

West End Poets News Letter

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Michael Troy
Hillsborough Poet Laureate

Silence

It's easy to hear the absence of Noise
while silence is harder to hear
but once you have heard it
you'll listen again
for the music of silence is dear.

Michael Troy

West End Poets Festival 2008 Wrap Up

I Am From

I am from hot, steaming bowls of soup,
Kettles of warm, lemon ginger tea,
And burning hot pot all on a cold, chilly winter's evening.
That's where I am from.

I am from the sound of my grandmother's ringing laughter in the big bedroom,
The sound of Taipei Transit running on the tracks,
And beautiful round kumquats in my grandmother's garden pots.
That's where I am from.

I am from the taste of sweet corn and steamed red bean buns,
The delicious things at my aunt's breakfast shop,

The wonderful pastries with custard at the bakeries,
The sticky rice with pork sung at the stands.
That's where I am from.

I am from sweet hugs from my friends and family,
The thoughts and memories of my hometown,
And the love and support from my family.

That's where I am from.

Yujane Chen



Yujane Chen

Snowy Owl

White as snow
Legendary feathers;
Perilous beak and
Mighty claws.
Glowing eyes,
Wondrous shine:
Beautiful praise
Beneath the shining stars.

Ghosts in the night
Ever so radiant in flight:
The reunion of Snowy owls

They round up in the sky;
Their calls clear and high
As they cry:
"Hee hoo hee hee ha ha ha ha ha ha!!"

Yujane Chen, Youth Poet

A FINE RASSLIN'

An unexpected feeling comes upon me in the wrestling ring. I believe it is the sensation of marigolds—a flower of intoxicating beauty with an unpleasant, pungent aroma. And then, ever as unexpectedly, the aroma of jasmine—tea steeping on the samovar on a wind-swept, wintry night. And then the feeling of your powerful, muscular arm around my neck—you have put me in a sleeper hold!

That wasn't unexpected. That happens all the time in the ring. I appreciate your gently nudging me back to the 'here and now.' And in doing so, I fall into a deep slumber; the marigolds fill my nostrils.

I mean, really fill my nostrils. They are all the way in my nostrils. And my nose is a little bloody. Sometimes I prefer to think only of the good times. This could be one of them, I think.

Ricky Garni

THINGS I LEARNED TODAY

Thank you, Netflix

Patty Hearst ages well.

Steve McQueen is confident, and seems to know what he is doing.

It was 14, not ten days in October, Cuban-missile wise.

If I am feeling old, it is a good idea to take a nice long look at Edith Piaf.

Little boys wore wide, beautiful striped ties in the Soviet Union in 1960.

The Man Who Came to Dinner is not who you had to guess was COMING to dinner. That was Sidney Portier.

The Man Who Came to Dinner was Monty Wooley.

If I had to say who had a better name, Sidney Portier or Monty Wooley, I would be stumped.

Cat Women have seductive and secret powers as long as they are on the Moon.

James Cagney probably had a very interesting heart rate.

If anyone could produce a legion of atomic superman through a series of flesh-burning radiation experiments with his crazed man-beast servant, it would be Bela Lugosi.

Emily Dickinson had a lot of ready cash. I don't know why I never knew that.

Ernie Kovacs was supposed to be a genius, but I think that must have been have a mistake.

I think that Zero Hour! is the only movie I have ever seen with an exclamation mark in it.

I don't know for certain if anyone ever called Tyrone Power 'Son of Fury' just as a joke but you must be careful when you choose to act in certain movies with certain titles.

It's easier to watch Shirley Temple if you can watch Joseph Cotten at the same time. If Claudette Colbert enters into the room, however, Joseph Cotton is outnumbered and it is hard to keep watching with both eyes.

It is inevitable that Doris Day ends up in a convertible at a car wash.

Ricky Garni



Dow Jones Beat

The WalMart trucks are crawlin' cross the scenery
 They're building houses in pieces you can drive down the road
 While this whole wide world is rockin' to that Dow Jones beat
 As we're tryin' to figure out
 How everyone can eat
 And have their place at the table
 And have their rightful place at the table

There are places where the people were forced from their homes
 Yesterday and a hundred years ago You can walk their trail of tears
 And read about their stories You can read tomorrows headlines
 Wherever you go And see the crop that's growing
 From the seeds that they have sown

chorus:
 While this whole wide world is rockin' to that Dow Jones beat
 As we're tryin' to figure out
 How everyone can eat
 And have their place at the table
 And have their rightful place at the table

Now my American guitar
 Was made in Korea
 It's all now just one big market place
 And everywhere you go
 We're just one big family
 You can find yourself in every place
 And every face you meet

chorus:
 While this whole wide world is rockin' to that Dow Jones beat
 As we're tryin' to figure out
 How everyone can eat
 And have their place at the table
 And have their rightful place at the table

Janet Bratter



We Talked About Michael

Never had I known,
 The feel of human kindness,
 Not until the day you spoke to me
 Before that day, my life was fear and blindness,
 And every word and deed felt like a sad apology,
 And even now, all these years later,
 Something that you showed me then still helps me to get
 through,
 If someone like you, can like someone like me,
 Then maybe someone like me should decide to like me too, I
 learned that from you

I don't want you, only for me,
 I don't want you, sexually,
 But I know you, and I love you free

Every time I meet different people and I take 'em at face value I
 see you there
 Every time I shift gears in my car I remember your patience in
 that summer air
 Every time I think about quitting I remember there's people like
 you who really care

Never had I seen humility and wisdom,
 Not until the day you took my hand,
 We were walking, tired in the streets of Allentown,
 Happy and not knowing where we'd land,
 We danced and danced, we talked about Michael,
 And when you cried in my arms when it all became too real,
 That was the night, I decided that there's nothing,
 Nothing that you'll ever ask from me that is too much,

Sometimes when I see a girl walk by with a cool man's jacket and
 straight brown hair,
 Even though it can't be you I miss you so much that I can't help
 but stop and stare,
 There is nothing bittersweet about the good times you and I
 share,
 And if he mistreats you he had better close his eyes and say a
 prayer...

Gilbert Neal



Multiple Sclerosis is a progressive and thus far incurable neurological disease. Among its complications can be progressive loss of motor coordination, to the point that turning the pages in a book or keeping your eyes focused on printed text for any length of time can be a challenge. While working in Springfield, Illinois for two years I came to be good friends with Mark who is living with MS, and his wife Anita. Both of them enjoy reading and writing poetry and I enjoyed many informal poetry gatherings at their house. Each night they read together, covering everything from poetry to science fiction.

This poem is for my dear friends Mark and Anita.

—Glenn Cassidy



*Read to Me
for Mark and Anita*

Read to me
with lithe and steady fingers,
run marathons through the pages.
Read to me
in wide open spaces,
Mercuries sprinting across time
on heels of light.
Read to me,
throw open the windows,
the chipped and etched and weathered windows,
let the world spill in
and slap and pinch my withered muscle,
let it freeze and burn
and stab to the bone,
let it sting an unnumbed nerve,
read to me.

Read to me
of absent lovers
sundered by war, revolution,
and pieced together only in dreams.
Read to me
of abandoned lovers
searching through the pages
in chase of fantasies unrecoverable.
Read to me
of ghosts of lovers,
nails desperately digging
at wisps of life,
pulling, stretching, scratching,
tearing at the fabric,
unraveling the threads,
grabbing at the fraying, frizzing
fibers unwinding,
read to me of that.
Read to me.
Read to me.

Glenn Cassidy

To learn more about MS and ways you can help, here are charities recommended by Anita:

- The National Multiple Sclerosis Society www.nationalmssociety.org
- Multiple Sclerosis Association of America www.MSassociation.org

Also recommended is the

- Well Spouse Association at www.wellspouse.org.

Parisians of the Piedmont

The daydream window
serves up raspberry sorbet scoops
atop crape myrtle cones
by the organic dairy store,
frames the orange bricks
of the hosiery mill
framing bistros,
co-op, and galleries.

In the purview of the daydream window
Parisians of the Piedmont
open laptops on picnic tables,
eat quinoa salad with fair-trade tea,
people-watch the passersby
with the elan
of the Jardin des Tuileries.

Through the daydream window
the quotidian flows, boundless
as the bottomless refills
and broken bits of nacho chips
the gazing woman sweeps
from the aged oak floors
in the slow of the afternoon.

Glenn Cassidy

Glenn Cassidy
is a Carrboro resident.
He has worked as a
public policy consultant and as a
faculty member in city planning,
public policy, and
public administration at
UNC-Chapel Hill, Georgia Tech,
and the University of Illinois at
Springfield. He frequently attends
both Open Mic Night at the
Open Eye Café and
Friday Noon Poets
at Amnesty Untied Methodist
Church. To read more from
this talented poet,
please visit
www.anglesandrhymes.blogspot.com.

Kaleva

When I heard the news,
 I died inside.
 The Soviets shot you down;
 now I'm without you,
 (all I hear is the sound of thunder).
 Son of Water; my dear Wainamoinen
 Last Sunday morning
 we made love and wrote letters,
 on flowers, on stones
 but now, Kaleva, you
 —rest at the bottom of the sea,
 dear—without me.
 “I shall never love another soul—”
 you said; I say the same, “—as I love you”
 to you at the bottom of the sea.
 Forever weep, forever mourn—Hiisi,
 Kaleva, why go down?
 “Secrets on board,” they say.
 What cause for war?
 When I heard the news,
 I died inside.
 My love at the bottom of the sea;
 I without you without me.

Maiden in the Ether

When I saw my fate,
 I died inside.
 To know this love I have for you,
 My Dear Ethereal,
 (all I hear is the sound of rain),
 now buried at the bottom of the sea.
 —Sirius, would you guide me to her?
 Guide me to my Maiden in the Ether.
 As we fell, love,
 certain of my end,
 I met Infinity in those forests, in those mouths,
 where Tuonela feeds;
 clasped it in my hand and, that twine,
 wrapped in it Love Infinity.
 Don't weep, don't mourn
 —love above the sea,
 I promise—we'll meet again.
 I with you with me,
 sharing love above the sea,
 sharing Love Infinity.

I dedicate these two poems to these two people: First, to my great uncle Henry W. Antheil, Jr., diplomat, whose life was cut short on June 14, 1940 at 2:05 p.m. when the Junkers Ju 52 passenger plane “Kaleva,” departing from Tallinn’s Ülemiste Airport en route to Helsinki, was shot down by two Soviet DB-3T bombers. Second, to his fiancée, Greta Lindberg, who sixty-eight years ago lost a piece of her heart.

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Henry W. Antheil, Jr.



“Uncle Henry’s Love”

Pals for the “Cats”

“Cat” is a slang term for “man” or “person” (e.g. He’s a cool cat). It is used in prison culture to mean “guy”.

Just before *The Road from Chapel Hill* was published, the *News & Observer* ran an excerpt in their Sunday book section. Shortly afterwards, I received a letter stamped “Mailed at Central Prison” from a young man on Death Row who had read it. He asked around the prison until he found a cat with a family that stays in touch. This cat wrote to his mother, she cleverly found out my address, and H, as I will call him, wrote me asking what happened to Tom (the runaway slave and hero of my story). I sent him a copy of the novel, the prison sent it back, so I had the publisher send him one. He read it, and wrote again asking if I would come and talk with him because black history was one of his great interests. I went, and we have been talking ever since.

At first H did not trust me not to vanish from his life, since he had been disappointed many times before, but gradually trust grew on both sides and now, two years later, he has become part of our family. My sister writes him from Australia, and my three daughters, two of whom started out antagonistic, regard him as an older brother. In fact, H has turned out to be such a wise and thoughtful person that when my daughters have a problem in their lives, it is to him they turn for good advice. He is a keeper and I love him! Strange and wonderful the way life goes.

Early in our friendship, H told me that if I helped another inmate he would never speak to me again. Now, as a result of kindness done, he is reaching out in kindness to his fellow inmates by having me find pen pals for them, selectively of course. I have run into a lot of negativity and outright aggression along this path, as the cats on Death Row are generally feared and condemned as though they are all of a murderous lump called “they.” But these men are individuals. Each one has his own unique story. And there are those among them who have sat in contemplation of their lives and now seek to improve themselves. Since there are no educational or rehabilitative programs for Death Row, not so much as a library, one of the best ways for them to do this is by developing friendships with educated men and women on the outside. We have dubbed this effort “Pals for the Cats.” So, if you are reading this and can find it in your heart to become a pen pal to a lonely Death Row cat, or if you would like to talk with me about it, I would love to hear from you at sekoongjhe@alumni.duke.edu, or through Allie Hansen of this newsletter.

—Joanna



DEATH ROW

He was an accidental package, thrown away
to float upon the surface of the world,
an obstacle, a mouth to feed,
the nuisance bastard of a rough man’s wife,
a punching bag, a dog to kick,
a pale-skinned black boy good for nothing
but to shove aside, to mock,
to stare at with that hard and silent
slow-neck-turning straight-on stare
that sees so little and yet says so much.

An ordinary story his, the giddy highs off gasoline,
the Bull malt liquor and Wild Irish Rose,
the swift onrush from foster home to foster home,
group home to group, as though he traveled
down a glass-slick tunnel with the four harsh
winds of fate exploding at his back,
his panicked hands flung out to seize
whatever shone along the way—a box of donuts
and an apple pie, a winter coat, a pair of shoes
with solid soles, a pack of socks, a watch, a bike—

until a handgun, loaned out of his grandma’s purse
to a cat who called him homeboy, friend,
slammed him, spreadeagled like a cartoon character,
against the tunnel’s silver-badged,
blue-uniformed dead end.

And then the slave-like hobbles, lost-child mug shots,
and the prison label ‘black,’ ignoring half his ancestry,
the stunned astonishment at what he had become.
And after that, beneath a high, shrill,
ever-burning light, the long slow dirge
of days and years toward the needle’s fatal,
sympathetic slide into his arm.

Joanna Catherine Scott

ON CONSTANCY

I write you every day, not because I have something new or world-changing to tell you—although I would love to tell you something that would change at least *your* world—but because I know you want to know that I am here still, that somewhere in a world you've barely known there is a rock to cling to.

So here I am again. Today is Monday. Yesterday was Sunday, and tomorrow will be Tuesday. Please know I am not dead, I am not ill, I have not wrecked my car, or come down in a plane, or been blown up by terrorists. Please know I have not abandoned you.

I try to conjure what a friend on the outside is like for you and find I'm up against that old conundrum, the one about the tree, the forest, and the sound. You do not know it? Here it is: When a tree falls in the forest, does it make a sound if no one's there to hear? No one with, perhaps, a panicked heart,

a sudden hard contraction in the belly, no one awed and terrified by this momentous crash. And then, of course, what follows on from that: if no one's there to see it, is there a tree at all? And so on to the forest, and so on . . . Or is it all inside some solipsistic mind, the mind of God perhaps?

See how the question shifts, becomes more slippery? And yet for people out here in the world it is old hat, a riddle of a type, offered by professors to beginning thinkers, who maul it with beginning minds, and then dismiss it with a joke. To them it is an exercise without an application. To you, however, it is urgent, real.

Each Friday when I leave the cramped, sour-smelling visitation booth, you consume yourself with worry that I have gone for good, that friendship—all those affirmations—has vanished down the creaking elevator labeled *Danger! Occupants no more than four!*

And next week wait on your side of the soiled, bar-striped plexiglass, fraught in your flaming jumpsuit, head bowed, praying I will come, praying for that miracle again, praying that there really is a world out there where trees fall with a crash, that one day you will come with me to listen.

Joanna Catherine Scott

STRANGER

I have dreamed strange things, and many stranger, yet never dreamed of loving you, a stranger from a world to which my world is stranger than a dream, yours to mine a dream of danger. I never dreamed of strangely loving you.

What could be stranger than for stranger to love stranger, each one's world a stranger place than they had dreamed of, stranger than a foreign planet or a dream of danger. How strange now to be strangely loving you.

As you to me, I am to you a stranger, yet two strangers met, and stranger than a landing on the moon—what could be stranger?—forgot that (now strange) dream of danger. Strange you love me strangely loving you.

Joanna Catherine Scott



Carrboro Poetry Revealed & Round About NC

Poets Open Mic Open Eye Café, Carrboro

Tuesday, February 3
7-9pm Free

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

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

For this and other Carrboro events contact:

Carrboro Recreation & Parks Department
919-918-7364.

Or visit:

www.townofcarrboro.org/

rp



Open Mic

Royal Bean Coffee House
3801 Hillsborough St,
Raleigh, 27607

919-834-BEAN

New location!

First Thursday monthly.
7-8pm. Hosted by Maureen Sherbondy and co-sponsored by Main Street Rag. Email Maureen to sign up to read: msherbondy@nc.rr.com

Spoken-Mic w/Ben & Marty

The Cave
452 1/2 W Franklin St
Chapel Hill
968-3908

First Wednesday of each month.

Poetry open mic night.

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

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.

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 & prizes. Mature Content. Call 683-1709.

Please check out our recently updated West End Poetry Website:

<http://www.westendpoetsweekend.com/>

Created and Issued by:
Carrboro Recreation and Parks

- We welcome any poetry news, future programs, articles, and contest information for the newsletter, or the West End Poets' Festival.
- Submissions can be sent to Allie Hansen at programdivision@townofcarrboro.org
- Do you know of anyone that would like to receive this newsletter? Email us.

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