Questions for Carmen Tafolla
“A White House Garden Cookbook”
by Clara Silverstein

“Plague” by Bonnie Lyons

“The Day I Became a Writer”
by Cyra S. Dumitru
Poetry & Arts Places in San Antonio

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

William Wordsworth (1770–1850)

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 and peoples 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 area’s oldest jazz clubs.

LA VILLITA—This restored Mexican village captures charms 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.sasymphony.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.

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In her oil painting *Dreamscape* the German painter Ulrike Rowe interprets a traditional subject in a manner deeply influenced by the images and colors of her unconscious. Rowe uses a combination of media and usually includes some recognizable shapes to invite the viewer, but then proceeds to change shapes and colors and insert images from her dreams, leading the viewer to share her path.

Rowe, who lives and paints in a small village near Kaiserslautern, Germany, studied at the State Theatre in Hagen, Germany, followed by studies at the Art Academy in Atlanta, Georgia and at the University of Maryland. After years at the Rheinpfalz Theatre, art directorships at art centers in Kaiserslautern, Pirmasens, and Ramstein, she continues to teach art to adults and concentrates on her creative work. Since 1995, Rowe’s art has been exhibited throughout Germany.

**GIRL GONE LOST**
Rebecca Brown

Hope, perched upon the branch of love,
A father’s pain is palpable.
Like a green bough twisting to meet the sun,
He strains to hear the reason
in his daughter’s voice.

Too hard it is
to hear the madness.
Too hard it is
to feel the rage.
Too hard it is
to hold the vision
of a sweet girl gone lost.

---

**A Letter from the Editors**

*Mo H Saidi and James Brandenburg*

Long summer days invite writers and artists to pack their notebooks, unread magazines and books, brushes and paints, and leave for cooler places. We all need a break to refresh body and mind; it does not matter where or how far we go, the important point is to take a vacation with a purpose.

James Brandenburg traveled to Barcelona and Puerto Rico, visited family and friends and museums, got together with Spanish literati, and brought back pages of poetic observations. Mo H Saidi spent August in a lake-view cottage near Chautauqua, NY where he took advanced poetry and prose workshops, read his poetry, and sold and signed some books.

Authors and writers at the Chautauqua Writers’ Institute perused and complimented recent issues of our magazine. Professor Philip Terman who teaches at Clarion University, PA and co-directs the Chautauqua Writers’ Festival at Chautauqua Institute, wrote in his email, “I’ve just started to read the issue you kindly gave me, and I’m already appreciating its quality and variety. Unlike most journals, it covers national and local literary concerns, as well as poetry, criticism, reviews—all in the same space, which is quite rare.”

Beyond heat waves in the Northeast, Europe, and Russia, this summer brought mixed literary news. Struggling Newsweek magazine, which had amassed over $30 million in debt, was sold by the Washington Post to a loyal reader for one dollar. Several financially stressed university presses stopped publishing poetry books. Online books and magazines continue to prosper, however; according to Amazon.com the sale of eBooks via Kindle has surpassed paperback and hardcopy versions. Our own presses in San Antonio, including Bryce Milligan’s Wings Press, are also selling more eBooks than hardcopies. This trend has even affected the dictionary publication. For the first time in its over a century of steady growth in print, the OED is considering to abandon the hardcopy version of its most popular and revered English dictionary.

Meanwhile, we are heartened by flourishing poetry venues with growing audiences in San Antonio and elsewhere. This summer also brought fantastic summer festivals to the area, including the Cactus Pear Music Festival under artistic director Stephanie Sant’Ambrogio, whose outstanding musicians performed modern and old classical music pieces to full auditoriums in July.

We at Voices de la Luna: A Poetry & Arts Magazine are not trendsetters, but we observe literary developments and try to learn from them. With the full support of our active boards of directors and advisors, we are focusing on electronic formats of the magazine while we continue hardcopy publication to meet subscription demand.

Because we believe poetry heals minds, and arts advance the quality of life, we strive to continue existing projects and to stage additional poetry and prose workshops. We are available to present monthly poetry readings and workshops for youth, high school students, homeless people, and to inmates at the Bexar County Detention Center, where we offer poetry and arts as therapeutic and creative tools.
First God took
all Job’s oxen, asses
Camels and sheep.
That I could understand.
It doesn’t take a Solomon
to know our possessions are loans
that can be recalled.

But then all our children died
every one, and in exchange
as if in some grim joke
he was given boils.

Each of our children was unique
and irreplaceable,
not to be squeezed into a lump,
not just seven sons and three daughters.
Sick with grief and fury,
I told him to curse God and die.
I don’t take it back.

Hidden in the darkness
outside the tent,
I listened to the men argue
night after night.
His friends insisted
this must be punishment,
that he must be sinful.
But wasn’t that because they
would have to think
God unjust, if Job was good?

If not a punishment,
then a test, someone suggested.
But why would God test Job
using our children as ciphers?

Even after that voice
claiming to be God
named all the wonders of the world,
all that lie beyond human imagination
and power, what happened
still made no sense.

We cannot be wiser than our creator,
so how can an ordinary wife
and mother be more just
than our all-knowing father?

Like Job’s boils,
which itched and pained him
night and day, terrible questions
plague me.

*Bonnie Lyons, Professor of English, received her B.A. from Newcomb College and her M.A. and Ph.D. from Tulane University. She has taught at Newcomb College and Boston University and as a Fulbright professor in Greece, Italy, Spain, and Israel. Her primary teaching interests are 19th and 20th century American literature and 20th century literature. She has published a book about Henry Roth, co-authored a book of interviews with fiction writers, two poetry chapbooks, and a full-length volume of poems. She has published articles and interviews in many journals, including The Paris Review and Contemporary Literature. She is currently working on a new volume of poems and a second book of literary interviews.

W.S. Merwin: U.S. Poet Laureate
for 2010-2011
from www.loc.gov

William Stanley Merwin succeeds Kay Ryan as Poet Laureate and joins a long line of distinguished poets who have served in the position, including Charles Simic, Donald Hall, Ted Kooser, Louise Glück, Billy Collins, Stanley Kunitz, Robert Pinsky, Robert Hass, Rita Dove and Richard Wilbur.

During a 60-year writing career, Merwin has received nearly every major literary award. He is a two-time winner of the Pulitzer Prize, just recently in 2009 for The Shadow of Sirius and in 1971 for The Carrier of Ladders. In 2006, he won the Rebekah Johnson Bobbitt Priz from the Library of Congress for Present Company. His retrospective collection Migration: New and Selected Poems won the 2005 National Book Award for poetry.

Born in 1927, Merwin showed an early interest in language and music, writing hymns for his father, a Presbyterian minister. He studied poetry at Princeton and, in 1952, his first book, A Mask for Janus, was selected by W.H. Auden for the Yale Series of Younger Poets Award.

The author of more than 30 books of poetry and prose, Merwin’s influence on American poetry is profound. Often noted by critics is his decision, in the 1960s, to relinquish the use of punctuation. “I had come to feel that punctuation stapled the poems to the page,” Merwin wrote in his introduction to The Second Four Books of Poems. “Whereas I wanted the poems to evoke the spoken language, and wanted the hearing of them to be essential to taking them in.”

In 1976, Merwin moved to Hawaii, where he and his wife Paula have fashioned a quiet life in beautiful, natural surroundings. An avid gardener, he has raised endangered palm trees on land that used to be a pineapple plantation.

“Although his poems often deal with simple everyday things, there is a nourishing quality about them that makes readers want more,” said Patricia Gray, head of the Library’s Poetry and Literature Center. “Like William Wordsworth, he is passionately interested in the natural world.”

Merwin’s many honors also include the Bollingen Prize in Poetry, the Tanning Prize for Poetry, the Ruth Lilly Poetry Prize, the Wallace Stevens Award, the PEN Translation Prize, the Aiken Taylor Award for Modern American Poetry, and the Governor’s Award for Literature of the State of Hawaii.
Questions for Dr. Carmen Tafolla
Interviewed by Mo H Saidi

San Antonio-born Dr. Carmen Tafolla is internationally acclaimed as a writer, poet, performer, and educational consultant, and as a renowned folklorist of the Chicoano-Mexican community. Described by Alex Haley as a “world class writer,” she has published poetry, screenplays, children’s books, short stories, and articles. Her work has appeared in over 200 anthologies; she has performed her one-woman show, “My Heart Speaks a Different Language” all over the world. In 1999 she received the Art of Peace Award for writing which furthered peace, justice, and human understanding. Her book The Holy Tortilla and a Pot of Beans won the 2009 Tomás Rivera Award. Other recently published children’s books are, What Can You Do with a Rebozo? and What Can You Do with a Paleta?, which this year has won the Charlotte Zolotow Award for Best Children’s Picture Book Writing, the Américas Award, the 2010 Tomás Rivera Award, and two International Latino Book Awards. Having co-authored a children’s book about the activist who stood up for the pecan shellers of San Antonio in the 1930s, That’s Not Fair!: Emma Tenayuca’s Struggle for Justice/¡No es Justo!: La Lucha de Emma Tenayuca por la Justicia (2008), she is now at work on the adult biography. Tafolla earned her Ph.D. at the University of Texas at Austin, and currently teaches at the University of Texas-San Antonio in the Department of Bicultural, Bilingual Studies.

As a highly acclaimed writer, you have published works for both children and adults in numerous anthologies, magazines, journals, and textbooks. Why do you write books for children?

Gabriel Garcia Marquez said that every writer is a revolutionary, and I believe that what calls us to be writers – to suffer and sweat over every word and every comma till the expression is perfect, to forego financial security and more stable career opportunities in order to embrace a low-paying job that works us 24-7 all the way to the grave --is that desire to change the world. Some think politics will change the world --is that desire to change the world. Some think politics will change the world, a coup d’état, or a military reconnaissance, and we’ve learned from French concepts the consequence of having life with gusto, criticize machismo, and conduct guerilla warfare; those words—we’ve learned from Spanish concepts how to live with gusto, criticize machismo, and conduct guerilla warfare; those words—even in Tejano dialect, a lot of publishers and editors don’t understand or appreciate our regional Tejano Spanish very much. And children’s literature has been the most open to publishing bilingually, in both Spanish AND English. And while I once was fluent in French, and even wrote a few poems in French, my love of mestizaje (or métissage, as the French call it) drew me to create a Franco-Tex-Mex poem once called “La Minuit Chingade” spoofing language elitism.

English is a melting pot that absorbs words from everywhere, including Mexico and Latin America. Are we stealing other people’s vocabulary, or is it fair trade to import and coin new words?

Of course we import language daily and have done so for the entire history of human communication. Language is not prescriptive, it is descriptive, that is, it simply seeks to document how we communicate, not to dictate how we should communicate. Language is so dynamic and fluid that it is always growing and adapting to meet people’s communication needs. We add new concepts from situations and cultures we encounter, and then find we need the words to express those concepts. English is full of those words—we’ve learned from Spanish concepts how to live with gusto, criticize machismo, and conduct guerilla warfare; we’ve learned from French concepts the consequence of having an elite, a coup d’état, or a military reconnaissance, and we’ve imported a million other everyday words from countless other languages. The Spanish did the same before us, incorporating Arab words and Jewish concepts, Indian vocabulary and English “loan words.”

You are considered a symbol of the bicultural West-Side of San Antonio; would it be appropriate to call you a Chicano writer?

Our modern world has the longterm memory of a flea. We live in the present, focus on the future, run away from the past. Yet it is the past that has made us who we are. Yes, I listen to the voices of my ancestors, they whisper in my ears, guide me, scold me, pick me up, shape me… I listen to other people’s ancestors too. I am unabashedly a Chicana writer. I have a sense of place, of history, of identity, of gratitude to that culture and those cultures that made me. And by claiming openly my Chicana identity, I also open the door to claiming my links to the Arab world and the Jewish world, the European and the Amerindian, the Celt and Goth and Asian and East Indian, as well as to all those cultural identities that I do not find in my direct lineage. Too often today, folks fall to the fad of not wanting to discuss race or sex or culture; some would say those concepts are passé. The deeper truth is that those topics are still painful, AND unresolved. The topics embarrass us as a nation, so many simply avoid mentioning those issues. But I choose to look at where the injuries and the infections lie, to clean out the pus, and face these issues head on, not only with honesty but also with celebration of what they say about our human heritage, with deep respect for the sanctity of our human diversities. Being a Chicana writer doesn’t limit me; it makes me even more universal, a more member of the human race.

Being fluent in both Spanish and English, and with a doctorate in bilingual education, in what language do you write?

I write, usually, in one of three languages: English, Spanish, or Tex-Mex. Of the three, Tex-Mex is my favorite. English is what most of my readers speak so many of the works that get published are in English. When I write Spanish, I usually write in its Tejano dialect, and a lot of publishers and editors don’t understand or appreciate our regional Tejano Spanish very much. And children’s literature has been the most open to publishing bilingually, in both Spanish AND English. And while I once was fluent in French, and even wrote a few poems in French, my love of mestizaje (or métissage, as the French call it) drew me to create a Franco-Tex-Mex poem once called “La Minuit Chingade” spoofing language elitism.

Continued on page 6
The day we truly quit borrowing words from other languages, we will have ceased to grow and breathe as a language, and our culture will become static and funereal.

You write prose and poetry but you are also doing a one-woman show; what is the attraction of acting? Does it not take you away from writing?

Actually, the acting and the writing feed each other. I’ve always been an auditory writer, that is, I can’t be happy with a literary piece on the page unless I’m happy with the way it “falls on the ear.” I could blame that on the poet in me, but even my prose has to have that human song to its voice, or else it falls flat to reality, sounding artificial. Acting gives me a chance to take characters from the page and put them into an active, dramatic mode. I actually “edit” some of my characters after performing them, and that electric way the theater lets you interact with an audience feeds my writing and gives me new ideas, new energy.

What do you make of the Tea Party Movement? Could it be a racist reaction to the election of our first African-American president? Have you yourself ever experienced racial prejudice in academia?

Yes, this President has had to carry the burden of so many people’s prejudices. Ask any priest how many confessions they hear of people admitting, “I could never vote for a Black man for President.” I can’t even imagine any other President having had such total denial of his American birth—do they really think it’s impossible for a child to be born here of an African man and an American woman? Or for a smart, conscientious black man to really be an American citizen? But for all the racist backlash we are getting right now, prompting xenophobia and anti-Latino legislation, the scape-goating of immigrants didn’t start with Obama’s election. Racial prejudice continues to happen in many institutions, including academia. Twenty-five years ago, when I received my first tenure-track position, (and was one of two entering non-White faculty,) we experienced such a level of suspicion, stereotyping, and office sabotage that the department chair even ordered the office Information Resource files locked against us, because they feared we might steal them! All along the way, I was accused of “only getting the job because I was Mexican” and all along the way, I had to publish twice as much and accomplish twice as much just to get the job!

Sylvia Plath, Elizabeth Bishop, Ernest Hemingway, to name just a few, ended their lives tragically. Why are artists and poets so vulnerable to emotional extremes?

When people ask me what it’s like to write, I tell them: imagine the process of childbirth. Then, when you think about trying to write in between all the interruptions of paying bills and making a living, imagine a lo-o-o-o-o-ong labor that gets put on hold several times a day for a week or a month, only to be asked to start up again, over and over, after the interruption. Babies would NEVER get born if we did childbirth the way most artists are asked to write! Writing also requires honesty, pain, confrontation of your inner demons, and sometimes, this can push a writer over the edge. It’s as if we have all our sensitivity antennae turned on, in order to write, and some writers never turn it off. Looking at the big picture, though, Plath and Hemingway are a minority. Many writers are some of the most emotionally stable people I know. They have to be-- to survive the multiple childbirths of their creative works. Look at Elena Poniatowska, Julia Alvarez, Carlos Fuentes, James Michener, Ernesto Cardenal, Demetria Martinez, Jaqueline Woodson, Denise Chavez, and so many others.

America was inhabited by the First Peoples long before Europeans, the Second Peoples, who arrived uninvited. Why do you think there is such a hostile reaction to the wave of recent immigrants, the Third Peoples, coming to America even if they have to climb the walls looking for work?

I think America is running away from its conscience and from its Christianity. Most of these “Third Peoples” are not Third peoples at all, but First Peoples, descendents of the original residents of this continent, and most of the anti-immigrant leadership does not want to be reminded of that. No one wants to admit that George Washington and Thomas Jefferson had no permission from the nations of this continent to come here, and therefore, were illegal immigrants. No one wants to remember, either, that the basic tenets of Christianity state clearly that our Christian responsibilities are to welcome the stranger. These days, the Statue of Liberty is a hypocrite.

Do you have any children?

I have a 26-year-old, an 18-year-old who just started college, and a 5-year-old, who starts kindergarten this month. AND My 92-year-old mother lives with my husband and I as well, so between the family members, the friends-to-die-for, and a few additional “spiritual children,” our house seems always full and festive.

What do you make of our mayor who is garnishing national attention? Is he going to become a major national figure, perhaps President?

It’s certainly possible, and would definitely represent some positive changes for the way Latinos are viewed. Like so many San Antonians, I’m very proud of both Castro twins, and of their Mom, activist Rosie Castro, whose ongoing tenets were always conciencia y comunidad. If you could pour all the leadership skills and commitment in that family into a generator, we’d have a new power source!

Other than children’s books and the adult biography of Emma Tenayuca, what else can we expect in the near future?

The long-awaited art-and-poetry collection, Rebozos, will finally be out in 2011! Sixteen full-color oil paintings by Catalina Gárate are accompanied by my poems in both English and Spanish, and 16 poems of last Christmas season, Tamales, Comadres, & The Meaning of Liberty is a hypocrite.

Thank you very much for your time.
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In his acclaimed 1999 memoir Places Left Unfinished at the Time of Creation, John Phillip Santos told the story of one Mexican family—his father’s—set within the larger story of Mexico itself. In this beautifully written new book, he tells of how another family—this time, his mother’s—erased and forgot over time their ancient origins in Spain.

Every family has a forgotten tale of where it came from. Who is driven to tell it and why? Weaving together a highly original mix of autobiography, conquest history, elegy, travel, family remembrance, and time traveling narration, Santos offers an unforgettable testimony to this calling and describes a lifelong quest to find the missing chronicle of his mother’s family, one that takes him to various locations in South Texas and Mexico, to New York City, to Spain, and ultimately to the Middle East. Blending genres brilliantly, Santos raises profound questions about whether we can ever find our true homeland and what we can learn from our treasured, shared cultural legacies.

*John Phillip Santos is the author of Places Left Unfinished at the Time of Creation, a finalist for the National Book Award. His articles on Latino art, culture, and politics have appeared in The New York Times and Los Angeles Times. A former writer and produced of television documentaries for CBS and PBS, he is also a poet and the recipient of numerous literary awards.

**A White House Garden Cookbook**

Healthy Ideas from the First Family for Your Family

Clara Silverstein*


Clara Silverstein writes on the book jacket, “How do you get your kids to eat their greens?” This question not only comes up in everyday conversations among parents, but it’s of interest to First Lady Michelle Obama who has been hoping to answer with her White House kitchen garden. Silverstein’s timely book explores the many ways the White House garden has gotten to the root of the matter with vegetables, including descendants of seeds planted by Thomas Jefferson. We get to know honey scraped from the hives of First Family bees. Filled with ideas to get children excited about eating and cooking locally grown vegetables, this cookbook makes it fun to plan healthy family meals. Recipes come from White Houses past and present, as well as from the community gardens that are inspiring children nationwide.

The book also addresses the history of the White House gardens from the first president to the present one. The historical aspects of the book are perhaps the most interesting part where Silverstein describes how Civil War troops, camped on the South Lawn of Lincoln’s White House, saw vegetables growing and begged for food from the White House kitchen.

Growing and tending vegetables in the White House has been popular among American presidents. Thomas Jefferson, more than any other president, changed the way we eat and grow food, just as he changed things in the political arena and during the revolutionary war. Silverstein quotes current White House healthy food initiative adviser Sam Kass’s thoughts on Jefferson, “He’s the first person to start seasonal growing. That is something that people are coming back to now, thinking about ways to use a diversity of crops and keep growing throughout the year.”

For those who love green and leafy vegetables, there are numerous recipes for making delicious salads using what grows in your garden, e.g: dill, lettuce, arugula, and spinach. To encourage kids to eat a healthy diet, Silverstein indicates that “Kids are interested in eating vegetables that they have a hand in growing.”

Throughout the book there are reports of how the children in summer programs in Tulsa, New Orleans, or Camden prepare gardens growing basil, oregano, peppers, tomatoes, and then really enjoy cooking and eating their own handmade pizzas.

This delightful historical book, covering growing home gardens in America, in various climates, and during the four seasons is a must for every home with schoolchildren. For further information, please visit www.RedRockPress.com.

*Clara Silverstein is the author of four books, a long-time food writer in the Boston area, and the program director of the summer Chautauqua Writers’ Center. A journalist for more than 20 years, Clara has published articles in Health magazine, Prevention, Runner’s World, American Heritage, and the Boston Globe. Formerly a food writer at the Boston Herald daily newspaper, she also contributed several entries to the Oxford Encyclopedia of Food and Drink in America. Her poems and essays have been published in many literary journals.
News & Views

Muhammad: A Story of the Last Prophet
by Deepak Chopra

In this riveting novel, beloved international bestselling author Deepak Chopra captures the spellbinding life story of the great and often misunderstood Prophet.

Islam was born in a cradle of tribal turmoil, and the arrival of one God who vanquished hundreds of ancient Arabian gods changed the world forever. God reached down into the life of Muhammad, a settled husband and father, and spoke through him. Muhammad’s divine and dangerous task was to convince his people to renounce their ancestral idols and superstitious veneration of multiple gods. From the first encounter, God did not leave Muhammad alone, his life was no longer his own, and with each revelation the creation of a new way of life was formed and a new religion born.

Muhammad didn’t see himself as the son of God or as one who achieved cosmic enlightenment. His relatives and neighbors didn’t part the way when he walked down the parched dirt streets of Mecca. There was no mark of divinity. Orphaned by age six, Muhammad grew up surrounded by dozens of cousins and extended family to become a trusted merchant. Muhammad saw himself as an ordinary man and that is why what happened to him is so extraordinary.

Rooted in historical detail, Muhammad brings the Prophet to life through the eyes of those around him. A Christian hermit mystic foretells a special destiny, a pugnacious Bedouin wet nurse raises him in the desert, and a religious rebel in Mecca secretly takes the young orphan under his spiritual wing. Each voice, each chapter shines a new light on Muhammad and the creation of Islam. Muhammad’s life is not a myth but the incredible true and surprisingly unknown story of a man and a moment that sparked a worldwide transformation.

In the interview, which took place through an intermediary who cannot be named for security reasons, she said: “They’re lying. They are embarrassed by the international attention on my case, and they are desperately trying to distract attention so they can kill me in secret.” She pleaded: “Don’t let them stone me in front of my son.”

Her lawyer Mohammad Mostafaei is an outspoken critic of the Iranian judicial system and had represented her for free. He succeeded in bringing her case to world attention but had to flee the country when Iranian authorities issued a warrant for his arrest. He found asylum in Norway, but his wife is being held without charge in Tehran’s notorious Evin Prison. Twelve other women and three men have been sentenced to death by stoning in Iran during recent years.

Omar Khayyám
A Persian Poet, Philosopher, and Naturalist
from Writer’s Almanac

A Book of Verses underneath the Bough,
A Jug of Wine, a Loaf of Bread—and Thou
Beside me singing in the Wilderness—
Oh, Wilderness were Paradise enow!

18 May 1048 is the birthday of Omar Khayyám, (books by this author) born in Nishapur, Iran (1048). During his lifetime, he was known as a scientist and a mathematician, and his treatise on algebra is considered one of the greatest mathematical works of the Middle Ages. But today we know him for his Rubáiyát—which means, simply, “quatrains,” four-lined stanzas with a rhyming pattern.

In 1859, E.B. Cowell, a scholar of Persian at Oxford University, stumbled on a manuscript copy of 158 of Khayyám’s quatrains at Oxford’s Bodleian Library. He passed it on to one of his students, Edward Fitzgerald, and Fitzgerald translated 75 of the quatrains. He thought some of the quatrains were too sensual or too irreverent, so those he left in Persian, and he made liberal changes to the verses he did translate. Fitzgerald self-published the Rubáiyát, and sold it in a local bookstore for a shilling, about 12 cents. It became one of the most reproduced works of the 19th and 20th centuries.

The Rubáiyát has been translated many times --- sometimes more faithful to the original text --- but it is Fitzgerald’s translation that remains most popular in English.

Iranian Woman faces stoning*
Saeed Kamali Dehghan
www.guardian.co.uk

In an exclusive interview with the Guardian, the woman whose sentence of death by stoning triggered an international outcry has accused the Iranian authorities of lying about the charges against her to pave the way to execute her in secret.

Sakineh Mohammadi Ashtiani, 43, was sentenced to death by stoning for adultery but it was commuted to hanging after an international outcry. Her initial sentence was for “having an illicit relationship outside marriage,” but Iranian officials have claimed that she was also found guilty of murdering her husband and should still face death by stoning.
American Muslim Leaders Visit Concentration Camps
from JTA

Eight Muslim American leaders who visited concentration camps and met with Holocaust survivors signed a statement condemning Holocaust denial and anti-Semitism. The trip earlier this month, intended to teach the participants about the Holocaust, featured visits to Dachau and Auschwitz.

“We stand united as Muslim American faith and community leaders and recognize that we have a shared responsibility to continue to work together with leaders of all faiths and their communities to fight the dehumanization of all peoples based on their religion, race or ethnicity,” the statement read. “With the disturbing rise of anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, and other forms of hatred, rhetoric and bigotry, now more than ever, people of faith must stand together for truth.”

Marshall Breger, an Orthodox Jew who served in the Reagan and first Bush administrations, launched the trip to educate those who may not have had the opportunity to learn the history of the Holocaust. Breger said this would help combat Holocaust denial among Muslims.

The leaders on the trip were Imams Muzammil Siddiqi of Orange County, Calif.; Muhad Maged of Virginia; Suhaib Webb of Santa Clara, Calif.; Abdullah Antepli of Duke University in North Carolina; and Syed Naqi of Washington, D.C., along with Dr. Sayyid Syeed of Washington; Sheikh Yasir Qadhi of New Haven, Conn.; and Laila Muhammad of Chicago. U.S. government officials, the State Department’s special envoy to monitor and combat anti-Semitism, and an official from the Organization of the Islamic Conference also participated.

According to the Jewish Daily Forward, several of the leaders, all with large spheres of influence, had a history of anti-Semitic comments. Laila Muhammad is the daughter of American Muslim leader W.D. Muhammad and granddaughter of Elijah Muhammad, leader of the Nation of Islam.

The Aug. 7-11 trip was co-sponsored by a German think tank and a New Jersey-based interfaith group called Interreligious Understanding.

Internet Wiping Out Printed Oxford Dictionary
Sylvia Hui
Associated Press Writer

It’s been in print for more than a century, but in the future the Oxford English Dictionary—the authoritative guide to the English language—may only be available to peruse online.

Publisher Oxford University Press said Sunday that burgeoning demand for the dictionary’s online version has far outpaced demand for the printed versions. By the time the lexicographers behind the dictionary finished revising and updating the latest edition—a gargantuan task that will take many more years—publishers are doubtful there will still be a market for the printed form.

The online Oxford English Dictionary now gets 2 million hits a month from subscribers. The current printed edition—a hefty 20-volume, 750 pound ($1,165) set published in 1989—has sold about 30,000 sets in total.

“At present we are experiencing increasing demand for the online product,” a statement from the publisher said. “However, a print version will certainly be considered if there is sufficient demand at the time of publication.”

Nigel Portwood, chief executive of Oxford University Press, told The Sunday Times in an interview he didn’t think the newest edition would be printed. “The print dictionary market is just disappearing, it is falling away by tens of percent a year,” he said. Although the comments relate primarily to the full-length dictionary, the publisher says the convenience of the electronic format is also affecting demand for its shorter dictionaries.

The first installment of the Oxford English Dictionary was published in 1884, and it kept growing for decades until the complete text went out in 1928. It was the first comprehensive English dictionary since Samuel Johnson’s A Dictionary of the English Language published in 1755, and has since evolved to become the accepted authority on the meaning and history of words. The version users now consult—the second edition—has 291,500 entries, plus 2.4 million quotations as sources. Unlike shorter printed versions such as the single volume Oxford Dictionary of English, it doesn’t track current usage, it simply includes every single word.

A team of 80 lexicographers are preparing the third edition of the dictionary, which is just under one-third complete. Oxford University Press hasn’t yet given a date for when the third edition will be ready.

The Oxford English Dictionary first went online in 2000, offering paying subscribers a much faster way to look up words. It’s also helped the dictionary catch up with rapid semantic changes and the large numbers of new words: updates to the dictionary’s online version are added every three months.

In December, the online version will be relaunched to include a historical thesaurus to make cross-referencing easier.

John Locke postulated that all of our knowledge is derived from our senses and that we can know morality with the same precision that we know math. His “Essay Concerning Human Understanding” (1690) sparked debate all across Europe.

In “Two Treatises of Government” (1690) he described his belief in Natural Law and Natural Rights of individuals, and wrote: “…every man has a property in his own person. This nobody has any right to but himself.” He believed government exists to protect those rights and he argued in favor of revolt against tyranny. His ideas were a foundation for much of the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution. Locke said, “Reading furnishes the mind only with materials of knowledge; it is thinking that makes what we read ours.”
Editors’ Poems

**White Flag**
*Josie Mixon*

After the letters
Of desperation
Have been recalled
I’m begging you to stop
Leave myself alone
Stop the charades
Of coldhearted abuse
Your demeaning attitude
Smells of stagnant water
My heart oozes
Between tightened fingers
Strangling out the tears
Of solitude
Flag waves
In every shade of white
Steadily blisters
Bruised palms of my hands
Victoriously dance
The battle is yours to own
I stand defeated
Worn beyond repair

**I am Homeless**
*James Brandenburg*

I awake late at night
to the moon
not sure if it is
the moonshine inside me
or the moon shining down on me
that makes me crazy
but here I am
panhandling on
the street with drunks
I don’t even know

Talking to crazies
lit up by the moon
or maybe lit up within
a burning itch
that has gone ablaze
a flame of disillusionments
and disappointments
as I talk
I beg
I plead
I drink
to smother
the burning fire
it is hell
holding up my sign,
“Help me,
I am homeless.”

Passion Fruit in Paradise
*Mo H Saidi*

Adam was starving, tired of eating roots
and nuts, he was searching for real food
his disheveled mate drew up a list and cried out

harvest some wild wheat, mill the grains
leave the flour unbleached, knead the dough
and fire the oven and bake two flat loaves

fill the bucket with milk and make cheese
harvest some tomatoes and garlic
prepare the sauce for the pizza.

In a red wheelbarrow Adam brought a load
of red apples, some white chickens, a slaughtered lamb
wild barley, and bucket of milk, but no tomato.

Devil was smirking at the First Couple
holding a bowl of pasta. In paradise, He
said, there is no passion fruit or potato.

**Nightsweat**
*Valerie Martin Bailey*

Drama, trauma—bits and pieces
reality magnified
into grotesque caricatures,
scrap torn from ordinary fabric
transformed into garish
plaits and paisleys.
Hidden meanings, hidden agendas
familiar faces in strange places
doing absurd things—
someone made a casserole
using pages from my
book alternated
with slices of bacon
and topped with cheese.
Poems quite tasty,
but much too greasy.
Wake up! wake up!
You’re talking in your sleep.
A voice penetrates a
deep coma where my brain
lies paralyzed in fright by
unnamed monsters, unframed threats,
antamed desires.
Where have I been?
I cannot tell...
my troubled spirit tells
me it’s a twisted realm...
a place I was glad to leave,
whose memory clings like a
The wholeness and sensory delight of my early childhood gave me a deep center that eroded and then fractured during my pre-teen and teenage years. Due to various forces, my parents’ marriage began to unravel right after we moved to Ohio when I was seven, and that unraveling persisted, frayed the fabric of our family, and became increasingly dramatic. Despite the love and intelligence of my parents, my family lacked center and lacked a productive language for the emotions. I felt the tensions lurking deep below the surface but had no words for them; I could vaguely sense them but neither name them nor shape them, except sometimes through poems. When my eldest brother committed suicide in circumstances that placed me as witness to his fatal injury, I felt myself at age 16 to be made of slivers of glass. I also felt the devastation of my parents and surviving brothers. We had no family language for this tragedy. We each retreated into singular anguish.

As a young adult, writing poems became a gradual way for me to piece the slivers together, one by one. The traumatic experience of what I saw, heard and smelled during David’s injury forced me to find some mode of expression in order to keep the nightmares from overwhelming me. Not only did I intensify my writing of poetry, I was also able to enter into deep community with other poets of various ages and professional backgrounds here in San Antonio beginning in the early 1980s. Such blessing, the kindness and generosity of poets in our city all these 30 years that I have lived in San Antonio. There is a spirit of humility and openness among our poets that has an inherent healing touch.

This process of healing through poetry writing, and then eventually, through good counseling, occurred over the course of more than a decade. I noticed that every time I found a powerful metaphor for my experience that worked into a poem, I felt a huge inner leap toward cohesion. The metaphor gave shape, allowed catharsis, and gave meaning. I always felt much stronger as a result of working with the metaphor.

When overwhelmed or distressed emotionally, I feel as if a Mass of Ache has overtaken me—an undifferentiated mass of aching—hard to feel where it begins and ends, where I begin and end, separate from it. I am occupied territory. This is when metaphor serves as a saving tool of imagination/discernment. It redefines my relationship to my inner world and gives me a language for my experience that I can share with others, thereby reconnecting me socially. It coaxes the shapeless Mass of Ache into a particular form with known boundaries. It defines me as distinct and independent from that occupying turmoil. It helps me to imagine and then to create a new being (a poem) from the energy of that distress.

This process of creative change activates hope and playfulness in the face of fear, sorrow, brokenness, and distrust. As I listen for the poem, the metaphor becomes the organizing principle. As I move deeply into the realm of the particular metaphor and find patterns of words, I encounter the situation that troubles me.
I confront it in small steps (each metaphor serving as a kind of step) and slowly convert my undifferentiated mass into a wad of different colored ribbons that can be untangled one by one. Each ribbon I can give a name, color, texture, length, and significance. I give it boundaries and duration by constructing poems with beginnings, middles, and ends. Gradually I achieve psychological distance from that which lodges deep within. Instead of wallowing in it, I can enlarge the inward landscape and feel a fresh breeze coming from a promising other place. I am strengthened, and I can approach the painful circumstances of my life with more of an imaginative, problem-solving mind. I am freed to move through it with a greater range of feelings, my dignity, and my reflective mind. My world becomes more clarified, more spacious and I rediscover my sense of “rightful” place within this world.

I regard this creative process as how God speaks to me. The Creator gave us the gifts of metaphorical thinking, imagination, language, a world full of images that relate to the natural order, and a yearning for wholeness. Let us use them with care, playfulness, concern for healing ourselves and the community, and with celebratory gratitude.

I would like to share some powerful insights from Eugene Peterson who is best known for the translation of the Old and New Testaments called The Message. He writes in Living the Message (July 24), a companion book to The Message, that, “Poetry is essential to the pastoral vocation because poetry is original speech. The word is creative: it brings into being what was not there before—perception, relationship, belief. Out of the silent abyss a sound is formed: people hear what was not heard before and are changed by the sound from loneliness into love. Out of the blank abyss a picture is formed by means of metaphor: people see what they did not see before and are changed by the image from anonymity into love. Words create. God’s word creates; our words can participate in the creation.” Words heal because words create deep spiritual meaning.

**Poetry**
*Cyra S. Dumitru*

The weight of a word, the magnitude of a moment: can they form an equivalent?

Each bears treasure. Each has a life span impossible to measure.

What vessel can hold the moment that lives forever?

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**Estuary: The Snake River, Maine**
*Cyra S. Dumitru*

From *Remains*

We still find ways to be together.
I am the inland one, dusting the childhood photos and stirring the stew

riding the coastal river downstream
until the Snake becomes thick as a tongue
as fresh water merges with salt.

You press inward upon the infinite tide
more seaweed than flesh.
We meet in a feast of remembrance

my face older than yours now. Still,
you are the elder brother, the one who inhabits the Huge. When you tell me: Listen!

Or your tongue shall make you deaf!
I enter silence as we do the estuary— plunging off the bow of our small boat.

Jolt of cold. Can’t feel or see the bottom. Shadows ripple beneath us as eels glide from grassy banks.

We join hands and float on our backs perfectly content that living means swimming with the dead—

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**Reflection**
*Cyra S. Dumitru*

All around us, the language of limits:

afternoon sun illumines the underside
of oak leaves, falling as it does
toward darkness. Shadows reshape the stone wall.

Such long exhalation of light.

Each moment is a new frame formed from shifting angles.

Where do we go from here?
Music & Poetry

Steve Reich & William Carlos Williams:
Finding a Form
www.Poets.org

“The mind is listening,” sings the chorus near the end of Steve Reich’s 1983 recording The Desert Music, a cantata that sets passages from three poems by William Carlos Williams to music. Reich first encountered Williams’s work when he was sixteen, initially attracted by the symmetry of the poet’s name, and has long been influenced by his poems, especially his later books The Desert Music and Journey to Love. As a young composer, Reich attempted to set Williams to music but was unable to find a suitable form. He set aside the idea until much later in his career, when his work with Hebrew psalms in Tehellim revealed possible avenues for setting the poems.

The opportunity to set the poet’s work came when the West German Radio and the Brooklyn Academy of Music in New York commissioned him to write The Desert Music. For the first time in his career, Reich was asked to write a piece that would operate on a grand scale, employing a full orchestra and chorus. When Reich turned to Williams’s poems, he found that they had been churning in his mind all those years.

Reich has always been interested in the intersection between art and politics, and the forty-six-minute The Desert Music is no exception. Largely concerned with the issue of nuclear warfare—which Reich sees as a concern in Williams’s poems of that time—the composition takes place in a sort of desert of the mind, which, as Reich said, “threatens one’s normal thinking.” Reich draws the connection between this metaphoric desert and the White Sands and Alamagordo areas of New Mexico, the infamous location of early nuclear testing.

The Desert Music reflects the qualities of Williams’s lines through an intricate composition of harmonic density, overlapping asymmetries, and shifts from despair to clarity. Each movement features lines Reich chose for an amplified chorus. The first and last movements, which move quickly, use lines from the poems “Theocritus: Idyl I” and “Asphodel, That Greeny Flower,” respectively. The second and fourth movements slow to a moderate tempo and repeat twelve lines excerpted from “The Orchestra.” The middle movement, which, at seventeen minutes, is the longest, is divided into three sub-movements, the first and last are slow, while the middle section is similar to the moderate tempo of the second and fourth movements. The text for all three also comes from “The Orchestra.”

The effect of all five movements is a unified pastiche that demands the full attention of the listener. There are no pauses between movements, so the sudden shifts from one to the next, coupled with the layered, amplified choral notes, creates, in Reich’s words, “a constant flickering of attention between what words mean and how they sound when set to music.” This ambiguity is a central focus of The Desert Music.

Williams’s work is preoccupied with modes of attentiveness and ways of listening. Though best known for having written the line “no ideas but in things,” and for his poem of, at first glance, pure image, “The Red Wheelbarrow,” Williams was a poet of great sensitivity, acutely aware that the world beyond the poem can present greater complexities than the poem possibly can. As he wrote in “The Orchestra”: “The / theme is difficult / but no more difficult / than the facts to be / resolved.”

The Grammy-winning Reich is considered one of the greatest living American composers. His study and integration of Western classical music with non-Western and American vernacular music, such as jazz, lend an unexpected dimension to his work, a dimension evident in this remarkable collaboration.

Peace on Earth
William Carlos Williams*

The Archer is wake!
The Swan is flying!
Gold against blue
An Arrow is lying.
There is hunting in heaven— 
Sleep safe till tomorrow.

The Bears are abroad!
The Eagle is screaming!
Gold against blue
Their eyes are gleaming!
Sleep!
Sleep safe till tomorrow.

The Sisters lie
With their arms intertwining;
Gold against blue
Their hair is shining!
The Serpent writhes!
Orion is listening!
Gold against blue
His sword is glistening!
Sleep!
There is hunting in heaven — 
Sleep safe till tomorrow.

*William Carlos Williams was born in Rutherford, New Jersey, in 1883. He began writing poetry while a student at Horace Mann High School. He received his M.D. from the University of Pennsylvania, where he met and befriended Ezra Pound, who influenced Williams’ writings, and in 1913 arranged for the London publication of Williams’s second collection, The Tempers. Returning to Rutherford, where he sustained his medical practice throughout his life, Williams began publishing in small magazines and embarked on a prolific career as a poet, novelist, essayist, and playwright. As time went on, he began to disagree with the values put forth in the work of Pound and especially Eliot. Williams sought to invent an entirely fresh—and singularly American—poetic, whose subject matter was centered on the everyday circumstances of life and the lives of common people. He was awarded the Pulitzer Award for literature posthumously in August of 1963.
To a Scientist Dying Young

Philip Terman*

1. The Accident

For the first four hours after
the accident you were John Doe,
anonymous as before our birth,
your great accomplishment unknown—
the discovery of a receptor
and its role in angiogenesis,

the inhibition of which may be
one strategy for treating cancer —
meaning it wasn’t in the lexicon until

you found it and became the first
to so identify it, this presence that
arose out of nothing, or, not nothing,
as surely it was there for all to see
if they, like you, simply knew where
to look, like gravity or E=MC 2, and

all those other revelations beyond
my conception. Normally shy
and unassuming, you were effusive

explaining your triumph, drawing
diagrams on Starbuck’s napkins,
your face glowing with the ardor

of your occupation, and, more than
the equations, it’s the groping I grasped,
as in poetry, the way in their invisibilities

these words wait for me to find them.
Now you’re a body without a name,
removed from your relations,

in that place, perhaps, we return to
in sleep, but deeper, before knowledge,
or where all knowledge resides.

For those first few hours
you were as if under water,
or beyond the most visible star,

where not even your strongest lens
could locate you. Did you make
your greatest discoveries, the cures
to which all of your results
had been leading? What journal
would publish them to the world?

Soon they identified you,
called the appropriate loved ones,
and your death began.

2. Washing the Body

I wanted to wash my brother’s body,
the way he washed mine, as children,
in the bath, squeaking and splashing,
his older hands soaping my tender skin.

I wanted to touch him one last time,
ot the way I brushed his chest
when he lay exposed in his injury,
his breath rising and falling
to the rhythm of the machines—
but rather to anoint with wet cloth
his freckled face, around his blue eyes
and small mouth, to work my way down

the shoulders and chest and stomach,
sponge his thighs and the hairs
we both inherited from our father
and from his father all the way back
to our first hairy father, and so
I am cleansing them, too, if what we are
is some portion of what others leave,
and I wanted, while reciting

from the Song of Songs, to
clean his nails and brush
his hair and recite the prayer
of forgiveness for touching him so,

and to sprinkle holy soil onto his flesh
and place broken pottery on his eyes,
to wrap him in unbleached linen
and place him in the pine container,

readying him for his next experiment.

3. To the Woman Who Killed My Brother

When you struck my brother
with your Mercedes, as he was adorned
in running shorts, anointed
in his own sweat—blood pulsing,
heart quickening, breath laboring,
his whole body in motion—early

May morning, blossom season, smell
of lilac—at first I didn’t want to know
your name, the color of your eyes,
because I can never know who you were
before this event entered our lives, this
accident, how you turned a corner

Continued on page 31

*Philip Terman’s five collections of poems include The House of Sages
and Rabbis of the Air. His poems and essays have appeared in many
journals and anthologies, including Poetry magazine, the Kenyon Re-
view, The Georgia Review, Awards include the Sow’s Ear Chapbook
Award, the Kenneth Patchen Award from Pig Iron Press, and the Anna
Davidson Rosenberg Award for Poems on the Jewish Experience. He is
a co-director of the Chautauqua Writers’ Festival and teaches creative
writing at Clarion University of Pennsylvania.
Poetry & Art Therapy

A Conversation with Maripat Munley, RN, MPH, ATR-BC

James Brandenburg

James Brandenburg: You are a registered art therapist with a lot of titles. Can you explain your professional path?

Maripat Munley: I am a Registered Art Therapist and Board Certified (ATR-BC) with a Masters in Art Therapy from Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville. Art Therapy Registration (ATR) requires graduate education and post graduate supervised experience. Board Certification (BC) is granted to Registered Art Therapists after a written examination and requires continuing education. I have been an art therapist since 1996.

Art therapists come from a variety of professional disciplines. I am a Texas Registered Nurse, with a BS in Nursing from Incarnate Word University and a Masters in Public Health from the University of Texas Health Science Center, Houston. I trained in psychiatric nursing in the City of Philadelphia Forensic Psychiatric Unit and have worked in emergency rooms with clients in acute stages of mental illness. I have additional training in the use of psychotropic drugs through Regional Psychiatric Nurses Conferences.

Texas does not license art therapists directly, but practitioners with licenses in related fields such as Marriage and Family Counselors (LMFT) or Professional Counselors (LPC) may apply to have the credential of Art Therapist (AT) added to their license. Without licensure of some kind, art therapists cannot receive third party reimbursement and this makes it difficult for agencies to use them as outside consultants.

What does art therapy cover?

Art therapists are trained in both art and therapy; they study human development, psychological theories, clinical practice, spiritual, multicultural and artistic traditions, and the healing potential of art. They use art in treatment, assessment, and research; they work with people of all ages: individuals, couples, families, in groups and communities; in clinical teams, and as independent practitioners; at mental health, rehabilitation, medical, and forensic institutions; at nursing homes, schools, and wellness centers; in community outreach programs and within corporations.

Where do you use art therapy?

I do community outreach workshops for art-based self exploration or to introduce specific art directives for therapeutic art making; I lead seminars for survivor retreats through the Cancer Treatment and Research Center; I develop day-long retreats for nurses through the Center for Caring at the University Hospital, and I volunteer through Bexar County Detention Ministries at the County Jail, leading programs for women in Visual Spiritual Journaling. I integrate art therapy in all individual or group sessions that I conduct in the processes of assessment, planning, treatment and evaluation of clients to help them reach their personal treatment or programmatic goals. All clients or workshop and seminar participants who contract for my services expect to make art and are reassured that no previous art making experience is needed.

How do you diagnose an illness?

At the outset of treatment a client may be asked to draw a person picking an apple from a tree using Mr. Sketch markers. The Art therapist initially examines a client’s art work based on the client’s stated reason(s) for coming into treatment, though many times surprises occur that identify symptoms of illness or need for healing not defined verbally by the client or the therapist at the outset of treatment. Sometimes clients cannot articulate “why” they want treatment or they come because family members encouraged them to do so. Their issues and needs for healing can be identified and teased out using a variety of art based assessment directives.

One assessment method is the Formal Elements Art Therapy Scale (FEATS) which measures on a scale of 1-5: Prominence of Color, Color Fit, Actual Energy (needed to make the art), Implied Energy (energy evident in the picture), Space, Integration, Logic, Realism, Problem Solving, Developmental Level, Details, Line Quality, Person, Perseveration, and Rotation in the art product. Much peer reviewed research has been published using this method across diverse client populations.

A client’s art reflects their symptoms; see for example the two pictures below. The Control Art is from a child with no known diagnoses or unusual symptoms and the Case Art is from a child with untreated ADHD. The artists were matched by sex (boys), age (about 6) and social economic status (SES). The differences are quite obvious visually and as measured by the FEATS.

FEATS may be employed to examine art from clients with diverse clinical diagnoses such as depression, anxiety, or chronic pain. Clients with deep depression, for example, often do not have the energy or interest to select different colors; instead they do whatever takes the least amount of time and effort. Therefore their picture is very limited in the representation of the elements listed above; their drawing may be all one color, not use much space on the page or have few details and limited line quality.
Over the course of treatment and perhaps with psychotropic medication, as the client heals, his art will become more active, colorful and imaginative, which can be measured on the 1-5 scale and totaled to estimate improvement.

Another results measurement is possible visually, because people grow developmentally in their art making skills as they mature physically and emotionally. There are well established developmental stages in drawing, for example: scribbling at around 2 years, pre-schematic stage at around 3-4 years, then schematic around 4-6 years etc., moving toward adult development. Clients experiencing serious psychological disorders often regress in both behavior and in the developmental stage of their art products and processes.

Healing, improvement or worsening of illness symptoms are evident in clients’ art in many other ways besides the FEATS and developmental art stages; a new method uses brain scans to measure the neurobiological impact of art making. Future articles in the Art Therapy Section of this magazine will describe the use of art based interventions within a variety of client populations such as those with chronic pain, elder religious sisters and their need for life review, conflict management in corporate settings, spiritual self exploration, cross cultural community based health care planning and college faculty development.

How does the treatment work?

An example: a client who comes to treatment with a therapeutic goal of reducing their experience of pain may be asked to “draw your pain.” By observing the client’s process of making art and the product they create, and hearing the client’s response to their art making process, the client and the therapist are able to recognize actual markers of chronic pain in both their art making process and the art product. Art obtained from clients with chronic pain usually offers visible evidence of their specific experience of that pain, such as depression, low energy, inability to function normally, frustration, anxiety, the description of their pain across body parts, and the activities to which they are limited by their pain etc. These are typical “markers” described in medical journals about clients experiencing chronic pain.

Usually over time and treatment, identifying strategies to reduce chronic pain and then engaging in these strategies, the client’s experience of the pain will usually lessen and this then causes changes in how the client “draws their pain.” Some of the strategies might be using art to reduce stress therefore reducing pain, designing activities on a schedule that is less tiring, using the medication optimally for pain reduction, or engaging in art based meditation etc. This is a very simple straight forward example but it is emblematic of how characteristics of illness and recovery are identified and measured in the art product and art making process.

How do you measure improvement?

Art therapists measure growth together with their clients in many different ways. The clients are involved in art based assessment of their needs, treatment planning, and therapeutic goal setting; some methods of measuring growth involve estimating growth or progress toward meeting treatment goals, such as identifying feelings or reducing dependence upon psychotropic or pain medications. Physical symptoms or markers of clients’ struggles with many diagnoses such as depression, anxiety, or perseveration in children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) are almost always reflected in the art the client makes. As symptoms are reduced, their art changes, and this can be visually and statistically measured.

Improvement and worsening of symptoms of illness or progress toward healing can also be observed in the changing stories the client’s art tells and in the changing processes used to create art. Art making directives lead clients to express in their art the characteristics of their experience of living past or present periods of their lives and even hoped for futures. Metaphors that reflect clients’ past or current physical and emotional state are often visible in their art and can be openly examined. Art therapists do NOT interpret client art but introduce their client to interpreting their own art and how to become a witness to their art making process.

Where can one find information about studying art therapy?

Go to the South Texas Art Therapy web site (http://www.stxartherapy.org/) and the American Art Therapy web site (http://www.arttherapy.org/) and your own state association’s web site for up-to-date information about the profession, how to train, and various avenues toward clinical practice. Talk with art therapists, observe them in a therapeutic setting if possible, and attend local, state, and national conferences. Research the salary scale or approximate fee for service in a geographic location to be sure it is adequate for your intended lifestyle.

Is art still fun for you, or are you constantly thinking about its therapeutic aspects?

Making art is is great fun for me! While the therapeutic aspect of art is always active, when I make art there is a difference in its conscious application depending upon my intention for the specific art making. If I am making art with others or by myself in order to improve my skills or create a certain type of painting or work of art or to make a gift for someone, I am more conscious of the aesthetic aspect of the art I am creating.

Is it appealing to look at or have meaning for the person who is going to receive the art? If I am making art to self explore, as a catharsis of feelings or to reduce stress and elicit the relaxation response, then I am much more aware of the therapeutic aspect of making art. We can learn just as much about ourselves by observing our process of making art as from the product we create, and this is true for clients as well.

Have you integrated art therapy into your own life?

I have always made art and was aware all my life that making art was therapeutic for me. For more than 30 years I have kept journals that included art—mostly drawing—as a form of self exploration and spiritual searching. Certain art making techniques reduce stress and elicit the relaxation response; I engage in these techniques with great regularity. I use art as a form of prayer. Because I have lived in Europe and Asia and worked in Central America, opportunities abounded to learn art making approaches cross culturally and this has enriched my own personal therapeutic work as much as that of my clients. I have a studio in my home; make art regularly and water color every Friday with a group of artists led by water colorist Les Frank. Art making is a both a joy and a personal discipline.

Additional references:

Select Poems–Part I
Youth Poems

The Sea Is Like a Playing Cat
Mary Sophia Bodden
5th grade

The sea is like a playing cat:
It leaps in the wind.
As the sea purrs, it laps the shore.
When it sleeps it is covered with a blanket of darkness.

When the sea is angry, it pounces on the sea wall like a ball
of string. As I stand at the edge of the shoreline,
the water
touching my legs
reminds me of a cat rubbing up against me.

The sea is like a playing cat.

Severance
Whitney Bennett
St. Mary’s Hall, 12th grade

I wasn’t concerned
When my leg went numb.
The nurses gave no answers
When the pain had begun.

Writhing in hurt,
I sit alone.
A man finally enters
Using a tongue unknown.

The doctor called it diabetes
And some kind of infection.
Viruses and glucose levels
Causing poor circulation.

He smiled, touch my shoulder,
Promised no more pain,
“Your leg won’t hurt
After we take it away.”

Mockingbird
Fiona Burmeister-Morton
Homeschool, third grade

Where will Mockingbird sing?
—In the glorious tree across the way.
When will Mockingbird sing?
—When the days grow short and the nights grow long.
Why will Mockingbird sing?
—For a mate to call his own.
Do you hear it?
Do you hear the magnificent call?

Fried Green Tomatoes
Allie Trigoso
St. Mary’s Hall, 12th grade

The mud-stained farmer gathered
His trowels and watering can and seed,
Brushed all the earth off his trousers
Picked up his hat and prepared to leave.

Before he did, he waved at his
Plant and whispered a soft goodbye.
Soon he would have green tomatoes,
To gather
and chop
and fry.

The rain passed over, the sun twinkled bright,
And after a series of weeks,
With basket and scissors the farmer came back,
Ready to harvest and eat.

In the place he had planted the seeds of the fruit
He was truly astonished to find,
A fragrant, utopian daisy among
the heavily
burdened
vines.

He plucked it up out of the ground,
And now tomatoes forgotten, unmissed,
He enjoyed its scent and a breeze on a hill,
City skyline far in the distance.
Select Poems–Part II
Youth Poems

A Photograph
Olivia Tse
St. Mary's Hall
10th grade

my favorite kind of photography
is black and white
pretty shadows
deep contrast
always, always
open to interpretation

my teacher says
black and white photos
are abstract
because they leave parts
up in the air

I’d say that stands true
for any kind of picture
maybe it was like this
or like that

sometimes
I like to think
I’m a dreamer
remarkably perceptive
wise beyond my years

click

then I look back and say
oh how silly of me
another black and white photo.

Cupcakes
Kelcie M. Prodger
North East School of the Arts, 12th grade

You think to yourself,
how many more cupcakes
can be made out of this batter?
(You have the misfortune of constantly
stressing and worrying about
one thing or another.)
Just because you can’t spell dyslexia
doesn’t mean you don’t have it.

Insignicances matter most when
you can’t remember what day it is;
water tastes as strong as wine when
you let your imagination own your heart.

As the compass spins, a clock turns,
and heads read over your slim shoulders.
As dusk seeps into darkness,
ic ing becomes your new dilemma.

Birth
Cyra A. Dumitru
St Mary’s University

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

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

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

for it was not I
who created those words
not I who gave them meaning
but merely the vessel
they grew in
until fully shaped.

Shocked
Alexandria Huff
St. Mary's Hall, 12th grade

families return with hearts lost in the eye
the wrath of water consumed
no respect for any being
wailing
vanquishing lives of innocent prosperity
a little girl holds Teddy in a death grip
the biting wind penetrates her skin
her bedroom, nothing’s salvaged.
Select—Poems
Part III
Near-Earth Object
Wendy Barker

They said a second moon,
a bright new sphere
orbiting our planet, another
presence we can count on.
Have you seen the moons tonight,
we’ll say, they both are full!
And suddenly our small
circumference has swollen
to the size of Saturn’s—first
one moon, then two, in time
we might have rings, a crown
of moons all following
the wisps of our transparencies,
the clouds, the drifts of all our storms.
But no—they’re saying now
it’s the last stage
of an Apollo rocket launched
thirty years ago, returned from
decades revolving round the sun.
A boomerang’s ellipsis:
a word we uttered once,
flung back to us.

from Things of the Weather; Pudding House Press, 2009

Ode to a White Dog
Marcus Goodyear

Early in the morning, I’m usually strong
enough to face the darkness of a starless sky.
My black dog shadows me onto the back
porch, huffing and grunting her presence
and clicking her nails on the concrete.
I sip decaf coffee, also black, invisible
liquid with a living spirit rising in steam
that I can see drifting in the soft light
of the computer screen where I type.
Last week, we lost our white dog.
Paralyzed, breathing heavy, he waited
on the vet’s table for us to come
say goodbye. We cried. The vet gave
us privacy. We wrapped him in the same
blanket he had as a puppy and it was still
soft. Then Dr. Joe returned with two needles.
A tranquilizer first made him vomit, but I
wiped his muzzle with a rag, kept him clean.
Then the hard one. A full syringe of something
the doctor injected slowly into his front leg,
cooing, “Good dog, good dog.” I held my hand
on his chest, felt it rise and fall and rise and fall.
I watched, but the lights were too hard

The Poet and the Artist Compete
Martha K. Grant

My two muses are jealous stepsisters,
escapees from an obscure fairy tale,
vying for the starring role in my creative life.

When one is in residence, having bolted
the lock behind her on entering,
she commands my rapt attention
to her flirtation or outright seduction.
But the other pouts on the studio porch,
pacing and chain smoking,
rattling the door handle,
making faces in the windows.

Some days I am unable to create at all,
for they stand at a collaborative impasse,
shoulder to shoulder in the door frame,
blocking the light, their sturdy arms
folded across stubborn chests,
their paint-splattered artist smocks
and ink-stained poet shirts
hanging limp and lifeless
on a single peg
in the back of the closet.

Storm Cellar—1948
LaVern McCarthy

When night storms
brought danger, Grandma
forced us into the ‘fraidy’ hole.
Down there scorpions ruled,
centipedes crawled down collars,
dank things squiggled
across our arms.

Forgetting the beast outside,
we hovered around our lantern
like cavemen at the dawn
of creation, afraid to move.
Later, when the storm had
passed, I went to sleep
and dreamed of clouds
with stinging tails.
The Final Incarnation of the Phoenix
Maribeth E. Pittman

This time,
to my sluggish surprise,
the ashes feel like a feather-bed—
they are cushy and warm, and they comfort my spirit.
I am loath to leave their swaddle.
I am lethargic, still, want only to sleep,
to be left alone outside of expectations—my own or others’.
I’m thinking...
“I don’t even want to dream.”
No, just sleep.

But comes the calling! (Damn the calling....)
Resigned, I gather myself, emit a delicate cough,
spit out charcoal dust and a wisp of sour smoke.
I slap my cheeks rosy,
flap my wings gingerly to shake out the death-creases.
(Bed-head wings—what a concept.)
I trudge into wakefulness, stalk into purposefulness—
whatever my purpose may be, and that’s clearly
not clear any more,
ot to me.

Reformation is weary work.
I don’t want to contemplate the exploits ahead,
let alone engage them.
I don’t want to do this again.
I WILL NOT DO THIS AGAIN!
If I set that intention, repeat it like a mantra
(repeat it like a mantra, repeat it like a mantra)...
after I succumb to the flames,
may it please the gods to let me stop in sleep...
this time?

Memento
LaVern McCarthy

No one knows that long ago
I escaped dirty dishes,
casserole and laundry
to go dancing with someone forbidden.
We whirled all night! We sang and touched
the stars. Nothing existed
but ourselves and fire.

Since then I have grown mellow
with middle age, comfortable
with life, complacent with marriage,
but once in awhile, thinking of that white-hot
rendezvous, I rush to my closet
humming an old love song,
searching for a certain red dress
that even after all these years, still smolders.
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.

Unforgiving Time
Janie Alonzo

I tried to speak to my Father
But my eyes
Could not
Hold his stern gaze
I became a child again
And my words like peanut butter
Stuck to the roof of my mouth
And there they remained
Unspoken
Unasked
Questions for another day

Life rolled on
Year by year
Erasing his memory
Softly at first
Leaving faint chalky traces
Of names, dates, faces
Then one swift stroke
Left dusty remnants
Floating in the air

The questions unvoiced
Unanswered
Too late
Memories vanish
Vanquished
By unforgiving time

Rio Grande
Mary E. Howell

The river calls across the quivering desert, croons a liquid lullaby, sings fluently of a country where a strong back can choke a minimum wage from gutted fields, sings in desperate ears of money to send back home, of indoor plumbing, of a plastic Jesus, on the battered dash of a primer-gray pickup, sings, in the voice of the Virgin, a luring promise to cradle them across her currents, not to swallow them in her muddy arias.

Eddy
Tom Emrick

The wind blows the ashes from my hearth
I chase them back in.
A house can be a home or a prison,
Depending on the situation.

The moon is just a rock in the sky,
Above us it just hovers.
But means so much more,
To the star-crossed lovers.

The hurricane sweeps clean,
Both destruction and emerging purity.
The fountain of youth is eventually fed
By the well of maturity.
**More Poems from Voices Editors**

**Guru**  
*Joan Seifert*

Her footsteps along the pebbly creek path  
made loud crunching sounds,  
enough, she thought, to scare a bear, if one were about.

The crunch a certain confident sound,  
preface maybe, for a book she’d write,  
“How I go forth bold, interact with the world.”

There were no bears, of course.  
But suddenly squirrels, sly brutes,  
leaped from tree to tree following her path,  
peered down on high; were they laughing?

The creek trek not that gratifying yet,  
though hard she wished; should she have come?

It is what is, her discourse group held,  
so on she trod crunching, feinting bold.  
For couldn’t each step claim a path’s possession,  
a mite of dominance? For just awhile?

The squirrels did not concur; peered down,  
chirped shrill, demanded counsel; tribute would be theirs!  
Mockery fell like withered leaves upon her trail.

Then some large bird swept down between the trees,  
flapped, cawing—hawk, shrike, kestrel?  
No matter. Wingspread ruled.  
And with stuttered slurs, the torturers fled.  
Grit calls forth strange angels, she reflected.

Her strides crunched, shouted, loud enough to scare a bear.  
She hailed the creek, hallooed the new spring water,  
laughed to watch bold splashes over shiny polished stones.

**Rage**  
*Lou Taylor*

The angst under your skin  
unbearable to behold

Bubbling up at any time  
Never predictable  
Never known

Almost visible  
Boiling rages  
Roiling  
And dying down again

Rage always present  
Never far away  
Part of every day

**Untitled Poems in English and Spanish**  
*Maria Gabriela Madrid*

It is you  
It is I  
It is my reflection I see in the mirror  
It is you  
It is I  
Alone picking up the pieces  
It is you  
It is I  
That at the end, the puzzle will reflect the lights and shadows of being alive.

**Untitled Poems in Spanish**  
*Maria Gabriela Madrid*

Es usted  
Soy yo  
Es mi relejo el que veo en el espejo  
Es usted  
Soy yo  
Solo recogiendo los pedazos  
Es usted  
Soy yo  
Que al final, el rompecabezas reflejará las luces y sombras de estar vivo.

*Voices dela Luna* welcomes Maria Gabriela Madrid as Spanish editor. She is a bilingual writer living in San Antonio, Texas, born in Caracas, Venezuela, and educated at Metropolitan University of Caracas, at Harvard University, Boston University, and Columbia University.

**Select–Poems**  
**Part V**

**Blank Canvas**  
*Carolyn Patterson Sanchez*

As you stare at the blank canvas  
colors of red, green, yellow, and blue appear in your mind  
visions of a sunset, sunrise, a rainbow, snow-peaked mountains and many others race before you  
you notice the hues, shadows, and depth required  
colors before you change forever  
a new and wonderful world has opened up  
everything is within your reach  
brushes and paints become your best friend  
onece held within, you are able to share with the world  
all that is treasured and seen only by you  
the artist that was hidden now shouts for all to hear  
glowing with pride and enthusiasm
Select Poems
Part V

Sandia Lover
Juan M. Perez

My father would smile  
A big sandia of a smile  
His teeth, although gleaming white  
Like huge seeds in every slice  
Smiling, simply smiling  
Like the fruit that made him happy  
In heaven with a huge serving  
Of fat slices of his life  
Smiling, forever smiling  
At the rest of us down below  
Waiting their turn to indulge  
To enraputure their sandia-loving soul  
With southern-born sandia slices  
Served up by beautiful bronze angels  
In a fabled corner of God’s heaven  
Right next to his forever-green garden  
My father is smiling forever  
With a huge sandia of a smile

Embrace
Annie Neugebauer

Caught in a hurry,  
raindrops tap my shoulders.  
Instinct makes me hunch  
and cover my hair,  
but then I open my arms  
and hug the sky’s tears,  
because it turns out  
that this unexpected rain  
is just what I needed.

Zydeco Dancing
Dario Beniquez

Helicopter night, noisy night,  
Crawdaddy howls back at the wind.  
Angels step to the beat. Mango mambo

Blinking lights, Billie Jo swings  
to the tunes. Graffiti painted doors,  
back alley dance floor, Coconut Bar,

Fried Fish Shack, gumbo shrimp  
in spicy red sauce; all is wet tonight.  
This is the night of Zydeco violins,

Pineapple colada, raumbunctious laughter.  
Billie Jo dances in the moonlight. Why,  
then, do I feel so blue?

'72 Skylark
Stuart Young

She definitely wants the bucket seats in white,  
console shifter, Rallye gauges and sport steering wheel.  
She only wants a 350 (for better gas mileage) but  
she does insist on the cold air package.

She deserves an overhaul with higher-than-stock compression,  
and advantages of the contemporary hot-rodдинg aftermarket  
(computer-designed carburetion, exhaust, cam profile;  
Free-flowing heads; digital ignition, etc.).

If 400 Horsepower is not possible with the original engine  
perhaps she’ll want a late-model Corvette engine  
and transmission installed from a wrecked donor.  
And she wants the optional side stripe. Black on gold metallic.

O.K., she definitely wants the Buick chrome wheels.  
But no vinyl top. She feels that the vinyl top is too  
“old fogey-ish,”  
and that her roofline looks more sleek without it.

She wants to take me on a road trip to Florida;  
We’ll visit friends on the way.

Another Chance
Frances Laniese Reed

I think to myself: I am trying to ease the pain  
Re-motivate myself and deal with past shame  
I know I fell off so much  
But all I need is God, His love and His touch  
I’m a child of God who needs to give Him praise  
Get on my knees and thank Him every single day  
Do what I got to do and move on with my life  
He’s given me guidance and potential inside  
I’ll never feel like I’m alone ’cause I know He’s always near  
Always, forever listening—lending an extra ear  
He’s given me another chance—something to look forward to  
I won’t hold back when I feel I need to pray—  
And forever thank Him—for another chance and  
Another day.

My Violin
Hejo Müller

A piece of wood  
on my neck  
and now and then  
it begins  
to glow.
Liberty Schooner Saloon
Mim Scharlack

Jazz poets are here bopping and jamming
rhyming and slamming
high-wired on Josephine Street
home of the Phoenix Bookstore
Josephine Theater and
long-loved leaning tower of Texas
120-year-old Liberty Bar

Built in 1890 by brew master Fritz Boehler
the Liberty Schooner Saloon and
Boehler & Son, Simple & Fancy Groceries
occupied the first floor his family lived above

During WW II a cousin
beckoned troops up the stairs
to her room

The Liberty began to lean after the flood of 1921
water rose above the mahogany bar
left river bottom silt
around cedar posts of the foundation

Back east on Josephine
poets sigh, cry, praise moon and sky
love lost or found
torrents of tears flow in four-four time

the band plays blues, bop ballads and rock
three drummers some nights
congas, flute, sax guitar, keyboard, bass
doin’ their magic music

Jazz poetry is here NOW
the old Liberty Bar has gone to THEN

Rain
Deborah Fuentez

A quiet storm
stirs
the dust from my eyes
awakening my lazy dreams
awakening my sleepy heart.

A soft caress of rain
envelopes me in all my ambivalence
gently holding my attention
softly washing me away
into the night.

A Texas Just So Story:
How Hard Pan Got that Hard
Jim LaVilla-Havelin

cold enough
this morning
everything tightened,
crisp
even the ground shut down

then I remember days
and days over 100 degrees
dust blowing across it
scours it until
nothing comes up
scrapes it smooth

but even rain, never enough rain
and when it comes, always too much
turn the ground into cement

I really think hard pan got hard when
I took a shovel to it

and got a shovel handle
back in the mouth
rattling my teeth

Be Still and Know – Dawn at Government Canyon
Clyta Coder

I awaken with the waking light
arousing the canyon from slumber,
My eyes feast on the dappled sunflower.
Dewy ferns wash my legs.
I feel my clenched spirit
unwinding in the quiet.
Here in this emerald canvass
of mesquite and juniper
I find silence to fill the empty spaces in my soul.

A friendly cricket chirps “Good Morning”
as katydids rasp in resounding chatter
broken only by the grunt of a wild hog asking,
“What are you doing on my trail at this hour?”

A scarlet-winged butterfly drops by,
pausing on our shared rock
to join in communal meditation.
She halos my head before wafting on,
then returns to bless my hand,
reminding me to
be still and know.
Kiko, Dancing with Leaves
_Toni H. Falls_

Dressed against the chill.
Knit cap. Flannel shirt.
No top hat and tails—

Kiko blows autumn leaves.
Buttery elm, ash,
Texas redbud
fly
like gold coins tossed
from
a benevolent hand.

The blower is part of that
body; he leaps, twirls, tosses
his head until loosened hair    glints
like obsidian
under the early    tamed    sun.

Heedless of
    tired legs    damaged elbow,
Kiko and the tawny leaves
dance—    October’s    first morning.

The Mask
_Peter Holland_

Lights sparkle and dance,
the music rises and she
takes to the floor carefree,
confident, alive and lively.
A sure bright glow
shines through the mask,
a mask of many colors,
till at once fickle fate
looses the gaudy domino.
It falls to the floor, she
collapses an empty husk
her joy and confidence
lying with the mask at her feet.

Burn
_Tom Keene_

When Moses wondered at the burning bush
might he have asked:
What is it that burns without consuming?

It is love, of course:
A secret fire
hiding in every soul,
waiting, building
for the moment
it may burst and spread
without consuming,
but declaring to all our pharaohs:
Let my people go.

Darby Riley’s Feedback Group

Kiamichi
_Jeff Aktins_

The box contains one mussel shell. No doubt from one of Dad’s
canoe trips down the Kiamichi River with his Boy Scout troop.
But why did he save it? Was it as a memory of the river? Of one
of his trips?

I remember when I first discovered mussels in the Kiamichi.
Tommy Landon and I played in the river when we were six years
old. Mom and Bertha Landon sat on the rocky shore watching
us.

This was the area known as the Old Pavilion, where the lo-
cal folk had a public beach area of sorts, located about a mile
from town. The tornado in 1945 changed all that. The town had
diminished. That day, we were all alone, as the Pavilion was no
more and this was the Landon’s private property.

Tommy and I spent an hour bobbing for those mussels, which
were the size of our hands, and trying to crack them open. It felt
primitive. We were doing something the Choctaw Indians would
have done—hunting for mussels. And we had discovered these
shells that seemed to us like clams from the ocean. Imagine, a
clam all the way up here in Oklahoma, in our river in our back
yard!

The sound of the rippling water pulses in my ears. I feel the
warm river flowing gently around us, with enough current to
carry us if we want to float. But we won’t go too far because
of the big rocks in our path, protruding from the river bottom. I
stand in the water waving my hand and yell to Mom to look at
this mussel, the largest one so far. Mom finally looks over and
nods and seems to say “Yes, I see it!” and then turns back to
Bertha. I think I’ll keep this one, forever.
Poetry Writing Groups

Mobi Warren’s Writing Group

Mobi Warren leads Haiku Hikes at Government Canyon State Natural Area on the first Sunday of each month.

Haiku

Mobi Warren

a lone white lily
slow to waken after rain
finds no companions

grounded by high wind
a small brown butterfly, wings flat
or a fallen leaf?

close-by, a bee’s roar
in the distance, faint thunder
echo, then echo

nearly toppled now
rain has loosened the roots’ grasp
on the limestone ledge

with blue that startles
corridors of dayflower
draw me up the path

Evening on the South Spur

Darby Riley*

These dry and rocky hills
turn yesterday’s water
into multiple perfect beings
flowering, grassy
fruit-bearing, woody
flying, jumping, crawling, singing
dying and being born—

just before dusk
in cool gray light
their subtle features speak.

Now the lowering sun
freed from dark cloud
shouts its last whiteness
straight at this hill
to blind and illuminate—
a proud old cedar
dying from drought
offers its bare limbs to the light.

*Darby Riley wrote this poem in the above workshop

Poetry as Therapy

Using Poetry Therapy with Clients

Melissa Martin*

Poetry therapy gives voice to our pain, our sorrow, the emotional verbiage inside our being that needs expression. The encumbered messages inside our heart and soul want to be heard. Albeit, if we listen the body will also speak to us of suffering and traumatic experiences. But there’s more... poetry therapy gives a voice to the healing journey, our resiliency, the message of hope that lives at the epicenter of our internal universe. Through the five senses: touch, sight, hearing, smell, taste; we absorb our environment and make meaning of the world. At times, our inner sponge becomes saturated with emotional pollution that needs to be squeezed out. Writing and reading poetry is a tool of cleansing for clients and for therapists.

*Melissa Martin is a licensed professional clinical counselor in Ohio who has counseled Vietnam veterans. She uses poetry therapy as a healing tool in both individual and group therapy.

Broken Soldiers

Melissa Martin

Broken soldiers existing in American VA hospitals,
They never left Vietnam.

The stench of war seeped into their bones,
Death’s smell permeates their civilian clothes.

Human atrocities scarred their psyches,
Unspeakable bloodshed robbed their innocence.

Trying to cope with images of slaughtered humanity,
Alcohol pickled their brains, LSD clouded their reality.

Unbearable pain dances in their memories,
Chaos rules their soul, numbs their spirit.

Fractured soldiers struggling in America,
Trying so hard to leave Vietnam.

Graying hair and ponytails whisper stories,
Unforgotten friends are dead but not buried.

Avant-garde hippies of the 70s fighting for peace,
Drafted by an armchair king bathed in deception.

Healing soldiers living in American society,
Weeping at the Vietnam Veteran’s Memorial Wall.
Poetry & Dreams

Poetry, Dream and Interpretation

Client X

Client X was sexually abused as a child and has made tremendous progress after 20 years in therapy. He states that looking at his dreams and expressing his feelings through writing poetry have turned his life around. Below are two poems, one from several years ago and the second one from this year, and a recent dream which he has interpreted. Notice the movement from feeling unvalued/unwanted a few years ago to his current ability to express love for himself. He sees his latest dream as a significant transformation—the transformation of loving himself to being able to extend his love to other people and to give spiritually to others.

VALUE

Client X

My father gave me no value
neither for my future nor for my present
He only thought in terms of
a cowardly revenge
for my mother’s apathy and self-pity
blaming me for her disillusionment
with their marriage
and giving me little or no value.
I was underestimated for my talents
unappreciated and unloved.

It is said that one does not
grow up until he sees his
father in himself.
If my father neither valued
his family nor himself,
perhaps that has now
happened to me.

Love of my Life

Client X

The flickering light throws its shadow
from the altar candle
into the mirror over the dressing table
bringing me reassurances
and security in my life
The dancing shadows
accompany me on a long journey
interrupted by the hard blows of life
and the fantasy of finding
my true love
a fantasy that carried me from day to day
At times my 62 years hang heavy
but tonight separate themselves
from the dancing shadows
today there is a lightness in my life
there is a new love.

Interpretation: Client X walks to this place almost everyday. There are always lots of tourists around. The Black Raven has a huge beak. It reminds him of the Black Raven that his twin brother Y used to have at home when they were children. Y fed it and trained it. Y loved the bird. Although negative aspects of the Raven appear as a bad omen, Client X likes the more ancient characterization of the Raven. In Japan it is regarded as a messenger of the Gods; Chinese Ravens were solar. In the book of Genesis the bird is a symbol of clear-sightedness; it was sent out to see whether the lowlands had emerged from the waters of the Flood. Ravens are common features of Celtic legends where they play prophetic roles. There is a fairytale like aspect to this dream. Client X likes the idea of the Raven as a bringer of light, of bringing him more into consciousness. The Raven is an archetypal animal that comes from somewhere deep in the unconscious. The Black Raven has a red ring, about a 30-carat ring, round. His former lover, Z, gave him a ring just exactly like this. Rubies were regarded as emblems of good fortune in Classical antiquity. Rubies surpass all other fiery stones, casting rays like blazing coals, so that the darkness is unable to dim their light. Formerly symbolizing an external light given to him by his lover, the ring now represents an awakening of consciousness in Client X. In many traditions the ring was the symbol of the endless cycle of uninterrupted continuity. The hole in the middle of the ring is the receptacle for, or the channel of, celestial influence. In Jungian psychology, the ring represents the process of individuation. Client X sees his own transformation in the dream. The Raven turns into a good-looking man and walks away. In his relationship with lover Z, Client X was not an equal. In his own transformation, Client X is letting go of his co-dependent relationships with men. Client X is now looking inward—into his heart and soul. He thinks this dream could represent the awakening of the third eye inside himself. He can see beyond the pain and agony (even his own). He says moderation has become a way of life, almost Buddha like. The Buddha life is beyond suffering, because it has gone through suffering. Client X now sees his quest in life as a more spiritual quest.
C.G. Jung & Arts

My Path to Jungian Dreamwork

Al Drymala*

The Research and Training Centre in Depth Psychology was founded in the 1994 by Marie-Louise von Franz and other analysts from the Jung Institut, who believed that the institute had strayed from the original spirit of Jung. Von Franz had been Jung’s closest collaborator for almost 30 years and worked for many years at the Jung Institut in Zurich, which was founded in 1948, while Jung was still alive. The specific mission of the alternate training program was to return to Jung’s original inquiry and exploration of the psyche. The Research and Training Centre in Depth Psychology expects every participant to engage in some creative work with the psyche. Even Members of the Board have their own practice specialties, which they teach at the center.

Today the center attracts students from all over the world. Requirements for applicants are similar to other such institutes, for example every applicant has to document a required number of hours of personal analysis and submit his own creative work, but the most important factor is his living connection with the unconscious and how that is being lived out.

The actual course is an individual process with ongoing personal analysis an essential element. One must attend a minimum of eight block courses (two-week blocks of lectures and seminars held each fall and spring), and navigate through two major rounds of exams and projects. Theoretically, one could complete the program in four years, but almost no one does. Upon completion one becomes a Diplomate Jungian Analyst, which is roughly equivalent to a Ph.D. in the US system.

Like other analysts, my individual journey has meandered. I have always had a strong spiritual bent and entered Catholic seminary with a strong interest in the mystical tradition of the Church. While I didn’t complete ordination as a Catholic priest, the archetype of the priesthood has been an important part of my journey. I started reading Jung in my late 20s—his autobiography and anything I could find on dreams. Dreams were and are important to me and I’ve been logging them for at least thirty years.

In 1989, I started personal analysis with a Jungian analyst, and began working with the unconscious in a more structured way while I was finishing up a degree in Counseling and getting licensed as a therapist. From the beginning, I understood analysis as a way to know myself and hopefully know clients in a deeper way.

Analysis is a spiritual discipline that must be cultivated over time. Jung understood dreams to be sacred—a very real link to the Divine and a source of numinous experiences for all the major religions. Of course, there are dreams and then there are DREAMS—we have the daily maintenance type dreams, and then, during important transitions in our lives, the big dreams.

But there is no such thing as an unimportant dream! Those little snippets—the very ones we might quickly dismiss as “only” this or that—often turn out to be some of the most profound. One needs a bit of intuition and some feeling to sort that out. Good rule of thumb—log all your dreams in a notebook, and you will have them with you for the sorting.

Dreams are symbolic expressions of one’s inner life—the unconscious—and so they are extremely useful in therapy. A good rule of thumb is to consider everything in the dream as some aspect of the dreamer herself—in other words, the people, places, situations, landscapes, everything—it is all symbolically describing something within the dreamer in most cases. This is called the subjective meaning of the dream. There are also dreams which refer to one’s objective outer life as well, so that when you dream of Aunt Sally, it really is about Aunt Sally. And the dreamer can reflect on the relations to Aunt Sally in the dream. But more often than not, “Aunt Sally” is really something within the dreamer’s own psyche.

Because Jung considered dreams to originate from a source beyond the ego, he felt they were especially important in getting to one’s deepest and truest self. We are all good at deceiving ourselves, or rationalizing, or even being too hard on ourselves—sometimes overly critical. The dream compensates our conscious attitude—it balances it out, challenges it, adds to it, supports it—all in a way that furthers the greater wholeness of the individual.

I have clients in my practice who regularly log their dreams and bring them as part of our time together. We work with them on at least two levels—one on level, we look at the more immediate compensation from the dream, i.e., what is this dream compensating in the dreamer’s conscious attitude right now. On another level, though, the symbols begin to have more of a life of their own. With a little attention, they continue their dance throughout the day. And the dreamer can evolve a relationship with a new center within the psyche that offers guidance and energy. Jung called that center the “Self.”

Beyond my actual therapy practice, I facilitate a couple of dream groups, one running for almost 6 months, and the other about 5 years. This is a great way to get a little outside support for the inner discipline of the dream work. Clients see progress in their lives, in small ways and large ways. It is always an individual matter. Analysis is about engaging the unconscious. About learning its symbolic language. Living with it in an intentional way. Listening to its subtle and sometimes not so subtle directions. And ultimately it is about living out a quest for meaning and value—one’s religious instinct—through a relationship with one’s inner self.

When my older brother died of cancer in 2006, I reached a turning point. I was harshly confronted with the question of how I was living out my own life. And so I resumed analysis, to get my bearings and re-connect with the unconscious in a more committed way. Shortly after that, I applied to the training program in Switzerland. I’ve been in analysis this second time around since the beginning of 2007 and have continued up until the present. Currently I work with a Swiss analyst via Skype, to maintain a close connection with the training program.

*Drymala is a certified therapist with a degree in Counseling. Currently he is working toward a Diploma as Jungian Analyst at the Research and Training Centre in Depth Psychology which is headquartered in Zürich, Switzerland.

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Jung is known for many terms that he introduced into our everyday language and culture—introvert and extrovert, for example; and complexes, shadow, archetypes, anima and animus, to name a few more. People forget that Jung didn’t just dream up these terms up one day. He derived these terms out of his own lived experience and that of his patients. Over his lifetime he analyzed tens of thousands of dreams, and he had an amazing intuitive ability to see the living patterns in the unconscious.

Jungian “concepts” are descriptions of living processes in the psyche, and “integrating the concepts” is to learn to relate to those inner processes in a conscious and intentional way. For example, integrating the concept of the “shadow” would be the real life struggle to own the split-off aspects of one’s personality—those sides that I think are beneath me or above me and that I have rejected or avoided. And finding the gold, the great value, in them for my life. I love the opening line of Jung’s autobiography—“My life is the story of the self-realization of the unconscious.” Integrating concepts is about the self-realization of the unconscious, and that is never completed in one’s lifetime.

What many people don’t appreciate is that Jung’s perspective on the symbolic has opened up a totally new way to understand not just one’s dreams, but all of mythology, and ancient philosophy, and all of the world religions. It is a new type of knowing and seeing for the modern age.

Jung placed great value in the individual, and felt that what each individual did was important for the whole. If you have a true sense of the value of what you are doing, then the concern isn’t with “fighting the collective.” What is the collective, but lots of individuals with greater or lesser degrees of consciousness? How you and I live out our lives really matters, in conscious and unconscious ways we will never fully appreciate.

Depth psychology at a deeper level is a vocation, not for everyone. It does take patience and a regular discipline. But, nevertheless, everyone is called to become just a little more conscious each day, to keep the whole process moving forward and not backward. Plus it just makes life worth living. That’s a big deal.

The Healing Aspects of Poetry & Arts

Modern Medicine Recognizes the Power of Poetry
from http://www.poetrytherapy.org

Meanwhile, great figures in the world of medicine were recognizing the important relationship of the arts to healing. “Not I, but the poet discovered the unconscious,” wrote Freud. Other theoreticians, such as Adler, Jung, Arieti and Reik also confirmed that the poets were the first to chart paths that science later followed. Moreno suggested the term “psychopoetry,” as well as the term “psychodrama”, for which he is famous. By the 1960’s, with the progressive evolution of group psychotherapy, therapists were delighted to discover that “poetry therapy” was an effective tool which they felt comfortable incorporating into their work. Poetry Therapy began to flourish in the hands of professionals in various disciplines, including rehabilitation, education, library science, recreation, and the creative arts.

Mental health professionals were exploring the therapeutic value of literary materials, especially of poetry. Their contribution to the emerging discipline was two-fold: 1) emphasis on the evocative value of literature, particularly poetry; and 2) recognition of the beneficial potential of having clients write either their response to poems written by others or original material, drawing on the clients’ own experiences and emotions.

A Poem from a Poetry Therapist

Powdered Sex
Melissa Martin

Tonight I will sneak away to rendezvous with my lover.
He hides in the shadows until I arrive.
Anticipation heightens until my body trembles.
I snort my burning lover through a straw.
My heart pounds wildly as I feel his touch.
An instant orgasm floods my mind and body.
When I awake my lover and my money are gone.
Continued from page 15

at the light and a life was stopped, as it will stop forever, this death you will have to live with.

It could happen to anyone. Impossible to pay complete attention, one slight distraction—you turn a corner

and a runner listening to music—classical—on his I-pod is sprinting across the street—early Saturday

May morning, blossom season, smell of lilac, his whole body in motion—and we can never take it back,

that moment that changed our lives, that death you will have to live with. And the sages say: A transgression performed with good intention is better than a precept performed with evil intention. And they also say: we should make ourselves holy, and we should be holy, because on the day of atonement when we beat our breasts with our fists for the sins we have committed knowingly and the sins we have committed without thought we do not know who shall live and who shall die and who shall drive and who shall be the one driven down—I say this to you whose name I do not know and whose anguish I can never imagine.

4. My Brother’s Resurrection

It’s all about saving a life. According to Leviticus 9.16, you should not stand aside while your fellow’s blood is shed, thus says the Lord, and so Rashi, our interpreter, reasons: if a life is in danger, you must save it. Yet our law forbids desecration of the body, and, further,

how can the dead, who in any case are not obliged to follow the commandments, be instructed to save a life? And, still further, how do we know if the body is dead, which is, depending on whom you ask, when the nose is not breathing or when the heart is not beating, which, as anyone can see, his

is, in intensive care at Hackensack medical Center—his chest rising and falling, his breath surging and receding—not, it is true, according to death’s strict definition: “cessation of spontaneous respiration,” but, rather, to the rhythm of the machines, a prognosis this scientist, this Einstein, would understand: Brain-death, the experts said, the skull severed, prohibiting the blood flow and the organs to operate on their own. I brushed the hairy chest he inherited from our father, our father, who he had already joined in the feast, even as my hand held his hand, even as I listened to his heart beating with the hope he’d wake and stand and dress and walk out of this place into a morning mysterious as where, in fact, he already was, not, it appears, like Lazarus, who, too, was a brother. If I had been there, would he have died? Did someone say: This illness is not to end in death? That your brother will rise again? Because aren’t there twelve hours of daylight? We, too, were weeping.

We, too, were moved to indignation and distress. I said: Brother, come forth. Yes, he was wrapped in bandages and a cloth. Come forth. Let’s walk out of this hell.

There’s a Jewish Delicatessen—corned beef on rye bread, onion rings and black cherry soda—and you do, you rise, all three of you, and, though you are in the other world, it’s you—a sixty-year old widow with your kidney, a forty-year old trucker with your liver, and your heart, that sweetness—in a sixty-five year old grandmother—you, all of you, lift yourselves out of your graves and walk out. And your mind? How it probed in your lab at the medical college? Isn’t that, too, still alive, in the way the mind’s discoveries are fueled by and fuel other minds, passed-on torches in the greater Mind’s examinations for solutions? That’s what science is, you taught me, a faith, and whoever believes, you said with your life, saves the world.

To read more of Professor Philip Terman’s work, please visit his website at: http://www.clarion.edu, and http://www.poetrymagazine.com.
The final program, “Baroque Bacchanal,” featured baroque Dvorak’s Piano Quartet No. 2 in E-flat, Op. 87. Lynn Stillman. The concert ended with a rousing rendition of lous punctuation by Winn and festival newcomer Judith Pieces in the Form of a Pear” for piano duet, played with meticu-
thuroughly for the concert; Kramer and the musicians received a
flawlessly for the concert; Kramer and the musicians received a
professor and composer Timothy Kramer was commis -
its world premiere gave CPMF its theme for the season. Trinity
chamber music programs
Every summer in the last two weeks of July, San Antonio based Cactus Pear Music Festival (CPMF) performs a series of classical chamber music programs in San Antonio, Boerne, and New Braunfels.

The world class performances of this 14th season of the festival were well-attended and received. The four San Antonio concerts held at Coker United Methodist drew large and appreciative audiences to four very diverse programs.

It was indeed a season of “pear-fection”—the theme of this year’s festival—sprinkled with the world premiere of a piece commissioned by CPMF, and the introduction of a new educational component, the Young Composer Xtreme Competition, that gave the festival another brand new composition that was unveiled under the musicianship of an octet of extremely gifted young student musicians. Indeed, the festival had something for everyone.

Artistic Director Stephanie Sant’Ambrogio*, former concert-master of the San Antonio Symphony, created a compelling arc of programs. The festival kicked off with “Restless Romantics: an Ambrosia of Anniversaries,” a program that celebrated works by luminaries Schumann and Chopin, both born in 1810, and American composer Samuel Barber, born a century later in 1910. Barber’s songs for baritone and piano, Despere and Still, were exquisitely performed by singer Timothy Jones.

The second program highlighted award winners Peter Miyamoto and James Winn playing Mozart’s Sonata in F major for piano with four-hands. Winn introduced the piece by explaining how important four-handed piano pieces were to the social mores of Mozart’s time. The Mendelssohn Trio in C minor, Op. 66, was performed by Winn, Sant’Ambrogio, and cellist Dmitri Atapine. These three comprise the Argenta Trio at the University of Nevada, Reno, where they teach. The third program “Paired to Perfection” with its world premiere gave CPMF its theme for the season. Trinity professor and composer Timothy Kramer was commissioned to write a new work for the festival. He called it “Three Pairs Suite” as it featured pairs of strings, woodwinds and percussion. The composition came together flawlessly for the concert; Kramer and the musicians received a thunderous standing ovation.

Kramer’s world premiere was paired with Eric Satie’s “Three Pieces in the Form of a Pear” for piano duet, played with meticulous punctuation by Winn and festival newcomer Judith Lynn Stillman. The concert ended with a rousing rendition of Dvorák’s Piano Quartet No. 2 in E-flat, Op. 87.

The final program, “Baroque Bacchanal,” featured baroque specialists, cellist Fred Edelen and harpsichordist Christina Edelen, violinists Sant’Ambrogio and Pogorelov, and the ever-effervescent flutist Stephanie Jutt in a program of baroque masterpieces. The largest crowd of the festival filled the hall for that popular program.

The last concert night also highlighted the students who made up the fellows of CPMF’s Young Artist Program (YAP). These eight exceptional student musicians had auditioned and then spent intense two weeks of lessons, mentoring, and performances, culminating in the final concert and another world premiere piece, the winning Xtreme competition “Velocity” by Colin Sorgi.

*Stephanie Sant’ Ambrogio is the winner of the 2010 Alan Bible Teaching Excellence Award at the University of Nevada, Reno. Assistant Professor of Violin and Viola, Stephanie Sant’ Ambrogio was previously Concertmaster of the San Antonio Symphony and First Assistant Principal Second Violin of The Cleveland Orchestra. Sant’ Ambrogio has been praised as an “expressive and passionate chamber musician” by the San Antonio Express-News. She has performed as a soloist and chamber musician throughout the U.S. as well as in Canada, Estonia, Sweden, Ghana, Italy, Peru, Chile, and Mexico. She is the Founder and Artistic Director of Cactus Pear Music Festival.

A Physician & Artist
Habib Nathan, MD, AACP
Glass Sculpture Artist

The finely produced illustrated book, Vitreous Visions From Judaica, by Habib Nathan, MD with beautifully prepared photos and text in glassy paper was produced by Bill Brockmeier, Little Star Ideas and Revealing Light Photography.

Dr. Habib Nathan practices psychiatry in San Antonio, and during the past decade has been immersed in the world of art, specifically glass-sculpture. Nathan reveals deep artistic aspirations, employs a wide palette of color and brilliance like a master painter, brings life to shining pieces of glass and shapes glass into memorable works of art.

A Jewish Persian-American, Nathan has brought together two of his greatest passions: Judaic symbols and the medium of sculptured glass. Nathan’s art reflects both Jewish heritage and Persian love for bright colors.

Nathan writes about who conquered the Babylonian empire and freed more than 50,000 enslaved Jews (538 BCE,) protecting their Diaspora throughout the Persian Empire.

Nathan’s collection of Menorahs are his most impressive pieces; they have different styles, colors and formats from blue to green, and from traditional shapes to cubic sculptures.

For more information regarding the artist call his studio at 210-408-7171.

Esther; and Rainbow Menorah
The San Antonio Symphony has appointed Sebastian Lang-Lessing as music director, effective October 2010. Maestro Lang-Lessing will be the eighth music director in the orchestra’s 70-year history. His initial contract runs through the 2013–14 season, encompassing the scheduled opening of the new Bexar County Performing Arts Center in September 2013.

An experienced orchestra leader and winner of Berlin’s Ferenc Fricsay Prize at the age of only 24, the German conductor has held important posts throughout Europe from the start of his career.

He served as conductor-in-residence at the Deutsche Oper Berlin for eight years and subsequently as music director and chief conductor of the Opéra de Nancy in France for seven years. During his time in Nancy, Lang-Lessing also led a full symphonic season, and under his leadership the Opéra de Nancy was promoted to national status becoming the Opéra national de Lorraine. Currently the chief conductor and artistic director of the Tasmanian Symphony, Maestro Lang-Lessing is a regular presence on the podium and in the pit of major opera houses and symphony orchestras across the globe.

“There is a favorite German saying: ‘Amerika ist das Land der unbegrenzten Möglichkeiten,’ or ‘America is the land of possibility,’” said Lang-Lessing. “In my experience, this is true—especially in San Antonio. Ever since I made my American debut in Houston, the state of Texas has felt like my American home base, and now I will truly have a home in this great state.

From the beginning I felt an immediate chemistry with the musicians of the San Antonio Symphony; they are passionate about music and committed to the orchestra’s success. I also feel a sense of dedicated partnership from everyone involved with the institution, from the loyal leadership of the board of directors to the talented administrative staff, our wonderful chorus, and the adventurous audiences throughout the city. Everyone has worked together to triumph over difficult circumstances and now there is a bright future for the San Antonio Symphony, complete with a beautiful new performing arts center. I am excited for this next chapter in my life and very thankful to all involved for offering me this incredible opportunity.”

*for more information regarding the 2010-11 season program, please visit San Antonio Webpage at www.sasymphony.org, or call (210) 554-1090.

San Antonio Symphony
Highlights of the 2010-2011 Season

Chopin Piano Concerto
October 8 & 9, 2010; 8:00 p.m.
Christopher Seaman, conductor
Jeffrey Swann, piano
The mystery of The Sorcerer’s Apprentice and the passion and virtuosity of Chopin start off the Symphony’s 71st season. Christopher Seaman brings the chilly fog-laden pastoral tunes, the high spirits of a London street party and the chimes of Big Ben to the Majestic.

October 22 & 23, 2010
8:00 p.m.
Ken-David Masur, conductor
San Antonio Symphony Mastersingers
Heidi Melton, soprano
Margaret Lattimore, mezzo-soprano
Russell Thomas, tenor
Kevin Maynor, bass
Nobody writes great melodies like the Italian opera master Rossini! His Stabat Mater is a moving religious composition, but it’s inspired by his famous opera style. The Pines of Rome captures all the grandeur of the Eternal City.

November 5 & 6, 2010
8:00 p.m.
Tito Muñoz, conductor
Ryo Yanagitani, piano
The roaring 1920s come alive with Gershwin’s and Ravel’s jazz-influenced masterpieces. These two Gershwin favorites are filled with memorable melodies that are audacious, sentimental and unabashedly American.

November 12 & 13, 2010
8:00 p.m.
Carlos Miguel Prieto, conductor
Elena Urioste, violin
Carlos Miguel Prieto, music director of the Orquesta Sinfónica de México, transports you to ancient Mexico with musical colors influenced by the Aztecs. Revueltas’s passionate movie score depicts life in an oppressed rural fishing village.

McNay Art Museum
6000 North New Braunfels, San Antonio, Texas 78209
210.805.1767
http://www.mcnayart.org

Incoming Exhibitions
You’ve Got Mail: The Greeting Cards of Richard Anuszkiewicz
September 8, 2010–January 2, 2011
Landscapes from the Age of Impressionism
October 6, 2010–January 16, 2011
Away from the adults, Otis Settle taught me and my brothers how to make whistles with blades of grass, the vibrations tickling, and to fertilize plants with eggshells and limp banana peels splayed like starfish under the surface earth. He showed us how to feed a baby pigeon with an eyedropper, and how to fold an origami dove with wings that flapped when he pulled the tail. He also told me his Master Sam stories, memories from his childhood years as a slave to Sam Houston, captor of Santa Anna at the Battle of San Jacinto, first president of the Republic of Texas. No one else mentioned these stories, and I kept them to myself. Now I hope they weren’t revisions, given condescendingly, like he would have to my grandfather, in order to accommodate a slanted version of his life.

Two were favorites, and I’d often beg for them. “Not now, child,” he’d always begin. “Don’t bother an old man.” But that was his signal for me to plead. I’d pull him a chair, usually at the backyard wrought iron table, and he’d sit, then poke at one of his hearing aids, his tongue clicks loud as a mockingbird.

In Otis’ first story, the chief of a Texas branch of the Coushatta Indian tribe complained about the Confederate government’s mandatory draft, which forced Indian Braves to travel to Virginia to fight in a war they didn’t understand. “Chief Billie Blount brung along twenty of his men, and Master Sam, he met them down at the big spring,” Otis would say. We shucked corn, throwing husks into a bucket, or his fist—the knuckles gray as if mud had caked there—whittled a piece of mesquite, his pokeyknife curling thin strips into wooden bows. “Mrs. Houston wouldn’t allow them to step foot into her house ‘cause she never forgot about that princess of his.”

Otis couldn’t, or wouldn’t, talk about Houston’s previous years with the Cherokees in Arkansas, except to say that his hero had become a chief and had married the first wife. I imagined Houston, his face streaked red and yellow, held my hands as we danced around a campfire, until he, like Sambo from the racist book my mother gave me, turned into butter, melted into light, a disappearing star. And I was moaning ‘cause the best friend I had or would ever have on this earth, somebody—’cause I was young, a little under what you are now—somebody I thought of as a sort of papa... anyway, he was dying. Even then, while I seen him all yellow and dragged down, I knewed my years working for Master Sam was to be the best of my life. Finally, he whispers, ‘Margaret! Margaret! Texas!’ and that great spirit lifts right off the bed like a light and flies its way out to the beyond.”

Nothing could prepare me for the effect these words had—Otis, so close while he told the story, and slightly younger than I, so he said, when he’d watched his substitute father die. Some nights after I’d relived this scene with Otis, I had a dream. John Wayne, his face streaked red and yellow, held my hands as we danced around a campfire, until he, like Sambo from the racist book my mother gave me, turned into butter, melted into light, a disappearing star.

* Nan Cuba is the co-editor of Art at our Doorstep: San Antonio Writers and Artists (Trinity University Press, 2008) and has published work in journals, such as Quarterly West, Columbia, and Harvard Review. She is the founder and executive director emeritus of the nonprofit literary center, Gemini Ink. Currently, she is an assistant professor of English at Our Lady of the Lake University in San Antonio.

How a Russian Poet Survives Stalin’s Russia

from Wikipedia

Anna Akhmatova was born in a suburb of Odessa in 1889. She was a beautiful, fashionable, 22-year-old woman when she published her first collection of poetry in 1912, but it became a sensation. The book was filled with love poems inspired by her affair with then unknown Italian painter Amedeo Modigliani. At the time, no Russian woman had ever written so frankly about love, and Akhmatova became a celebrity overnight.

But within a few years, life in Russia became much more complicated, and Akhmatova had a lot more to write about than love affairs. In her poem “In Memoriam July 19, 1914,” about the start of World War I, she wrote, “We grew a hundred years older in a single hour.”

After the Bolshevik Revolution, most writers and intellectuals tried to flee the country, but Akhmatova and her husband decided to stay. She wrote, “No, not under an alien sky, / Not protected by alien wings, — / I was with my people then, / There, where my people, unfortunately, were.” Her husband was shot in 1921 for allegedly participating in an anti-Bolshevik plot, and the following year, the government told her that she would no longer be able to publish her poetry. She began working on translations and more or less stopped writing her own poems.

Then Akhmatova’s son was arrested by the government. For 17 months, she went to the prison in Leningrad every day to try to get news about him. There were crowds of other women there, doing the same thing, and one day a woman recognized Akhmatova as the formerly famous poet, and whispered in her ear, “Can you describe this?” That woman’s question helped inspire Akhmatova to begin writing her 10-poem cycle “Requiem,” which many Russians consider the greatest piece of literature ever written about Stalinist Russia.
**Short Prose**

**Bunny**

Kristin Kovacic*

I was in front and he was behind. He was faster and more experienced, and if he were in front, he’d sprint far ahead, drifting dangerously into the road as he searched over his shoulder for me. We were on our bicycles. Ahead, I took the wind’s first force, and I resented him, him and the wind, pushing from either direction. Behind, he barely pedaled to keep from crashing into me, slow and ambitionless on my new bike. We noticed everything, and like the wheels beneath us, we brooded. We were about to be married. We were crossing Europe. I wondered what he was thinking—of my ass, for example, staring at it as he needed to do, for safety’s sake. I was still mostly a girl. I wondered about the way he clenched, sometimes, when I spoke, his willed attention. It had only just occurred to me that I could bother someone.

We were in the gorges of the Loire, all baking climbs and cool, roaring descents. We were alone on the road; the sound of us was the only sound. We were climbing. I could hear his patience behind me. He had taught me to concentrate on the six inches of road in front of the wheel, to not look up on a climb, so as not to lose courage. But I always looked up. He was right, of course; it was like an injection of weakness, of the recurring thought that everything—gorges, bike trip, marriage—had been his idea.

Unnoticed by a driver in a car, there is a 3/4 in. gap between the shoulder of a road and its tarmac. It demands a cyclist’s steady attention. I must have looked up (he must have seen me), and my slowly turning tire drifted off the tarmac and onto the sandy shoulder. The front of my bike folded toward the back, and I folded into it. Tangled thus, I slid across the shoulder and into some brush.

I was young. The voices of my parents still played in me, and I could hear them now, loud in their absence. I cried like I’d always cried, a child’s open keening, but in there was a knowledge that it was probably for the last time. He was there behind me, lifting me up. He cleaned my wounds with all the water from his bottle, then mine. He plastered me with bandages, then set to fixing the bike with that clenched face. Though my cuts throbbed with blood, and I trembled, I would have to ride it. We had no more water. We were twenty kilometres from anywhere.

We stood next to our bikes before mounting them. He looked over at me, and I nodded. It was only then that we looked out together at the gorge beneath us, its vast mouth of rocks. We were on a precipice, the kind your mother warns you back from. I felt a wind at my back.

We had no choice, so we made it to the village and set up our tent. To celebrate, we washed our faces and went to a restaurant. The whole day’s exertion pounded inside me, and I couldn’t remember my French enough to order. And so a rabbit was delivered, whole, mid-leap, its eye surprised as mine. It was my first, as well as his. We devoured it.

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Kristin Kovacic recently celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of this trip, and marriage, with the poet Jim Daniels. She is the co-editor of the anthology, Birth: A Literary Companion (University of Iowa Press). She lives in Pittsburgh, PA.

**Short Fiction**

**Gasping for air**

Maria Gabriela Madrid

Being at Marion’s house was a paradise for my senses: her house full of arts and crafts, displays contemporary and realistic paintings, ethnic sculptures, and colorful walls that reflect the colors of the rainbow. Every time I enter her kitchen I’m reminded of my mother’s collection of different pots and pans, and her china with flower designs ready to hold the dishes of the day. The kitchen, as a heart of the house, vibrates with sweet, salty, and spicy spices ready to be used. Marion always takes the time to describe everything to me, and automatically in the back of my mind, infinite images recreate what I used to see before I lost my sight.

As soon as she heard my white cane coming through, she took the cookies out of the oven, and left them to cool down. The smell floating in the air was powerful, sweet and mysterious, since in her cooking, she always used several exotic spices that made it difficult, even for me, to determine its place of origin.

Liz welcome back! Come right in! It’s great to see you here.

Marion, it’s great to be here.

How was your trip? You have to tell me all about it.

Marion, it was more than a trip, it was the fullest experience that I’ve ever had.

I brought a powder that will make you travel to the glorious, deepest and darkest parts of your soul. It will bring back past and recent memories. By using it, you will have a better understanding of the good and bad side of your own spirit. The only rule is to include the powder in your recipe and eat your own creation.

The only warning is that any side of your spirit can take over the other and change it for better or worse.

Do you believe that?

Well, that is what they said.

Why don’t we make some for us?

Fine, but first let bring these cookies to the table.

Feeling anxious for not knowing what to expect, Marion and I put our hands into action. The contact of our cold fingers with the flour invited us to be creative and playful. After blending the flour with butter, milk, sugar and salt, we made small balls. The first one without any definite form was nothing compared to the last one perfectly rounded waiting to be smashed and put into the oven.

Wait said Marion. You have to add more spices, and a little bit of powder from this bowl, and do you still want to add the powder you brought from Haiti?

Yes, trust me.

Fine Liz, here it is. Just move your hand a little further and you will touch it.

With her eyes closed, Liz took a small pinch of spices and powder when suddenly her heart started pounding while recalling at the same time the bright color, the simplistic and intricate forms of nature as well as the people that she was once involved with, Those relationships that ended after the accident, and now form part of her memories. The expression on her face went through all the emotions: happiness, pleasure, incomprehension and melancholy. Taking a towel, she wiped the excess flour from her hands and by a single gesture stroked the salty water running down her cheek.

Marion, it works. I only touched it and you will see...

Liz, come on we don’t have much time, take the cookies and put them in the oven.

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Marion, it works. I only touched it and you will see...

Liz, come on we don’t have much time, take the cookies and put them in the oven.

The heat from the oven cooked them quickly and as soon as they were done, Liz took them out of the oven, ate one of the cookies and put the rest inside the cookie jar. The strong sweet smell of cinnamon made Marion’s mouth drool. It was the feeling of wanting something so badly and at the same time, anticipating the moment of enjoyment. When Marion was ready to taste them, the phone rang several times.

Liz, it was Julia, said Marion. She wants to come over and try our recipe.

But Marion, we can’t trust her, she’s a hypocrite, and you never know what she’s truly thinking. She may come and steal the recipe from us.

Don’t you want us to be fair? Don’t worry, she’ll taste our recipe, but first she’ll have to share hers with us.

Marion, listen, she’s a tiger disguised as a lamb, and I’m sure she just wants to sneak around here.

No, I think you are exaggerating. She won’t come to steal. She’s your sister, maybe she just wants to make peace with you, who knows?

Stop talking, she’s here, she’s about to ring the bell.

Julia walked slowly, her red skirt folded to protect her cookies from the rain.

Howdy ya’ll! here are the cookies that will win the contest! Well, Julia, ours will give you a fight, so don’t count on that. Liz don’t be nasty, I didn’t have anything to do with your accident. It’s not my fault that I wasn’t there.

Well it’s pretty convenient that you’re the sole heir to our parents’ estate, and have a say in my future.

I swear Liz, if you behave, and I mean by doing what I say, I won’t have to send you to an institution, and you can keep living at home. Let’s make peace Liz.

Infuriated by her sister’s remarks, Liz went in the kitchen.

It wasn’t long ago that she had won most of the tournaments in Southeast Texas. Her precise style riding horses and her maneuvers, set her apart from the rest. She wasn’t only a cowboy legend, she was a free spirit, now trapped in the darkness and left to the will of her sister. Desperate, Liz went into the pantry; her hands nervously touched every can and package of food, until she almost fell against a bag of rat poison.

Liz, do you need any help? The cookies are already here waiting to be eaten.

Oh no! Everything is fine. I just want to bring more sugar to add better flavor to the cookies. I will be there.

While bringing them to the table, Liz asked: are you ready to try them?

Yes, said Julia, and Liz are you better? No more fighting? Oh sure, don’t think about it, I’m fine.

Marion, I’ve already sprinkled mine, said Liz. Just sprinkle Julia’s and yours.

In a single motion, Marion got a fair amount to sprinkle her and Julia’s cookies. After eating them, Julia noticed Marion’s rocking chair stopped moving; her hand suddenly dropped, throwing the rest of her cookie to the floor. Anguished and terrified, Julia went to check on Marion. Her motionless body left her with the terrifying truth that she would be next. Desperate, she made useless attempts to throw up the poisoned cookie.

Liz, what have you done? What did you do to us?

Oh, don’t worry, sister, it won’t be long for you. Marion is already waiting for you! As for me, everyone will see it was an accident. I’m just a blind person who gave you rat poison instead of sugar. I told you, Julia, I will always keep my freedom. Now, I will be the sole heir to our parents’ estate, and nobody will run my life. Go ahead and shock. You just have a few minutes left.

Meanwhile, Liz, with a triumphant look, went for the phone to call the police while Julia gasped for air and died.

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Persian Marchers: A Novel
Chapter Four
Mo H Saidi

“I’m sending you to Najaf to study with Ayatollah Khomeini,” Ayatollah Ansari told Mirza Hassan.

Shaking with excitement, Mirza Hassan said, “Thank you, Ayatollah! I’ll borrow money from...but...” Mirza Hassan faltered and did not finish his sentence. His head drooped.

Ayatollah Ansari patted the young man’s shoulder. “Don’t worry. Thanks to Hadji Bazaar, all your expenses will be paid for.”

Every year at this time, the local clergy chose the brightest talabe among their twenty or so students and sent him to Najaf for further theological studies. The selection of Mirza Hassan surprised everybody, because Mirza Hassan’s inability to memorize more than ten words of the Koran was well known in the madresseh. The only talents of note Mirza Hassan had exhibited so far, were his ability to run faster than anybody else and his eagerness to wrestle aggressively and well even against opponents with more experience. Coupled with his booming voice and his corpulent body, he had become the voice for the school in marches against the Shah’s government.

The rumbling of a garbage truck in the street below awakened Cyrus before dawn. The house was dark and quiet, and his hosts were still asleep. In the bathroom, his sore body throbbing with a nagging ache, he waited for the streams of hot water from the shower to traverse his sore chest, thighs, and legs and reach his feet while he watched a roach struggling to climb into the tub. He swallowed two tablets of Tylenol, flushed the roach down the toilet, and returned for a long time under the stream of hugging water.

When he came out of the shower, he compared the time on his watch with the alarm clock in the room. It was nine and a half hours later than Texas time, and he thought about the jetlag that would soon overtake his mind. In the past, when he had given medical lectures in faraway places such as Bangkok or Tokyo, the time difference had been even greater; but this time he felt totally exhausted and fatigued. He decided to blame it on the araq and the heavy meal of the night before and hoped he would soon recover. He set the alarm for a wake-up time that would promote a predictable circadian rhythm and opened the window; but when the cold and smoggy air, and the noise of heavy traffic rushed in, he shut it again. He put on a pair of running shoes, pulled a warm sweater over his jogging suit, stretched for a few minutes, and then quietly left the house for a jog around the neighborhood.

Early morning light illuminated the deserted street. The skies were overcast and the air was heavy and stiff, the alley covered with a thin layer of snow from the season’s first snow during the previous night, and now the dusting of snow blotched with gray crunched softly under his shoes.

He entered the main street aiming toward a well-known bakery across from the Iranian National Bank on Amirabad Avenue, about a mile and a half from Maryam’s home. At the intersection near the bank, he saw a cluster of military trucks and jeeps. Armed soldiers and police were guarding the bank building and preventing people from getting close.

He crossed the street to the opposite side and stared with astonishment at the stone building; the three-story bank was scarred and in ruins. The acrid smell of burned wood and plaster filled the air. The walls and windows of the third floor had collapsed over the remaining levels, and splintered window frames, broken glass and burnt wood were scattered over the sidewalk.

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Cyrus entered the courtyard and the hall and quietly climbed up. The main entrance of Maryam’s house was unlocked. The other victim he was thanked by the paramedic and excused. Whirled up. He tended to the wounded leg and helped transfer the fallen debris and fallen bricks and concrete, he was lucky to be alive. Cyrus saw fractured bones extruding from the flesh. The wound was breathing; his rapid pulse barely detectable. Black clot—these were innocent victims, night guards, now badly burned; soon might die of infection. Their broken limbs reminded him of injuries he had seen years ago, when he was a young recruit searching through collapsed mud huts for buried villagers after a devastating earthquake.

Like the muezzin’s crow—the bells that toll in the wee hours of the morning—the clatter of dishes in the kitchen broke Cyrus’s chain of thoughts. It was time to get ready for a new day. Maryam was emptying the dishwasher and putting away the dishes when Cyrus came down. He greeted her and settled with a stekan of tea at the breakfast table. A few minutes later a disgruntled Habib joined them and turned on the radio for the morning news. Maryam had already set the table and put out fresh bread, the quince marmalade, wild-cherry jam, honey, butter, and the sheep cheese. The radio was bellowing news about the state-dinner the Shah had hosted the previous evening for President Nicolae Ceausescu, the visiting Romanian dictator. Nothing was said about the bombing of the Bank-e-Melli building.

By the time Cyrus had finished his second stekan of tea, Parviz arrived to give him a ride to his house to meet their mother. Parviz refused Maryam’s offer of tea and wanted to rush off promptly.

“We have a busy day, Cyrus. Please, let’s go now!” he urged Cyrus on. Maryam stopped them, “Cyrus, please, tell me; when are you coming back? I need to know, so I can schedule visits from friends and relatives.”

Cyrus turned to Parviz. “What do you think?”

“You know everybody will call and want to come over.” Maryam insisted.

Parviz tried to dismiss her. “He will be busy with Mother all day, today and tomorrow.” But Maryam was adamant. “How about later in the week, Parviz?”

“You can set up visits for Friday,” Parviz relented.

Cyrus followed Parviz downstairs into the noisy street. Parviz was an aggressive driver; on the five-minute drive to his house, he skillfully swerved around cars and honked his horn often, even when there was no need to do so. He parked the car in the street in front of his single-family house, the driver-side tires close to the edge of the joob, the open-sewage line, running down between the street and sidewalk.

Cyrus took his shoes off before entering the carpeted hallway. Parviz led him inside toward the elegant guestroom where their mother was staying. She was sitting on a blue and beige Isfahan carpet that covered the entire floor. He said salaam, kneeling and kissed his mother’s hand; it was cold and pale. “Oh, my son, let me hug you,” she said softly, gently grasping Cyrus’s hand. She pulled him close and embraced him, her eyes gleaming. Cyrus’s eyes welled. He enjoyed the warmth of her bosom, the perfume of rosewater she always sprinkled her cheeks with. The smell ignited gentle childhood memories. They both fell silent for a moment, and wiped their eyes. Cyrus felt a lump in his throat. For a fleeting moment, he experienced utter peace in his mother’s arms and did not want to leave her embrace “I need to go to a business meeting at my college,” Parviz broke in abruptly, “I’m late already.”

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A short while later Parviz’s wife came in to greet Cyrus and offer him a cup of hot tea. Out of consideration for his mother who needed to fast prior to her surgery, Cyrus declined.

“It has been a long four years since your last visit here.” Mother whispered.

Cyrus was pleased that his mother was in good spirits; for the moment she appeared content and free of pain. He sat down next to her and held her cold hand.

Observing her bulging abdomen he asked, “How are you, Bibi?”

“I’m fine now.” She did not mention the stabbing, recurrent pain that had tormented her for the last six months. She tapped Cyrus’s hand softly and smiled. “You’re thinner than last time. Why did you lose weight, my son? Doctors should be plump and dullahs gaunt.” she said, recalling an old proverb.

“Oh, I was too heavy before. Nowadays I run almost every morning, and I have much more energy.”

The sun appeared for a moment behind the window, some strands of light slanting down, landing on the carpet and touching his mother’s chest, neck, and face. She liked their warmth and they comforted her. She managed most of the household matters including their finances very frugally and always kept the family on a tight budget. He observed a shadow of grave concern pass over his mother’s face. It was midmorning when Parviz returned home. “Mother, in a free society one encounters all types of opportunities, from the best to the worst of things, but one can choose to make the most of what one sees, so we will know what you have.”

She frowned, “Well, I am afraid that I have something more than a simple ulcer and I fear you boys will not tell me the truth if that is so. I feel a hard lump in my stomach, especially after each meal and to me this lump seems to be more than just a canker sore.”

Her statement surprised Cyrus, “I’ll mention your concern to Dr. Shaad, I promise!”

“You should know, my sons, that I am not afraid of the truth. I need to know about my illness.”

“I am sure Dr. Shaad will take a biopsy of anything suspicious he sees, so we will know what you have.”

She insisted, “If it is cancer, I will learn to deal with it.”

Parviz was unhappy to hear the word ‘cancer’ and immediately objected, “I don’t think you have cancer, Mother! You just have some indigestion; I for one believe you will recover completely and regain your health. Trust me; it is only some kind of indigestion.

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Cyrus was amused by Parviz’s simple point of view, but did not express want to get into another discussion with his brother.

Cyrus and Parviz accompanied their mother to the hospital. A young nurse escorted them to a consultation room next to the minor surgery suite. She set the medical file on the spotlessly clean counter and paged Dr. Shaad. She took the old lady’s pulse, temperature, and blood pressure, asked a series of medical questions about her past health, and noted it all in the file.

When Dr. Shaad showed up he recognized Cyrus immediately.

“What a pleasant surprise! I am so glad to see you.” They embraced. “Man, you have aged. What happened to all that hair on your head?”

He laughed and patted Cyrus’s shoulder. Then he turned and greeted his friend’s mother and brother, gently polite with the lady, jovial with the man. Dr. Shaad was a chubby man of forty-five years who always had a pleasant smile on his plump face. He and Cyrus had been classmates at Tehran Medical School. When they both came to the U.S. for their medical specialty education, Shaad went to the University of Chicago and became a gastroenterologist, while Cyrus became a surgeon and moved to Texas. Dr. Shaad returned to a part-time faculty position at Tehran University, while setting up a lucrative private practice in the affluent northern part of Tehran.

Cyrus’s mother liked Dr. Shaad’s friendly attitude; Parviz, however, was annoyed by the physician’s cheerful manner; he preferred a more reserved demeanor.

Dr. Shaad turned to their mother, who was wrapped in a black chador that showed only her face and a few strands of hair, and told her, “You’ll be fine, Bibi Chanoum.” He grinned, “We’ll take good care of you and most probably this is only a minor irritation.”

Parviz liked that statement and smiled for the first time, but their mother maintained her uneasiness.

Cyrus recalled his promise to his mother and said, “Dr. Shaad, our mother is really afraid; somehow she is convinced she has a tumor.”

Dr. Shaad’s face became serious. He knelt down, stared directly into the face of the old woman, and said, “I promise you, Bibi Chanoum, I’ll examine your stomach very carefully, and I will biopsy anything even remotely suspicious.”

He caught his patient by surprise when he went on, “Do you mind if Cyrus attends the surgery?”

“Of course not! What a great suggestion!” A glance at him told her that Cyrus did not like the idea, but his mother begged him, “Please, stay. I’ll feel much better if you are with me in the operating room.”

Cyrus and his mother followed Dr. Shaad to the holding area while Parviz went to the waiting room.

Cyrus’s mother held his hand. “I am so happy that you are here with me.” She smiled into his face and appeared calm, prepared for anything.

A nurse directed them to a small room and told Cyrus’s mother to change into a hospital gown. The nurse helped her lie down on a stretcher and again measured her blood pressure and pulse rate. Satisfied with the results, she smiled at Cyrus, “Your mother is in good shape, Doctor.”

She pulled out a pre-filled syringe, cleansed the patient’s arm with an alcohol swab, injected the drug deep into her deltoid muscle, and left to check the instruments in the minor surgery room.

A few minutes later, she came back. “How are you feeling, Ma’am?” Seeing the patient could hardly keep her eyes open, the nurse smiled, “I think you are ready.”

Cyrus helped the nurse push the stretcher into the hall and rotate it toward the minor surgical suite. “You can change in the doctor’s lounge, Doctor!” the nurse pointed down the hall.

Cyrus was holding his mother’s cold hand when Dr. Shaad entered the surgical suite. He wore a sterile surgical gown and gloves, and inspected the instruments laid out on a long tray covered with a sterile, green surgical sheet. He looked at his well-sedated patient, patted her eyebrows with his index finger, encountered no resistance when he opened her mouth, and inserted the flexible gastroscope.

Peering through the eyepiece of the gastroscope he moved its flexible tip around until he identified an ulcerated red bulge in the stomach. He raised his head and invited Cyrus to look, “Here is an ulcer. I will take a few biopsies of it.”

Cyrus noticed an elevated edge around the ulcer and immediately became concerned. He quizzically raised his eyebrows, “What about that uneven swelling around the ulcer? Doesn’t that look suspicious to you?”

Dr. Shaad made light of the suggestion. “My friend, this is only a nasty stomach ulcer. She will be fine,” He extracted a few pieces of tissue and dropped them into the formalin solution. “You worry too much!” He grinned. “Let’s wait for the results.”

Cyrus replied with some reservation. He wasn’t happy with the appearance of the biopsic specimen; to his experienced eye it seemed to contain hardly anything but streaky blood clots. He was afraid they might fail to produce an accurate diagnosis.

“I assure you, the pathologist will not find a tumor.” Dr. Shaad asserted in a determined voice. “We have plenty of samples now.”

After the instrument had been removed, the old lady coughed for a while, and then she became calm again. Her eyes were closed, her face very pale; she fell asleep.

“As soon as she is completely stable you can take her home,” Dr. Shaad said. “I’ll call you at your sister’s house the minute I get the pathologist’s report.”

Parviz eagerly waited for Cyrus’s entry into the waiting room and pressed him for a detailed description of the procedure. When he heard of Dr. Shaad’s statements, he immediately pounced. “I knew it wouldn’t be cancer.”

Cyrus considered this assertion premature and emphasized, “We really don’t know yet what type of ulcer Mother has and need to wait for the tissue report before we can draw any conclusions.”

Parviz ignored Cyrus’s objection and remained confident about his own prediction, “I feel better already about Mother’s situation.” A moment later he announced, “Now that this is done, I need to attend to some business. Can you stay with Mother and take her home afterwards?”

Cyrus nodded and Parviz promptly left the hospital. A short while later a nurse came into the waiting room looking for Cyrus. “Your mother is awake and wants to see you.”

Cyrus entered the recovery room. His mother opened her eyes, smiled at him and asked, “Did your friend find a tumor?”

Cyrus had not expected this direct question. He said, “He saw no tumor at all — only an ulcer. All you have to do is take your medicine and you’ll be well again in a few months.”

She rewarded him with her kind, calming smile and rested her head back on the pillow.

Bahram, the young student Cyrus had met the night of his arrival, now occupied a small room at the end of the hall on the second floor of Maryam’s apartment, which had been a storage room. An intelligent youth, Bahram was well liked by

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When we sit down to put words on a blank page, how do we go about making those words the best they can be? When it feels overwhelming to get anything at all down on the page that stares up at us with the challenge of its emptiness, it can be tempting to be easy on ourselves by writing something familiar or overly planned. How do we break out of our usual ways of thinking, approach our subject matter from new angles, alter our habitual patterns of diction and syntax? Free writing, I tell my students.

Free writing is how we warm up our writing muscles and find material that is fresh and vital. I have years of free writing notebooks, pages filled at the weekly sessions I spend with my free writing group or when I do warm-up free writes at home. When I sit at my desk to write, I always have a free write notebook open for inspiration, challenge and, yes, distraction.

More about that later. First, what is free writing? There are many variations, but the basic rule is that you pick an amount of time, generally from 5 to 10 minutes, and write non-stop for that period of time. That’s it. You can write with pencil, pen, or on the computer, but you can’t stop. If you come to a place where you have nothing to say, you write “I have nothing to say,” but don’t let the writing stop. No editing either. Whatever you write stays as is.

I use prompts when I do my free writes. A prompt can be any word or phrase or snippet of dialogue. Because I like to remove as much intention as possible, I randomize the prompt by writing several on small pieces of paper and then choosing one blindly. The very best place I have found to mine for prompts is an old World Book Encyclopedia, where I’ve gotten such gems as “Then there are sure to be some earth and stone and sand,” “I wish my room had a floor,” “On the day before we start,” and “Still, no current flowed,” which are the first four in my current notebook. What you want is something that is not too directive. Hopefully something where your first reaction is “What? How will I ever write something from that?” And then you write.

By not stopping, you shut off the inner editor who tries to comment on your writing as the words appear. You know the one I mean—the one who says your writing is not good enough, or who would ever want to read it, or what would your mother say. The rule of not stopping, and the zany energy that evolves from the challenge of keeping the words flowing, allows your unconscious to have its say without judgment.

Don’t try to get a poem (or essay or story) from your free write, although every once in a while that will happen. Instead, cull through what you’ve written for words or phrases that hold energy for you. You might underline these so that they jump out at you when you’re leafing through the pages for ideas. Or for distraction, as I mentioned before. When your writing is going in predictable directions, when you are writing something that sounds too much like you, distract yourself from your tried-and-true path with something strange, and strangely wonderful, from your free write journal.

Barbara Ras’ *The Last Skin* (Penguin Poets) wanders along a changing landscape of moods, impressions and memories. Her control and mastery of material reveals a poet with a clear, strong conception and technical execution of each poem. The dominant theme of the book is the poet’s haunting by the death of her mother. Her mother is remembered with a mixture of grief, regret, sympathy, anger and acceptance. Along with her intense feelings about her mother, Ras also delves into political commentary, travel narratives, tender and humorous poems about love and marriage, and memories of experience; and it’s marked by worship and worry. Her materials include the death of a parent, travel and meditation, nature and memory, serial wars, time. But it is the profound, implacable tension sparking through those materials that create her distinct manner—graceful or erratic gestures veering between the devotional and the quizzical. I take a harrowing pleasure here in listening to the erosion of stability and sanity not displayed but unmoored, seemingly irreducible—salvaged by the generous accommodations and resolving shapes of the poems. Often praised for its values, Ras’ poetry interests me more for its extremities.

* Barbara Ras was born in New Bedford, Massachusetts and has lived in Costa Rica, Colombia, and Athens, Georgia. She is the author of *One Hidden Stuff* (Penguin 2006) and *of Bite Every Sorrow* (Louisiana State University Press 1998), which was selected by C.K. Williams for the Walt Whitman Award. Ras has worked as a Senior Acquisitions Editor for the University of Georgia Press in Athens, and has taught at the Warren Wilson MFA Program for Writers. Currently she directs the Trinity University Press in San Antonio, Texas.

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from Kurt Heinzelman, Marian Haddad, Scott Wiggerman, David Starkey, and many others.

**Wings Press**

Wings Press evolved during the small press movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s. One of the founders of Wings Press was Joanie Whitebird, who was active in the formation of COSMEP (Committee of Small Magazine Editors and Publishers). Whitebird was the driving force behind the first truly multicultural anthology of contemporary Texas poetry, *Travois*, published in 1975 as a cooperative venture between the Houston Museum of Fine Arts and another small Texas publisher, Thorp Springs Press. Wings Press was founded that same year by Joseph F. Lomax (Editor and Publisher) and Joanie Whitebird (Editor) as “an informal association of artists and cultural mythologists dedicated to the preservation of the literature of Texas.”

**New Releases**

*My Town: A Memoir of Albuquerque, New Mexico in Poems, Prose and Photographs*

by Margaret Randall

*Borderlines: Drawing Border Lives / Fronteras: Dibujando las vidas fronterizas*

by Steven and Reefka Schneider

*Crazy Love*

by Pam Uschuk

*King of the Chicanos*

by Manuel Ramos

**Notes & Videos from Grand Canyon**

**Voices National Geography Tour of the Grand Canyon**

YouTube - Grand Canyon Interview E

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U8nWyVOLRge

The Grand Canyon is a steep-sided canyon carved by the Colorado River in the United States in the state of Arizona. It is largely contained within the Grand Canyon National Park, one of the first national parks in the United States. President Theodore Roosevelt was a major proponent of preservation of the Grand Canyon area, and visited it on numerous occasions to hunt and enjoy the scenery. The Grand Canyon is 277 miles (446 km) long, up to 18 miles (29 km) wide and attains a depth of over a mile (1.83 km) (6000 feet). Nearly two billion years of the Earth’s geological history have been exposed as the Colorado River and its tributaries cut their channels through layer after layer of rock while the Colorado Plateau was uplifted. While the specific geological processes and timing that formed the Grand Canyon are the subject of debate by geologists, recent evidence suggests the Colorado River established its course through the canyon at least 17 million years ago.
Select Photos

Photos from Desert Botanical Garden
Phoenix, Arizona
www.Voicesdelaluna.com

Photos from Sedona Vortexes

Music & Poetry Videos
by Bryce Milligan
“Sweet Anarchy”
http://youtu.be/QcGMfZ5hhio
and
“Margot’s Fog”
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hulgFSsIA

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 must 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.
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Voices de la Luna
and
Barnes & Noble

Announce the Joint Monthly Poetry Workshop, Reading, and Open Mic at La Cantera Barnes & Noble
Beginning Wednesday 22 September
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.purosalm.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.
6 PM Poetry Workshop: Host, Josie Mixon
7 PM Open Mic: Host, Mo H. Saidi
8 PM Featured Guest: Host, James Brandenburg
For more information, visit www.bihlhausarts.org

Last Thursday of Each Month 7–9 PM– Awaken the Sleeping Poet – Features and open mic – Northwoods Barnes & Noble,–18030 HWY 281 N, Suite #140 (281 & 1604)–(210) 490-0411. Host: Floyd Lamrouex

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
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