“Ringing” by Naomi Shihab Nye
Questions for Richard Becker
Gini Garcia’s Chandelier for Dresden
Literature by UTSA Students
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.texacultures.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.mcNayArt.org

MEXICAN CULTURAL INSTITUTE—Exhibits of contemporary Mexican artists. portal.srg.gov/culturamexicana


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, and 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 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

Letter from the Editors
Mo H Saidi and James Brandenburg

Although Voices de la Luna has not yet been able to secure a significant grant or sponsorship funds, the magazine continues to exist and thrive. It is now completing its third year of publication; with the 15 October issue, Voices will enter its fourth year as a venue for celebrating poetry and the arts. During a time in which literary journals are facing reduced circulation and financial contraction, Voices de la Luna’s achievements are gratifying.

It must be noted, however, that the success of the magazine and the improvement in the quality of published work were attained only with the hard work of our staff, most of them volunteers, and the continued support of loyal authors who graciously submit their work for consideration without any financial expectations. Of the same importance are the leadership and financial contributions of members of the boards of directors and advisors; they play a vital role in maintaining the financial health of Voices de la Luna.

Under the leadership of our chairman of the board, Mike Burke, who spearheaded the event, Voices staged its second annual fundraiser, “An Evening of Poetry and Music, Food and Wine,” on 27 April 2011 at the Dominion Country Club. After a tasty Mediterranean dinner, the audience enjoyed Dr. Carmen Tafolla’s outstanding performance and listened to presentations by Dr. Bridget Drinka, chair of the UTSA English department; Jack Fishman, president and CEO of the San Antonio Symphony; Mariana Aitches and Palmer Hall, and music and poetry recitations by Bryce Milligan and Trey Moore. Guests were treated to great wine courtesy of Becker Vineyards and went home with silent auction items, ranging from a week in a penthouse in Berlin, Germany, to a fully catered weekend for ten at Lake Medina and a wide assortment of original art and some useful services, such as year-long car washes. Voices de la Luna is grateful to the benefactors, sponsors, poets, contributing artists, volunteers, and the event chair and directors who made the fundraising event so successful.

We encourage our readers to support and attend poetry venues at local bookstores and visit art exhibitions at San Antonio museums, because we believe poetry heals minds, and arts advance the quality of life. It is for this important reason that we strive to continue with the magazine’s publication, to stage poetry and prose workshops, to present monthly poetry readings and instruction for youth, high school students, and homeless people, at the San Antonio Bereavement Center, and to teach poetry and literature at the local universities and colleges. We are grateful to Dr. Bridget Drinka, chair of the UTSA English department, and to Cooper Harris, managing editor of Sagebrush Review, for continuing to support and collaborate with Voices de la Luna. Voices and Sagebrush Review coordinate their literary venues, share information on publishing, and devote pages of their journals to publish selected pieces from each other’s publications.

April was National Poetry Month, and many thanks are owed to Jim La Villa-Havelin, who coordinated the celebration in San Antonio and organized a nine-week schedule of poetry performances in the area. The Voices “Poetry and Music, Food and Wine” event in April was one of the named events. Voices de la Luna congratulates La Villa-Havelin for an outstanding job in organizing and directing the National Poetry Month events in San Antonio.
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Submission Guidelines

To see video interviews and additional material, please go to www.voicesdelaluna.com.
**Featured Poem**

**Ringing**

*Naomi Shihab Nye*

I’m sorry you lost your father, people say,  
and I step outside to soak in stripes of gray cloud.  
Hand touches iron rail.  
You needed it, I don’t.

Blood circulating under skin  
and time, that blurred sky shifting.  
Air holds everyone, visible or not.  
Slice of lemon you craved by your teacup.  
Strange affection for chipped ice.

Maybe the right wind brings  
a scent of smoldering twigs, fresh water over stone.  
Maybe tonight your laughter carpets our rooms.  
I keep finding you in ways you didn’t know I noticed, or knew.

Every road, every sea,  
every beach by every sea, keeps lining up with what you loved.  
Here’s a line of silent palm trees.  
It’s as if you answered the phone.

*To Mo from Naomi

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**Gini Garcia’s Chandelier for Dresden**

**A Gift from San Antonio**  
*Brigitte B. Saidi*

Gini Garcia, a San Antonio-based glass artist for more than two decades, has completed more than 50 site-specific works, including pieces for the J.W. Marriott San Antonio Hill Country Resort & Spa and the Hyatt Regency San Antonio. She initially proposed the idea of creating a chandelier for Dresden to local arts patron Dr. Angelika Jansen, the Representative of the San Antonio-Dresden Economic and Cultural Alliance.

Garcia has described the glass and metal piece as “an oversized piece of jewelry.” Surrounded by greenery, the flowers at the center of the chandelier are in shades of pink, purple and red. Garcia and Jansen collaborated in the creation of the chandelier to make the alliance shine in Dresden.

Dr. Jansen, who lives in San Antonio and Berlin, who received her Ph.D. from NYU in 1985, is an active proponent of cultural and artistic advances in San Antonio. With the blessing of the City of San Antonio, Gini Garcia and Angelika Jansen embarked on an ambitious project to forge a cultural and economic alliance between San Antonio and Dresden to produce artistic and commercial connections. The goal of this alliance is to enhance artistic exchanges and produce tangible progress in the areas of commerce and business ventures that could create jobs and enhance tourism in both communities.

In an elaborate dedication ceremony that was combined with the 100 year anniversary of the Hygienic Museum in Dresden’s 150 year old Lingercastle, a glass floral chandelier created by Gini Garcia as a gift from the citizens of San Antonio to the city of Dresden was unveiled. Mrs. Elizabeth Costello, Director of International Relations of the City of San Antonio, joined the officials of the city of Dresden, including the First Mayor of Dresden, Dirk Hilbert, and spoke on behalf of the people of San Antonio, welcoming the cultural and artistic alliance and saying she hoped the joint efforts would be beneficial to both communities.

Garcia and her team brought the huge crate containing the floral chandelier from her studio near the Blue Star Center in San Antonio to the castle. She spoke briefly about the work, describing it as organic, feminine, and Latin. It’s got color, and will bring awareness to the citizens of Dresden of their own past and reflect the friendship between the two cities.

To finance the $240,000 project, Garcia enlisted Joci Straus, a friend and well-known arts patron, to chair a fundraising committee. These two, together with Dr. Jansen’s productive participation, have raised more than $120,000 so far. Prior to her arrival at the dedication ceremony in Dresden, Garcia exhibited her work at the Museum of Modern Glass in Coburg and the Frauenau Glass Museum in Munich.
Questions for Richard Becker
Interviewed by Mo H. Saidi

Dr. Richard A. Becker was born in Abilene, Texas. He graduated from Abilene High School and holds B.A. and M.A. degrees from the University of Texas at Austin in English Literature. He is a 1971 graduate of the University of Texas Medical School at San Antonio, Texas. He trained in internal medicine at Boston City Hospital, and in endocrinology at Yale Medical School. He is a member of AOA and was the 2000 Distinguished Medical Alumnus of the University of Texas Medical School at San Antonio. He served as a Lt. Commander in the U.S. Navy Medical Branch at the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland from 1976 to 1978. Dr. Becker and his wife established Becker Vineyards in Fredericksburg, Texas in 1992. He was the president of the Texas Wine and Grape Growers Association in 1997 and 1998. He is also on the board of the Texas Hill Country Food and Wine Festival in Austin, Texas, and of Culinaria: Wine & Culinary Arts Festival in San Antonio, Texas.

Mo H Saidi: You are a successful endocrinologist and probably treat a lot of patients with diabetes. What inspired you to become a vintner?
Richard Becker: There is a balance of art and science in both medicine and wine making. So, there is an appeal on that basis, but I have a long history of interest in horticulture and was learning about food and wine pairing when we bought the property in Gillespie County. Also, there have been many physicians who were vintners. I had the opportunity to stand in Pasteur’s laboratory and to visit his vineyard. Remember that the germ theory of disease was described by Pasteur after observing infecting microorganisms in “sick wine” and extrapolating those observations to sick patients.

Before you entered medical school, you graduated from the University of Texas with a master’s degree in English literature. What happened to your literary inclinations?
On sabbatical but achingly present. I have two mistresses, medicine and viticulture. I don’t think I could pursue writing other than full time.

When you and I participated in the UTHSCSA Writing Workshop moderated by Dr. Abraham Verghese, you presented some passages of a memoir focusing on the founding of Becker Vineyards. What’s going on with that project?
About a chapter and a half. I spend more time thinking about it than writing.

The Becker Vineyard in Fredericksburg, Texas is one of the most recognized Texas vineyards. How do you compete with other national or international winemakers? Any war stories from wine competitions?
All of our marketing has been what’s in the glass, not what is said about it. If the wine is good enough, then one doesn’t need marketing. We have a great advantage in Texas because Texans love things Texan if they are good.

In poetry, especially among Persian poets, e.g. Hafiz and Khayam, red wine is sacred. Do you agree with them?
Yes, there is a long line of connections between wine and blood and sacred blood, etc. For me the wine is sacred only if it is good.

Hafiz compares a well landscaped vineyard to paradise, provided he’s also awarded the company of a beautiful Shirazi woman and a bottle of vintage red wine. Is he exaggerating or is he under the influence?
He needs to sober up!

As a physician, do you believe wine has any medicinal benefits?
Yes, but they must be balanced against all the risks of excess alcohol and alcoholism. The final analysis is a wash in society.

Another medical question; do you think America needs a universal healthcare coverage for all its citizens?
Yes as has almost every President, Democrat or Republican, for sixty years.

You are a successful entrepreneur in both medicine and the wine business—have you ever failed in any business venture?
Yes, and I think that is crucially important to an entrepreneur. I believe that if you haven’t failed, then you aren’t trying hard enough.

Have you ever considered retiring from your many activities to start a new career, i.e., writing?
Yes, but I am not yet ready for that. I am very fortunate to have the life I have.

We are in the midst of the longest and deepest recession since the Great Depression. How have you fared so far in this perilous economy?
The wine business is much healthier than medicine. I never thought that the vineyard would allow me to continue to practice medicine.

What do you think about the Tea Party Movement; is it racially motivated or an honest movement against government expansion?
Any organization that supports Governor Palin is beyond comment.

Wine, music, and poetry are closely related. Do you stage poetry or music performances at your vineyard?
Yes, lots of music, e.g., Bluegrass in The Bluebonnets April 9 and 10. We read Dickens and Truman Capote at Christmas.

If you are amenable to the idea, Voices de la Luna could offer you a program of “Wine, Music, and Poetry” at your vineyard. After all, poets will travel long distances in order to recite their poetry and enjoy a glass of good wine.
Done.

Continued on page 6
Continued from page 5

Writers are creative, just like gardeners; do you grow and tend your vineyard’s gardens?

Yes, lavender, rosemary, and artichokes, also tomatoes and potatoes.

Thank you very much for your time.

*Located in the Texas Hill Country between Fredericksburg and Stonewall, Becker Vineyards was established in 1992 by Richard and Bunny Becker. The vineyard was planted on a site of native Mustang grapes much prized for winemaking by German neighbors and their ancestors. Also planted on site is a three-acre lavender field reminiscent of the wine country of Provence, France.

The 46 acres of French Vinifera vines generate 8 different available varietals, including Syrah, Petite Syrah, Sauvignon Blanc, Malbec, Petite Verdot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Merlot.

The vines are planted in a mixture of deep sand and Precambrian granitic soils at 1,500 feet above sea level. The vines are watered with water welled from limestone formations 300 feet beneath the surface. A drip irrigation system is employed throughout the vineyard.

Becker Vineyard’s first harvest was in 1995. Most vintages are aged in new French oak, others in new American oak, and stored in the largest underground wine cellar in Texas.

The 10,040 square-foot winery is located in a 19th-century German stone barn reproduction and surrounded by grazing quarter horses, peach orchards and fields of native wildflowers and lavender: The winery’s Tasting Room, which opened June 1996, includes a large working stone fireplace and an antique bar originally from the Green Tree Saloon, established in San Antonio during the 19th Century. The bar and backdrop were produced at the August Kerns Supply Company in St. Louis, Missouri, in the mid-1800s. The bar is made of long-leaf red pine, and the ceiling has tin panels. The backdrop features are Moravian design. The Tasting Room is decorated with arts and crafts by local artisans and with antique pie safes and armoires found in the Fredericksburg area.

In 1998 the Beckers planted three acres of lavender behind the winery. The varieties planted include lavandula x intermedia provence, lavandula x intermedia grosso and lavandula angustifolia. Becker Vineyards makes potpourris, sachets, soaps and oils from the lavender. These products are for sale in the Tasting Room and Gift Shop.

A Clockwork Orange
Anthony Burgess

Anthony Burgess was born in Manchester, England, on 25 February in 1917. He once said, “Every grain of experience is food for the greedy growing soul of the artist.” He grew up a cradle Catholic in England, wanted to be a classical musician, didn’t get into music school, and majored in English literature instead. Then he joined the army. He resented authority, was not very well liked by his peers, and did things that got him in trouble. Once, he did not report back from leave on time, and the British military police hunted him down, treating him as a deserter. Still, he did well in the army and rose through the ranks. He was good at languages, and he held important positions in military intelligence and as an instructor. It was an incident that occurred during his unhappy army days of World War II that would inspire him to write A Clockwork Orange two decades later.

After the army, he got a job with the British colonial service and was posted to Malaysia. He taught in a boys school, became fluent in Malaysian, published some books of literary criticism, and wrote novels for pleasure on the side. At the time, he thought of fiction writing as a “gentlemanly hobby,” expecting to make no money from it. From Malaysia he went to a teaching post in Borneo. He started to get headaches, and then one day he collapsed in front of the classroom while giving a history lecture. The Colonial Service flew him back to London, checked him into a neurological ward, and doctors proclaimed that he had a brain tumor — an inoperable one — and that he had one year to live. He might have spent his “terminal year” traveling, but he didn’t have any money. In fact, he was determined to make money for his future widow, and decided he would do this by writing at a furious pace. He wrote five novels in the year following his diagnosis. It turns out that he did not have a brain tumor, and he did not die. He outlived his wife by many years and eventually died of lung cancer (he was a heavy smoker) in 1993, more than 30 years and 30 books later.

His wrote his most famous book, A Clockwork Orange, in just three weeks. Although the novel was composed in 1962, it was based on something that happened a couple of decades before, when he was in the army. He was newly married, and his wife was pregnant. One night, while he was at the army base, his wife was mugged by four young U.S. Army deserters in London. After the attack, his wife miscarried their child. Stanley Kubrick bought the film rights, and it was the American version of A Clockwork Orange that he used as a basis for the movie. Kubrick’s movie made Burgess’ book a big best-seller.

He wrote long hours. Unlike many authors who swear by morning or late-night writing sessions, he preferred the afternoon best of all. He said: “It’s a quiet time. It’s a time when one’s body is not at its sharpest, not at its most receptive — the body is quiescent, somnolent; but the brain can be quite sharp. I think, also, at the same time that the unconscious mind has a habit of asserting itself in the afternoon. The morning is the conscious time, but the afternoon is a time in which we should deal much more with the hinterland of the consciousness.”

He once said that his ideal reader is “a lapsed Catholic and failed musician, short-sighted, color-blind, auditorily biased, who has read the books that I have read. He should also be about my age.” See the movie trailer at: http://youtu.be/40Xc-9YeWE4.

Coping with Natural Disasters

Students celebrate and pose for photos after their graduation ceremony at Rokugou Junior High School in Sendai, Miyagi prefecture, Japan, on March 30. The ceremony was held in a gymnasium used by about 200 refugees of this month’s Japan disaster.
Berlin artist Inge H. Schmidt is one of the most sought-after painters in Germany. Her work has been exhibited in numerous galleries and museums in Europe and the USA. She lives and works in Berlin.

On Oct. 3, 1990, East and West Germany were united, and a new Germany was born. Now, some twenty years later, an exhibition featuring the work of East German artists who challenged the status quo is touring throughout the U.S. It’s called “Breakthrough! 20.”

Painter Inge H. Schmidt experienced joy and trauma when, as a young woman in 1985, she received official permission to study art in the West. East German authorities gave her fewer than six hours to pack everything she owned and say goodbye to her family — she thought — forever. Schmidt recalls the moment when she walked through the barbed wire gate wearing the pair of shoes shown in the photo.

After the Wall tumbled down, Schmidt’s work reflected the problems faced by East Germans after unification as we see in the painting titled “Warm Welcome,” from 1989. The work shows glimmers of golds and yellows representing the West, which seemed like a gleaming paradise to East Germans. But there’s darkness in the painting, too. The cover art was printed with the artist’s permission.

Spring in Texas: the War Years*

_Mariana Aitches_

I keep cooking sugar water for ruby-throated hummingbirds, who will not share the air outside my kitchen window on their slow way north.

I keep looking for finches in my yard, breasts of sun whose birdsong murmurs in the low whir of branches brought by rain from the west.

I keep waiting for a warmer wind to float monarchs from the south, nectar-workers whose wings insist against fences on their journey.

I keep planting firebush, purple sage, gold lantana—a frenzy of blessings for women mourning war-lost children we can’t forget.

And those other mothers weeping in a world east of here—what ceremony can I offer them in this season of unspeakable war?

*from _Ours Is a Flower_, Pecan Grove Press, 2010
Henry Roth (1906-1995), author of the great immigrant novel *Call It Sleep*, is one of the giants of American literature, yet for years he has lacked a biography. After completing his first book in 1934, Roth lapsed into a legendary six-decade silence, only to reemerge with *Mercy of a Rude Stream*, hailed as “a landmark of the American literary century” (David Mehegan, *Boston Globe*) and “as provocative as anything in the chapters of St. Augustine” (Stefan Kanfer, *Los Angeles Times Book Review*). In following Roth’s tortured life from his childhood on the Jewish Lower East Side to his twilight years in New Mexico, literary critic Steven Kellman has uncovered FBI files, spoken with family members and friends, and gained access to the tape in which Roth discussed the long-buried incest of his youth. *Redemption* is the Shakespearean saga of a great writer doomed to a life of psychological torment but saved in the end by his search for deliverance.

The obvious hurdle in writing a biography of Roth is the 60-year gap between his first novel, the Jewish immigrant, stream-of-consciousness classic *Call It Sleep* (1934), and his second, the four-volume *Mercy of a Rude Stream* (1994–1998). Kellman, an English professor and author of seven previous scholarly works, makes a strong case against writer’s block as the reason for the long silence, pointing out that Roth pitched short stories to the *New Yorker* for years (with intermittent success). Instead, he suggests, Roth deliberately withdrew from writing rather than allow his autobiographical fiction to confront his worst adolescent shames: expulsion from high school for stealing and a prolonged incestuous relationship with his sister. Kellman’s account of Roth’s early life draws extensively on *Mercy of a Rude Stream*, created from thousands of manuscript pages Roth produced in his final years, and carefully details how they were prepared for publication, blaming editorial missteps for the slightly disappointed reaction of critics surprised by the author’s new, more naturalistic voice. After the excitement of Roth’s life before *Call It Sleep*—his Lower East Side childhood, the incest, involvement with an older woman—however, the long, often painfully frustrating decades that follow may make readers wish he’d hurry up and start writing again, Kellman said. Despite occasionally overplaying the drama, Kellman gives readers a thoughtful and objective perspective on Roth’s life.


Kellman is a professor of comparative literature at UTSA, where he has taught since 1976. He has also taught at the University of California campuses of Berkeley and Irvine and at Bemidji State University in Minnesota and Tel-Aviv University. He received his M.A. and Ph.D. in comparative literature from the University of California at Berkeley and his B.A. in English and General Literature from the State University of New York at Binghamton. He has held the Fulbright Distinguished Chair in American Literature at the University of Sofia and a Fulbright Senior Lectureship at the Tbilisi State University, and he has twice served as Partners of the Americas lecturer in Peru.

*greenhouse gas blues*

*Darby Riley*

the Earth is melting

glaciers disappear

seas become warmer

coastal waters rise.

the Earth is melting

staple crops wither

poor folks go hungry

old folks die from heat

each year everywhere

weather records break

droughts become wild fires

enter the big winds

to level cities

power lines go down

mosquitoes move north

brining diseases

the Earth is melting

historic flooding

massive migrations

fresh water gets scarce

violence erupts

Petrified Women in Red Cross Museum, Geneva
Eight years before she died, my mother tried to divvy up
her jewels, called back each of the daughters one at a time,
spread across her bed the velvet bags and wooden boxes.

She’d lived our lives with a script of her necessity, kept us
confined within roles she’d assigned us, the film director
feeding us lines, a ventriloquist speaking through puppets.

Jade and diamonds, pearls and agates, sapphires and opals,
earrings, necklaces, rings, bracelets, pendants, brooches.
She wanted to know who would be wearing what, and when.

She wanted to have it arranged so she’d know how it would
play out after she died, and she orchestrated her own death,
deciding the exact day to call a halt to food, and finally water.

What I thought I most wanted of my mother’s jewels
she’d given to another daughter, but what I now know
I always desired had nothing at all to do with those stones.

While we sifted through the ropes and clasps, the metal
chains and pins, outside the window the lake shimmered,
but somehow with Mom, we never got down to the lake.

Never time to drift in a canoe—and she’d long ago sold
the canoe—to laze on the dock, to ease down into the water,
alive in the layers of cold currents, to gaze up at the pines.

It was about china, who would inherit which platter,
teapot, and the silver, who could use the flatware,
the ginger jars, the crystal, the ivory-handled knives.

It’s true though that I craved those things, the ring
with the stone the color of the lake’s morning surface,
the strand of pearls, iridescent as the water at dusk.

I hadn’t heard then of the mi-se porcelain cherished
by the Tang Dynasty emperors far more than gold,
celadon vases and bowls the colors of mossy mud.

An odd kind of beauty, perfect in their imperfection,

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the ginger jars, the crystal, the ivory-handled knives.

It’s true though that I craved those things, the ring
with the stone the color of the lake’s morning surface,
the strand of pearls, iridescent as the water at dusk.

I hadn’t heard then of the mi-se porcelain cherished
by the Tang Dynasty emperors far more than gold,
celadon vases and bowls the colors of mossy mud.

An odd kind of beauty, perfect in their imperfection,
News & Views

The Bloody Middle East Revolution
Adapted from the New Yorker, BBC, and Wikipedia

The Spring revolution that has convulsed one country after another in the Middle East is not centered on religion-based politics, but nationalism and a broad-based social consciousness. Before the uprising, the most organized and prominent opposition movements throughout the Middle East countries came from Islamist organizations, similar to what happened in Iran in 1979 when the Islamic Revolution toppled the Pahlavi Dynasty and replaced it with the Islamic Republic of Iran, whereupon zealously religious Khomeini followers usurped the movement that had begun as social unrest.

In this year’s revolutions, however, secular forces emerged from the revolution touting principles that religious groups shared with them: freedom, social justice, and dignity. Islamist organizations also emerged with greater freedom to operate. Although the cooperative, multi-denominational revolution itself was no guarantee that partisan politics would not re-emerge in its wake as occurred in Iran decades ago, its success nonetheless represented a change from the intellectual stagnation created by decades of repression which simply pitted modernity and Islam against one another as conflicting and incompatible.

Despite the optimism surrounding the revolution, there is a genuine concern about the risk of increased power and influence for Islamist forces in Tunisia and Egypt and the region at large, as well as the difficulties of integrating the different groups, ideologies, and visions for the countries among the population. Any emergent regime is bound to be attuned to religion, but as in France, there is a chance that in Egypt and Tunisia the new democratic governments may disallow the participation of radical political Islam.

The brutal crackdown on peaceful protesters in Syria, a close ally of Iran which has apparently been assisted by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard members, reminds us of the uncertain nature of any revolution. The clerical regime in Iran has conducted a systematic, brutal campaign since the rigged presidential election of 2009 to prevent a similar uprising in the country.

Historically Iranians were ruled by an absolute monarchy for several thousand years, at least since the time of the Achaemenid Empire (550 BCE) until the Constitutional Revolution in 1906 that brought about a constitutional monarchy, but the Pahlavi Dynasty ignored the constitution and suppressed political activities and human rights and gave opportunity to the mullahs with Khomeini’s leadership to succeed, replacing the monarchy with a religious dictatorship. The Green Revolution that followed that election was violently suppressed with an approach similar to that which Syria is employing today against its people.

As Victor Hugo said about the French Revolution, “The brutalities of progress are called revolutions. When they are over we realize this: that the human race has been roughly handled, but that it has advanced.” So let’s wait a decade and see the outcome.

The Power of Faith
How Man Creates Miracles

Under the mobilizing power of leaders who used the power of faith to mobilize masses, history has witnessed the creation of once-in-a-lifetime monuments such as Egypt’s pyramids, the Great Wall of China, and the Sacred Family Church in Barcelona. Although the power of faith has led to the liberation of numerous countries in recent decades—e.g., Poland and the fall of the Soviet Union—it has also brought us the Holocaust, 9/11, and the jihadist organizations. Under the barbaric and nihilistic vision of Islam’s jihadists, the power of faith has produced terror and chaos, terrorizing the people of Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan and other nations throughout the world. Yet, there are leaders who direct the power of faith to advance freedom and human rights, alongside respect for various ideologies and religious practices.

The ancient Egyptians probably chose that distinctive form for their pharaohs’ tombs because of their solar religion, explained Donald Redford, professor of classics and ancient Mediterranean studies at Penn State. The Egyptian sun god Ra, considered the father of all pharaohs, was said to have created himself from a pyramid-shaped mound of earth before creating all other gods. The pyramid’s shape is thought to have symbolized the sun’s rays.

The process of building pyramids, while complicated, was not as colossal an undertaking as many of us believe. It has been suggested that between 20,000 and 30,000 laborers were needed to build the Great Pyramid at Giza in less than 23 years. By comparison, Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris took almost 200 years to complete. What mobilized Egypt’s population of around five million to build these monuments is debatable, but the power of faith was almost certainly a driving force behind these projects.

The Sacred Family Church, or Sagrada Familia, is a large Roman Catholic church in Barcelona, Catalonia, Spain, designed by Catalan architect Antoni Gaudí (1852–1926). Although incomplete, the church is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and in November 2010 it was consecrated and proclaimed a minor basilica by Pope Benedict. Though construction of Sagrada Familia had commenced in 1882, when Gaudi took over the project in 1883 he transformed it with his architectural and engineering style—combining Gothic and curvilinear, Modernista forms with ambitious structural columns and arches.

Gaudi devoted his last years to the project, and at the time of his death in 1926, less than a quarter of the project was complete. Sagrada Familia’s construction progressed slowly as it relied on private donations and was interrupted by the Spanish Civil War—only to resume intermittent progress in the 1950s. An anticipated completion date is 2026—the centennial of Gaudi’s death.
Texas Poet Laureate
Adapted from SA Life
and http://www.daveparsonspoetry.com/#
Email: dmparsons@consolidated.net

Dave Parsons, a Conroe writer, author and educator, has been honored with the state of Texas’ highest literary honor for his work as a poet and in promoting the literary arts to the public. Montgomery County poet laureate and Lone Star College-Montgomery creative writing instructor Dave Parsons has been named 2011 Poet Laureate of Texas.

“I’m surprised, happy and haven’t stopped grinning since I got the news earlier this week,” Parsons said. “This is a great honor for me and I’m very appreciative.”

Each year, the Texas Commission on the Arts names official state artists in poetry and music. During their one-year term, Texas State Artists serve as ambassadors promoting the arts in Texas.

While there is no cash prize or direct compensation that accompanies the title of Texas poet laureate, recipients enjoy academic and literary prestige as well as greater publishing and appearance opportunities.

“It’s especially impressive for a community college faculty member to receive this honor,” Parsons said. “It’s an award my counterparts at major institutions would very much like to receive.”

Internationally acclaimed writer Paul Ruffin, the 2009 Texas poet laureate, said the recognition of Parsons is well deserved, “Dave has been very active in promoting poetry and literacy programs as well as writing and publishing his personal poetry,” he said.

NIGHT HAWK*
Dave Parsons

Congress Avenue rolls south from the Paramount Theater straight through sentries of Live Oak over the Colorado River before it was over that first main bridge before it housed the dark cloud of bats and past the flagship Night Hawk Restaurant, where, I remember running head to chest into President Lyndon Johnson as his secret service agents, holding the glass doors open, looked on in horror at the unexpected possibilities of our collision, as I swung into the double doors like some unexpected and inescapable event in Asia, from the snaky nook of the restroom corridor, unaware of his incoming entourage—s’cuse me—no, pardon me! For a brief moment we did that uncertain dance to squeeze by each other in the small vestibule of the double door entry, LBJ in trapped composure, I imagine, with steak or a beer on his mind—

I—in awkward and puzzled wonderment—secret service agents on the outside and inside doors—staying stiffly cool—sizzling—

Literature by UTHSCSA Students

Happily Ever After
Stefani Hawbaker*

What is happily ever after but a premature clip On the inner workings of the beautiful light Overflowing our orchestrated cup. Please, take a sip Of the incomparable, unbreakable, powerful might And soothe your soul to the surprising sensation Of belief, of hope, of destiny, of purpose. “I do” begins a trek nearing toward the sun. Unknown, yet safe; comforting, yet curious- We live for finality, one solution, one end That will fulfill our wants, needs, utmost desires. The golden rule prevails; we do not offend; Yet why oh why are we so tired? Scientific theories and empiric formulas Do not cure. Oh! Isn’t ignorance bliss? Drudging, slacking, continuing on because Our one special day we do reminisce. One truth remains. We cannot go back. One path continues. Many roads diverge. Happily ever after, why do we lack When the promises uplift even the solemnest dirge? Anger and hatred; brokenness and contempt. Infidelity and religiosity; confusion and doubt. With no mechanism of action, all we have is lament For our puffed breast who receives no more clout. But wait. Look there. I see. On him. On her. The light. The sun. They still draw near. Ah, the beauty of a replenishing happily ever after To that, a sigh. The love. I can’t hold back a tear.

*Stefani Hawbaker is a senior medical student and the managing editor of Connective Tissue, an annual anthology of art and literature at UT Health Science Center San Antonio. This piece has been published in Connective Tissue, where selection is based on artistic and literary merit and does not reflect the personal views of UT Health Science Center San Antonio, the Center for Medical Humanities & Ethics or the editorial staff. For more information about Connective Tissue, including past issues and details on how to submit your work, please see the website at http://www.texashumanities.org/connective_tissue.cfm.

This sketch entitled “Palpation” by Melissa Vaconver won the first place award and has been published in Connective Tissue Anthology, 2011, volume IV.
James Brandenburg: You have had one of the most successful music and poetry venues in San Antonio over the past seven years, and you have just moved to a new location. Talk about the places where you have hosted this venue and your new location.

David Rodriguez: Brother Dave’s Open Mic began in the Deco District, moved to Southtown, and has now returned to the Deco District. The first location was The Koffee Kup located on Donaldson near Jefferson High School. I spent a couple of years there then moved to the Presa Street Café on S. Presa. Many of the performers from the Koffee Kup made the move with me to Presa St. My good friends, Barbara Wolfe and Steve Silbas, invited me to bring the open mic to Casbeers/San Antone Café in 2009. The new home of Brother Dave’s Open Mic is Deco Pizzeria on Fredricksburg Rd.

How did you become interested in establishing a venue specifically showcasing the combination of music and poetry as an open mic event?

Open mics traditionally have played a significant role in the development of the singer/songwriter. Open mics provide a venue where you can “test drive” new material and take it from the living room to the stage. At the time I started the open mic, I was transitioning from fronting a rock and roll band (True Stories) to being a solo performer and convinced the folks at The Koffee Kup to let me play there on Thursday nights. I quickly realized that I did not have enough material to fill the evening. So, I started inviting friends to come out and perform and Brother Dave’s Open Mic was born.

What is your background in music? I know you have a band and have performed with various bands. How would you classify the music you perform? How has your style of music changed over the years?

From the start, I wanted my open mic to be inclusive. In addition to singer/songwriters, I have had poets, playwrights, authors, and comedians. All ages and skill levels are welcome. Music has always been a part of my life. I played the triangle in kindergarten, made a shoebox guitar in elementary school, and played trumpet in junior high and high school. I picked up the guitar after high school and am just now starting to get comfortable with it. I also play the mandolin and the bass. My wife just bought me a ukulele, so I would classify my music as soulful, roots music. Like the culture of San Antonio, the influences of my music are very diverse. Listening to one of my sets is like flipping through radio stations in your car. You get a little rock, a little soul, a little country, a little conjunto, etc. My music evolves as I become more comfortable and confident with my writing, singing, and musicianship.

How would you describe the music scene here in San Antonio? Is San Antonio a city where songwriters/musicians can find places to perform and can be nurtured in the learning process? Is there any formal training here for songwriters/musicians?

San Antonio is rich in talent. Our musicians can go toe-to-toe with those of any other major city. Unfortunately, the city is not very supportive. There are fewer and fewer places to play original music any more.

How would you compare the music scene in San Antonio with the music scene in Austin? Have you ever performed your music/song lyrics in Austin?

Apples to oranges. The Austin music scene is more established and better supported by the city. The music industry is a significant part of Austin’s economy. I have had the opportunity to perform in Austin on a number of occasions and have always found it to be enjoyable.

The Kerrville Music Festival comes up in June every year. Have you ever performed there? Is the Kerrville Festival a strong venue for musicians/bands/songwriters? Why or why not?

I’ve only been to the Kerrville Folk Festival once a few years ago. I performed at many of the campfires but not at any of the official venues. It’s a great place to meet other songwriters and network.

Do you have any advice for musicians and poets who are interested in starting a venue? What are some of the keys to success?

Be persistent, be consistent, believe in yourself, believe in your art, and have fun!

What drives you to host a venue and to perform music week after week? How do you juggle the discipline of music, a busy work schedule and your commitment to your family?

You make time for the people and things you love.
With the capture of a single shining feather of the golden bird, worth more than the entire kingdom, the King decides he must have the whole bird.

So the two older sons set off, each in turn, to find this golden bird. Both encounter a fox who gives them directions about finding the bird and a warning about where to sleep for the night. Neither heeds the advice, but both try to shoot the fox instead, and then spend their nights and days in a life of revelry at a rowdy inn, abandoning the search.

When the older sons do not return, the youngest son sets out, and he too encounters the fox. This youngest son heeds the advice of the fox, and is even given a ride on the fox’s tail to the quiet inn for the night, where he sleeps soundly.

The next day the fox carries the son to the castle of the golden bird and instructs the son to quietly go past the sleeping soldiers and retrieve the golden bird, which is held in a plain wooden cage. The fox says that the son must leave the bird in its plain cage, and not put it into a golden cage nearby, or there will be trouble.

Sure enough, though, the youngest cannot resist putting the bird into its golden cage, and the bird calls out to the soldiers and the son is captured. He is sentenced to death, but he is told he will be freed if he will now retrieve a golden horse in another kingdom for this king.

A similar scene unfolds regarding the golden horse, and the son is again captured, but promised release if he can retrieve the beautiful princess who lives in the golden castle in the next kingdom.

Have you ever come across a single line of poetry that sent you on a wild search for the unknown poet, so that when you found her you greedily devoured everything she ever wrote? Or come across an enchanting painting which opened you up to a whole new body of art and literature unknown to you before? The golden feather is that initial experience—the glimpse of something divine, an ecstatic experience—which inspires such a quest.

In this tale, the older sons set off in search of the golden bird, and after disregarding the help of the fox, take their eyes off the prize and abandon the search. How often we take our eyes off the prize—what is really the most valuable thing—and settle for something secondary. Or maybe just familiar. In one sense, the older sons are continuations of the prevailing attitude of the old kingdom, and it is only the youngest son who carries the capacity for living out with a truly new attitude. It is in the youngest son that the “feather experience” resonates strongly enough to push the quest further.

And, of course, the key mistake of the older sons is to disregard the helpful animal, the fox. We have seen in the first installment of this series that, in this kingdom, nature is strictly cultivated and controlled. “The apples on the tree of life are all numbered.” So it is not surprising that the helpful instinct of the fox, i.e., nature, is discounted and dismissed.

But what is this fox? How are we to understand this helper animal who outwits the hounds with its sly tricks of doubling back and crisscrossing the woods and fields? I have watched grey foxes in the hill country approach a watering hole with endless backtracking and caution.

So the fox is that instinct for moving back and forth over boundaries and thresholds, an expression of the capacity of Hermes, who could easily move from the divine realm to the human realm and back again. Marie-Louise von Franz says that the fox is something like the spirit of nature and a close parallel to the god Mercurius of the alchemists, the light of nature.

She also notes that there is a difference in a fairy tale between a simple helpful animal that was always an animal, and a helpful animal which had once been a human being but is now “cursed” and living in an animal form. She says that the “cursed” animal is some capacity which had at one time been lived out in human consciousness. For some reason, however, that capacity has been repressed and no longer lived out consciously.

It only takes a little imagination to think about all the “cursed animals” running around in our culture today—levels of consciousness which had at one time become more elevated, but have sunk down to an unconscious and instinctive way of life. From politics to sexuality to the business world and beyond—there are higher levels of conscious functioning which have been repressed and have regressed.

Now for an animal to live out its nature on an instinctual level is absolutely correct. For a human being, though, to repress the higher meanings of human love, for example, and live out sexuality on a purely instinctual level, is incomplete. It is a “cursed” state.

But what about this cursed fox? Von Franz says that at one time people had a greater appreciation for nature and for the natural wisdom in nature, even having a capacity for recognizing an illuminating light in nature, the lumen naturae. That has now largely been repressed.

In our fairy tale, this fox knows how to seek out and capture the golden bird. If the golden bird is the expression of some shining ecstatic experience, some brilliant spiritual breakthrough, then the fox is the capacity to pursue and relate to this illumination, i.e., this ecstatic, altered spiritual state.

We see that capacity among many people in our culture today, as traditional religious institutions have lost their hold on the modern person and people are seeking authentic religious experiences on their own. The “Hermetic fox” inside is alive and well as people seek inner illumination.

But to trust and follow the inner fox can be considered suspect and even heretical, especially when it strays outside the boundaries of organized religions. Think of the attitude of the older sons of the king who try to shoot and kill this fox. And one is invariably going to make some mistakes along the way, which is what the youngest son does in our tale. Even the mistakes can be important though, and we’ll explore those mistakes in the next installment.

In the meantime, it is a good exercise for all of us to consider the presence of the inner fox, and to know that there is that capacity within us, albeit “cursed” or repressed, to seek out authentic religious experience and illumination.
Music, Poetry, and Arts

Billie Holiday
from Writer’s Almanac

The singer Billie Holiday, born Eleanora Fagan in Baltimore (1915) to teenage parents, was never professionally trained, but by the time she was 18, she had spent more time performing in clubs than performers twice her age. When she recorded with Benny Goodman, her career took off, and she went on to work with Artie Shaw and Lester Young, who gave her the nickname “Lady Day.” She struggled with relationships, and addiction, but her apartment in the Bronx was always open to unemployed musicians, and she left a plate on the table that held money for food and subway fares. In her autobiography she wrote, “Singing songs like the ‘The Man I Love’ or ‘Porgy’ is no more work than sitting down and eating Chinese roast duck, and I love roast duck.” When a critic saw a performance of Holiday in 1956, he wrote: “When she went into ‘Willow, Weep for Me,’ you wept. You looked about and saw that the few other customers were also crying in their beer and shot glasses. Nor were they that drunk. Something was still there, that something that distinguishes an artist from a performer: the revealing of the self. Here I be. Not for long, but here I be. In sensing her mortality, we sensed our own.”

Willow Weep for Me
Sung by Billie Holiday
http://youtu.be/MLiPCpENAM8

Willow weep for me
Willow weep for me
Bend your branches green along the stream that runs to sea
Listen to my plea
Hear me willow and weep for me

Gone my lovers dream
Lovely summer dream
Gone and left me here to weep my tears into the stream
Sad as I can be
Hear me willow and weep for me

Whisper to the wind and say that love has sinned
Left my heart a-breaking, and making a moan
Murmur to the night to hide its starry light
So none will see me sighing and crying all alone

Weeping willow tree
Weep in sympathy
Bend your branches down along the ground and cover me
When the shadows fall, hear me willow and weep for me

Oh, weeping willow tree
Weep in sympathy
Bend your branches down along the ground and cover me
When the shadows fall, hear me willow and weep for me

What Happened on 15 July 1799

The Rosetta Stone is an Ancient Egyptian granodiorite stele inscribed with a decree issued at Memphis, Egypt, in 196 BC on behalf of King Ptolemy V. The decree appears in three scripts: the upper text is Ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs, the middle portion demotic script, and the lowest Ancient Greek. Because it presents essentially the same text in all three scripts (with some minor differences between them), it provided the key to the modern understanding of Egyptian hieroglyphs.

Originally displayed within a temple, the stele was probably moved during the early Christian or medieval period and eventually used as building material in the construction of Fort Julien near the town of Rashid (Rosetta) in the Nile Delta. It was rediscovered there in 1799 by a soldier of the French expedition to Egypt. As the first ancient trilingual text recovered in modern times, the Rosetta Stone aroused widespread public interest with its potential to decipher the hitherto untranslated Ancient Egyptian language. Lithographic copies and plaster casts began circulating among European museums and scholars. Meanwhile, British troops defeated the French in Egypt in 1801, and the original stone came into British possession under the Capitulation of Alexandria. Transferred to London, it has been on public display at the British Museum since 1802. It is the most-visited object in the British Museum.

Jeremy Koontz
A Local Piano Composer, Performer

Jeremy Koontz is a pianist/composer living in San Antonio, Texas, performing under the alias of Milton Raphael. He frequently gives performances at local venues in San Antonio, including premiere contemporary art galleries such as Bismarck Studios and Gallery Nord. His compositions are often long form tone paintings, incorporating layers of acoustic and electronic sound with keyboard/piano solos to create narrative imagery in the music. Please visit www.sevensparrowproductions.com, or http://youtu.be/lLm_ZEc2q14, to hear piano pieces by this composer including the Amazon of the Meditations.

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

Swiss Alps, Spring of 2011
Graphic Arts & Photography

Paintings & Photography of Sylvia Benitez at Gallery Nord

by Voices Editors and from http://www.gallerynord.com/

Sylvia Benitez is a nationally known environmental installation artist whose recent work has begun to explore landscape painting. She is the recipient of many awards including two Pollock-Krasner awards, an AICA Award (Association of International Critics of Art) and Two National Endowment for the Arts Awards. Benitez has shown in numerous museums, sculpture parks and galleries, including the C. Grimaldis Gallery, Baltimore, MD; Galeria Raices, Puerto Rico; Alva Gallery, CT; Gallery Nord, San Antonio; the Baltimore Museum of Art; the Neuberger Museum, SUNY Purchase, Wave Hill, NY; and the Whitney Museum of Art.

Sylvia Benitez recently married a sixth-generation Texan and relocated to the greater San Antonio area from the East Coast. She says, “I am continually moved by the beauty and variation of the landscape. Simply put, I want to bring the landscape inside. Through my paintings I try to express what I see and feel as I watch and marvel at the natural majesty around me.” She says about her art, “My painting is the embodiment of the emotion this visual experience brings to me. I cannot capture Nature and I do not try to. One might say, however, that it has captured me.” Here are two paintings from the Benitez Exhibition at Gallery Nord:

**Untitled**

**Dad’s Field**

At The McNay Museum

Two New Picasso Paintings at the Museum

The McNay Art Museum announced the addition of two important paintings to its collection of works by the great 20th-century Spanish master, Pablo Picasso (1881–1973). Both come as a bequest of McNay emeritus trustee Jeanne Lang Mathews from the collection she and her husband, Irving Mathews, formed over many years.

The earlier of the two, *Reclining Woman on the Beach*, is one of Picasso’s many paintings of the female form painted at Boisgeloup in 1932. According to Picasso scholar Pepe Karmel, the 1932 Mathews painting is one of several that the scholar characterizes as “a series of miniature variations on the great erotic nudes of 1932, one of the high points of the artist’s career.”

A New Exhibit Reveals Picasso at a Rare Moment of Symmetry and Stability

by Jed Perl from The New Republic: Books & Arts

Among the many mysteries of Picasso’s distorted anatomies is how often they strike us as anything but distorted. When Picasso takes one of his great flights of physiognomical fantasy, the face can become an enchanted erotic arabesque, as inevitable as it is unpredictable. Here in this painting, Picasso, by some accounts the most important artist of the twentieth century, dives into the most passionate sexual experience of his life, and with a girl who was seventeen when he met her at the age of forty-five in 1927. Marie-Thérèse is the mother of Picasso’s daughter Maya, born in 1935.
Poetry & Art Therapy

Art in the Dark
The SA Lighthouse Inaugural Event* Hits a Home Run
Nancy Lipton

The San Antonio Lighthouse for the Blind (SALB) creates opportunities for individual independence by providing rehabilitation programs and employment opportunities that measurably improve the lives of blind and visually impaired individuals.

The San Antonio Lighthouse for the Blind is a private, non-profit 501(c)(3) organization incorporated in the State of Texas. Serving people who are blind or visually impaired for over 78 years, the San Antonio Lighthouse for the Blind provides rehabilitation services, as well as employment opportunities through its light manufacturing assembly plant and Base Service Centers.

On Thursday, May 19th, at 6:30 p.m., a unique fundraising event made its debut—a silent auction, in which thirty-three local and very talented artists donated tactile works of their art for Art in the Dark. There were to be touching and feeling but no “peeking.”

During the event, attendees were able to “see” the pieces of art, such as Angela Mann’s work, pictured here. The works were draped with cloth, and visitors used their sense of touch to gather information such as texture, size and shape. Most of the artists were present and stood behind their pieces helping the potential bidder to understand what was before them in order to make their bid.

It was a unique way to share with others how those who are visually impaired or blind might experience the world.

Over 300 people in attendance laughed, touched, felt the pieces like “Tea Party Center Piece,” and bid. The art was unveiled after the bidding was over, and during dessert the winners were announced. All of the pieces were sold. It was a glorious evening. The buzz in the air was extraordinary with talk of doing it again next year.

The evening also consisted of fabulous food provided by Wing-Zone, RK Group, Hyatt Wild Oak Ranch, Ye Ol Kendall Inn and Amoritos. Gambrinus donated Shiner, and Republic National Distributors the wine. The desserts were extraordinary and many thanks go to Gigi’s Cupcakes for their delicious mini-cupcakes and to Cathy’s Sweets for those chocolate truffles to die for.

The evening was also brought to life with the unbelievable music provided by SALB employee Art, who plays a mean harmonica, and William, who played guitar for 14-year-old Sierra, who sings like an angel (not an employee). When the attendees themselves turn a two hour event into three—that’s a “home run”!

What Is Christianity?
From the Synopsis of Introducing Christianity* by James R. Adair**
www.Amazon.com

What is Christianity? How did it begin? What do Christians believe? What are their customs and history? How has Christianity developed through the centuries, and how diverse is Christianity today? These are some of the questions addressed in James R. Adair’s book *Introducing Christianity*. The book begins by looking at broad questions about such topics as the definition of religion, sacred space and time, sin and salvation, and faith. It then traces the development of Christianity from its Jewish and Greco-Roman roots, through the struggles to define itself in the midst of inner and outer conflicts, to its emergence as the dominant religion of the Roman Empire. The history of the church and some of its most influential and interesting personalities and doctrines are sketched through the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, the Reformation, the Enlightenment, to today. The book then turns from the history of the church to consider the various forms in which the church manifests itself today, from the traditional Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches, to the churches of the Magisterial Reform, to the free churches of the Baptists and Pentecostals, to groups such as Mormons and Jehovah’s Witnesses. Christianity is then viewed through the lenses of geography, doctrine, and liturgy. Finally, the book examines the interaction between Christianity and science, the arts, ethics and politics, and other religions.

* For those seeking a phenomenological and historical approach to the study of Christianity, Adair’s text provides a helpful introduction. The book not only surveys the history of Christianity from the origins to the present but also provides students with an extended examination of contemporary varieties of Christianity and of Christianity’s interactions with the world. Adair’s evenhanded exploration of diversified Christian responses to such hotly debated issues as creation and evolution, abortion, embryonic stem cell research, and relations with other religions serves as a useful reminder that there is no monolithic Christian approach to any social or ethical issue—by Mary Kathleen Cunningham, North Carolina State University, Editor of God and Evolution: A Reader.

** James R. Adair was born and raised in San Antonio, and he has also lived in Fort Worth, Cape Town, and Atlanta. After earning his B.S. in computer science at Trinity University, he went on to earn several advanced degrees in religious and historical studies. He has been an IT manager, directed large digitization projects, and taught in university and seminary classrooms. He currently lives once again in San Antonio and works for the University of Texas at San Antonio. He is technical editor of *Voices de la Luna*. 
**A Response to Destruction**

*H. Palmer Hall*

**A Response to Destruction**
as we approach the tenth anniversary of 9/11
and “celebrate” (?) the killing of Osama bin Laden

With the death of Osama Bin Laden, I have been thinking back to those first few weeks post-9/11 and a junior-level course I was teaching at St. Mary’s University. Everyone, including me, was a bit jumpy, and the university’s electrical system kept shutting off, sometimes for a couple of hours at a time. Many of the students thought that perhaps that, too, was some kind of terrorist-related problem. It was not, but we were not always rational in the weeks following what happened in New York and Washington that day. We did stupid things right here in San Antonio: people threw rocks through the windows of Arab American owned businesses. A med student was arrested on flimsy grounds and held for weeks before he was finally released. People started mistrusting people of Arab descent who had been good friends for some years. A friend of mine lost his import/export business and wound up going to work for the U.S. Army as an interpreter/translator for the First Infantry Division. The United States was turning into a country that few of us could recognize. I remembered the old Pogo cartoon: “We have met the enemy and he is us.”

I decided, at least partially because I was teaching T. S. Eliot’s “The Wasteland,” that my students and I should turn our creative efforts toward what our nation was already calling “Ground Zero,” a new wasteland in New York City—to creative ways we could react to the event that has scarred the lives of all of us. My students and I worked together to help turn the negative energy that destroyed the towers into something that could not, in any way, be all positive, but that might be something we could remember that would not be as gray and soot-filled as that awful day in New York. Art, certainly including poetry, can do that. William Carlos Williams was so right in “Asphodel”: “It is difficult / to get the news from poems / yet men die miserably every day / for lack / of what is found there.

In those weeks after 9/11, some of my students created collages, paintings, sculptures; others wrote poems, essays, stories. I am not suggesting that the world changed because of the art they created, only that it was better for them to be creative than to dwell on destruction. I worked along with them, and what follows is what I wrote at that time.

Just a quick note; that Fall one of my best students was participating in our semester in London. This poem is in the form of fictional letters from her and commentaries from me. It is all conjecture, not literal. I placed it in 10-line stanzas that march down the page in fairly formal measures. That kind of formality distances the writer a bit from the content of the poem.

**From My Student in London**

She walks beneath the White Tower, thinks of all the dead of those old wars. She sees thousands walking across gray bridges,

reads reports of this year’s dead and dying.
Had we imagined we could succeed, could live aseptically, the patient not immobilized?
Men on horses fade into a mountaincast dragging cannon, guns, copies of holy writ.
Wind blows across the Khyber Pass and thunder echoes through dry valleys.

“I should be in Rome tomorrow...if there are no alarms, no signs of rain.”

She writes, consults her Baedeker, out of date, wonders if she should go south to study, perhaps Belize. In Trafalgar Square she hears a turbaned man prophesy:
“The rain will be yellow and will drip slowly from suppurating skies. Prepare! Dogs will run in the streets, *Huc usque, nosostros miserum!* The rain will burn.”

And this is what she does. She finds Philip, whom she barely knows, and takes him home, finds what can only pass for comfort, some pale reflection of desire. A faint song chanted in the rose garden, some record of damp places, of what is not love but warmth—huddling in a far country. “...a journey still necessarily assumes something of the nature of an exploration” the old man says, but this journey repeats itself turns in expected places, “Nothing is new.”

“We are going to Stratford, to the Avon River, and we will see a play. Some comedy, I hope. I do not want Hamlet. I see myself drifting on my back in a cold stream, washed in flowers.”

So cold so young and yet no tears, only blank expectations, a Stratford of broken bricks.

“I think next summer in San Miguel, some old colonial buildings far from European streets, from American certainty. I saw a turbaned man, a Sikh, I think. He raved in quiet tones.”

“Write me,” she says. “Tell me to go to Paris where you promised me romance. I would walk along the Seine with some young man who speaks to me in French and smiles at my attempts to answer love in a halting tongue. I stumbled today; the streets are slick, dirty, coated with grime.”

I would have her walk down la Rue des Sts. Pères and meet some Parisian, then make romantic love not the pallid passion of a London night safe until a sooty fog settles in damp streets.

Even there, I would not have her read the news, not *Paris Match*, not *Le Monde*. Those tangled spires, plumes of gray smoke rising months later still appall, even in Paris in the day. “I’ll do it,” she writes. “I may never get the chance again, would taste forever some vague regret that I was here and let it pass. Think of me, if you do, beside a river, light bouncing from ripples you saw when you were young and leaned against some piling, some streaked column holding up a bridge and artists showed their paintings in an old new world.”

A flash of lightning, rain...newspapers blow across the square and everyone runs as if some other place will offer shelter, some other arms will comfort.

“I am in Paris and the night is clear, moonlight bounces off the river in a thousand shapes. It is all you said,” she writes, “and more.” For her, there are no more bombs falling on the mountain passes, no children screaming in the night, no war. Only, sometimes, when the lights are out, only a slant of dim light from the street, her eyes open in the dark.

Voices de la Luna, 15 July 2011
**Select Poems—Part I**  
**Youth Poems**

**Letter to Dad**  
*Joshua Hernandez*

We all miss you, Dad,  
It’s hard being without you.  
This wasn’t meant to be.  
We love the way you used to laugh,  
And the way you would sing and dance.

But mostly, we feel bad.  
We worry about you,  
But we know that  
God will always be with you,  
We love you very much.

This year, I’m going to join basketball, I hope.  
I’m doing just fine in school,  
Trying to keep my grades up,  
Trying to be good.  
Mom says you want me to be good  
For the whole year,  
I know I can do it.

Mom always tells me that you love me,  
And that you want me to pass to fifth grade.  
Don’t worry—Mom is taking good care of us,  
Sometimes she says, “Let’s go to the store,”  
And she buys things to cheer me up,  
Like a cool chair  
And some glow-in-the-dark earphones.

We love you, Dad,  
We will keep you in our hearts  
Until you come back home.

*Gardendale Elementary School, grade 4*

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**Butterfly Dreams**  
*Kendall Kramer*

Drinking pollen  
Fluttering wings  
Butterfly dreams

*Sunshine Cottage School, grade 1  
Blanco, Texas*

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**Ode To Swedish Fish**  
*Chelsea Orth*

Small fish figured gummie  
Cherry juice stimulating my taste buds  
I feel the smoothness against my tongue  
Wet and slippery, they slide through my mouth  
Instantly I’m six years old again  
Friends are laughing, family is cheering  
This tasty treat brings everyone together

*Tom C. Clark High School*

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**Inky Pens: An Ode**  
*Natalie Koehn*

With every twirl, loop, or spot  
I thank you for making my writing look nice  
So that I might get a good grade for handwriting  
You make me feel like  
It’s calligraphy on parchment  
When it’s really just chemicals on trees  
I thank you for providing the communication  
To help me write that love note  
And some of you (I love you, BG!) for not sputtering out during an essay.  
As technology advances, you will too  
But I do believe you make the world go round  
Like the ball on your tip.

*Tom C. Clark High School*

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**Eight Seconds**  
*Kole Graf*

The cowboy bravely mounts the beast,  
He is not frightened, not in the least.  
The cowboy’s heart is racing,  
For eight seconds of excitement he is bracing.  
His glove clenches tightly on the bull rope,  
He is tough and strong, full of hope.  
The gate flies open wide,  
For eight seconds the bull he must ride.  
Danger! The cowboy falls down,  
The beast is distracted by the clown.  
The cowboy retreats without a gore,  
Until next time,  
When he bravely mounts the beast once more!

*Pleasanton Primary School, grade 2*


**Homeless**  
*Neal Talukdar*

A thought, a feeling, a want of a temple, a sanctuary  
A place one can call his own  
A place where an individual is his own master  
And everyone has a home  
Ah humanity, oh this irony!  
My home is the box under the highway  
It is a place where opposites attract  
It is either as hot as the confines of hell  
Or as cold as the Siberian winter  
As dry as the barren Sahara, or as wet as the lush rainforest  
However, it is always very loud!  
My home can garner neither the beauty of a palace  
Nor the disgust of the sewer  
Sadly, my home is neither my temple nor my sanctuary  
It is a shelter  
A shelter for me to sleep and a place for what I can call my own  
It contains neither gold nor silver, hope nor wisdom  
It contains my pillow and blanket  
Poverty  
One of the most cruel fates ever imposed upon a human  
I am branded as poor, but what do I lack that is important?  
I have a brain, a heart, and a desire to live  
However, money never sleeps  
I feel that I am one of the richest people in the world  
Rich with the desire to live  
And still in search of a temple…

*St. Mary’s Hall High School, grade 11*

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**Pencils**  
*Zachary Jacinto*

They are magic in a stick.  
They can turn a blank canvas into a masterpiece,  
a white sheet of paper into an essay, a book into a story.  
With a pencil, you can erase your mistakes.  
The pencil creates a two dimensional world.  
Do not underestimate the pencil.

*Bandera High School, grade 9  
Lakehills, Texas*

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**The Alamo: A Family Legacy**  
*Mary Kate Crockett*

Davy Crockett wiped his brow  
As the Mexican army attacked.  
The Alamo, a mission turned fort,  
Had men ready to react.

Cannon after cannon launched,  
The Alamo began to lose her hold,  
But the soldiers did not back down  
Or allow chaos to unfold.

At least they tried their best  
To keep favor on their side.  
Two hundred Texans within,  
Fifteen hundred Mexicans outside.

Twelve days dragged on,  
The fight would not end.  
Even though they were tired  
The Texans managed to suspend

Until the thirteenth day,  
When the battle drew to its conclusion.  
Almost two hundred Texans killed  
In the battle’s great confusion.

Davy Crockett, among the dead,  
Did not die in vain.  
His life, a service to others,  
Leaves a legacy that will reign.

*Homeschool, grade 10  
San Antonio, Texas*

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**Ice Crusher**  
*Katherine Mansfield*

Sometimes, even the littlest things  
Reflect our personalities—  
— the way my parents fit ice  
Into a thermos:  
My father patiently runs water  
Over the cubes,  
Coaxing them into the confines  
Of the canteen…  
My mother, with the hilt of a wooden spoon  
Bashes relentlessly,  
Forcing the cubes into submission  
Imprisoning them within the stainless steel.

*Keystone Middle School, 7th grade  
San Antonio, Texas*
Select Poems–Part III

After the Plunge
Cyra S. Dumitru

Someday when I become a disciple
of the hidden, when I leave my body
and join the moonrise
taking only what the unseen can carry,
when the sound in my lungs is silence,
let there be one shred of me, one dense bit of ash
that remembers the bright bite of living between bones:
how I trembled beside the Pedernales River
surging muddy and muscular with rain,
how a longing to plunge into such motion –
swirling deep yet forward
seized me and I understood what it meant to be alive.

Oahu
Rod C. Stryker

Every day, Saturday.
When we went to
the Tampur SuperMarket
last Monday,
ate at the local
L&L Barbeque
two weeks ago
next Friday,
and on Thursday
took in the view at Pali Lookout,
it was Saturday,

Visited the Bishop Museum,
on a windy Sunday,
buried our toes in Bellows beach
w/a hint of secret Wednesdays,
by chance enjoyed the giclée art
at Sunshine Arts Gallery yesterday,
it was still Saturday.

As the clouds kiss the mountain peaks
above the Byodo-In Temple
or the Ko’olau mountains
reflect the morning sun
next year,
next lifetime,
it will still be
the Land of Saturdays.

PRAYER FOR JAPAN
Tatjana Debeljacki

Bubbling laughter
rips out of me
into words
humming
white scent of incense
I can’t help speaking
I see through petals
centuries old
and my hands clap
in a prayer for Japan.
Then something wizened
something blackened
turns to smoke
starts shifting
rips out the heart of laughter
stamps pain on my forehead
with a spring wind
ties my hands
and so dries up
my prayer for Japan
in full swing
God hears the prayers
have mercy on Japan
longing made of frost
the soul of soil is rubble
the face is proud

Calculations
Robert Allen

You have overheard two strangers debating
their weekend plans, or your brother has called you
for a phone number, or your wife has asked if
you still love her—up spring those rapid mental
calculations where each hard fact is reckoned,
each pebble of thought made vital, which only
you know, from events you barely remember,
charged seconds spent deciding what to say,
whether to speak, after which lives will change
like circles rippling out from small, skipped stones.
Poems From Voices Editors

I've Seen the Grand Canyon
James R. Adair

I’ve seen the Grand Canyon and the Rocky Mountains, the voices of three oceans breaking on rocks or surf have spoken in my ears.
On hot summer days I’ve played in the waters of the Frio River (aptly named),
then on those warm nights I’ve lain on my back and stretched out my hand toward the black sky, reaching for stars just beyond my grasp.

I’ve watched the leaves change colors then float gently, softly, to the ground, and I’ve seen little yellow flowers push their way through the same damp leaves to breathe the fresh air of Spring.
I’ve heard the quiet burbling, babbling, chortling of a mountain stream, and I’ve stood transfixed as the fierce, powerful thunderstorm rolled in over the hills, flashing its lightning in the distant clouds.

I’ve drunk water from a spring that seemed to emerge from solid rock, the scent of cedar and pine, magnolia and honeysuckle have overpowered me.
I’ve caught lightning bugs in a jar at dusk, then let them go as the night grew dark, and my daughters (who are expert firefly catchers) hug and kiss me and tell me they love me.
Of course I believe in God!

Journey to Paradise
Valerie Martin Bailey

Deep, shining pools inviting me to sink Into their sapphire blue and there explore The ecstasies beneath their quiet brink— Uncharted depths, unbound by any shore.

The twinkle of a distant universe— Love captured in a soft, sweet orb of light; A shimmering enchantment—I immerse My soul, a willing captive of delight.

No voyager has sailed such far off seas, No conqueror has taken such a dare, No astronaut exploring Pleiades Has found an atmosphere so rich and rare.

My heart has journeyed beyond paradise While gazing in the crystal of your eyes.

Ensuing Traces*
James Brandenburg

Tireless,
Relentless,
On her path
Instinct of
A Monarch
Celebrating
Her journey
By touching
Zinnias and
Tasting nectar
Ascending south
In winter
Resting her
Weary wings
In sunlight’s
Grandeur

A silhouette
In nature’s cycle.

* (For Maeca on her birthday)

Socrates Cafe
Joan Seifert

I like to pass the day at the Socrates Cafe Where butterflies are heroes and scorpions are a scare. Butterflies will charm their foes (they have plenty, heaven knows) But scorpions bring even Plato fear.

There’s no way to ask a scorpion a question. To sting, its favorite answer. Butterflies, though, are discreet. They shrewdly float and soar, seek acumen in the air, Finding in the chaff of nature, something sweet.

I’ll spend my Cafe time while finishing a rhyme Seeking words I need; just give me a suggestion. The scorpion won’t care – if he knew, he wouldn’t share; In true Socratic style, he’ll raise a question.
Select Poems—Part IV
International Poems

Deal Struck with Happiness
Ana Enriqueta Terán

How much sweetness to make right the night and this clutch of anemones near thin smooth consoling stones, stones havens of southern weather.
Of a woman who watches Cepheids quiver among light bursting mangroves.
Of a woman who offers cats’-eyes and clematis only Islands, for the sake of setting right her deal struck with happiness.

Compromiso con la alegría*
Ana Enriqueta Terán**

Cuánta dulzura para adrizar la noche, y este ramo de actinias hacia piedras lamidas, de consolación; piedras, fondeaderos de tiempo sur.
De mujer que atestigua vaivén de cefeidas por entre relampagueos de manglitos.
De mujer que ofrece cimófanas, clemátides solo para restablecer, Islas, el compromiso con la alegría.

*Taken from House Made of Utterance
**Ana Enriqueta Terán was born in Valera, Venezuela. Her writings explore nature and her native Venezuela.

Video Interview with Hejo Müller

Müller, a Berlin poet talks about poetry, life, and his own voyage to become a poet. He began writing poetry at the age of 25, but didn’t begin sharing with others until he was fifty years old. As a teacher, dancer, musician, and a devoted family man, he witnessed the rise and fall of Nazism, the Second World War, the division of his country, and the transformation of Germany into a highly successful, artistic, and peaceful country. He has published seven books of poetry in German and a bilingual collection of English and German poems, Somewhere Everywhere Irgendwo Überall, co-authored by James Brandenburg. The video interview may be seen at www.voicesdelaluna.com.

Munich, Ludwig Street
Hejo Müller
February 1943 (For Sophie Scholl)
Translated by James Brandenburg

In cold, foggy night air lights illuminating outside walls on family dwellings.

The white color of the WHITE ROSE dripping down.

Shortly thereafter the girl’s neck under the guillotine.

TheMEDAL
Rosa Francisca Beotegui

The coin gleamed in her hand, its glint as opaque as a sardine tin, a sheen as cheap and flimsy as a word ill scrawled or ill understood or ill undertaken. Even so, mama reckoned its heft, lifting it into the air like someone carefully cradling a fragile star so as not to drop it.

No more than five centimeters of vertical flight, just space enough for the coin to turn over once in the air and return to the safety of my mother’s half-lighted hand. Without remorse I think of the mother hen in the speed lane, trying with suicidal calm to look after her chicks that, themselves unruffled, surround her, eating scraps found on the shoulder of the road.

So my mother, giggling a little as she bites down onto the coin, tosses it onto the floor, careful not to lose it in some free-will accident, and says, “It tastes like silver.” She says, “No doubt it’s a collectible,” picks it up again and plants it in her bosom…like a medal.

I think, “Why so much fuss? Yes, it is a simple coin showing the father of the nation’s face. It even has a spelling error in the inscription.”

My grandfather passing by, shuffling his feet, said, “In Spain they call that Toledan silver because it’s like debased gold but in silver,” and went out.

LA MEDALLA
Rosa Francisca Beotegui

La moneda relumbró en su mano. Su relumbrante opaco, su relumbrar de lata de sardinas, su brillo barato y con levedad de palabra mal escrita o mal entendida o mal asumida y sin embargo, mamá calibró su peso elevándola al aire con el cuidado del impulsivo. “Vive a las dos,” dice, “No duda de que es coleccionable, vuelve a recogerla y planta en su pecho como un astillero…como una medalla.

Pienso, “¿Por qué tanto aspaviento? Sí es una simple moneda con la cara del padre de la patria... hasta tiene un error ortográfico en la leyenda.”

Mi abuela pasó arrastrando sus pies y dijo: A eso lo llaman plata toledana en España, que es como el oro bajo pero en plata y se fue.

Rosa Francisca Beotegui was born in Valencia, Carabobo State, Venezuela. A poet and architect, she graduated from the University of Los Andes, Mérida, Venezuela.
Voices de la Luna, 15 July 2011

Wild Flowers
Maria Gabriela Madrid

Under the sun
Under the rain
Wild flowers
Swallow the nutrients from the earth
Under the sun
Under the rain
Like wild flowers
Children dance with the wind
Breathe pure air
But children from infancy are put to the test
Too many rules to observe on how to behave
Lack of praise and too much criticism
Contaminate their air
And suffocate their spirit
Until it bends
Under the sun
Under the rain
The flowers no longer wild like before
The children rest on the ground in despair
Hoping to breath pure air
And dance with the wind
To become a wild flower again
Under the sun
Under the rain

Flores Salvajes
Maria Gabriela Madrid

Bajo el sol
Bajo la lluvia
Flores salvajes
Ingieren los nutrientes de la tierra
Bajo el sol
Bajo la lluvia
Como flores salvajes
Los niños bailan con el viento
Respiran aire puro
Pero los niños desde pequeños son puestos a prueba
A observar reglas de como comportarse
Carencia de apoyo, demasiada crítica
Hace que se contamine el aire
Y asfixie el espíritu
Hasta doblarlo
Bajo el sol
Bajo la lluvia
Ya no siendo las flores salvajes de antes
Los niños descansan desesperada en la tierra
Con la esperanza de respirar aire puro
Y bailar con el viento
Para ser de nuevo
Flores salvajes
Bajo el sol
Bajo la lluvia

ACUÁRIDA
Norka Armand

Acuárida
Una distancia adentro
Soy una Acuárida que mira la acuarela
Miro a través de las hojas el cielo
Miro a través de la hoja a Plancton
Y cómo le cuela la sangre entre las piedras del muro
Soy una Acuárida que hace dieta a base de salvado de trigo
No puedo llorar, mi acuario está seco.
La ardentía que se forma en la Rada,
La Rada del Mar
Son las lágrimas de Plancton que brillan en mis noches
cuando dorir me ha negado.
Cierro las puertas de mi Cuerpo Astral
Cierro las puertas de mi Aura
Cierro las puertas de mi Casa
Y me perdono a mí misma
y aunque sé que en el plano espiritual no existe el perdón, perdono
pues de esta manera transformo la idea de todo aquel que quiera hacerme mal
y así me quedo convencida de que sólo son recuerdos.
Mi mente no puede desplazarse, alarmas de rayos láser detienen mis pensamientos
Me encuentro en una caja de cristal petrificada
Recuerdos, recuerdos muertos en un pasado sin tiempo. El tiempo es hoy, ahoritica, ya.

Norka Armand (Valera, Trujillo), besides attending several writing workshops, has attended courses and workshops in painting, drawing, craftsmanship in precious metals, utility glass and metal hammering with renowned Venezuelan craftsmen.
Springtime Blooming
Sarah Taylor

The cherry blossoms bloom
And the daisies bloom
Cardinals sing sweet songs
Painted ladies dance in the air

Water moves softly
Fish swim in the calm waters
Crabs crawl in the smooth sand
Making me feel relaxed, nice and joyful

Discovery School, Kindergarten
San Antonio, Texas

Entombment of a Dream
Amanda Nicole Bartlett

At the end of this cancer stick
Smoke collides with fresh air
At the end of this coffee cup
Caffeine fuels these thoughts

At the beginning of this dream
Imagination feeds this soul
At the beginning of this end
Dreams will entomb this life

International School of America, grade 11
San Antonio, Texas

Charlie and Me
Sara Stewart

I jump in the saddle
And through the barn door,
Charlie leaps in the air,
And suddenly we soar.

Into the fields,
Race towards the sun,
A tap of my foot,
And now into a run,

Our adventure has just begun.

Pleasanton Intermediate School, grade 5
Pleasanton, Texas
Select Poems–Part VI

The People I’m Becoming
Elzy Cogwell

For one thing, my former wife,
the alcoholic, had a movie star body
that would slide into the bed
of my consciousness like that snake
with his apple, but whoever

I happened to be when she came in,
she became in those hormonal times
baggage for the rest of my ride,
not just someone I once knew
but rather a large chunk of who I am today.

It was like she shed her skin
from those anguished years
and left it as a diploma
for me to hang above the mantel
of all my other regrets.

Loving the next woman I married
was so much easier that I hardly noticed
the way that all through the years, she too
deposited in me little pieces of herself.
Like Hansel and Gretel I follow them home.

Growth Chart
Jim Daniels

I want to measure my children by hands
like they did in the old days

in the inexact human way
measure them against what I imagined
when I could hold them both in my arms
but they are too big

for their father’s weepy calculations,
his jazzy dance of letting go.

The man who sold us this house
left us three yardsticks in the closet

and tulips in the garden. When he died
I missed his obituary,

busy, I suppose, waving a flag in the wind
for my children, signaling the heavens
like they did in the old days.

Despair*
Jim La Villa-Havelin

I remember when kids would die
imitating Superman. We never thought
what they wanted was to die. It always
seemed they really were trying to fly.
Without the magic of special effects,
when kids watch Saddam hang amid
bile-filled functionaries, they know what
they’re seeing, and what it means.
So when they play the hanging swinging
leader in his last moments, stealing futures
we have already stolen from them,
with the snap of a noose, what other pictures
worse than dying, are they hoping to shut off?

*from Counting, published by Pecan Grove Press

over the top
lianne mercer

we carry in our souls and behind our eyes
whispers circling in the wind
wood strong in past and future tense
wheat bowing at the edges of words
images, memories – no historical evidence
no notices fading on warped boards
only our lives going forward

i knew a woman who complained
about the granularity of dreams
awoke in the night to dust her china
missing the point of what night unwraps
in our minds – beaches where we walk naked,
children laughing at everything and nothing
farmer’s hands stiff with winter
purple thistles made into baskets
a century ago by young girls

perhaps we could begin to redecorate our days
snipe away at pride and fear and shyness
laugh at our belief in order and sanity
respect chaos and possibility and song
and invite the elf of imagination
to bring her dreams to lunch
At the Amusement Park
Carol Coffee Reposa

Everything is slow and gold this afternoon.
My grandchild strolls from ride to ride
The grounds almost deserted.
Leaves trickle from old oaks
In sleepy currents, slow confetti
Floating round our feet in amber swirls.

Painted clowns gaze out from the carousel
Red smiles peeling
In the thin October light
While they revolve to tinny waltzes
Horses moving up and down
Their endless hills.

Nearby the Ferris wheel sits silent
Waiting for the children
In their noisy dozens
Who will race in after school
Push and crowd each other to get on
Shriek as they reach the top.

For not we own the place.
She settles on the roller coaster
Trots toward the waiting cars.
Attendants strap her in, pull the lever
Lock the gate.
The only passenger, she looks at me serenely

As the train begins to climb
But screams and grips the crossbar
With the first downhill
Louder, harder, with each turn
Her gold hair blown straight back
In a howl of fear and joy.

I decide that she’s too young for this
But now she wants to ride again, at once.
I think about Ulysses.

Poetry Therapy

Poets use poetry to deal with such issues as heroin/alcohol addiction, abandonment and sexual and emotional abuse. The following poets illustrate the use of writing to deal with the above issues.

Heroin/Alcohol Addiction
William Z. Saunders

I am a 32 yr. old poet in recovery from heroin addiction/alcoholism. I did my last shot of dope in April, 2006. I don’t write because I am an addict, nor did I become an addict because I write. In fact, I wasn’t a very productive person at all until I got some real “clean time.” It took a few years before I became well enough to start writing poems again; however, I journaled throughout the process, which helped my healing, and allowed me the opportunity to take the long, hard look at myself necessary to reach and maintain comfortable, emotional sobriety.

I wrote my first poem in 5th grade, which was published in the school newspaper. My grandaddy had just died and my parents split up, so I decided to write a poem. Poetry helped me deal with the pain and confusion. I came up with the title, and then I filled the lines with my version of what I saw and felt. What I do now, twenty years later, isn’t much different from what I was doing then. My experience is all that has changed. My poetry is personal observation and inspection of specific moments that have taken place in my life that I try to describe as best I can, so that I may better understand them and myself.

Sobriety is a challenging process—one that was initially slow-going. I didn’t know how to live without drugs, but I’ve found a solution that works for me. One day while riding the bus I realized that the logical progression would be for me to become a case worker, a sort of wounded healer, and I am now working toward my goal of helping others. My journey to sobriety hasn’t been without effort, but my life is better now than I could have imagined. I believe that life is a series of small miracles that take place every day right in front of our eyes, if we choose to see them.

The First Time I Heard VENOM: Black Metal
William Z. Saunders

I went to a special school in the spring term of eleventh grade. It was in a hospital. All the kids there were either pregnant, on drugs, or in a gang of some form or another. Some of the kids had to live there; others got to leave at 3 o’clock.

I was one of the latter. Part of me wishes that I could tell you that I was one of the wilder ones, but I wasn’t, so I won’t. A typical day was as follows. Every day began with intake. They (the shrinks) observed while we (the kids) interacted with one another for the first hour. The ones that were on meds got meds: then we split into two groups for therapy. After group we split up, so I decided to write a poem. Poetry helped me deal with the above issues. The following poets illustrate the use of writing to deal with the above issues.

*Carol Coffee Reposa earned her B.A. and M.A. in English at the University of Texas at Austin and has taken post-graduate courses at University of Texas at Austin, Trinity University (San Antonio), and the University of Texas at San Antonio. Her poems have appeared in Borderlands: Texas Poetry Review, The Formalist, Blue Mesa Review, San Jose Studies, Descant, Amarillo Bay, Context South, The Texas Observer, Concho River Review, Southwestern American Literature, and River Sedge, among others. She has two books of poetry, At the Border: Winter Lights and The Green Room, with a third manuscript, Facts of Life, in press. She was a finalist in The Malahat Review Long Poem Contest (1988), winner of the Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center Poetry contest (1991), and second prize winner of the Blue Unicorn Poetry Contest (1992). Twice nominated for the Pushcart Prize, she has also received two Fulbright/Hays Fellowships, the first for study in Russia (1995) and a second for research in Peru and Ecuador (1999). She recently retired from teaching English at San Antonio College.

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The rest of the afternoon we spent in different types of therapy and counseling sessions. After that, the ones that had to stay, stayed, and those of us that got to leave, got in the van. That van ride could be anywhere from one to three and a half hours long, depending on the rotation, the driver, and traffic conditions.

One day, D...., one of the therapists, explained to us that we should all bring some music to listen to in group the following morning. We didn’t have to take part if we didn’t want to, but we all agreed that we would. I brought my Walkman with me every day. I used to carry at least three tapes with me. I hated to be without music and the ability to tune everything out out out.

The next day when we got into group, D..... set the jambox out in the middle of the floor. We went in alphabetical order. The first girl’s name was C’est la vie. Her song was C’est la vie by: UB40

The second kid was a Mexican metal head. He was real quiet. He whispered something to D.....; she nodded, patted him on the knee, and left the room. She came back in a few minutes with an A.V. cart with one of those old Caliphone turntables on top. The thing was covered in dust. She plugged it in, and he pulled a copy of Venom’s *Black Metal* from a paper bag and put it on the record player. We made it through three songs before anybody knew it. No one could wipe the smile from his face. We were healed.
Poetry & Dreams

Poetry, Dreams and Interpretation

James Brandenburg

Background: Client J was sexually abused by her cousin from the time she was 11 years old until she was 16 years old. The cousin was more than 10 years older than J, and J had his child out of wedlock. She gave up her child for adoption and was reunited with him in 2007 when he was in his early thirties. She later married and was a victim of domestic violence. She had two children from her first marriage, remarried later, and divorced a second time. Her mother and her siblings blamed J for the abuse. J has had a difficult time with relationships. Her mother died in August 2007. Shortly after Christmas of 2010, J ended another romantic relationship with an abusive man. J has been in therapy with me for three years.

Dream: The dream takes place in a garage/shower house, (a building detached from the main house), and begins in the garage section that leads into the shower. My brother and cousin are there. My brother is sitting in a wooden chair (type known) to my left; he has his head down. He never looks up. He just sits there. I am wearing my school uniform. The uniform is blue and white gingham with squares all over it. He (the abuser) is wearing a white t-shirt with jeans. He has a prominent mole on his left cheek. He is taller than I am. I am little and short. He is looking down at me, and I say, “Why did you do those things to me?” It is very dark, and the only thing that is lit up is him. It is almost as if he is under a light, but there is no light. He is lit up. No smells or colors. He never responds. He has this confused look on his face, like he is frowning. He never answers. He never responds. The dream ends right there. End of dream.

Since 1978, J. has had this recurring dream, and it is a faithful reproduction of the actual event, which persisted in her dreams for 30 years. The dream repeats the actual trauma and is a classic trauma dream.

Second Dream: The second dream occurred in 2008, and begins after the following passages of the first dream: “He never responds. He has this confused look on his face, like he is frowning. He never answers. He never responds.” In (2008), my daughter appears in the dream from my right side. In the dream she is 20, and that is her real age. She is wearing black. Her dress has long black sleeves, and she has her hair pulled back tight. Her hair is black. I only see her profile because she pushes me away. She pushes me to the back of her. When she steps in front of me, my brother looks up, and my daughter says, “I will handle this.” End of dream.

Interpretation: The first dream was a recurring dream, which repeats the trauma, beginning when J was 11 years old. The second dream occurred in 2008 and points toward compensation because a new element is introduced. J had this second dream only one time. J’s daughter has stepped between J and her abuser and handles the situation. The fact that J’s daughter handles the situation results in J’s being able to deal with the situation herself. This second dream changes the character of the dream. The unconscious points toward a new element.

J had this recurring dream for 30 years. For 30 years, she was not able to integrate the contents of this dream, nor could she make conscious the contents of the dream. In a trauma dream, the dream tends to repeat elements of the trauma. Trauma dreams do not compensate. They are an abreaction of the trauma.

It is in the second dream when J’s daughter appears that the element of compensation becomes possible and after which J has a different reaction. The daughter comes in between the mother and the trauma. The daughter has what the mother lacks; what the daughter has makes change possible in her mother. There is a contrast between the mother and daughter, because the mother has not been able to stand up for herself. The mother is suffering, and the daughter’s entry indicates a change of attitude.

In the second dream, J’s daughter appears at the end of the same recurring dream that J had had for 30 years. That daughter appears from the right and signifies a connection with consciousness. Her daughter’s hair is black, and she is dressed in black. Hair is incredibly potent. Hair is associated with interior, involuntary fantasies, thoughts and longings. Hair tells us something about the state one’s head is in. One of the first ways we register transformation is by something we do to our hair, and hair has ever played a part in initiatory process and major transitions.

J’s daughter’s hair is pulled tight and signifies that she is in control of her actions. Black is experienced as darkness, where sight and orientation are not possible. The daughter’s black dress and black hair might indicate that she is coming out of the unconscious. Depression, destruction and death are associated with the dark side of black. J’s daughter comes out of blackness and thus, brings an unconscious element into consciousness. J’s daughter pushes J away. J’s daughter is the positive shadow because she has developed a stronger ego than her mother and has established healthy boundaries in her life. The daughter has insight into J’s abuse and orientation.

With black comes the new light—resurrection and possible rejuvenation. When the daughter steps in front of J, the brother looks up. The attitude of the shadow figure gets his attention. If J can adapt the right attitude, J can change her life. Her daughter says, “I will handle this.” By developing the right attitude, J is able to come to terms with her abuser and her sexual abuse. She, too, can handle her abuser and her sexual abuse.

This new element introduces the possibility of compensation. Dreams that compensate try to balance, make whole, and modify. This is a situation that J. could assimilate with a different attitude. It is noteworthy that J had this second dream only one time. After this second dream, J confronted her abuser, and that confrontation brought about a change. She felt freed and stopped being ashamed and stopped blaming herself.
The daughter appears as the compensatory element because a new component is brought in with something that does not have to do with the original trauma. The daughter is the new element to rectify the situation and to make things better. Working on the dream with me helped J understand that her daughter was her positive shadow. Because the daughter has insight into the abuse, the daughter is the positive shadow. Her ego is stronger and more well-developed than that of the mother. She has more maturity and is decisive. She has healthy boundaries underscored by her decisiveness and her determination to rectify the situation. J’s daughter did not encourage J to confront her abuser; however, she told her mother to do whatever she needed to do to heal. When J decided to confront her abuser, her daughter advised her not to do it alone.

At first, when J confronted her abuser, she wanted to ask him why he did what he did, but then she realized that he was sick. She decided to tell him how his abuse had affected her life and how the abuse had practically destroyed her life. When she confronted him, she felt bigger or almost as big as he was, and she no longer felt afraid. She confronted her abuser for the sake of her son, and she thought about her daughter as she confronted her abuser. After confronting her abuser, J was crying and screaming at her mother about how much she hated her. J was asking her mother why she did not intervene and help her. Ironically, J’s abuser thought he was on a date when he was meeting with her. The abuser had very little or no insight into what he had done to J.

There is a sense of contrast between J and her daughter. In the trauma dream which J had for 30 years, nothing changes. The trauma is repeated over and over again. In the second dream, J’s daughter confronts the abuser, and afterwards, J is able to confront the abuser herself; therefore, J changes her attitude. Because of her daughter’s appearance in the dream and because of J’s interaction with me, her therapist, J was able to stand up for herself. The daughter is the real agent of change. The daughter represents J’s inner figure, and that inner figure brings in what the dreamer is lacking—which is assertiveness and inner resolve.

CONFRONTING THE DEMON
Josie Mixon

An old bridge creaks
With the weight of my soul
It separates us from the past
The inferno below scorches
The details of my youth
My footsteps have been slow
In bringing me back to you
I am, coming to you
The heat has evaporated my tears
So don’t bother looking for any
The soles of my feet are blistered
As I travel this path once more
Slowly I have walked towards you
At times taking one step forward
Two long steps back
Pausing only

To pray for strength
While my faith disintegrates
In this hell I stand in
I am closer than I have ever been
Much closer than the dream I saw you in
The end is near
The time has come
Finally, finally
The end
Is mine!

HOW DARE YOU
Josie Mixon

How could you?
Why did you?
I ask myself
Over and over again
My dreams confront you
Begging you and pleading with you
You stare at me
As if I am still 13 and you a man
With a hunger for my youth
I will never see that child again
You took her from me!
The child who climbed the trees
To play, to hide, then to get away
The child who walked the railroad tracks
One foot in front of the other
Wanting to leave to never come back
How could you rape this child?
How could you claim her youth?
I want that little girl again
I want back what you took from me!
I want what is mine!
How dare you!
How dare you take her!
She’s mine!
I used to be her!
How dare you rape my youth!
My future!
Every door I open,
You’re there
Looking back at me
Still taking what is mine
30 years later, still here you are
I cross the street to get away from you
You’re already there
I close my eyes to not see you
My dreams won’t let me forget
You rearranged my destiny
I want to walk the tracks again
To climb the trees left waiting and fly my kite once more
I want to be that child again
The one you took from me
I’ll never have her back
Because of you
How dare you.

Voices de la Luna, 15 July 2011
Healing Through Art and Poetry

E.R.

I was physically and emotionally abused during my childhood and adolescence. Through painting and writing poetry, I let off steam and dealt with my emotions.

Stranger

E.R.

A look in the window reveals a peculiar stranger. Young, wise and passionate dark chocolates for eyes hair as black as night and frothy caramel covered skin reveal this person’s figure. Although young seems very beaten by tough times reveals a sadness in the eyes of this stranger. Scars reveal a hidden past yet I know nothing of this stranger. At a closer glance I see something familiar..... It’s a gold necklace My gold necklace. Slowly but surely I see the shadow of the person I once was.

Serenity

E.R.

A chill in the air gently kissing my face as the moonlight lights up the wooded space. Sweet bickering of the innocent creatures breaking the night's silent sky almost brings me to want to cry. The mountain air’s so soft and sweet enfolds me in a gentle bliss. While in the peace of my cabin in Tennessee’s Mountains I sit by the fire to see my serenity. My coffee all warm my blanket by my side holds nothing but precious memories. my serenity, my piece of heaven.

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Time

Marian Haddad*

I’ll tell you what—we are almost run over by time—a Faulknerian thing, perhaps. The tickling does not stop. Away, away the hours chime. And us, running frenzied about, as if we can beat the clock. But when we stop, somehow, to rest—or when the head no longer aches—words—again. It always happens like this. They save themselves up during the busy days—

When we make ourselves sit by the waters of a river, by the floating water sliding down—

When we sit awhile in this constant place of beginning—the night entering its expected hour—

It is then—that the words make their way out. Here they unfold. When the mind is quiet, and the river is not.

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*Marian Haddad, MFA, is a Pushcart-nominated poet, writer, manuscript and publishing consultant, private writing mentor, visiting writer, and creative workshop instructor. Her chapbook, Saturn Falling Down, was published at the request of Texas Public Radio in connection with their Hands-on Poetry workshops (2003). Her full-length collection, Somewhere between Mexico and a River Called Home (Pecan Grove Press, 2004) is approaching its fifth printing. Her new collection, exploring connection to place and the geography of home, was published by Pecan Grove Press in 2011 and is entitled Wildflower. Stone. The poem “Time” is taken from this collection.

Her poems, essays, reviews, and articles have been published in various literary journals and anthologies in the United States, Belgium, and in several Middle Eastern countries.

A National Endowment of the Humanities recipient, she engaged in graduate work in philosophy at the University of Notre Dame and studied The Prose Poem at Emerson College. She holds a BA in creative writing from the University of Texas at El Paso and an MFA from San Diego State University, where she was associate editor for Poetry International, vol. 3.

She has taught at Our Lady of the Lake University, Northwest Vista College, and St. Mary’s University. Her works in progress include a collection of essays about growing up Arab American in a Mexican American border town. She writes a blog for the San Antonio Express-News.
The following poems were written in poetry therapy groups at the Ingram Barnes and Noble Poetry Venue. Groups were run by Voices de la Luna editors.

**Impatience**  
*Maria Alonso*

I have longed and ached for the guidance and wisdom of the Inner Voice.  
My impatience and anxiety drowning out the solid softness echoing in the unheard silence.

---

**River View**  
*Maria Alonso*

I took the time to go to the River.  
To watch it, take it in and revel in its Water.  
Before the sun rose, I saw its stillness.

I saw the fallen leaves, colorful and dying mixed with small debris in a filmy glue where the ducks explored and swam through, around and out to the stillness of the fluid flow.

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**Each Step**  
*Peter Holland*

For each step I take  
I swallow hard against fear,  
every step taken into unknowable;  
I can guess what lies beyond,  
often my guesses are right,  
frequently they are wrong,  
rarely is it better than  
I had guessed it to be.

---

**Grabbing a Pen**  
*Allie Sumner*

Muscles quaking, pain flashing, spreading.  
Touch causing fiery pain.  
Light causing blinding pain.  
Sound causing booming headaches.  
Writing causing tremors.  
Poetry is serenity.

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**Untitled**  
*Tom E.*

Shades of gray  
Not black and white.  
Sure as day  
Follows night.

Pull to the left  
Pull to the right.

It’s stubbornness  
That makes them fight.  
Move to the high ground between.

Give compromise a chance.  
Find truth in the paradox  
To find your balance.

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**Discarded**  
*Jodi Lynne Ierien*

I hold in your secrets,  
Wrapping my pain around  
The sharp edges of  
Your saw-toothed hatred.

Each time you call me stupid,  
Tell me I am worthless,  
Say you never wanted me,  
Part of my self is eaten away,  
Becomes sawdust on the wind,  
That irritating bit trapped  
In my eye that triggers  
Tears which blur my world  
Into soft focus, blinding me  
To the beauty I have created  
From the scrap wood you  
Have chosen to discard.

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**Rivers**  
*Vivian Kearney*

At the river,  
the river of rests  
breezes rejuvenating  
these minutes blessed

By God who knows  
where all rivers flow  
and can sail our souls  
over all tests.
A mother is the Big Bang
That creative explosion birthing order from
Chaos, aligning stars that pull away from
Each other but then find attraction
From invisible arms and perfumed sheets,
Welcoming the new cradle
Endless expansion and contraction
The lungs of the strongest
Constellation, her scorpion,
Rising and falling
And rising.

A mother is the first fire
The earliest collision of hot elements
To melt sand into glass
Striking lightning wands down
Into beaches treasures promised
And delivered
Yes, the sun begs,
I must break again
Each day —
The life is all hers
She brought you here
Like an infant in a solar flare.

A mother is the Atlantic Ocean
Lost cities and golden kingdoms
Show like torches behind her eyes
That look everywhere
Wary, nervous with quick heart-tide;
Under moonless nights
Her skin is dark and deep,
Indigo and coal bleeds across her
But she calls the moon to wake
And crystals race madly below her eyes
Revealing her phenomenon
A surface soft and fluid you stand on.

A mother is a fault line
Two mosaic plates with their own memories
Grate against one another
Lovingly, violently, breaking into the other’s belly and becoming
that passion —
Here is the place of creation
Pushing mountain ranges into the skies
Cracking into molten reserves long
Thought cold and stone-still:
This line is a border, a place of destruction
That generates.

A mother is a wolf
Warm and with teeth like ice knives drooping from branches
Taiga dens hold
Her brood like the radius of a bonfire
In alpine winter, a sanctuary from the indifferent climates which
seek to eat
The young – she with her lips peeled back and frosted blood on
her jowls, neck-hairs
Raised and eyes ready
That is the face of nurture
She returns to the den tired, steam-cloaked,
Successful in her pact.

A mother is a house
Spaces filled and emptied, things moved
And adorned, the place of all places to be
When none other feels right
The shelter, ceilings pressed over us by
The hands of gods
Lifetimes stacked like layers of earth
Bearing the gardens
Open and prosperous in love is all
The locus of gravity which
No moving thing can escape:
The inevitable drift home.

Daughter of Eris, you who starts as a little thing that
grows into a relentless thing that fades into thin air:
why have you brought me here if you meant to leave
by first light? How could you rouse me from sleep and
tempt me into the night with a symphony of shattered
glass and bodies in strife if you would not last? How
could you compel me toward this eternal war of attrition
only to leave me holding the bag? I ache to be the night
we dreamt of church and magistrate then woke to paint
our vision in bathtub napalm. The night we built a funeral
pyre of Crown Vics. The night we found love drowned in
tear gas. The night we saw order in chaos. The night we
stalked the streets like ghosts in a landscape.
More Editors’ Poems

The Lighthouse*
Mo Saidi

The miracle of love needs no explanation it is in your flesh and bones, skin and joints it fills your chest, flows in your heart circulates in your body, exhilarates your mind.

When you kiss your beloved inhale her warm breath, absorb the energy that radiates between your beings your souls celebrate unity, the passion of love.

Wander through valleys and over hills crawl, climb up the highest mountain drink from the pristine spring that flows from the cracks of stones

barter your peace to be in love even for a day longing gravitates you to your beloved. Seek love’s kingdom, succumb to the spell of her gaze, her gleaming eyes, her scent.

The lighthouse of love blinks incessantly swim the treacherous waters in quest of love its magic will pull you to the shore where your beloved awaits with open arms.

*from “The Mansion of My Childhood”

Untitled
Josie Mixon

The hope for complete sentences beginning and ending with “you” was your way of adding salt to the wound.

Dad held the spool of string as my bright orange kite pierced the sky over the freshly harvested field. Mother severed the string and my kite flew away.

We watched the man on the moon as he sat within a snowglobe in the dark, South Texas sky. Mother shook it and broke it! The water spilt like blood from my broken heart. The snow became the heavy metal wall that neither one of us ever took down

Chopsticks
Debra Peña

At age six, convinced I was Chinese all I wanted was a pair of chopsticks. Daily, I’d question “What is her name, the Chinese mother, who left me here with you?”

Mother, curt and worn, snapped “Stop this silliness! You are not Chinese—you are just a little girl. Nothing more.”

Her words accompanied me while I played outside with the red rooster living behind our crooked house of alter-identities, dreaming chopsticks, red with fancy gold letters, wishing I were eating rice with Ma-ling who loved me.

Little did I know that in China, I too was a girl and nothing more, a small package delivered to the wrong family.

Traveling Light
Lou Taylor

Travel light
Return to nature
Purge possessions

Lower the carbon footprint
Live simply
Within your means

Live simply so others
May simply live

Joyless admonitions

You are the traveling light
Created from nothing
You are star dust
**The Promise**
*Carmen Tafolla*

Señora Luz María Monreal leans over the small rock grotto in her front yard. She pours the coffee can of water onto the red roses growing there, touches them with fingers that have outlived trees and walls and five of her six siblings. She raises her eyes to the skies filled with fat greying clouds, and wipes her hands on the patched apron. Ninety-six at last birthday, and her baby sister only eighty-one. She crosses herself and whispers, “Gracias.”

She is sure the prayers to the Virgin’s grotto are what have kept her here. What rescued, too, her five-year-old from constant asthma attacks that disappeared once the grotto was built. She waters the roses in summer, lays artificial flowers there in winter, whispers her prayers.

“Mamá,” the grey-haired son, now 70, calls out, “Come inside before the rains hit, before you get soaked.” She follows, with one glance back, one last whispered phrase at the Virgencita. The son is protective but not too fearful of the rain. He knows her strength. Knows she raised the six younger siblings when she was just a teen and all of them alone. Cared for them till they were grown, vowed never to leave them unprotected, watched them into death, and perhaps beyond. He knows she will not leave this life as long as even one of them is here.

He holds the screen door open, tunes the radio back to her favorite—polkitas, absorbs her quiet grace that fills the house. After she is settled on her couch, he wanders out to the grotto, spellbound by its endurance, so much like his mother’s. He stares, wonders, doubts.

Then his lips part, and for the first time, pray. The greatest test of meaning, he knows, is still ahead. Inside his head still rings the phone, the call, just minutes fresh, piercing all his senses. The last orphaned sibling now critical, hospitalized. The thread of his own loss hangs thinly. He pleads with every breath from lungs no longer asthmatic, for someone’s baby sister. He knows his mother’s promise did not come lightly. He knows also that it will not leave alone.

*Sierra Vista is often referred to as “The Hummingbird Capital of the U.S.” The mild climate and diverse habitats make southeastern Arizona a major hot spot for rare and unusual species of birds.*

**The Hummingbird Capital of the U.S.*
*Valerie Martin Bailey*

In June 2008, I took a trip with my friend to the national poetry convention in Utah. On the way, we stopped in Southeast Arizona at my friend’s father’s home in the mountains around Sierra Vista and Ramsey Canyon, the hummingbird capital of the United States.

They have three feeders for the hummingbirds, and they fill them several times a day to accommodate the crowd of birds. There is a small tree by the back porch that is just filled with hummingbirds. They fill the branches the way grackles do here in San Antonio. The leaves of the tree tremble with the motion of the birds. There are hundreds of hummingbirds in the tree and they come to the feeders in waves... sometimes only a few and other times, they come in droves and flit and dart past your face, their wings brushing your hair and cheeks. They don’t seem to have any fear at all of humans. The air is filled with the sound of their zooming... their overwhelming number bring Alfred Hitchcock’s *The Birds* to mind. Except these birds are not vicious, they are adorable and very busy—intent on feeding.

I was told if I would stand very still and hold my finger near the feeder that sooner or later a bird would perch on my finger while feeding. I got up at 5:30 am to stand on the porch by the feeders. I tried to hold my finger very still. My arms got very tired, but I was determined to have a hummingbird perch on my finger, and sure enough several times, one of the tiny creatures landed on my finger, and I could see them up close and feel their tiny bodies throbbing. I could feel the vibration through their feet into my finger. It was awesome. I have never experienced anything so exhilarating as the sensation created by those tiny feet gripping my finger. I could see their little throats pulse as they swallowed the nectar, and I could see their alert, miniscule eyes. It was the experience of a lifetime. I think I would have stood there for the rest of my days with the hummingbirds, but we had to go on and visit many other beautiful spots on the way to Utah. The canyons, deserts, and mountains were amazing and inspiring, but the hummingbirds were incredible. Nothing else compared with the up close and personal encounter with the hummingbirds.

As young children grow, mature, and acquire new skills they go through specific stages of development in four areas: physical, cognitive and language, social, and emotional. Physical development includes gaining control over the small muscles used to pick up and hold things and building the large muscles used to walk or throw a ball. Cognitive and language development includes the thinking and reasoning skills used to solve problems and the acquisition of language. Social development involves learning to develop relationships and get along with other children and adults. Emotional development is closely tied to social development and leads to a sense of identity and self-esteem.

Language skills are also closely tied to social and emotional development. Children use language skills to play, make friends, express feelings, and develop ties to family members and others. Children first learn to listen and speak, then use these and other skills to explore reading and writing. Children who have many opportunities to listen and speak tend to become skilled readers and writers. Children who can put their ideas in writing become better readers. Children who are read to often, learn to love reading and become better listeners, speakers, and writers.
Rain had delayed building a fire under her wash pot until the snow stopped. When she looked outside she saw a small band of Indians at the springs. Rain had been captured by Comanches when a child and adopted by a squaw whose own daughter had died of a fever because the village was pursued by soldiers and they couldn’t stop to cool the baby in the shade or bathe her in the creek. Rain had fallen in love and married a brave. When her son was born she knew her heart would be Indian forever.

Rain saw mostly squaws with a few old men and fewer scrawny, shivering children, the buzzard-bait horse their commissary. The wild kids, an amorphous group of varying ages with parents too sick, too defeated by brutal work conditions and cruel nature to care where their children were or what they were doing, saw them almost as soon as Rain. The wild kids ran to tell everyone.

When Marshal Jade heard the wild kids and saw armed citizens, everyone in the settlement who was able to hobble, hurrying to the roundhouse, he raced his horse through them to Rain, his wife, who was already with the Indians. The Indians showed no weapons but huddled together to share the little warmth provided by their frail bodies held together by parasites. Their freedom gone, they were trying to get to Indian Territory where they would be allowed to live.

*The Indians told Rain that buffalo soldiers and palefaces had burned their villages, killed their husbands and sons, killed their horses and dogs, took their sisters and daughters. Only a few old men, women, girls and boys who had hidden or run away had survived and they were freezing. “Build a fire,” Rain told Jade. “I’m going to make biscuits, hoecakes, gravy and anything else I can find.”

Instead of doing as Rain instructed, Jade, a faded Indian killer that Indians called “paleface with hell in his neck,” stationed himself between the Indians and the whites in the roundhouse. The last time the Indians had appeared at the springs the whites had repulsed them with help from cowboys who had been trailing the Indians, but not before the Indians had damaged the church house and set fire to the house of a lunger, and the canvas walls of the saloon. This time Jade hoped to prevent shooting from the audience to gawk at the savages, talk about their smell, the sorry condition of the horse they had, how dirty they were.

“Beggars,” the palefaces complained. “Why don’t they work like we do?”

A few cowboys came to see the red devils. “Look at them now,” they crowed. “They’ve gone to stealing the poorest horses they can find.” One of them yelled at the children. “Hey kid, where’s your pa? I think I planted him at Buckhorn Draw.” Others called out to the squaws. “Where are all your men? You*** so ugly they all left?” The taunting became so savage that the store keepers looked for someone to do something. Most of their wives left.

The audience remained as Wilbur talked to the Indians with help from Rain. He promised to start a school for them. He told them about Moses who freed the Hebrews from slavery in Egypt, and Jesus who freed men from their sins. “God sent Jesus to be killed for our sins, yours and ours.”

None of the Christians in the roundhouse, everyone in the settlement who was able to walk or ride there, wanted to feed Indians. “We don’t want them here,” one said. “If we give them food we’ll never be rid of them.”

“They’re going to Indian Territory but they can’t get there on empty stomachs,” Wilbur explained.

“That’s blackmail,” they complained. “We can’t go back to our homes until they leave, and they won’t leave until we feed them. They already attacked us once, tried to burn down the settlement. What more reason do we need to kill them all?”

Wilbur rode back to Jade to report. “I bought what food I could,” he said. Only the lure of money persuaded Christians to sell food for Indians.

Jade dug into his pockets and gave the parson the money he had. “If you see my deputies, tell them to report to Rain and bring their shotguns.”

Rain told the first deputy to butcher one of her pigs. “A calf would be better,” Rain said, but not even the law dared kill a branded calf. Rain fried the meat and told the deputy to take the liver and heart to the Indians knowing they preferred it raw.

Jade sent the other deputy to get Pancho and Mick. No one knew their legal names but identified them by prejudice. Mick brought another pig and eggs. Pancho offered a mutton and eggs. Both came with pails of milk.

By midmorning the Indians had food and an audience of fully armed men and the wild kids who watched hungrily as the redskins filled their bellies. By noon most of the settlement was in the audience to gawk at the savages, talk about their smell, their shotguns.

The audience remained as Wilbur talked to the Indians with help from Rain. He promised to start a school for them. He told them about Moses who freed the Hebrews from slavery in Egypt, and Jesus who freed men from their sins.

“Was Moses Egyptian?” they asked.

“No, he was from the Hebrew tribe.”

“Was Jesus a paleface?”

“No, like Moses he was a Jew.”

“Then we must find an Indian Moses to free us,” the grandfathers said.

The audience grumbled threats and one by one left the meeting, the entertainment over, replaced by politics. Jade stayed. “An Indian could not set Indians free,” Wilbur warned. “That chief would likely be killed.”

“Was Moses killed?”

“No,” the parson said. “But Jesus was. He died for your sins.”

“Then we should seek the God of Moses.”

“It’s the same God. God protected Moses.”

“Why didn’t God protect Jesus?”

“God sent Jesus to be killed for our sins, yours and ours.”

Prose & Fiction

Indians at the Springs

Robert Flynn
“Can Jesus save us from the soldiers, from the Rangers?”
“Not at this time,” Wilbur confessed. “The Hebrews were in Egypt for many moons before God turned Pharaoh’s heart.”
“Can Jesus turn palefaces’s heart?”
“Yes,” Wilbur said. “Already he has turned some white men’s hearts but they are far, far from here.”
“Will we find such white men in Indian territory?”
“You will find a few,” Wilbur said. “You will find more white men who have turned their hearts to coins. There are false gods that do not free people but enslave them,” he said. “The land, the sky, the water, the buffalo are not gods. They are things made by God.”
“Do palefaces kill buffalo because buffalo are false gods?”
“It is a sin to destroy for profit what others need for survival.”
“Are guns false gods?” the Indians asked.
“Guns, arrows, spears, clubs, knives, rocks that one relies on for safety are false gods. There is no safety in this life for whites or Indians. The only safety we have is our faith in God.”
“Didn’t Jesus have faith in God?”
“Yes,” Wilbur said. “Jesus believed in God. Jesus gave up safety in order to give new life to men.”
“Where is this new life?” they asked. “Where can we find it?”
“You have to find it in your heart. You can’t find it in this world until Jesus’ followers act like Jesus.”
“Will you be our Moses and deliver us?” they asked.
“I will start with my people to teach them love and justice,” Wilbur promised. He rode over the trail again and again until the Indians’ faces were clouded with doubt when he and Rain left. Wilbur had prayed so long for a chance to preach to the Indians but the meeting was a disaster.*****
“I didn’t know what to tell them,” Wilbur told Jade. “God must first set Christians free from greed and vengeance. Until we see the harm we are doing to others made in God’s image there will be no peace.”
Wilbur saw no way that he could lead the Indians to freedom and equality through the Gospel. When he talked to the ranchers, preached in the settlement they stopped their ears and hardened their hearts. He would have to go farther from the Indians, farther from settlers who demanded free land as the Indians did, except the Indians wanted it free for all. Farther until he reached Washington, D.C., not as a parson but as a representative of white people who tried to represent all people.
And God had revealed to him that doing that would be the temptation to personal glory and private power that could lead to his destruction.
Late that night Rain took the buffalo robe she had made from the hide her Indian son had given her and placed it on the shoulders of the oldest grandmother who gathered it to herself like a vestment. She looked up at Rain with eyes the color of clouds trying to see the Indian in her.
The Indians spent the night in the snow and by first light they were gone, leaving nothing but filth in the snow and something to talk about for weeks afterwards.
It was the last chapter of their story.*****Victims of the slow, subtle torture of the palefaces.

*This was not a single incident but happened repeatedly. “Took their sisters and daughters” means raped them, maybe murdered them, maybe sold them as prostitutes. It was not against the law to rape Indians.

**Mutton is meat from a sheep. A mutton is a sheep on the hoof to be butchered.

***The cowboys can’t read or write and don’t always speak proper English.

****“rode over the trail” is colloquial meaning “told the same story or explained the same thing the same way again and again.” They have never left the springs.

*****the meeting was a disaster because he didn’t convince anyone of them. but left them confused.

******the last chapter of their story because they are headed for a reservation if they can get there alive. Their lives as Indians are over. There is no way to resurrect it.

The Gandy Dancers

Dave Northrup

“Awright, Tim, gimme me that tie plate here.”

Eddie Geiger’s voice rumbled in the dappled morning air like the roll of distant thunder on a still summer’s night. The grey canvas overall he wore would have hidden the limbs of lesser men, but on Eddie great slabs of muscle outlined themselves underneath the cloth covering his forearms, thighs, and upper back. His left foot was braced against a railroad tie, the right thrust behind him while his hands were raised above his head and wrapped about the end of a long steel bar levered underneath a section of rail.

Tim, the black man, lithe and agile, danced up to the track and deftly stepped between the ties. At waist level he held a flat piece of steel, its weight dragging his arms straight down and forcing him to bend his knees so that he stood bow-legged.

“Yes, suh,” said Tim, his voice tight with the strain of his burden. “That’s right, that’s right,” rumbled Eddie, his face a catalog of contradictions colored by the exertion of pulling down on the bar. Veins bulged, coursing like great pink snakes along his neck. Above his upper lip the once sharp edges of a pencil-line mustache had begun to blur into the indistinct smudge of several days’ growth of beard that shadowed his cheeks. Eddie’s forehead was smooth, the brow of a young man of not more than thirty years, but his eyes had that hunted, vulnerable look that often comes with age.

Tim Tibeau, broad-shouldered, narrow-hipped, wore a dark knit cap pulled down over the tips of his small ears. His eyes were large, the upper lids slanting down a bit at the outer corners, giving them a guarded look. Tim’s face was the color of coffee grounds and small dark scars pockmarked the skin over his prominent cheekbones. Tibeau’s history was written in his face and in his movement: he had been an amateur boxer before signing on with the New York Central track gang after the war.

Eddie grunted and cursed, yet the rail remained motionless at his feet.

“Where th’ hell is Bernie?” he thundered.

“Hold on, big man, here I come,” a sing-song tenor floated above the crunch of jackboots on gravel.

“Bernie, grab th’ end of th’ pinch bar so’s Tim can get th’ tie plate under,” barked Eddie as he raised the lever over his head.

Bernie Andrulis, the tallest and thinnest of the three gandy dancers, reached above Eddie and grasped the end of the bar. For an instant the two men seemed suspended like giant bats; the skirt of Bernie’s great-coat spread out from his legs like half folded...
wings. Slowly, they pulled down on the lever, and the end of the rail began to rise above the tie. Tim, squatting low, knew just when to pitch forward, letting the weight of his burden carry the tie plate under the end of the rail. His companions held on to the pinch bar as the weight of the rail carried them both upright, their arms slowly ascending once again above their heads. When the end of the rail came to rest on the tie plate, they let go of the bar and Eddie turned to face Bernie.

“Where th’ hell yuh been? Me and Tim been bustin’ ar asses fer twenty minutes ta fit this plate.” His voice was tight with anger and hurt.

Bernie raised his sparsely bearded chin. The reddish-blond hair barely covered his jaws, as though he’d taken tufts of pig’s bristle and glued them randomly to his skin. A blush began to cover Bernie’s neck. It spread up over his cheeks and across the thin bridge of the sharp beak of his nose, making his face a kaleidoscope of pink and red blotches. He swallowed, and his adam’s apple, sharp pointed, worked up and down.

“I was in th’ tool house checkin’ spikes.” The words, slowly uttered, had the quality of being shouted out, defiant, more a challenge to fight than an explanation.

“More like playin’ with yer spike, than countin’ New York Central’s,” smirked Tim.

Bernie clenched his fists and turned. He took a step toward Tim. Seen in profile, Bernie’s face lost its incongruity of color curving upwards gave the impression of a goat.

“Uh, oh. Uh, oh,” laughed Tim, his eyes going wide. “C’mon,” he called out. “C’mon an try ta git a piece of the best boxer in th’ Mohawk Valley.” He danced a bit from side to side, his fists pointing downwards, pumping at the air.

“That was nineteen-forty, this’s forty-eight,” Bernie shot back, angry and hurt.

“Ah’m goin’ back to th’ house an’ git a track wrench,” said Eddie as he moved off quickly in the direction from which Bernie had just come.

Bernie flicked his tongue between his lips and glanced at Tim.

“Ah sure hope he don’t make no mistakes that’ll get my ass hurt.”

“When then,” said Tim, rousing himself, “maybe yah just better watch your ass today.”

The two men stared at each other.

“Don’t get uppity with me. Ah like my fun, but at least Ah know when and where to do it so’s Ah don’t kill myself and maybe somebody else into th’ bargain.”

“Well then,” said Tim.

Eddie stepped up to the sliding door of the toolhouse and paused, turning to look across the river. The sun had risen high enough to mark the four black smoke stacks of the Adirondack Power and Light generating station on the south-side of the Mohawk with brilliant white lines along the edges where they curved away from his sight. Memory flashed the ruins of Koblenz, Germany before his eyes.

Spires and stacks, their outlines gilded by the rising sun, loomed above the brown rubble. Eddie felt again the weight of the BAR he held at his waist. Slowly he walked forward, swinging the barrel from side to side. He saw the sharp-faced girl with dark eyes standing before the black doorway. Eddie raised his hand toward the smoke stacks, and motioned for the girl to get back inside the ruined building. But she didn’t move. She stood holding him in her dark doe eyes. She was his own age, he thought. Her meager shoulders were wrapped in a tattered black shawl which left her pale, blue-veined arms bare below the elbows. She held her hands clasped above the waist of the dirt-encrusted skirt that was long and broad and hid her feet. The girl was so thin, and the fabric of the garment so thick, that it did not show the usual folds and creases of the body beneath. Indeed, it was as though the skirt itself held the girl erect.

Holding him with those dark eyes, she bent forward at the waist grabbing the hem of her skirt with both hands. Slowly she straightened up. Eddie saw again her bare legs so beautiful and white, soft and smooth against all the pocked and fractured stone. Then he saw the glint of metal between her legs, and Eddie Geiger, without a second’s hesitation, leaned forward into the recoil which he knew was coming. He unloaded maybe half the magazine from the BAR into both of them there in the doorway. He heard the ragged echoing thunder of the gun and he saw the girl tumbling backwards atop the German’s shoulders, those beautiful
him. Then he lay motionless between the rails. Bernie leapt the
he hung for an instant before the ground rose suddenly to meet
jaw, taking all his breath with it, propelling him into the air where
he felt the gut-punch hit him high, just under the ribs. The impact
ments were slow and clumsy. His gloved hand wedged into the
square foot. Eddie grabbed at the handle, pulling the tamper close
to his side in an attempt to swing it over the rail. But his move

Deep creases knitted his brow. His eyes took in his companions

Suddenly conscious of his responsibilities as boss of the track
gang, Eddie Geiger, throwing his shoulders back, looked up.

"Gimme the god-damn tamper!"

"Ahm' th' foreman! Foreman makes sure th' job's done right!
"Lemme do it, boss," Tim said quietly.

"Whyn't ya let me turn in th' time book and git th' pay, boss?"
"Sure," grunted Eddie. He sat forward, grasping the back of
lower half of the door. Casey, the paymaster, a slight, narrow-
overhang of the station's roof. He slapped the thin purse-sized
strode toward a half-open dutch door shaded beneath the broad
entrance to the station.

"Gang boss is in th' truck," he said evenly, gesturing vaguely
"Wait. Ah forgot ta lock th' god-damn rocker arm," he called
With Tim holding him up, Eddie lumbered forward. His head
was bent down and his eyes took in only the ties and rails over
which he slowly picked his way. With each step a dull pain pulsed
deep within Eddie's chest, and when he mounted the low steps to
the crew cab of the truck and started to swing onto the seat behind
the driver, an agony tore at his lungs bringing before his eyes a
vision of the black doorway in Koblenz.

Tim settled into the driver's seat. Bernie turned toward the
tracks.

"Wait. Ah forgot ta lock th' god-damn rocker arm," he called
back over his shoulder as he ran off in the direction of the handcar.
"Hold on, boss, we getcha ta th' hospital in Amsterdam."
"Ya take me th' pay office, first," Eddie said in a high, tight
voice.

The truck's door swung wide, and Bernie jumped up onto
the passenger's seat. Tim gunned the engine, and the truck lurched
along the narrow dirt road leading to Route Five.

At the corner of Main and Bridge Streets, Tim swung the truck
to the left, toward the train station. Bernie's head snapped toward
him.

"Boss says we need ta git ar pay first."
Tim kept his eyes forward, studying the traffic swarming about
the entrance to the station.

"Why'n't ya let me turn in th' time book and git th' pay, boss?"
"Sure," grunted Eddie. He sat forward, grasping the back of
the driver's seat, his eyes shut against the pain. Beads of sweat
glistened on his forehead.

Tim brought the truck up next to the side of the station far-
thest from the passenger entrance. Bernie hopped from the cab,
his coat tails sweeping behind him. In the bright noonday sun he
strode toward a half-open dutch door shaded beneath the broad
overhang of the station’s roof. He slapped the thin purse-sized
paperbound time book down on the narrow shelf of the closed
lower half of the door. Casey, the paymaster, a slight, narrow-
shouldered fellow in a crisply pressed white shirt and perfectly
knotted, dark tie, looked up at the disheveled gandy dancer tower-
ing in front of him and then down at the book. His voice, thin and
reedy, seemed to float up toward Bernie.

"Eh? Gang boss supposed ta present th' timebook fer pay, Andrulius," he piped out.

His face a solemn mask of unconcern, Bernie stared down at
the little man.

"Gang boss is in th’ truck," he said evenly, gesturing vaguely
in back of him.

Casey remained silent, head down, the thumb and forefinger
of his right hand slowly caressing a dogeared corner of the time-
book. It seemed to Bernie that the paymaster was prepared to
wait all day for an answer that would let him hand over the pay

white legs kicking at the air. The landser’s helmet flew off into the
pink and grey cloud that enveloped the doorway.

Eddie Geiger shouldered the sliding door to one side and en-
tered the toolshed. In front of him sat a massive work-bench, a
large toolbox reposing on its bottom shelf. He strode over to the
bench and bending low, grabbed the box by the side-handles and
swung it up onto the top. Across the lid of the box was embossed
in fat, authoritative letters, The Gandy Tool Manufacturing
Company, Chicago, Illinois.

Quickly unlocking the padlock of the chest and raising the lid,
he brushed aside a piece of dirty canvas which covered a large
canteen. He took gulp after gulp until the canteen grew light in his
hands and the hot breath of the rye boiled out his nose, numbing
his tongue and biting at the back of his throat. Then he took care
to wrap the canvas sheet securely about the canteen and slowly
placed it back in the chest. He knelt before the bench, sliding the
tool box back on its shelf.

Eddie emerged from the toolhouse and looked down the tracks.
In the distance Tim and Bernie appeared small, insignificant fig-
ures. The big man lifted his gaze skyward. To the west, he saw the
sunlight shining brightly on the copper-wrapped ropes hanging
below the signal stand that spanned the tracks at Cranesville. The
ropes seemed like red bars placed across the clear blue expanse
of the sky. He turned and stepped off in the direction of Tim and
Bernie.

The gandy dancers worked slowly. Tim’s every movement was
a study in deliberation as every now and then he cast a guarded
look in Eddie’s direction. Bernie’s face was a mask of indiffer-
ence turned away from his companions. Eddie, stupid with the
peace he’d found in the tool house, stood stiff-legged keeping
silent watch over them.

Eddie emerged from the toolhouse and looked down the tracks.
Bernie strode over to the closed door of the station building.
Beads of sweat glistened on his forehead.

"Wait. Ah forgot ta lock th' god-damn rocker arm," he called
back over his shoulder as he ran off in the direction of the handcar.
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wait all day for an answer that would let him hand over the pay
The Marchers: A Novel
Mo H Saidi

Chapter Seven
It was late in the night when Cyrus entered Maryam’s house

It was late in the night when Cyrus entered Maryam’s house. Maryam and Habib, who had left Parviz’s party shortly after dinner, had already retired to their bedroom. The lights in the hall were dim. The living room was dark. Cyrus returned to his room, but feeling restless, he stuffed two pillows behind his back, pulled out a book and read awhile. Street noise was easily crossing the thin window and continued to interrupt him. He got up and drew the heavy curtains to minimize the noise of the street traffic. He sat on the edge of the bed, trying to make sense of the events of the past few days.

Bahram’s enthusiastic accounts of the anti-Shah student movement brought past memories to the surface: the marchers in the streets, their clashes with the Shah’s police, their bloody faces, the torn banners, bullets piercing bodies, fatally wounding students, the fleeing demonstrators, the narrow alleys. Bahram’s youthful idealism. His fearless mindset. And the chess game earlier tonight with Reza’s bold endgame moves. The trap and the checkmate.

Thinking about the chess game brought back memories of his own student days, when he and Tooraj had participated in frequent anti-Shah demonstrations, the particularly dangerous one, one day in 1963 when the game of chess had played a critical role in determining his fate, his ability to complete his medical education.

It had been close to the end of the academic year at Tehran Medical School. The classes had ended and students were spending most of their time either in the laboratories or in the libraries practicing or studying for final examinations. Yet for some politically active students, politics was also a good part of their daily agenda. These activists would spend every available break between the review sessions or even take time away from their studies to congregate in the halls, in the parks, and in the streets to debate political issues.

The Shah had conducted another mock election during that politically ominous spring of 1963. Everybody knew even the registered candidates had been pre-selected, and the election was just a sham, so popular interest in the election was nonexistent. As expected, the Shah’s election officials had produced millions of fake votes, rigged the ballot boxes, and the next morning proceeded to announce the successful election of all of the Shah’s candidates to the Iranian Majlis. Since no opposition candidates had been allowed to appear on the ballot, none were elected. In some communities the vote count exceeded the number of the eligible voters, and some candidates won by a ludicrous 105% or more.

That spring the people’s distrust in their government turned into anger, frustration into rage. Tehran was engulfed in daily demonstrations. Workers and clergy joined students and anti-Shah intellectuals and marched in the streets demanding a new prime minister and a new government. The Shah himself was not their actual target; they merely wanted more freedom in...
the country: authentic elections, a free press, and the release of political prisoners. For many days they occupied the squares and forced the shut-down of city services. The secular leaders opposing the Shah’s regime demanded a new election.

But in the midst of all this political turmoil Ayatollah Khomeini, the newly crowned Mojtahed, the leader of more than 120 million Shiite Moslems living in the Middle East and beyond, raised the bar. A recognized clergyman with radical political views, Khomeini demanded the abdication of the Shah. For his courageous position the Ayatollah became an inspiration for many who saw the Shah as the crux of the problem and the downfall of the monarchy in Iran as the final solution to the political impasse. Khomeini was a powerful voice for devoted and practicing Shiites in Iran. He lived in the holy city of Qum where Fatemeh, the Prophet Mohammad’s daughter, was buried and where the largest theological school of the Shiite sect is located. He did not believe in separation of state and religion and promulgated the notion of a democratic Islamic system of government for Iran in all of his sermons, although he cleverly avoided direct references to the implementation of strict Sharia law in Iranian society. During one of his sermons in spring of 1963, Khomeini condemned the Shah and called for a new system of government, dissolution of the Majlis, a new and free election, freedom of the press, and freedom of speech for Iranians. But he also demanded that the government observe the Islamic code. None of his secular supporters took this part of his speech seriously. They imprudently thought the fall of the shah’s regime would bring democracy, and people would choose a secular government and oblige Khomeini to reside in Qum and focus on his religious duties, not politics. Yet that sermon was taped and widely distributed among his followers as well as other political opponents of the Shah.

During these turbulent times there were two distinct political camps in Tehran opposing the shah’s rule: the secular camp of students, intellectuals, teachers, and workers organized and led by the Iranian National Front; and the religious camp of the clergy, under the helm of Khomeini. Initially, the Nationalists did not call for the abdication of the Shah; they only demanded the reinstatement of the constitutional monarchy as declared during the 1906 Constitutional Revolution. The Shah and his advisers were quick to exploit any major division in the anti-Shah movement; they had succeeded thus far to divide and govern, to repress the most effective group and to ignore the Ayatollah, who was becoming the Shah’s ever-present and stubborn enemy, a true archenemy. Meanwhile these two diverse groups of opponents against the Shah staged daily marches in major cities and many towns. The frequent strikes closed factories, railroads, schools, and bazaars. These political rallies were held despite a severe crackdown by the government forces, but the largest and most effective ones took place in Tehran, in front of the main bazaar, which was a stronghold of the Khomeini camp.

For several days the police had beaten the student marchers and forced them off the streets and back onto the campus of the university. But one day the demonstration in front of the Tehran bazaar became a bloody clash, a war between the Shah’s military might and the stubborn supporters of Khomeini. This was the first battle in a long and unrelenting war that would last until February 1979. The rally turned into a street battle when armed police and soldiers attacked the demonstrators, injured hundreds, and fatally shot many of them in hopes of quelling the unrest.

The demonstrators then barricaded sections of downtown Tehran around the bazaar, occupied nearby police stations, and appropriated guns and ammunition. They carried the flag of Iran and mounted large pictures of Dr. Mosadegh and Ayatollah Khomeini above their barricade. The bazaar became the bulwark of the anti-shah movement and the place that held off the Shah’s forces. News of their valiant resistance against the soldiers spread like wildfire and produced excitement in the city, encouraging columns of supporters from other corners of Tehran to move toward the bazaar.

The battle raged on for three days. Thoroughly shaken by the extent of the unrest, the Shah ultimately called upon his elite military units, equipped with machine-guns, artillery, armored vehicles, and tanks to join the fray. What ensued was a bloody massacre of the demonstrators. Eventually, the Shah prevailed in successfully crushing another serious threat to his dynasty. But the die was cast; the failed uprising had kindled a deeper determination in the Khomeini camp, and for that matter in other opposition groups.

On that fateful day, the third and last day of the uprising, Cyrus and Tooraj had marched with their fellow students from Tehran University towards the bazaar enthusiastically shouting anti-Shah slogans. Like thousands of other students, Cyrus was full of revolutionary fervor and was excited to observe the recent successes of opposition groups. Like many students, he was drawn into the struggle for democratic reforms and followed the commands of the Iranian National Front; meanwhile he remained completely ignorant of Khomeini’s goals, which included the eventual takeover of the anti-Shah movement and ultimately the creation of an Islamic Republic in Iran.

The ominous clouds moved in, darkened the heavens
The streets were filled with women in veils
Mullahs planted religious police
Clandestine group: the Revolutionary Islamic Guard
Planned massacre of the intellectuals
Snipers in the roofs

Chapter Eight
In the office of the local revolutionary guard

In the office of the local revolutionary guard, a young woman cowers in a corner while the chief who has a thick beard and unkempt blotchy hair topped off by a military cap listens attentively to his comrades’ report: “We brought this girl in for her unchaste clothing. She says she has read the official moral instructions, but look at her; she looks like a whore, her hair is not completely covered, her elbows and arms are blatantly visible, her skirt barely reaches her knees, her stockings are thin and light green instead of thick and dark, and when we confiscated her purse we found a man’s photograph inside.”

The revolutionary chief rises from his chair and walks threateningly close to the young woman. “What’s your real name?” He asked.

“I have only one. Shirin.”

“Are you married, woman?”

“No, not yet.”

“Who is the guy?”

“He is my friend.”
He slaps her in the face and shouts, “You are a whore.”

“You need to apologize, sir.”

“Why are you carrying a stranger’s photo in your purse?”

“I told you, he is my friend, my classmate at the university.”

“What’s his name?”

“His name is none of your business,” she whispers.

“Believe me, whore: to know his name is my business.”

He calls a female revolutionary guard from the back room.

“Sister, the whore needs education,” the chief says.

“Yes sir, Mirza Hassan,” the sister says. She renders the punishment: ten lashes for her exposed hair, ten for the light stockings, ten for the blue skirt and ten for the boy’s photo.

“Put the bills from her purse in the safe for shaheeds, and the coins, too. Mirza Hassan says, “Get the name and address of that playboy and bring him here tonight.”

They pull her hands behind her back and push her into a dark room. A stocky female revolutionary guard covered top to bottom in a black veil with only a patch of face visible, shoves her against the brick wall. She rips Shirin’s blouse down and unties her bra. The other female guard ties Shirin’s hands to a bar hanging down from the ceiling a foot above the Shirin’s head. Shirin is in a state of dismay and confusion. Her eyes follow the movements of the guards. The first guard’s face gets close to Shirin’s face and shouts, “Look, you have one chance to avoid all this misery and go free.”

“I’m sorry, I’m a bit confused now . . . and don’t know what to do,” Shirin says.

“I understand, lady. We see ignorant women like you every night. All you have to do is to show some remorse and maturity and ask for forgiveness. Not from me or from the officer, but from Imam Khomeini. He will forgive you for all your misdeeds and anti-Islamic sins.” The guard calls her comrade and asks for an atonement form.

The first guard shows the paper to Shirin and explains to her that if she fills out the form and signs it she can be freed on probation for thirty days. After that she will be permanently pardoned provided she doesn’t commit any anti-Islamic offenses.

“I don’t know what to do. May I call my father?”

“No, believe me you don’t want to get your parents involved, because if they come here, they have to sign the same atonement form and if they don’t, they will be flogged, too.”

“I really want to talk to my father.”

“Don’t, you stupid girl.” The guard loses her patience. “Your mom will be flogged, too.”

The prisoner closes her eyes. With a deep breath she manages to regain her composure and makes up her mind. “Go ahead; flog me as many times as you wish. I have faith in God. He will punish you someday for all this.”

The two guards take turn and whip her as forcefully as they can. They pause to wipe Shirin’s oozing wounds with a coarse cloth that brings out throbbing pain, more ooze. She screams. She curses. And she sobs. And they whip and whip. She is in a state of dismay and confusion. Her eyes follow the movements of the guards. The first guard’s face gets close to Shirin’s face and shouts. “Look, you have one chance to avoid all this misery and go free.”

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It’s midnight when they are done with the woman. They pull her hands off the bar and drag her into the waiting room and drop her on the floor next to eight other people; some stubborn and fearless like her with a bloodied body, and a few with the copies of the signed forms in their hands, waiting to be released. Shirin is in the fetal position and keeps her back away from the rough brick wall. Streaks of blood run from the bodies of the tortured women.

The unharmed ones who signed the forms avoid looking at the tortured ones, but firmly hold onto the copies of their atonement papers.

Shirin slowly regains her composure and crawls up to one of the benches. She breathes, slow and shallow so as not to expand her chest cage, not to trigger the sharp pain. The guard behind the desk looks at her with contempt and tells her that she can leave. Shirin stumbles onto the sidewalk and lifts her arm as a taxi approaches. The taxi stops and takes her home. The driver rings the doorbell. The family has been up all night; they rush to the taxi, pull her out and bring her inside. Mother curses the mullahs. Two curses for every lash of the whip, she airs her anger eighty times. The father sobs but hides his face so Shirin doesn’t see his anguish.

Reviews and Books

Detective Story

by Imre Kertész

Winner of the 2002 Nobel Prize in Literature

Reviewed by the Mirage Book Club

Imre Kertész, the author of the short novel Detective Story was born in Budapest on 9 November 1929 of Jewish descent. In 1944 he was deported to Auschwitz and from there to Buchenwald, where he miraculously survived certain demise and was liberated in 1945. On his return to Hungary he worked for a Budapest newspaper, adopting the Communist party line in 1951. After two years of military service he began supporting himself as an independent writer with no party affiliations and as a translator of German-language authors such as Nietzsche, Hofmannsthal, Schnitzler, Freud, Roth, Wittgenstein, and Canetti, all of whom significantly influenced his own writing. In 2002, Imre Kertesz became the first Hungarian to win the Nobel Prize in Literature.

Regarding his fiction, he has said, “When I am thinking about a novel, I always think of Auschwitz.” The shadow of Holocaust and Auschwitz appears when one reads all his novels, including this one. The scenes are so vivid that one realizes that the author must have been there, in those horrific chambers of torture and death. The novel is a fictionalized account of Kertesz’s own experience in captivity.

In Detective Story, a short novel first published in Hungary in 1977, Kertesz moves his attentions from Europe to South America, but man is still reliably vile. The narrative is the testimony of Antonio Martens, an interrogator with a steel heart and blind mind, a secret policeman in an unnamed dictatorship. Martens gives his view of a case that seems to have eventually brought the government down, in which a prominent businessman and his son were executed on charges that were not so much trumped up as wholly imagined. The defense lawyer who introduces Martens’s account warns us of his “stony indifference” and “wholly cynical” attitude to his crimes. Martens often attempts to excuse his behavior by reminding us, in a variation on a familiar theme, that he is “just a flatfoot,” doing “the profession I trained for,” but as the story proceeds to its grim, brutally predictable ending, his account is lit with shards of insight, usually suppressed, but still unmistakably evident, his mind and actions void of any empathy towards his victims.
Established in 1988, Pecan Grove Press is sponsored by The Louis J. Blume Library of St. Mary’s University. The press publishes books and chapbooks of fine poetry and, very rarely, short works of prose. PGP also publishes a regular chapbook series for students at St. Mary’s University in San Antonio, Texas. 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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The Names They Found There
by Kurt Heinzelman
Kurt Heinzelman co-founded and for ten years edited the award-winning journal The Poetry Miscellany; he is currently editor-at-large for the Bat City Review as well as editor-in-chief of Texas Studies in Literature and Language (TSLL). He has been a multiple nominee for the Pushcart Prize; his first two books of poetry, The Halfway Tree (2000) and Black Butterflies (2004), were both finalists for Poetry Book of the Year from the Texas Institute of Letters. A scholar and translator, he also serves on the Board of Directors of the Dylan Thomas Prize in Swansea, Wales. He lives in Austin, Texas with his wife, Susan Sage Heinzelman.

Wildflower. Stone.
Poems by Marian Haddad
Marian Haddad’s new collection of poetry grows by the sea like wildflowers in the dunes of Padre Island. Glover Davis writes about the spiritual and poetic journey that Haddad has undertaken throughout the poems: “In Wildflower. Stone, there is a sensibility to water, light, flower, desert mountains and their colors, textures, odors. Marian Haddad’s words move across landscapes from San Diego to Padre Island and linger on places in between.” Yet, these wildflowers have their own secrets. The poems reflect the wild beauty of Texas from Gruene at the river to Scenic Drive.

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Whitebird Chapbook Winner
The winner of the 2009-2010 Whitebird Chapbook competition is JoAnn Balingit. Her manuscript, Forage, will be published this coming October both as a hand-bound chapbook and as an eBook. Runners-up were Alison Peligren and Frances Hatfield. Pelegrin’s submission has subsequently been enlarged and will be published later this year by the University of Akron Press. Frances Hatfield grew up in east Texas and Louisiana, and studied poetry at the University of Dallas and the University of California at Santa Cruz, where she was a UC Poet Laureate Award winner. Her work has appeared in Quarry West and the Anthology of Monterey Bay Poets.

E-books
Most Wings Press titles are either available now or will be available by 2011 as eBooks in all formats, including Kindle, iPad, B&N Nook, and Sony Reader. Check the source for your reading device for current availability.

Black Like Me 50th Anniversary News
Wings Press is celebrating the 50th Anniversary of Black Like Me by John Howard Griffin.

November 2011 marks the 50th anniversary of the publication of the American classic, Black Like Me, one of the most important documents of the Civil Rights movement. Wings Press is proud to publish the definitive Griffin Estate E-book Editions of almost all of John Howard Griffin’s books including, Black Like Me — The Devil Rides Outside — Nuni — Street of the Seven Angels — Scattered Shadows: A Memoir of Blindness and Sight — Exile in Mexico — Follow the Ecstasy: The Hermitage Years of Thomas Merton — Prison of Culture — and Man in the Mirror: John Howard Griffin and the Story of Black Like Me.
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Poetry Workshop at 6
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Barnes & Noble at the Shops at La Cantera
17900 La Cantera Parkway, Suite 217
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Poetry & Art Events

San Antonio Recurring Venues

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


2nd Tuesdays 7-9 PM – Awaken the Sleeping Poet at the Twig, 200 E. Grayson, Ste. 124, Pearl Brewery (210) 826-6411, Featured poets & open mic. Host: Floyd 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 certified by the National Poetry Slam allows poets to deliver their work and get heckled. DJ Donnie Dee spins before and after the show. Sign up begins at 9:30 PM. Slam begins @ 10:30 PM. For more information visit www.puroslam.com.

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

Every Fourth Wednesday - Barnes & Noble, The Shops at La Cantera 15900 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.


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.

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

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“Yeah, I know that, but you asked where babies came from, so I thought maybe …”

“It’s just that my Sunday school teacher said that Jesus had a mother but no father, other than God, and I told her that was impossible. Everyone knows that parents have sex, and then they have a baby.” Her eyes narrowed and her voice lowered: “Sometimes teenagers who aren’t married have babies, too. My friend Gloria’s sister is pregnant right now!”

“Generally speaking that’s true,” I said, “but your Sunday school teacher was talking about something called the Virgin Birth. Mary was a virgin—that means she never had sex before.” Another roll of the eyes. “Anyway, even though everyone else who’s ever lived has had both a mother and a father, Jesus only had a mother. His birth was a miracle.”

“Everyone else?” Angela said, her eyes sparkling mischievously. “Are you sure?”

“Sure I’m sure,” I said, wondering what she was getting at. “What about Adam and Eve?” she asked triumphantly.

“OK, you’re right, Adam and Eve are exceptions, too. But still, the main point is that Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary, and God was his only father.”

She wrinkled her forehead and considered what I’d said as we drove home from church. Or maybe she was thinking about something else. She’d always been a deep thinker, and I’d learned not to interrupt her when she was pondering.

As we walked inside and began to get ready to cook Sunday dinner, she came over to me and took my hand. “I don’t know,” she said, “I just don’t believe it. I think Jesus had a mom and a dad just like everybody else. I think Joseph was his dad.”

Angela let go of my hand and went to her room to change out of her Sunday clothes and into something more comfortable. It was just as well that she didn’t wait for a response, because I wasn’t quite sure what to say. I’d been raised in a very conservative Christian church, and though I didn’t always agree with everything the pastor or my Bible study teachers said, there were certain bedrock principles that for me were unquestionable. They were the fundamentals of the faith ....

To read the rest of the story, please visit www.voicesdelaluna.com

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The Archives include 15 March, 15 June, 15 Sept and 15 Dec 2009; and 15 March, 15 June, and 15 Sept 2010

To Submit Poetry: joans@voicesdelaluna.com

To Submit Prose: Deb Peña: debra.pena@utsa.edu

Send Questions to: chopper001@satx.rr.com