TOP STORY

In Light of Recent Events

A High School Teacher’s Look at Teaching Creative Writing

When Dan Cuddy called me in August and asked me to write an article about teaching creative writing in high schools, I readily accepted. I’ve taught English in the Baltimore County Public Schools for twenty-seven years, including creative writing in three schools over the last fifteen. In many ways, my experiences in creative writing have constituted the best part of my career. Throughout that time, I’ve been amazed at the talent, intelligence, and sensitivity of the teenage writers I’ve worked with, and I’ve had the pleasure of seeing them achieve tremendous success.

Over these years, of course, individual students have etched themselves into my memory. Some have gone on to considerable success as writers, editors, and teachers themselves. I think of Lea Aschkenas, who contacts me every few years to direct me to a piece of travel writing she’s done that has appeared in a new book. Check out her story in Tom Miller’s Travelers’ Tales— Cuba, published this past summer. I think of Linda Brady, a songwriter, who sent me a self-titled CD which was released in San Francisco in 1993 and included several songs written in our Advanced Writing class. There’s Sharon Kim, who graduated from Yale with a Ph. D. in English and is now serving as the advisor for a beautiful student literary magazine at Wheaton College in Illinois. Or Kate Ettinger who is a magazine editor in California. Or Kathy Cottle and Alicia Rabins who have won Baltimore Artscape prizes in short fiction and poetry, respectively. Kathy won two Associated Writers’ Prizes for poetry while working with Elizabeth Spires at Goucher College. Alicia was a Presidential Scholar in Writing. Yes, I’m very proud of these writers whose early careers so wonderfully crossed with mine. And I’m proud of many others, some of whom are still in college, who are making writing a significant part of their lives.

But these writers and their accomplishments are only a small part of why I’ve loved teaching creative writing to high school students. What has most intrigued me over fifteen years has been the myriad of voices I’ve heard emerging in class after class of students, the beautiful sensitivities and absolute courage these young adults have demonstrated as they’ve realized that writing can help them to make sense of the world.

Continued on page 8
### Literary November/December

**A Potpourri of Literary Events**

(Available online at [www.litecircle.com/calendar/html](http://www.litecircle.com/calendar/html))

#### Consecutive Reading Series

**Saturday, November 3, 10, 17, 24**

8:00 p.m. Saturday Night Poetry Series, Mariposa Center for Creative Expression, 5000 Berwyn Rd., College Park, MD. Typically 3 featured readers followed by open mike. Complimentary refreshments included in $5 cover charge. For more info, call (301) 513-9422 or email MariposaPoet@aol.com.

Sunday, November 4, 11, 18, 25

7:00–10:30 p.m. The MYTH poetry slam. TEAISM, 400th St. NW (corner of 8th & D Sts.), Washington, DC. Cover $5 for program info, call (202) 638-6010 or email GalAeNgus@aol.com.

Monday, November 5, 12, 19, 26

7:30 p.m. SLAMicide! downstairs at XandO, 3003 N. Charles St., Charles Village. Donation $5. Open mic—local and national features—slam. Cash prize for 1st and 2nd place SLAM winners! Host: Baltimore Slammaster Nicki Miller and Gramma Dave Schein. For directions, call (410) 889-7076. For more info, contact Nicki at: GalAeNgus@aol.com, or Dave at: _grammadave@yahoo.com_. Featured readers: 11/5: Georgia Popoff/Syracuse; 11/12: Regie Cabico/NYC; 11/19: Scott Kirkpatrick/Fairfax; 11/26: Dwayne Morgan/Toronto; 12/3: Elizabeth Thomas/Connecticut; 12/10: Komplex/DC; 12/17: the dhi fis/ Baltimore.

Tuesday, November 6, 13, 20, 27

8:30 p.m. Tell the World, open mic poetry and spoken word reading at the One World Cafe, 904 S. Charles St., Federal Hill. Hosted by Tom Smith. For more info, call (410) 455-5352 or email bmw3@infamous.net.

9:00 p.m. Open reading at Funk’s Democratic Coffee Spot, 1818 Eastern Ave., Fells Point. For more info, call (410) 276-FUNK.

**Literary November**

**Thursday, November 1**

6:00 p.m. Maryland Institute College of Art. Felicia Morgenstern and Linda Eziquel read their poetry at the Mt. Royal Station Auditorium. A “Spectrum of Poetic Fire” event.

**Saturday, November 3**

12:00 noon. Enoch Pratt Free Library, Central Branch. The Enoch Pratt Poetry Discussion Group discusses the work of Kaman Brathwaite, a contemporary Caribbean poet.

2:00 p.m. Enoch Pratt Free Library, Wheeler Auditorium of the Central Library. Commemorating the 25th anniversary of the publication of Toni Morrison’s Song of Solomon, Dr. Gerri Bates, Professor of English, Morgan State University, will talk about the novel and lead a group discussion.

**Sunday, November 4**

5:00 p.m. Barnes & Noble Ellicott City, 4300 Montgomery Rd. (410) 203-9001. Irish Book Group. 1000 Years of Irish Poetry.

**Monday, November 5**

6:30 p.m. Enoch Pratt Free Library. Central Branch, Poe Room. In Meeting of the Waters author Kim McLaRian provides a realistic look at interracial love. In Los Angeles two reporters—one white, one black—meet on the day when the jury acquitted four police officers of assaulting Rodney King.

7:30 p.m. Barnes & Noble Ellicott City. Student Writers Alliance led by award-winning Howard County teacher Sindys Parrot.

**Wednesday, November 7**

6:30 p.m. Enoch Pratt Free Library, Central Branch, Poe Room. In Master of the Crossroads novelist Madison Smartt Bell returns to Haiti with the story of a gifted military and political leader, Toussaint Louverture. This is the second part of a trilogy, of which All Souls’ Rising was the first.

7:00 p.m. Barnes & Noble Ellicott City. Middle School Book Club discusses Turnabout by Margaret Haddix.

7:00–8:30 p.m. 1st Wednesday of the month, Lightsey Poetry Circle hosts “Function at the Junction” at the Coffee Junction, 803 Frederick Road, Catonsville. Featured Readers: Dan Cuddy, Rosemary Klein, Barbara Simon. Info: lite@toadmail.com.

Saturday, November 10

1:00–4:30 p.m. Lightsey Poetry Circle hosts “Function at the Junction” at the Coffee Junction, 803 Frederick Road, Catonsville. Featured Readers: Dan Cuddy, Rosemary Klein, Barbara Simon. Info: lite@toadmail.com.

**The Big Literary “Spot” Lites**

- Borders-Columbia, 6151 Columbia Crossing Circle. Phone: (410) 290-0062.
- Borders-Towson, 415 York Rd. Phone: (410) 296-0791.
- Enoch Pratt Free Library, Central Branch, 400 Cathedral St., Baltimore. Phone: (410) 396-5494/396-5847.
- Mystery Loves Company Booksellers, 1730 Fletch St., Fells Point. Phone: (410) 276-6708 or (800) 538-0042.
ONE OR MORE WORDS FROM OUR EDITOR

Proud to Be an American

Hello, my friends, my fellow writers and lovers of literature. That terrible day of the terrorist attack on our country will forever be remembered, not only by all Americans, but by everyone who has heard of it all over the globe. In a very real sense, we are all survivors. I hope and pray that the evildoers will be punished in order to prevent further bloodshed. Don’t get me wrong—I love peace and I want there to be peace, but the fact remains that peace has been taken from us and we must reclaim it. And the peace must be the peace of justice, not of capitulation.

Some have claimed that somehow America brought this on itself, that the terrorists acted in response to the policies of our government, particular our policy toward Israel. The truth, however, is that Osama bin Laden and his cult of terror would have done this to us had Israel never existed. Because what they can’t tolerate is not the sins of this nation, but its virtues. They can’t tolerate our values of democracy and pluralism. They can’t tolerate a nation which proposes that all people are created equal, and that everyone may worship—or not worship—as he or she sees fit. They can’t tolerate a nation where people are free to dress as they wish or say what’s on their minds without fear of being dragged before the authorities. And let’s also put the events of 9.11.01 in perspective. The terrorist attacks that day killed over 5,000 people, mostly Americans, but also citizens of countries from Argentina to Zimbabwe. In all of recorded history, this was the largest mass murder of civilians on a single day during peacetime. And if we look at the attack on Pearl Harbor, which pushed us into entering World War II, we find that fewer than half that number were killed, and overwhelmingly servicemen. The Japanese could have attacked Honolulu or some other undefended city, but instead they chose a military target—thereby demonstrating their moral superiority to the terrorists who struck New York and Washington. Timothy McVeigh killed even fewer, less than 5% of that number. And the Unabomber killed only 3. Clearly we are in a new world, when the heinous acts of these recent mass murderers can be made to seem small.

And yet, some good has come from this evil. The country has come together—I even notice differences like skin color, hairstyle, and mode of dress less these days. People are generally being kinder to each other, helping each other out. The coffers of charities are overflowing. At a recent benefit reading sponsored by Lite and the Maryland Institute College of Art the Red Cross collected hundreds of dollars for the victims, a drop in the bucket, perhaps, but evidence of the care and concern of Baltimore’s literary community. I also see American flags everywhere. The flag is more than a symbol of our country—it’s a symbol of the democratic and pluralistic ideals which are the basis for this country. As one NPR editorial put it, we don’t have a “homeland” or one “people” here—we have a flag. Long may it wave.

David W. Kriebel
Editor

I Hear America Singing

Each issue we will select one patriotic poem and print it in this special section. Poets whose work is selected will receive a $25 savings bond. By “patriotic poem” we mean any poem which:

- celebrates the United States or its democratic and pluralistic ideals;
- eulogizes the victims of the terrorist attack on September 11, 2001; or
- honors our men and women in uniform (military personnel, police, firefighters, postal workers, and medical personnel).

Poems should be no more than 40 lines long.

Please submit only one poem per entry to:

Attn: Patriotic Poem
Lite: Baltimore’s Literary Newspaper
PO Box 26162, Baltimore, MD 21210
Email: lite@toadmail.com

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**Join The Lite Circle**
The Lite Circle, Inc. is a non-profit literary organization based in Baltimore. We rely on individual contributions to continue our literary activities, including Lite Circle Books (a small-press publishing house), our various poetry reading series, and the publication you are reading right now. If you care about the literary arts in Central Maryland, join us. All you have to do is fill out the form below and send it to The Lite Circle, Inc., P.O. Box 26162, Baltimore, MD 21210.

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**Lite Reading: BOOK REVIEW**


This book is the third collaboration between writer Gary Blankenburg and photographer Stephen John Phillips. It is a winning combination. Phillips’ photographs are surreal, bizarre, kinky, memorable. No one can look through the book and be indifferent to them. The viewer is either delighted or repelled by the freakish images of some of them, e.g. the cover photo of a head in clown paint with a serpentine, almost obscene tongue, and two horns. Surely not everybody’s ideal of beauty but remember the title of the book, and in its own way that memorable image has a beauty intrinsic to it, if your sensibility is open to more than the conventional. Some of the other photographs are easier to admire. The shock is less though the expressiveness is as striking. Phillips’ photographs complement the content of the writing.

Gary Blankenburg’s writing has never been better. The book, though comic and absurd at times, has its quiet, sad moments. This poet is the Bukowski of Baltimore but with a spoonful of transcendent longing thrown into the broth of his narratives, more sympathy for humanity, less, though definitely some, spit. Someone once said that Gary Blankenburg could stand before an audience and read a phonebook and be interesting. However, At the Edge of Beauty contains interesting material, and the only performance is the verbal opera transferred to the bare stage in the reader’s mind.

The book opens with poems that deal with God and the great abstractions. For the most part they are successful, though at times the artifice shows through like a bone under the skin. The book progresses to love, sex, adolescence and adult scenarios. The movement in these pieces is compelling. The words are just right:

'It is the obscene pinkness of it all, its taste hot on the tongue— not the natural blush of spring flowers in bloom, not the common flush of cheeks grown warm, or declaring one’s love w/fuchsia spray paint on a wall. It is the obscene pinkness of it all, like women applying lipstick in a restaurant, or lovers embracing & kissing on a street corner, or declaring one’s love w/fuchsia spray paint on a wall.

From “Flamingo Love”

There are poems like ‘Flamingo Love’ which is a really great narrative about adolescence. Fact or fantasy? It is both. Only a callous person can not feel the pathos. Poems like “High Noon,” “Black Front Tavern,” and the story “I Go Down To The Ocean” are Bukowski-like in their tawdry sensuality, but they have more heart. There is an uneasy balance of bravado and vulnerability in these pieces which make them so poignant. And they are not literary in the bad sense. They contain a wealth of details but the details are subordinate to the whole. The is plain language with a lyricism in the images but not the phrasing. The reader does not get thrown from the narration by bucking dictus, but rides the tale to its end.

The next group of poems present many facets of the poet’s relationship with his mother. Some are quite sad, “Mother As Art Critic.” These poems are followed by narratives of old age and of people met at A.A. meetings. A comic potpourri, “The Beard Poem” and “Cigar Butts” change the mood. The final poems have a joy in them, even when melancholy. This poet is not trapped at the bottom of a barrel but floating in his/her tears of laughter and sadness. And the last to next poem in the book “Chrysanthemums In November Twilight” is such a lyrical gem:

These chrysanthemums in November twilight are like no earthly flowers. Heavy headed muted suns drooping toward the rainy grass gone dank, these chrysanthemums speak just how clean a right moment can be.

The last poem, “Crows,” is a romp of free-floating associations, some extremely dark. However, this book, even in its brutal stretches of imagination, does not leave the reader in despair. Insights and emotions change like a kaleidoscope. Blankenburg can make you laugh and can make you cry. In lesser hands the poems would be ruined with self-pity. Humor and lyricism imbue the vestiges of self-pity with a decorative sheen that pleases. There is sadness, genuine sadness, but, though remaining as an omnipresent possibility, it enhances the bright colors of life like shadows accentuate photographs or paintings. This book is Blankenburg at the top of his game.

DAN CUDDY
Brown, a 23 yr old first-year teacher in Kansas, unmarried and pregnant.

Monday, December 3

6:30 p.m. Enoch Pratt Free Library, Central Branch. Poe Room. Julia Chance, *Sistersfriend: Portraits of Sisterly Love*. A collection of impressions of African-American women, the essays in *Sistersfriend* tell beautiful stories of sisters, whether related by blood or bonded by fate. Mary J. Blige, Ilyana Vantant, bell hooks, Gail King and others less well known have contributed their stories to this collection, written by Ms. Chance with photographs by Michelle V. Agins.

Tuesday, December 4

1:00 p.m. Harford Poetry Society event program TBA. Rockfield Manor, 501 Churchville Rd (Rte. 22), Belair, MD. For more info, call (410) 877-1625.

5:30 p.m. Loyola College, 4501 N. Charles St., McManus Theater. E. Ethelbert Miller reads his poetry.

Thursday, December 6

4:00 p.m.-6:45 p.m. Maryland Institute College of Art. Readings from *Fire: MICA Student Poetry Journal*. A “Spectrum of Poetic Fire” event.

Sunday, December 9

4:00-6:00 p.m. WordHouse at Minas, 733 S. Ann Street. Tillie Friedenberg and a poet TBA read.

Tuesday, December 11

1:00 p.m. Harford Poetry Society event Program TBA. Rockfield Manor, 501 Churchville Rd (Rte. 22), Belair, MD. For more info, call (410) 877-1625.

6:30-8:00 p.m. Enoch Pratt Free Library, Central Branch. The Fiction Discussion Group discusses Edwidge Danticat’s *Breath, Eyes, Memory*.

To Have Your Event Listed
please send information to:
Dan Cuddy, Calendar Editor
41 Odeon Ct.
Baltimore, MD 21234
Tel. (410) 882-4138
lite@toadmail.com

Information received after the 15th of the preceding month may not be printed. We reserve the right to edit all material to fit space requirements. Lite: Baltimore’s Literary Newspaper is published bi-monthly. A literary calendar is posted monthly on the Lite web site (www.litecircle.com/calendar.html).

To Ha

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**DEVELOPING**

Existed before the beginning of time
Slave and king have I been
Conqueror and conquered
Saint and demon
Dwelled in hell and heaven
And deserved them both
Lived a thousand times have I
Died almost as many
Created in God’s image
So I am all man
As I am no man
But I’m not a god
Neither are you

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**THE LOCAL LITERARY SCENE**

**After Auschwitz, is lyric poetry possible?** I don’t remember where or when Theodor Adorno posed this immortal question, but it did stick in my head from the “Post-Modernism and Political Theory” class I took in college from a Swedish professor who looked like the Brawny Towel Man. And I have to say it came to mind when I made my home from Washington on September 11.

There was a lot of stuff I meant to cover in this column before September 11. I’ll get to some of it in a minute. But I want to start with an account of the Red Cross fundraiser Lite Circle and the Maryland College Institute of Art (MICA) hosted October 19. The event was emceed by *Lite* Editor-in-Chief Dave Kriebel and kicked off by Lindsey Stroh from the Central MD division of the Red Cross, who gave us an overview of what the Red Cross has been doing since September 11 and what the Red Cross does in our every day lives. I didn’t realize they got involved with ordinary things like house fires and psycho killers holding neighborhoods hostage. She also read two poems related to the tragedy of the 11th. The event featured Linda Joy Burke, Barbara DeCesare, Michael Fallon, Rosemary Klein, Kendra Kopelke, Barbara Simon, and Chezla Thompson-Cager followed by open mike readers. An audience of about 40 people raised about $370 to support the nationwide efforts of the American Red Cross—not bad, considering the mix of students and starving artists in the house.

Burke led off with a recitation of a Lynda Barry comic about Marlys’ family and its reflections on the Vietnam War. She read a cycle of poems she wrote during the Gulf War. I appreciated the juxtaposition of the Gulf War and the War on Drugs in “They keep bringing it in.” The poem of hers I liked best was the hypnotic “M a k e me over,” which didn’t seem to have anything to do with war. It was a good lead-in for Barbara DeCesare’s reading, which also didn’t have anything to do with war and which was hysterically funny. (If you haven’t seen her reading of “Joanne and Dick,” her poem about the next-door neighbor’s love life, you should be able to catch it when Blair Ewing’s next installment of “Poetry Jam” appears on cable.) But Michael Fallon’s disturbing poems about high-rise fire and apartment fire sales brought the group back down and made them ready to go there—address the tragedy of September 11 directly. Rosemary Klein’s reading of the poems she had composed in the wake of September 11 as well as some snippets of New York-themed poems by other writers—what a lovely, homely voice she has!—brought many members of the audience to tears. Kendra Kopelke’s reading of postcards from Japanese youth orchestra kids to their Baltimore counterparts strikes a lovely note. “Poetry through fire, by accident.” Barbara Simon read from her own work as well as the work of a Bosnian poet whose name escapes me. The boldest thing I saw that night was Chezla Thompson-Cager’s “Ode on Tuesday,” a choral-poem interweaving “Hava Nagilah,” “Jesus Loves Me” and the Call to Prayer with verses asking whether blood can redeem blood. I wasn’t sure why she’d chosen to kick off with a Hebrew song of celebration, but she said she liked the ferocity of the “Ura achim” part. She also added that the poem was a work in progress and that she might try to find something from the Torah to use instead. I am looking forward to seeing how it shakes out.

*Lite*is seeking submissions for an ongoing web anthology of work related to the events of September 11, entitled “Songs of Remembrance and Renewal.” Fiction, poetry, art, photos all welcome. Submissions accepted by email to: crescent@toadmail.com; mail to: Lite, PO Box 26162, Baltimore MD 21210.

A final note relates to September 11, and then I’ll try to let it go: the 9/11 project is collecting the artistic outpouring of Maryland residents in reaction to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, to be published in various media, including the multi-volume set *September Eleven: Maryland Voices.* Estimated publication date: August 11, 2002. Title of the publication is not final. All entries must be received or on before Friday, March 15, 2002. All proceeds generated by the 9/11 project will be donated to various relief funds in support of the victims of this tragedy. Submit entries by mail to: the 9/11 project, P.O. Box 6881, Towson, MD 21285; or by email to: submissions@the911project.org. Submission guidelines and entry forms are also available by mail (#10 SASE) at the address above. Please write for more information, call (410.337.9411), or email to: info@the911project.org. Web site: http://www.the911project.org. Entries will not be returned. the 9/11 project is co-directed by members of the Baltimore Writers’
The nature of our personal freedom while participating in a long-term relationship. The exhibition compares and contrasts the entrapping bird cage with the nurturing bird’s nest, and exhibits a flock of pink cloth birds mimicking flight, thus, representing women who have found the strength to fly and become individuals again following a break with their partners.

Contre-Jour, David Penney’s photographs, succeed in taking the astonishing range of 3-dimensional “visual scraps” that he’s devoted to everyday and imbuing them into self-sufficient 2-dimensional images by seeing those scraps more strongly. In his photographs Penney works “against the light” with distortions, and in for more information or to download an application visit www.arts.endow.gov/guide/Lit02/Litindex.htm. Applications are available in Microsoft Word and pdf formats.

L. lite@toadmail.com.

Some of Maryland’s finest poets will read their poetry in a special program to benefit African American refugees Sunday, November 18, 3-5 pm at Stony Run Friends Meeting, 511 N. Charles Street, on the block south of Northern Parkway. The 4th Annual Margaret Diorio Poets for Peace program is free, but donations will be accepted for the American Friends service Committee program to aid African refugees in Pakistan and Iran.

Ten Maryland poets, including Michael Fallon, Marta Knobloch, Thomas Dorsett, Barbara Simon, and Rosemary Klein will read and engage in a dialogue with attendees. The Poets for Peace reading has been called especially relevant in these troubled times. For more information phone (410) 435-3773 or (410) 821-7807.
I don’t cover as I once did. In fact I barely listen to the voices in the next room, one shrieking like an outraged animal with its leg caught in the teeth of a metal trap, the other staid, level, authoritative, patient. I put the voices in another place and think about Alice. Alice’s mother said she would give us a nickel after school tomorrow. We will go down to Mr. Peter’s store and buy a lemon and a sour pickle and split them both two ways. The thought of it makes my lips pucker with pleasure. I’m glad I still live near Alice. I quietly pull my clothes, my cigar box full of treasures, and a new pair of shoes from the ratty, musty-smelling suitcase I have used for so long, and place them on the shelves of the tiny alcove which is now my bedroom in this new apartment just off Peachtree Road.

Mother and I have lived in eight different apartments now, all within a two-mile radius of Piedmont Park. Sometimes I walk by the various two- and three-room flats in Virginia Highlands and Midtown—some standing, some different from the way I remembered them, some no longer there—and wonder why there are so many. But even with all the trouble we’ve had, I know Daddy loves me: he always makes sure I have new shoes.

As the noise in the kitchen escalates, I edge toward the door Indian style—I’ve learned to move silently on the coolest of wooden floors. Daddy is doing what he has done so many times before: calm the demon that is inside Mother. Daddy has lived in Atlanta for almost fifteen years now, though Mother says he still has a lot of Yankee in him. His nose is long, thin, and hooked like a bird’s beak, and his small, gray eyes behind round, wire-rimmed glasses squint when he talks. His whole face seems sour somehow, like he is never at peace. He doesn’t talk much but I know he is busy taking care of Mother.

“Ann, look at me now,” I hear Daddy say. “I’m eating this soup—the soup I prepared for your supper. Ann, now listen to me. Would I put poison in this soup and then eat it? Ann, look at me now,” he says, as if coaxing a stubborn child. By this time there is no amount of reasoning or evidence Daddy can produce to convince Mother that he is not planning her death. I hear Mother slam out of the kitchen and I race into the kitchen as Daddy grabs the keys to the car. I smell the acidic tang of tomato soup.

Mother is in her pink nightgown and it is still daylight out. We will follow her until she gets tired of walking; then she will reluctantly get in the car and tears of rage will start. I don’t know why she is so angry. Then we will drive home and Daddy will calm Mother with one of her pills into an unwilling sleep. I will clean up the mess in the kitchen where Mother threw the soup. Daddy and I will not talk about what has happened.

But this time Mother will not get into the car. I keep looking at Daddy to see if a sign of doubt appears on his face as the walk becomes nearly twice as long as ever before. I know that as long as Daddy looks the same, everything will be all right. He doesn’t speak, but just keeps clicking his tongue, “Click, click, click.” I am beginning to think we will just keep driving forever, when Mother suddenly turns to the car. Daddy stops and leans forward and down, looking past me, waiting for Mother’s next move. In Mother’s face I see all the anger and bitterness I have ever seen in the world. Her eyes are the piercing black holes of an animal cornered and about to make its move. She looks right past me as if I am not even in the car, and the words slash like knives aimed at Daddy’s heart.

“I’ve taken care of her for twelve years—now it’s your turn!” And with that she takes off running across Piedmont Park. Daddy puts the car back in drive, and with only the vibrating noise of the engine to fill the silence, we each find separate places to store those words. Alice and I get our treat the next day after school. Mother does not return home for several days and Daddy neither mentions her absence nor gives any hint that he is pursuing her. After a week of quiet, I wonder where Mother is, but peace which has settled in the little apartment and I will not talk much about it. I settle into a routine that is not warm comforting in its familiarity. I rise at dawn. I finish my things. Go on, now. With Daddy and peruse my Weekly Reader as Daddy pours through the Atlanta Journal. We have biscuits with honey and Daddy says you can never make the biscuits and honey come out even, so you just have to keep eating more. Usually the conversation is short, with the same questions and answers, but I know I’m lucky: at least I have Daddy and I know he will take good care of me.

A few weeks into our routine Daddy calls me into the kitchen. It is a bright June morning, a Saturday, and I think perhaps Daddy has something fun in mind. Many times on a Saturday Alice’s father takes us to the zoo or to a movie. I feel excited as I come down the stairs.

“Sit down, Betty,” Daddy says. “You know you’ll be a young lady soon and a girl needs a mother. You know your mother is not coming back. I have a new client, and she wants you to come and stay with her family for a while. She has a girl just a bit older than you, and you’ll do fine there. Now go up and get your things. Go on, now.”

I go to the alcove whose shelves hold every possession I own in the world. I slide the suitcase out from under the tiny day bed where I have slept for the past two months. I know it will take only minutes to empty the shelves and that the suitcase will still have plenty of room after all my things are packed inside. I stand for time as I try to decide where this turn of events can fit into my mind. Just as I think I will give in to the tears burning behind my eyes, I reach for my Sunday shoes, a new pair of white patent leather Mary Janes that Daddy bought me for Easter. The tears subside as I look at the shoes and place them in my suitcase. I finish packing and return to the kitchen where Daddy stands, car keys in hand.

Fiction 2000

1st Prize: Elisavietta Ritchie, A Lovely Day for Tennis
2nd Prize: Carol Harper, Mary Janes
3rd Prize: Elisavietta Ritchie, I Wait for You
4th Prize: Carol Harper, Two Tens

Don’t Miss The

Lite Circle Literary Contest
Winners, 1999-2000

Fiction 1999

1st Prize: Kathleen Hellen, Last of Summer
2nd Prize: Elisavietta Ritchie, Thanksgiving with Great Aunt Eugenia
3rd Prize: Tod Wild, Barley, Lester Come Home

Fiction 2000

1st Prize: Katrina Prado, Doll Twig
2nd Prize: Andy O’ Bannon, Véronique
3rd Prize: Carol Harper, Mary Janes
4th Prize: Véronique

Don’t Miss The

Lite Circle 1999-2000 Literary Contest Winners Reading
Saturday, November 10, 2001
1:00-4:00 p.m., Poe Room
Enoch Pratt Free Library
400 Cathedral Street, Baltimore

Mary Janes
Illustration by Moira Lachen

by Carol Harper

Fiction: Third Prize

2000 Literary Contest

November/December 2001 Lite 7
By the time I got downstairs, my third period writing class was waiting, transfixed by the images unfolding on CNN on the television in our room. We watched, as many Americans did, stunned by what we were witnessing. And then we talked, trying to come to terms with what we were feeling.

Over the next few days, writing began to emerge from the writers in my two classes, writing that was not assigned as an exploration of history or politics or philosophy. My students wrote what they saw, what they felt, what they imagined. They did what I think the best writers do; they wrote what really mattered. Take, for example, the following poem by junior Sarah Bregel. In it she captures the scene in our school on the morning of the attacks:

### The Price of Freedom

The door slams behind me on September 11, 2001, as I rush into a silent classroom, one by one, the stories give up under pressure.

"Freedom is not free" were the wise words of my Field Biology teacher, and I wish he wasn’t right.

Sarah Bregel

Not every writer in our classes maintained the distance and ironic perspective that Jess’s poem embodies. Emotions broke through the surface in many of us, demanding forceful expression. Senior Lacey Burke captured the pride, anger, and patriotism which have pervaded the United States in recent weeks. In our discussions of the early drafts of her poem, students raised the issue of tone in her writing, and she chose to be hopeful and resolute. She selected a rhetorical style, emphasizing control and will:

### Notice to Bin Laden

You tried to hit America with your planned attacks, but you failed to reach your target.

You may have killed thousands, you may have hit a building or three, but America you missed.

For America is not
Exhibit: “New Beginnings: Japan in the Immediate Postwar Years, 1945-1949,” an exhibit of photographs, magazines, newspapers and children’s books from the University of Maryland’s Gordon W. Prange Collection. On display at the Central Library, 400 Cathedral Street, through December 29.


Writers LIVE! Readings and Book Signings at the Central Library

Wed., Nov. 14, 6:30 p.m.

Sat., Nov. 17, 2 p.m.
Debra Dickerson (An American Story) and Dalton Conley (Honky) discuss and sign their books.

Sun., Dec. 2, 2 p.m.
Maxine Clair reads and signs her novel, October Suite.

Mon., Dec. 3, 6:30 p.m.

Children’s Book Week (November 12-18) Events:

Sun., Nov. 11, 2 p.m.

Tues., Nov. 13, 6:30 p.m.

Both programs will be held in the Meyerhoff Children’s Garden of the Central Library.

Call 410-396-5494 to register.
Enoch Pratt Free Library 400 Cathedral St. www.epfl.net

PRATT PRESENTS

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7:30 pm

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In Light Of

In light of recent events, I have done many different things. I have lit candles in the name of those who suffer. I have prayed for the first time in years. I am not religious, but I’ve asked God to give mercy to those affected. I have gone to church, where I’ve recited prayers and psalms and sang songs that I have never sung before. I’ve watched as the priest lit candles, seven candles for seven reasons. In light of recent events, I’ve talked to strangers, who’ve held glowing beacon’s of sorrow for a night of silent mourning.

Deep thoughts have entered and left me, thoughts of anger, revenge and pity. I have thought of trying to help, of donating blood, of sending money or aid. I feel useless.

In light of recent events.

Ben Vaeth-Levin

Names in Lite

-Steve Allen (Fiction: Stoned Angel) is a writer and teacher of writing who lives in a rural community southeast of Portland Oregon. He writes: “Stoned Angel” was born a number of years ago when I encountered a young woman in a writing class I taught. Her writing was raw, intelligent, and dealt with an addiction to CNN and possessed of an encyclopedic knowledge of reggae and the blues. She saw writing as a way out of the mess of her life, but sadly, she quit showing up and I’ve never seen her again. “Stoned Angel” is based on this woman.

-Arthur Glass (Poem: The Gall Song) lives in Hillside, New Jersey. This poem was written for a friend. An alternate title for the poem is “For A Runner.” Mr. Glass frequents the

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Spotlite, cont. from page 8

a building or the land we build upon. America is the people who live—the firemen and the police, the volunteers and blood donors. America is in the hearts of our every single soul. We don’t live in America; America lives in us.

Lacey Burke

Other students took other directions. Elecia Roberts, a senior, spoke of the new consciousness she perceived in America, portraying the tension in our country’s psyche. Her original draft contained what proved to be two poems, one much like Lacey’s in its style, the second the haunting vision which became “Aftermath.”

Aftermath

From the twin towers to the frightened workers retrieving dead bodies, our country remains humble, silent, grieving the next day, for war is chanting death in the air.

Children, holding their breaths, clasping the little tip of their mothers’ skirts, view terror for the first time, not understanding the evil conceived on that Tuesday.

Elecia Roberts

Clearly, Elecia had understood that evil and the horror surrounding it.

Finally, twelfth grader Ben Vaeth-Levin provided a personal and powerful glimpse into his experiences following the terrorist attacks. His writing illustrates the courage and sensitivity I described earlier. He is a young man willing to express his confusion and uncertainty, a young man who speaks to our humanity.

In Metric, cont. from page 5

Alliance (www.baltimorewriters.org), in association with the following organizations: Maryland Writers’ Association, Maryland State Poetry & Literary Society, and Maryland Writing Project.

Okay, now on to happier subjects. I want to talk about the Diva Squad Poetry Collective. Oh, how I love the Diva Squad Poetry Collective. The Diva Squad consists of Chezia Thompson-Cager, Lenett Nefertiti Allen, jaki-terry, and Linda Joy Burke. Their performance at MICA’s Mt. Royal Station September 7 left me positively giddy. I mean, here were four poets spewing up verse that ranges from the erotic (“Allen’s “Why a Lazy Woman Loathes Leaving Her Bed”) and amusing (“Cager’s “Alien Pussy” and jaki-terry’s “Leo Sun Scorpio Moor Cancer Rising, Part II”) to Cager’s choréopoems and a pair of political pieces that ought to be canonic (Burke’s “This is Why I Remember King” and Allen’s “Call to Action on a New Day Dawning for Naomi”), in a well crafted production (and with costumes and group vocalizations and percussion, this was a production) that lasted LESS THAN AN HOUR. I tell you, if all high school students were herded into auditoria around the U.S. for mandatory encounters with the Diva Squad Poetry Collective, we’d have a nation of budding poets on our hands. (I don’t bring the best attempts to span into this Great Critic thing, so I really appreciate brevity when I find it.)

A reason for celebration in this otherwise dark time: I got my first free book from an author seeking publicity. Can a place with Oprah’s entourage be far behind?

I feel useless.

I have lit candles in light of recent events, looking at the students’ work, I recall my own writing as a senior in high school, writing that won an award or two, but that would now strike me as well intentioned but un-original. Its voice was generic, its phrasing indistinguishable from the phrasing of many others. To me, it lacked the maturity of what I see in my students’ best work. It was safe. It could hide what I really thought and felt.

Now, as a teacher of high school creative writing, I’m committed to inspiring my students to go beyond that. I want them to educate themselves about writing. I want them to experiment with style. I want them to help us all experience life more fully through their words. I must encourage them to write clearly and forcefully and honestly. That is my role as their teacher. I see that as the most significant contribution I can make, now more than ever, “in light of recent events.”

BILJONES

Yes, as Kendra Kopelke says, poetry breaks through. I don’t know if that answers Adorno’s question or not.

KATE YEMELYANOVA

“Songs of Remembrance & Renewal” on the Web

Lite is seeking submissions for an ongoing web anthology of work related to the events of September 11, entitled “Songs of Remembrance and Renewal.” Fiction, poetry, art, photos all welcome. Submissions accepted by email to: crescendotoodmail.com; mail to: Lite, PO Box 26162, Baltimore MD 21210. A time to help others & heal ourselves.

The Gull Song (Fiction: Stoned Angel) lives in Hillside, New Jersey. This poem was written for a friend. An alternate title for the poem is “For A Runner.” Mr. Glass frequents the
9/11

by Hilbert H. Turner, Jr.

No one can function as if it is still a normal day anymore. Everyone leaves but me. I volunteer to lock up. Disbelief keeps me seated for one hour. Once my legs allow me to walk again, I do not go directly home. I stop at the library to return a book that is due today. As I enter, the really cute checkout lady is approaching me and carrying in one hand a ring of at least twenty keys. In her other hand is a sheet of paper stating that the library, along with the county schools, is closing. She locks the door behind me. I return my book and do not look for another to borrow. The cute lady is standing by the front door, unlocking and relocking it to let people out. As I leave, an elderly woman behind me asks why the library is closing in the middle of the day. The checkout lady says, “National emergency.” The elderly woman asks if the President has been shot. Another man being let out explains the situation to her. He is the last patron out. I resume my commute and get home at the time the late morning flight from Cincinnati usually passes overhead on its final approach. The sky was empty except for sunshine and clouds, and quiet except for the low-pitched cooing of a pair of mourning doves. I climb three of my four steps and stop. I set my newspaper and lunch bag down and sit on the fourth step. All I have the energy to do now is stare at the houses in front of and next to mine and wonder what is gone on behind the doors.

My Neighbors

My townhouse shares a wall with that of the Ali family: Ahmed, Fatima, and little Molly. Molly is not her real name. Her given name begins with an M, but English speakers never seemed to be able to pronounce it correctly, so her parents took the first name to produce the nickname Molly.

I admire their cleverness. The Alis are devout Muslims. Ahmed is from Philadelphia as are his mother and grandmother. His father is from Tampa. Fatima and her parents are from Detroit. Molly was born in nearby Baltimore. The parents know what they will have to go through for the next few days, maybe weeks. They remember the Persian Gulf conflict and the Ayatollah and how they were not granted amnesty from middle-class American wrath due to their Saudi roots. I remember Oklahoma City and how, when guilty parties were caught, no one called for retribution to be visited upon the heads of those with Islamic surnames.

Fatima pulls up in the minivan. She slides the side door open and two first grade girls pop out and race to the Ali’s house. One is a miniature version of Fatima without the mole on the left cheek. The other has freckles, red hair, and green eyes. Fatima and I acknowledge one another without the customary wave. She knows her husband is not home yet. I can see the worry in her eyes. The ebullient laughter of the girls gives me the energy to rise and unlock my door. The redheaded girl wins the race.

Molly and Megan

Molly is six and doesn’t understand the significance and depth of what is happening today. Her best friend and classmate Megan Zimmerman lives two doors down. The Alis usually watch her until her mother gets home from work in DC. Megan’s father travels a lot. Today, he is in Denver. Megan and Molly are drawing rainbows on the sidewalk with chalk. Megan’s mother finally gets home and screeches the SUV to a halt in front of the houses and jumps out, screaming, “Megan, get away from her right now! Let’s go home!” Naturally, Megan protests, but her mother snatches her up so quickly, she doesn’t have time to drop the chalk or wave bye-bye. Molly is stunned. She sheds silent tears that scream louder than her voice ever could. After ten seconds, she runs inside. 

Ahmed’s Car

I hear glass breaking outside. I go to the window to see two high school boys, one black and one white, vandalizing Ahmed’s car. It has a green bumper sticker with a crescent moon and a slogan, motto, or advertisement written in Arabic. It is parked next to my car. One of the boys is denting the hood by jumping on it and chanting “USA! USA!” The other is in search of more loose asphalt instead of retrieving the chunk that landed on the passenger seat on his last hurl. I exit my door and head for the parking lot. I yank the jumping boy off the car but catlike, he lands on his feet. Someone nearby, I hear rapidly fading footsteps. He gets up in my face and yells, “Hey, man, don’t you realize what hap-

ened to our country today? This is war! What kind of an American are you?” In-

stant anger makes me say, “A tax-paying, God-fearing, and, until now, a law-abiding one.” I clarify my statement by punching him in the gut. I finally notice that he is the white one. I hear sirens getting closer. Someone else obviously called the law. Maybe the other kid; maybe Ahmed; defi-

nitely not Mrs. Zimmerman. The kid I slugged is still doubled over and sucking in air when the lone blonde officer pulls up and turns the flashing lights off. I give my account first since I am the New York and raised since almost a baby in Switzerland, London, and central Europe until 1959 when she perma-

nently returned to America. She received a doctoral degree at the University of Georgia. For years she worked as a consultant but on the side wrote and still writes for newspapers in New York, Los Angeles, London and Sydney and also for the well-known internet magazine, Theatre World. She now lives in Columbia, MD and continues to write theatrical reviews.

Carol Harper (Fiction: Mary Janes) is a writer, editor, and graphic designer living in Balti-

more. As leader of WHJ’s NOTES newsletter from 1996-2000, she utilized all these skills as editor-in-chief and production artist. She received a Master’s degree in comprehensive health publishing from the University of Baltimore. She has read many of her commentary essays on Bal-

timore Voices, a local radio show that mirrored, from our uniquely Baltimorean perspective, NPR’s “All Things Considered.” Her next book, To Win This Afternoon, is due in fall 2002. Harper is also editor of a forthcoming children’s book series, Hocus Pocus Press, featuring local authors and artists. Among Harper’s books is Fugue of a Forgotten Ghost, an adventure story for ages 8-12. Harper lives in Annapolis, Maryland and hosts local poetry readings, including LIT’s Poetry in the Shade series. Her first poetry chapbook, Extended Family, was published in October.

Hilbert Turner, Jr. (Fiction: 911) lives in Baltimore City and hosts local poetry readings, including LIT’s Poetry in the Shade series. His first poetry chapbook, Extended Family, was published in October.
Once More To The Book Fair!

The 2001 Baltimore Book Fair was a great success for Maryland Poetry & Literary Society. We again hosted the Coffee Bar, and for the first time, we actually scheduled the events that took place. Friday night the Coffee Bar’s focus was on College Night, featuring readers, especially from University of Maryland, Baltimore County, Towson University, and Morgan University. Saturday the focus was on poetry and fiction readings, and Sunday a variety of workshops were offered. The Coffee Bar was always crowded with people appreciative of local literary talent.

Our booth at the Baltimore Book Fair was also a success! So many interesting people stopped by, including Joan Biegeleisen, a former member of the Slavic community, who loves observing and interacting with people and who wrote our featured poem “Mommy, Mother, Mom.” In “Thoughts,” Joan expresses her positive outlook on life, saying “Don’t hesitate; reach out today beyond yourself sharing love, knowledge and skill; help others grab on, creating a masterpiece together.”

We were so thankful too for Meredith Burke, Pat Barnes, David Diorio, Rosemarie “MiMi” Zanibio-Buckalew, and George Bracken who worked diligently and tirelessly at our booth. Without the generosity of dedicated volunteers like them, the Society would fold.

For our annual Book Fair raffle, the Chesapeake Center For The Creative Arts donated a family membership, won by Baltimorean Melissa Malanowski; the SoBo Café donated a forty-dollar gift certificate won by Baltimorean Bill Johnson; the American Dime Museum, co-owned by literary light James Taylor, donated a year’s membership, two copies of Shocked and Amused—On Any Night The Midway, and a genuine “dimeand” pin, won by Catonsville resident Pat Barnes, and Friction donated an original signed mobile, won by Sandra Crete. For more information on those who donated the wonderful prizes to us, please read the following article.

—Rosemary Klein

Support These Merchants and Organizations!

Especially with the upcoming holidays, we encourage you to support the local merchants and organizations who support the Society and the literary community at large. If you haven’t yet, stop by the SoBo Café, across from south Baltimore’s Cross Street Market, at 6-5 West Cross Street. The spacious but cozy Café is filled with paintings and serves excellent and intriguing food. Visit this charming restaurant at www.sobocafe.com or call 410-752-1518.

And while you’re in south Baltimore, make sure to visit Friction, 1039 Light Street, 443-722-2322, where you’ll find appealing gifts, vintage clothes, and original, visionary art, including mobbies and clocks, by Friction’s ebullient proprietor Gerald Gillis. Visiting Friction should make your Christmas shopping a snap!

Chesapeake Center for the Creative Arts (CCCA) is located in Brooklyn Park at 194 Hammond Lane.

The Center offers music classes for all ages as well as classes in the visual and the literary arts, dance, clay and pottery, and drama and acting. Linda Joy Burke, president of the Baltimore Writers’ Alliance, and Barbara Simon, president of Maryland Poetry & Literary Society have both taught CCCA workshops. The Center’s literary classes have also included creative writing for teens, introduction to playwriting, and dramatic screenplay writing for television. December 7 at CCCA is opening night for the perennial holiday favorite A Christmas Carol. For more information on CCCA’s special events, its classes or memberships, visit the Center’s web site at www.chesapeakearts.org or call 410-636-6597.

The American Dime Museum (ADM), the world’s only museum devoted to variety, novelty, and entertainment in the form of a dime store, is a must see! At 1808 Maryland Avenue, you’ll feast on eye-popping displays that will make you say “Wow.”

—Rosemary Klein

A City of Readings

While Baltimore may no longer be known as "the city that reads," a case can be made that we should be known as "the city of readings." And the Enoch Pratt Central Branch can take great credit for the title.

“Society’s Page” is brought to you by the Maryland State Poetry and Literary Society under the auspices of The Life Circle, Inc., with special thanks to Alan C. Reese

Under Judy Cooper, Chief of Public Relations and Programming, the library honors a commitment to writers and their audiences by bringing them together for readings as various and interesting as our city itself.

On Sunday, October 21, Washington Writers’ Publishing House poets Bernard Jankowski and Margaret Weaver were featured in a reading at the Central Branch’s Poem Room. Weaver, a retired teacher and tree farmer from Wayne, ME, read from Escaping Words (WWPH, 2001), her collection of poems evolving from close observation and insightful reflection. Lyrical and sensual, Weaver, with lines such as “Gold-crowned, lean, solemn old man’s sonnets (from branch to branch) and clear shoes (‘Tree master’) displayed her quiet skill of making the ordinary into the extraordinary. Reading from his collection The Bullfrog Does Not Imagine New Tones (WWPH, 2001), Bernard Jankowski, who hails from Shamokin, PA and who owns a business in Frederick, MD, shared poems firmly grounded in place and filled with interesting characters such as “Eddie [who] is sitting without a hat” ("Fast Eddie") or “The Carnival Owner [who] knows the silence” ("The Silence Beyond the Carnival Grounds"). Jankowski’s poems portray a world not quite secure, a world that just may tilt.

Within two weeks of those two readings, on October 27, the Pratt featured a writer of international prominence. Thomas Glave, who has been praised by David Lynn of the Kenyon Review as "one of the finest and most important new voices on the American literary scene," read from whose soul? and other stories, his first collection of short stories. Glave’s talent and appeal were obvious (he read for an audience of 30 minutes in a fall afternoon) A master of voice, in "And Love Them" Glave developed a first-person portrait of a white woman pathetically unaware of her prejudices. In "Whose Song," that voice turned lyrical as the author wrote of the despair of a young lesbian raped by boys who knew her. Glave also read a piece "interview with a Not-Poem" written in response to the September 11 tragedy.

So, wherever you are, be aware — because of the Enoch Pratt Central Branch programming — we are "the city of readings.”

—Barbara Simon

Mommy, Mother, Mom

The silence is broken by streams of tears coming from my eyes:

Acting for my mother’s touch
Yearning for the warmth of her arms
Wishing I was curled in her protective lap.
Wanting the smell of her sweet breath,

Then calmreaches out and soothes my brow
Peace surging through every part of me.

I see my mother’s spirit, I feel her soul.
She breathes strength into my heart... whispering

"I am you and you are me."

Joan Biegeleisen
The Architect and the Emperor of Assyria. Reviewed by Meaghan Greyson at the Poolesville Playhouse, well reputed Spanish playwright, who included the play into his self-described “theatre of panic” (theatre panique) which was named after the god Pan, the one that could make people laugh and dance one minute, and plunge them into terror, the next.

The play was presented by the GALA Theatre Company in collaboration with the Washington Performing Arts Society, and the National Endowment for the Arts with the support of the Embassy of Spain.

This controversial, written around 1965 in Arrabal’s Paris exile, and which has been successfully performed worldwide, is excellently directed by Jose Carassquillo, who faithfully brought about all the corrosive rumination on the nature of Man, ruthlessly exposing all the ugliness of the mankind; as well as his smart guiding of the characters—Arrabal’s kind of men—the ones who need to rule and reign, and the ones who build, control, and create.

The performance, in a Spanish Castilian language, was translated by Everard d’Harmoncourt and Adele Shank, with a simultaneous interpretation coordinated by Ed Johnson.

The farce has been attributed to the non-realistic genre of absurdism. The Theatre of the Absurd, a term coined by the critic Martin Esslin, never followed the roots of logic and among the representatives of this school of drama we find the works of Genet, Albee, Becket (“Waiting for Godot”), Jarry (“Ubu Roi”).

This is a story of two people living together: their games, their roles, the gestures they make, the roles they assume together: their games, their plays, the gestures they make, the roles they assume—two aspects of one personality continually switching roles as an implicit suggestion that both characters are ever-changing reflections of one man.

Luis Caram is the Architect, noble and naive, who acts brilliantly when sending inadvertently brutal blows to his companion using a speech pregnant with hideous humor. He is very real and convincing when submitting to the will of the self-styled Emperor in order to learn the ways of the “civilized” men from this sole survivor of an airplane crash.

Hugo Medrano was magnificent as the Emperor: an effective versatile performer in the impersonation of several witnesses during an hilarious mock trial; and forceful in the disgust he spewed out in rascally derisive laughter. Both men arguing, ac- cusing, condemning, fighting, loving, and losing seemed to be depicting a dual representation of one human soul in a eternal conflict.

This play is saying something about isolation, confinement and the needs of a 20th century man with the grace of the 20th century man with the grace of the absurd, phantasmagoric island where a man can make his own rules, those he’s made with the grace of the absurd, and the meaning of the absurd an existence surrounded by a scenery which reminds of Goya’s fierce etchings, his Caprichos sketches and some of Picasso’s paintings. Also, there are influ- ences of Ionesco (“The Lesson”) in the chattering technique used where the charac- ters sometimes cannot communicate.

The entire action takes place on a desert, elusive, phantasmagoric island where a plane has crashed and the only survivor is this man who calls himself the Emperor of Assyria and seems to descend from the sky. There is a lone inhabitant, a savage, whom he dubs the Architect. Those two, confined and prisoners of an illusive reality, are in conflict as well as in love. There are intricate series of interac- tions, graphic and intense, which provide an enthralling analysis of the formation of societal roles.

This complex charade is a confrontation and in fact a study in role playing: the Emperor parades around the stage impersonating different people: his wife, his brother and a friend. The Architect pretends to be sometimes the Emperor’s grieving mother and a prosecutor as well. The Architect devours the Emperor on stage as the climax of this odd surreal interlude, an implicit allegory of special aspects of life, perhaps the human condition in its creative level.

When the Emperor urges the Architect to kill and devour him, it seems to symbol- ize the pagan ritual of slaughtering a sacred king, which represents the nature god who died and revived with the season, a phoenix coming out radiantly from the ashes, as seen in the last scene when it repeats the sequence with the Architect coming back as the Emperor.

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This play is saying something about isolation, confinement and the needs of a 20th century man with the grace of the absurd, the coarseness of the real, its mood, its sentiment, its special eloquence and its basic thrust which makes it unmis- takably powerful.

The play for this farce has been consid- ered a blasphemous caricature of the Ro- man Catholic Mass. For others, the inter- pretation of the characters resides on the faces of two a coin, the two sides of the coin. Continued on page 14

ERRATUM

On the cover of the September/October 2001 (Special Italian Issue) of Lite, Regina Soria was incorrectly listed as the author of “The Translator’s Dilemma.” The author is Madeleine Keller. Lite regrets the error.
This drama, written by Eugene O’Neill in 1943, is the sequel to “Long Days’ Journey into Night,” where the character of the dissolute James Tyrone. The story starts just after the wedding, three generations of feuding families, with an atmosphere of despair, loss, and mourning.

Josie and her father, James Tyrone, whose family has long owned the Hogan farm, is preparing to leave the farm in 1923. At the beginning, the story revolves around the need for a mother and the guilt to Josie and to himself in terms of his long hatred to his father and the love and remorse he now can sleep under the eternal spirit. He confesses to Josie and also when discovers for one night a loved mother in Josie. He pretends to be a slut with calculating efficacy as she appears to be and who is a very quick thinking, overweight, and promiscuous slut, all her inner self-hatred about herself; revealing, as the affected bawdy as she, who is magnificently the role with a shrewd coarse with emotional euphoria.

Bill Hamlin is Phil Hogan who renders magnificently the role with a shrewd coarse sense of humor and a soft heart displayed with emotional euphoria. Valerie Constantini is excellent in her interpretation of Josie showing no illusions about herself; revealing, as the affected promiscuous slut, all her inner self-hatred as well as her neurotic pride which enables to eradicate the rooted self-loathing that overshadows her personality. J. M. McDonough is James Tyrone Jr., who faithfully portrays the least dramatic of O’Neill’s protagonists. He is very successful as an alcoholic and in describing his haunted memories and his whoring binges; though not very convincing and somewhat unsettling in his role of self-analysis, his spiritual agonies, and his self-tormenting which are all related to an unresolved Oedipus conflict. He is superficial in his braggart poise and also as the lonely child at heart who cries for his “mommy,” which remains Dion’s conception of Cybel in “The Great God Brown.” However, he’s good in his contrasting moods, expansive one moment and submissive the other, and in showing oblivious and denial of his real identity.

This rich modern drama, with fierce qualities of introspection, is filled with emotional truth, a wealth of psychological complexities that progressively uncover the masks that some people wear to either conceal or disguise their feelings in order to protect themselves and avoid becoming vulnerable to one another.

MEAGHAN GREYSON

Das Barbecu. Reviewed by Meaghan Greyson at The Vagabond Theatre, the oldest little theatre in Baltimore, MD, on Sunday, September 16th, 2001.

This inane musical comedy, in two acts, with book and lyrics by Jim Luigi and music by Scott Warrender, was presented by the Vagabond Players and directed by Terry J. Long. The musical was originally commissioned by the Seattle Opera and later produced Off-Broadway at the Minetta Lane Theater.

This is a brazen, small-scale musical with five actors playing about 35 characters and costume changing at a terrific speed. It tries to present a witty Texas fable as an hilarious and grotesque parody of Wagner’s famous opera “Der Ring Des Niebelungen” (The Nibelung Ring). This crazy musical includes a shotgun double wedding, three generations of feuding families, guitar-singing cowboys and girls crowning out their unhappy woes in a Western rather than a country twang; and a magic gold ring that gives its owner worldly powers. The musical runs from Broadway to Texas swing, to jazz and country and western foot stomping’s. This puerile romp is characterized by dialogues interspersed by a series of ditties that explain the complex situations among the characters in their diverse roles.

The plot, which first focuses on Siegfried drugged and betrothed to Gutrune while his beloved Brunhilde is also mis-betrothed to another, opens with the song “A Ring of Gold in Texas” that makes clear the quest for the marvellous ring which drives the action. The score includes gleeful melodies like “Hot-Tie Your Man”; the ode of “Makin Guacamole”; “Rodeo Romeo”; as well as romantic ballads like “County Fair” and “Slide a Little Closer,” which envisions Siegfried and Brunhilde gliding along a dance floor in a Texas two-step walk.

The performance of the five actors was excellent, specifically Heather Marie Beck as Gutrune, Laura K. Cosner as Brunnhilde, and Stuart Goldstone as Siegfried. Also, well to mention is the musical director Robert Gee and his keyboard, and Tony Colavito who produced a fantastic geography map of Texas dropped in as a splendid backdrop.

It was a terrific time spent watching this director Long’s fast-paced production!

MEAGHAN GREYSON

We, Like Winter

We, like winter; sky tipple dumps white on buried tract, branch and hive. Nature retreats into the artifact of sex, bedecked, sprayed with hoar-frost, hung with balls and lights that copy flickered heat of firefly in twilight’s frenzy. Nothing we admit of this nature, ever-green, ever pushing up from white to spring’s first fever.

Kathleen Hellen

Lit Reviews: 2.4.2001

MEAGHAN GREYSON


This central character of the play, Josie, Tyrone and Phil Hogan, are New England Irish who are set in a Connecticut farm in 1923. At the beginning, the story revolves around the need for a mother and the guilt to Josie and to himself in terms of his long hatred to his father and the love and remorse he now can sleep under the eternal spirit. He confesses to Josie and also when discovers for one night a loved mother in Josie. He pretends to be a slut with calculating efficacy as she appears to be and who is a very quick thinking, overweight, and promiscuous slut, all her inner self-hatred about herself; revealing, as the affected bawdy as she, who is magnificently the role with a shrewd coarse with emotional euphoria. Valerie Constantini is excellent in her interpretation of Josie showing no illusions about herself; revealing, as the affected promiscuous slut, all her inner self-hatred as well as her neurotic pride which enables to eradicate the rooted self-loathing that overshadows her personality. J. M. McDonough is James Tyrone Jr., who faithfully portrays the least dramatic of O’Neill’s protagonists. He is very successful as an alcoholic and in describing his haunted memories and his whoring binges; though not very convincing and somewhat unsettling in his role of self-analysis, his spiritual agonies, and his self-tormenting which are all related to an unresolved Oedipus conflict. He is superficial in his braggart poise and also as the lonely child at heart who cries for his “mommy,” which remains Dion’s conception of Cybel in “The Great God Brown.” However, he’s good in his contrasting moods, expansive one moment and submissive the other, and in showing oblivious and denial of his real identity.

This rich modern drama, with fierce qualities of introspection, is filled with emotional truth, a wealth of psychological complexities that progressively uncover the masks that some people wear to either conceal or disguise their feelings in order to protect themselves and avoid becoming vulnerable to one another.

MEAGHAN GREYSON
Stoned Angel
by
Stevan Allred

The Gull Song

They are the clowns of light,
angels of lower air,
slapstick Punicillos. Look where
they coat up the cliffs of heat,
crying, canting there,
hang by the merest wingbeat.

May my song do the same:
climb up the frets of breath,
tongue the eternal name,
sing down the maw of death.

Arthur Glass

Bitter.

Baby makes a face when my milk lets down. Three or four hours into the rock my milk tastes bitter, but he’s gotten used to it. That first taste makes his face scrunch up so cute. I love when he nurses, the way his mouth latches on. He’s so strong. I can tell how much he needs me by how hard he sucks. Not like his father. Guzzetta doesn’t need me, not anymore.

Guzzetta pays my rent sometimes but he never comes around to see his baby. Like he don’t want to see.

He waits for me on paydays, outside the hotel, up against the lightpole in his ratty leather jacket with his eyelids half closed. Walks me down to the bank and stands in line with me while I cash my check. He’s in my ear, tells me he’s got The Good.

Bread into flesh. Wine into blood. If a priest does it they call it a miracle. Priestly magic.

Oil into rock. Rock into smoke. If I do it, it’s a crime and a sin.

Baby don’t mind.

Magic. Before the rock’s all the way cooked, while it’s still small and gathering itself from the water and the heat and the baking soda. Glob of oil dead center in the rolling boil. Magic, how the oil finds the center and stays there. Magic, how the oil becomes rock.

Baby starts to fuss a little. All wrapped up in a blanket on the couch. He’s squirming but he won’t fall cause he’s wedged in tight with pillows. He cries a little, and I sing to him to let him know I’m here. Them that’s got shall get, Them that’s not shall lose, So The Bible says, And it still is news . . .

Baby loves when I sing. Quiets him right down.

Candlelight is best. Dark, like inside a chapel when I start to cook the rock. Blue flame from the gas so pretty, and with all the lights off the kitchen is like Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve. Something so special about to happen.

Alchemy. Making gold from base metals. Guzzetta taught me how. Baking soda and water and cocaine hydrochlorate. Atoms and molecules. Baking soda strips the hydrochlorate off and makes it disappear, steam rising in the air and gone.

What’s left is pure. That little rock is an Act of Faith. Spend your whole paycheck on an eightball and dump it in the water and watch it dissolve. The only way to get it back is to cook it. Blue flame. The Refiner’s Fire. You have to believe. You got to get the flame just right so the water won’t boil too hard, and keep it that way until the rock comes. The Philosopher’s Stone.

A miracle, right here in my kitchen.

That moment when I dip the baby spoon in the water and lift the rock out I feel like I should be on my knees. O-Father-For-give-Me-For-I-Have-Sinned. Ten Hail Mary’s while I dry the lump out with the hair drier.

Baby sleeps a lot, which is a blessing. God looks out for us, each and every one, no matter what kind of sins we commit. God put the Vietnamese woman down the hall so she could watch my baby while I work. God put the Safeway store on the corner, and it’s God who turns the eyes of the clerks away when I shoplift. And God made my baby a good baby so I can do the things I need to do.

Thank God for TV, it’s always so dark in this apartment. I’ve always liked the way a TV lights up a dark room. Mostly I watch old reruns. I saw The Flying Nun last night.

Newsbreaks in between shows. This winter it’s all Bosnia. Winter in Sarajevo, and how terrible the war is. A woman holds a crucifix above her head like a shield. Crying in the angels. People standing in line for water and a mortar round comes in from somewhere they can’t even see. Blown to bits for a bucket of water.

They burned all the wood in Sarajevo last winter, and now there’s none left.

Snow on the ground. Must be cold there.

Baby warm up against me, TV light flickering in the room, glass pipe on the floor where I can reach it. Only thing is my feet get so cold when I smoke the rock. Makes me shiver.

I’m going to quit. If I hadn’t run into Guzzetta I wouldn’t of spent my paycheck so fast. Wasn’t much of a paycheck anyway. Doesn’t matter, the money just comes and goes.

I only bought a gram. Is that such a crime?

Guzzetta is Bosnia. Sarajevo. Guzzetta is a mortar round, coming in from somewhere I can’t see. I have no crucifix. My baby is my shield, my angel.

The way the light in the room changes from blue glow to dull daylight, I hate the dawn. All the mystery drains away. Baby and me rock back and forth in the morning light. My feet cold and I sing to him, the way my Mama used to sing to me, Mama may have, Papa may have, But God bless the child that’s got his own. His eyes close and we lay down on the couch, keeping each other warm, and I sing us to sleep.
CALLING ALL WRITERS!

STOP!

You are NOT ALLOWED to put down this magazine without reading about Lite’s 2001 Poetry & Short Fiction Contest

Winners in each category will receive the following prizes:

FIRST PRIZE: $75
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All winners will be featured at a special Lite Circle reading and will have their work published in Lite: Baltimore’s Literary Newspaper

All entries must be postmarked no later than December 31, 2001. Reading fee: $5.00 per story, $3.00 per poem, $10.00 for up to 6 poems. No limit on submissions. Manuscripts should be typed, double-spaced, with cover sheet containing title(s) of work, along with author’s name, address, and telephone number. The manuscript should include the title, but not the author’s name. Please include short bio. Winners will be notified by March 31, 2002. Maximum story length 6,000 words. Maximum poem length 50 lines. Please mail entries to:

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