Questions for Bonnie Lyons
Conversation with Sebastian Lang-Lessing
“The Baptism of Grackles” by Budd Powell Mahan
Voices de la Luna Celebrates National Poetry Month
Teaching English Literature at UTSA
Poetry & Arts Places in San Antonio

“A poem … begins as a lump in the throat, a sense of wrong, a homesickness, a lovesickness…. It finds the thought and the thought finds the words.” Robert Frost (1874–1963)

BOTANICAL GARDEN—33 acres of formal gardens, pools, fountains, and natural areas; Native Texas Trail, Lucille Halsell Conservatory. www.sabot.org

CARVER COMMUNITY CULTURAL CENTER—Traces its historic roots back some 85 years. Facility is both a gallery for contemporary art exhibits and a theater for performing artists. www.thecarver.org

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

INSTITUTE OF TEXAN CULTURES—The Institute is concerned with the people who produced Texas events—people who created the robust kaleidoscope that is Texas today. www.texancultures.com

JAZZ AT THE LANDING—NPR’s acclaimed radio show, Riverwalk Jazz, is produced in San Antonio at The Landing, one of the country’s oldest jazz clubs. www.riverwalkjazz.org

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

MAJESTIC THEATER—Opened in 1929; restored in 1989 as a performing arts center, the Majestic is said to be one of the finest “atmospheric” theaters ever built. www.themajestic.com/theatre.htm

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. www.mcnyart.org

MEXICAN CULTURAL INSTITUTE—Exhibits of contemporary Mexican artists. portal.srg.gob.mx/culturamexicaing/


SAN ANTONIO OPERA—The opera currently performs at the Lila Cockrell Theater. Future performances include 2011 National Vocal Competition, Placido Domingo, and H.M.S. Pinafore. www.saopera.com

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

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

SOUTHWEST SCHOOL OF ART—Housed in restored city’s only remaining example of French Provincial architecture. Craft Center established alternative art school at site in 1971. www.swschool.org


Poetry Venues
Please see the Poetry Events section on page 44 and at: www.voicesdelaluna.com

Chairman’s Note

Mike Burke

On a very personal note Voices de la Luna: A Quarterly Poetry & Arts Magazine has broadened my horizons and given me a greater understanding of how expression in all forms enriches our society. After spending my career working with molecules and materials, I have gained a new respect for the part that the arts, music, and literature play in enriching our world. I have enjoyed firsthand the beauty of expression and how it brings joy to people and helps troubled souls. It has inspired a desire in me to contribute more to the world around me through the work of this great organization. I am honored and privileged to serve as the Chairman of Voices de la Luna. I would like to thank Dr. Harmon Kelly for his leadership during the startup and establishment of the organization. We now take on the responsibility of moving the organization to the next level.

To be successful it is important for any organization to set realistic goals. The first of these will be to expand our audience, giving South Texas artists greater exposure to the community by increasing subscriptions to our quarterly magazine and visits to our online publication, which has broader content. This will be driven in large part through linkage with other organizations such as the Sagebrush Review and UTSA.

Education will continue to be a very important focus of the organization. The excellent work of our founders Dr. Mo H Saidi and Jim Brandenburg at local high schools and universities has played an important role in the lives of many students and has greatly enhanced the reputation of Voices de la Luna. As our support staff is developed we will look for opportunities to expand their work in this area.

Art therapy has also been an important activity. I have had the opportunity to meet people who have been helped by our certified Poetry Therapist, Jim Brandenburg. Jim’s work with distressed youth and adults has been a major contribution to our community. Supporting this work will continue to be a strong focus for us.

All this work requires a dedicated staff and volunteers. To this point, almost all of our work has come from our founders and a dedicated core of volunteers. If we are to move to the next level and meet our goals, we need to supplement this work with a strong staff, which will require a focus on fundraising. Like all other 501(c)(3) non-profits this is critical to the growth and development of the organization. Over the next two years we will supplement annual individual contributions with strong long-term relationships with major foundations that support the arts.

I am very excited about the challenges in front of us, and based on our past success I am confident we can make Voices de la Luna the premier arts advocate we aspire to be.

Thank You for Supporting Voices de la Luna
A Quarterly Poetry & Arts Magazine
Cover Page Art

David Baker
A Freelance Artist

David Baker is both a freelance artist who produces realistic figurative paintings and commissioned portraits. He has a masters degree in medical illustration from the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, Dallas. His work has been exhibited in galleries, museums, and medical institutions in Texas, including the Dallas Museum of Art, Frito Lay Company, Kerr McGee Oil Company, the Grace Museum (Abilene), Children’s Medical Center, Museum of the Southwest (Midland), Cass Oil Company, McKinsey and Company, and in private collections in Dallas and Houston. He is the medical illustrator for the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio. He has been commissioned by the following clients to produce work: Roger Horchow, Rosalie Taubman, Claude Albritton, John Reoch, Dr. Irwin Thal, David Durham, Larry McMurry, Laura Bush, U.T. Health Science Center at San Antonio, Trinity University, and Harry S. Parker III.

For more information visit: http://www.uthscsa.edu/IMS/medill.aspx. This month’s Cover Page Art is Baker’s Stearman, Stinson Field.

Voices de la Luna
A Quarterly Poetry & Arts Magazine

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A Letter from the Editors
Mo H Saidi and James Brandenburg

For the editors of Voices de la Luna, advancing poetry and arts in South Texas is the first priority. Although we are seeking submissions from poets and artists who live in Texas, we also receive work from national and international writers. We have found considering and publishing creative materials originating regionally can be achieved while we improve the quality of the magazine. Our goal is to extend the reach and quality of the magazine, so every published piece in Voices de la Luna is reviewed thoroughly and then recommended by our editorial staff before consideration for publication in the magazine.

On Saturday 12 March, the night of Luminarias, San Antonio celebrated literature and arts, partied all evening and night, listened to music, and watched theatrical plays. Marian Aitches, Anel Flores, and Micaela Perez directed the literary arts section, working tirelessly to arrange impressive presentations of prose and spoken poetry.

April has always been a busy month for poetry because it is National Poetry Month; and thanks to Jim LaVilla-Havelin, an art director, published poet himself, and the coordinator of the poetry month, San Antonio plays its role celebrating poetry and arts in San Antonio. In conjunction with these events, Voices de la Luna is celebrating its third anniversary and staging an evening of poetry, music, and wine at The Dominion Country Club on Wednesday 27 April from 6:30 to 9:15 PM. Since we are collaborating with the UTSA English Department and San Antonio Symphony, this year’s event includes presentations by Dr. Drinka, Chair of the English Department, and Mr. Jack Fishman, Executive Director of the symphony, as well as performances by Dr. Carmen Tafolla and Trey Moore. Voices de la Luna is grateful to the benefactors, sponsors, poets, contributing artists, volunteers, and the event chair and directors who made the event successful.

Meanwhile, thanks to our supportive board of directors and advisors and our dedicated staff and editors, Voices de la Luna is completing three years of existence and presently publishing the magazine in four formats including hardcopy and webpage. The three electronic versions are accessible without fee; the hardcopy is mailed only to paid subscribers. However, the fee is considered a membership fee; therefore, it’s tax deductible.

Audiences at poetry venues in San Antonio are growing. Students and faculty associated with Clark High School, TMI, Sagebrush Review, and UTSA are participating enthusiastically in Voices’ monthly poetry and arts venue at Barnes & Noble at The Shops at La Cantera.

Other important news: Voices de la Luna and Sagebrush Review, have agreed to collaborate to advance poetry and literature in San Antonio. We are grateful to Dr. Bridget Drinka, the Chair of the English Department, and Cooper Harris, Managing Editor of Sagebrush Review, for negotiating this agreement. Both Voices and Sagebrush Review will coordinate their literary venues, share information on publishing, and devote pages of their journals to publish selected work from each other. Voices de la Luna is very grateful for the editorial and copy-editing work of Deb Peña and Laura Davenport, who are playing a valuable role in the preparation of our magazine.

Please read the complete article at www.voicesdelaluna.
Antoine de Saint-Exupéry: Born in Lyon, France, on 29 June 1900, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry entered the military service to train as a pilot in 1921. He spent much of his life as a commercial pilot, flying routes between Toulouse, France, and Dakar, Senegal; between Casablanca and Dakar; and throughout Argentina. He survived several plane crashes, including one in the Sahara desert while attempting to set a speed record for a flight from Paris to Saigon. After four days, suffering from severe dehydration, he and his navigator were rescued by a Bedouin.

Saint-Exupéry’s flying experiences inspired him to write, and he enjoyed a second, parallel career as an author. His first novel, L’Aviateur (The Aviator), was published in 1926. This was followed by two novels, Courrier-Sud (Southern Mail) and Vol de nuit (Night Flight), which depicted pilots as heroic figures, dedicated to their craft. He achieved international recognition with his novel Terres des hommes (translated as Wind, Sand and Stars), which recounted his ordeal in the Sahara, and for which he won the Grand Prix du roman de l’Académie française. He is perhaps best known as the author-illustrator of the children’s book Le Petit Prince (The Little Prince).

When World War II broke out, Saint-Exupéry joined the French air force, but after the fall of France he relocated to the United States. In 1943 he returned to France to fly for the Free French. On 31 July 1944 his airplane disappeared near Corsica. His body was never definitively identified, but his plane was discovered in shallow waters off the coast of Marseille in 2003.

Beryl Markham: Beryl Markham née Clutterbuck was born in the village of Ashwell in England on 26 October 1902. She was raised primarily by her father in Kenya (then British East Africa) and became an expert horse trainer. She married three times and had several notorious love affairs, including one with the Duke of Gloucester, son of King George V of England. She befriended Danish writer Karen Blixen (pen name Isak Dinesen), famous for her memoir Out of Africa, in the 1920s and was persuaded to take flying lessons. She worked as a bush pilot, spotting herds of game and radioing their position to safaris on the ground.

In 1936 Markham took off from Abingdon, England, in an attempt to become the first pilot to fly from Europe to New York. Mechanical problems forced her to crash land in Nova Scotia, but she was still the first female pilot to traverse the Atlantic east to west. In 1942 she wrote about her adventures in a memoir, West with the Night, and her biographer Mary S. Lovell suggests that her writing style was influenced by one of her lovers, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry.

Her book quickly went out of print, and Markham lived the next forty years in relative obscurity, returning to her career as a breeder and trainer of horses in Kenya. A positive comment by Ernest Hemmingway in one of his letters, not noted until 1982, concerning Markham’s book fueled new interest, and the book was republished in 1983. Markham, now eighty years old, basked in her new-found fame for three years until her death in 1986.

Katherine Stinson: When Katherine Stinson earned her pilot’s license on 24 July, 1912, at the age of 21, she was only the fourth woman in the U.S. to do so. Born in Alabama, she lived for a time in Arkansas, but she relocated to San Antonio with her family to set up a flight school, because the climate there was ideal for flying. She and her sister Marjorie both became flight instructors, and Katherine became a stunt pilot. In 1915 she became the first woman to fly a loop, a maneuver she repeated hundreds of times in her career. She was one of the first women authorized to carry the U.S. mail, and during World War I she flew on...
Bonnie Lyons, a professor teaching American and British literature, 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.

Mo H Saidi: Your grandfather, Benjamin Dubrow, was an immigrant from Belarus, who arrived here with a wife, three children and no English. He began with a candy store and ended up with a chain of Jewish cafeterias in Brooklyn, Manhattan, and Miami Beach. My father, Irving Kaplan, was Benjamin Dubrow’s son-in-law. He graduated from Harvard Law School and practiced law in NYC for awhile, but by the end of World War II he had two children and felt he couldn’t begin law practice again. In those days, beginning lawyers made very little. Both my parents graduated college, so my going to college was never in question. During one summer, I worked at Dubrow’s, in the garment center (south of Times Square), taking sandwich orders on six phones. I got a free lunch, as well as a salary. All summer I ate sturgeon, not realizing how expensive it was—I think I ate more than I earned. After college I had a number of jobs: editorial assistant at Bantam Books, juvenile probation officer, teacher of English to Jewish children from Arab countries in Israel, and social worker in Oakland. Returning to graduate school and beginning to teach at the university level seemed a lovely life, although I needed those years away from the academy first.

Mo H Saidi: Your grandfather, Benjamin Dubrow, was the founder of the famous Dubrow’s Cafeteria in New York where you worked many summers. How did you make the transition to a scholar with a Ph.D. in English Literature?

Bonnie Lyons: My grandfather, Benjamin Dubrow, was an immigrant from Belarus, who arrived here with a wife, three children and no English. He began with a candy store and ended up with a chain of Jewish cafeterias in Brooklyn, Manhattan, and Miami Beach. My father, Irving Kaplan, was Benjamin Dubrow’s son-in-law. He graduated from Harvard Law School and practiced law in NYC for awhile, but by the end of World War II he had two children and felt he couldn’t begin law practice again. In those days, beginning lawyers made very little. Both my parents graduated college, so my going to college was never in question. During one summer, I worked at Dubrow’s, in the garment center (south of Times Square), taking sandwich orders on six phones. I got a free lunch, as well as a salary. All summer I ate sturgeon, not realizing how expensive it was—I think I ate more than I earned. After college I had a number of jobs: editorial assistant at Bantam Books, juvenile probation officer, teacher of English to Jewish children from Arab countries in Israel, and social worker in Oakland. Returning to graduate school and beginning to teach at the university level seemed a lovely life, although I needed those years away from the academy first.

You grew up in New York and Florida and have lived in Boston and New Orleans, but you ended up here in San Antonio. How does this city compare to Boston & New York, two American meccas of arts and literature?

San Antonio isn’t New York or Boston obviously, but the city has really developed culturally since I arrived in the 70s. I’ve become a sort of cheerleader for San Antonio—proud of the new wing of the McNay, of the Riverwalk extension, and the Pearl development. Manhattan and Boston don’t need cheerleaders!

You have reviewed the work of many American writers; who are your two favorite American writers?

Oh my, I can’t pick just two! Will you take ten? Thoreau, Twain, Dickinson, Whitman, Erdrich, Henry and Philip Roth, Mary Oliver, Flannery O’Connor, Toni Morrison. To tell you the truth, I like particular books, not authors in general, and some of my most favorite authors are not American: Alice Munro and Doris Lessing, for example.

The last American who won a Nobel Prize in Literature was Toni Morrison in 1993; any speculations about why an American has not won since then?

I have no idea how these choices are made. I have heard there is a desire to spread them around to writers all over the world. I think the next American Nobel Prize winner SHOULD be Philip Roth.

As a Jewish writer, have you ever experienced any anti-Semitic abuse? Do you have any suggestions about dealing with Holocaust deniers, e.g. Ahmadinedjad of Iran?

I have been blessedly free from anti-Semitism—or else it’s been so subtle I haven’t noticed! I’m afraid that no evidence will convince people who, for personal or political reasons, want or need to deny the Holocaust.

What is your position on Judaism? Is it more of a cultural ideology than a personal religion for you?

As you know, being Jewish is very different from being Christian. One can be a secular Jew, for example. I absolutely identify as a Jew and practice some of the home holidays, but I am not much of a regular Temple-goer. I do not believe in a supernatural God, but I love the biblical stories and take religious questions seriously. In that sense I am religious.

As your poetry indicates—especially when you wrestle with the Old Testament treatment of women—you write somewhat satirical narratives; do you think God has some grudges against women; is He misogynistic?

Those wonderful stories were written by men and men of a certain period. Like Christianity and Islam, Orthodox Judaism is a patriarchal religion. Naturally, the God envisioned by those men reflects their own vision. How could it be otherwise?

You have written about the novel Call It Sleep, written in 1934 by Henry Roth. Do you know why he never wrote another masterpiece, a novel of that high caliber?

Call It Sleep was fictionalized autobiography and ended with the protagonist as a young boy. To have continued would have involved Henry Roth having to deal with the question of his sexual relationship with his own sister (who is notably absent from Call It Sleep). Read Steve Kellman’s Redemption for more on that.

Henry Roth’s main character, David Schearl, has a loving relationship with his mother, but his father Albert is aloof and angry toward wife and son; how was your relationship with your father?

Continued on page 6
Continued from page 5

My father could not have been more unlike David Schearl’s terrifying, disturbed father. In fact, I’ve had to outgrow my idealization of my own father.

Some poets question the use of a computer; do you have an iPhone or a page on Facebook? Do you Twitter?

I write longhand first, then transfer what I’ve written to the computer. I use my not-smart cell phone for emergencies mostly, and have no interest in Facebook or Tweeting. I love what the kids call “flesh meets.” To me, that’s the real thing: spending time with friends and developing intimacy. Not “friending” and “unfriending” 800 people. Nobody ever has had, or will have, that many friends. I sound like an old grouch, I know.

Let’s talk politics—what do you think about Sarah Palin? Does she represent the aspirations of American women?

Sarah Palin is a reminder to me as a feminist that we don’t need just women politicians—we need the right kind of women. Obama makes me proud to be a citizen of this country. I certainly identify with him more than I do her, despite her gender and race.

Do you think poetry has a future in America?

There are many, many kinds of poetry being written and performed now, that’s hopeful. Since poetry is so much concerned with words, not characters or plots, it probably will never appeal to as many people as novels.

We are shaken by the recent gruesome shooting in Tucson, Arizona. Do you have a handgun in your bedroom?

I do not and wouldn’t want one.

Thank you very much for your time.

A Modern American Classic

The 50th Anniversary of the Black Like Me Experiment

Robert Bonazzi*

In 1959 John Howard Griffin—a white novelist from Texas disguised as a Negro—began a six week journey through the segregated Deep South. Fifty years later, his personal testament for human rights has become a modern American classic.

In Black Like Me, Griffin’s unique double perspective and lucid insights remain relevant today, and his cogent critique still illuminates the principles and evils of racism. With the simple act of darkening his pigment, Griffin encountered a complex reality unknown to white people. “My deepest shock came with the gradual realization that this was not a matter of inconvenience but rather a total change in living.”

Black Like Me maps racial borders, from the necessary social adjustments a Negro had to make during that segregated era to the subtle shifts in perception and response that emerge from Griffin’s emotional recesses. These changes are demonstrated in unexpected revelations, in the immediacy of his journal’s intimate disclosures, and by the reader’s identification with the “secret identity” of the author.

Reaching the first critical turn in Black Like Me, when Griffin first stares at the mirror, we are startled by the sudden shock and his antipathy for the “stranger—a fierce, bold, very dark Negro” who “glares” back at him. This causes a foreboding and

a deep fracture. “I became two men, the observing one and the one who panicked, who felt Negroid even into the depths of his entrails.” Initially, he clings to his familiar inner white identity, disappearing toward oblivion while rejecting the darker appearance of the unknown “stranger” he observes. “The worst of it,” he admits, “was that I could feel no companionship with this new person. I did not like the way he looked.”

At that moment, Griffin realizes he has encountered his own unconscious racism. Beginning with this pivotal confession, Griffin faces the mirror five subsequent times in the book. Used as formal literary device, the mirror reflects his evolution toward achieving a balance between the two perspectives once split. Black Like Me reads like a novel bound to an ethical treatise, evoking intense reality through the masterful use of fictional techniques.

Griffin did not decide to rework his journal as the text of Black Like Me until after failing to make sense of the experiment through a scientific approach. Trained in medicine, his first intention was to objectify the experiment. That effort failed because statistical analysis did not evoke his actual experience. Griffin composed the classic book (from handwritten notebooks kept on his journey) in Mexico, where he moved his young family after receiving death threats from local racists in Mansfield, Texas.

After Black Like Me appeared in late 1961, Griffin traveled on the lecture circuit monthly for the next dozen years. Always he was asked why he had changed skin color. He considered it “the most irrelevant question, and one that black people never asked.” He thought true understanding emerged from examining the cultural formations of prejudice, and he further explored race relations in several later works, most openly in a final autobiographical book, A Time To Be Human (1977).

During the experiment recounted in Black Like Me, Griffin listened to Negroes express inner thoughts and feelings without fear of reprisal, because he had been accepted into their community. What he was privileged to hear, no white person would have been trusted to hear. What he learned was that “blackness was not a color but a lived experience.” Never abandoning self-criticism or slipping into egotism, Griffin transformed a limited scientific experiment into a dynamic ethical witness. Through a creative act of insight, Black Like Me transcended the societal perceptions of that era and opened a fresh vision for human rights.

Griffin constantly insisted, “I do not represent myself as a spokesman for black people or for anyone else.” A dozen years after publishing Black Like Me, exhausted by the grind of constant traveling and lecturing for nonviolence to solve race relations, he lamented, “I have had a life that I loathe these past years, but I have had to go in conscience and also because I am under spiritual direction...”

Rarely is Black Like Me mentioned in spiritual or religious terms because he kept those vows private. Just as the experiment tested the validity of his simple premise, it also tested his faith. The redemptive quality of suffering cannot be measured quantitatively, just as faith cannot be proved by tangible results. Yet Griffin lived his adult years in the service of such ideals as justice, honesty, humility and peace. Even after years of suffering the ravages of diabetes and multiple heart attacks, he wrote in his final scribbled notebook that he was struggling to be “obedient, insofar as I can discern it, to the Holy Spirit, hanging on to love and some kind of innocence, trying to have enough presence of mind in the bad hours to go on saying yes and meaning it.”

*Bonazzi, Afterword to Black Like Me (Penguin Group, 2011).
# Table of Contents

15 April 2011  
Volume 3, Number 3

**Poetry & Arts in San Antonio**  
**Chairman’s Notes**  
**Cover Art**  
David Baker—A Freelance Artist

**A Letter from the Editors**  
Mo H Saidi & James Brandenburg

**Featured Poem**  
“The Baptism of Grackles”  
by Budd Powell Mahan

**The Inspiration of Flight**  
Inspired by the Cover Page Art  
by James R. Adair

**Featured Interview**  
Questions for Bonnie Lyons

**A Modern American Classic**  
The 50th Anniversary of *Black Like Me*  
A Review by Robert Benazzi

**Collaboration in Literature & Arts**  
UTSA & *Voices de la Luna*  
Teaching Literature & Language  
*Dr. Bridget Drinka*  
Reflections ~ Debra Peña

**Teaching Mrs. Dalloway, I’m Thinking**  
Wendy Barker

**News & Views**  
The 18 Days that Electrified the World  
Martin Luther King Jr.

**Two Sides of the Cable Coin**  
Keith Olbermann and Bill O’Reilly

**Editors’ Poems**  
Josie Mixon, James Brandenburg, Mo H Saidi, Lou Taylor

**Healing & the Arts**  
Conversation with Sebastian Lang by James Brandenburg

**C.G. Jung & Arts**  
The Golden Bird  
Al Drymala

**Music & Poetry**  
Tone Poem in Five Movements  
Birth, Life, Love, Death, and Metamorphosis  
Music by Daniel Parker  
Poetry by Mo H Saidi  
What Happened in Poetry on 15 April

**Graphic Arts & Photography**  
A Short Biography and Paintings by Carole Minton  
At the McNay Museum ~ ARTMATTERS Series  
Sandy Skoklund

**Poetry & Art Therapy**  
Art Making, Imagery, & Chronic Pain  
by Maripat Munley

**Select Poems Part I—Youth Poems**  
Dale Fastle, Eric Lee, Fabrian Rodriguez, Nabiha Zaman

**Select Poems Part II—Youth Poems**  
Matthew Diana, Emilia Pelsor, Genevieve Donaldson,  
Brittani Jackson, Sofia Thompson-Arisipe

**Select Poems Part III**  
Cyra S. Dumitri, Lauren M. Walthour, Cecilia Jiminez,  
Robert Allen, Lois Heger, Sylvia Berek Rosenthal

**Poems from Voices Editors**  
Valerie Martin Bailey, Joan Seifert

**Select Poems —Part IV—International Poems**  
Maria Gabriela Madrid (International Editor), Astrid Lander,  
Isabel Cecilia González Molina, Antoneta Madrid

**Select Poems Part V—More Youth Poems**  
Amber Weber, Shanique Martinez, Selina Bonilla,  
Christopher Canestero

**Select Poems Part VI**  
Chuck Collins, Asef Al-Jundi, Hejo Müller

**Poetry & Art as Therapy**  
The Children’s Bereavement Center of South Texas  
Spin Art Grief Circle Technique©

**Poetry & Dreams**  
Poem, Dream, & Interpretation ~ James Brandenburg

**Poems & Art from the Children’s Bereavement Center**  
*Jacob B, Shanique Martinez, Xavier Florez*

**Sagebrush Review**  
UTSA’s Literary & Art Journal  
Cooper Dale Harris, James Adair, Deb Peña

**Poems from Voices Editors**  
Josie Mixon, Lou Taylor, James Brandenburg, Mo H Saidi

**Short Prose**  
Sister of the Moon ~ by Woodrow Hopper

**The Persion Marchers: A Novel**  
Mo H Saidi (Chapter 6)

**Small Press Feature, Notes & Videos**  
Review & Books  
Poetry & Art Events in San Antonio  
Submission Guidelines  
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The course, ENG 6033: LITERATURE AND LANGUAGE, will take an in-depth look at the role linguistic analysis can play in the understanding and creation of literature. Students will be introduced to phonological analysis—the study of sound systems—and will then examine a number of pieces of poetry and prose to see how these principles operate in literature. We will explore the extent to which the structure and sounds of a given language influence the aesthetic principles which emerge in the poetic traditions of that language. For example, does the nature of Old English help shape the metrical and alliterative patterns found in Beowulf and in “Caedmon’s Hymn”? We will examine the contributions that Shakespeare has made to our language, with special emphasis on the ways in which he enriched the English lexicon, for example, by skillfully pairing Latin borrowings with native Germanic words, by verbing his nouns and nouncing his verbs, by the “submerged linking” of linguistic themes laced into the dialogues of his characters, and so on. We will explore the role that gender plays in shaping the linguistic habits of writers: do female and male poets shape their literary worlds differently based on their genderlects? We will have an opportunity to study the work of Walter Mignolo, this year’s Brackenridge Distinguished Visiting Lecturer, and will read extensively from his work. Mignolo’s analysis of semiotics and the role of language in colonialization will lead to an exploration of the use of dialect in literature, from the perspective of ethnicity. We will examine, for example, how African American Vernacular English is employed by writers, and will then look at the techniques used by Latino/a writers who embrace linguistic traditions from both sides of the border. Finally, we will use literary works to examine the grammatical structure of English, focusing also upon rhetorical devices used by a variety of authors. For example, we will explore the techniques and structures employed by Faulkner, which make his language at times abrupt, at times fluid, as opposed to the smoother, complex, polished sound preferred by Hawthorne or Austen. What are the nuts and bolts of language which enable authors to focus our attention, to quicken the pace, to leave us in awe? “Hands-on” exercises, in both textual analysis and composition, as well as an in-depth look at a number of crucial theoretical issues will represent important components of the course. For more information please visit www.utsa.edu.

Reflections

Debra Peña*

Taking pictures of my grandchild is one of my favorite pastimes. From the moment of his first breath, I’ve had my Canon camera in his face. How else am I to share with my friends the wonder of Gideon—the precious smile of a little boy who loves me? Yet, there is more to my camera-mania. Layered between the pride of a new grandmother and the desire to document his growth is the need to give him images of what I see when looking at him. I want this child to know the gift of being seen, and more than that—I want him to never know the fear of facing himself. Unlike me, I want him to face the lenses of this world without fear. And if that means snapping pictures every time he is with me, then so be it. For I now believe that it is often through the eyes of others that we meet our true self.

Not long ago, before beginning another semester of graduate work and teaching, I decided to put Gideon’s photos into the many albums I bought while awaiting his birth. Rummaging through my closet, I found the albums stacked in the far corner of the top shelf. On tiptoes, I leaned into the closet, and with both hands pulled them towards me. Much to my surprise, I immediately found myself shrouded in forgotten fabric. A dress that I had not seen in some twenty years tumbled down, and landed atop my head. Cloaked in the cotton blend of a green flowered dress, I backed out of the closet and placed the albums on the floor. Removing the dress from my head, I laughed at having been attacked by a garment I’d forgotten I had, and I wondered how it had escaped the many goodwill offerings made through the years.

As I stood there, rubbing the softness of brushed cotton between my fingers, I recalled the last time I wore the dress. Bought right after my youngest child was born, I had thought it flattering to my post-natal figure. Surely, I would appear stylish and fit, and not the overweight new mom I saw when looking in the mirror. Out the door I had gone to my first day of a new job and had stopped at the local ice-house for a package of gum. Still new in town, the clerk did not know me and assumed for me an identity. Looking over the top of her glasses, her eyes traveled the terrain of a body I was trying to hide.

“You must be the new school teacher,” she smugly surmised. Not waiting for me to reply, she dismissed me with a “We’ll be seeing you” and turned to her next customer.

Dismayed, I walked out of the store. Slamming my car door behind me, I flipped down my visor and gazed at my reflection, “Great,” I thought, “I look like a frumpy school marm!” Troubled by the clerk’s assumption, I started my car and drove myself to the new administrative assistant position I had proudly obtained, and swore I would never wear the dress again.

Standing with the aged dress in my hands, I was humbled by this memory. For in the clerk’s assumption was vision—not criticism. Her eyes didn’t see the clothing I covered myself in, but rather the essence of me covered in clothing. Looking over the top of her glasses, her eyes traveled the terrain of a body I was trying to hide.

*Debra Peña lives and writes in Poth, Texas. Currently in her 2nd year of Ph.D. coursework at UTSA, where she also teaches, Debra seeks to recover the work(s) of forgotten 20th century female writers. She is a writer of fiction, creative non-fiction, and poetry.
How I’d like to buy flowers, how I’d like to place a sterling silver bowl of peonies or cut-glass vase of tulips and irises on the laminate seminar table in this windowless room, and I’m thinking how I’d like to arrive before the one student always a half-hour early, how I’d like to greet each of them at the door, inquire after their sisters and cousins, their tíos and abuelitas, and comfort the one who’s been fired from his job. Every Tuesday another novel about the modern condition, those catchy phrases we use: “alienation and fragmentation”—while for the past three weeks Jill, the debate team captain on two scholarships, hasn’t said a word because, she told me sobbing at the break, her boyfriend was found bloody in his apartment, shot by her brother off his meds, and Angie, dispatching for Pleasure U Hot Line, her shift moved to graveyard, slumps dozing in her chair. Now Jeffrey is saying, “She’s snobbish, Clarissa, I don’t like her, who cares about her maids and her flowers, but she’s right, I mean, she gets it, nothing like a great party.” It’s the dinner hour, though no bells chime on this campus, and only two of us have actually heard Big Ben, have ever strolled through Regent’s Park, ridden on a red double-decker. But nobody around this table wonders why Septimus hurl’s himself out the window, nobody needs PTSD explained, and when Marita asks, “Wasn’t it Woolf who filled her pockets with stones and walked into a river?” nobody says “weird,” as two dozen heads bend over pages littered with post-its. I’m thinking how I want to say something, mend this rent in the air the way Clarissa gathers the raveled threads of her ripped dress with her needle, the way she draws everyone into her party, but already it’s time to pack up our pens, our notebooks, head out on the crowded interstate, past all the newly constructed buildings with no balconies, no wrought iron railings, these multiple stories of steel and glass, mirrored so no one can see into them.

*(Southern Review, 45, No. 2, Spring 2009)*

*Wendy Barker is a professor and one of the Core Faculty of the UTSA English Department. She is the Poet in Residence and is the author of Nothing Between Us: The Berkeley Years, a novel in prose poems (Del SolPress, 2009) and numerous collections of poetry, including Poems from Paradise (2005), Way of White (2000), Let the Ice Speak (1991), and Winter Chickens (1990), as well as two chapbooks, Eve Remembers (1996) and Between Frames (2006).*
News & Views

The 18 Days that Electrified the World
11 February 2011
Adopted from David Patrick’s article at BBC.com, NPR.com, and youtube.com

An 18-day-old revolt led by the young people of Egypt ousted President Hosni Mubarak on Friday, shattering three decades of political stasis and upending the established order of the Arab world. Shouts of “God is great” erupted from Tahrir Square at twilight as Mubarak’s Vice President and longtime Intelligence Chief, Omar Suleiman, announced that Mubarak had passed all authority to a council of military leaders.

Tens of thousands who had bowed down for evening prayers leapt to their feet bouncing and dancing in joy. “Lift your head high, you’re an Egyptian,” they cried. Revising the revolution’s rallying cry, they chanted, “The people, at last, have brought down the regime.” Egypt’s revolution was televised; however, Facebook updates, 140-character tweets, and YouTube videos turned the land of pharaohs and pyramids upside-down. In reality, Internet waves became a fulcrum to wring a thirty-year dictatorship in 18 Days.

Mubarak’s departure overturns, after six decades, the Arab world’s original secular dictatorship. He was toppled by a new force in regional politics — a largely secular, nonviolent, youth-led democracy movement that brought Egypt’s liberal and Islamist opposition groups together for the first time under its banner. One-by-one, the protesters withstood each weapon in the arsenal of the Egyptian autocracy—heavily armed riot police, a ruling party militia, and finally, the state’s powerful propaganda machine.

The upheaval comes less than a month after a sudden youth revolt in nearby Tunisia toppled another enduring Arab strongman, President Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali. And on Friday night, some of the revelers celebrating in Cairo marched under a Tunisian flag and pointed to the surviving autocracies in Syria, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Yemen. “We are setting a role model for the dictatorships around us,” said Khalid Shaheen, 39. “Democracy is coming.”

President Obama praised the Egyptian revolution. “Egyptians have made it clear that nothing less than genuine democracy will carry the day,” he said. “It was the moral force of nonviolence—not terrorism and mindless killing—that bent the arc of history toward justice once more.”

Sources:
You Tube: <iframe title="YouTube video player" width="480" height="390" src="http://www.youtube.com/embed/-HGfFy-qJMrk" frameborder="0" allowfullscreen"></iframe>
URL: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-HGfFyqlMrk

Martin Luther King, Jr.
Assassinated on 4 April 1968
from Wikipedia.com

Martin Luther King, Jr. (15 January 1929 – 4 April 1968) was assassinated on 4 April 1968. He was standing on the balcony of his room on the second floor at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis when, at 6:01 p.m., he was shot in the right jaw. The day before, he’d given a speech at the Mason Temple in Memphis. He was addressing a rally for the Memphis Sanitation Strike, which involved 1,300 black sanitation workers protesting dangerous working conditions and discrimination. He’d been delayed getting into Memphis because there was a bomb threat to his plane. Toward the end of his speech, he acknowledged the recent death threats and said:

“Well, I don’t know what will happen now. We’ve got some difficult days ahead. But it doesn’t matter with me now. Because I’ve been to the mountaintop. And I don’t mind. Like anybody, I would like to live a long life. Longevity has its place. But I’m not concerned about that now. I just want to do God’s will. And He’s allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I’ve looked over. And I’ve seen the promised land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the promised land. So I’m happy, tonight. I’m not worried about anything. I’m not fearing any man. Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord.”

The Inspiration of Flight . . . continued from page 4

The Inspiration of Flight

. . .

numerous fundraising tours for the American Red Cross. She was also the first person, male or female, to fly a plane at night.

After her family’s flight school closed in 1917, Katherine became an ambulance driver for the Red Cross in Europe, a career move she shared with Ernest Hemingway. While in Europe she contracted influenza during the 1918 Flu Pandemic (the Spanish Flu), which turned into tuberculosis. She survived but was forced to retire from flying. Katherine married an airman, Miguel Antonio Otero, Jr., son of the former territorial governor of New Mexico, in 1928 and worked as an architect in Santa Fe for many years. She died in 1977 at the age of 86.

Katherine’s legacy is commemorated today in San Antonio, whose southern airport is named Katherine Stinson Field. Katherine Stinson Middle School on the north side of the city is named after her as well.

High Flight, by John Gillespie Magee, Jr.

Oh! I have slipped the surly bonds of Earth
And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings;
Sunward I’ve climbed, and joined the tumbling mirth
Of sun-split clouds, — and done a hundred things
You have not dreamed of — wheeled and soared and swung
High in the sunlit silence. Hov’ring there,
I’ve chased the shouting wind along, and flung
My eager craft through footless halls of air. . . .
Up, up the long, delirious burning blue
I’ve topped the wind-swept heights with easy grace
Where never lark, or ever eagle flew —
And, while with silent, lifting mind I’ve trod
The high unrespassed sanctity of space,
Put out my hand, and touched the face of God.
Two Sides of the Cable Coin
Keith Olbermann and Bill O’Reilly
from www.currenttv & www.billoreilly.com

Keith Olbermann
After receiving broadcasting honors that include three Edward R. Murrow Awards (including one for his coverage of 9/11), the Cable Ace for National Sportscaster of the Year, and co-host of Entertainment Weekly’s selection as the 67th greatest television program of all time, Keith Olbermann now joins Current TV as its Chief News Officer, as well as Executive Producer and host of its centerpiece nightly news and commentary program, “Countdown with Keith Olbermann.”

Olbermann won his third Murrow award during the last of his eight seasons as managing editor and host of the same program on MSNBC. As host of “Countdown,” Olbermann attracted a large and devoted audience. His outspoken commentary, rhetorical virtuosity, and undeniable passion made the show the highest rated program on MSNBC, as well as a lightning rod for controversy.

A sports and news broadcaster since he was in high school, Olbermann began his professional career as a United Press International stringer at the age of 17. At 20, he joined UPI’s national radio network as an anchor, reporter, and commentator, covering his first Olympics and World Series at the age of 21. A year later he broke into television with the fledgling CNN, and after successful stops anchoring sports at local stations in Boston and Los Angeles, he came to national prominence co-hosting ESPN’s “SportsCenter.”

His work on “SportsCenter” from 1992 to 1997, distinguished by his provocative blending of pop culture and sports, launched a new era of sportscasting. While at ESPN, Olbermann was chosen to launch the ESPN Radio Network and ESPN2. He also co-authored the critically acclaimed book, The Big Show about his experiences working on “SportsCenter.” After being offered a joint position with NBC News and NBC Sports, Olbermann left ESPN in 1997. In addition to hosting the World Series and Major League Baseball’s All-Star Game and contributing to pre-game coverage of the Super Bowl, he anchored two nightly primetime news programs on MSNBC, “The Big Show,” and “White House In Crisis,” and served as a substitute anchor on weekend editions of NBC Nightly News.

The following year, in a transaction unique in broadcasting history, NBC sold Olbermann’s contract to Fox Sports for $1 million. At Fox, Olbermann became host of the network’s Emmy-winning Baseball Game of the Week Pre-Game Show, as well as its All-Star Game and World Series coverage. He also anchored and served as Senior Correspondent for Fox’s attempt to compete with “SportsCenter,” “Fox Sports News.”

Olbermann rejoined CNN in 2001 as a correspondent for “NewsNight” and substitute anchor for other network news programs. He also covered 9/11 and its aftermath for KFWB Radio in Los Angeles and the ABC Radio Network. By February of 2003, Olbermann had returned to NBC to anchor the same 8 PM news hour he had left more than four years earlier. In addition to his extensive broadcasting experience, Olbermann has written for dozens of publications, including The New York Times, USA Today, The Los Angeles Times, Newsweek, Time, Sports Illustrated and Playboy, and maintains an official Major League Baseball blog for MLB.Com. The first of his five books, The Major League Coaches, was published when he was 14, and the subsequent four each made The New York Times best-sellers list. Olbermann received a Bachelor’s of Science degree in communications arts from Cornell University. He was born and lives in New York City.

Bill O’Reilly
The historic run of “The O’Reilly Factor” on the FOX News Channel continues. Because of your support, the program with Bill O’Reilly at the helm, has remained the highest rated cable news show, beating all competition for eleven straight years. Night after night, week after week, millions of viewers enter The Factor’s No Spin Zone to witness Bill’s analysis, commentary, and probing investigative reporting.

Bill’s reach doesn’t stop there. More than 300 newspapers carry his weekly column and many others (like you) go to BillOReilly.com for unique exclusive features, and to buy stuff, thereby contributing hundreds of thousands of dollars to various charities each year. Bill calls this his “proudest achievement.”

But wait, there’s more. O’Reilly writes books, and people read them. More than five million copies of Bill’s six non-fiction books are currently circulating, including his latest best-seller Pinheads and Patriots, which came hard on the heels of his deeply personal memoir, A Bold Fresh Piece of Humanity.

Pinheads and Patriots emerged two years after O’Reilly interviewed Barack Obama during the presidential campaign when the two debated the future of our country. Pinheads and Patriots is subtitled “Where You Stand In The Age of Obama,” and is an uncompromising examination of the individual actions that are maintaining or undermining the core values of America during this time of change.

O’Reilly’s broadcast career started in Scranton, Pennsylvania long before the folks from “The Office” settled there. He has been both a local reporter and news anchor in other cities, including Dallas, Boston, and New York. Audiences across America got to meet O’Reilly when he worked at CBS News and ABC News and when he hosted the first version of “Inside Edition.” But it was when he landed at Fox News in 1996 and began “The O’Reilly Factor” that he achieved his current national and international stature and enormous following.

O’Reilly was born in Manhattan and raised on Long Island. He has a bachelor’s degree in history from Marist College, along with a master’s in broadcast journalism from Boston University and another master’s degree in public administration from Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government. There have also been many awards, including 3 Emmys, and a special 2008 Governor’s Award from his Boston University colleagues.

In his spare time, O’Reilly takes naps.

Voices de la Luna, 15 April 2011 11
James Brandenburg: It is my understanding that you divide your responsibilities as a conductor between San Antonio, Texas, and Berlin, Germany, as well as several other cities. Is it difficult to travel between cities?

Sebastian Lang-Lessing: Traveling is part of a conductor’s job. We need to conduct other orchestras and opera companies to keep in the international circuit, and also bring these experiences back to “our” orchestra. It can be very inspirational to meet other ensembles.

What kind of training and education is required for a conductor in Germany? Talk about your training and education.

As a conductor you are for a very big part an autodidact. As your education continues all your professional life, you never stop learning. In Germany the education covers all fields. Very important is to be an accomplished musician on your instrument. The piano will be the most important tool as a conductor, as you have to learn how to play from a full score, be a coach at an opera house and accompany singers. I learned from accompanying string and wind players in their classes. Music theory and history also play an important role, as well as singing lessons and many other fields, including such languages as Italian and French.

Berlin has a rich cultural history in theatre, music, and the arts and is home to The Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, a world-class orchestra. Please discuss the selection process for a conductor of such a prestigious symphony. Are the challenges and expectations different when working with a world-class orchestra that emanates from, and is part of, a rich cultural history?

First of all, I think as an artist you will never really understand that selection process, as it sometimes seems a bit vague. Secondly, I don’t like these rankings too much. In the last years, the overall standard of playing has risen enormously. So you’ll find this potential of “world class” everywhere. It’s the excitement and the commitment that inspires an audience, and you’d be surprised how many “world class” performances you can find here in very remote places and very ordinary ones in Vienna or Berlin. For example, your San Antonio Symphony has absolutely this potential, and we really work hard to get to the highest level every night we perform. There’s absolutely no need for inferiority complexes.

Talk about the difference in audience sophistication in Berlin and San Antonio? Is it more difficult to market classical music in San Antonio than in Berlin?

Again, I guess I see this in a very similar way to the preceding question. What is sophistication for an audience? I want a curious audience, an audience that wants to be challenged at times and trusts their orchestra and takes this ownership that is so important in the community. We have every year more and more students graduating from the big institutions, about 5000 young professional musicians every year. This tells me there is a deep need in the society for music, and the young generation sees it as more important in life to express themselves through music than to make a lot of money very quickly; so logically, the need for live performances must be higher and not lower. It is essential to us as human beings and not at all just a nice decorative plus in life.

We often say that a city has its own unique pulse. Talk about the pulse of San Antonio in contrast to the pulse in Berlin. Actually, San Antonio and Berlin have quite a few things in common. This constant metamorphosis that both cities go through in a very positive way, is similar. The cities change and don’t want to stagnate. Both cities are melting pots and embrace various cultures. The San Antonians are extremely welcoming and warm hearted, which gives a small town feel in a big city; very few cities have that quality. I find it very refreshing and inspiring to be here. In the short time of being here, I have met many people that I really like to call friends. I think there is an enormous ability to embrace change and improvement. We will take our role at the San Antonio Symphony very seriously to be part of the motor of that.

Germany provides some government funding to its artists, whereas in the United States, funding is much more dependent on the city or the state, which makes funding in the States much more tenuous. Is funding for the symphony an issue here in San Antonio? Do you have a favorite composer? What composer presents you with the greatest challenge musically?

These are three questions of a very different nature. The last two are very easy to answer. Of course, I don’t have a favorite composer, and every music is challenging, just in different ways! The funding traditions are very different in all countries. The United States has the biggest and most impressive history of philanthropy in the world. The citizens take ownership and responsibility by donating to these art institutions, something I honor and admire a lot. I think a lot of people in San Antonio are starting to discover us now and really realize what an important role a symphony in a city really plays. They are realizing how exciting SAS is and want to be part of this journey we’re on right now. In difficult times you need to know that the arts and especially the performing arts are an anchor of hope and a stimulus of positive energy for a flourishing future.

Please discuss your transition to conducting in San Antonio. Has this been a difficult transition? If so, in what ways? What challenges might an American conductor be faced with if conducting in Berlin?

Stay who you are, and be honest with what you want to express. The art of conducting is to make transitions so smooth, that nobody really hears them. This is true in real life as well.

Plato on Music

“Music is a moral law. It gives soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, and charm and gaiety to life and to everything.”
What has been the highlight of your coming to San Antonio? Have you had any major disappointments?
Lang-Lessing: I have no favorite composers, and I don’t believe in highlights. Every single concert for me is a highlight until the next comes and will be the next highlight.

You have been quite involved in The Tchaikovsky Festival. Would you care to comment about any aspect of the following quote from the biography of Tchaikovsky: “Although he enjoyed many popular successes, Tchaikovsky was never emotionally secure, and his life was punctuated by personal crises and periods of depression. Contributory factors were his suppressed homosexuality and fear of exposure, his disastrous marriage, and the sudden collapse of the one enduring relationship of his adult life, his 13-year association with the wealthy widow Nadezhda von Meck.”
Lang-Lessing: I have initiated this festival idea to create a special event that allows us and the audience to discover in a more profound way the style, the language, the world, and the soul of a composer. For various reasons, I think Tchaikovsky is an excellent way to start such a project, and there will many more social events that allow us to blossom, and you will all have a very rewarding harvest every single time you hear us perform all year round.

Please feel free to address anything about your experience in San Antonio or Texas that you wish to discuss.
Lang-Lessing: I’m a very curious person and love to be surprised every day; discover new things, have new ideas and be inspired by absorbing the place I’m in. You all own this Symphony, take this big gift, make it yours, but also be a part of this wonderful family. We need a lot of gardeners who help us to blossom, and you will all have a very rewarding harvest every single time you hear us perform all year round.

C.G. Jung & Arts
The Golden Bird
Al Drymala

In olden times, there was a King who had behind his palace a beautiful garden in which there was a tree that bore golden apples. When the apples were getting ripe, they were counted, but on the very next morning one was missing. This was told to the King, and he ordered that a watch should be kept every night beneath the tree.

The King had three sons, the eldest of which he sent, as soon as night came on, into the garden; but when midnight came he could not keep himself from sleeping, and the next morning again an apple was gone.

The following night the second son had to keep watch, but it fared no better with him.

Now it came to the turn of the third son to watch. When it struck twelve, something rustled through the air, and in the moonlight he saw a bird coming whose feathers were all shining with gold. The youth shot an arrow at it, and one of its golden feathers fell down. (Grimm’s Fairy Tales)

“The Golden Bird” is a fairy tale known in countries throughout Europe, e.g., Germany, Norway, France, Serbia, Czech Republic, and Russia, and each variation says something a little different about the national psyche of its country of origin. The above referenced opening scene is from the German version of the tale, taken from the Grimm’s collection, and provides a good basic outline for us to examine.

Marie-Louise von Franz said that fairy tales are symbolic stories that describe psychological processes deep within the collective unconscious and are the purest expressions of the archetypes. So, we study these tales to give us a sense of the scope and structure of the unconscious, and to better understand the psychological patterns which guide and shape our lives every day.

To analyze a fairy tale, we begin like we would begin with a dream—we critique the initial setting of the tale to see if we can discern something about the psychological condition being depicted. In this case, there is a king with three sons who has an extraordinary tree that bears golden apples in a beautiful garden behind his palace. However, there are certain features that immediately stand out—features that become important points requiring additional analysis. First, there is no queen mentioned in this kingdom. Secondly, there is the beautiful garden with the tree of golden apples. And finally, there is the business of the thieving going on at midnight by the golden bird.

Psychologically we can say that the absence of the queen portrays a situation in which the feminine element is somehow missing from a kingdom inhabited by a king and his sons—an over-abundance of the masculine. Without a queen, no new life can be generated and no new ways of relating can evolve. An absent queen signifies the missing element of a living feeling and eros and significantly highlights the tale’s emphasis on control and acquisition. Despite the rescue of the princess and a clear return of the feminine that occurs later in

Continued on page 29
**Music & Poetry**

**Bryce Milligan Performs**

**Guernica**

A lively song about cosmic guilt.

*Bryce Milligan*

I’m sorry for the pain I caused,  
I’m sorry for your eyes.  
You struck your spark into these hearts  
not knowing what flames would rise.  
(Now) you’ve learned to weave with blinded eyes.  
How did you weave before?  
You wove a tapestry of love,  
but we’ve dragged it off to war.

Guernica, Guernica,  
what have they done to you?  
To sacrifice so many  
and not even save the few.

Your sorrows grow year by year;  
your tantrums tell us so.  
As Gaia becomes Guernica  
so green to dust must go.  
Now tapestries and towers glow  
with echoed, fabled fire.  
What could have been was broken on  
a rack of sheer desire.

Guernica, Guernica,  
what have they done to you?  
To sacrifice so many  
and not even save the few.

*To preview the video production visit: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fZoxTu6p_sY

**Life**

**Tone Poem in Five Movements**

Birth, Life, Love, Death, and Metamorphosis

*Music Composition by Daniel Parker  
Poetry by Mo H Saidi*

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uaiwifV4Qxg

This newly composed symphonic poem or tone poem is a piece of orchestral music in five movements in which the content of the poem and the background video selections are illustrated or evoked. The term, *tone poem* was first applied by Hungarian composer Franz Liszt to his 13 works in this vein. In its aesthetic objectives, the symphonic poem is in some ways related to opera; while it does not use a sung text, it seeks like opera a union of music, poetry, and drama.

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**Trey Moore Performs at San Antonio Luminaria 2010**

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

*To preview the video production visit: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bQufTiBMosM

**What Happened in Poetry on 15 April**

from *The Writer’s Almanac*

It was on 15 April 1802 that William Wordsworth was walking home with his sister, Dorothy, and saw a patch of daffodils that became the inspiration for one of his most famous poems.

William was impressed by the daffodils too, but William didn’t write anything about them for at least two years, maybe more. No one is sure when he wrote the poem “I wander’d lonely as a cloud,” but it was published in 1807.

**I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud**

*by William Wordsworth*

I wandered lonely as a cloud  
That floats on high o’er vales and hills,  
When all at once I saw a crowd,  
A host, of golden daffodils;  
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,  
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine  
And twinkle on the milky way,  
They stretched in never-ending line  
Along the margin of a bay:  
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,  
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they  
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:  
A poet could not but be gay,  
In such a jocund company:  
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought  
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie  
In vacant or in pensive mood,  
They flash upon that inward eye  
Which is the bliss of solitude;  
And then my heart with pleasure fills,  
And dances with the daffodils.
Graphic Arts & Photography

Paintings by Carole Minton and a Short Biography

Voices Editors

A painter from the age of 10, Carole Minton has an unending passion for art. At the age of 10, she won a three year scholarship to The John Herron Art Institute in Indianapolis, Indiana, and continues to take lessons today. Carole started working with oil paint on canvas when she attended the Art Institute, primarily working with still lifes and landscapes. She then broadened her work to include watercolors.

Today she has expanded to acrylic paint on canvas and is studying the abstract world of painting. Abstract art is not cosmic or ethereal but is a learning process in balance, form, shape and color. This is true of all areas that allow her to move back and forth between realism, impressionism, and abstract. She moves between watercolors and acrylics even though they differ in many respects.

Carole lives in San Antonio, Texas, with her husband of 40 years, Ralph. They have 3 children and 6 grandchildren.

Golden Fan Coral, Acrylic on canvas, 2011

At The McNay Museum

www.Mcnayart.org

ARTMATTERS 14

Sandy Skoglund: The Cocktail Party

16 February – 8 May 2011

In the fourteenth presentation of its ARTMATTERS series of works by contemporary artists, the McNay Art Museum presents Sandy Skoglund’s surreal sculptural installation The Cocktail Party. Recently acquired for the McNay’s collection, the installation—accompanied by a large-scale color photograph of the same title—uses Cheez Doodle snack-food as surface material to compose a cocktail party scene typical of American suburbia. The photograph features human models while the installation presents only faceless mannequins dressed in cocktail attire and covered in bright orange Cheez Doodles; however, the presence of the figure in both incarnations is detached, enhancing the ambiance of uncanny hypereality in the work.

New Image Sculpture

16 February – 8 May 2011

New Image Sculpture assembles the work of an intergenerational group of emerging and mid-career artists who freely borrow from the worlds of ethnographic and material culture, folk art, fashion, hobby crafts, DIY, and the shelves of home improvement stores. These artists transform widely available, often non-art materials, into fanciful recreations and replications of the ordinary. Styrofoam, duct tape, corrugated cardboard, and Scotch Tape replace marble and bronze as primary materials, while boom boxes, suitcases, and women’s purses are elevated to places previously held by portrait busts or minimalist cubes.

Snow and Freezing Rain in San Antonio

11 February 2011

In January of 1985 a national record breaking thirteen inches of snow fell on and covered San Antonio. It shut down the city; the highways and access roads became impassable and the entire city took a holiday.

In 2007 we had an ice storm, and again on Friday 11 February 2011 we witnessed snow; fortunately this time, we had less than one inch, yet enough to close highways, schools, and many flights.
Poetry & Art Therapy
Art Making, Imagery & Chronic Pain
Maripat Munley, RN, MPH. ATR-BC

Long before becoming an Art Therapist, I understood the POWER of imagery. Working as a mid-level Nursing Executive in a San Antonio, TX, hospital, I used imagery to soothe myself when things were extremely hectic and to rev myself up when I needed energy. The two pictures below were in a reversible desk frame in my windowless office. When I wanted to energize or calm myself, I simply rotated the frame and contemplated the images of China in the ‘80s, which evoked the feelings associated with the photos.

(Guangxi, China) its serenity calmed me.

Guilin (Hollywood Road, Hong Kong) energized me.

These phenomena occur for many reasons, but especially because images embody feeling responses to memories, thoughts and desires, as well as expressions of self within. Images serve as vessels to hold memories and feeling responses, and act as catalysts for growth and change by creatively modifying our responses to ourselves and our world. In order to clearly delineate the value of imagery, this article will posit answers to why the art museum is therapeutic, who can benefit from the art museum as therapy, and what we can do to optimize the art museum as therapy.

Why the Art Museum Is Therapeutic
We can think about images and symbols in two ways: (1) a mental picture of something not actually present OR (2) a tangible, visual representation. In observing museum works of art we engage with both kinds of images via the works of art we physically see, and all the images that the work of art retrieves from our mental databank or through new mental images inspired by the tangible one. Simultaneously, feelings associated with imagery arise.

There are psychobiological and physiological reasons why the art museum is therapeutic. Psychobiologically, as stated above, images have power. In addition, looking at and making art (images) are different ways of knowing. Both of these museum activities are nonlinear and convey layers of meaning while they simultaneously inform us. These same museum activities shine light on conscious reflection and can help us heal through meditation and active engagement with both mental and tangible images. Of additional benefit is the fact that often the art museum’s environment soothes and restores the psyche.

Physiologically, museum activities are therapeutic because looking at works of art or making art can help visitors elicit the Relaxation Response, assist memory retrieval, increase imagination, decrease memory loss, develop observation skills through enhanced engagement with image, and activate physical senses. Below is a graph that illustrates the physiology of the Fight or Flight Response versus the Relaxation Response. Often when guests enter art museums, they report physically feeling the shift between these two responses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PHYSICAL CHANGES OF THE FIGHT OR FLIGHT RESPONSE</th>
<th>RELAXATION RESPONSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Metabolism</td>
<td>Metabolism</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heart Rate</td>
<td>Heart Rate</td>
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<td>Blood Pressure</td>
<td>Blood Pressure</td>
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<tr>
<td>Breathing Rate</td>
<td>Breathing Rate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Muscle Tension</td>
<td>Muscle Tension</td>
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Art Museum as Therapy for Adults
New and innovative programs directed toward employing the museum as therapy are springing up across the country. The New York Museum of Modern Art, the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and the Bruce Museum of Arts and Science in Greenwich, Connecticut have partnered with healthcare agencies to serve persons with Alzheimer’s syndrome. Participants in these programs observe and discuss works of art during their museum tour. Studies from such programs indicate that while patients are engaged in looking at works of art, they seem to improve interpretive abilities, expressive powers, articulation and self assurance. Practice with observing and discussing works of art also stimulated narratives, increased socialization temporarily,
released memories (a valuable touchstone), and engaged participants in both indoor and outdoor experiences. Upon returning to their agencies, these same patients demonstrated elevated mood, an ability to self-soothe, a reduction in agitation and wondering, and an awakening of their physical senses.

Harvard Medical School, in collaboration with Brigham and Women’s Hospital, designed an academic approach to improve observation skills among medical students, Training the Eye: Improving the Art of Physical Diagnosis. Students who participated in the program had a 38% increase in visual observation accuracy compared to a control group. Other medical and nursing schools are partnering with museums to help students improve their observation skills when interviewing and assessing their patients, including the Center for Medical Humanities and Ethics at the University of Texas Health Science Center, San Antonio which partners with the McNay Art Museum. Adults in the general population, who engage with works of art or art making at the museum, often report that they experience a sense of relaxation, enjoy new learning experiences, elicit memories, interact with people with similar interests, activate their imagination and physical senses, and improve their observation skills.

**Art Museum as Therapy for Children**

There are many reasons WHY making art and looking at museum art is therapeutic for children. Consider the idea of introducing exhibitions related to school curriculum and the reality that children have many different modes of learning. Learning through a new and pioneering mode may be an effective strategy employed to reduce a child’s learning anxiety about a specific subject matter such as math, geometry or literature—all of which can be explored in the museum. There are opportunities to normalize life experiences universal but sometimes challenging to children through reflection on art work content. The museum atmosphere, inside and outside, as well as art making on site can be very restorative to children’s thinking and feeling states. More importantly, museum visits and making art, an experience now greatly reduced in school curricula, is fun, as well as educational.

**Art Museum as Therapy for Families**

Looking at museum works of art and making art introduces “safe topics” for discussion among family members. Art-related activities help create new family memories for discussion in the future. Additionally, the entire process stimulates group and individual engagement with imagination. Meanwhile, the Relaxation Response is activated and emotional flutter reduced. The “fun factor” is another strong reason WHY visits to the art museum can be therapeutic for families.

**What We Can Do To Optimize the Museum as Therapy**

First and foremost, visit museums—showing up is the very beginning of taking advantage of this type of art therapy. Balance the potential to acquire knowledge with reinforcing creative and critical thinking during your visit. Take advantage of the fact that the potential for creativity may increase in our later years. Use viewing art as a means to improve your observation skills. Employ movement and breathing exercises to engage your children with art works (i.e. getting children to assume the gestural pose of a sculpture). Use looking at works of art and making art activities to stimulate reminiscence and memory retrieval. Make time for contemplation and meditation with the works of art. Most of all laugh and have fun!

Questions about this article may be referred to the author at maripatmunley@satx.rr.com.

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**The Laurel Crown Foundation**

**The Awaken the Sleeping Poet Festival**

Celebrates National Poetry Month

Our Mission Statement: The Laurel Crown Foundation is dedicated to helping each member of the community (adult or child) to find, develop, and share his or her unique voice, and to express the creativity inherent in every human soul; we endeavor to do so in a manner that honors and respects the individual and dignifies the arts.

The Laurel Crown Foundation, a 501(c)3 non-profit, held its sixth Awaken the Sleeping Poet poetry and art festival at the San Antonio Museum of Art on 9 April. Nearly 400 people participated in three programs for children, teens, and adults. The festival is open to everyone in the S.A. area to submit poetry and/or art to win cash awards and trophies. Alan Birkelbach, 2005 Poet Laureate of Texas, travels from Plano, Texas each year to emcee the festival and says it’s one date on his calendar that’s set in stone. Poems and art are awarded, then poems are read in the auditorium and art is displayed in SAMA’s foyer. The top art entry is featured on the cover of The Dreamcatcher; an anthology of the contest poems. We invite those interested in helping promote literature and art in this area to become supporting members.

Visit our Website at www.laurelcrown.org or e-mail info@laurelcrown.org to find out how you can support our mission.

*Voices de la Luna is a supporting member!*
Captured Freedom

Dale Fastle (TMI)

Grazing on a bright green slope,
Through the dazzling meadows, lope
Heavy hooves pound the ground,
Thunder is the only sound,
Beneath the blinding light of day,
Horses here are free they say,
Free of human whips and spurs,
Free to roam where free endures,
But the cities keep on growing,
And the wild keeps on going,
Swallowed by the buildings tall,
Buried under streets and walls
The horse’s home is nearly gone,
And with the coming of the dawn,
Humans cage what they saw free
And hold them in captivity,
Bound by satellites and wires,
Stuck on fossil fuels and tires,
They cannot see what should be free,
’Cause they know they’ll never be.

2003

Eric Lee (TMI)

How casually do we
invite catastrophe
into our lives.
The Devil thrives
on the willful self-destruction—
the soul’s own deconstruction.
The horrible hordes march
and marshal their energy,
the ugly audience
for darkness’ victory.
And all the while,
we grimly smile
and stare at that murder mile.
Through teeth clenched
do we lament
the serpent’s invitation to foment
disaster…

Hello, How Are You

Fabrian Rodriguez (SAC)

Hello, how are you?
Such a simple phrase to say
yet here I sit two desks away
and like a black night
those words are stuck at bay

She flips her hair
sans a single care
as I sit back and dream
about what could be there
A house? A family?
a white picket fence too
but first a spark or flare
must prove itself there

Today’s the day I chose
to confront my angel with
these words I am dying to say
but a lack of confidence leaves
me here two desks away

With a heart full of love
and a brow full of fear I sit
and I wait on this chosen date
as it passes me by like a bug
in July until I am back in my room
living the loneliest doom.

Ode to Sadness

Nabiha Zaman (Keystone School)

I don’t know what to see to expect
For all i know it’s a feeling
Fine a day
Sad the next

A burning fire
Now cold
A tree stem
Now fallen

A broken heart cannot resist
For when it’s angered
At night crying to sleep
Wishing i could run away from this pain

The once roses
Are now hanging
Sadness cannot cross the threshold
For through it comes the breath of the world
Select Poems–Part II
Youth Poems

Happy
Matthew Diana (St. Paul’s School)

Happy is red.
It sounds like music
And smells like pizza
And tastes like cherries
And feels like love.

The Red Fox
Emilia Pelsor (St. Paul’s School)

One day I was walking
I saw a red fox
The fox was playing
I walked closer to it
Then the fox looked up at me
I closed my eyes, I heard
Leaves crackling, I opened
My eyes, the fox was gone.
The next day I saw the red fox again,
I knew to just keep on walking.
So I did.

Deep, Dark, Depressive and Maybe Death
Genevieve Donaldson (St. Paul’s School)

Each person has a life
The life trapped in a bubble.
When it pops
I go away.
The aqua keeps me going
I feel a new world.
A deep abyss almost never ending.
Then I land, dark sand.
Now I’ve entered a depressive desert
Trees but no leaves
and it may be death in a way
but then I realize I’m in a happy world.
The hole is all my losses
falling away from me.
The sand is really light
sparkling from the stars.
The depressive desert trees provide shade in a perfect world.
Deep, dark, depressive and maybe death
That’s all part of life.

We Are Like Fish
Brittani Jackson (Clark)

When I was a little girl
my grandfather told me
we are like fish
All of us different shapes
different sizes
swimming up a hill
some of us swimming downhill
Not knowing
where the water
is going to take us.
“Oh, the bigger you are the better?
Right, Grandpa, right?”
“Oh, no, little one, for you see
the bigger the fish
the more people it crossed.
They might be proud of being big,
but so are the fishermen.
The bigger the fish
the first they are to go,
so I suggest you act like an anemone.
It protects itself from other fish
but provides a place of shelter
for some as well.”

In This World of Ours
Brittani Jackson (Clark)

We live in a world full of destruction,
Devastation and dilapidation
We live in a world full of pleasure,
Passion and promise
We all rush to go someplace when we're Really not going anywhere at all.
Only the living may enter this world
And only the dead may leave it.

Koala Feelings
Sophia Thompson-Arispe (St. Paul’s School)

Koalas have feelings.
they can be sad,
they can be happy,
or even mad.
Koala can be talking to himself in his tree,
munching on Eucalyptus leaves.
Koalas can be thinking of their feelings for another Koala.
Select Poems—Part III

Poetry opened a window in him, his mother said
For student writers of all ages
Cyra S. Dumitru

He felt the window within, its vision and heft,
felt the pulse of the unspoken. Some days
he glimpsed his face in the closed glass,
smelled the mountains trying to break through,

heard splashing from a distant river.
One morning while he was reading a poem aloud,
a white bird flew through the classroom,
dropping feathers. The children dove
to the floor, claiming the fallen feathers,
and the window pane lifted inside the boy.
The view from the other side spoke
and he lifted his notebook and wrote.

Now the window stands open.
The boy can hear birds of changing colors
sing from the mountain trees,
and smell the small fish leaping in the river.

As he moves his pencil across the page,
words flow. Some days
he disappears. All you can see
is a notebook spinning with the breeze.

QUIET
Lauren M. Walthour

For those who cross back over the causeway
Air sounds different and perception clarifies.
Solemn burden and lonely evenings transform;
Confusion clears the way for contemplation;
Slowly to heavenly silence and poignant witness.

While the city’s noise grates one’s nerves,
Brash bank tellers sell candy to cure cancer.
So nature softly sings sweeter.

How tiring the TV debates and commercials;
How hollow Hollywood’s winners and distractions.

How relaxing the butterfly’s ballet among lantana.
How savory the breath of a yawning cat;
How patiently the forest reflects the sunset.

Red Light
Cecilia Jimenez

When I stopped at the red
you were standing there, on the corner.
There was a cap over your thick brown hair.
I admit, each distinct step you took
toward the car tightened my fingers over the wheel.

Your hands were loose, framing the black words “please help”
on a bent piece of cardboard.
The song coming from the blue-lit radio
didn’t match your deliberate walk or boney shoulders.
A salmon shirt hung over your frame;
I thought you would have moved just the same
irrevocable way without it, because clothing was just a little
inconsequential, and there are more
important problems to worry over.

My grandmother once told me to look in people’s eyes—
that if I saw Jesus in them, to help.
I would have laughed if not for her hand
gripping mine with a hard intention, firm pressure.

So I did look—
wiry beard,
locked mouth,
firm nose,
and in your eyes, I saw my own.
Mirroring succinctly back:
me into stranger,
into me.

Silence
Robert Allen

Listen to the silence of early morning
and slowly learn what cannot be ignored.
When the cat is not purring, wife not snoring,
hear how the ticks of the grandfather clock
fall down on restless ears like hammer blows
from the opposite corner of the house.
Discern the corded whir of foreign-made tires
as they go whizzing down the street outside.
Think of the sound that skates make on sidewalk
and remember a quiet girl named Susan
who lived on Sutton Drive. Then cry out loud
when you push her in the back and cause her
to fall and bruise her knees, and keep yourself
fifty years later wide awake wondering.
All That Is Sacred  
Lois Heger

OK now let’s just rule out all that junk.  
That profane  
That not perfect  
That ordinary non-sacred stuff.

But wait a minute,  
I think I’ll keep this butterfly with a broken wing,  
That coneflower with some petals drooping, others missing.

That small mesquite leaning East but taller on the West.  
Just some small yellow/green leaves on blackish branches  
On it so far.  
Yet there is a lazy rhythmic pleasantness to it.  
This soft dirt, beauty I feel through my feet.

Some stuff is sacred by use, sacred by peopled-ness  
Grey and worn and shabby.  
Not that pretty  
Just beautiful.

Marry Me  
Sylvia Berek Rosenthal

Marry me with marigolds  
Tempt me with your tenderness  
Covet me with coriander  
Chocolate and  
Clove

Favor me with foxglove  
Gather me the garden’s garland  
Circle me with summer squash  
Sesame and 
Sage

Woo me with water lilies  
Nurture me with nutmeg  
Pamper me with peppers  
Red green and  
Gold

And I will stroke  
Your balding head  
Bake you babkas  
Cook you cabbages  
Pat your pot belly

If you will only  
Marry me with marigolds

Poems From Voices Editors

Tragedy of a Wooden Duck  
Valerie Martin Bailey

Alas, he cannot hear his kinsmen cry.  
Eyes vacant, sitting motionless and mute.  
Forever earthbound, he will never fly  
To join his brothers in their wild pursuit,

No iridescent wings will soar outstretched  
On sunset skies of lavender and gold.  
His free-born silouette will not be etched  
On heaven’s canvas, glorious and bold,

No ripples mar the surface of his pond.  
No hunter’s boot disturbs its marble sheen;  
No reeds for shelter, only silken fronds  
Enhance the beauty of the figurine.

Poor faultless icon, carved by skillful knife,  
Will never know the joyous throb of life.

Layers  
Joan Seifert

The lightening struck too close just now;  
lit up the corners of the room  
where sure and certain dust has been at home discreetly for—well, years.

Where have they gone—the years  
before dust became the rule?

Those vanished ballgame cheers resound.  
Do they still boom in some far time warp,  
echoing victors’ names lauded long ago?  
And when the dust had settled, who had really won?

No more than rain can be stilled in midair 
or dust can thwart its own soft settling,  
no more than Orion’s traipse across the sky 
can be called onto an earthly plane,  
no more than this can I meet time and win.

Exhaustion claims the scepter, demands rule.  
Dust and lightning flashes are life,  
have been life, will be life.

Ceaseless, the query.
**Roncesvalles / Orreaga**  
_Astrid Lander_  

In the towns it is always Sunday morning.  
I look for its quiet people  
as if it always were naptime.  
Even in the grilled balconies  
the designed bars are not seen  
hidden by bell-shaped flowers.  
These towns are two names  
snow roof tiles  
doors and windows of painted wood  
hinges on view  
stable design.  
I hope that instead of a person a horse comes out

**DIOS**  
_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.

**Rage**  
_Maria Gabriela Madrid_  

Roaming around are monsters  
wanting to cause pain  
Poison darts enter your mind  
Your guard is down,  
but tearful eyes  
embrace the smile of being you.

**Rabia**  
_Maria Gabriela Madrid_  

Deambulando alrededor hay monstrous  
queriendo infligir dolor  
Dardos venenosos penetran tu mente  
Tu coraza está caída  
pero tus ojos llorosos  
albergan la sonrisa de ser tú.

ASTRID LANDER was born in Caracas, Venezuela, in December 1962. She has a license in letters from the University Center in Venezuela. Books of poetry include the following: _La Distancia por Dentro Premio Ramón Palomares, 1994_. AzúL ejo s Premio Lucila Palacios, 1997. SE ES Poemas Novelados. Buen Camino, hacia el Camino de Santiago.
I AM THAT WOMAN
Antonieta Madrid

I am that woman
on her own
who stretches out in the sun
who goes up walls
who gets lost in cracks
who drinks beer
who reads Marcel Proust
who is getting used to the square world
AND
at the first sign of irregularity
leaps over the walls!

SOY ESA MUJER SOLA
Antonieta Madrid

que se extiende al sol
que trepa por las paredes
que se pierde entre las grietas
que bebe cerveza
que lee a Marcel Proust
que se habitúa al mundo articulado
Y
a la menos irregularidad
¡salta los muros!

I WAS BORN IN Caracas, Venezuela. She works as a Director of International Affairs at “Círculo de Escritores de Venezuela.” Her published works are the following: Novels: Trance, Campos de niebla. Poetry and prose: Bañada de azul. She has articles published in magazines, on the web, on blogs, and in newspapers.

ANTONIETA MADRID was born in Valera, Venezuela. She taught Latin American literature at the School of Arts UCAB, received her MA in Contemporary Latin American Literature from Simon Bolivar University, her BA in Education (UCV, 1963-68), and an Honorary Fellow in Writing (University of IOWA, 1970). Her works are translated into several languages (English, German, French, Italian, Modern Greek and Serbo-Croatian) and are included in numerous anthologies.

As far as I am concerned, we would live by the fire, filled with stories and dance. I wouldn’t change anything, not even the end of our own story.

You, on the other hand, you must have done that: you must had invented an artifice in order to change the end. You must have been trying to wipe me out, thinking of thousands of ways to kill me. Not at gun point, not by professional killers; even more cruel, you are killing me in your memory.

You loved me briefly as visitors love each other; in your bed you no longer dream of me. In reality, you have shut me out; nevertheless, I am there.

It is impossible to erase my memory.
We have met.

POR MÍ NO PASARIÁMOS DE LA FOGATA, DE LOS CUENTOS Y DE LAS DANZAS. Yo no cambiaría nada, ni siquiera el final de nuestra historia. Ya tú lo debes haber hecho, inventarte algún artificio para cambiar el desenlace. Estarás ingeniantotela para desaparecerme, se te ocurrirán mil maneras de asesinararme. No, no con pistola ni matones, aún más cruel, asesinarme en la memoria. Me amaste con la brevedad de los visitantes, en tu cama ya no me sueñas, en la realidad me espantas, y sin embargo, queda. No se borra, jamás se borra.
Nos hemos reconocido.

ISABEL CECILIA GONZÁLEZ MOLINA was born in Caracas, Venezuela. She works as a Director of International Affairs at “Círculo de Escritores de Venezuela.” Her published works are the following: Novels: Trance, Campos de niebla. Poetry and prose: Bañada de azul. She has articles published in magazines, on the web, on blogs, and in newspapers.
You Are...
Selina Bonilla (Southside H.S.)

You are the essence of compassion
who wonders at the unraveling road
in its perpetual unveiling
as you see a promising future - for us.
Who wants to grab hold of the reins of time
to embrace each moment in its authenticity.
You are the embodiment of strength
as you pretend to be strong
throughout every difficult situation
without the faintest falter in your step,
but you feel just as much as I do.
You touch my heart
with the slightest smile or gentle laugh
which sets my day ablaze,
intoxicating me with pure bliss.
You worry when our anger flares
as arguments erupt
but never do you cry, never do you give up.
You are the epitome of nobility
who understands the depths of what I speak
while the ocean of words
doesn’t always flow so easily from my lips
You say more without speaking
because sometimes words unspoken
can say it all.
Oh! And your dreams!
How I cannot convey how genuinely
I yearn for you to achieve more
than you can attain.
How all the possibilities lay at your feet,
wishing for the faintest
chance to be in your grasp.
And I cannot fathom
how I could be so lucky
because you are mine.

Spawned from Silverstein’s Yipiyuk
Christopher Canestaro (Clark)

Exactly why I walk so slow
Is proof of the monsters from long ago
You’ve surely been told not to venture afar
But perhaps you’ll heed my warning scar
For still they are out there stomping around
Waiting to snatch you up without a sound
And although my pain has caused me much grief
It’s here we must stay... in the shade of this leaf.

My Mom
Shanique Martinez (Highland Forest Elem.)

I always wonder what she would be like...
I only know what I remember
Her hair was long and beautiful
Her smile lit up the darkness
Her lashes were long and dreamy
Her voice was soft spoken
I wish I could remember more
Like what she did or said
All I remember are her looks
And a faded memory of her face
I know she loved me so
And I still love her
I wish I could change that day
And my mom would be here with me to stay

Obscure
Amber Weber (Southside H.S.)

The tone of life reflects through your music
The ups and downs, the rise and falls
Your music displayed in your face
Constant changes of emotion

A torrent of confusion
Unchanging yet different
The same music plays everyday
On your face

A facade, an act
No truth unrolled for me to see
My own personal play to keep me entertained
Why do you do this to me?

Black-lace drapped over your features
Obscure the beautiful melody you keep hidden
Deep keys, an upside-down day
When will you drop it?

Mourn not, there is still hope
To make your music wonderful again
Replace black lace with white light
A fantastic play worthy of a standing ovation

Select Poems–Part V
More Youth Poems
Select Poems—Part VI

The Yard Two Streets Up

Chuck Collins

Of the streets I can take for my morning walks
I choose the one two up from ours
where I can walk past one particular house
whose yard makes me smile.

It’s not perfect with rocks and bricks around
exactly trimmed trees and tidy poodle bushes,
but sculptured looser for inventive proportions of color and size
with palate knife precision.

It’s more like later Picasso than his earlier works,
the paintings that are interpretative rather than photographic,
of bowls of fruit that evoke the taste of fruit,
not nude models whose every hair is in its proper place.

I wonder what kind of person enjoys the freedom
to have a yard different from the rest of us,
perhaps a therapist or a synchronized swimmer who needs an
outlet,
or a poet liberated from having to write in four lines.

Sometime soon I will knock on their door
to thank them for expanding my understanding of “yard,”
then I’d like to strike up a conversation about motive and cre-
ativity,
and then, if it seems right, I might bring in the topic of poetry.

Air

Asef Al-Jundi

No one has copyrights to the word
No one holds a patent for thinking of it first

So many humans jealously behave
As if they own what is naturally free

They have willingly put their heads in boxes
Breathing and seeing through tiny holes

They keep repeating to themselves:
This is the righteous way to live

Those not joining are condemned
To suffer forevermore

But why do they get riled when others
Sing of freedom from boxes?
It should matter not to them!

In peace
I claim my birthright to unbounded
Air

HOMAGE TO MY SILESIAN GRANDFATHER

Hejo Müller

Opa’s silver tobacco box
pervades my memory
the smoke from his pipe curling
around me like morning fog.

You were an artist, Opa,
as you constructed for farmers
wells made of wood
up and down the countryside
in Herzogswaldau

I followed you
as you shook clusters of bees
out of fruit trees
into your basket
as you eyed tenderly
your livestock surrounded in stalls
by cooing swallows

I watched you
as you harvested fields
of clover and grains
with your scythe
as you created
a certain rhythm in the
swaying of your body
thus dictating the beat
for the birds

And then World War II
took you away, Opa,—
this cursed
senseless war

I saw you on that night
for the last time
when the barn and stalls
burned in an ocean of flames
when your beloved bees screamed
suffocating in the smoldering heat…

The blistering flames killed you, Opa,
as you faded into darkness
the soft buzzing of your honey bees
following you.

Adapted from Hejo Müller’s story by James Brandenburg
Spin Art Grief Circle in the Bereavement Center
Patricia L. McNaught LPC-S RPT-S

As the Clinical Director of the CBCST, I create expressive art interventions for grieving families. I began this therapeutic work in 2001, and created the Spin Art Grief Circle technique© in 2005. This process gives grieving children and families new visual and tactile stimuli to help accept and embrace the pain of loss.

Clients of the Bereavement Center range from ages 3 up to 24, and are introduced to a series of expressive art interventions that they are encouraged to use as mediums to understand and define their emotional pain. Because it is often difficult to express feelings of grief and loss, powerful sensations often overwhelm clients and cause them to defensively retract inward where they struggle to regain feelings of safety and emotional balance. However, at the Bereavement Center, we explore these deep emotions and seek ways to reorder clients’ lives in positive ways.

The Spin Art Grief Circle technique© is both simple and powerful. Through the process, the client objectifies their emotions, pours out pain as color, and creates a tangible product they can hold in hand to visualize what is happening inside. The process helps clients embrace the beauty and pain of love as they begin the healing process.

The process begins by asking clients to draw a large circle on a 36 inch by 36 inch, white piece of paper. They are then asked to write the word “grief” above the circle (for younger clients, we spell this out), and to think of words that define their grief. Then, they write their selected words within the circle and thus establish a visual range of individual perceptions and sensations that their personal grief brings to mind, heart and body.

The next step in this process asks that clients select colors that relate to the feelings they have written down (feelings and colors are correlated). Clients then move to a spin art machine, a device that spins quickly and is used to disburse the series of selected colors onto a sheet of paper within the machine. In pouring the
paints into the machine, the client representatively pours painful feelings of loss into the spin art machine, which then releases the colors/emotions onto the paper in vivid displays of representative emotional pain.

Significantly, the individuals tacitly measure the weight of their pain as they handle the paint containers, squeeze various amounts of color into the machine, and experience the turbulence of grief as the paint spins in a circular pattern. Manipulating the paints, adjusting the process of releasing their pain through paint colors onto the paper, and watching this unfold in front of them allows clients to externalize their emotions into products of beauty that they can see and touch. Clients are able to see and experience in a tactile way, the release of emotions spinning out from their internal processes as they witness their chosen colors spin out from the machine. Clients continue introducing more colors, representative of the emotions they are therapeutically processing, until they accept what they see as an accurate reflection of their personal, internal loss and pain.

It is possible for a bereaved person to reflect, embrace, and adjust to tremendous life-altering experiences; however it is very important to remember that one must not reject or minimize the varied emotions of grief. Because grief is often experienced as pain when someone dies, healing requires an expression of that specific and very personal pain. Through processes such as Spin Art Grief Circle technique©, clients learn to see their feelings in a new way and accept them. Spin Art encourages clients to process their pain both physically and emotionally through the creation of visual and tactile artwork, and thus offers clients a process they are able to use to regain the necessary balance needed to heal—the ultimate goal of therapy.

The Spin Art Grief Circle technique© is only one of the many therapeutic interventions we have developed at the Center for children and families to begin the healing process.

Patricia L McNaught LPC-S  RPT-S
Clinical Director CBCST
Licensed Professional Counselor-Supervisor
Registered Play Therapist-Supervisor

Spin Art
CBCST

The Joy In My Heart
Shanique Martinez
(Highland Forest Elementary)

Joy is a feeling of love, happiness, and safety all bundled up in a ball.

Joy is what you feel in your heart... You can feel it when you are around family, friends, or relatives.

You can feel it when you are all by yourself, this joy in your heart.

Joy is a warm glow deep down in your soul that surrounds you with beauty and hope.

Joy does not happen overnight, you have to look deeply with all your might.

I found my joy when I moved in with my mommy.

Each day she filled my heart with warmth, love, and understanding.

No matter how hard things get in life... Each day she filled my heart with warmth and love. You too, can find joy like mine.

Continued on Page 30
Poetry & Dreams

Poetry, Dreams and Interpretation
James Brandenburg

Dream (Jan. 12, 2011): The dream takes place outside a church. It is a large stone church made of white stone. I am outside waiting to go inside. I am excited because my brother Steve is coming. He is older, closer to my age. People (unknown) are streaming inside. I go inside and converse with some of the church members. I have not been to church in a long time. There are Bible classes taking place before the main service. I decide not to participate in the Bible studies and leave with someone my age. He has a crew cut and reminds me of my Uncle Marshall from Kentucky. As he and I are going up the driveway, my brother Steve arrives in a Black Limousine. He gets out of the Limousine and is dressed in green. It looks like a military uniform. We embrace, and he seems proud to see me. He is much more grown up than the last time we were together. That was before he went to the war in Vietnam. We walk into the church together. Just the two of us. End of dream.

Interpretation: This is the first dream in which my brother Steve has appeared. He was a welder in the Marines and was killed in Vietnam in August of 1968. While he was welding on a bridge in Da Nang, he was hit by a mortar attack from the Viet Cong and was blown into the river when the bridge exploded. War is an archetypal experience, and this experience profoundly changes most people. My brother was profoundly transformed by the war in Vietnam. He became more introspective and more serious. He began writing poetry.

My brother and I were extremely close, and his death affected me profoundly. Not a day passes that I do not think of him. Why does the unconscious send my brother to me in a dream? Why now? In a very spiritual way, Steve has been with me all these years; I sense that he is a part of my soul. Because dreams can have both an objective interpretation and a subjective interpretation, consideration of both often provides profound, personal insight.

From a subjective standpoint, what could this dream add to my life? That Steve is male, and because he and I were so close, he represents the positive shadow. The dream takes place outside a large, white stone church. Compared to my brief life span, the stone becomes a symbol of endurance and suggests the concept of eternity. Significantly, the church is made of white stone. Depending on the region of the world, white is associated with death and is the color of mourning. Therefore, white might symbolize the willingness to adopt a new attitude. Reflecting upon the way I felt when my brother and I walked into the church together, a shift in my attitude had occurred. Walking into the church—together, again—I felt as though we were walking together into eternity.

I also see the idea of the philosopher’s stone (the indestructible material of transformation) in the white stone. According to Jung, one labors on the stone one’s entire life—forging and transforming the Self. I see the visit of my brother as a symbol of my own transformation. The Arabian alchemist Morienus expressed the philosopher’s stone in this way: “The philosopher’s stone is extracted from you: you are its mineral, and one can find it in you” (Jung 210). This tells me that I must patiently work throughout my life, like the ancient alchemists, “with love and approbation” to transform what I least value—the dead, ignorant or false aspects of myself—into the true stone, wise and eternal (Book of Symbols 106). In Jungian terms, my brother, Steve, reflects my own transformation.

Moving further into the dream, the church is read as a symbol of the spiritual, and linked with the collective. We often participate in the collective, thinking that the collective aspect of church is the path to spirituality, but I had not been to church in a long time. Because I go into the church the first time and do not experience a sense of connection, this initial entrance seems representative of a collective experience. Although there are Bible classes taking place before the main service, I leave with someone who reminds me of my Uncle Marshall in Kentucky. My Uncle Marshall had a positive influence on my life when I was growing up, and therefore, represents another aspect of the positive shadow. In objective life, he was a witty and fun-loving individual, a contrast to my more serious and focused attitude. As my Uncle Marshall and I walk up the driveway, my brother Steve is arriving in a black limousine.

Steve gets out of the black limousine and I watch him while fully anticipating his arrival. He and I embrace. He is four years younger than I and has matured since he was killed in Vietnam. He is the age he would have been had he continued to live. His age and maturity would indicate that he has continued to develop in his afterlife. The black limousine had the shape of a coffin; it felt like a more formal occasion. A black limousine has a certain status to it; the black limousine is associated with formality, parties, celebrations and weddings. Very often government officials and dignitaries ride in a black limousine—my brother arrived in style. Yet, it appeared that my brother had stepped out of an abyss, (a cave) that had swallowed and enveloped him but had not destroyed him. It was as if he stepped out of the bowels of the earth and therefore, out of melancholy and death.

Black points to a loss of consciousness, death and chaos, but out of darkness also comes new light, which represents resurrection and possible rejuvenation. “In alchemy, the blackness (nigredo) is the necessary prerequisite for the whiteness (albedo) and the redness (rubedo), which means the resurrection of new life after the depressed state of the nigredo “ (Introduction to Picture Interpretation by Theodor Abt).

Steve comes out of Blackness and as such, is interpreted as a symbol of the resurrection of new life after the depressed state of the nigredo.

Another important aspect of this dream is Steve’s clothing. Normally, Marines are dressed in a brown uniform, however, Steve is dressed in green. The uniform represents a kind of persona, indicating one’s place in the hierarchy of the military. His green uniform symbolizes his attitude, that of green vegetation. Green, as the color of vegetation, symbolizes the renewing and flowing force of the unconscious. Green is growth. It is life-bringing and hopeful. Steve carries this renewal force with him. I see my brother as a bringer of life and renewal.

We walk into the church together, just the two of us. Here, the church means something different from what I normally
associate with church. It takes on a more spiritual meaning—a union or quite possible, a reunion. That there is a unifying aspect to the relationship shared by siblings, perhaps represents the unlived side of myself. He has gone through an archetypal experience involving war, and I have not had that same archetypal experience. He went through a transformation in the Vietnam War.

On a more objective level, he was able to experience life growing up in a less serious way. He enjoyed playing cards, smoking, drinking and going out with women. He had a more frivolous side than I. Perhaps he forged an attitude and adaptation to life by indulging in these things that brought him meaning. He knew how to turn these frivolous things around and really focus on the other person. He knew how to connect to others. I was serious and focused when we were growing up together, but I did not connect to others as well as he did. I also know that he connected to my more serious side when we were growing up, and I served as a strong role model for him.

Although, the first time I go into the church represents a collective experience, the second time I enter into the church with Steve symbolizes a way of entering into a more sacred space. Steve comes from the land of the dead, and our entering that sacred space the second time could be about entering that space Jung calls Self. Self represents that holy space within me. It is fitting that I should enter this holy space with my brother. Walking into the church together makes this experience even more profound.

Certainly the subjective way of looking at this dream has enabled me to look at aspects of myself, but what if there is a strictly objective level to this dream? My brother’s picture sits on my desk behind me in my office. Not a day passes that I do not look at that picture and think about him. For years, I have asked myself the following questions: Will I see my brother again? Is there an afterlife? How does this afterlife manifest itself? Is this my brother appearing to answer these questions? Is he revealing some of what he is going through since I last saw him? Is this my brother appearing to me from his trans-death state? Maybe he is coming to see me.

In his chapter entitled “On Life After Death,” from Memories, Dreams, Reflections, C.G. Jung says that “parapsychology holds it to be a scientifically valid proof of an afterlife that the dead manifest themselves—either as ghosts, or through a medium—and communicate things which they alone could possibly know. But even though there do exist such well-documented cases, the question remains whether the ghost or the voice is identical with the dead person or is a psychic projection, and whether the things said really derive from the deceased or from knowledge which may be present in the unconscious.” What if my brother really appeared to me? Dreams seem to be the only place where the dead appear. This dream points to the idea that death is not the end; it is something that we pass through. Perhaps there is something going on in my life that is calling my brother forth? No longer do I have to have faith, because I have had the experience. In my life, this dream opens up a whole dimension of the unconscious that was inaccessible before. For me, it means a great deal to assume that my life will have an infinite continuity beyond my present existence. I feel better, and I feel more at peace. I have a “myth,” which encourages me to look deeper into this whole realm. I can see that our world, with its time, space, and causality, relates to another world—a totally different order of things. For years I have had an inkling about life after death, but this dream helped me grasp it clearly at a particular moment in my life.

It is intriguing that my brother appears at the age he would have been had he lived all these years. He is four years younger than I (his actual age today), he wears a military uniform, he climbs out of a Black Limousine, he has a certain status, and he has continued to develop in his afterlife. I feel happy in the dream, and feel that he came to see me because I was calling him forth. He answers my call. The idea that he appears to me from a trans-death state is a huge experience in my life. The time was ripe for me. Although the subjective interpretation of the dream makes sense to me, the objective interpretation offers me profound answers to questions about life and death.

Return of My Brother*
James Brandenburg

All these years you were with me
In that hidden place, today you appear
man in green arriving
in a Black Limousine
you disembark your destiny
leap forward from our past
as if never gone
more grown up now,
you embrace me
and we walk arm in arm
into this place of worship
composed of white stone
we dip our hands in holy water
something about siblings
fusion into self
entering the land of the dead
crossing the threshold
into that sacred space.

*My brother Steve was killed in Vietnam in August, 1968. He was in the Marines. He appeared in a dream for the first time ever in January before my birthday.

C.G. Jung & Arts ... continued from page 13
the tale, the feminine seems conspicuously absent at the beginning of our story—until we look for alternative sources of feminine energy/presence. In fact, the feminine is not entirely absent in the original situation. Rather, it is represented via the image of the beautiful garden and the tree that produces golden apples. Yet, this is a very sheltered and protected feminine element, a carefully cultivated and managed source as symbolized through the statement that “the apples were all carefully counted.”

On an archetypal level, a cultivated garden with a tree that produces golden apples seems an expression of the cultivation of nature herself, such that the wildness of nature has been tamed by the masculine spirit and transformed into a fruitfulness that has great value. This tree is the Tree of Life itself, producing its golden fruit—the arts, humanities, and so on—within the garden of Western culture and civilization.

Continued on page 30
On an individual level, the initial scene of this fairy tale consists of the Golden Bird, which introduces an entirely new element. One feather from this other dimension is a magic spark that goes beyond tradition, expresses a special visitation by the divine, and an opening to another dimension. In our tale, the Tree of Life with its golden apples is visited by a golden bird at midnight, who plucks away its fruit and upsets the status quo of tradition.

Birds are creatures of the air, which navigate the skies in a seemingly miraculous way. So miraculous, in fact, that the ancient augurs would observe the flight of the birds in the sky and interpret it as an oracle, guiding important decisions and providing meaning to key events. Psychologically, birds would represent intuitions or thoughts, as well as inspirations and lofty ideals. In a basic sense, birds are an expression of spiritual energy itself. Birds have been associated with the Holy Spirit in Christian tradition and spiritual energies in every tradition. Wotan had his ravens, Huginn (“thought”) and Muninn (“memory”), Zeus had his eagle.

In our tale, the Tree of Life with its golden apples is visited by a golden bird at midnight, who plucks away its fruit and upsets the King of the palace. Midnight is the most numinous time of the night, and also the most dangerous. It is the moment when there is the greatest opening to the other side. It is at midnight that momentous things happen, from Cinderella’s transformation at the ball, to the Egyptian Sun God Re being joined with Osiris in the sixth hour (midnight) during the night sea journey through the underworld.

Likewise, the appearance of the Golden Bird at midnight expresses a special visitation by the divine, and an opening to another dimension. It is a magic spark that goes beyond tradition, and introduces an entirely new element. One feather from this bird is worth more than the whole kingdom!

On an individual level, the initial scene of this fairy tale corresponds to a situation wherein life has reached a plateau, where one is only creatively productive within certain confines or conventions. And then something, an impulse or inspiration, comes along which, if given the right attention and value, can be the beginning of an entirely new chapter of creative life. The impulse or inspiration often demands that we color outside the lines and extend past predetermined frames—and if heeded can transform tradition itself with an entirely new mode of creative expression. This would be akin to the creative spark of an Elvis or the Beatles, or perhaps a Picasso or a Debussy—any creative spark that ultimately changes traditional frameworks. Significantly, in the Russian version of the tale, the Golden Bird is referred to as the Firebird, so here one gets the sense of the great passion involved. One must be passionate about this inspiration!

In the next issue we’ll continue with the tale, and see how the hero follows the Golden Bird into the transformational process. In the meantime, stay awake past the midnight hour and be watchful for the divine spark which can transform your ordinary into the extraordinary!

Painting by David Drymala

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About My Papa
Megan Huff (Woodridge Elementary)

My Papa died but I don’t know how. I cried and cried with my mom. My nana told me papa was in surgery. I thought she meant he was doing a patient. But then the next morning my mom told me my dad died. I was sad. But my mom said it’s okay because he’s with me right now.

Before he died, he went to Blue Wing with me. Blue Wing is a hunting and fishing place. My dad asked if we could borrow his friend’s house. We could sleep there; it was cool. I went fishing. It was fun. He loved to go hunting. I hate the boom from the gun when you shoot it. It was loud.

My friends asked me if I was going to have a step dad. But I am not going to have one at all. My Papa had a big black truck. We gave it to my big sister. She’s 16.

He was really smart. He knew one billion—33 times 90. He was a doctor. He had a lot of friends because all these people were at the funeral. All these people were there. There were a lot.

I love him so much. He used to give my mom flowers. My mom gave me my dad’s ring. I wear it on my neck and hold it when I feel sad.

I love my papa. He was cool. I love my papa so much. He was awesome! He took me to school. He worked a lot but he liked to spend time with family a lot, too. His favorite color was orange. He liked to play with me a lot.

My mom loves my papa. My mom said I have a nose like him. He was an exciting person. He lives in heaven and he is watching me right now.

Just a Few Steps Away
Isabella Briones (The Carver Academy)

You will always be my Daddy and I’ll always be your Baby
I promise I’ll be with you soon hopefully maybe
I don’t wanna let you go
But I got to let you go, so
Just remember we will be just a few steps away
Why can’t you stay...
I envy you up there
I can’t find you anywhere
Just remember we will be a few steps away
When I get there I’ll walk through that gate
and walk into your arms and feel safe
Mom will once again have her soul mate
But Daddy don’t forget
Just remember we will be a few steps away...
My Paintings
Jacob (Leon Valley Elementary)

My name is Jacob. I do lots of paintings because I like to do it. I am eight years old.

I come here (Bereavement Center) because my dad died.

“Art is what you feel inside.”

Here is one of my paintings.

I like this one the most because it represents my family.

The colors are my feelings. Red is the love of my family. Blue is sad because my dad died, and we are all sad. Yellow is joy because my dad took care of us, and I still remember him.

When somebody dies, it feels like somebody crushed you. After a while, you feel better, but you never forget them. J.B.

This is my memory box for my dad. It’s red because it’s the color of the human heart and love.

If you lose someone they are always alive in your heart.

I paint because of my dad.

That’s my story.

Before

Xavier Flores (East Central H.S.)

In my bed where I stay on a cold endless day,
To punish time itself for the sorrow it brought,
How my happiness has slowly rotted,
My life is coming to an end,
My heart unable to mend,
Harder to breathe with every second that passes,
The bright light alas!
He speaks to me in a monotone voice,
Death is unbeatable and nobody’s choice,
As he rises from his holy chair,
I realize nobody is there,
I blink to see the reflection of myself,
Along with the pain and sorrow he has dealt.
Through it all I am still here,
Living day by day,
Year by year.

5 Minutes Ago
Xavier Flores (East Central H.S.)

To see days fly by and nights go fast
I’m filled with emotions from my past,
Sadness and anger linger inside me,
Waiting for someone to come and find me,
My heart beats with the echo of a lion’s roar,
But wants to stop and pump no more,
The man who brought me to be who I am,
Is the only one pushing me reassuring I can,
And he’s not even here!
His life is well done!
But that’s just the life of a dedicated son.
Geomancy
Cooper Dale Harris

If one were to blast
Sonar waves straight
Down into the depths
Of this city, what
Would they see?

Layers, metamorphic
Funerary strata set
Down some dead years
Ago when blood and
Hot tar mixed to the
Sounds of stolen
Symphonies, spectral
Autopsy cut so deep into
The mine, depths to
Plumb at the expense
Of what exactly?

Flashes of something
Inhabiting the abyss,
Luminous streaks whip
Across frames, illuminating
Pieces at a time,
Hardly enough for the
Short-sighted wanderer
To be wary of what walks
These streets as well,
Something silent and climbing
Delivering that pressure at
The back of the neck,
Like a plea to turn around
To see the phantom who
Wants to be seen,
Wanting why?

This city churns in its heat
Beneath the bone-paved paths,
Veins carrying what can now only be
Understood as the residents, safe in
Their detectable flesh, in their assured
Dominion over the specters who have to be
Gone, have to be harmless and quiet, have to be imagined,
Have to be redirected with the breeze, have to be
Gone, but the specters are not still,
And after the skin and the tricks,
How are we any different?

*Tapestry Review is UTSA’s very own student-run and student-produced literary journal. Published annually (in the spring term) the third volume was published in Spring 2008. For students interested in volunteering their time and energy to help produce Sagebrush Review, information is available at their website: http://www.sagebrushreview.org/

Editors’ Poems

The Tiger, Alas*
James R. Adair

Tiger, tiger, fading fast
From the forests where you pass
Silently in search of prey,
Deadly hunter, night or day.

Flaming stripes and teeth of steel,
None your prey that seek your weal,
Yet other hunters do admire
Your strength and quintessential fire.

Your backbone’s spring, your mitts of stone,
Your jaws that sunder flesh from bone,
Invincible mid Nature’s beasts,
They gaze, astonished, at your feats.

But now of late your numbers dim,
E’en as masses chant your hymn.
Ruthless man, your mortal foe,
Steers your fate toward final woe.

Tiger, tiger, fading fast
From the forests where you pass
Silently in search of prey,
Will you live another day?

*Written in response to the news that tigers may be extinct in the wild within 12 years.

Letting Go
Deb Peña

The last straw wasn’t a straw at all. No laboring camel stood before me, bleating pleas for relief; No choir of dissenting angels sang, “Hallelujah, get the hell out!”

No, instead, it was a hole.

In a prized Pier One pillow, long pined over and saved for, purpled satin, white faux pearl beading squared, set just-so, perfect, in the right corner of our couch.

Monday night, I sat down, leaned into its soft belly, and while adjusting for comfort, my ring finger slipped deep into the wound of once durable fabric, and

I knew… stitching seams was not an option.
**Relapse**  
*Josie Mixon*

Finally  
My lungs cough up  
Strangling salted water  
I am able to breathe again  
Rays of golden sun  
Hover over me  
Like an invitation to heaven  
From afar you taste  
A sense of happiness within me  
You pull the chain  
Around my ankle  
Submerging me back  
Into your darkness  
Yet keep me  
At arm’s length  
Close enough  
To hear the whispers  
Of the voices in your head  
Phantoms of love  
You are a madman  
With lovers eyes  
Whose temperament baits my desire  
Darkness without a promise of light

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**Border Crossing**  
*Lou Taylor*

Caracara  
Far from home  
Mexico is where you roam

Your shrill cry  
Rarely heard  
North of the Rio Grande

But I saw you  
One day  
As you flew overhead  
I heard your cry

I’ve been told  
You’re called  
Mexican Eagle

I guess you didn’t  
Notice the border  
As you flew over

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**Death: Dance of the Psyche**  
*James Brandenburg*

Do not fear  
the passing of this body  
for fire  
chasés out the woman  
as she ascends  
into the clouds  
then pours herself  
onto smoldering ashes  
and like rain to earth  
returns again to the body  
a sacred marriage  
of wisdom and decay  
grass swathes the vestiges  
a rose of a hundred petals  
riots in all her glory.

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**Chautauqua**  
*Mo H Saidi*

When you ride your bike, you are the blue  
and yellow wild flowers along the hilly roads.  
At the bend, the blueberries, cherries, sweet corn  
you are the short walk to the Hall of Philosophy.

You are a cool air before dawn in August  
a wool blanket to keep warm at night  
soft rain in the early morning hours  
the rising sun; and you’re brisk at noon.

You are the old and the young; a youth  
who swims half a mile in the lake  
a bard who recites Elizabeth Bishop’s  
The Fish during the Brown Bag speech.

You are the new voice on the stage  
the novice writer anxious in the prose workshop  
you are white, brown, black, or oriental  
Hindu, Moslem, Jew, Christian, or secular.

You are man, woman, hetero, homo, or nonsexual  
musician, listener, lecturer, or a student—perpetual  
you are Clinton, Rushdi, Israeli, or Egyptian Sadat  
You are Chopin, Mozart, Verdi, or Gershwin.

You are a pianist from Poland, a ballerina  
from Moscow, a writer from Ireland, celist  
from South Korea; you a lone sailboat, the lake-weed  
Tosca lamenting before her fall from the ramparts.

You are a visitor from the canicular Deep South  
seeking light; from the prickly fields with arthritic  
mesquites, declining aquifers, wilted meadows.  
You are Chautauqua, a fire fly glowing at night.
Many generations ago a Cherokee warrior and a twelve year old boy lived in the town of Tomassee. The town was located on the north bank of the Keowee River and surrounded by endless woodlands. One afternoon the warrior summoned the boy to his hut and asked him to sit with him by the fire for a private talk. They sat down in front of the fire and remained silent for a long time, their thoughts focused on the bright flames leaping off the cane splints stacked in a shallow pit in the center of the hut. Occasionally the warrior sipped, from a gourd bowl, a bitter black drink brewed from leaves and tender shoots of the Yaupon Holly. After awhile the warrior placed the bowl on the ground. He cleared his throat. Then he informed the boy that since he was the brother of the boy’s mother he was obliged to communicate to him a story that the old men had told him they had heard from his elders. What the warrior said next was so curious that it was indelibly etched in the boy’s memory.

This is what the warrior told the boy: The great unseen Supreme Being created the heavens and filled them with the Sun, the Moon, and many stars. Then he made a great paradise called earth that floated in a sea of water. He suspended the earth at each of the four cardinal points by a cord hanging down from the sky vault. After he finished his work, he spun the heavens on his fingertip to harmonize the Sun and the Moon in the sky high above the earth. The animals and plants came next. The Cherokee came soon after. On the day the earth died, the cords will break and the earth will sink back into the ocean. This is the Cherokee’s greatest fear.

But for now the earth lives and every day, at a moment shortly before dawn, when the mysterious night still shrouds the earth, the Moon whispers to his sister, “Wake up, dear one. Your time draws close.” And so the Sun awakes from the land of dreams. She yawns; she stretches; she rubs sleep from her golden eyes. And she slowly rises in the tranquil air to bathe the mountains and valleys and the Cherokee people with her gilded rays. The misty gray vapors of dawn are no match for the Sun’s grandeur, and like a heavenly goddess she dances along the sky arch toward paradise wrapping her warm arms around the Cherokee. Her glorious dance and life-giving rays are pleasing to all living things, including gods and spirits of all shapes and sizes.

In a time long ago a band of Cherokee lived in a town called Guaquili. The town was situated directly beneath the sky arch in a stand of trees at the edge of a vast prairie-like track that stretched westward for many leagues. Near the town ran the Tuckasegee River. The Cherokee were thankful that the Creator had made the earth and its many gods and helpful spirits. All gods and good spirits were placed on earth to look over the Cherokee and grant them the power to ward off menacing spirits like the great horned serpent Ukenta and other magic creatures with supernatural power that sometimes came to harm the Cherokee or to invade their dream world.

Every morning the Cherokee of Guiquili moved joyfully to the nearby river. There they bathed in the cool cerulean water. When they finished they turned their faces to the east and lifted their eyes to the sky. With hands held high a holy man led them in a thankful orison to the Sun and the Cherokee would ask that all gods and good spirits roaming the earth share their kindness with them now and in the afterlife. One day, the Sun took the occasion to analyze the Cherokee more closely. After a few moments her smile faded and she grew melancholy; cold winds of gloom swept over her soul. She was disheartened because the Cherokee looked at her with squinted eyes, something she had never noticed before. That evening she told her brother that this was so. She said, “My grandchildren cannot see my true beauty because they shield their eyes when they look at me.” Her brother said, “I am fond of the Cherokee because when they see me at night they always smile with eyes wide open.” His words flung envy toward his sister’s core. When it struck it swiftly boiled to jealousy.

The next morning the Sun rose on schedule and began her journey along the sky arch. But on that day she was resentful and intended to punish the Cherokee because they would not look at her face. Her rays blazed with fury while she searched for them but they were nowhere to be found. She was unaware that they were huddled closely together in the council house singing a mournful lament, knowing danger was lurking nearby. As she searched, she thought about the Cherokee and their squinting eyes, which she believed made them ugly. But then she remembered how the Cherokee held her in high esteem. They often chanted incantations and special songs in her honor and in difficult times they mumbled prayers to her and sang their songs louder to make sure she would hear them. Finally, she reasoned that the Cherokee worshipped her with the reverence she deserved; thus, the shielding of their eyes was not a sign of disrespect. In the end she concluded that perhaps she was behaving impulsively. With that thought in mind she strove to cast aside her resentment and replace it with forgiveness. Her thoughtful reasoning calmed her soul but the tips of her rays were still searching for the Cherokee. She longed to let them know how much she cared for them. Suddenly targets shimmered beneath her rays and her eyes locked on a new race of people moving from the east. Abruptly a cloud moved in front of her face and covered it like a woman’s shawl. She swept the cloud aside to get a better view. She was mortified at what she saw.

The bearded leader of six hundred soldiers held up a hand sheathed in black leather. His soldiers, covered with fatigue and wearing clumsy helmets, came to a halt. The horses neighed, their droves of pigs squealed, and the war dogs snarled and lunged forward, restrained only by heavy chains wrapped around their muscular necks. The exhausted soldiers raised their faces and stared toward the Sun, being careful to not look at her directly. The leader dismounted his horse, his rusty armor squeaked as he moved forward chin deep in sweat. With quivering muscles and darting eyes, the horse reared up on its hind legs and pawed the air. Then it dropped its legs to the ground, trembling to dust the innocent leaves that lay beneath its black hooves.

When the leader’s calf-high boots hit the ground, he momentarily swooned with greed. He handed the reins to an Indian porter who had been taken captive at the onset of the journey. Then the leader’s ravenous eyes fell on the gates of the palisade that garrisoned the town. He stepped forward, using his lance like a walking stick. With each step he took, the long metal tip at the bottom of the lance pricked the earth. His eyes roamed around as...

\[\text{Short Prose}\
\text{Sister of the Moon}\
\text{Woodrow Hopper}\]
body were painted red; he wore many fine plumes and carried a war club. The chief was accompanied by warriors who carried bows and arrows at the ready. The two men exchanged uneasy nods. A moment later the bearded leader turned on his heels and pointed to a soldier in the ranks and waved him forward. The summoned man trotted forward and was accompanied by a much smaller fellow and a party of captive Catawba, Tuscarora, and Yuchi men as well as others captured in provinces near the ocean. The porters followed behind the two men like frightened dogs. When they arrived at the leader’s side, they bowed. The leader nodded and twirled around. Then with the swipe of his arm he pierced the earth with the razor-sharp tip of his lance. Then, haft on high, its crystalline cross extolled the sun’s rays and a blinding flash of light exploded in all directions. In a booming voice the leader declared that the land now belonged to his god and the King of Castile. The smaller of the two men who had come forward bowed his head and the leader, and soldiers, and porters followed his lead. The little man offered a prayer to his god and they all made the sign of the cross on their chests. The smaller man’s words and the words the leader spoke were recited to the chief by the principal interpreter. The interpreter used sign language and bits and pieces of other languages that the chain of porters brought to the conversation. When the interpreter finished, the leader eased off his gloves and handed them to a porter who clutched them to his chest.

The chief asked the leader to identify himself, inquired as to his purpose, and the length of his stay. The leader declared his name was Soto, and as the emperor’s vassal he could stay as long as he chose. Next he demanded food for himself and his soldiers and grain for the livestock. After stating his initial demands, he retrieved a gold nugget from a pouch and clasped it tightly between his thumb and forefinger and thrust it toward the chief’s face, demanding that the chief hand over his gold. The chief was aggravated by De Soto’s demeanor and outrageous demands. He considered bashing him in the head with his war club. The chief was accompanied by warriors who carried swords, lances, arquebuses and crossbows they carried. So knew that thought to be unwise given the size of the army and mischievousness of the leader’s eyes was so vast that he was unable to see the mountain range. Suddenly the sky darkened and a shooting star with a tail of yellow fire arched across the sky moving rapidly east to west. A hush fell over the town. De Soto opened his eyes wide. His army of superstitious men trembled with nerves. The Cherokee were stone faced, trying their best to swallow laughter because they knew the sun, and the moon, and the stars were tricksters. A moment later the sky brightened as never before and a golden glow flashed upward into the clear blue sky off the western horizon. De Soto and his men knew without a doubt that this was the radiant glow of gold. A tremendous sigh flowed from the army’s throats. De Soto stroked his black beard. He nodded and his upper lip curled into an ugly snarl.

That night De Soto and the chief sat up late into the night and talked while an owl screeched off in the distance. The owl’s constant cry irritated De Soto. The screech troubled the chief because he knew that owls brought prophetic tidings, but no confessor was present to interpret its language.

The army delayed its departure to recover from the fatigue and hardships of the journey. To ease the army’s hunger, the chief had the women bring forth baskets of green corn, loins of venison, two hundred plump turkeys, chestnuts, mulberries, and green onions with bulbs as fat as the tip of one’s thumb.

In the pre-dawn hours of the eighth day, De Soto rallied his army and prepared to march them out of the gates of the palisade, heading westward in search of the gold he yearned for. But prior to their departure, the smaller of the two interpreters hung a silver cross on the door post of the council house and informed the Cherokee that because of the sacredness of the cross the Cherokee should worship it and never remove it. The interpreter was a wiry little fellow with a shaved patch on the crown of his head, who dressed different from his companions. Instead of wearing armor he wore a shabby brown sack cloth that hung to his ankles and was tied by a rope at the waist. On his dusty feet he wore thick leather soles fastened to the bottoms of his feet with leather straps tied around his ankles. His face wore a dour, humorless expression. Surprisingly, he carried no weapon. Since his arrival he had eroded in his arms a large leather folder with many talking leaves bound inside. Day and night he had chattered like a magpie, often flipping through the binder and reciting stories from the talking leaves. Since the stories were long and convoluted they made the Cherokee unsettled and because he was less of an interpreter than he was a talker, most of his stories were lost in translation.

After the army left the Cherokee came together and built a massive fire in the center of the town. They began to beat their drums, dance, and sing their best songs to the Sun, thanking her for the good omen she had sent to them eight days before. The chief walked to the council house, grabbed the cross from the door post, and hurled it into the fire. The Sun was so pleased with the sight she rose up and smiled upon them. Her smile pleased the Cherokee. They danced some more. They sang more songs. As they danced their moccasins swept away the marks the lance had made on their land, with no knowledge that the tedious words and signs delivered by the second interpreter during the seven days and nights he lectured while walking among them, foretold the death of their gods and spirits and the end of paradise.

The Cherokee warrior stopped talking. He lifted the gourd bowl from the ground and placed it to his lips. He sipped and afterwards smacked his lips. He handed the bowl to the boy. The boy sipped from the gourd and handed it back. Again they sat in silence. After a few minutes the warrior turned his face toward the boy and challenged him to find the binder with the talking leaves. The warrior said that if the boy could find the binder and was brave enough to touch it he would receive the power to decipher the talking leaves for the Cherokee so they would know for themselves the true meaning of the little fellow’s mystical tales.
April is National Poetry Month. As calendar coordinator of the San Antonio celebration Jim LaVilla-Havelin puts it, “It is quite incredible to be in a city with so many committed to literature.” All across the city, more than 50 events are planned, from poetry by elementary students to poems about birds.

A Life Crossing Borders: Memoir of a Mexican-American Confederate / Las memorias de un mexicano en la Confederación
by Carmen Tafolla

This fascinating autobiography recounts the life of a man born in Santa Fe, New Mexico in 1837, long before Mexico lost control of the region following the Mexican-American War in 1848 and the state achieved U.S. statehood in 1912.

One of the first Methodist preachers of Hispanic descent in the United States, Santiago Tafolla chronicles his life during turbulent times. An orphaned runaway, he left New Mexico in 1848 on a U.S. Wagon Train, and traveled through Missouri, New York, Washington, D.C., and the Deep South. He experienced firsthand the racism inherent to the time period and was an eyewitness to slavery. He was a veteran of the Texas Indian Wars and the Civil War, having served as a bugler in both the U.S. Army and the Confederate Army. He spent the last 35 years of his life as a Methodist circuit-riding preacher in a time when most Hispanics were Catholics. For more information visit: www.amazon.com and http://www.carmentafoalla.com.

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From Many Springs
by Joan Strauch Seifert

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From Many Springs is available at the Twig Bookshop or by contacting the publisher at www.WordDesignStudio.org.

Born in Refugio, Texas, Joan Strauch Seifert moved to San Antonio when she was six. She graduated from Thomas Jefferson High School and earned a BA degree in English from the University of Texas in Austin. She serves Voices de la Luna as the Poetry Editor.

Persian Marchers: A Novel
Chapter Six
In the Afternoon, Cyrus Visited His Mother

In the afternoon, Cyrus visited his mother at Parviz’s home, where she was taking her customary postprandial nap on a love-seat in the sitting room. An open hardcopy of the Koran lay on a small glass table nearby. Cyrus walked quietly to the stack of books and idly pulled one from the upper shelf. It turned out to be Blind Owl, by Sadegh Hedayat. He read the preface and turned to the first page of the novel. The familiar opening sentence pierced his mind like a flaming arrow: “In life there are certain sores that, like a canker, gnaw at the soul in solitude and diminish it.” After a few pages he became deeply affected by the dark, pessimistic tone. His thoughts were interrupted by his mother’s soft voice, “How long have you been here?”

“For a while.”

“How’s your family?”

He looked at his mother’s homely face and forgot all about Hedayat’s depressing passages. “Everybody’s fine. My wife wishes you well.”

“How is Paul? Does he speak Farsi?”

“At all.”

“Your son should be fluent in Farsi,” she said.

“But, there is no one out there to speak Farsi.”

Mother was now impatient. She said, “Do they read the Koran?”

Cyrus felt uncomfortable telling her that none of his children spoke Farsi, read the Koran, or practiced any religion. He tried unsuccessfully to find an answer that would not hurt her feelings; and murmured, “No.”

“My son, they need God’s words.”

“We recite a pledge every Monday morning before breakfast. I read it and the others repeat the words.”

“How is Paul? Does he speak Farsi?”

“Are you using Christian sentiments?”

“How is Paul? Does he speak Farsi?”

“Only a few words.”

“Your son should be fluent in Farsi,” she said.

“But, there is no one out there to speak Farsi.”

Mother was now impatient. She said, “Do they read the Koran?”

Cyrus overcame his initial hesitation and proceeded to declaim the family pledge uttering the Farsi translation of the lines:

I believe in honesty and liberty,
I respect people’s faiths and beliefs,
and I strive to be happy and have a healthy life.

I shall not lie, steal, or do other people harm.
I shall care for earth, guard its fauna & flora, spend my time wisely, and waste nothing.

I shall be polite and speak frugally,
live with other people in peace,
and respect my neighbors.

I shall read and walk daily, eat properly.
I will defend my family, friends, and my town,
and I believe in the sanctity of life: mine and the others.

Cyrus’s mother frowned with profound bewilderment. She tried helplessly to react in a positive tone and said, “But this is a poem; it must cause a deep confusion in your children. Why don’t you read the Koran to them instead. The Koran has all the explicit answers to the issues presented in this poem; it gives simple and
clear advice about what to do in life, and how one prepares for the afterlife.”

To avoid further discussion about religion, Cyrus said, “Mother, let’s talk about their schools.”

“Teach them Islam. They will live in peace in this life and go to heaven thereafter.”

“Their education, mother.” She reluctantly nodded. After a pause, she asked, “Are they as smart as you?”

“No way.” She shook her head and resumed the initial subject, “My son, your children need the blessing of God for their salvation. Please introduce Islam to them. They’ll become better persons.”

The long table in the dining room was covered with a hand-woven, embroidered Persian tablecloth. Parviz’ wife was putting the finishing touches on the table for the reception in honor of Cyrus’ visit for later that evening. The party would be preceded with cocktail and hors d’oeuvres, though consumption of alcoholic beverages are strictly forbidden in Islam. Parviz’s mother would stay in the guest room during the reception. Although she would know what would be going on, she would not acknowledge or discuss the matter. Despite Parviz’s attempts to explain to her in the past that for the sake of his business success and to satisfy his partners, he’d be obliged to serve alcoholic beverages, she refused to take part.

A large bouquet of fresh flowers in a tall, hand-blown crystal vase decorated the center of the dining room table. Parviz’s wife had tended the flowers earlier, rearranged the red roses and white jasmines around the fragrant tuberoses and pink gladioli. She had directed the servant to shift the furniture so there would be enough room for guests to move around the table and serve themselves. The caterer was bringing dishes and silverware and setting up warm and cold hors d’oeuvres on the dining table. She knew the guests would gather in the living room. The sitting room between the library and the living room was reserved for the beverage service. A helper, a student from Parviz’s college, set up rows of glasses, opened two bottles of Shiraz wine, and filled an ice bucket.

The clatter of dishes and the tinkling of ice cubes falling into the box in the sitting room interrupted Cyrus’ conversation with his mother. Soon the house became noisy with the greetings and chatter of arriving guests. The commotion passed through the doors and walls and overwhelmed the peaceable exchanges in the library. Cyrus replaced the book on the shelf, and his mother stirred from her comfortable position on the love seat. “Bibi, let’s go to your room,” Cyrus said. Mother struggled to get up. Cyrus gave her a hand and then picked up her prayer rug and Koran, and he helped her to her room. Their inconclusive talk about life and religion became irrelevant against the voluble conversations in the living room.

Suddenly, Bibi’s stomach cramps returned in full force. She bent slightly forward and began to massage her abdomen. Cyrus recognized the severe pain in her face and quickly went to the kitchen, returning with a glass of milk and a serving of cookies. He opened her pillbox, chose several pills, including two antacids, and placed them beside the cookies. She whispered words of gratitude and struggled to sit upright. She swallowed her pills with a few sips of milk and then took her time, slowly finishing the rest of the milk and a cookie; she whispered a few Arabic words and regained her usual smile. Her pale face glistened with sweat. She saw the clock and remembered it was time for evening Namaz. She excused herself, rose up and walked to the adjacent bathroom. There, she turned the water on and waited for it to warm. While she was whispering words of the Koran, she performed the ritual of ablution, a pre-requisite for daily prayers. First she washed her face, then her hands up to the elbows, and finally, her toes and her insteps. Cyrus sat in a chair and waited for her to return. She slowly walked back and unrolled her prayer-sheet, covered herself neatly with a white chador, stood tall, facing Mecca, and began whispering the evening prayer.

Cyrus listened to the soft whispering of the Arabic words of Namaz, and instantaneously remembered images from when he was a child, and later when he was an adolescent, when his mother had been healthy and her voice strong, and when she had him speak the words of Namaz aloud when she was teaching him the verses. She looked serene and majestic then. She looked even more so now. Though her face looked pale, she still appeared at peace, calm, and free of any signs of pain or discomfort. She whispered the verses from the Koran that were assigned to each section of the Namaz as she stood first, bowed, bent, sat, and finally lay in knee-chest position with her forehead on a piece of sacred stone from Mecca. She struggled to rise to a sitting position, and more so to a standing position. Now, she showed the strain of pain. Her face twitched a few times. However, she went on to bow, bend, sit, and squat and placed her forehead over the sacred stone.

After awhile, Cyrus quietly left the room and went to join the guests, most of whom were already gathered in Parviz’s spacious living room. The majority of the guests were close relatives with their spouses, but Parviz had invited several of Cyrus’ friends and a few of his own colleagues from the school Parviz owned. Bahram and three other senior high school students were also among the guests.

Bahram was chatting in a corner with a teenage girl when he saw Cyrus. Bahram asked the girl to follow him and they walked up to Cyrus. “This is my friend Shirin,” Bahram said. “She is a senior.”

Shirin was a chatty person with a smiley face. “I have heard you’re here to visit your mother,” Shirin said. “How is she doing?”

“She is in pain. I hope to get her to a specialist.”

Another young student came by and said hello to Cyrus. The boy looked familiar to Cyrus. “Have we met before?” he inquired.

“Yes. In Maryam’s house on the night of your arrival,” the boy said.

Parviz joined them and joked, “Dear Cyrus, you were very sleepy that night.”

“Sorry about not remembering you,” Cyrus said, “It was a long flight with some good food and wine.”

Parviz introduced the boy, “This is Reza, my brightest student; he is also a good chess player too. Beware of his unusual opening games. You ought to give him a chance to play against you.”

“I am just learning chess,” Reza said.

“I’d like to play sometime,” Cyrus told Reza.

Reza welcomed the offer, “What about tomorrow?”
Cyrus smiled. “Call my sister’s house tomorrow night to set up a game,” he said.

Cyrus noticed that Bahram was holding Shirin’s hand as they both listened attentively to the conversation. Shirin had a slim figure and long, smooth, champagne-colored hair that spread over her shoulders. Her light make-up accented a delicate nose, finely-drawn lips and large black eyes. She was obviously enjoying herself and at ease in the crowd. Once she smirked at Bahram when Cyrus commented how delicious Persian cuisine was.

“Shirin loves Persian gourmet food,” Bahram said.

“I want to be a connoisseur of any good cuisine including Persian food,” Shirin said.

“Shirin, how about start from Kabob Kobideh,” Reza said.

“That’s a hard one to do well,” Shirin said. “One of these days, when I complete my education, I’ll take some courses to learn how to cook complicated dishes.”

“Cooking is fun; it’s creative,” Cyrus said.

Shirin laughed. “Sorry, I don’t have time for it now.”

“I’ll show you how to cook a light meal,” Reza told Shirin. “It takes a short time to do some simple dishes.”

“I doubt I would be a good student, especially with you as the teacher,” Shirin replied; and that caused uproarious laughter among the listeners.

“How do you three know each other, you, Bahram, and Reza?” Cyrus asked Shirin.

“Bahram and I attend the same college preparatory evening school,” Shirin explained.

“Reza was introduced to us by Parviz,” Bahram said.

Reza said, “We are all seniors, but we attend three different high schools.”

“Occasionally we study together at Maryam’s house,” Bahram said.

A servant brought a tray of ice-water, sodas and fruit juices. Another servant was offering alcoholic drinks; the choices included Arak on the rocks, Shiraz wine, and Scotch whisky mixed with Cola and one with ice. Parviz asked for a glass of whisky on ice and Cyrus for Shiraz. The students all had sodas. “It always reminds me of Hafiz’ ghazals when I drink this,” Cyrus said to Bahram, pointing to his glass.

Cyrus left the youth and joined Parviz and his partners, who were talking about expanding the college. They greeted Cyrus but quickly reverted to their conversation. After hearing their comments about the need to raise the tuition for the next academic year, Cyrus excused himself and strolled across the room, sipping his wine and enjoying its fruity aroma and rich bouquet. The stereo system was playing, but one could hardly hear the music because so many conversations were going on simultaneously.

Tooraj, who arrived late, joined Cyrus just as one of Parviz’ sons placed some tasty appetizers on a nearby serving table. “Sorry, I had a child with croup to hospitalize,” Tooraj said. The dishes were a veritable cross-section of Persian cuisine ranging from fresh yogurt and vegetable dips to dolmeh, stuffed grape leaves, and assorted hot appetizers. The two friends selected sautéed lamb kidney kabobs, roasted eggplant with yogurt sauce, and fried rice crust covered with herbal stew. They went to the corner of the room and sat down to nibble on the fragrant and appetizing dishes.

Soon Bahram and Shirin joined Cyrus and Tooraj and began a conversation about Persian music. Shirin was blessed with a good voice and had been taking singing lesson for some time.

“I sing Persian songs now, but you never know, when I get better I may take lessons in opera music and try some arias,” Shirin said.

Cyrus was surprised by her interest in classical Western music. “How can one study operatic music in Iran?” He asked Shirin.

“Several music colleges in Tehran offer music majors with concentrations on voice,” Shirin replied. “A few even offer evening classes.”

“How are you progressing with your voice lessons?”

“I still have a long way to go.”

Bahram said with enthusiasm. “She already has a repertoire.”

Shirin interrupted Bahram, and turned to Cyrus, “A very small one. You don’t want to hear anything yet.”

But Tooraj was delighted at the prospect of hearing Shirin and said, “I’ll join you when you’re ready to sing.”

Shirin knew then that she was going to be asked to sing before the evening was over. She wasn’t shy, but she didn’t have the confidence to sing in front of such a big crowd.

The servants had set up the buffet with a variety of salads and main dishes, including eggplant puree, herb kuku, assorted lamb and chicken kabobs, sturgeon kabob, several rice dishes and many different vegetable stews. The dishes were beautifully arranged on the dining table, with stacked plates, bowls, silverware and napkins on a second table. Parviz’s wife asked Cyrus and Tooraj to start serving themselves. Cyrus had a hard time selecting and assured Tooraj that one could find such a large banquet only at major corporate parties in the U.S. or at Sunday brunches in a first class hotel.

After an enjoyable hour of dining and conversation, the feast was not yet over. Cyrus was surprised to see that the servants cleared the buffet table and brought out an array of Persian pastries and cookies. The servants also offered trays of hot tea in individual gilded glass stekans. At first Cyrus could hardly imagine eating anything more, but after a cup of tea, he couldn’t resist the rice pudding with almond slivers on top, and forgot all about how much he had eaten already and served himself a good portion.

Full and content, everybody settled in their chairs with tea or another drink, relaxing after the scruptious meal. Parviz walked to a corner and asked for their attention. He announced that one of his colleagues had brought his violin and might be persuaded to play some Persian music. The guests cheered and clapped and a few immediately voiced special requests. The violinist, who was only waiting for an excuse, came forward, bowed, and began tuning his instrument.

He looked at Parviz and grinned, “I cannot play without an accomplice! A singer, perhaps?”

Parviz turned to Shirin, “Will you sing for us tonight?”

Even though Shirin had expected the call, she blushed and hesitated. Several of the guests demanded loudly that she come forward and sing, and when she dithered, one guest sang out:

Sing, sing, sing!

Shirin jaan sing
you have a silky voice
be courageous and sing.  
We will divert our gaze  
we will close our eyes  
be courageous and sing  
Shirin jaan sing.

The violinist, who had performed with Shirin at smaller family parties went to her and gently pulled her to the center. Shirin looked down doubtfully, but when the guests clamored for her to start, she exchanged a few whispered words with the violinist and addressed the gathering.

“Okay. But you may regret it. I am going to sing a special song and dedicate it to our American guest.” She had a sip of water and continued. “The song is called Mara be boos, Kiss me farewell.”

The guests liked her selection and immediately burst into heart-y applause. The violinist tuned his violin again and initiated the melody, and she followed. Cyrus knew the lyrics by heart. The room was quiet, only Shirin’s voice and the violin music filled the air.

Kiss me farewell  
for the last time  
God protect you  
I am meeting my fate . . .

Shirin’s voice rang out, young, smooth, and moving. She was bashfully looking up at a chandelier as she sang, but occasionally exchanged a glance with Bahram.

You, beautiful girl  
with your bright eyes  
your innocent tears  
kiss me farewell  
for the last time  
I am meeting my fate.

Cyrus was deeply touched. The song evoked the memory of a cool and breezy night under a full moon many years ago, when Tooraj and he had climbed the foothills of Damavand Mountain singing the same song together. They were students in medical school, single, but passionately in love with girls they couldn’t possibly possess. Now, more than fifteen years later, Shirin’s voice singing the same melody brought Cyrus and Tooraj back to those precious moments.

Tooraj was next to Cyrus and told him, “I am thinking about that night when we climbed up the hills under the full moon.”

Cyrus nodded, “I can almost feel the cool evening breeze.”

“It was an exciting time in our lives. It was a dangerous time, too.”

“We were full of hope, and we were hopelessly in love.”

“I was recalling that full moon that carried the image of her face.”

“I was recalling my first case of broken heart.”

“It was a tumultuous time,” Tooraj said.

Cyrus murmured, “No, it was the best of times: we were in love and free of obligations.”

“It was the worst of times: we were so poor we couldn’t even send roses to our beloved ones.”

“We were a couple of sad, heart-broken students,” Tooraj said, “I was rejected by her family because I was poor and a Jew.”

“But the girl loved you.”

“They wouldn’t even let her see or talk to me,” Tooraj said, “For her fanatic parents, I was a najess; a heathen and un-touchable person.”

The guests insisted on an encore. Shirin sang another song about the loss of a beloved one. Cyrus became sentimental again. The Persian music and the taste of Shiraz wine brought back more precious memories of his student days. At heart he was a romantic dreamer. Tooraj knew that and had pointed out repeatedly to Cyrus that when one falls in love more than twice, one gets addicted to love and will fall in love time and again. When they were students, Cyrus loved to recite poetry and Tooraj would crack jokes at the end to break the emotional tension. Tooraj had a small notebook filled with songs, poems, and jokes that he always carried in his breast pocket. It was now bulging against his chest. After the last song, Tooraj suggested that Cyrus recite a poem. Shirin and other guests joined and asked Cyrus for a poetry reading.

“My friends, it’s been over a decade and a half since our poetry days,” Cyrus said, “I hardly even remember the title of a poem.”

Parviz had overheard their exchange. He quickly went to his library and brought back three books of Persian poetry, which he handed to Cyrus, “Now you have no excuse.”

One of the books Cyrus now held was, The Collection of Ahmad Shamlu’s Poems. While leafing through its pages, Cyrus stopped at a poem he used to know by heart—in its entirety.

“I’ll recite poetry at your next party, I promise.” He told Parviz.

“How come no one is asking me to recite a poem?” Tooraj grumbled, jokingly complaining that he was totally ignored by one and all.

Cyrus remembered his friend’s ability to memorize long dramatic poems. He asked Purviz, “Why don’t you get Tooraj to recite?”

“Tooraj! You’re an expert in Iranian history and religions,” Parviz said, “But go ahead, if you wish.”

Tooraj laughed and said, “Actually, I may do a better job at poetry.”

The guests now demanded that Tooraj proceed. He wrinkled his forehead and announced, “I need to dig into my dormant memory for a while to find the right piece.” After a moment he grinned again and said, “All right, you asked for it. Now, you can’t escape my recital.”

Tooraj was actually pleased with the attention he was receiving. He cleared his throat again and said, “I remember a poem by Rumi, and even though he is not popular among Persian Jews because of his demeaning references to them in his poems, still, I like this one very much as it is somewhat mystical.”

“Go ahead, Tooraj.” Bahram encouraged him.

“In this poem, Rumi describes a time when conservative religious leaders of certain denominations were imposing their doctrines on society.”

“This may happen again,” Bahram commented. Undeterred by the interruption, Tooraj announced, “I’ll quote from Rumi’s Divan-e Shams-e Tabriz.”

Several of the guests voiced their approval. “We want this poem!” someone said. “Good choice, start your recital!” came from another one.

“But wait,” Tooraj said, “when I’m finished I’d like to
hearing Cyrus give us his response to Rumi’s poem. Here we go.

I am neither Christian nor Jew
Zoroastrian nor Moslem
I am not of the East
the West, the land, or the sea
I’m not of nature’s mint, nor of the circling heavens . . .

As Tooraj proceeded through the poem he did not notice that some guests had started to yawn; he was absorbed in his rendition. “. . . I am not of Adam or Eve / nor from Eden and Paradise.

My place is the placeless; / my trace is the traceless . . .”

Parviz, sensing the boredom of his guests, wished they hadn’t asked Tooraj to recite and heaved a big sigh of relief when Tooraj finally finished. When he received the obligatory long round of applause, Tooraj smiled with pleasure.

“That is a truly great poem: Rumi crafted a remarkable manifestation of Sufism.” Tooraj repeated the last line and glanced at Cyrus to observe his reaction. “But now it is Cyrus’s turn.”

The guests were tired. Parviz frowned but kept quiet being certain some guests had started to yawn; he was absorbed in his rendition. “. . . I am not of Adam or Eve / nor from Eden and Paradise.

The subject tonight is Love
and for tomorrow as well,
as a matter of fact
I know of no better topic
for us to discuss until
we all die!

Later that night, when only a few close friends remained, Parviz invited them to gather in the dining room, which had meanwhile been tidied. Parviz’ son brought a tray of tea and joined Bahram and Shirin in a corner. Parviz brought out a chess set and placed it on the dining table with the intention of challenging Cyrus to a match. It was the same chess set they used to play with years ago when they were students.

Cyrus remembered how they would often play chess throughout the night—until one of them finally won decisively. Their matches were so close that their friends and classmates would sometimes drop-in to watch and cheer for one or the other. And he remembered that fateful night when Parviz kept him playing until the wee hours of the morning:

Oh, that late night!
Just one more game, Cyrus.
Alas, it’s four, Parviz. I need
to rest at least a few hours before I leave
for the medical school’s entrance exam.

Looking at Cyrus, Parviz inquired, “Any takers?”

Tooraj and Cyrus were hotly debating the ideology of mysticism and Cyrus ignored the call. Another round of tea came in and to Parviz’ delight, interrupted Cyrus’s discussion with Tooraj. Parviz immediately presented Cyrus with another chance to play a game, but Cyrus hesitated.

“It’s too late now. Besides, you won’t enjoy it. I am not a match for you anymore; I haven’t played for years.”

“That’s okay with me.” Parviz tried a humorous approach, hoping to raise Cyrus’s interest. “Here comes my chance to revenge all my losses when we were both students at Tehran University.” He insisted laughingly, “Let’s play just one game, I will be easy on you, I promise!”

Tooraj increased the pressure. “Go for it, Cyrus!”

Reza, who had been busily chatting with the other young people in a corner of the room, now came over and innocently offered, “Perhaps I can help you, Cyrus.”

“Why don’t you play instead of me, Reza?” Cyrus asked. Reza was eager to play and immediately sat down next to Cyrus, anticipating Parviz’s acceptance. But Parviz was not interested.

“I’ll play against Cyrus, and I’ll be easy on him,” Parviz said.

After a few sips of tea Cyrus felt refreshed enough to accept the challenge. Within a few moves, both brothers were completely absorbed by the challenge of the game. At one point, Parviz was ahead by a pawn and had a good chance to mount a damaging attack, but luckily for Cyrus, Parviz did not see it. Cyrus sacrificed a bishop in front of the castle, and managed to take one of Parviz’ rooks with his knight. Cyrus brought one of the rooks forward to f7 while the knight threatened the pawn at g7. Parviz exchanged queens and hoped to bring the game to a draw. But Cyrus wouldn’t give up. He was thinking hard before each move and that annoyed Parviz. It took Cyrus a long time to plan the final push. Surprising Parviz, he moved back to e6 and at the next move, the bishop to c3. The pawn at g7 had only the bishop for support. All was lost when Cyrus exchanged the knight with Parviz’s bishop and left his king without defense. Parviz knew the end was near and conceded.

“Like in the old days, you take too much time for each move,” Parviz said.

Reza was impressed with Cyrus’s final moves. “Well done! I was sure you would lose! How about a game with me?” Cyrus declined. “Good idea, but not tonight.”

“Well then, sometime tomorrow?” Reza pleaded with an encouraging smile.

Cyrus pulled out his calendar and looked at his daily schedule. Astonishing that even here on this family visit he had managed to fill his days. But there was time before lunch.

“In the morning?” he asked Reza.

“It’s Saturday and I can spare a few hours,” Reza said. “But I must return to my studies in the afternoon.”

“What are you studying for?” Cyrus asked.

“For two important exams,” Reza said, with a sigh. “My final high school exams, as well as the university entrance examination, which comes up later in the summer.”

“Are you sure about playing chess then?” Cyrus did not want to be responsible for an academic detour.

“Don’t worry, I’ll need to take a break anyhow,” Reza assured him.
Reviews & Books

Coda
A Book of Poetry
by Marilyn Donnelly

Garrison Keillor has listed Marilyn Donnelly’s book as one of his recommended titles this month.

About the Book
Marilyn Donnelly has always lived, spoken, and written, with a stunning, indelible, original voice. Her poems, while often brief, plumb great depths of wisdom and wit. Her style of humor sweeps cobwebs and confusion far far away. She reminds me of those haiku masters of the 13th century whom any of us would have been grateful to meet on a trail. Her voice would have saved us then, as she inspires and saves us now. Do not miss her beauty!—Naomi Shihab Nye

For more info: http://www.autumnhouse.org.

Having a Little Talk with Capital P: Poetry
Jim Daniels*
Reviewed by Mo H Saidi

Jim Daniels’ poetry is refreshing, full of energy and moving. In this collection, he travels from Detroit to Pittsburgh, from childhood to parenthood, sharing his memories, reflecting upon them in his poems. He is a different kind of poet. In I Lost My Voice in a Mall, he writes, “Once upon a time / Every hamburger had a different shape / Like snowflakes.” Yes. He’s is a different poet. One-of-a-kind.

There are some facts of life that are there to see but you do not recognize them until you pause and pay attention like peace: “You could drive by that house and never notice / the red peace sign, but once it’s pointed out / you’ll never miss it again.”

Throughout the book, Daniels’ cynicism battles with his sense of wonder. In naked realism, he writes, “Bridge freezes before road. Cautionary / sneer. The heart pondering a change of heart.” And in the title poem, he speaks of poetry like William Carlos Williams, and emphasizes its significance in an open mic debut: “I wanted to give self-expression a bad name, or an alias, / or a mustache of dirt like the little boy / who’s been quietly eating it alone / and at peace in some small corner / of what we might all agree / is the world.”

Yes we need to read poetry to know there at any intersection, there are hidden and horrific event await us like driving at night facing reckless cyclist who wears no helmet: “. . . / I smashed my foot foot against the brake / and the tires shrieked the silent shock / on the cyclist’s face / . . .”


* Jim Daniels has published eleven other books of poetry, along with three collections of short stories. He has also written three films and edited or co-edited four anthologies. His poems have appeared in the Pushcart Prize and Best American Poetry anthologies and have been featured on Garrison Keillor’s “Writer’s Almanac,” in Billy Collins’ Poetry 180 anthologies, and in Ted Kooser’s American Life in Poetry series. In addition, his poem “Factory Love” has been reproduced on the roof of a racecar. Other recognitions include the Brittingham Prize for Poetry, The Blue Lynx Poetry Prize, the Tillie Olsen Prize, two fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, and two from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts.

The Middle East Uprising
Libya
The Story of a Frankly Delusional Despot
URL: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eBY-On4esNY

Adapted from the New York Times & the BBC

On 28 Feb when most of the country had revolted against him, Col Muammar el-Gaddafi said true Libyans had not demonstrated but those who had come on to the streets were under the influence of drugs supplied by al-Qaeda. He said those people had seized weapons and that his military supporters were under orders not to shoot back.

Here you have a despot in the state of frank delusion. “When he can laugh in talking to journalists while he is slaughtering his own people, it only underscores how unfit he is to lead and how disconnected he is from reality,” the BBC reporter interviewing him said.

On the other side of the country and in a town 30 miles away from Col Gaddafi’s fortress, the Libyan rebels challenging Col. Gaddafi demonstrated their increasing military coordination and firepower on Sunday, as defecting officers in the east took steps to establish a unified command while their followers in this rebel-held city, just outside Gaddafi’s stronghold in Tripoli, displayed an array of tanks and anti-aircraft guns.

In a further sign of their strength, the rebels also began making plans to tap revenue from the vast Libyan oil resources now under their control — estimated by some oil company officials to be about 80 percent of the country’s total. And in recognition of the insurrection’s growing power, the foreign minister of Italy suspended a nonaggression treaty with Libya on the grounds that the Libyan state “no longer exists” while Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said the United States was reaching out to the rebels to “offer any kind of assistance.”

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Pecan Grove Press is pleased to announce the availability of Jeffrey Greene’s new collection of poems: Beautiful Monsters; and also of Lana Hechtman Ayers’s new collection of poems: A New Red. Other new books are from Kurt Heinzelman, Marian Haddad, Scott Wiggerman, David Starkey, and many others.

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I remember living near Scenic Drive;
Father and Mother and I
would ride up the long,
slow-curving hill
from our street---

Even in the heart of dark winter where the air is darker than pink,
Haddad is in awe with San Antonio’s vast skies, its January sky:
It is more like spring / than Winter here— / in this city / of saint.

Haddad’s poetry is mesmerizing, saturated with hope, love, and enthusiasm. After reading her poems I begin to love Texas too..

To order the book from Pecan Grove Press:
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Poetry & Art Events

San Antonio Recurring Venues

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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 L. 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 certificed 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.purosalam.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.

Every Fourth Wednesday - Barnes & Noble, The Shops at La Cantera15900, La Cantera Parkway Bldg 27 San Antonio, TX 78256. Host: Voices de la Luna: 6 pm Poetry Workshop / 7 pm Featured Guest / 8 pm Open Mic

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

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 L. 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.

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