with two 9-5 votes along party lines after months of ideological haggling and debate that drew attention beyond Texas.

The guidelines will be used to teach some 4.8 million students for the next 10 years. They also will be used by textbook publishers who often develop materials for other states based on those approved in Texas, though Texas teachers have latitude in deciding how to teach the material.

U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan said after the votes Friday that such decisions should be made at the local level and school officials “should keep politics out” of curriculum debates. “Parents should be very wary of politicians designing curriculum,” Duncan said in a statement.

But Republican board member David Bradley said the curriculum revision process has always been political but the ruling faction had changed since the last time social studies standards were adopted.

“We took our licks, we got outvoted,” he said referring to the debate 10 years earlier. “Now it’s 10-5 in the other direction … we’re an elected body, this is a political process. Outside that, go find yourself a benevolent dictator.”

GOP board member Geraldine Miller was absent during the votes.

The board attempted to make more than 200 amendments this week, reshaping draft standards that had been prepared over the last year and a half by expert groups of teachers and professors.

As new amendments were being presented just moments before the vote, Democrats bristled that the changes had not been vetted.

“I will not be part of the vote that’s going to support this kind of history,” said Mary Helen Berlanga, a Democrat. At least one state lawmaker vowed legislative action to “rein in” the board. “I am disturbed that a majority of the board decided their own political agendas were more important than the education of Texas children,” said Rep. Mike Villarreal, a San Antonio Democrat.

Earlier in March, after three days of turbulent meetings, the Texas Board of Education on Friday approved a social studies curriculum that will put a conservative stamp on history and economics textbooks, stressing the superiority of American capitalism, questioning the Founding Fathers’ commitment to a purely secular government and presenting Republican political philosophies in a more positive light.

In one of the most significant curriculum changes, the board diluted the rationale for the separation of church and state in a high school government class, noting that the words were not in the Constitution and requiring students to compare and contrast the judicial language with the First Amendment’s wording.

Continued on page 10
The oil painting *Hope* by the German painter Ulrike Rowe offers a semi-abstract break from traditional rules; she changes shapes in an experimental way, deeply influenced, she says, by the images and colors in her dreams. Rowe uses a combination of media. Her earlier paintings embraced realism; now her work exhibits some aspects of surrealism with images from the unconscious. She likes to present a sense of mood with colors and techniques and invites the viewer to enter the painting by offering some recognizable object shapes. Evaluating process and result, Rowe writes, “The creative process is most important to me because with the interpretation of the object I have the freedom to explore.”

Rowe, who lives and paints in Erzenhausen, a small village near Kaiserslautern, Germany, began painting as a teenager. Her first self-portrait shows her as a wrinkled old female with girlish pigtails. Educated in theatre arts and stage design at the state theatre in Hagen, Germany, she worked eleven years at the Rheinpfalz Theatre Company in Kaiserslautern. From 1979 to 1985 she was the art director of the American Performing Arts Center in Kaiserslautern, followed by a year as art director in nearby Pirmasens. Since 1981 she has taught art in adult education classes. From 1989 to 1990, she studied art at the Art Academy in Atlanta, Georgia. After serving as art instructor at the American Air Base Ramstein Art Center from 1991 to 1993, she studied art education, art history, and theatre arts at the University of Maryland in 1995. Since 1995, Rowe has exhibited her art throughout Germany.

---

**Voices Editors**

Co-Editors
James Brandenburg (Poetry)
Mo H Saidi (Prose)

Associate Editors
Joan Seifert (Poetry)
Josie Mixon (Poetry Therapy)
Antoinette Winstead (Prose)

Copy Editors:
Valerie Martin Bailey (Poetry)
Brigitte B. Saidi (Prose)

Technical Director: James R. Adair, Jr.

Graphic Editor: Anne K. Parker

Junior Editors
Julia Hawkins
Ellaire Yantis

---

**25 of the top 100 books of all time**

*in alphabetical order by authors’ name*

from the Daily Telegram

Full list of the 100 best works of fiction, alphabetically by author, as determined from a vote by 100 noted writers from 54 countries as released by the Norwegian Book Clubs. *Don Quixote* was named as the top book in history but otherwise no ranking was provided:

1. Chinua Achebe, Nigeria, (b. 1930), *Things Fall Apart*
2. Hans Christian Andersen, Denmark, (1805-1875), *Fairy Tales and Stories*
4. Honore de Balzac, France, (1799-1850), *Old Goriot*
6. Giovanni Boccaccio, Italy, (1313-1375), *Decameron*
7. Jorge Luis Borges, Argentina, (1899-1986), *Collected Fictions*
8. Emily Bronte, England, (1818-1848), *Wuthering Heights*
11. Louis-Ferdinand Celine, France, (1894-1961), *Journey to the End of the Night*
12. Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, Spain, (1547-1616), *Don Quixote*
14. Anton P Chekhov, Russia, (1860-1904), *Selected Stories*
16. Dante Alighieri, Italy, (1265-1321), *The Divine Comedy*
17. Charles Dickens, England, (1812-1870), *Great Expectations*
18. Denis Diderot, France, (1713-1784), *Jacques the Fatalist and His Master*
19. Alfred Doblin, Germany, (1878-1957), *Berlin*
20. Alexander-Fyodor M Dostoyevsky, Russia, (1821-1881), *Crime and Punishment; The Idiot; The Possessed; The Brothers Karamazov*
22. Ralph Ellison, United States, (1914-1994), *Invisible Man*
23. Euripides, Greece, (c 480-406 BC), *Medea*
24. William Faulkner, United States, (1897-1962), *Absalom, Absalom; The Sound and the Fury*
25. Gustave Flaubert, France, (1821-1880), *Madame Bovary: A Sentimental Education*
Questions for Sandra Cisneros
Interviewed by Mo H Saidi

Sandra Cisneros is a teacher, award winning writer, activist, poet, and writer-in-residence at OLLU, who was born in Chicago in 1954 and now lives in the King William district of San Antonio. She earned a B.A. in English from Loyola University and an M.F.A. in Creative Writing from the University of Iowa. Cisneros has published a chapbook of poetry, Bad Boys; two full-length poetry books, My Wicked Wicked Ways, and Loose Woman; a collection of stories, Woman Hollering Creek and Other Stories; a children's book, Hairs/Pelitos; and two books of fiction, The House on Mango Street and Caramelo. She was praised as a “gifted and an absolutely essential writer” by Bebe Moore Campbell of the New York Times. Her first novel, Caramelo, was selected as a Notable Book of The Year by such publications as the New York Times, the Los Angeles Times, the San Francisco Chronicle, the Chicago Tribune, and the Seattle Times. In 2005 Caramelo was awarded the Premio Napoli and was short-listed for the Dublin International IMPAC Award. She is president and founder of the Macondo Foundation, an association of socially engaged writers, and of the Alfredo Cisneros Del Moral Foundation, a grant-giving institution serving Texas writers.

Mo H Saidi: In your first fiction collection, The House on Mango Street, you tell the story of Esperanza Cordero, a young girl growing up in the Latino section of Chicago. Do you have anything in common with her?

Sandra Cisneros: She comes from the stories I’d heard from other people as well as my own; as well as my own; however, her voice, emotions and feeling mirror mine. I also come from a working class family and share her SENSE OF SHAME ABOUT HER HOME, AND her naïve optimism.

You were born and raised in Chicago. What attracted you to San Antonio?

When I was a child and later as a young woman, I’d drive through San Antonio with my family almost every year, coming from Chicago and going to Mexico City; however, it never occurred to me then that one day, I’d live here. I moved to San Antonio in 1984, when I got a job as the Director of the Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center for 18 months, and shortly thereafter, I was awarded the Texas Institute of Letters Dobie-Paisano Fellowship. After the fellowship I lived off substituting as an English lecturer in English Departments. But those first 18 months in San Antonio I didn’t have a car and would ride an old bike to work.

Your book, Caramelo, reflects the struggle of hard-working Mexican-American citizens in San Antonio. When will you write about the trials and tribulations of notable local Hispanics, e.g. Henry Cisneros?

I do not know Henry Cisneros well enough to write about him. But I do write about notable people that I have met and know. I write about my father who emigrated from Mexico City to the U.S. and worked very hard to raise his family of seven children.

Although you moved to San Antonio only several years ago, you seem to be mesmerized by the city and its people. What inspired you to write the short fiction, “Woman Hollering Creek”?

I was teaching in Seguin and commuting in a rental car and crossing this creek. I asked everyone why the name, but no one could tell me. I was sitting at the friendly spot bar in SA one night when a woman was killed across the street at an ice house. A man shot her because she came at him with a mop. That chilled me. Later, when I was asked to write a Texas story I incorporated Seguin, the creek, and the violence I read about daily in the papers. I was astonished at the the violence against women then and now.

As the only girl among seven children, how did you get along with your six brothers?

I have good memories from my childhood, and for the most part, I got along with my brothers except one. Well, sometimes it was hard to live with them. Twice as a child I ran away from home because of the brothers. They would tease me and I was hypersensitive.

Have you visited the Alamo, and what do you think about John Wayne’s movie, The Alamo?

I attended a healing prayer circle at the Alamo a few years ago with Los Macarturos, the Latino MacArthur winners. I have not seen that movie or any other movies about the Alamo.

Are you writing poetry, too?

I enjoy writing poetry. When I am about to tackle the characters facing emotional and social issues, I write fiction. To debate social issues, I write essays. But poetry is more of a personal matter for me. It’s what I write when I feel censored to write.

Several Eastern European writers have become successful politicians. Have you considered going into politics and running for office?

I’d never enter politics. Power corrupts people. I’m too frank and honest to be a politician. I couldn’t make compromises.

President Obama is struggling to achieve his main campaign agenda to overhaul the American healthcare system. Are you happy with your healthcare services and insurance coverage?

I wish him well but I’m tired of waiting for for the war to end and am losing faith in him. For a long time, I didn’t have healthcare coverage. It’s very hard for a writer to obtain a health insurance policy. Now I hope we can get healthcare coverage for Macondo Foundation employees. I am taking a wait and see approach with our president. But he is not moving fast enough on immigration and peace issues for me.

Continued on page 6
In *Caramelo*, you devote many passages to the ubiquitous “Awful Grandmother,” and many pages to other Reyes family members, their home, and even their colorful clothes. Are you reflecting upon your own grandmother and relatives in this book?

I know very little about my ancestral roots, and I didn’t know my grandmother very well. But my mother became an awful mother-in-law. I sort of created the character as a blend of my mother.

You seemed really upbeat at your 55th birthday party. Are you not afraid of aging, dying, and your mortality?

I am not afraid of dying. There are things that are worse than death, e.g., witnessing the death of your own child or a loved one. I am also Buddhist and believe in transformation.

Are you translingual? I mean, do you write as well in both English and Spanish?

For me Spanish is like a box of crayons with eight colors, English with 150,000. I wish it were not so, but that’s how it is.

Thank you very much for your time.

---

**Genetic Aspects of Human Evolution**

*Voices Editors*

Africa’s genetic secrets unlocked

*Compiled from Wikipedia & an article by Victoria Gill, Science Reporter, BBC News*

An international team of scientists described their 10-year study of the genetic map of Africa in a recent issue of *Science*. The largest African genetic study ever, led by Dr. Sarah Tishkoff from the University of Pennsylvania, studied genetic material from 121 African populations. It revealed the continent to be the most genetically diverse place on Earth.

“This is a spectacular insight into the history of African populations and therefore the history of mankind,” said Muntaser Ibrahim, a researcher from the University of Khartoum, who was involved in the study.

The team collected over 3,000 samples, including genetic samples from some of the continent’s most remote communities. They identified 14 “ancestral population clusters”. These are groups of populations with common genetic ancestry, who share ethnicity and similarities in both their culture and the properties of their languages. They looked at individual ancestry, or genetic similarities in their samples, by comparing the frequencies of more than 1,000 DNA markers - sections of the DNA code that are known to reveal common genetic heritage.

“In the past, [geneticists] studied just a few Africans, and suggested they were representative of the continent, but we’ve found that no population is representative of all of this diversity,” said Tishkoff. “Our goal has been to do research that will benefit Africans…. This will set the stage for future genomics research there, and future biomedical research…. The genetic variants we’ve identified may play a role in disease susceptibility and the different ways in which people respond to drugs.”

A large amount of data came from populations that had never previously been studied genetically. One of the remotest collection sites is the homeland of the indigenous San communities; the San have already been shown to have the oldest genetic lineages, suggesting they may be descendants of a population ancestral to all modern humans.

This is the first time anybody had the genetic data to reconstruct migration events, and the data revealed a great deal about the history of the continent. The research located the origin of modern human migration in south-western Africa, near the coastal border of Namibia and Angola. This is based on the widely-accepted theory that the highest level of genetic diversity is in the oldest population - the one that has had the longest to evolve.

Genetic reconstruction allowed the map to provide an entirely new link between biology, and existing anthropology and linguistic information. The team, which represented a variety of academic disciplines, showed how genetic and linguistic diversity have co-evolved. This analysis revealed some surprises. “The Masai people [in Kenya], for example, have maintained their traditional language and pastoral lifestyle, but genetically they’ve mixed a lot with populations from Ethiopia [who speak a different language],” said Tishkoff.

The researchers also took samples from four African American populations, and traced their African ancestry. This was, as expected, mostly pinned down to West Africa.

Mark Thomas from the Department of Genetics, Evolution and Environment at University College London praised the study, and added that because the origins of African American ancestry can be seen “all the way from Senegal down to Angola, it will be a long time before a DNA test will be able to identify someone’s ancestral origin.”

Perhaps it is time to discount the outrageous claims of some DNA testing companies.
Table of Contents
15 June 2010
Volume 2, Number 4

Cover Page
“Hope” by Ulrike Rowe

A Letter from the Editors

The Featured Poems
“After School Practice” & “Pursuit of Happiness”
by Trey Moore

Regarding the Cover Page Art
James Brandenburg

Featured Interview
Questions for Sandra Cisneros

Reviews & Books
Echoes of Glory by Robert Flynn

Views & News
Does Video Evidence of a War Convey Truth?
The King James Bible

Editors’ Poems
Josie Mixon, Joan Seifert, Mo H Saidi, Valerie Bailey

Healing and Arts
Conversation with Floyd (Michaud) L. Lamrouex

Poetry & Art Therapy
Featuring Jahaira Aguilar, Maripat Munley & Tom Munley

Music & Poetry
“Rumi’s Life” by Voices Editors, “Like This” Jalaluddin Rumi

Poetry Workshops
Poetry Heals & Arts Advance the Quality of Life

Select Poems Part I—Youth Poetry
Lilah Kalista Qubrosi, Ashley Redwine, Olivia Tse,
Margot Mays, Victoria Adelina-Montoya Cortinas

Select Poems Part II—Youth Poetry
Claire Hubert, Julia E. Toney, Cara Comfort, Katherine Mansfield

Select Poems—Part III
Mary Galloway, Wendy Barker, Edna Kovacs, LaVern McCarthy

Select Poems—Part IV
Tatjana Debeljacki, Jose Caraball, Margot Van Sluytman,
Lori Simpson

Select Poems—Part V
Floyd (Michaud) L. Lamrouex, Barbara Loyd, Joan Seifert,
Wini C. Findon

More Poems from Voices Editors
James Brandenburg, Lou Taylor, Valerie Bailey

Select Poems—Part VI
Lynda Somers, Paula Blaylock, Sandy Rhodes, Mary Hughes,
Mobi Warren, Mike Gilliam, Mim Scharlack, Darby Riley,
Joyce Collins, Jim LaVilla-Havelin, Agnes Meadows, Peter Holland,
Robert Bonazzi, Sherry Craven, Hejo Müller

Poetry & Dreams
“The Golden Pitchfork – Dream & Interpretation”

C.G. Jung & Arts
Dialogue with & Poems by Margo Sluytman

Poetry Support Groups
Darby Riley’s Feedback Group with Poems by Jeff Atkins & David Drymala

Poetry as Therapy
“Self-Discovery Through Writing Poetry” by Lianne Mercer

San Antonio Small Presses
The Books Published by Pecan Grove Press & Wings Press

Art in the City
Paintings by Donna Simon & Lesta Frank

Short Prose
Woodrow Hopper & Carmen Tafolla

Select Prose
Woodrow Hopper, Carmen Tafolla, Mo H Saidi,
Dave Northrup & Maria Gabriela Madrid

Select Photos
Photos from Voices Annual Gala

Prose & Poetry Submissions
Our Organization
Events & Sponsors
Subscription Form
Archives
Current & Previous Issues

God & Albert Einstein
Voices Editors

Albert Einstein acknowledged that he believed in Spinoza’s god, which is essentially that the universe itself is god. When told of claims that he believed in the Judeo/Christian god, he responded, “It was, of course, a lie what you read about my religious convictions, a lie which is being systematically repeated. I do not believe in a personal god and I have never denied this but have expressed it clearly. If something is in me which can be called religious then it is the unbounded admiration for the structure of the world so far as our science can reveal it.”
Robert Flynn, Professor Emeritus at Trinity University, writer, and native of Chillicothe, Texas, has authored twelve books, among them seven novels: *North To Yesterday; In the House of the Lord; The Sounds of Rescue, The Signs of Hope; Wanderer Springs, The Last Klick, The Devils Tiger,* and co-authored with the late Dan Klepper, *Tie-Fast Country.* His latest novel, *Echoes of Glory,* was published in 2009 and won the 2010 Spur Award for Best Western Novel (more than 90,000 words). Since 1953 the Western Writers of America has honored “works whose inspiration, image, and literary excellence best represent the reality and spirit of the American West.” Other 2010 Spur Award winners include former Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O’Connor for the children’s book *Finding Susie,* and Robert Olmstead for the short novel *Far Bright Star.*

In his new novel, *Echoes of Glory,* Robert Flynn blends the culture of small town Texas with remembrances and misunderstandings of war and weaves them into an interesting and well-paced story on the search for ethics and right. Set in the Reagan era, the story renders the myths about war as both lies and truth. Sheriff Timpson Smith (Timp) has become a reluctant Korean War hero for the small town of Five Mills, since he is the only survivor of the Second Platoon made up mostly of young men from Five Mills. The town has glorified that platoon, erected a statue of Timp, and made him Sheriff; he, in return, has told the town what they needed/wanted to hear about what happened in Korea, ignoring the real events.

Timp is preparing to pass the baton to his deputy Larry Maddin, until Larry shoots and kills Wynn Mills while Timp is trying to talk Mills into putting his shotgun down. Mills was a Vietnam War veteran, with a reputation for belligerence, but he was also Timp’s friend (the common bond of coming home from war). When Larry reports the incident as a righteous kill and uses it in his election campaign, Timp must choose between allowing this or postponing his retirement in the face of small town politics aligning against him. Larry feels betrayed since he has always supported Timp, and the rhetoric charges the old war hero with losing touch and refusing to make way for the younger warrior. A professor from the neighboring town of Advantage decides (or is chosen) to write a play about the Second Platoon. This is turned into a political as well as a figurative battlefield, and the truth about Timp and his platoon’s fate in Korea comes to light.

Flynn, as in previous novels, shows a profound knowledge of the way small towns work, their personalities, rivalries (within the towns’ folk and with the larger towns), secrets and histories.

His method of writing, especially when describing a locale in short bursts of incredibly descriptive fragments, paints a striking, unvarnished, and vigorous picture:

Vacant buildings that tempted the idle young, near-empty stores that listed toward the road to hell — All-Night Launderat that attracted vagrants and nickeld and dime thieves; Overnight Dry Cleaning: the barber shop where blacks congregate to tell their anger; Mostly Drugs that oﬀered dusty, out-of-date patent medicines, stale candy, cheap sandals, plastic purses, and school supplies; Rent-All that sold used clothing, tools, and sports equipment of suspicious origin; Payroll Loans, only $20 cash; Grabbit N Grin for bread, milk, aspirin, condoms, soft drinks, gas, magazines, and used paperbacks; Drop By drive-in that oﬀered warm coffee, stale pastries, and watered drinks. Everything was cheaper, fresher, better at cut-rate stores in Advantage if you had a reason, a car, and gasoline.

As with Flynn’s previous novels such as *Wanderer Springs,* the characters are out in force, including the overly righteous Pastor Murphy; his gorgeous black sheep daughter; Timp’s wife Martha, who was widowed when her husband Rocky was killed with the rest of Second Platoon; Hao, the newly widowed Vietnamese wife of the shot-down Wynn Mills; and a cast of others at once eccentric and familiar.

Flynn takes a deep look at war, how participants suffer under its cruelty and horror, how it is glorified by people who don’t understand or need to think of it in mystic terms. “Timp searched the crowd for veterans whose eyes saw things they did not want to remember. Those whose knowledge of war came from movies seemed entranced.” Flynn says his life work could be called “The Search for Morals, Ethics, and Religion, or at least a good story in Texas and lesser known parts of the world,” and moral and ethical quandaries are explored in great detail.

The novel is published by TCU Press, Forth Worth, Texas, 2009. Robert Flynn is a contributing editor and member of the board of director of *Voices de la Luna.*


---

**The Spur Awards**

[http://www.westernwriters.org/awards.htm](http://www.westernwriters.org/awards.htm)

The Spur Awards, given annually for distinguished writing about the American West, are among the oldest and most prestigious in American literature. In 1953, when the awards were established by WWA, western fiction was a staple of American publishing. At the time awards were given to the best western novel, best historical novel, best juvenile, and best short story. Since then the awards have been broadened to include other types of writing about the West.
News & Views

Does Video Evidence of a War Convey Truth?

Voices Editors
Redacted from BBC, NPR, and The New York Times

It was just getting light when the Turkish boat, packed with 546 activist descended into chaos. The crack of an Israeli sound grenade and a hail of rubber bullets from above were supposed to disperse activists, but instead set them in motion. And when three commandos slid down ropes out of helicopters, a crowd set upon them. One soldier was stabbed and two were beaten. From that moment on, the attempted takeover turned into an armed assault with Israeli commandos opening fire. Within an hour, they had taken control of the ship, and nine Turks were dead.

Dozens of interviews in Israel and Turkey suggest that Israel’s decision to stop the flotilla collided with the intention of a small group of well-organized Islamic activists from Turkey, turning a raid on a ship of protesters in international waters into a bloodbath—and a major international event. The activists had set sail precisely in hopes of focusing the world to focus on Israel’s blockade of Gaza, and they succeeded.

The deaths at sea on Monday have created a diplomatic fiasco for Israel. The assault has been condemned around the world and ruptured relations with its closest Muslim ally, Turkey. Meanwhile, the Palestinians of Gaza, often neglected in Middle East peace talks, have taken on new importance. In truth, the chaos and deaths on the ship were not due to lack of planning. It was clear for at least a month to both the pro-Palestinian activists and the Israeli government that they were on a collision course. But both sides severely miscalculated.

When Israeli commandos attacked the Freedom Flotilla, both sides were well armed—with video cameras—and both sides have released a blizzard of video clips as evidence that the other side was the aggressor in the conflict on Monday. Once again, the political power of the moving picture is on display, as it was last year when a video showing the death of a young Iranian protestor named Neda became a symbol of resistance in that country. The Freedom Flotilla videos have proved a popular draw online, with one from the Israeli Defense Forces attracting more than 600,000 views on YouTube and scenes from both perspectives being shown in a continuous loop on television newscasts all over the world.

But what is missing from those clips is context: it is difficult to establish the sequence of events and determine who attacked first. The Israeli military has been particularly active, using its YouTube channel to post nearly 20 videos, sometimes enhanced by graphics and captions, trying to show that its soldiers were acting in self-defense.

“On a matter like this, public opinion is awfully important, in terms of determining which image is really going to last,” said Jim Hoge, the editor of Foreign Affairs, who observed that there had been a gradual increase in the use of video clips to bear witness and shape opinion. “First it was people in crowds with mobile phones,” he said, referring to the Neda video. “Now … governments catch up and begin to use the tools for their own purposes.”

So do the flotilla’s organizers: Insani Yardim Vakfi, the Free Gaza Movement, and other groups, were webcasting live from the open seas as the confrontation started, using the services of Livestream, a New York-based company that hosts free Webcasts. They chose to make their trip to Gaza a media event. According to Max Haot, Livestream’s co-founder, the boat was set up with full multi-camera production, which was uplinked to the Internet and to a satellite that allowed news channels to rebroadcast live pictures of the raid in progress.

The fight over what happened on the high seas will soon become a distraction. Israel and its defenders need to be prepared to offer a strategic and moral defense for continuing with the blockade of Hamas-controlled Gaza. Or be prepared to offer an alternative. The anti-Israel forces will be armed with images of hungry Palestinian children and infrastructure damage in Gaza from the war last year. Combating them with videos of thugs on a boat attacking Israeli soldiers would be like sending the cavalry into a line of machine gun fire.

Predawn Raid by Israeli Defense Forces: www.guardian.com

Voices Webpage Annual Hits
1 April 2009-31 March 2010: 13,295

Voices de la Luna:
A Quarterly Poetry & Arts Magazine
Annual Hits
1 April 2009-31 March 2010
13,295

Page Views Report Details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>963</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>684</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>1,294</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>1025</td>
<td>570</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>657</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2,532</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>564</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1,098</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1,072</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>476</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1,381</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Voices de la Luna, 15 June 2010 9
Students also will be required to study the decline in the U.S. dollar’s value, including the abandonment of the gold standard. The board rejected language to modernize the classification of historic periods to B.C.E. and C.E. from the traditional B.C. and A.D., and agreed to replace Thomas Jefferson as an example of an influential political philosopher in a world history class. They also required students to evaluate efforts by global organizations such as the United Nations to undermine U.S. sovereignty.

The changes include teaching that the UN could be a threat to American freedom, and that the Founding Fathers may not have intended a complete separation of church and state. Students in Texas will now be taught the benefits of US free-market economies and how government taxation can harm economic progress. They will study how American ideals benefit the world but organizations such as the UN could be a threat to personal freedom. And Thomas Jefferson has been dropped from a list of enlightenment thinkers in the world-history curriculum, despite being one of the Founding Fathers who is credited with developing the idea that church and state should be separate.

The doctrine has become a cornerstone of US government, but some religious groups and some members of the Texas Education Board disagree, our correspondent says. The board, which is dominated by Christian conservatives, voted nine-to-five in favor of adopting the new curriculum for both primary and secondary schools.

The King James Bible
4 May 1611
Compiled & redacted
from www.wikipedia & The Writer’s Almanac

It was on 4 May 1611 that the first edition of the King James Bible was published in England. An epidemic of the black plague had struck London the year before work began, and 30,000 Londoners had died of it. Puritans in the country were beginning to agitate against the monarchy as a form of government. And a group of underground Catholics was plotting to assassinate the king.

King James I thought that a new translation of the Bible might help hold the country together. There had been several English translations, but King James envisioned a Bible that would become the definitive version, a Bible that all English people could read together. The King James Bible would make use of previous translations from Latin texts, but it would attempt to be more faithful to the original Hebrew and Greek.

The king assembled a committee of 54 of the best linguists in the country. They believed that the most important quality of the translation would be that it sound right, since it would be read aloud in churches. So when the committee would gather, each man read his verses aloud, to be judged and revised by the rest.

The translators also deliberately used old-fashioned language. At the time they were working on the Bible, words like “thou” and “sayeth” had already gone out of fashion. Some scholars believe that the translators wanted to give the sense that the language in the Bible came from long ago and far away. And when the meaning of a particular word or phrase was mysterious, they tried to choose English words that would be just as mysterious, just as strange.

Many of the turns of phrase in the King James Bible came from previous translations, but it was the King James Version that set them all in stone. Many of those phrases have some of our most enduring English expressions, such as “the land of the living,” “sour grapes,” “like a lamb to slaughter,” “the salt of the earth,” “the apple of his eye,” “to give up the ghost, and “the valley of the shadow of death.”

One of the few sections that was translated almost entirely anew for the King James version was the Book of Genesis, which begins: “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep, and the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.”

The first edition came out on 4 May 1611, but for decades, most people preferred the Puritan Geneva Bible, because of its plainer language. It was only after the civil war that the King James Bible came into fashion because people were nostalgic for the period before the war. The King James version went on to become the English symbol of God and country, and it influenced the way writers have used the English language for hundreds of years.

The 30th Annual Conference of the National Association for Poetry Therapy Conference 2010
Josie Mixon

The 30th Annual Conference of the National Association for Poetry Therapy in Washington DC was titled “Looking Forward, Looking Back, Coming Home: Celebrating Thirty Years of Promoting Growth and Wellness through Language, Symbol, and Story.” It was yet another phase of my healing when Jim Brandenburg and I presented our workshop, Reflections of a Battered Life: Surviving Sexual Abuse and Sexual Violence, to an international audience that included John Fox, one of the leading poetry therapists in the world. It was as it should be that Brandenburg, who had introduced me to poetry therapy and has been my guide through this winding river of healing, was now handing me the oars with ease and confidence as we traced our individual stories.

Our presentation captured the triumphant accomplishments as well as the heartaches of the steps leading to success. Discussing my experiences of domestic violence and sexual abuse with a sophisticated audience who was able to capture all the subtleties of my experience was exhilarating. What unites audience and presenters at this conference is commonality in experience, purpose in life and vision. We offered our audience hope and a deeper confidence in the power of poetry as therapy that can be effective even after some of the darkest hours a client can experience.

The featured poet was Gayle Danley, and Kim Rosen gave the keynote address, “Saved by a Poem: The Transformative Power of Words.” It had been poet Naomi Shihab Nye’s poem, “Kindness,” that literally saved Kim Rosen’s life after she had lost her life savings in Bernie Madoff’s Ponzi scheme. Rosen’s experience showed that poetry indeed saves lives and heals.

We offer special thanks to Frank Villani and the San Antonio Office of Cultural Affairs for funding a major part of our trip to Washington, D.C., and for believing in our mission at Voices de la Luna.


Naive Milligan at the Voices de la Luna, 15 June 2010
Editors’ Poems

Again
Josie Mixon

Foolish thoughts
Accompany me
Between
Folded anguish

Still sitting on the bed
Wishing I had a dream
To firmly step into

Crushed
Between the past and present
My reflection despises me
My pain is hilarious

Tagged by deceit
Face cracked
On impact
Heart melts
Into nothing
Nothing is left
Not even the ashes
Of nothing

Only sounds
Of laughter
Reminiscent
Of my foolish thoughts
Of wanting to belong
Of finally feeling
That this time
I am enough
Damn foolish thoughts

A Reluctant Yes
Joan Seifert

When making lunch, to cut into a perfect avocado,
find a small seed, no black spots at all,
and the offer of effervescent green —
one needs to hug somebody!

Two small girls skipping through the lawn —
my lawn, not theirs —
take liberties, bubbling at spring’s overture. They wave,
unaware I am a grouch, and old.

I wave back, my grin peeks out; doesn’t really want to.
Why do I let it?

The avocado was perfect.
Old memories — well,
some did green into sweet ripeness.

The fruits of life are so mysterious!

Persian Shore*
Mo H Saidi

Looking up from the sandy shore
under the hazy sky, all I see
is a tepid, undulating sheet of gray water.

The sea fades away into the misty horizon
the opposite seashore, rocky and ancient
rests below a mass of agitated trees.

The distant land, an aged lion
lies on its side, panting
dreary, winded, and restive.

Like a kite aflame, the sun
is gliding, dimming, fading
deserting a once familiar land.

There the starless night covers the trees
here darkness prevails in the harbor
the frail short waves die near my bare feet.

In the moonless night, the murky
water brings no news, no words
of love from the Persian shore.

*from The Color of Faith published by Pecan Grove Press:
http://library.stmarytx.edu/pgpress/

Voices From My Seventh Summer
Valerie Martin Bailey

The voices flow over me,
verbal sedatives—rising, falling—
adult conversation punctuated
by knowing laughter.

The voices know everything,
offering their solutions
to problems of war, religion,
scandal, birthing babies.

In the droning breeze of a fan,
a beaded chain sways rhythmically
from the naked bulb overhead,
reinforcing the hypnotic effect of the voices.

Far away night of my seventh summer—
I drift to sleep on the old, iron bed
In Grandma’s front room—
 comforted by trusted, grown-up voices.

I need those voices now.
The Stigma of Mental Illness
Floyd (Michaud) L. Lamrouex

There is a stigma in our society when it comes to mental illness. Whether it is schizophrenia, depression, or bipolar disorder, our society looks down on those with mental illness. They look at you as if it were something you could get over if you just tried hard enough. As some would accuse, ‘It’s all in your mind.’

Yes, it is all in the mind. The person with mental illness can no more change his illness than people with cancer or diabetes can change theirs. But society does not think of people with cancer or diabetes as being defective human beings, they are just people with the misfortune of having a serious disease, but the stigma of mental illness is the implication that you are defective in your essence as a human. You are judged as inferior, and that is a terrible thing.

Conversation with Floyd (Michaud) L. Lamrouex
by James Brandenburg

San Antonio poet and writer Floyd Lamrouex is currently reading from his book of poems and stories Oasis in the Sky, published by Rhyme or Reason Design Studio. Lamrouex was born and raised in abject poverty by his schizophrenic mother and maternal grandfather who survived with sustenance farming in the mountains of Arizona. He worked his way through graduate school, earning a JD and an MBA in a joint degree program at Texas Tech. Having built a successful law practice with all the economic benefits such as house, cars, etc., he lost it all after being diagnosed with bipolar disorder. Years of treatment followed, till he finally regained his footing and professional standing. His book lets us glimpse into his life story.

James Brandenburg: Listening to you read from your book of poems and stories, Oasis in the Sky, I was truly moved by the tremendous obstacles you have overcome. What were the most difficult ones?
Floyd (Michaud) L. Lamrouex: You ask for “obstacles,” plural instead of singular, so you might get more than you bargained for in answer to this question. The first obstacle was that, to put it bluntly, we were poor and only barely survived on my grandfather’s ranch. The second obstacle was when my father abandoned my brother and me to live with our schizophrenic mother who did everything in her power to provide for us, never considering government aid, even though we lived at or below the poverty level. The next obstacle was putting myself through 8½ years of school. Scholarships and grants got me through college, but then I had to pay my own way in the joint JD and MBA degree program at Texas Tech. In the end I had a roofing company that paid the bills, until my last semester when I quit working and focused on graduating. I graduated with $32 in the bank. But for a best friend in Dallas, I would have had nowhere to live.

My largest obstacle has been the late onset of bipolar disorder, because now I was “mentally ill,” even though I had sworn to never be like my mother. It took me a full year to accept the diagnosis. That year culminated with me in the shower trying to pull the trigger of the gun I held against my head. I sincerely believe that God sent his angels to stay my hand that day, and that evening a Christian doctor took me into his home, giving me time to heal. In the meantime, I lost my house, my cars, and my fiancée. Now, I’ve clawed my way back to a semblance of normality. I have a law practice again, a place to live, and a couple of cars to drive. But the greatest blessings in my life have been a handful of good people along the way who extended a helping hand when I most needed it, God putting them there at just the right moment to help me with my next step.

Your life is an inspiration for all of us. Was it difficult or healing to put your life story on paper?
I don’t see myself as an inspiration, rather I see myself as a survivor. At best I maintain a truce with my mental illness and that is a success. It was not difficult to write about my bipolar disorder, because at the time I was writing mostly for myself. The hard part was putting it in a book and sharing the book. I laid it out there for the world to see. As can be expected, it has drawn some people closer to me and has pushed others away. As for healing, yes, there was something of a catharsis as I wrote; I was becoming totally honest with myself, no longer hiding behind a facade of normalcy. I finally came to grips with my illness.

People are hesitant to speak or write about mental illness. Why do you think that people are so hesitant in this respect?
In our society “mental illness” is a dirty word. People accept AIDS, HIV, cancer, and diabetes much more readily than mental illness. The perception is that something is profoundly wrong with you; that you are less of a human than those around you. And this is wrong. Scientists agree that mental illness is the result of a chemical imbalance in the brain. I hope one day being treated for bipolar disorder (or any of the other mental illnesses) will be as easy as taking a couple of pills. Then, I believe mental illness will no longer carry a stigma.

Your book has the potential to touch many lives in this society. Have you thought about how you are going to promote and market your book?
My first goal was just to get the book published, following the advice of one of my favorite poets and good friend, T.S. Alexander, who evangelizes that we poets need to get our poems published any way we can, so that there is a written legacy of our thoughts and who we are (or were). As far as marketing the book, it is available on Amazon.com, from the publisher, Rhyme or Reason Word Design Studio—http://www.WordDesignStudio.com, and at the Twig Book Shop. Right now I’m in the enviable situation that I need to print more books. It’s been something of a cult classic, and being featured in Voices de la Luna will go a long way toward getting the word out.

Continued on page 13
You are a man of many talents. Talk about your many gifts.
People sometimes ask how I do all that I do. Where do I find the time? The answer is both easy and sad. I’ve never been married, and I have no children. Without the obligation of fatherhood, I’ve had the opportunity to follow my heart, and the time to do so. I do not want to run off a litany of my gifts and talents. Read the foreword of my book, and the author’s bio at the back, and a couple of the poems, in particular, “I Will Not Go Quietly,” if you want a litany of what I can do or have done with my life. What I am most proud of are those days when as an attorney I can effectuate justice for a client, my years of competitive ballroom and country western dancing, my years as a triathlete and rock climber, my computer and Web design skills, the novels I’ve written (and for which I’m seeking an agent), training Border Collies, composing music on my keyboard, and playing trumpet in my church’s orchestra.

You have the most successful poetry venue in San Antonio. How do you do it?
You’re kind, but I’m sure some people would disagree with you. Here are my thoughts on why I have the venues I do: Awaken the Sleeping Poet at Barnes and Noble, and Awaken the Sleeping Poet at the Twig Book Shop. The first priority is to line up all speakers in advance. Then there is the promotional phase for each set of speakers. I try to get their pictures and bios out on the Internet two weeks in advance of their appearance. I repeat this e-mail five days before the venue. Then the day before the venue, I modify my e-mail to the bare basics: pictures of the featured readers, where, and when. So a lot of work goes into the preparation for the venue. Then at the venue, it’s important to me that everyone feels welcome. If the poetry is good and the attendees enjoy themselves, they’ll want to come back. Not much of a secret after all.

Who has been your greatest inspiration for writing poetry?
I do not know if I would call her my “inspiration.” I think a better term would be “motivation” or even better, the “impetus” behind my poetry. She is one of San Antonio’s grande dames of poetry, my poetry mentor Valerie Bailey. It’s Valerie who dragged me off to those first San Antonio Poets Association meetings a few years ago. It’s Valerie who instilled and nurtured the idea that I could write poetry. And it is Valerie who encourages me to enter the contests at SAPA and the Poetry Society of Texas. I’m just enough of a competitor (very goal oriented and task oriented) to want to do well and place in those contests. So about half of my poetry writing is in relation to those contests, and the other half is related to my bipolar illness. Few poems are written outside those two motivations.

As for writers who have influenced me, I can’t really say, because for one reason I was lucky and found my “voice” early on in my writing. Another reason is that I have read a ton of poetry via anthologies. Valerie is editor for the National Federation of State Poetry Societies (NFSPS) and edits their anthology, Encore, as well as the Laurel Crown Foundation’s Dreamcatcher, and SAPA’s Inkwell Echoes. And as it so happens, I’m her proofreader. So, for several years now, I’ve been proofreading excellent poetry and have come to recognize what I like and what I dislike. I lean toward lucidity in a poem, rather than abstraction; poetry that makes a point rather than poetry that leaves me wondering what the point was; and poetry that touches my emotions, whether humorous or poignant, rather than poetry that leaves me cold inside.

I WILL NOT GO QUIETLY
Floyd (Michaud) L. Lamrouex

Once I was:
swimmer, runner, biker...
musician, composer, writer...
scuba diver, rock climber, skydiver...
attorney, litigator, counselor...
mediator, educator, problem solver...
disciplined, determined, motivated...

Then came three triggering events
and the late onset of a devastating mental illness: bipolar disorder.

Now, I am only a shadow of my former self,
and I am bent by the heartaches of life.

Proverbs proclaims: “Where there is no vision,
the people perish,” or, as I have learned,
when you lose your dream, you die.
With every lost dream,
I have died just a little bit more.
I have died so much that I have lost the ability
to effectuate change in my life,
and dreams are hard to hold onto.

So I wonder:
Will I ever love again?
Be loved again?
Be lovable again?

Will I ever again have music burst from my soul?
Have stories pour forth with no effort at all?
Will I ever be what I was before?

Don Henley sings:
“I will not lie down...
I will not go quietly....”

I want to believe that.
I want to embody that.
I want to stand on the edge of the earth and spit defiantly at the darkness.
I will not go quietly.
I will not go quietly.
I will not go quietly!
Music & Poetry

Rumi’s Life
A Poet, Musician, and Sufi
Compiled & Redacted by Voices Editor
From www.Wikipedia.com
www.sufism.org/books/dayex.html

Rumi was born in 1207 in greater Balkh, which is in present day Afghanistan. He died on 17 December 1273 in Konya in present day Turkey. He was laid to rest beside his father, and over his remains a splendid shrine was erected. The 13th century Mevîna Mausoleum, with its mosque, dance hall, dervish living quarters, school, and tombs of some leaders of the Mevlevi Order, continues to this day to draw pilgrims from all parts of the Muslim and non-Muslim world. Jalâl al-Dîn who is also known as Rumi, was a philosopher and mystic of Islam, but not a Muslim of the orthodox type. His doctrine advocates unlimited tolerance, positive reasoning, goodness, charity and awareness through love. To him and to his disciples all religions are more or less truth. Looking with the same eye on Muslim, Jew and Christian alike, his peaceful and tolerant teaching has appealed to people of all sects and creeds. The mother of Rumi was Mu’mîna Khatun. The profession of the family for several generations was that of Islamic preachers of the liberal Hanafi rite, and this family tradition was continued by Rumi.

When the Mongols invaded Central Asia sometime between 1215 and 1220, Baha ud-Din Walad, with his whole family and a group of disciples, set out westward. On the road to Anatolia, Rumi encountered one of the most famous mystic Persian poets, ‘Attar, in the Iranian city of Nishapur, located in the province of Khorasan. ‘Attar immediately recognized Rumi’s spiritual eminence. He saw the father walking ahead of the son and said, “Here comes a sea followed by an ocean.” He gave the boy his Asrârnama, a book about the entanglement of the soul in the material world. This meeting had a deep impact on the eighteen-year-old Rumi, and later on became the inspiration for his works. For nine years, Rumi practiced Sufism as a disciple of Burhan ud-Din until the latter died in 1240 or 1241.

Rumi’s public life then began: he became a teacher who preached in the mosques of Konya and taught his adherents in the madrassa. During this period, Rumi also travelled to Damascus and is said to have spent four years there. It was his meeting with the dervish Shams-e Tabrizi on 15 November 1244 that completely changed Rumi’s life. Shams had traveled throughout the Middle East searching and praying for someone who could “endure my company.” A voice said to him, “What will you give in return?” Shams replied, “My head!” The voice then said, “The one you seek is Jalal ud-Din of Konya.” On the night of 5 December 1248, as Rumi and Shams were talking, Shams was called to the back door. He went out, never to be seen again. It is rumored that Shams was murdered with the connivance of Rumi’s son, ‘Ala’ ud-Din; if so, Shams indeed gave his head for the privilege of mystical friendship.

Rumi’s love for, and his bereavement at the death of, Shams found their expression in an outpouring of music, dance, and lyric poems, Divan-e Shams-e Tabrizi. He himself went out searching for Shams and journeyed again to Damascus. There, he realized: “Why should I seek? I am the same as / He. His essence speaks through me. / I have been looking for myself!”

Mawlawna had been spontaneously composing ghazals (Persian poems), and these had been collected in the Divan-i Kabir or Diwan Shams Tabrizi. Rumi found another companion in Salah ud-Din-e Zarkub, a goldsmith. After Salah ud-Din’s death, Rumi’s scribe and favorite student, Hussem-e Chalabi, assumed the role of Rumi’s companion who encouraged him to write a major poetry collection, Masnavi. Rumi smiled and took out a piece of paper on which were written the opening eighteen lines of his Masnavi, beginning with “Listen to the reed and the tale it tells, / How it sings of separation . . . .”

In December 1273, Rumi fell ill and died on 17 December 1273 in Konya; his body was interred beside that of his father, and a splendid shrine, the Yeşil Türbe (Green Tomb). His epitaph reads: When we are dead, seek not our tomb in the earth, but find it in the hearts of men.

Like This

Jalaluddin Rumi

The poem has been translated by Coleman Barks with John Moyne in The Essential Rumi

If anyone asks you
how the perfect satisfaction
of all our sexual wanting
will look, lift your face
and say,
Like this.

When someone mentions the gracefulness
of the nightsky, climb up on the roof
and dance and say,
Like this.

If anyone wants to know what “spirit” is,
or what “God’s fragrance” means,
lean your head toward him or her.
Keep your face there close
Like this.

When someone quotes the old poetic image
about clouds gradually uncovering the moon,
slowly loosen knot by knot the strings
of your robe.
Like this.

If anyone wonders how Jesus raised the dead,
don’t try to explain the miracle.
Kiss me on the lips.
Like this.

When someone asks what it means
to “die for love,” point here.
If someone asks how tall I am, frown
and measure with your fingers the space
between the creases on your forehead.

To watch the musical video of the poem visit
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HdvMzAZR0fA
Poetry Workshops

**Poetry Heals & Arts Advance the Quality of Life**

A Monthly Poetry Workshop & Reading

*Moderated by Josie Mixon, Mo H Saidi, and James Brandenburg*

*Sponsored by Voices de la Luna*

*For more information, visit www.voicesdelaluna.com*

**Haven for Hope**

The Shining Place in San Antonio

http://www.havenforhope.org/

One of the original missions of *Voices de la Luna* is to reach out into the community with poetry presentations and workshops. We at *Voices* are developing two poetry workshops for some very special audiences: one for homeless people at Haven for Hope, and one for visually impaired people at the San Antonio Lighthouse for the Blind. Both are unique institutions that prove the willingness of San Antonio’s community to offer a path toward self-realization and achievement to all segments of our city. It is with great pride that *Voices de la Luna* adds its support to these endeavors.

On 2 June 2010, the co-editor and several staff members visited Haven for Hope and interviewed several members of this promising community. With the individual written permissions, two video interviews were conducted. A multi-million dollar campus offers a whole array of services tailored to the needs of homeless people. The idea grew out of the Community Council to End Homelessness, launched in 2006 by then San Antonio Mayor Phil Hardberger and civic leader Bill Greehey. The community council was chaired by both Bill Greehey and then-Councilwoman Patty Radle as Co-Chairs.

Now open for business, Haven for Hope provides a safe and transforming place for citizens who are in trouble and have no place to go. Haven for Hope is a private non-profit establishment that aims to transform the lives of homeless men, women and children in the San Antonio/Bexar County area. Partnering with 78 governmental, non-profit, and faith-based agencies, Haven for Hope seeks to transform the lives of the homeless by addressing the root causes of homelessness through education, job training and behavioral health services. While most “shelters” feed, clothe and shelter the homeless, Haven for Hope and its Partners will provide critical social services to help the homeless become self-sufficient individuals on a long-term basis.

Established in 1933, the San Antonio Lighthouse for the Blind began with the vision of one individual to train and educate blind and visually impaired people. From a place for five part-time workers sewing pillow cases, it has evolved into a 60,000 sq. foot facility on Roosevelt Avenue, which employs more than 250 people and manufactures more than 80 products for the general community, as well as most branches of the Armed Services.

---

**Love inside the Walls of the Jail**

Teheran’s streets are quiet, but on the Web, dissident wives post a new form of manifesto, the passionate letter. From http://www.irannewsdigest.com & The New York Times

“I know that there will be a day that you and I will hold hands again.”

Only in today’s Iran, perhaps, could such words of love and longing also be a call to defy repression.

In blogs, Iranian women whose husbands are imprisoned for political dissent have been posting dozens of deeply personal letters to and from their spouses. The postings, many of which circulate virally in Iran, interweave passionate affection with vows to continue fighting the regime.

The letters are an eye-catching new tactic for the reformists, but this is not the first time that women have been in the forefront of Iran’s reform movements. They were there in the 1906 constitutional revolution, and again in the 1979 revolution, which overthrew the Shah. These letters began last June, when women were prominent in the huge protests that followed the disputed re-election of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad; they were arrested and tortured alongside men.

Since December, when new protests were again repressed, the demonstrators have gone dormant. But the letters continue. Perhaps most striking is their open expression of love between husband and wife — a most defiant touch in the Islamic Republic of Iran, where intimate affection is customarily expressed only in private.

---

**Black Maids who Raised Whites in the South**

*THE HELP* By Kathryn Stockett

*Abridged from the Review by Sybil Steinberg*

*The Washington Post*

Southern whites’ guilt for not expressing gratitude to the black maids who raised them threatens to become a familiar refrain. But don’t tell Kathryn Stockett because her first novel is a nuanced variation on the theme that strikes every note with authenticity. In a page-turner that brings new resonance to the moral issues involved, she spins a story of social awakening as seen from both sides of the American racial divide.

Newly graduated from Ole Miss with a degree in English but neither an engagement ring nor a steady boyfriend, Eugenia “Skeeter” Phelan returns to her parents’ cotton farm in Jackson. Although it’s 1962, during the early years of the civil rights movement, she is largely unaware of the tensions gathering around her town.

Skeeter is in some ways an outsider. Her friends, bridge partners and fellow members of the Junior League are married. Most subscribe to the racist attitudes of the era, mistreating and despising the black maids whom they count on to raise their children. Skeeter is not racist, but she is naive and unwittingly patronizing. When her best friend makes a political issue of not allowing the “help” to use the toilets in their employers’ houses, she decides to write a book in which the community’s maids—their names disguised—talk about their experiences.

---

*Skeeter and her friend Hilly meet with Eugenia “Skeeter” Phelan and Nellie*
Poetry & Art Therapy

Reflections on Jahaira
A Young Artist at San Antonio College
James Brandenburg

Jahaira Aguilar, a 19 year old painter studying Fine Arts at San Antonio College, paints to relieve some of the tension in her life. She calls it her dark side. Her primary medium is acrylic on canvas; her art can be found on her Webpage at www.myspace.com/jahairaaugilar. Aguilar began painting at the age of 15; she first painted with make-up and eyeliner pencils on the furniture, doors, and baseboards of her room in the dead of the night. At the time she had never purchased a tube of acrylic paint or utensils, and she sought pure expression through mixed media. This spontaneous form of expression grew into a passion still burning furiously four years later.

Paintings by Jahaira

Jahaira Aguilar envisions herself pursuing a career in art therapy through creative expression, especially for inner-city youth with a history of behavioral problems. She believes that today’s youngsters are having a hard time expressing their own feelings, and something as simple as poetry, art, or singing can make them more aware of the emotional struggles and mental obstacles before them and give them hope in their ability to resolve their problems. In ten years, she believes, she will be happily fulfilled painting and through the creative arts exposing others to the love they can share with themselves and the world in which they live. Meanwhile she acquires skills. The ability to accurately and proportionately draw a figure from memory, for example, is impossible without proper training; this is one of the skills she acquired in her first challenging year at the art program at SAC. She believes that greater technical skill will enhance the execution of her conceptual ideas and make them more accessible to her audience.

She regrets that so many people are discouraged from making art because they are made to believe they will not be “good” at it. Art is for everyone, Aguilar believes; anyone can create and anyone can see life through the eyes of an artist. Art is a way of letting others know how you cope, how you view society. Artists are different mainly because they accept and passionately embrace life.

Many of Aguilar’s paintings lean towards the dark side, but she is determined to exhibit her emotions in her art. As she paints, the content usually distorts itself in her hands and becomes a distorted human, a mournful expression or a painful gesture. She notes: “… many (human experiences) … that … tend to invoke fear, sadness, and anguish are shunned and left untouched. My paintings … relieve my internal sadness and anxiety … I am left with feelings of spiritual cleansing and rejuvenation. Proper tapping into the dark side of our own minds is natural and healthy … often the expression of these dark points begins to be therapeutic.” She agrees with the Swiss psychologist C.G. Jung who postulated that there is a need for artists to deal with the dark side of life in their artwork; artists should search for a balance.

Paintings by Jahaira
Callanish Stones, Isle of Lewis, Scotland
Water Color by Maripat Munley

THE CALLANISH STONES
Maripat Munley

Twenty years ago the wind swept me into
This tall Neolithic standing stone
At the north western edge of the Hebrides
on the Isle of Lewis, Scotland.
It was a cool and damp summer morning.
No one here but we two.
“‘Tis a thin place,” the Celts say,
Where the veil between
This time and past times is transparent and
Sometimes faceted as through a prism.
I can feel “all those behind me”
As my Nana used to say.
I hear their music, the haunting chants,
Feel the pulsing of the earth as they dance
Their tribute round these stones
Announcing their reverence
For the mysterious, the unknown.
Their precious dowry throbs in my blood and
I will never be the same.
The Lightning
Lilah Kalista Qubrosi
Kriterion Montessori School, 5th grade

The lightning
with
its rapid wrath
came down
upon us
And nighttime
was a fright
though in the morning
the sun shone
and there was
no mourning.

My Hate
Ashley Redwine
Bandera High School, 12th grade

My hatred for you is as red as blood dripping from a cut.
Our yelling carries throughout this place YOU call home.
This feeling, hate, leaves a bitter taste on my tongue.
The stench of my hatred for you reeks beyond recognition!
To me, you are a grotesque beast that killed me from inside.
I called you father, but now I refer to you as a traitor.
You left your family for another.
Your son and daughter were left to question themselves.
Were we the cause of you leaving or your own selfish reason?
No, you deserted us for reasons unknown!
So feel my hatred that only burns for you.
Watch me grow up and become amazing without your guidance.
Maybe one day I will forgive your crimes against me,
But for now, my hate for you is as red as blood.

Great Expectations
Olivia Tse
St. Mary’s Hall, 10th grade

I wish my hair was curly,
a wild, mismatched curly.
Because then
a lock out of place
wouldn’t matter
quite so much.
Like being scatter-brained every day
except for Tuesdays
(or is it the other way around?)
Like Pip in his boat,
just another trip up the river.
These are our Great Expectations.

Wind
Margot Mays
St. Mary’s Hall, 5th grade

The wild wind
softly speaks to you
in the bright of the day.

It silently
watches you
as you play.

Through the trees
at night,
you can softly hear it
whispering to you.

La Sonrisa de Mamá
Victoria Adelina-Montoya Cortinas
St. Anthony Catholic High School, 12th grade

Just that same old war of words
on every birthday, holiday,
and anniversary
of yet another year survived.

Anger I knew
would blow through our home—
the tempest over familiar waters.
The wind howled, and the yells
accompanied by tears
that fell like rain.

But all at once it had ended.

A slammed door
acknowledged her presence.
She looked at me with those
depth brown eyes,
eyes that knew integrity.
They had once looked toward a future
and dreamed a dream greater than this.

“True happiness comes from your heart,”
she said as she allowed the
last tear to run down her face.

And finally she smiled…
the same smile that had
for years made me smile;
beautiful and true.
It was my smile.
When Unsure, I Think of You

Cara Comfort
St. Mary’s Hall, 12th grade

Your influence, quirks, and ways
Left upon me the impression that I was
A baby elephant, freed from a menagerie.

On unfamiliar, unwieldy legs
You guided me into the outside world, the real world
Away from that enclosure.

I grew nervous by my trunk’s misleading shadows,
But sensed your seismic rumbles,
Even if miles away.

As I followed you, flap ears enlarged and peaked,
Trunk arched majestically against the sky
With brisk, assured steps.

And then you were gone.

But I accepted your absence because from you I learned
To stroll under an unforgiving sun, roll through mud
And appreciate the tickling of savannah grass.

Or so I thought.
My once leathery skin now cracks
With hardened mud.

Where did you go? Oh—
Where did you go?

I Am…

Katherine Mansfield
Keystone School, 6th grade

I am a tumult of happiness,
descending from the heavens;
A heart throbbing faintly
To the steady thrum
Of the waves pounding below.

My birdsong echoes through the placid waters
Of the blue heavens.
Airy, wispy white clouds bear no resistance for me;
I soar right through them,
Breaking shackles and bonds—
Nothing can hold me in place.

I go by many names:
Defier of Gravity,
Heaven’s Messenger,
God’s Creation.

But above all,
I am free.

Midnight

Claire Hubert
Pleasanton Intermediate School, 6th grade

In between the dusk and dawn
In the darkness of the night
Peaceful, sleeping, snoring
All life feels right
But when creepy things happen
It’s after
Midnight

Twelve o’clock when owls are screeching
Ravens speaking
And we are sleeping
Something comes out from the in-betweens
From behind the moon
Into your dreams
Only few of us know that magical things
Happen only after
Midnight

Dark Wolf

Julia E. Toney
Barbara Bush Middle School, 7th grade

Snow under the moon,
A passionate white,
Amid cold and harsh blackness:
The absence of light.

Eyes bright, claws out,
Fangs sharp, strong, and ready,
Shadows dash through the snow,
Their pace swift but steady.

In the lead is a dark wolf,
As cold as the ice,
With strength and accuracy
Quick and precise.

A past? He has none
(Or at least none forgiven).
He just runs and breathes;
He’s quick and he’s driven.

The wolf howls a call;
The hunt has begun!
Circle round, now break in,
The cruel deed is done:

Blood stains the snow;
As scarlet on white
The dark wolf grows darker
Select—Poems
Part III

Into the Woods (A Sonnet) *
Mary Ellen Galloway

Held fast by the centrifugal force of a dream,
I see branches swirling and leaves flying.
And hear a voice crying in anguished screams
In this wilderness, this place of dying.

Spectres appear and I shield my gaze.
From seeing images that cause cold sweat.
But though my lids are shut none can erase
The flickering films that haunt me yet.

Unexpectedly calm and then silent,
I clearly see the woods on every side.
The nightmare which appeared so violent
Has released its grip yet still I abide.

The solid tree I lean on does not bend,
But rather bears me up, my steady friend.

*For Suzanne, who taught me that the woods are not such a bad place to be.

Sunset, Crescent,
with Venus at Greatest Eastern Elongation
Wendy Barker

A whisper touch,
your lips across my wrist,
and there, up there, surrounding us,
a violet calm, a gauze
contentment, and a sliver of light—slim canoe—suspended on the float
of lavender, mauve, pastel
haze through which this single
disk of light off to the side
gleams down to the fading—almost
colorless—green of the lawn
where rain lilies lift their petaled whiteness, as many lilies
nibbling at the coming dark
down here as stars.

I stayed awake half the night dreaming of a table by the sea.
Yesterday, in a café, I sat for hours making studies of figures, faces—
A window was the most intimate entity within that picture.
I went home restless—in despair of that canvas.

Nearly noon, the shutters of my room burst open, bringing in
the smell of fish. Salt-mist shaded sea cliffs—cries of gulls
intersected penciled rhythms against a gray horizon.

I considered the objects on the table—a bowl of apples
an empty vase, sheets of music—
When I touched the strings of my guitar
the dim candle rushed from wall to wall
breathing on to a page of half-awake sketches.

In my curiosity, I ran outside.
I began remembering my legs and body.
I ran until I lost my breath—until I had become
a part of that landscape—where waves pranced
becoming one triumphant form.

They were not statues, not vacuous, not skeletons
Their living peaks rose up again and again.
Light threw itself upon them—changing ideas about transpare-
cy.
When green clouds of foam touched crystalline heels, they
resonated
in tones of turquoise-silver—a scherzo in indigo and jade.

Hours later, when I returned to my room, I saw
the objects on the table as companions.
Now I could paint them.

The Watchful Moon
LaVern McCarthy

That old Comanche moon is riding high,
As watchful as she was long years ago
When warriors took up the battle cry
To maim and kill when settlers were the foe.
Too many battles came, from year to year.
The moon looked down upon the human race.
She bent so low observing pain and fear
A splotch of blood still lingers on her face.
She knows a thousand secrets from the past,
A certain history of what has been.
Perhaps she will reveal the truth at last.
She pauses on her nightly trek, but when

I ask her what was seen along the way
She hides behind a cloud and will not say.
To Forgiveness
Tatjana Debeljacki*

This is not the puzzle,
The tree of life,
Model of perfection,
Diary of chronicles,
Sullen neighbour,
Short shower of rain,
Flower of oblivion,
Slim willow tree.
Wake up you
Sleepy butterfly
Startled by emergency,
You coward!
You left the Elysian peacock to me,
Like an arrow, straight into my heart.
In the glass – half full of wine,
The storm of silent words...
Short break is your night,
Rhymes are blossom.
Sour, sweet,
You the enchantment.

*Serbian Poet

Melancholic City
José Caraballo

I was born in a melancholic city
covered by autumn leaves of newspapers.
Urban walls of concrete;
streets of tar populated
by neurotic noises of cars;
church benches worn
by heaps of men
lost in the morning stampede.
Melancholic city;
fictitious enchantments
enlightened by halogens lights
blinding the untested
obsessed by fleeting riches
your citizens fill their lungs and eyes
with the smoke of ambition.
Metropolis dragged by injustice,
Indifference, apathy, and indolence:
You, the senseless, oppress the poor
while the blood of innocents
runs through your veins.
Your luxury king, the dollar,
contaminates and sickens
everything it touches.

Sweet Muse
Margot Van Sluytman

I commit to you sweet Muse
I beg you to guide this, my pen
My fingers.
I commit to the purpose—to write.
To your presence too.
To prioritizing my soul, my very self
In a manner that embraces all that I am
all that is me.
I offer to faith,
Mindfulness,
Enduring trust.
For it is as if my very being
Is one with who you are, that I am.
In believing that you are my guide,
I open up.
I soak in.
I can, even when it is darkest, rejoice.
Letting go.
Giving in.
Crying. Sobbing. Smiling.
Arching in tender rhythm with my lover.
Dancing a worthy dance.
When each piece seems to break away
And leave me stranded,
You repair me. Patch me up.
Embrace and rejoice with me.
Sweet Muse,
I am learning to believe that
I am worth the time it takes to create
Whatever I feel called to create.
Birthing over and over again.

It’s the Little Things
Lori Simpson

Life’s
Little
Things add up -

Fill or flood
Your soul’s
Cup.

Take
In all,
Drink it down,

Give yourself
One more
Round.
BESIDE STILL WATERS
Michaud L. Lamrouex

PSALM 23:1
“The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures,
He leads me beside still waters. . . .”

Like a raging creek,
like a rushing river,
like Spring’s snowmelt—
fast, treacherous, deadly—
I ride rapids full of
turmoil and danger.

Crisis after crisis.
Tribulation after tribulation.
Trial after trial.
Heartache after heartache.
Disappointment after disappointment.
Are there no untroubled waters in this world?

Trying to survive the rapids, I pray for
release from emotional pain,
relief from anxiety and apprehension,
quieting the turmoil of a damaged soul,
soothing the angst, anguish,
and agony of a diseased mind.

Amidst the crisis I finally understand
what being led beside still waters means:
God’s quiet presence; God’s sufficient grace;
the peace that passes all understanding.
No fear for today, or the future.
No shame for the past.

Take my yoke upon you . . .
He commands,
for you will find rest . . .
beside still waters.

Cock
Barbara Loyd

We cannot ignore the cock
The proud cock so princely
The vain cock-of-the-walk
The lord of the hens
The rooster, the one who summons,
The early morning caller.

He struts himself proudly
With puffed-out chest and
A bright comb the color of blood
The feathers of all sizes and colors
The tail with its long, flowing plumes,
The meaty legs, spurs and claws.

Guess he’s never heard of Coq-a-Vin!

Cattle Call at Carnegie Hall
Gussie Goes to the Opera
Joan Seifert

Remembering arias from La Boheme
swung her down from the saddle to ecstatic tears.
Mimi your little hands are cold – it rang so brave and true!

How could she learn, just looking in? Opera had such style.
She was a square peg, craved highfalutin’ class
but wore dusty jeans and boots streaked with remuda mud.

It must have been the wine.

Her spurs hang in the tack room now; (yeah, girls had spurs sometimes.)
She remembers Barbara Stanwyck and her get the hell off my land!
She was like that, once.

Her range had never been at Carnegie.
She rode a land drought-ridden, miles of mesquite,
and herded moos across dried up arroyos,
yodeled sad, to dogies searching for their mamas.

That ain’t opera. Even mavericks know it.
But can a wrangler rope a hanker for Italian wine?

So when at Carnegie, she heard Rudolpho plead to Mimi,
and when Mimi’s candle dimmed, and when she clung,
and when they kissed, and Lordy, Lordy, when they kissed…

She practiced arias instead of yodel-songs,
learned to drink Chianti,
And when there came a cattle call for chorusers —

Well, she hasn’t really been a cowgirl since.

Awaken
Wini C. Findon

Barren branches bursting with life,
Another Spring I get.
Robins chirping, digging, yearning
Give up you worms, you’re mine!

Peepers loudly make their point
Be still, enjoy their sounds.
Silence falls ever so swiftly
At last the earth rebounds.

Give up your chill, flowers awaken
Sweet faces toward the sun.
Give unto us all you have
Dance on, dance on, dance on!
An Old Friend (Death) *

James Brandenburg

I can’t ignore you
smiling
in that hidden cavern
inside me
where the bare walls
once enclosed the depths
of cave dwellers.

I hear water
dripping
down the
stalactites
of my existence
splashing
into that large pool.

The bell tolls for me
in that colonial village
atop the mountain;
cobblestone streets
lead upward,
and I know
how slippery they are.

You greet me where
they drag the dead bull
across the arena.
Then we seat ourselves
in the center
at the roundtable
of the ancients.

* The poem is an amplification of a dream about the death of my
best friend Larry Rowe, who died tragically of a brain tumor. In
the dream, the setting shifts from Mexico to Spain.

Journey

Lou Bailey Taylor

Parchment thin skin
Reveals the long journey
Of years
Without apology
Blood still surges

Imagination a companion
That recalls zest
Undimmed by transitory
Intersection of time and space

Dream Forest

Ulrike Rowe

After Being Deposed

Valerie Martin Bailey

Having been
the reigning queen
of his adoring heart,
how do I now
remove my crown,
step down from my throne,
and gracfully walk alone?
When there is no
rose bouquet,
no lovely card
with tender words
to hold in my heart,
no box of fancy
chocolates to
tell me I am sweet.
No romantic music,
no candlelight,
no whispered words of love,
how do I, the former
center-of-his-universe,
live with the
truth that
my king is dead,
and I rule
no one’s heart...
no one really cares
what I’m
doing tonight.
Sandy Rhodes

I do not know where my place of darkness is,
Some days are bright with plenty of light,
Some days are dark as the night,
Some days life flows,
Some days life just goes,
Where I go and where I’ve been,
Is yet to be known, Or when.

---

Mary Willette Hughes

Words Are Buried in My Marrow

The words are: I forgive you.
The you, is he who planned and groomed, who sexually molested our young son that July night in his tent of darkness.
The words, I forgive you, are jagged; they cut the back of my throat when I try to say them; they make my tongue bleed.

Though our son’s abuse happened forty years ago, a sea of anger—tears still rolls up and crashes through the thin-ice veneer of my memory. Will ice ever melt into forgiveness?

An April sun, risen to its apex, begins to free a long-frozen river into flowing.

---

Ulrike Rowe

Spring Feeling

24 Voices de la Luna, 15 June 2010
A Thin Doorway
for Bui thi Huong
Mobi Warren

Where she dreams, white-shouldered ibis
wade in a slow river. Ribbons cast by
coconut palms tie and untie themselves
across the screen of her white blouse,
a theatre for shadow puppets. Her basket
holds ribbed fruits that slice into stars,
bananas the size of thumbs.

She walks with the boy who loves ducks.
He warms an egg in his cupped hands,
hums a folk song about lovers who exchange
their jackets, trade their hats, slip rings
on each other’s fingers. She turns her head
to hide a smile.

The sweet earth is knotted with land mines.

When she awakes, her body is a nest
of shrapnel, her friend is gone.
During a long recovery, she is given
a knot of olive wood, sweet wood of doves,
which she uses to carve buttons.
She sews a jacket with pockets
to tuck starfruit and duck eggs.
Stitches buttonholes and walks
each button through a thin doorway
to where she dreams—
white-shouldered ibis wade.

The Rose Knows
Mike Gilliam

A petal says “I Love You,”
A petal says I care.

A stem—I’ll be your rock,
And forever be there.

A thorn or two—our challenges,
The coping with our trials.

A bright and hoping color,
Sharing of laughs and smiles.

The other petals—your protector,
Surrounding you with me.

The rose knows how I feel,
Our love was meant to be.

Select—Poems
Part VI

Six P.M.
Mim Scharlack

Brandy bounds into my bedroom
tail wagging her whole body
leash in her mouth
ready for our walk

tiny delicate leaves
grace winter’s bare branches
bluebonnet buds appear
air smells like spring

Brandy walks nicely by my side
after a year of training
until
she spots the Rottweiler
from down the street
walking with his Mom

my docile dog
becomes an energetic maniac
barking, straining to play
with her species
the command “leave it”
falls on deaf ears

Totally ignored by neighbor dog
her eyes question me
“Why won’t he play?”
I offer a treat of consolation

Spring comes to south Texas
but once a year
Brandy has spring fever
all year round

Rant No.2
Darby Riley

Earth groans under the human yoke.
Life cries out to be relieved.
Atmosphere’s perfect gaseous mix is broke
and too many humans are deceived.
Some frantically chase the money, money
as if it could be breathed, consumed.
Some think it’s all absurd and funny
even though we may be doomed.
Some believe Allah or Jesus
will free us from the mess we’ve wrought;
they think we’re purely spirit creatures
and soul’s salvation must be sought
above all else; but that’s not the prize.
Our great work is to organize.
Last Speaker
Jim LaVilla-Havelin

on Monday in Anchorage
the last fluent speaker of the
Eyak language died

someone looking to listen
to the song of the words
in Eyak will have to play tapes

and all the smiles and sighs
the tears and twinkles, endless
shapes of a face in conversation

watching the words jump into
the raw air before they’re swallowed
by a hungry listener

are gone. The fish that are the words
are hooked and gutted and served up
flat, just as the birds and

hands of Eyak are stilled.
Dictionaries flop open to a page of
words no one will ever pronounce again.

----------

Space Medicine
Jahaira

FRUIT
Fair Price Supermarket, Singapore 2010
Agnes Meadows

Dragon fruit from Vietnam, its surface alive
With flameless tongues of scarlet and green.

Indonesian snake-skin fruit, earth brown scaled pods
Glistening and perfect, compact as Cobra heads.

Thai long mango, slender gleaming crescents of
Mellow ebullience, like midday sun on your tongue.

Kong pears from China, moon pale and nestled together for
Comfort, remembering their birth’s desert-edged orchards.

Shivering and apologetic, ice green English strawberries,
Limp and lonely, wan aliens too far from home for good taste.

----------

LIZARD
Singapore, February 2010
Agnes Meadows

There’s a lizard in my bathroom
Tiny as a child’s thumb, rusty with
The rain of this Singapore Spring.

It scurries between the fractured floor tiles,
Along water pipes, runs across my toes,
Its microscopic feet barely registering their

Presence on my skin. With red eyes pin-pricking
Pin-pricking the green-fingered sunlight, its minute
Tail lashes in Lilliput rage. As I back away,

Shrieking mammoth multi-hued oaths,
It looks back at me over a diminutive
Emerald-scaled shoulder, lightning tongue

Rasping in and out defiantly,
An interspecies act of scorn that
Cuts me right down to size.

----------

Certain
Joyce Collins

I made my plan and checked it twice
I took my very own best advice

I was in control, you see
That felt good – me, me, me!

Not again would I be failed –
not while to myself availed

I was nearly wholly certain,
but for this one nagging question.

What if life calls my bluff,
and I find I’m not enough?

----------

26          Voices de la Luna, 15 June 2010
On Seeing a Crying Child

Peter Holland

For eighteen years he played on clean suburban streets, nothing of want did he see. Now in the cause of aid he walks broken, dusty streets of pain. Tears of the crying child, clean the blood and filth from her sad eyes and sorrowful face. His heart shatters to see her sitting in squalor and decay. The heady perfume of death hangs oppressively in the noisy air. His stomach bucks at the smell. He and his team were sent to give help, to render aide, but what can anyone do to help erase the blood, the pain, the death.

Changing Sites

Robert Bonazzu

I
At the near edge of a captain’s chair, hard yet attentive, shaped to buttocks as comic illusion of comfort—could this be right? We have access to idioms and trust lovely words which do not kill—could that be wrong?

II
We rent forward for a time, possessed by space. Nothing simple when kittens scatter stereotypes. Rhetoric an inhumane response to palpable shoulders, to a graceful curve of neck we do not cease caressing.

III
Old positions appear in chapters not resisting habits of humiliation—could it be real? As inquiry, I mean, experience as primal awareness. Next: Please, let it be Cognac.

IV
Cold wet air of a western shore: I was lost in oceanic beauty when I felt that chill. Wrote of a past watched closely in two polished pages per day, a revised life in spare prose.

Girls, when your mother asks you if you’re a virgin, don’t tell her about the time you saw heaven from the backseat of a bright white pickup, your hands lovingly wrapped around a gun rack, or the time you met ecstasy in the summerdark climbing to a rapture not mentioned in the Bible, on extra long limbs that stretched out a rolled-down window into the starry, hot Texas night.

No, better tell her that you and the boy from Sunday school—the one in law school with the crisp khakis, cool countenance—fell in love, tumbled into passion, for your first time.

Better tell her what she needs to know, that love needs appropriate, caring not being enough. Love, like table manners has to sit straight up, be clothed in serious starch, durable fabric, nothing gossamer and sheer that floats on hope, uncatchable.

But. Hang onto dreams of pickups, snap-button shirts, and warm, clear nights that hold your heart; don’t let memories slip into years until you no longer recall lingering love with a drawl, at all.

Skies Aglow

Hejo Müller

If only the winds not fan the winds afresh
Too many paradises already in ashes.
The Golden Pitchfork
Dream and Interpretation
James Brandenburg

Dream: The dream takes place outside London, Kentucky, where I spent much of my childhood. I am driving away from London. I am on the road with a male companion (slightly younger and unknown). I am driving up the side of a mountain, and there is a small village below. The name of the village is East Bernside. I recognize the location and drive down into the village. The village has changed so much that it no longer looks like the village of my childhood. There are little tourist shops everywhere, and it looks very contemporary. I look at the side of the mountain where the villagers live. I expect that they sit on their porches and listen to bluegrass music at night. There are lots of steps that go down, steps everywhere to shops, stuffed with typical tourist fare—little mementos, dolls with dresses, etc. I don’t see anything that reminds me of the area we are in. My companion says he wants to buy a pitchfork. We ask a lady at one of the shops. She says there is nothing here like that, but there is an old dump outside the village in the hills. She points us in that direction. We walk quite a distance up the hill and find the old dump. There is old furniture, old rusty tractors, old rusty tools, and lots of old treasures. My companion spots an old pitchfork and picks it up. It is rusty, but it can be cleaned up and is probably still functional. He is happy. Behind some old furniture I spot another pitchfork. I wipe it off with my handkerchief, and it shines. The forks are made of gold. It is a real gold and is a treasure. My companion and I walk back to the car, each with his own treasure. End of dream.

Interpretation: I had a happy childhood, and many of my dreams touch on parts of my childhood. I had visited the actual village of East Bernside as a child. Villagers sitting on their porches at night and listening to bluegrass were images from childhood. The dream village is now a village for tourists and could represent the plastic homogenization of America and the assimilation of this childhood town into the collective. There seems to be nothing in the tourist shops that reflects the culture of this area; again, the gradual disappearance of local culture into the collective. The pitchfork seems an important symbol. One association I have with the pitchfork is the devil, but I do not feel that aspect fits with my interpretation of the dream. When I was a child, a pitchfork was a very practical tool, used for tossing hay and manure. Every household had a pitchfork. In the village setting I associate a pitchfork with hard work, messing in plants, and working outdoors in nature. I think of the cycles—growth and decay in nature. The shopkeeper directs us to an old dump for the pitchfork. A dump is a place for unwanted, unused items. On rare occasions valuable things are discarded in a dump, and one can find old treasures. My companion finds an old rusty pitchfork discarded in the dump. Perhaps my companion could represent my shadow figure. For male dreamers, the shadow figure is another male figure. For female dreamers, the shadow figure is another female figure. The shadow figure is a part of the dreamer, and it can be either negative or positive. Very often, the shadow figure represents unresolved issues. For the companion, this pitchfork has a more practical use, like the one in my childhood. As a child, I was steeped in nature, but did not realize the importance of it. In the dream I come across a golden pitchfork in the old dump. Gold is traditionally thought to be the most precious of all metals, and a perfect metal; it neither rusts nor becomes soiled. Symbolically, gold is the tree of knowledge and throne of wisdom. Gold is of supreme value in alchemy. Gold has the sun in it, and the moon has silver in it, because it waxes and wanes. Alchemy supposedly accelerated the natural process of transmutation by changing lead into gold. It was a way of transforming man into God. These were the mystical objectives of spiritual alchemy. In Jungian psychology the individuation process is a purification process. The golden pitchfork represents the purification involved in my own individuation process.

In terms of compensation, the unconscious is taking my experience in the dream with the golden pitchfork and tweaking it by giving it a superlative value. I have retrieved something from childhood that is extremely valuable. In recent months, I have returned to nature on a daily basis by planting and taking care of a garden, thus reclaiming something from childhood. Now I am steeped in nature, but it is by choice, and I see the positive results. Working in my garden is symbolically panning for gold, and the work has a psychic value. Working in the garden forces me to use my sensation function, which is the hands-on function and also represents my inferior function. I have to pay attention to detail and watch things grow on a daily basis. Cultivating nature (earth, water) and attending to plants is a lot like therapy. Gardening is a lot like therapy; to succeed in therapy we have to stick to the present moment. Both gardening and therapy revolve around the process of attending to the psyche. The unconscious is telling me that the detailed work of gardening gives me a close connection to nature and that planting and maintaining a garden parallels the detailed work that I have to do on my psyche. In the psyche, panning for gold takes on a symbolic meaning. It is finding the things of value in my life and focusing on the important things in my individuation process.
C.G. Jung & Arts
Dialogue with Margot Van Sluytman

Margot Van Sluytman is currently completing a Masters of Integrated Arts, which feeds her desire to weave a potent and necessary connection between Restorative/Transformative Justice and Expressive Writing. She is an award winning expressive writing facilitator, scholarship recipient to The Merton Institute of Contemplative Living, member of The National Association for Poetry Therapy, member of The Society for Arts in Healthcare, member of the Writers Guild of Alberta, member of the Alberta Restorative Justice Association, and editor of the on-line literary magazine, Palabras. Her books include Sawbonna: Dialogue of Hope. A Real Life Restorative Justice Story. Foreword by Howard Zehr. (Orders can be placed at: www.Sawbonna.com) and The Other Inmate: Mediating Justice–Mediating Hope. Poetry and Workbook for Restorative Practices. Online at http://theotherinmate.sawbonna.com/.

James Brandenburg: Would you consider yourself a poetry therapist?
Margot Van Sluytman: In Canada that designation does not exist. My vocation is Expressive Writing and Transformative Language Arts. I facilitate workshops, using my published works, and the works of kindred writers; work which underscores the deeply powerful, vital, and necessary act of speaking our voice from behind prison bars, both visible and invisible. I am connected to a long line of kinship in which the Cantadora, Griot, Poeta, Bard, have been the healers in their communities. My most current book, Sawbonna: Dialogue of Hope, and my book The Other Inmate: Mediating Justice–Mediating Hope are both my children in this process of birthing literature that I trust will add to a growing body of work about how reconciliation and hope are resurrected when we each come to trust our voice of kindness and authenticity in which, as per Carl Jung, the Shadow is an intricate and vital teacher, along with the light.

Can you tell our readers about synchronicity and what this process means to you.
Synchronicity speaks to and from trust. Trust in recognizing the call of the mountains and answering with only one word: yes, even when logic and practicality want you to scream: no. Synchronicity means that you take a step or make a decision and it appears that all of sudden the Universe is conspiring to bring you into contact with people and ideas, books and opportunities that you could not imagine before. I chose to join NAPT because I wanted community, and though it is in the US, after speaking with former President Perie Longo, I knew without a shadow of a doubt that this was my community. Only two years later NAPT honoured me with an award for my work which was and still is new in Canada and the US. Because of that award, the man who murdered my Father contacted me and from there two new books were birthed. My work with victims and offenders continues to unfold and evolve. Prior to meeting face-to-face with Glen, my father’s murderer, I had written to Sister Helen Prejean, the author of the book Dead Man Walking. I wrote to her out of the blue to ask her to send a prayer to me before my meeting with Glen. On the morning I was leaving for British Columbia, a prayer and a tender note came from Helen; then later a quotation to use in my book Sawbonna: Dialogue of Hope, then an email inviting me to do two talks with her--one in March and one in October of 2010, to speak about healing and reconciliation! Imagine. One word. One poem. One synchronistic connection after another, whereas logic is not feeding this dance with life, this dance with words.

The word Sawbonna is a Zulu word of greeting as in “hello,” and it means as well “I see you,” as in “I see your soul.” I continue to meet individuals who share a kindred vision about how words/palabras, poetry, story shape our everyday, and affords us hope which does not grow from out there, but rather lives with us, as we live the questions, the process, and the paradoxes in which our lives are steeped.

Synchronicity speaks of raw, rich connecting with/through/from all that know us, even when we might feel isolated, alone, lost. In essence the words, “What you seek is also seeking you,” is synchronicity’s voice and vision, one that highlights that we are indeed relational beings, who inspire each other to breathe beauty, even where that might seem impossible.

Sawbonna
My soul / sees your soul. / And our shared dancing / stretches to the very core / of all that is possible. / All that is.

Tell us about your relationship with the works of C.G. Jung.
Synchronicity is Jung’s word. The imagination is Jung’s territory. Creativity is Jung’s kin. I have loved Jung’s work for he knew that logic and practicality, though both having their places in our lives, were not the essential meat and marrow of our humanity. Jung spoke of the power and potency of dreams, of symbols, of images. He understood the mysticism of art i.e. poetry and painting, and the vital necessity of art’s place in our world, not as the icing on the cake, but rather the cake itself. As a Poet and as an Expressive Writing Facilitator, I am conscious of this relationship to how the act of birthing what Creativity invites us to birth, not as product but rather as process, is part of an ever-unfolding and symbiotic relationship to life’s very breath and meaning.

A few months ago I sat to have coffee with one of Canada’s most gifted writers, Sharon Butala. That coffee date came about because I reread one of her best sellers, The Perfection of the Morning, and decided to email her and thank her for that gift. She responded to me, and lo and behold we met and met again, sharing kindred conversation. On our second meeting, as we ate delicious Chinese food, I was angst-ridden about where my life was going, about my decisions, about what I can sometimes feel as the trained Jungian Analyst. If you wish, I will introduce you.

Continued on page 30

Voices de la Luna, 15 June 2010 29
Sharon had no idea that only two days prior to our lunch that I had ordered several books about Jung’s work on the Shadow. She had no idea that I had wanted to work both in a professional and personal way with a Jungian Analyst. Two of books I had ordered were Why Good People Do Bad Things by James Hollis and the other, A Little Book on the Human Shadow by Robert Bly; and that sitting on my desk, being read by me were Man and His Symbols edited with and an Introduction by Carl Jung and Memories, Dreams, Reflections by Carl Jung. When she spoke of Thomas Moore’s, Dark Night of the Soul, that was it! I once again knew that I was exactly where I needed to be. Sharon did not know at that time that my fourth book of poetry was entitled Dark Night of the Soul: Poems of Journey-Poems of Arrival. I am steeped in deep gratitude for letting my instincts trust in the beauty and depth of synchronicities that continue and will continue to feed my journey, what I call my “dance with life.”

As my vocation continues to grow, unfold, evolve, and deepen, I feel the glorious mystery of the lush integrating of my mind, soul, body, spirit, and psyche, and I envision birthing new relationships, new poetry, new non-fiction works that will speak the voice of the mountains. A voice that yearns for us to thrive. Daily!

Of Dark Night
Margot Van Sluytman

In accordance with the
Essential pattern,
The sweet will rose up,
Burst open.
No misconceptions here.
Perceptions unclouded.
“Not to tame your soul, sista.”
“Not to curtail your wildness,
in this vast and sensual wilderness.”
To construct. To create.
To fashion with elegant
And meaningful might
That which begs to be fashioned.
In light. In darkness.
To participate in. To play in.
To thrive in the very bloody
And brilliant myth of creation.
Ever over and over and over again.
Reinventing the wheel.
Sweet, powerful, inventive self,
Forming in dark night
All that moves to glorious light.

From Of Dark Night: poems of journey – poems of arrival
© Margot Van Sluytman

Poetry Support Groups

Darby Riley’s Feedback Group

Resting Places
Jeff Akins

Only now can I rest relax move on It’s over A volume finished eight months from beginning to end You Dad are where you wanted to be And you Mom are now where you wanted to be

Your ashes Dad in Oklahoma in the City Cemetery beneath the strikingly modest gravestone you purchased when you were alive because you did not want to be forgotten I know your monument would have been huge had you bought it when you were making money instead of when you were an octogenarian But I know you were happy with it a stone so modest it conveys a humility that you did not exhibit in life but I know deep inside you were humble You treated the poor and the damned you cared about them when others did not I would not trade for the long goodbye we had with you at the cemetery no minister no funeral director no tent no folding chairs just us sitting on the grass

Crying
And your ashes Mom in Colorado in Rocky Mountain National Park next to the Lawn Lake trail head along with Janet’s Laurel’s and Glenn’s ashes under the spruce tree we planted Such a beautiful day with dramatic weather changes which you would have loved brilliant sun blue sky the storm clouds rolling over the tops of surrounding peaks then blowing snow followed by more blue sky again and again Neither would I trade for this goodbye one last and perfect way of remembering you You would have liked our great meal afterwards in Estes Park our group photo your nieces and nephews who remembered you that day You would have liked seeing your grandsons playing like young colts in the deep snow at Bear Lake For you and for us we continued our long goodbye in your national cemetery until its beauty which now includes you receded into darkness

If All Were You
David Drymala

If all the world were just your face
There was no creed
There was no race
Just all together pieces of a puzzle
Made of hate and made of love.
If all reacted to your acts,
Stunts in a matrix of made-up facts,
All your visions lost and found,
All the faces, all the sounds,
All were set up just for you,
A matrix made by all you do.
Then all truths that I speak
Can make you strong
Or make you weak.
This light’s strange shadow put to words
Can let your walk in life be heard.
If it were true that all were you
What in this world could you not do?
Poetry As Therapy

Self-Discovery Through Writing Poetry
Lianne Mercer, RN, MSN, CPT

Writing is often healing—we journal, we write poetry or a story. We know that in difficult times, putting our feelings on the page helps us to sort them out—to connect with new eyes to a situation or another person and—in particular—to ourselves. I subscribe to the old saying, “How do I know how I feel until I hear what I say?” As a poet, I “hear” on the page. And I recognize, remember, and reconnect to something I had forgotten I knew. Something that wanted to speak to me.

The therapeutic value of creating poetry comes from what the writing of the poem—its images and language—brings to you. When you are willing to put this puzzle together, sometimes you will say “Oh!” and smile; other times tears will come, or anger. Each of these powerful emotions has its healing purpose, but if you discover you aren’t ready to experience such raw emotions, you can stop what you’re writing. At such time, I have found it useful to say out loud, “Thank you for this invitation, but I cannot continue right now.” Perhaps you’re thanking yourself; perhaps it’s the muse, or whoever you send healing prayers to. And then you can write something more soothing for a time. Or you can put paper and pen away in a drawer and do something else.

An Effective Way to Invite the Muse
Peer through the windows of your eyes; what do you see?

A spider weaving a web on the clothesline, your father waving at you from two blocks away, walking home on a warm summer day for lunch, an image of you and your recently dead cousin in a 70-year-old backyard intent on a journey in a small Chief car, a wall hanging quilted by your daughter after her children are asleep, fastening one small square to another in a cascade of color that keeps darkness at bay.

Now, disappear behind the windows of your eyes and climb down your bones into your heart into that vast red sea where memory sails stories, tacking into the wind, keeping the keel steady as you head for shore. Once there, meander in the meadows of your mind and see who comes along. Use all of your senses.

Listen to voices now only imagined:

Who’s telling you to wear a sweater? Whose laugh is that beyond the daisies? Is that your dog barking at the cow in the next field? What boy (or girl) is saying “Come over here! You’ve got to see this!” Sniff—What does hot sunlight smell like? And that blue flower hiding near the pond? Taste the blackberries that grew near the fence or that leaf your friend dared you to lick. Touch cool pond water where turtles live and delicate flowers of Queen Anne’s Lace.

Walk on a forest path where the arms of thick pines leave you in shadow, where maple trees look not quite familiar, their belly up leaves dancing in the wind, a portent of rain, where you can climb inside the hollow trunk of a redwood, look up at the stars, and wonder if the heart of the live tree beats the way yours is now beating, enclosed in wood.

Perhaps you will pick up a rock cracked with forgiveness that has lain on this path for years and suddenly your tears will water unexpected purple or yellow wild flowers of hope unfolding along the way...

Perhaps you will stand still and listen; and in the sighing of trees and the sounds of birds’ wings, you will find a story that has been seeking you. Something wants saying. Invite its words to visit your pen and crawl onto the page without thought of direction or punctuation. The words know what is needed and have searched you out so you can write this poem—this story—to help you remember and to reaffirm our human connections, our shared dreams, tears, and laughter, and our willingness to enter the shadowy places where we sometimes dwell.

the flow of things
Lianne Mercer, RN, MSN, CPT

beneath mitered corners
and in a molded plastic chair
unspoken words lay dying
pain not touched
by morphine or aspirin
thirst unresponsive
to IV normal saline or black coffee
drops per minute
gaunt sheets in crisp folds
your reality burning my throat
the click of needles
the lengthening purple sleeve
were our connection, daddy

nursing school did not teach me
how to rumple the white
how to reverse the flow
how to hold you
from your final sleep
you were tired making peace
with the verdict with the knife
with the daughter
who could not follow with breath
when you stepped into the arms of Morpheus

Again and again
I leave that room
knitting and purling
put aside
waving like a child
across goodbye

I wrote this poem within months of my dad’s death nearly 40 years ago, when I was a sometime poet and not yet thinking about becoming a poetry therapist. I say this because people tell me, “Oh, I could never write poetry. I don’t know how.” Maybe not, but we do feel that something wants saying....
Palmer Hall’s latest book of poetry, Foreign and Domestic, brilliantly interweaves issues of war with domestic issues. Having gone to Vietnam at the age of twenty-three, Palmer experienced the atrocities of war first hand and can now create that horrifying reality in the reader’s psyche. When Hall invokes such appalling images as “wastes of war, of death’s destruction” in poetic form, the reader lives the action intensely at one level, but at another level is placed above the action with enough distance to reflect about it. I found myself caught up in the poetry; the images haunted me, even in my sleep. Palmer makes us question why we go to war in the first place.

In his poem, “Something,” from Part I, “Foreign,” he writes, “The same very old war keeps being fought, people die as they have always died, only something new—children clad with bombs—people weep for some cause as old as the thought of war.” What a provocative thought! In Part II, “Domestic,” the poem “Suburban Blues” brings war and memories of war into our own neighborhoods, “The blade ripped flesh, glanced off my rib. You took wallet, money, credit cards and so much more. I forgot to listen to that quiet voice that murmurs in my head, the firefight at Mitchell Lake Audubon Center on a beautiful Sunday afternoon. You had the most moving occasion was when he and five other local poets read aloud from their own work.”

Throughout the book the poems convey messages of hope, but they also remind us of realities of life. As in “Some Things to Do in the Face of Death,” LaVilla-Havelin writes that despite the ominous ending of life, “Paint the casket,” we must move on and “... / Make food. / Make art. / Make peace. / Make love. / Continue the work.” She mourns the loss of the Twin Towers yet he moves on and reminds us of the tragic consequences ensuing war in the last poem of the book, “The Current Count”: 

| Counting |
| Poems by Jim LaVilla-Havelin |

Throughout the book the poems convey messages of hope, but they also remind us of realities of life. As in “Some Things to Do in the Face of Death,” LaVilla-Havelin writes that despite the ominous ending of life, “Paint the casket,” we must move on and “... / Make food. / Make art. / Make peace. / Make love. / Continue the work.” She mourns the loss of the Twin Towers yet he moves on and reminds us of the tragic consequences ensuing war in the last poem of the book, “The Current Count”:

4701 | Iraq War Coalition Dead |
1686 | Afghan War Coalition Dead |
1,366,350 | Iraqi Deaths due to Foreign Invasion |
17,000 | Children a DAY die of hunger |
23 | Whooping Cranes at Port Aransas Dead in 2008-2009 due to Low Water Levels (our usage) |
11 | Siberian Tigers Dead of Starvation in a Zoo in China of a world population under 500 |

As an arts administrator, educator and critic, LaVilla-Havelin coordinated National Poetry Month in San Antonio in April 2010. He also read his own poems as one of many who celebrated poetry in our town, and the most moving occasion was when he and five other local poets read at Mitchell Lake Audubon Center on a beautiful Sunday afternoon. You had to be there!
In his latest book of poetry, *The Color of Faith*, Dr. Mo H Saidi weaves poetic images and metaphors into the scientist’s attention to detail, taking us on a journey from the poet’s birthplace in Iran to his life as a professor and OB/GYN physician in San Antonio. After retirement from medicine, Saidi received a master’s degree in English and American Literature and Language from Harvard University. His poems lead us on geographical journey of complicated human relationships, but they also deal with ethnic differences, war, religion and faith. In “Neutral God,” he knits together themes of war and of faith, “Allah sees the slashing swords in the trenches of war, / hears the wailing of dying soldiers. God is hopeless; / Allah is inept but the Son is not neutral. / The Son feels the pain; / sheds tears bleeds and dies; / a hero, He revolts against injustice. / In wars and peace God is a powerless, passive observer. / He merely watches the suffering of man.”

In “Waiting for Khoda,” which is set in Iran, he compares waiting for Khoda to the play he is reading by Samuel Becket, *Waiting for Godot*, which is about waiting for something to happen. Man spends his entire life waiting for something (graduation from high school and college, career, marriage, children, and retirement), never satisfied and continuing to wait. Toward the end of his life man is still waiting, this time for God to come. He implies that the culture we grow up in that determines the God we believe in and how we see reality.

Through poetic images Saidi bridges the gap of culture and language. In the poem, “The Land of Sorrow and Land,” he writes, “They must cover their sultry skin with a black veil, / for the sun with its golden arrows might penetrate their skin / lips, mouth, throat, chest and groins. / The only gender who may roam the fields is herded into the stadium to watch a spectacle / the stoning of two homeless women who were caught embracing in the city park.”

In his poem, “Chautauqua Lake,” he once again uses powerful poetic images to draw us into the color of faith. “A man moors the boat to its berth / loops the cord tightly around an old pine / and climbs the road to the hall of philosophy. / Along the narrow road close to the lake a woman in yellow pants holds a strap / an old dog follows its master obediently. In the hall one speaks about the myth / the faith, the third the religious wars / the lonely loon screeches, the sun collects its wings.” In his title poem, “The Color of Faith,” the last stanza sums up Dr Saidi’s views on faith, “A deep silence prevails when he says Jesus was white / with blue eyes, long blond hair, a rarity in the Middle East. / He singles me out: Look! Mo is from Persia, / fair skin with a small nose; / we leave / unscathed, nobody changes his faith.” Throughout the book, *The Color of Faith*, we are dazzled by Mo H Saidi the poet, and we are enlightened by Mo H Saidi, the scientist.
The father drove the family to Reno Street in his 1948 Dodge Deluxe. The car’s body was made out of tons of sheet metal and chrome, and it had a large hood ornament that pointed the way. The color of the car was about the color of a Charolais bull.

The ten year old boy in the back seat didn’t know much about Charolais bulls, but one thing he did know about bulls is that they stomped around the pasture like they owned the place and the one at Mr. Stead’s place down the road was about the same size as the Dodge, but it was black not Charolais brown. And the hood ornament on the Dodge was not a bull’s head. It was the head of a ram, one that sported large curled horns.

The ram’s head was not all that was affixed to the hood. An un-patented, after market modification had been added by the boy’s father. He added this feature because the choke cable that ran from the dashboard to the carburetor had snapped. This low-tech accessory was a large silver washer attached to a wire that ran to the carburetor. The washer fell down from the hood and rested on that ubiquitous chrome grill standard to cars of that era. One of his father’s war buddies laughed out loud the first time he saw it and said that it hung from the hood like an army medal hangs from Audie Murphy’s chest.

The washer reminded the boy in the back seat of the ring in the nose of Mr. Stead’s bull. Mr. Stead had placed the ring there so he could control that massive hunk of beef that sported balls the size of grapefruits. The boy’s father jerked, twisted and pulled the washer to master the family car’s engine the same way Mr. Stead did to master the family bull.

In those days the choke was state of the art automotive technology, so before the father attempted to start the engine he would pull the washer a fraction of an inch which moved a stout length of galvanized wire that was fastened to the choke mounted on top of the carburetor. The choke controlled the flow of air that entered the carburetor and was a key to engine performance during the starting process. Once the father had the cable in just the right spot he would walk around to the driver’s door, swing it open and plop down on the mohair seat. Then he would take a drag from the Camel that hung from his lip, blow out the smoke and push the starter button. Simultaneously he would pump the accelerator pedal and offer a silent orison. If the ram tough engine was inclined to rise from the dead, the father would jump out of the car, race around to the front end, grab the washer and gently push the wire back into neutral territory. When the engine failed to start he would repeat the steps until it either roared to life or the battery died. If the engine defeated the father he would exit the car, slam the door, and then pound his fist on the roof and walk away.

The father did not have enough money to get the choke cable repaired. As a matter of fact he did not have the money to get much of anything repaired which meant he certainly did not have money for family entertainment. So the father was always on the lookout for cheap amusement. That was why he drove the family six miles north to Reno Street where he knew the diversions from their life of hardship would come free of charge.
The father stomped on the brake pedal. The brake fluid rushed through the lines like a speed ball rushes through a junky’s vein. The brake pads shot outward and slammed tightly against the brake drums. Simultaneously the mother placed two hands on the dashboard and the father gripped the Bakelite steering wheel tightly. The boy slid forward on the seat with nothing to stop him except the ashtray and the rope. His fingernails raked the mohair as he slid toward the abyss. The creases his fingernails made were like the streaks he left on the back of Mickey, his short haired terrier, when he raked his fingernails across her back. When he did that Mickey’s hair would flip up and she would kick her right hind leg uncontrollably. The boy tried to kick his legs up and out to brace himself against the back seat but they were too short so he plunged over the edge of the abyss and onto the dirty floorboard.

The brakes worked fine and the car came to a screeching halt. The father threw the gear shift into reverse, and the fluid drive shifted the gears as smooth as butter. He backed up a few feet, turned the oversized Bakelite steering wheel to the left and pulled into a parking space.

The brakes and transmission of the Dodge were a testament to the dependable performance and low upkeep of an excellent Chrysler product that had combined engineering excellence, advanced research, and careful precision workmanship by American craftsmen. Unfortunately the choke cable inspector on duty the day the car rolled off the assembly line was on a coffee break and this one made it out the door with a major birth defect. Also the engineers had not given much thought to safety features such as seatbelts, padded dashes, collapsible steering wheels or airbags. Instead they had been concentrating on fin technology.

The father flung his elbow over the back seat, turned his head and said briefly for a few minutes and then he offered her a cigarette. She took it. He lit it. She took a long drag, raised her chin and blew out a cloud of smoke. Then she nodded her head and they walked into the James Hotel.

She brought a Tupperware pitcher of sweet tea. The tea was laced with enough sugar to put a healthy man into a diabetic coma. For snacks she brought a block of commodity cheese and a box of crackers with lots of cheese. The cheese was meant for citizens who had a low-level cho battery. This stuff had enough grams of American fat in it to extinguish the fire. Next she brought a block of commodity cheese and a box of crackers with lots of cheese. The cheese was meant for citizens who had a low-level cho battery. This stuff had enough grams of American fat in it to extinguish the fire. For snacks she brought a block of commodity cheese and a box of crackers with lots of cheese. The cheese was meant for citizens who had a low-level cho battery. This stuff had enough grams of American fat in it to extinguish the fire. For snacks she brought a block of commodity cheese and a box of crackers with lots of cheese. The cheese was meant for citizens who had a low-level cho battery. This stuff had enough grams of American fat in it to extinguish the fire. For snacks she brought a block of commodity cheese and a box of crackers with lots of cheese. The cheese was meant for citizens who had a low-level cho battery. This stuff had enough grams of American fat in it to extinguish the fire.

The family had arrived. Let the fun begin. But before the fun can begin the fans need nourishment. The mother was a walking, talking snack bar. She brought a Tupperware pitcher of sweet tea. The tea was laced with enough sugar to put a healthy man into a diabetic coma. For snacks she brought a block of commodity cheese and a box of crackers with lots of cheese. The cheese was meant for citizens who had a low-level cho battery. This stuff had enough grams of American fat in it to extinguish the fire. For snacks she brought a block of commodity cheese and a box of crackers with lots of cheese. The cheese was meant for citizens who had a low-level cho battery. This stuff had enough grams of American fat in it to extinguish the fire. For snacks she brought a block of commodity cheese and a box of crackers with lots of cheese. The cheese was meant for citizens who had a low-level cho battery. This stuff had enough grams of American fat in it to extinguish the fire. For snacks she brought a block of commodity cheese and a box of crackers with lots of cheese. The cheese was meant for citizens who had a low-level cho battery. This stuff had enough grams of American fat in it to extinguish the fire.

Later that evening while watching the comings and goings of the denizens of Reno Street, the family saw a lady leaning against a brick wall next to a hotel. A man walked past her with his hat pulled down low over his eyes and his hands shoved deep inside his pockets. The boy could see her lips move but he could not make out what she said. The boy’s father said, “Watch this.” His mother nodded her head and pursed her lips.

The man stopped, turned round and walked back to the lady. They spoke briefly for a few minutes and then he offered her a cigarette. She took it. He lit it. She took a long drag, raised her chin and blew out a cloud of smoke. Then she nodded her head and they walked into the James Hotel.

The boy’s mother said, “Thou shalt not bring the hire of a whore,” and then the mother and father laughed. The boy did not get the joke. He did not know anything about whores, but apparently his mother did and this must be serious business because he knew by her first two words that she was quoting Holy Scripture. The next morning, after hearing his mother say those Holy Words, he got up before his parents and looked up the word in the only hard-covered book in the house. The book was large and leather bound. It had gilt edges and sat on the coffee table between an ashtray and a silver plated cigarette lighter. He flipped through the tissue thin pages to the glossary in the back of the book. First he looked under H. No luck. Next he looked under WH and there it was. He found eleven citations and he read each one carefully. After reading them he still was not sure what the word meant but he concluded that it was a Word from God that was for adults only.

---

**Looking for Gold**

**Carmen Tafolla**

We waited at the counter. A few displays gently sparkled, edged discreetly by a small scale, magnifying glass, a mirror. The well-dressed lady to our right seemed impatient, but not in a hurry. She sifted through the items on a black velvet display. She exhaled loudly, then stared at my glittery earrings, distracted a moment.

“Nice earrings. Are they real?”

“No, not real expensive, if that’s what you mean.”

I kindly didn’t add that they had cost four bucks at Family Dollar and would last as long as I needed, probably two years before fading. She sifted quickly through the shiniest items, chitchatted, weighed on the scale the more interesting items before deciding their true value.

She was intrigued by my husband’s attentions to me, the fact that we still considered his mother, at 94, really beautiful. Her eyes flickered down when his golden-brown fingers touched my arm gently to tell me he was off to the restroom a minute. I complemented her jacket. She kept asking questions about our family. “Your husband seems very nice…”

“He’s a jewel,” I said, “Solid gold all the way through.”

“What does he do?” she asked, glancing at the scale and at the latest potential acquisition.

“Scholars. We write. We write poems. He writes the scholarly stuff. Doesn’t pay much. Our house is decorated in Early American Scholar,” I laughed. “A clear half-step up from when we first met, when my apartment was in Early American Pauper.”

Tossing a subtle glance at my keychain, our daughter’s smiling, dark-haired photo, she questioned, “What nationality is he?”

“We’re Mexican.” I added, again laughing, “So our kitchen’s the real treasure—Antique Mexican Rancho.”

She kept looking through the jewelry, looking as if it were her life’s most important occupation. I began to suspect it was. Her eyes waltzed slowly around the word “loneliness.” She kept asking questions. More than what was socially necessary.

“You’ve been married for a really long time?”

“A sterling 27 years.”

She tossed aside a small ring she had picked up—grumbled, “Not pure silver.” Then sudden curiosity pumped in excitement, spread tall her eyelids, “He’s here to buy you something?”

“No, we’re just waiting to repair a broken clasp. For my favorite necklace—the Virgin of Guadalupe.”

“Is it gold?” she asks, almost frightened of the answer, fearful I will say “Early Family Dollar—One Tenth Carrot.”

The corners of her smile tremble, plagued by quiet intuition. Her eyes accuse: there is some treasure we must own. Caught in mental arm-wrestling, tension steels her jaw. Then the lips soften. For just a moment, she hesitates, staring. Then, she shrugs it off. The stare melts, the corners of her mouth turn soft. She moves on, drifts to the next counter. Still searching, still looking for gold, wondering somewhere inside her why she never can quite find the right place to look.
Select Prose

Persian Marchers: A Novel
Chapter Three
Mo H. Saidi

It was stygian blank outside and Cyrus could only see the distorted reflection of his face in the oval window. The plane jolted several times as it was approaching the Western suburbs of Tehran. The captain’s voice came from the speaker above Cyrus’s seat. It was during the last year of the Shah’s government in the winter of 1978 that Cyrus traveled to Iran to visit his ill mother who suffered from a severe and worrisome stomach ailment that had caused her weight loss and compromised her strength. On that hastily arranged flight, he arrived at Tehran International Airport without his family.

The scratchy voice from the speakers announced, “The airplane is approaching the capital. We are preparing to land. Please fasten your seatbelts.”

Before long, the plane descended rapidly and soon Cyrus could see the string of bright lights dotting Karaj Highway along the western suburbs of Tehran and then the blue and yellow lights of the airport runways.

The thought of visiting his aging mother and once again seeing the house where he was born and grew up, made his heart flutter. The blue metal door. The courtyard with a lone oak tree next to the round fount with blue ceramic tiles. The fat pigeons alighting on the edge of the fountain to drink.

He pulled out his wallet and looked at an old photo of his mother taken some years earlier when she had been in good health and bursting with energy. A silky veil covered her hair, her plump body from head to toe, revealing only her bright face illuminated by a gentle smile framed by a few tendrils of black hair. Her tiny pale hands holding black leather covered Quran. He remembered the early morning hours before the misty gray appeared in the square sky above the courtyard, when his mother would call the children to come to the family room for the breakfast arranged on a white sofreh, which she had spread over the center of the old wall-to-wall Kashan carpet.

He recalled the small storage nook that he and his younger brother shared as their room until he was twelve. Their mother would enter their cubicle early every morning and gently awaken them. Despite the dim light, he would often notice his younger brother’s red face, embarrassed from yet another perpetual bed-wetting accident. Ignoring his ordeal, Mother would gently move him away and roll up hislahaf and its linen sheet, which were both stained with urine.

He always loved the way his mother looked at that time of early morning, especially when she was whispering namaz. Her innocent face, like that of an angel, wrapped in a white veil would exude her sweet demeanor, riant face. After completing her prayers, she would enter their rooms and call them again. She always spoke to them in a soft, gentle voice. In those cool mornings, her tender and warm hands would touch his cheeks and forehead, and tap softly to awake him. She would implore him to get up, wash up, dress, and get ready for school.

To feed the large family, his father, a fulltime government employee, a hard-working person who was an edacious eater with euplepsia—his usual snack: a wrap of fresh loaves of flat bread dipped in honey; sheep cheese and purple basil—worked long hours and held three jobs. He would leave the house early in the morning and return late at night after finishing his last job of the day, an evening job as bookkeeper for the Gulf Fishing Company.

On the short Iranian weekends lasting only a day on Fridays and sometimes an additional, precious but short afternoon on Thursdays, his father would turn into a shopper, a handyman, an occasional angler, or a cook. Cyrus would join him on some Friday afternoons, carrying tools while he repaired various bits and pieces around the house.

Sometimes Cyrus would be the lucky one, chosen from the five sons to accompany his father on an occasional fishing trip to the Persian Gulf; there on the banks of the swollen Karoon river where it merged the Persian Gulf, he would stare in awe at the heap of fish caught in the long trammels that the fishermen had dropped into the murky waters, or he would hang around the bins filled with other fish they caught farther out, in the flat waters of the Shat-el-Arab delta, with the many branches of their drift-seines, their floaters stretching long and far into the glittering mouth of the gulf. Afterwards they ate late meals of freshly caught fish, stewed in a huge pot with spicy herbs, limes, onion, and chili pepper, and served over boiled rice. On the return trip home, he and his father sat next to the driver in the leading truck of a column bringing truckloads of Gulf fish to his hometown of Ahwaz. Depending on the size of their catch, the fishermen might drop one or two baskets of fish into the large icebox in the storage room of Cyrus’s home, and then the family would share their abundance with relatives, friends, and even a few select neighbors.

The plane jolted harshly over the runway, breaking Cyrus’s train of thought. It whirled, slightly scaring everyone, but swiftly settled back onto a straight path and rolled steadily forward. A hearty round of applause rewarded the pilot.

The squeaking of wheels jolted the anxious minds.

Rapturous response

vigorous clapping

the storm of applause for the safe landing.

A whooshing noise filled the passenger chamber and then gradually diminished to a sedating, humming sound. Soon the plane slowed to a stop. Suddenly, the prospect of seeing his mother and revisiting his hometown made blood rush through his veins. His head full of indescribable elation and unknown expectations, he recalled the lines from a ghazal by Hafez that described the joy of coming home:

Bring all the wine that’s left!
When we’re dead and wandering in paradise
we won’t find a place more delightful
than this . . .

It was March 1978, and the air in Tehran was stiff, smoggy, and cold. Cyrus followed the other passengers down the stairs onto the tarmac. Gray and bitter air hit his face. He heaved a deep
sigh and climbed into the transfer bus packed with excited and restless visitors and returnees, full of unknown expectation, fear, and curiosity. The bus stopped in front of a characterless cement building with gray concrete walls. Under the watchful eyes of two armed soldiers guarding the entry, a uniformed airport agent directed the passengers through a small doorway into a low-ceilinged hall, where the new arrivals joined two queues that meandered toward a row of security checkpoints. The damp air of the unventilated area was saturated with the smell of unwashed bodies. Liltling Farsi music resonated in the utilitarian space from loosely suspended speakers. Bare walls showed no traces of décor except for the large portraits of the Shah, Queen Farah, and Crown Prince Reza on the wall facing the queues.

This was indeed a different arrival gate. On his previous trip, all international passengers had been processed in a spacious building with marble floors, high ceilings, and walls decorated with elaborate scenes of Persian history from Firdausi’s Shahnameh. Many miniature paintings and ceramic tablets with the popular quatrains of Khayam had adorned the walls of that edifice. He asked the passenger in front of him about the haphazard look of the current setup. The man was about to answer but seeing some airport agents walking nearby, he did not reply and turned away. Cyrus assumed this plain arrival building was some sort of interim building used during renovation of the main airport hall.

The line was moving slowly. The young man behind him tapped his shoulder and whispered in his ear, “The roof of the main building collapsed several months ago. Thank God, it happened in the early morning hours.” Cyrus nodded, but the young man was eager to tell him more about how the building had been walled up within a few days and no one could see anything from the outside. The young man raised his eyebrows with an air of skepticism; “The officials claim heavy snow from a severe winter storm caused the structure to collapse, but nobody believes them; that explanation is a farce. Everybody remembers the storm was relatively mild and not a single structure other than the international arrivals building came down that night. Not even a mud hut in the slums!”

When two airport agents approached, the speaker became quiet and quickly returned to his former position.

The security officer behind the window asked for Cyrus’s passport. Cyrus slipped his Persian passport through a narrow opening, and kept his American passport secure in his breast pocket.

“Are you Cyrus Sohrabi?” the officer asked.

“Yes, sir, I am.”

The official leafed through the pages of the passport and paused several times to check visas issued by different countries. His face froze when he discovered a visa for Hungary; he bent over and inspected it closely. The date of the visa was almost five years ago. He opened a drawer and took out a folder, which had a list of countries that Iranian citizens were forbidden to visit. Hungary was one of them. “I see, you have visited a Communist country,” the officer said.

“That was for a medical meeting; but it was a long time ago,” Cyrus said, “look at the date!”

“The date doesn’t matter, this needs to be investigated.”

“Please, sir, look at the next page!” Cyrus insisted, “The issue was thoroughly investigated during my last trip to Iran and completely clarified.”

The officer turned the page and saw two notes, one from the Passport Office and the other one from the Iranian Police Department. He grudgingly leafed through the rest of the pages.

Images of the scenic drive along the Danube River from five years earlier when he and his family visited Europe marched through Cyrus’s head. They had driven from Rotterdam where he had picked up his voluminous new Chevrolet Impala from the customs and had driven through several European countries including Hungary. Along the way, they had toured historic monuments, castles, and a few museums. While they were in Budapest, he had also attended a medical meeting for three days. Then they had driven back to Frankfurt where he had left his wife and their son with his in-laws. Then he had driven alone all the way from Germany to Iran crossing Austria, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Turkey. He had come to Iran for a short visit and had brought the car for his brother-in-law Habib who wanted a big American car with leather seats and automatic transmission.

Upon arrival, Cyrus had been summoned by the Savak, the Shah’s secret police to explain his itinerary, specifically his trip to Hungary. They wanted to know what he was doing in a Communist country and why he was driving around the countryside visiting old castles and universities. Cyrus had explained to them patiently that the time in Hungary was mainly to attend a medical meeting but the family had added some excursions to historical sites to their schedule. The officials were skeptical and asked him to justify the visits to the historical places.

“We enjoy visiting castles, cathedrals, and museums, studying old architecture and listening to the music of different countries. Actually it’s because my wife is an edacious reader and polymath who is interested in many subjects, from Greek tragedies to the old gables,” Cyrus had said.

“What’s a gable?”

“The section of the wall at the pitched roof.”

“What’s the big deal about a pitched roof?”

“I don’t know either, but she enjoys photographing architectural details of historical buildings.”

The Savak agent suspected Cyrus was covering up something, and he referred the matter to his superior. After the Savak had thoroughly investigated his highlighted maps and receipts, examined his certificate of attendance from the medical meeting and his stack of museum booklets and admission tickets, art books and music records, they cleared him of clandestine political activity and affixed a note to that effect in Cyrus’s passport. But it had taken them quite a while to come to this conclusion, and Cyrus had been anxious the entire time. Involvement with the Savak was no trivial matter.

An utter chaos in the abyss of fanatic times
an old Empire in decline.

The birthplace, the childhood home
a visit worth its risks
Mother’s warm bosom, soft kiss.

While these memories raced through Cyrus’s mind, the security official stamped the passport and waved him through to the luggage area. Passengers were picking up their bags from a big pile of suitcases and carrying them to the customs checkpoint. He saw customs employees rifle through suitcases and peruse books and magazines, searching for political articles. They also estimated the value of all items purchased abroad so they could levy import taxes. The couple ahead of Cyrus argued with the customs agent about detailed valuations for more than twenty minutes before they finally settled on an amount.

“Welcome to Iran, Doctor,” the agent said. He had seen the word Dr. before Cyrus’s name on the airline ticket. “Please, go on!” He waved Cyrus and his suitcases through with a polite gesture without opening his luggage.

Cyrus returned the smile with a nod, “Motashakerram.”

A porter took Cyrus’s luggage, and he followed. The noise of the waiting area, crowded with relatives and friends of arrivals, engulfed him. His sister Maryam was the first to catch sight of him. A wide smile illuminated her face as she hurried forward with a bouquet of flowers and hugged him. Cyrus immediately asked about their mother. His older brother Parviz stepped forward and they embraced. “Mother is at my house. She is fine. You are welcome to stay with us, too,” Parviz said.
Maryam quickly interjected, “You’ll be more comfortable in my house, Cyrus. You can visit Mom anytime; from our house it’s just five minutes to Parviz’ home.”

Before Cyrus could reply, Parviz calmly decreed, “It’s up to Cyrus.” Maryam appeared upset. She was the oldest sibling in the family and by tradition had the first right of refusal to host Cyrus. Noticing that Maryam’s face had grown tight and unhappy and Parviz was annoyed, Cyrus decided to let others decide who should host him in Tehran.

Fortunately, Parviz gave in quickly. “It’s all right. You stay at her place, Cyrus.”

Maryam immediately regained her earlier happy mood and thanked Parviz graciously. “After all, my house is your house, too,” she smiled at Parviz.

Behind them, squeezed among the throng of people in the small arrival hall, Maryam’s son Jamshid and Cyrus’s friend Tooraj, an agnostic Jew who loved poetry, were waiting for their turn to greet him. Cyrus turned to Tooraj, who had been his classmate and bosom friend during their seven long years at Tehran Medical School.

“You look happy, Tooraj. Life is treating you well!” Cyrus said. Tooraj grinned, “You haven’t changed much either.”

They both chuckled. Their camaraderie was re-established in no time. Jamshid, who was standing next to them disagreed, “Look up there, Cyrus has lost a lot of hair above his forehead.”

Now everyone except Cyrus laughed.

“He makes fun of my pilgarlic look too,” said Tooraj. “I think bald is beautiful.”

People who were trying to get in and out of the hall constantly jostled against Cyrus and his welcome party. Maryam took Cyrus’s hand, “I can’t breathe here. My stupid asthma,” she said, “Let’s leave.” Maryam’s face had become bluish red, almost purple.

Cyrus grew worried about her labored breathing. “Maryam needs fresh air,” he decreed. The group quickly left the hall and moved toward the parking area.

While Jamshid maneuvered the car through slow traffic, Maryam became herself again; always a gracious hostess, she told Cyrus, “I have prepared a light dinner for you.”

Cyrus knew her “light” dinners always meant several courses; however, he wasn’t hungry at all and cared little about food at the moment. He was tired and his migraine headache was coming on; he could feel the tension of his forehead. He looked around the room and noticed Parviz sitting on a sofa.

A few sips of hot tea from a slim stekan soon conquered his sleepiness. He tried to maintain a political conversation with Parviz. Jamshid spread caviar on crackers and handed one to Cyrus to go with his drink. Cyrus accepted the dish.

“Don’t forget about the tanks and armored military vehicles that patrol the streets, attacking the marchers,” Tooraj said. But no one responded to Tooraj’s comment.

Although their turnoff was only five miles from the airport, it took them more than an hour to get to Maryam’s neighborhood. Jamshid slowed when he passed a crowded intersection with a half ruined building, its scorched walls blackened by fire.

“This used to be our local post office,” Jamshid explained, “Two nights ago it burned down. And now armed soldiers are guarding the destroyed building shell. A case of closing the barn door after the cows have escaped.”

“They should have guarded it before the bomb attack,” said Tooraj. “How did it burn down?” Cyrus asked.

“No body knows.” Jamshid shrugged his shoulders.

Cyrus was surprised by his nonchalant attitude. “What’s going on in this city?”

Maryam closed the topic by declaring, “We don’t worry. These kinds of things are not our problem; it’s up to the Shah to deal with it!”

“It’s all politics,” Tooraj said. “One day, the whole city will shatter into pieces, aflame.”

The garlicky smells of fried eggplant, green onion and roasted lamb greeted the guests as they entered the living room. Maryam’s spacious apartment extended over two stories, with the large living room, the dining room and the well-equipped, modern kitchen on the first floor. She invited the guests to make themselves comfortable in the living room while she went to the kitchen to check on her live-in housekeeper. The servant’s yellow apron was stained with tomato juice, blueberries and turmeric, and she was arranging a dish of bareh kebab, a grilled lamb dish.

A delicious aroma of saffron and basil permeated the kitchen. Maryam looked over the array of beautifully arranged dishes and nodded. She was pleased with the gourmet selections, which included a few bowls of cold Persian hors d’oeuvres and hot appetizers, ghormeh sabzi, eggplant stew, two varieties of fluffy steamed rice and several platters of marinated vegetables. She smiled happily, tapped the housekeeper’s shoulder in approval, and left the kitchen to join her guests.

“Go into the kitchen, Cyrus. You’ll like what you see.” Maryam said.

In the living room, Habib had prepared mixed drinks with araq on the rocks and fresh orange juice, and was offering them to the guests, while he tried to maintain a political conversation with Parviz. Jamshid spread caviar on crackers and handed one to Cyrus to go with his drink. Cyrus took one bite; it was delicious. Nevertheless he could hardly keep his eyes open; during his long journey he had not managed to take a solid nap.

“Dear Cyrus, don’t fall asleep on us.” Habib chuckled. The other guests laughed, too.

“Sorry, it was such a noisy flight, with tight seats, and now the jet lag is starting to hit,” Cyrus said apologetically, somewhat embarrassed. He took two aspirins with a sip of his drink, hoping to prevent the advance of his migraine. He had trouble following the conversation.

“That won’t do, Cyrus!” Tooraj had noticed.

Exhausted, Cyrus abandoned his araq and asked for a cup of tea. His friend approved. “That’ll be much better for you.”

A few sips of hot tea from a slim stekan soon conquered his sleepiness. He looked around the room and noticed Parviz sitting on a sofa next to a teenage boy who listened submissively to Parviz’s comments and nodded in polite response. Then Cyrus remembered his mother’s illness. He walked over and waited for a break in their conversation.

“How is Mother not here? Is she all right?” Cyrus asked Parviz.

Parviz dismissed Cyrus’s anxiety with a casual wave of his hand and said, “She is fine. It’s just too crowded here for her fragile condition.
I thought it would be better for her to stay at my house tonight. She is resting.”

“Couldn’t she have eaten dinner with us?” Cyrus insisted.

“Mother needed a good night’s rest,” Parviz said, “she is going to have a diagnostic surgery tomorrow.”

Cyrus was surprised, “That soon? What is going on?”

“Your classmate Dr. Shaad will perform gastroscopy on her in the morning.” Parviz explained.

Cyrus suspected that Parviz was not giving him the whole story and grumbled that she could have rested here. Obviously, Cyrus needed more information. He turned to Maryam who was arranging the flowers on the dining table.

“Please, tell me, Maryam, what’s going on, how is Mother doing?” Maryam smiled, hoping to ease his concern. “No need to worry. Mom just has that old, constant nagging pain in her abdomen.”

“Why didn’t she see my friend sooner?” wondered Cyrus.

“Don’t you remember how stubborn Mom can be?”

“Come on, Maryam, she wasn’t inflexible at all,” Cyrus objected.

d’She was always persistent to have the last word in all crucial matters and decisions,” Maryam declared. “Well, the truth of the matter is that she has changed. She loves herbal medicines and took them for quite a while before she would consent to go and see a doctor. She does not take her health seriously. I finally convinced her to see Dr. Shaad last week, but she only agreed because he used to be a close friend of yours, Cyrus. She was so pleased when Dr. Shaad asked about you; and during their first encounter, he made sure Mom was comfortable during the physical examination.”

“Dr. Shaad was always a charmer.” Cyrus remembered.

Parviz, who had been listening to their conversation, walked over and patted Cyrus’s shoulder, “Her appointment is at noon tomorrow. Mother wants you to take her to the hospital.”

“Sure, I’ll do it,” Cyrus said. Maryam excused herself and went to the kitchen.

“Come by early tomorrow morning, she will be all yours,” Parviz said. “She takes a short nap after morning Namaz, and then she will be ready to see you.”

Cyrus was excited at the prospect of visiting Mother in the morning and promised: “I’ll be there early to observe her when she prays, too.”

“That’s much too early,” grumbled Parviz. “It will be before sunrise.”

“Remember, I am an early riser anyhow.”

Parviz frowned. As a popular college teacher, Parviz had gained a lot of confidence and had settled into comfortable mid-life. With his short goatee, he cultivated the proverbial look of a professor. He was slim and relatively tall by Persian standards. The straight line of his thin, dark mustache was rarely bent by any expression, and he wore thick glasses. His head was soft-spoken but exuded an aura of arrogant confidence.

He talked in a measured tone and often treated his family members like his pupils.

“OK. I’ll come after my morning jog,” Cyrus conceded.

Further argument was averted when Maryam announced dinner was ready and directed Cyrus to the head of the dinner table, “You sit here!”

Habib sat at the other end. Jamshid, Tooraj, Parviz, and Maryam arranged themselves along either side of the table. The teenage boy sat beside Parviz. Another boy of about eighteen or nineteen was sitting beside Maryam.

Parviz frowned. As a popular college teacher, Parviz had gained a lot of confidence and had settled into comfortable mid-life. With his short goatee, he cultivated the proverbial look of a professor. He was slim and relatively tall by Persian standards. The straight line of his thin, dark mustache was rarely bent by any expression, and he wore thick glasses. His head was soft-spoken but exuded an aura of arrogant confidence.

He talked in a measured tone and often treated his family members like his pupils.

“OK. I’ll come after my morning jog.” Cyrus conceded.

Further argument was averted when Maryam announced dinner was ready and directed Cyrus to the head of the dinner table, “You sit here!”

Habib sat at the other end. Jamshid, Tooraj, Parviz, and Maryam arranged themselves along either side of the table. The teenage boy sat beside Parviz. Another boy of about eighteen or nineteen was sitting beside Habib.

“I’m sorry; I forgot to introduce these two students.” Maryam said, looking at Cyrus, “That young man next to my husband is Bahram.”

Bahram got up and bowed lightly to show respect to an honored guest.

The other student is Reza. They are both doing well in high school; they are seniors,” Maryam explained.

Pointing to Reza, Parviz interjected, “This young man is my best student.”

Maryam called and directed the housekeeper to serve the soup. Its delicious warm aroma had little effect on sleepy Cyrus; he could hardly enjoy anything now and the sounds of the dinner conversation were washing over him like distant surf. It was all about politics. Habib, a political-holic himself, had already entered into a loud argument with Tooraj and Reza, over the wave of recent nighttime bomb-explosions government buildings.

“This is only the tip of the iceberg; its part of a nationwide trend. The weekend anti-government marches are annoying the Shah’s regime.”

Tooraj warned.

“The Shah is going to crush all of them,” Habib shot back, his voice rising. “And his forces will capture all those fanatic terrorists who plant bombs in public buildings.”

Maryam interrupted her husband, “Please, can’t you stop shouting?”

Habib ignored Maryam.

The second course arrived. Maryam served Cyrus first.

“I hope you will like the Shiraz salad.”

Cyrus loved salads, any kind, as long as they were not covered with gooey dressing: lemon juice, salt and pepper would do for him any day. For a moment, he overcame his sleepiness and gobbled up his salad like a rabbit; soon, however, he slipped back into his languid state. He felt as if he were floating above the dinner table, hearing everybody’s political conversations afar. The clatter of dishes and the rattle of spoons and forks became a monotonous lullaby.

After serving the third course, vegetable and rice with lamb shanks, Maryam, who was aware of Cyrus’s struggle to stay awake, told him with compassion, “Before you fall asleep, have a bite of lamb meat and then you’re excused to retire to your room.”

Parviz looked at Cyrus who was drifting in and out of a hypnopompic state, still arguing about the cause of the violent political events while Parviz acted as self-appointed mediator.

“We need a big storm!” Parviz declared loudly, “Big enough to sweep out these vile conditions and make room for a new structure in our country.”

“But a storm may bring disaster instead, another tyranny. Beware of the chaos that only feeds despots,” Habib objected stridently, interrupting Cyrus’s drowsiness.

The humming of airplane engines was now ringing louder and louder in Cyrus’s tired ears. Maryam shook his shoulder and took him by the arm and guided him to the guest room on the second floor, where she left him with a set of towels and a fresh bar of lemon soap.

From far away came the sound of Habib’s strident voice telling everybody, “You windbags! Stop complaining, the day will come when all of you will remember these prosperous times with regret.”

As soon as Maryam had closed the door, Cyrus changed and slid into the bed of cool and fresh sheets and a few seconds later was soundly asleep.

William Wordsworth and Nature
Redacted & compiled from Wikipedia

William Wordsworth was born in Cockermouth, England on 7 April 1770. His mother died when he was eight, and he went off to school at Hawkshead in the heart of the Lake District. He read some outside of school, but more than reading he liked to wander around the countryside. When he was 13, his father died, and he was separated from his beloved Dorothy, his younger sister. But he continued at school, went on to Cambridge, and in 1787 he published his first poem, a sonnet.

During the summer vacation of 1790, he went on a trip that changed his life, a walking tour through France and Switzerland with a friend. They arrived in France as it was celebrating the Revolution, so for a while Wordsworth was completely absorbed in politics and social issues, but then they continued on to the Alps, where he was overwhelmed by the sublime presence of nature, without any human presence at all. And then he wrote about hiking in the Alps:

**Our destiny, our nature, and our home,**
**Is with infinitude — and only there;**
**With hope it is, hope that can never die,**
**Effort, and expectation, and desire,**
**And something evermore about to be.**

Wordsworth wrote about nature and the imagination in poems like “Tintern Abbey” and “The World is Too Much with Us.”

Voices de la Luna, 15 June 2010 39
A Winter’s Tale
Dave Northrup

That December there was no snow until New Year’s eve, and every day I’d hurry to work along bare pavement under a leaden sky. The iron picket fence behind St. Mary’s Church seemed a grim sentinel of the bitter mornings. Only the small neon shamrocks above Shaughnessy’s Bar and the twinkling red lights in the Sears and Roebuck window relieved the grey monotony of East Main Street. When I arrived the store was always damp, the timer having just tripped on the boiler. invariably Mac was already in the back room, sipping a steaming cup of coffee and having a pipeful of Holiday.

“Hey, Danny. How’s tricks?” he’d ask.

“In one word, cold.” I’d always say.

Then in silence we’d get to work, straightening up before the bells on the front door started jangling. In those days, business downtown between Christmas and New Year’s was still brisk. Customers would return small items, ties, belts, cufflink sets, sport or dress shirts that were the wrong color or size. As New Year’s eve approached, a lot of the older guys who still dressed would come in for fancy formal shirts, black lisle dress socks, and cummerbunds, so we were able to put a nice finish on the year.

But that morning traffic was slow, and at noon Mac decided that his breakfast of a Sanka, black, no sugar, had played itself out. He said he’d run over to Kathy’s Restaurant and get us a couple of take-out hamburger specials. After he left, I strolled down to the sock cabinet near the front door and stared out at the slowly flashing orange and blue sign of W. T. Grant’s across East Main. No one passed the store. Random snowflakes floated down sticking here and there on the grey concrete of the sidewalk. As I looked at the lowering sky, who should shuffle up but Colley McIntyre. His shoulders were hunched against the cold as he stood chewing on his scrappily moustache and gazing vacantly into the display windows. In profile, Colley’s face was birdlike. He had a turned up nose, a chin that fell rapidly away beneath thin lips, and greying hair close-cropped above the ears. On top of his head a shock of that hair stood almost straight up like a rooster’s comb.

I was surprised to see Colley, for rumor around downtown was that he usually spent the holidays drunk in his room over at the Y. As I watched him a memory stole over me. It was when I was just a kid, and with my father and aunt coming back from St. Patrick’s Day breakfast at my cousin’s house in Perth. The three of us were wedged in the front seat of the family car as we made our way along Division Street. My aunt suddenly called out,

“Oh, Michael! Look. In Grinsus’ lot. Slow down!”

“What?” my father asked distractedly.

“In the parking lot, Michael. Grinsus’ lot. It’s Colley McIntyre. Look, fer God’s sake. He’s walking like he’s got half a jag on!” She sat forward pushing against me. I remember looking up to see a rail thin man walking stiffly as if angry or just uncertain of his ability to get to where he was going. His coat was buttoned tightly all the way to his chin which was dirtied by a sparse beard, a tuft of brown hair stood up on his head, and in his hand he clutched a small package.

“Lookit how he’s staggering right in the middle of the day! He’s drunk! He’s drunk!” my aunt shrieked with what seemed to be delight.

“Yeah, he’s drunk again, awright,” my father said.

The memory faded quickly as Colley pushed against the glass of Mac’s door, managed to open it, and shuffled through. Of course, I’d stepped back a couple of paces preparing myself for the aroma of stale cigarette smoke and booze that usually served as Colley’s cologne of choice. But what I detected was a heavy scent of Old Spice, and when I studied his face close up I saw that the whites of his eyes weren’t bloodshot, and when he spoke, he didn’t stammer.

“Mac around by any chance?” he asked quietly.
The wind slackened a bit, and I saw a slim figure approaching, its right arm stretched out and touching the Sears window in an attempt to steady itself on the slippery pavement. As we drew abreast of one another, I saw it was Colley McIntyre, and I decided to give him a friendly word, something about fellow travelers caught in a storm on New Year’s Eve. In response, Colley stopped short, his right hand resting against the glass while he raised his left arm out from his side in a wobbly gesture to keep from falling backwards. As close as I was to him, I could see that the thickly falling snow had soaked through the shoulders of his thin overcoat. At first, he stared straight ahead apparently not seeing me. Then he looked in my direction. “C’mon, you son-of-a-bitch, you wanna fight? I’ll give you a fight, if that’s what you want!” he yelled. He pushed himself away from the wall with his right hand and made an ineffectual gesture with his left as if to grab me. Amazed and half afraid, I backed out of his way. Colley McIntyre turned then, and steadying himself against the building as he walked, disappeared into the storm.

Slipping through the freezing slush, I made for Liberty Street. The storm rapidly began to weaken, and by the time I turned the corner onto Forbes the wind had dropped. The air brightened. Before me the street lay shrouded and silent. No car tracks had disturbed the thick mantle of snow, and I couldn’t tell where the sidewalk dropped down into the road. Each point of the iron pickets at the back of St. Mary’s was covered in a soft blunt-ended mound of white. I looked up and saw that the breaking clouds, backlit by the setting sun, had arranged themselves like ladder rungs against the pale blue sky. To the west the storefronts along East Main Street glowed pink and gold in the early evening’s tender light. I breathed deeply of the cold clear air, and felt all around me alive with the raw and unpredictable energy of life.

Poetry and Depression
Do Poetry & Arts Heal Ailing Minds?
Voices Editors

According to psychiatrists at John Hopkins University, writers are between 10 and 20 times more likely to suffer from depressive disorders such as manic depression. In a ‘mild’ manic state, a person will think between 10 and 20 times more likely to suffer from depressive disorders. According to psychiatrists at John Hopkins University, writers are believed to be overrepresented among manic depressed writers.

Symptoms and Causes of Depression: Depression can be a temporary response to stresses. In adolescents, a depressed mood is common because of: a. The normal process of maturing and the stress factors associated with it, and b. The influence of sex hormones and independence conflicts with parents.

Depression may also be a reaction to a disturbing event, such as:
a. The death of a friend or relative, b. A breakup with a boyfriend or girlfriend, and c. Failure at school.

Suicide and Poetry: Five famous poets (from the list of 56 reported by Wikipedia) who committed suicide:
1. John Berryman: He was a major figure in American poetry in the second half of the 20th century and often considered one of the founders of the Confessional school of poetry. He was the author of *The Dream Songs* which are playful, witty, and morbid. Berryman committed suicide in 1972.
2. Adam Lindsay Gordon: (19 October 1833–24 June 1870) was an Australian poet, jockey and politician. Gordon was born at Fayal in the Azores, son of Captain Adam Durnford Gordon who had married his first cousin, Harriet Gordon, both of whom were descended from Adam Gordon of the ballad.
3. Yukio Mishima: Yukio Mishima was the pen name of Kimitake Hiraoaka, (January 14, 1925–November 25, 1970), a Japanese author, poet and playwright, also remembered for his ritual suicide by seppuku.
4. Sylvia Plath: (October 27, 1932–February 11, 1963) was an American poet, novelist, children’s author, and short story author. Known primarily for her poetry, Plath also wrote a semi-autobiographical novel, *The Bell Jar*, under the pseudonym Victoria Lucas. The book’s protagonist, Esther Greenwood, is a bright, ambitious student at Smith College who begins to experience a mental breakdown while interning for a fashion magazine in New York. The plot parallels Plath’s experience interning at *Mademoiselle Magazine* and subsequent mental breakdown and suicide attempt. Along with Anne Sexton, Plath is credited with advancing the genre of confessional poetry initiated by Robert Lowell and W. D. Snodgrass.
5. Anne Sexton: Anne Sexton (November 9, 1928, Newton, Massachusetts–October 4, 1974, Weston, Massachusetts) was an influential American poet and writer known for her highly personal, confessional poetry. She won the Pulitzer Prize for poetry in 1967. Themes of her poetry include her long battle with depression. After repeated attempts, she took her own life in 1974.

Why?
Maria Gabriela Madrid

Christmas has always been a busy season for my family, and in December 1976, I not only meant to display the Nativity under the chimney, the Christmas tree with its ornaments beside the stairs, the best china on the table, but also to cook the traditional dishes. The night of December 21, the doorbell rang several times, but I chose not to open the door. I knew as a Christmas tradition my friends were probably waiting for me to approach the door so they could run and hide across the street.

That night, after Mom welcomed my aunts and Grandma inside the house, the first question out of Mom’s mouth was: had they brought sugar? After all nodded yes, in a blink of an eye, everybody was around the table making traditional dishes such as Hallacas, Pan de Jamón, Dulce de Leche, and among other delicious plates my favorite dessert called Dulce Real. In the background, songs called “Gaitas” played with a beat that made anyone want to dance, but I was shy, and to me it was uncool to dance or to sing protest songs. Dad told me that they were written to make others aware of all people not having food to eat or gifts to exchange during the Christmas Season. Since 1974 Venezuela became a very rich country. It was a year when Venezuela had full ownership of all the oil and mine revenues, and as everyone believed, it was only a matter of time for all its citizens to improve their lifestyle. Unfortunately, two years later, for most Venezuelans there was still no food on the table. However, my family was safe, and despite the shortage, we managed to get sugar from family members. Right then, I knew that by counting on each other, I was experiencing the true meaning of Christmas.

“Gaby pass me the sugar.”
“Which one? White or brown?”
“It doesn’t matter,” said Grandma.
“Do you want me to mix them together?”
“Yes, Gaby, and you will see it will add better flavor to the dessert.”
“Taste it, Gaby, and tell me it is delicious.”

That night, I wanted to know more, so I bombarded Mom and Dad with questions about the origins of San Nicolas, Santa Claus, and Papa Noel, and as my mom told me later, I upset them too much with all the why? why? why?

Three nights went by and each of us went downstairs at different times to eat Dulce Real (a dessert made of scrambled eggs and honey). I still can feel my mouth drool by imagining the eggs and honey going down my throat. On December 24, the house was at its best. The chimney was the setting for all the mountains made of newspaper covered by musgo (grass brought from the Andean mountains), a broken mirror as a lake, and figurines painted in Italy. The Christmas tree had white lights, big and small colorful angels, and on the top a golden star. On the table were the tablecloth with poinsettias, silver chargers, white and golden china and rainbow color goblets. It was a magical night where everyone wore their best clothes. As for me, I never got tired of looking at myself in the mirror wearing my shiny red dress. Later, after the midnight Mass, my uncles, aunts, grandma and cousins came for dinner. I always received from San Nicolas what I asked for, and that Christmas season was no exception, but on December 25th, I got something else...
Select Photos

Photos from Voices Annual Gala

at
Bourbon St. Seafood Kitchen
14165 IH10 West
San Antonio, Texas 78257
5-8 PM Sunday 23 May 2010

Honorary Chairs:
Harriet Kelley, Mori Bagheri
Co-Chairs:
Valerie Katz, Mike Burke

The standing room only event was attended by 122 Voices writers, musicians, poets, and supporters. After initial welcome remarks by Harriet Kelley and Mo H Saidi, the music and poetry began, wine and dinner followed. The poetry program included presentations by Sandra Cisneros who introduced Pablo Miguel Martinez, the award winning poet. Marian Haddad, Marian Aitches, and Josie Mixon spoke and read poems. Bryce Milligan performed three lyric songs accompanied by his own music. The grand finale belonged to Dr. Bert Roberts who played guitar, and harmonica and sang blues that he composed.

Many thanks goes to the city’s poets and artists, volunteers, benefactors, and sponsors who made this event a success.


Submissions

General Guidelines

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 help us understand whom we are reaching; however, contributors’ notes will not be published. 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, 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. We do not pay contributors.

We contact writers only if work has been accepted, letting them know that their piece will appear in the upcoming issue. This notification will come immediately before an issue goes to print, not sooner. Writers from the San Antonio area can purchase copies of the magazine at The Twig, Viva, and B&N bookstores.

We have a small editorial staff and 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 producing 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.

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.
Thanks to Our Sponsors

City of San Antonio
Office of Cultural Affairs
and SA♥Arts

San Antonio Express-News

Read SA Life
http://www.expressnews.com
www.mysa.com

Bill Miller Bar-B-Q
is a Family Restaurant

Founded in 1953
http://www.billmillerbbq.com

Wells Fargo Financial Advisors

Wells Fargo Advisors
Jeff Laursen
210-404-1120
jeff.laursen@wellsfargoadvisors.com

Harmon W. Kelley, MD, FACOG
Margaret A. Kelley, MD, FACOG
Southeast OB-GYN Associates, PA
Southeast Professional Building
4115 E. Southcross, Suite 102
San Antonio, Texas 78222
210-333-0592
www.southeastobgyn.yourmd.com

Becker Vineyards

The Lavender Fields at Becker Vineyards are located on a three-acre field behind the winery. Richard and Bunny Becker’s trip to Provence, France, influenced the creation of the lavender fields.
http://www.beckervineyards.com

Griffin Asset Management LLC
New Braunfels, Texas
830-620-1000
www.griffinfinam.com

Bourbon ST. Seafood Kitchen

Two Locations
Boerne Stage RD, Next to HEB
14165 IH 10 West
(210) 698-9888

2815 North Loop 1604 East
San Antonio, TX 78232
(210) 545-0666

Bruce D. Akright, MD, FACOG
Gynecology and Gynecologic Surgery
North East OB/GYN Associates, PLLC
8715 Village Drive, Suite 410, SA, TX 78217
and 502 Madison Oak, Suite 240, SA, TX 78258
210-653-5501
www.NE-OBGYN.com

At San Antonio Press, we’re inspired by the belief that one can use print to change the world
300 Arbor Place, San Antonio, TX 78207
(210) 224-2653  Fax: (210) 224-8132

Voices de la Luna
A Quarterly Poetry & Arts Magazine
Board of Directors & Advisors

Board of Directors
Dr. Harmon Kelley, Chairman of the Board
Tom Keene, Vice-Chairman
Michael J. Burke, Director
James Brandenburg, President
Dr. Mo H. Saidi, Treasurer and Secretary
Robert Flynn, Director
Woodrow W. Hopper, Jr., Director
Valerie Katz, Director
Deb Morgan, Director
Dr. Habib Nathan, Director
Anne Parker, Director
Prof. Antoinette Winstead, Director

Board of Advisors
Harriet Kelley, Chair
Ivan Beeka
Dr. Richard Becker
Zee Fisher
Palmer Hall
Lee Robinson
Dr. Srinivasan
Poetry & Art Events
San Antonio Recurring Venues

DISCLAIMER: All venue information listed has been provided by third parties. These venues have not been verified. It is the sole responsibility of parties interested in attending these venues to verify the validity of the post.


2nd Tuesdays 7-9 PM – Awaken the Sleeping Poet at the Twig, 200 E. Grayson, Ste. 124, Pearl Brewery (210) 826-6411, Featured poets & open mic. Host: Floyd Lamrouex

Tuesdays 6–9 PM – Jazz Poet Society – Guadalupe Street Coffee, 1320 Guadalupe St.– (210) 573-5115. Bring poetry and songs and work with other poets and songwriters to present works on stage. A drum circle accompanies poets.


Tuesdays 10:30 PM – Puro Slam–The Heights–9315 N. Broadway (just north of 410). Weekly open mic certified by the National Poetry Slam allows poets to deliver their work and get heckled. DJ Donnie Dee spins before and after the show. Sign up begins at 9:30 PM. Slam begins @ 10:30 PM. For more information visit www.puroslam.com.

1st & 3rd Wednesdays 7–9 PM – Barnes & Noble, Ingram Festival, 6065 NW Loop 410 (same side as Ingram mall). Features and open mic. 210-522-1340. Host: Josie Mixon

Thursdays 6:30-9:30 PM – South Presa Bar and Grill – Open mic: poetry, music, and storytelling Host: Andi

2nd Thursdays 6-9 PM–Poetry Readings at Bihl Haus Arts, sponsored by Voices de la Luna from 6–9 PM. Free to the community.

2nd Saturday 7–9 pm – Gallista – Features and open mic, Gallista Gallery and Art Studio, 1913 S. Flores – (210) 212-8606. Host: Thom E.

3rd Saturday 2–4 pm – San Antonio Poets Association – Monthly at Bethany Congregational Church–500 Pilgrim Dr.

Book Reading/Signings

The Twig
200 E Grayson, Ste 124, Pearl Brewery, San Antonio, TX (210) 826-6411 http://thetwig.booksense.com

Viva! Bookstore at Viva Galleria
8407 Broadway, San Antonio, TX 78209
Tel: 800-826-1143
Fax: 210-826-8321
www.vivabooks.com

Instructions for the eMagazine
Go to www.voicesdelaluna.com
click on the large icon to peruse the eMagazine or
click on the PDF Digital Reader icon to peruse the pages in a horizontal grid.

Turn pages using the arrows or the cursor.
Zoom in by clicking on the page.
Move the zoomed-in page around by dragging it.
Zoom out by clicking on the zoomed-in page

Contents displays thumbnails;
jump to a page or a section.
Print pages by selecting thumbnails.


To receive hard copies
Mail us $35/year or $10 per issue
The subscription fee is tax-deductible and includes shipping and handling

Thank You for Supporting Voices de la Luna
A Quarterly Poetry & Arts Magazine
Visit Us at: www.voicesdelaluna.com

Visit Voices de la Luna at www.voicesdelaluna.com
To Submit Poetry: joans@voicesdelaluna.com
To Submit Prose: awinstead@voicesdelaluna.com
Send Questions to: MHS@voicesdelaluna.com
Send Suggestions to: CPTpoetJB@voicesdelaluna.com
To Post Ads: svs@voicesdelaluna.com
To Submit Youth Poetry and Arts: joans@voicesdelaluna3.com