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Poetry on Your Plate

In celebration of National Poetry Month, citizens had the opportunity to meet each Thursday to eat lunch while listening to local poets read selections of their work. The featured poets were Carrboro Poet Laureate, Neal McTighe, Maureen Sherbondy, and Joanna Catherine Scott: three poets recently featured in the West End Poetry Newsletter. Neal shared how, when challenged by a friend to "live where you live", he became involved in his own personal quest to



Joanna Catherine Scott is lavished with praise and questions following her readings.

discover Carrboro's past. He soon realized he needed to put his thoughts into writing and thus his poems about Carrboro came into being. Maureen, who principally writes in subject groupings,

shared some of her poems about parenthood, nature, and identity and place. She also discussed the road to publication, the politics of poetry, and her belief in the value of having fun while creating. Joanna, read from her unpublished works while introducing us to her life stories including being born during a WWII air raid in England, and her mother's influence on her writings. She also shared how her favorite poets, Seamus Heaney, and Marc Doty influenced both her writings and her life.



Local residents gather to hear Carrboro Poet Laureate, Neal McTighe read selections of his poetry and discuss how he began to immerse himself in Carrboro's past.

Save the Date—West End Poets Weekend

2008 West End Poets Weekend

"Celebrating Diversity in Poetry"

October 11th

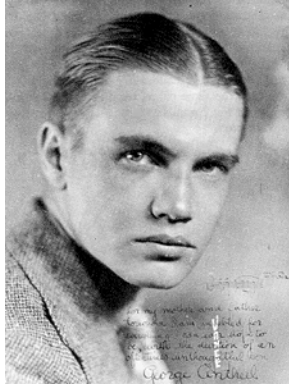
The Town of Carrboro is currently seeking both amateur and professional poets for its 2008 West End Poets Weekend. This day long festival will spotlight traditional and non-traditional forms of poetry through literary, performing arts, workshops and musical expressions of North Carolinians.

Persons interested in participating may obtain and complete an application.

Applications are available at the
Carrboro Recreation and Parks Department
100 North Greensboro Street Carrboro, NC.

www.WestEndPoetsWeekend.com

Applications will be available from **June 1 through August 15, 2008**. Applications received after the August 15th deadline will be placed on a waiting list.



Autographed Photo of
George Antheil.



Ezra Pound & Great Uncle
George Antheil during the 1920's.



Neal McTighe

“My great uncle was noted composer George Antheil. A member of the “Lost Generation,” in Paris of the 1920s Uncle George wrote one of the twentieth century’s most famous pieces of music, Ballet mécanique. I composed this avant-garde piece for him.” - Neal.

Neal’s *Ballet Mecanique*, was inspired by his enjoyment and admiration for his Great Uncle’s music, but also local shop Fitch Lumber where Neal visioned images of dancing wood in the store. See if you can find other references to names and places in and around Carrboro.

Ballet mécanique:

Roll 1, Remember when words had meaning?

“*Ecce incipit, riot, ballet de bois, / this here portent, ill / Ecce Strix Varia; this here Varia / this here ballet de bois / Is The End Of The / Universe. / The End Of Emerald Tablets; / The End of All & Everything. / fate, know, / dreams be born / Shallow creek. / Bolin creek; of spindles - room for / Kiki, Man for War, / Montparnasse & Sting Ray / levees / wood planks, trees e trestles; hearts e vessels - vroom. / where Frost lives - room. / strong and the seed - baa. / pecked by mechanical bird - room. / baa. room. room. baa. / This Atom Bomb - time shall toll. / This Cold Fusion - time shall tell. / I see there on the [destruction of classical motif] cripple’s stick - baa. / that the leaves are golden missile / pick - baa. Lloydian Automata. Turbine Time. / weaving lead pressure pumps fizzle / rhyme. distill / time, shatter crime; ye shall, ye universe / ye shall yelp, cringe / while dancing to-toe-to a stutter fury. / This my aquatic / nightmare, Simeon! / This my devilish treat! / Fire-bed of Yule; The Future’s *Ballet de bois! Mon ballet mécanique.* / ‘I, alone am sane.’ / seek shelter, Morris May; lead men Forest Fray; / from *Rue de l’Odeon.* / to winter’s night. / to flight / to marvel. / to winter’s night. / The extreme measure of neon / lumens divined from primordial wood / *Ecce fincipit.*”*

Neal McTighe

Neal wrote the following poem, “Gone to Sleep” in memory of Carrboro’s own, Libba Cotten. Libba Cotton’s music was so influential her songs were covered by artists such as Bob Dylan and Peter, Paul, and Mary. She performed often with the Seeger family after starting out as their maid and nanny. The term “Cotton picking” even originates from her unique style of banjo playing. She is the subject of a children’s book and has a Carrboro bike path named in her honor. The first line references one of Libba’s most famous songs “Freight Train”, while other lines reference other aspects of Libba’s music, like the guitar she called “Stella.”

Gone to Sleep

Freight Train; something remarkable
to tell you: I've gone to sleep.
Libba's star above; light in a rain storm;
there above, you see?

There, *Delta Capricorni*,
the day I came alive in 1895,
rain fell upon
dark shadows that now cover me.

Quiet,

now,

bury me deep. Libba's my name;
railroads through and through
my mind; ninety two from this here now
year I'll die; you'll remember me?

Miles 'round the Sun,
miles back again,
miles 'round the Sun,
miles back again, I shall then sleep.

Upon No Earth,
just me, spinning
'round the Sun.

The Solar System: I see God's Nectar,
God's Eye. Only Waves of
Celestial Augur Knots tie us d

o

w

n;

to Earth, I, Libba, hummed:

Freight train, freight train, run so fast.

Don't run me down, don't run me down,
Dove,

Train,

what of this mourning? Why from this fearful
symmetry must we run?

Why You, O' *Stella*, Why You, O' *Beta Cancri*,

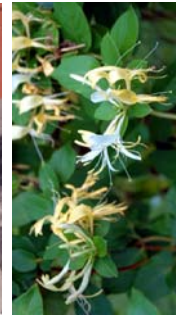
You above,

rest placid, eternally free?

Do you run counter to the gilded tides at dawn?

Neal McTighe

Originally published in the *Carrboro Citizen's Mill*



Honeysuckle (*Lonicera Japonica*)

Yellow tapestry of climbing
vines, voices whispering.
Honeysuckles called out to us
in the wild woods.

Their sweet spring smell pulled us
towards velvet-bell-shaped ropes.
We removed pistils and stamens
to find that honey well -
like hope at the base of all
growing things.

Honeysuckle dripping sun
drops clung to our young tongues
and finger tips. Lips
tingled with liquid sweetness.
This bright secret pleasure passed
child to child, lip to lip.
Golden treasure pulled
from this yellow-white sea
flower by flower. How many hours
passed between our small exploring fin-
gers.

What did we know about stamen
or other named parts, no matter.
We knew to tap out the sap,
how to map a path to the inside,
lap it up.

Before we knew too much
this much we knew -
there was pleasure
in even the smallest
living things.

Maureen Sherbondy

Originally published in *Lyricist*.

Invitation

My son tells me
I never take
an interest in his world.

He fires this bullet as
I'm scrubbing pots
and pans again.

My day is buried
in mindless chores,
I try to say to him.

Who will fold your clothes,
put away the forks and spoons,
create order in this chaos?

He does not want to
hear these things,
all he wants is a

green light of welcome
on my face when he
brings me a cicada,

June beetle, or lady bug.
Now I look into his eyes.
Now I see his invitation.

He has been inviting me
for many years, all through
falling leaves and hot still air.

I was too busy
keeping this house
in order to notice

he was building
a house
of his own.

Maureen Sherbondy

Originally published in *Calyx*.





Maureen Sherbondy joyfully autographs her poetry .



Joanna Catherine Scott reads some of her unpublished works.

The following poem, written by Joanna Catherine Scott, is what she considered the “. . . first decent poem I ever wrote. It’s about my mother’s death.” You could say her mother was the reason Joanna found poetry, for she believes that some things simply can not be expressed in prose and one of the functions of poetry is to heal. Many of her poems have her mother, aspiring actress turned religious zealot, as the subject. Joanna says that poems are what her mother would have called a “a hunger for God”.

Mirror Elegy

I washed her yesterday and once again this morning
because she wanted family to do it, not another stranger.
In all my life I had never seen her naked,
but now I have seen myself—

pallid sunken nipples, crotch of stiff white hair,
buttocks, skin in folds, where underneath,
flesh has withered almost to nothing.
She wore, nunlike, a plain gold ring,

the only one she’d worn since, forty years ago,
she offered up a sacrifice of all she loved to Jesus—
fox-headed stole, dangling opal earrings,
necklace of round green stones like peacock eyes,

hairpiece with glittering comb,
the leather-covered works of Oscar Wilde,
and last, with steady hand and no glance down,
a stack of soulful photographs of her dressed for the stage—

all burnt, except a single golden band set with a diamond,
which I stole, and then, repenting of my worldliness,
tossed into tall grass when I was hiking in the mountains.

That summer was the worst in thirty years.
The eucalyptus mountains dried,
shimmered with petroleum glints,
and then exploded in a ring of fire around the city.

Joanna Catherine Scott

A *Brief Definitive guide to Effective Writing* was written about the craft of poetry. Perhaps after reading you’ll be motivated to write your own poem.

A Brief Definitive Guide to Effective Writing

Write from the gut. Speak plain. Yet misuse language perfectly. It isn’t how you follow rules but how you hang your heart upon the page that makes the image clang onto the skull and stick, like mud-packed rocks slammed on the garbage can where all those readers huddle, waiting for enlightenment. You must jerk them Out of there, take each by the ear (the ear, you understand) and wring it Like the bell of doom, or like a cowbell, bell On the cat or on your toes—ring! ring!— Until the image is embedded in the brain.

To accomplish this, forget the pedant’s line drawn in the dirt, like the border of a wealthy country keeping all those nasty little foreign persons out, declaring that on one side lies the poem, on the other nothing but the poor third world of prose. Ignore all that. Leap on whatever sentence gallops by and ride it, bucking, down the road. Don’t be afraid of *and* and *but*, those darling common little men in orange hats who hold the stop-slow signs along the way. Follow the trail of *which*. Such whistling blue-blood arrogance! And if you’re partial to a dash—then dash. Use colons, semi-colons if you like. Regard the colon: like a pair of fox eyes watching where to strike to make the thought just right; and how the semi-colon hesitates before it leaps onto the line.

Punctuate, or not
The end effect makes everything correct. Yet don’t forget the peerless way the period separates, neat as the anus of a short-haired cat; or how the comma, fishlike, wiggles one consideration to the next. Recruit the adjective. Without it, we’d have faces, granted, but not glowing, lecherous, remote, or luminous with greed — yet still not poker-faced. Toss in a fitting adverb here and there (not the chill difference between creeping and creeping nakedly). Use repetition, onomatopoeia, *double-entendre*, apt alliteration’s artful aid—anything you can to clang and clang that repercussive can.

Don’t try to write how other people write; listen to the words reverberating in your head. And when rejection slips come whistling through the air like poisoned darts, or when they say you’re dancing on the edge of prose, that barbed wire line, invite them to come join, not stand there grimly on the side like flowers along and executioner’s wall. Since you’ll never make a nickel writing poetry you may as well have fun, not fall into the hell of affirmation — approbation — acclamation — (listen to the syncopation in that line!) Let the critics hang!

Joanna Catherine Scott
Poet Laureate Award 2002, North Carolina Poetry Society

Family Reunions Remembered



*There was Uncle Donny, swilling beer
Teetering from there to here*

*At another picnic table, cousin Bob
With hamburgers and sweet corn cobb*

*And Uncle Pete, with belly to match
Trying to reach that scratch*

*Aunts, pinching my face cheeks, so cute
Makes me want to puke
I'm only seven this year... yes seven
Not thinking of Heaven
Which it is*

*Then I hear the falls, Stockbridge Falls
Large granite boulders, pooling that small creek,
Before cascading down, I want to go peek,*

*Sodas bobbing in the water, ready to drink,
Sitting in that cold water,
That's what I remember, before falling in the Drink,*

© Slim Waters



Q: For the newsletter, do you want me to use your pen name Slim Waters or can I introduce you as David Waters as well?

A: I prefer the Slim name, just something poetic about a guy in the south named Slim writing poems. . .

Q: You have a unique type of team effort with a friend who helps creates the pictures and backgrounds that go with your poems. Can you tell us about that and how this came about?

A: Yeh, I guess you could call it unique. I started going to the Church of the Harvest and met Steve Campbell. He is one of the Elders in the church, and in the course of conversation, he asked “What have you been doing with your time?” Basically, I replied that I had been writing poetry. Well come to find out, he majored in English with a course study in poetry. And, well, the rest is history as they say.

Q: You have been asked to write poems for friends and their friends. Can you tell us some of the types of poems they've asked you to write, I think you've written one for the passing of a friend's husband once I think?

A: The only type of poems that I have been asked to write are bereavement poems for the loved ones that have passed on, which I consider a great honor to write for. The poems I do enjoy writing for myself are the more humorous ones, such as *Family Reunions Remembered*.

Q: You submitted *Lifetime* and *Family Reunion*. Of the many poems you've written, why did you choose these two above others?

A: *Lifetime* and *Reunions* reflect two of the different styles that I write, which, I believe the two represent the best of each style,

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continued . . .

though I can and do write in other styles as well. And also, when you write bereavement poems, you tend to reach a person's heart that you wouldn't normally be able to reach in any other way. Which when that happens, I'm very humbled by that. It's a feeling of great satisfaction, something that makes it all worth it, if you know what I mean? And with *Reunions*, well, it's a funny one and who doesn't like humor?

Q: You are now collaborating with someone to set your poems to music right? Can you tell me how that came about and how it makes you feel to read a poem with the music playing in the background?

A: We did one, I guess. A friend of mine (Ray out in Indiana) and I were talking one day on the computer and he suggested that I try to set a poem to music. Well, Ray mentioned it and sent some music . . . “Sunrise Over Haleaka” which is a very pretty song and went very well with *Lifetime*. Reciting poetry to music is quite a bit different than just reading poetry by itself. After all, you have to keep in mind when to start reading and to pause at the appropriate times, or it's a total wash, so to speak.



You can have the pleasure to get to know Slim and share his friendship and poetry on the first Tuesday of each month at the Recreation and Park Department's Poet's Open Mic Night at Open Eye Café.

Lifetime

With life lived and nothing else to do

**Breath...
Quaking and aching
With much ado
I look at my life,
As oceans of time
Always there, seagulls riding the air
With tides rolling gently, here and there
Lest we have only a pond's time left
To fill our time with clever and deft**

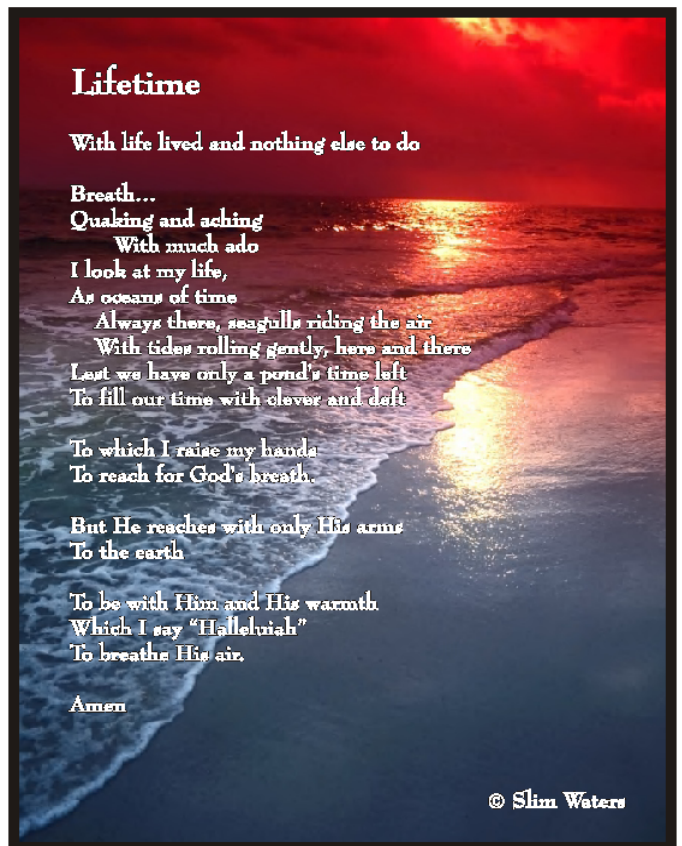
**To which I raise my hands
To reach for God's breath.**

**But He reaches with only His arms
To the earth**

**To be with Him and His warmth
Which I say "Halleluiah"
To breathe His air.**

Amen

© Slim Waters



The Town of Carrboro has been a Tree City USA city for 24 years. Each year the Town of Carrboro hosts an Arbor Day Celebration (celebration of Trees) with at least one elementary school. This year the celebration was held April 25th at Carrboro Elementary. The festivities included a poetry contest as well as poster contest and the planting of a Crab Apple tree.

Lakisha Kelly
Public Works, Administrative Assistant



Carrboro Elementary students work in teams to plant a Crab Apple Tree for Arbor Day.

The 2008 Arbor Day Poetry Contest Winners are:

- 1st place—Blake Ethridge
- 2nd place — Westin Barker
- 3rd place — Jonathan Phillips



Natures Gift

By Blake Ethridge
Ms. McFarling's Class

Outside I'm gazing
At nature's beloved gift
The trees surround me

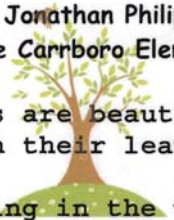
Trees are Beautiful

By Jonathan Philips
4th Grade Carrboro Elementary

Trees are beautiful
With their leaves

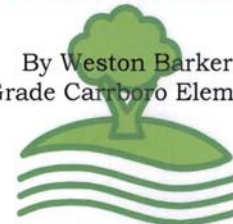
Swaying in the wind
By a gentle breeze

Changing in the seasons
With perfect ease



Trees are Beautiful

By Weston Barker
3rd Grade Carrboro Elementary



There's no place that I'd rather be
Than up my rope ladder, sitting in a tree

Relaxing in the branches, you can read or toss a ball
Swing your feet or look around—just be careful not to fall

Trees provide the perfect place to hide
When you're a child
Towering above adults below,
Your imagination can go WILD

What a place for me to be
On my own, and in a tree!

- **Main Street Rag's Annual Poetry Chapbook Contest**—Winner receives \$500 and 50 copies of chapbook. All entries receive a copy of the winning manuscript and are considered for publication. Entries must be postmarked by **May 31, 2008**. \$15 reading fee. Details at <http://www.mainstretrag.com/ChapCont.html>
- **Obsidian Announces Its First Poetry & Fiction Contest**—Obsidian: Literature in the African Diaspora, is a non-profit organization hosted by North Carolina State University. The semi-annual journal publishes poetry, fiction, drama, and non-fiction prose from within, about, and contextualizing the African Diaspora. Entries must be postmarked by **September 30, 2008**. Visit <http://www.ncsu.edu/chass/obsidian/WritingContest.htm> for more details.
- **Carolina Wren Press**—Their next poetry contest is for a full-length collection by an emerging author. The submission deadline will be **December 1, 2008**, with a fee of \$20. Full guidelines will be available in July of 2008. Details at <http://www.carolinawrenpress.org/submissions.html>



May 6, 2008 is the date for the
NC Primary Election and your chance to vote.

“People often say that, in a democracy,
decisions are made by a majority of the people.
Of course, that is not true.
Decisions are made by a majority of those
who make themselves heard
and who vote—a very different thing.”
— Walter H. Judd



Poetry Live!

Brought to you by the Carrboro Recreation and Parks Department

Poets Open Mic
Open Eye Café,
Carrboro

May 6th and June 3rd

7-9pm Free

This event provides a casual and comfortable setting for people to celebrate, share, encourage, write, read, and listen to poetry.

Recommended for ages 15 and up unless accompanied by a parent.

Carrboro Day
Town Hall Grounds
Carrboro

May 4th

1:00pm-7:00pm Free



Youth Poetry Contest Winners
will be announced at a ceremony held in the
Board Room of Town Hall beginning at 4:00pm.

Enjoy a day of poetry readings, music,
games, art, and fun!

For these and other
events contact:

Carrboro Recreation &
Parks Department
919-918-7364.

Or visit:
www.townofcarrboro.org/rp

Round About

Percolator Open Mic

The Percolator
5039 Falls of Neuse Rd,
Raleigh

May 1st, June 5th
First Thursday monthly.
7-8pm.

Hosted by Maureen Sherbondy and co-sponsored by Main Street Rag. Email Maureen ahead of time to sign up to read: msherbondy@nc.rr.com

UNC New Exhibition at the Wilson Library – The Beats & Beyond: Counterculture Poetry, 1950-1975

UNC Campus Chapel Hill

On exhibit now—July 3rd
This exhibit showcases counterculture poetry between World War II & the Vietnam War.

For more information call 919-962-1143 or rbcref@email.unc.edu

Literary Open Mic

McIntyre's Book Store at Fearington

Every first Thursday night at 7:00pm monthly.

Fearington Village in Pittsboro.

For more info call 919-542-3030. Sign up upon arrival.

Poetry Hickory

Taste Full Beans Coffee-house, Hickory

Tuesday, May 13. 7-9pm

Catawba Valley Community College student Poetry Showcase followed by an area poets Open Mic. Free and open to the public.

Red Hen Poets

Regulator Bookshop
720 Ninth St., Durham
Monday, May 19, 7pm.

Poets Lynnell Edwards, Doug Van Gundy, and Sebastian Matthews—all published by Red Hen Press—will read from and sign copies of their newly released works. More for more information call 919-286-2700.

Youth Poetry Slam

Durham County Library
Durham

Tuesday, May 20
6:30-8:00pm.

Youth from nearby middle and high schools showcase their poetry with a musical backdrop. Attendee must be between ages 13-18. Registration required. Visit www.durhamcountylibrary.org/ or call 919-560-0100.

Friday Noon Poets

Amity United Methodist Church, Chapel Hill

On the corner of Estes and Martin Luther King Jr. Rd. (aka Airport Rd.) .

Contact David Manning for information call 919-462-3695, or visit dbtm@mindspring.com

Jambalaya Soul Slam

Hayti Heritage Center
804 Old Fayetteville St.,
Durham

Last Fridays monthly. 8:30pm – doors open at 7:30pm. \$10 admission. \$5 for students and participating poets free. Spoken-word poetry hosted by Dasan Ahanu. Competition and prizes. Mature Content. Call 683-1709 or www.hayti.org

Created and Issued by: Carrboro Recreation and Parks

- We welcome any comments or suggestions for future programs, articles in the newsletter, or the West End Poets' Weekend.
- Do you know of anyone that would like to receive this newsletter? Email us.
- Submissions can be sent to Allie Hansen at athletics@ci.carrboro.nc.us

100 North Greensboro Street
Carrboro, NC 27514

www.townofcarrboro.org
www.westendpoetsweekend.com

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