

# Lite

**FREE!**  
to residents of  
Baltimore City,  
Annapolis, Bel Air,  
Columbia, Glen Burnie,  
Laurel, Towson, and  
the entire Baltimore  
metropolitan area.

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 1999

## Baltimore's Literary Newspaper

### THIS ISSUE

#### SPOTLITE: Literary News

- **A Window on the World: Normal's Bookstore** *Dan Cuddy*
- **A Lazy Weekend at the Baltimore Book Festival** *Patti Kinlock*

#### Fiction

##### Markoe and the Black Moon

Christopher A. Henry

Milton

John Becker

#### Poetry

- Hiram Larew ■ Frank S. Palmisano III ■ Mel Tansill  
Ivor C. Treby ■ Dawn Zapletl

#### Artwork

- **Cover Art** *Dolores Andrew*
- **Inside Art** *Hazel Camp*

#### Lite Reading: Book Review

**WHERE THEY AIN'T** by Burt Solomon

*Reviewed by Patrick Stevens*

#### LYTE BYTES

#### GUIDELINES FOR WRITERS

*Plus*

Literary Happenings in October and November!



### TOP STORY

## A Window on the World: Normal's Bookstore

*E. 31<sup>st</sup> Street, Baltimore:* News is usually a moment in time that explodes like a hurricane, flooding a society's consciousness with its transitory upheavals, but news can also be the daily unseen routine of a farmer or a mother's daily care for her infant. These long-term quiet things have as much, and maybe more, impact on our lives than the spectacular one time thing. Sometimes time accretes like the silt in a delta. Sometimes a whole era's eccentricities are found in somebody's display window. It is the process of noticing that is the

news.

Recently I discovered the windows of Normal's Bookstore. I've passed them hundreds of times, and have taken quick glances at the Halloween Bunny from hell, complete with fangs and skulls in its basket. The red dripping from its mouth is certainly not strawberry juice. No, I wouldn't point out that rabbit to 3 year-olds. Well, recently I just stopped and looked into the windows of that little bookstore. There were more totems from our crazy society than Woody Allen could imagine.

Normal's windows are multicultural. There was a large Tiki head made by Stoo of Stoo's Tiki Island. Stoo is Normal's Rupert Wondolowski's brother. (Rupert never said whether his brother's island is in the Pacific or the Chesapeake Bay or just in the imagination, but there is a website-- isn't there always a website?) Next to the head is a glass green Buddha. It is not particularly pretty, not particularly ugly. It, like existence, just is. As a backdrop to these figures there is a painted screen of

*Cont. on p. 8*

## THANK YOU!

This issue was made possible with grants provided by the Abell Foundation, American Trading and Production Corporation, Development Credit Fund, Inc., the Maryland State Arts Council, the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Art and Culture, the Harry and Jeannette Weinberg Foundation, and charitable contributions from Lite Circle members, including:

### PATRONS

Mary B. Kriebel

### SUPPORTING MEMBERS

Carroll Branch, National League of

American Pen Women

Karen Feeney

R. V. Gorski

Jarrettsville Pharmacy

Robert S. Johnson

Mitchell and Rose Kerr

Barbara E. Kirchner

Marta Knobloch

Rupel E. Marshall

McDonald's Rock Spring

Frederick G. Preis, D.D.S./P.A.

Dawn Sacks

Donald and Beverly Syvrud

Eileen S. Tarcay

Stacy E. Tuthill

Maryanne Vukcevic

Lite: Baltimore's Literary Newspaper

### ADVERTISING RATES

**FULL PAGE \$250**

(10 1/4" x 13 1/2")

**JR. FULL \$195**

(7 5/8" x 10 1/16")

**1/2 PAGE \$160**

(10 1/4" x 6 5/8" or 5" x 13 1/2")

**1/4 PAGE \$95**

(2 5/8" x 13 1/2" or 5" x 6 5/8")

**1/8 PAGE \$50**

(5" x 3 3/16" or 2 3/8" x 6 5/8")

**1/16 PAGE \$25**

(5" x 1 1/2" or 2 3/8" x 3 3/16")

**1/32 PAGE \$15**

(2 3/8" x 1 1/2")

**Business Card \$15**

1 issue (no discounts)

### Volume Discounts

3 months 5% discount

6 months 10% discount

12 months 15% discount

For more info, call (410) 719-7792

# Lite

Baltimore's Literary Newspaper

P.O. Box 26162

Baltimore, Maryland 21210

<http://litecircle.dragonfire.net>

*Editor and Publisher:* David W. Kriebel; *Managing Editor:* Patti Kinlock; *Director of Public Relations:* Dina Feinberg; *Assistant Editors:* Dan Cuddy, Dina Feinberg; *News Editor/Calendar Editor:* Dan Cuddy; *Book Review Editor:* W.H. Stevens; *Art Director:* Vonnie Winslow Crist; *Illustrators:* Diana Botteon, Vonnie Crist; *Acting Literary Discussion Group Coordinator:* Dennis Barnes; *Acting Membership Director:* Patti Kinlock; *Literary and Distribution Staff:* Sam Beard, Marisa Canino, Dan Cuddy, Donna Eason, Lisa Hurowitz, John Schweitzer, Susan Sweeney; *Annapolis Reading Host:* Sam Beard; *Webmistress:* Patti Kinlock; *Photography:* Moira Lachen.

Opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect the views of The Lite Circle, Inc., its staff, or contributors.

© 1999 The Lite Circle, Inc.

# Literary October/November

A Bi-Monthly Potpourri of Literary Events

(Watch for more September events in *Lite's* September 1999 Supplement)

### Consecutive Reading Series

Monday, October 4, 11, 18, 25

**11:00 a.m.** Barnes & Noble-Towson Circle. Betty Walter leads a weekly meeting in writing memoir essays. Designed for those 50 and over.

Tuesday, October 5, 12, 19, 26

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

Thursday, October 7, 14, 21, 28

**8:00 p.m.-close.** Jazz session and open mic poetry, Xando Coffee and Bar, 3003 N. Charles St., Charles Village. For more info, call (410) 889-7076.

**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 Swiss. For more info, email [tms@infamous.net](mailto:tms@infamous.net) or call (410) 455-5325.

Monday, October 11, 25

**7:00 p.m.** Lite Circle Roundtable Critiquing Group meets at The Coffee Junction, 803 Frederick Rd., Catonsville. All writers welcome. For more info, contact Dennis Barnes, Acting Discussion Coordinator, at (410) 744-2173.

Tuesday, October 12, 26

**7:00 p.m.** Barnes & Noble-Ellicott City. Writer's Group. Bring 15 copies of your work to distribute for discussion & critique.

### Literary October

Friday, October 1

**7:30 p.m.** Barnes & Noble-Annapolis. Join host Sam Beard for "Poet's Night Out/Annapolis Lites," reading and discussion group sponsored by The Lite Circle.

Saturday, October 2

**12:00-2:00 p.m.** Bibelot-Cross Keys. Culinary masters Julia Child and Jacques Pepin sign copies of their collaborative effort, *Julia and Jacques Cooking at Home*.

**8:30 am - 4:00 p.m.** Maryland State National League of American Pen Women 1999 Arts Conference, Essex Community College, Rossville Blvd. Writing, art, music, lunch, etc.—only \$22 per person. Pre-registration required. For more info, call (410) 557-0177.

**3:00-7:00 p.m.** "Books in a New Binding and a New Light." Exclusive one-day exposition. Gadfly Bookbinding and Conservation, 827 N. Howard St., Baltimore. Book conservation examples and fine finding by Steven Loew. Book art by Irene Woodbury. For more info, call (410) 728-1211.

Sunday, October 3

**2:00 p.m.** Enoch Pratt Free Library, Central Branch, Poe Room. The 77<sup>th</sup> Commemorative Edgar Allan Poe Lecture. Dr. J. Gerald Kennedy, Professor of English, LSU, will speak on "The American Turn of Edgar Allan Poe." Reception follows the program.

Bibelot-Cross Keys. Discussion and signing with Dr. Larry Dossey, author *Reinventing Medicine: Beyond Mind-Body to a New Era of Healing*.

Monday, October 4

**10:00-11:30 a.m.** Saxton Freymann and Joost Elffers, food sculptors and photographers and authors of *Play With Your Food* and a new book, *How Are You Feeling?*, visit The Children's Bookstore, 737 Deepdene Rd., Roland Park. For more info, call (410) 532-2000.

**7:00 p.m.** Borders Books-Towson. "Meter's Running. Open Mic. Limit of 10 participants, to read 5 minutes each. Register at the 1<sup>st</sup> floor information desk.

**7:30 p.m.** Barnes & Noble-Towson Circle. "The Writing Workout, A Monthly Event." Join poets Virginia Crawford and Sam Schmidt of the Baltimore Writers Alliance as they lead the Writing Workout, where you can pump up your poetry and fiction muscles and do mental calisthenics.

Bibelot-Timonium. Discussion and signing. Pulitzer Prize-winner Richard Rhodes traces

the research of criminologist Dr. Lonnie Athens in *Why They Kill: The Discoveries of a Maverick Criminologist*.

Tuesday, October 5

**6:30 p.m.** Enoch Pratt Free Library, Central Branch, Wheeler Auditorium. Camika C. Spencer reads from her novel *When All Hell Breaks Loose*.

**7:30 p.m.** Bibelot-Woodholme. Discussion and signing with Deborah Weisgall, author of *A Joyful Noise: Claiming the Songs of My Fathers*. Her grandfather was Chizuk Amuno's cantor and her father was an opera composer and conductor of the synagogue choir.

Wednesday, October 6

**7:00 p.m.** Borders-Columbia (see **Lite Bytes**). Priscilla Pitts facilitates for the Literature Book Group a discussion of Ian McEwan's *Enduring Love*.

**7:30 p.m.** "Function at the Junction" reading series at the Coffee Junction, 803 Frederick Rd. Admission \$2. Featured is the group Sunday Salon with poets Dana Bloomfield, Kamilah Aisha Moon, and Jean Cushman. For more information call (410) 719-7717. An open reading follows.

Thursday, October 7

**6:00-8:00 p.m.** Enoch Pratt Free Library, Central Branch. "Poetry in Motion": Non-

*Continued on p. 3*

## The Big Literary "Spot" Lites

Barnes & Noble-Annapolis, 5216 Solomon's Island Rd., Annapolis Harbour Shopping Center. Phone: (410) 573-1115.

Barnes & Noble-Ellicott City, 4300 Montgomery Rd., Long Gate Shopping Center. Phone: (410) 203-7006.

Barnes & Noble-Towson Circle, 1 East Joppa Rd. Phone: (410) 296-7021.

Bibelot-Canton, 2400 Boston St. Phone: (410) 276-9700.

Bibelot-Cross Keys, 40 Village Square, Baltimore. Phone: (410) 532-8818.

Bibelot-Timonium Crossing, 2080 York Rd. Phone: (410) 308-1888.

Bibelot-Woodholme, 1819 Reisterstown Rd., Pikesville. Phone: (410) 653-6933.

Borders-Columbia, 9051 Snowden Square Dr. Phone: (410) 290-0062. [**New location as of Oct. 30:** 6151 Columbia Crossing Circle, Columbia, MD 21045, 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.

WordHouse Salon at Minas, 733-35 S. Ann St., Fells Point. Phone: (410) 732-4258.

Calendar, cont. from p. 2

stop readings by Baltimore poets A. V. Christie, Allen Grossman, Phillis Levin, Kathy Mangan, Elizabeth Spires and Greg Williamson. Sponsored by the Poetry Society of America in collaboration with the Maryland Transit Authority. The poems of these writers will be on MTA buses.

**7:00 p.m.** Bibelot-Cross Keys. Discussion and signing with Stephen Vicchio, author of *Pieces of an Examined Life*, his latest collection of essays and stories spun from everyday issues and events.

Friday, October 8

**11:00 a.m.** Bibelot-Woodholme. *For children.* Bill Nye, science guru and host of television's "Bill Nye, Science Guy," discusses and signs his first picture book, *Big Blue Ocean*.

**6:30 p.m.** Enoch Pratt Free Library, Central Branch, Main Hall. Omar Tyree reads from his novel *Sweet St. Louis*.

**7:00 p.m.** Bibelot-Canton. Discussion and signing with local author David Pugh, author of *The Book of Baltimore Orioles Lists*. Pugh has been collecting Orioles trivia most of his life. Come test your knowledge of Orioles baseball and take an Orioles trivia test, get all the answers correct, and you will receive an autographed copy of Pugh's book.

Bibelot-Timonium. Award-winning cooking instructor and cookbook author Lynne Rossetto Kasper shares recipes from her newest cookbook, *The Italian Country Table: Home Cooking from Italy's Farmhouse Kitchens*. Discussion, tasting and signing.

Saturday, October 9

**1:00 p.m.** The Harford Poetry Society meets at the Harford County Library in Bel Air. For directions/info, call (410) 877-1625.

**2:00 p.m.** Bibelot-Woodholme. Discussion and signing with Adele Holden, author of *Down on the Shore*, her story of life in an African-American family living and loving through the Depression along the Pocomoke River.

Sunday, October 10

**4:00-6:00 p.m.** WordHouse at Minas. Featured readers to be announced. \$3 donation. Open Mic follows.

Monday, October 11

**4:00-6:00 p.m.** Jean Craighead George, author of the Julie Trilogy, *My Side of the Mountain*, and a new book, *Morning, Noon and Night*, and Twig C. George, author of *A Dolphin Named Bob* and a new book, *Swimming With Sharks*, visit The Children's Bookstore, 737 Deepdene Rd., Roland Park. For more info, call (410) 532-2000.

**7:00 p.m.** Borders-Columbia (see **Lite Bytes**). Open Mike Poetry. Bring 3 or 4 minutes of something new and share it.

Tuesday, October 12

**6:30 p.m.** Enoch Pratt Free Library, Central Branch, Wheeler Auditorium. Valerie Wilson Wesley reads from her novel *Ain't Nobody's Business If I Do*.

**7:00 p.m.** Bibelot-Cross Keys. After five years, mystery author Sara Paretsky brings back the heroine private investigator V.I. Warshawski in her latest book, *Hard Times*. Discussion and signing.

Wednesday, October 13

**7:30 p.m.** Barnes & Noble-Towson Circle. Joyce Brown and Madeleine Mysko from Johns Hopkins Writing Seminars will present readings of their recent works.

Thursday, October 14

**7:00 p.m.** Borders-Columbia (see **Lite Bytes**) Author E.F. Conklin discusses and signs her biography *Exile to Sweet Dixie: The Story of Euphemia Goldsborough, Confederate Nurse and Smuggler*.

**7:30 p.m.** Bibelot-Woodholme. *Slow Motion: A True Story* is a memoir of a life rescued by tragedy. Discussion and signing with author Dani Shapiro.

Friday, October 15

**7:30 p.m.** Bibelot-Timonium. "Lite Verse at Bibelot." The Lite Circle hosts a reading and publication party for *Lower Than the Angels* (Lite Circle Books). Many of the authors included in the anthology will read. For more info, call (410) 719-7792.

Saturday, October 16

**1:00-3:00 p.m.** The Lite Circle hosts "Poetry in the Shade," open reading/discussion series at Something Special Coffee House, 504 Main St., Laurel. All are invited to read or just listen. For more info, call (410) 889-1574 or (410) 719-7792.

**2:00 p.m.** Bibelot-Timonium. Discussion and signing with Patricia T. O'Connor, author of *Woe Is I*. Her latest book is *Words Fail Me: What Everyone Who Writes Should Know About Writing*. She offers practical, sensible tips and techniques for making poor writing presentable and good writing even better.

**4:00 p.m.** Bibelot-Cross Keys. Find out what makes Baltimore "Bawlmer" with Caroline Males, Carol Rodnick and Pam Goresh, authors of *Wish You Were Here! A Guide to Baltimore City for Natives and Newcomers*. Discussion and signing.

**6:00 p.m.** Bibelot-Canton. Maryland native Kevin Atticks offers a wine tasting and lecture about grape-growing and wine-making in Maryland referencing his book *Discovering Maryland Wineries*. Joining Atticks will be Paul Roberts, co-owner of Deep Creek Cellars of western MD and author of *From This Hill*, which chronicles his highly personal wine story. (Must be 21 or older to participate in the wine tasting.)

Sunday, October 17

**1:00 p.m.** Barnes & Noble-Towson Circle. "Travel Talk." Join Allan R. Miller as he discusses travel in the British Isles with an emphasis on *Literary England*.

**2:00 p.m.** Bibelot-Canton. Author and anthropologist Pearl Katz, Ph.D. discusses her book *The Scalpel's Edge: The Culture of Surgeons*. Dr. Katz offers a view of what surgeons actually do in and out of the operating room.

Bibelot-Cross Keys. *Leap into Darkness: Seven Years on the Run in Wartime Europe* by local author Leo Bretholz, co-authored by Michael Olesker, is the memoir of his escape from the Nazis' Final Solution. Discussion and signing of new paperback.

Monday, October 18

**6:00-8:30 p.m.** 3<sup>rd</sup> Mondays "Intellectual Stimulation." Open-Mike Poetry Slam. Love theme: no profanity, 5 min. limit, must be signed in by 6:15 p.m. Business Center at Park Circle, 2901 Druid Park Drive, Rm. 209. Featuring Linda Joy Burke, hosted by E-Z Spearit. Admission \$5. For more info, call (410) 594-9556.

**7:30 p.m.** Barnes & Noble-Towson Circle. David Corn reads and signs his first novel, *Deep Background*, an intelligent page-turning political thriller.

Tuesday, October 19

**6:30 p.m.** Enoch Pratt Free Library, Central Branch, Poe Room. Editor Brett Axel discusses and reads from the new anthology of poems he has compiled: *Will Work for Peace: New Political Poems*, which features work by Sherman Alexie, Collette Inez, Martin Espada, W. D. Snodgrass, and Maryland poets Hilary Tham and Reginald Harris.

**7:00 p.m.** Bibelot-Timonium. Laura Lippmanis back with *In Big Trouble*, the fourth book in her acclaimed series starring Tess Monaghan. Discussion and signing.

Thursday, October 21

**11:00 a.m.** Bibelot-Timonium. *For children.* Jan Brett, one of the nation's foremost author illustrators of children's books, such as *The Owl and the Pussycat*, signs her newest book, *Gingerbread Baby*.

**7:00 p.m.** Bibelot-Cross Keys. After a decade-long investigation, Eileen Welsome brings us *The Plutonium Files: America's Secret Medical Experiments in the Cold War*. Discussion and signing.

Saturday, October 23

**1:00-3:00 p.m.** Bibelot-Timonium. Virginia Crawford, editor of *WordHouse* and a Poet-in-the-Schools for the Maryland State Arts Council, leads a writing workshop, "Remember the Details—From Memories to Poetry." Free. Sponsored by *Late Knocking* literary magazine.

Continued on p. 8

The Lite Circle, Inc. publishes:

*Lite: Baltimore's Literary Newspaper*  
\$13/year regular; (\$10/year students, \$25/year supporting member)

Lite Circle Books including:

Lower Than The Angels.....\$14.95  
(Science Fact, Science Fiction, & Fantasy Anthology)  
Essential Fables.....\$9.95  
(Poetry & Art by Vonnie Winslow Crist)  
A Fine Thin Thread.....\$9.95  
(Poetry by Virginia Aten Pritchett)  
River of Stars.....\$9.95  
(Poetry & Art by Vonnie Winslow Crist)  
Penny's Hill.....\$4.00  
(A chapbook of poems by Hugh Burgess)  
The Laughing Ladies.....\$9.95  
(Poetry by Diane Scharper)  
Stations in a Dream.....\$9.95  
(Poetry by Michael Weaver)  
Heart of the Sun.....\$3.95  
(Chapbook of poems from Gary Blanchard)

First Lite Pamphlets:

#1 Night Queen – poems by P.E.  
Kinlock.....\$1.00

Sunrise Press:

The Muse and the Machine.....\$3.00  
(Chapbook of poems from Lite Circle's Bulletin Board)

Add \$1.00 for postage per publication ordered & mail check or money order payable to Lite Circle to: P.O. Box 26162, Baltimore, MD 21210.

## ATTENTION WRITERS!

Get Your Stuff Together!

Come to a meeting of the Lite Circle Roundtable Critiquing Group.

Starting up again this Fall.

Call (410) 744-2173.

## YOUR BUSINESS CARD HERE.

1 issue \$15.

Send with check/m.o. to: The Lite Circle  
P.O. Box 26162, Baltimore MD 21210  
For more info, call (410) 719-7792.

♦ Gourmet Coffee ♦ Ice Cream ♦ Lite Fare ♦  
♦ Live Entertainment ♦



Phone 301-497-2324 Fax 301-497-2350

PATRICK K. WALSH 504 Main Street  
Laurel, MD 20707-4118

## Correction

In the August/September 1999 issue, author Lawrence Watt-Evans' name was misspelled. Lite regrets the error.

# Milton

by

John Becker

Illustration by Hazel Camp

I remember how he would stand there silhouetted against the failing twilight. He would close his eyes and raise his arms slowly as if to float upon the hymn of utter quiet. Then he would throw his head back so suddenly that we would all jump, and the symphony would begin. Flailing and pointing, spinning and exhorting, his hair blowing madly with the blaring music, he would conduct them all home as though it were Judgment Day. Finally, after all nerves were sufficiently frayed, his arms would drop to his sides, walk slowly away, and all would be normal again.

His name was Milton. All of we kids were both fascinated and scared to death of him. Every evening we would pedal our bikes down to the main intersection in town to see if Milton was conducting the "rush hour" traffic home (inasmuch as you could have a rush hour in a town as small as ours). After his performance, he would climb onto his own bike with the red flag in the back, ring the little bell, and then go riding off down the hill toward, well, wherever it was that he went.

Maybe there was some kind of point to it all, some kind of Vareseian ode to the descent of man as symbolized through the rapid nature of traffic. Then again, maybe he was just nuts. Either way, this odd behavior was somehow doubly unsettling to us in that Milton was a man of sixty or so, who could easily have passed for any of our grandfathers.

As far as the rest of our town was concerned, the only unsettling aspect about all of this was the fact that Milton had no business whatsoever directing traffic. Although he would occasionally flash a badge made out of plastic or something, he was incapable of holding an official position of any kind. Not that this prevented him from attempting to make an occasional arrest of some unfortunate, discombobulated citizen. Drivers knew to proceed warily, but still the quick squeal of brakes was frequently heard. The dull thud of foreheads upon the inner side of windshields was a matter of scorekeeping for we kids.

God forbid his eyes should ever lock into yours after his evening's conducting. The few times my twelve year old eyes met his directly, well, a chill fingered its way down my spine like a snake. He wasn't exactly mean looking, but he was undoubtedly the most unnerving presence I've ever run into before or since.

Whether Milton was his first name or his last I never knew, but it was a name around which much legend was twisted in our little town. Local opinion on him was sharply divided: village idiot, town jester, neighborhood shaman, or borderline psychotic. As my mother used to say, whatever he was, he was certainly "interesting."

As we'd sit on our bikes watching him conduct, we would all throw in our two bits as to what the real story was behind Milton.

Marco, the Italian kid who lived down the street from me, would squint into the dying sun and say, "I'll tell you the real deal. I asked my pop about Milton one time."

We would all lean forward on our bikes a little, skeptical but curious as hell. Milton was Halloween, a campfire ghost story, and

a Saturday morning creature feature all rolled into one. He was all of the things our parents would tell us we weren't old enough to know, all of the secrets our teachers would forbid us to whisper about, all of the R movie ratings in the whole mysterious world.

Reggie, who was one of the first black kids in our town, was never reticent about speaking his mind. "I'm already doubtin' this one," he said. "Marco's pop still dresses as the tooth fairy when he slips a quarter under his pillow. I don't think your pop's in any hurry to clue you in to reality, Marco."

"Bull," Marco would counter. "Pop knocked off that tooth fairy costume a few years ago."

We always laughed at Marco's expense but, to his credit, held only purse his lips and plug ahead. "Ah, laugh your heads off, you morons. But I know the true story, if y'all are finished cackling." In a snap we would be church-quiet again. "All right, then," he'd say, then spit on the ground for emphasis.

"Years ago, Milton was given up by his parents when he was only five years old. He had to learn to beg and steal for his food. Held lift blankets and stuff from people's clotheslines and live in Fletcher's Woods at night. Sometimes held kill possums and raccoons and stuff; if he couldn't get a fire going in the winter he'd just eat 'em raw."

(Although highly skeptical on this issue, we would cringe just the same and be as silent as shrunken monks).

Marco would sense our captivation and lean in slightly closer, indicating that this information should travel no farther than those present. "On his twelfth birthday,

right around our age, he got to feeling a little lonely and depressed because he didn't have anybody to play with or talk to. All he could do was grunt and squeak like animals, and besides he was dirty and weird, so people avoided him-like they do to this day."

"Anyway, he wandered into town and saw a poster about a circus passing through. He decided then and there that held sneak in—"

"Wait a minute," Reggie interrupted. "I knew this story as bull. You mean all he could do was squeak and grunt, and yet he could read a poster?"

Marco would cluck his tongue and roll his eyes. "Even a moron knows a circus poster, you buffoon. It's got clowns and tigers and crap on it."

I remember nearly voicing my opinion that a boy raised in the wild would not necessarily know a clown from an archbishop, but I kept it to myself rather than miss the rest of the story.

"Besides," said Reggie, "how the heck would a kid raised in the wild know his twelfth birthday from any other day?"

"Don't be stupid," said Marco. "If you don't have people blabbering at you your whole life, you develop a sixth sense like animals have. Anyway, that night he kept to the shadows so as not to attract any attention to himself. He had to sit there in alleyways and stuff, watching the other kids holding hands with their parents, licking at ice cream cones and cotton candy, munching on peanuts, wearing clean clothes, the whole bit. You can imagine how he felt. For the first time in his life he learned to feel sorry for himself, and he started to cry, crouching behind a trash can with the rats and all."

Reggie and I both had to clear our throats once or twice, so as not to become a little emotional ourselves.

"No matter how sad he was, though, he was still too curious to just slink back through the shadows to the lonely old woods. So, taking cover behind parked cars and hedges and stuff, he worked his way to the back of the big circus tent, right in the middle of where the old fairground used to be. He lowered himself into the mud and wiggled like a snake, trying to sneak under that tent, but they had it pinned down awfully tight. Plus, it's really tricky to get any grip in the mud. After, like, an hour of dragging himself inch by inch through the filth, he had just about made it. The whole time he was wiggling under the tent, he was getting a peek here and there at the show inside, although he was kind of halfway in a backstage area. With each peek he became more and more fascinated and excited; this was his first chance to be like a regular kid."

Reggie, Marco, and I took a quick glance at Milton as he conducted the cars through the intersection. As usual, it was a symphony of blaring horns and squealing brakes. (Most people in town knew better than to pay any attention to his signals, but anyone who just happened to be passing through was putty in Milton's deranged hands).

"Just as he was about to pull himself all the way through, he felt someone grab his feet on the other side. Before he knew it, he was being dragged right back through the mud after all that struggling. All he could do was watch the circus disappear as his fingernails scraped a trail in the mud. Well, a security guy held him by the ankles and lifted him up to get a better look. Milton looked more animal than human, and all he could do was squeak and grunt at the wide-eyed security guy."

"So he became a sideshow freak, I suppose?" asked Reggie.

"Who can concentrate with all these interruptions?" asked Marco, with his arms spread wide and his eyes rolled toward the heavens. "No, no. This clown named Coco happened to be passing by on his way to the make-up trailer. He was even more curious about Milton than Milton was about the circus. Anyway, he convinced the security guy to let the kid in to see the show. So, they gave him a quick hosing down and Coco showed him around and then set up a chair for him."

"It was the first time in Milton's life that anyone had been so nice to him. After the show, Milton wouldn't leave the clown's side, and once Coco figured out that the kid had nowhere to go, he let him travel from town to town with the circus."

"Over the years, the old clown taught him to speak and count an all that crap, but not as well as a normal guy. Milton wanted more than anything to become an entertainer just like his "dad", or his guardian, or whatever you call a clown that finds you in the mud."

"One day, when old Milton was around eighteen, he was helping to set up the circus tent, when he heard a lot of noise coming from the animal trainers' area. As a matter of fact, it probably sounded an awful lot like this intersection, what with elephants blar-

*Continued on page 5*



Milton, cont. from page 4

ing like these car horns and the other animals squealing like these brakes and all. And what do you think he saw?"

Marco, Reggie, and I slowly turned our heads toward Milton, partially to be certain that he wasn't creeping up on us in clown make-up or some damn thing. There was something both horrifying and thrilling about hearing the strange story of his life with him being so near. Upon seeing that he was flashing his plastic badge from his wallet for the benefit of some out-of-towner, Marco finished the story.

"Everybody, including Milton, ran over to where all the commotion was. And there was Raja the elephant sitting on old Coco as contentedly as a fat lady waiting for the five-fifteen. There were clown guts everywhere. They say Milton went insane right then and there."

Reggie and I looked at one another dubiously and fidgeted with our handlebars. It seemed too good a story to be true, but you never knew.

"They say," said Marco, "that he keeps Coco's red putty nose, big and flat as a pancake, on some kind of altar he built somewhere out in the woods."

"That's not a bad story," Reggie admitted, nodding his head slightly, "but it's a buncha bull. My big brother Chuck told me the real for true thing." The streetlights flickered awake as the sun began to settle behind the bank.

"Shell shock," said Reggie with a sympathetic shrug. (I wasn't exactly certain what that was, but it sounded pretty damn dramatic to me). "He was a regular guy and all. Dating a pretty girl, working his way up at some big shot insurance company across town, the whole deal. Then he got drafted to go off and fight the Nazis. He wanted to do the right thing. So, he went over to beat up on old Hitler. It wasn't long at all before he wound up right in the middle of a big bombing raid. People getting blown to bits all around him. Explosions everywhere, loud enough to make your ears bleed and your eyes cross. You know you can't think straight with your ears bleeding and your eyes crossed—that's what makes war hell."

"Anyway, this one buddy of his comes running out and bum rushes old Milton. Before he knows what hit him, he looks up to see his buddy's head get blown off. His buddy saved his life, and got his head popped off as a reward. Old Milton never got over the horror and the guilt. That's what sent him over the edge."

"That's crap," said Marco. "Then how come sometimes on windy nights you can hear circus music coming from Fletcher's Woods?"

Reggie whipped his head from side to side and laughed so hard you would have thought he was being tickled mercilessly. "Aw, that's ridiculous, Marco. The only thing you can hear in Fletcher's Woods at night is Milton screaming when he has nightmares about the war."

I summoned up my courage as I fiddled with the orange reflector on my bike. "I heard that he escaped from an asylum a long time ago."

Marco and Reggie tilted their heads thoughtfully for a moment, imagining a

young Milton, powerful with madness, shaking loose the iron bars of an asylum window. "Not likely," said Reggie. "I don't think Milton would exactly be hard to find or anything. I mean, he stands in the middle of the biggest intersection in town waving his arms around like a maniac almost every night, for Christ's sake."

"Yeah," said Marco. "There'd be guys in white coats with butterfly nets all over town."

Suddenly, as I watched Milton settle onto his bike with the little red flag on the back, I had a crazy idea. The wind that began to hiss down the lonely street seemed to whisper to me. "Let's follow him," I said.

Marco and Reggie just stared at me as though I had just claimed that I was the Duchess of York. They were afraid, but probably not so much as I. "Not tonight," said Marco, his voice quivering just perceptibly. "My mom's making something special for dinner. You know how mothers are about that stuff."

"Me neither," said Reggie. "Homework and all. My parents are talking about grounding me if I don't pick up my grades."

Since I was usually the one to bow out of such predicaments, I was feeling rather brave and pleased with myself. "At least have the guts to admit that you're both too scared to do it."

They looked at one another and then back at me. "We're too scared," they said simultaneously.

Rather than simply withdraw the gauntlet I had thrown down, I stupidly intensified the pressure. I was enjoying my first moment of bravery far too much. "If you two girls are too chicken," I said, "then I'll just have to go by myself."

Without a moment's hesitation, they both whipped around on their bikes and peeled off down the street toward their comfortable, safe homes. Reggie called over his shoulder, "Let us know what happens!"

Just before he pedaled around the corner of Pleasant Street, Marco cupped his mouth and shouted, "Beware of the circus music!"

I stared at the flickering street light for a moment, imagining the scent of roast beef and mashed potatoes which was no doubt drifting from my mother's kitchen at that very instant. Crouching down to tie the laces of my white Chucks, I turned my head just in time to see the little red flag disappear over the crest of the hill. I walked my bike to the corner to take a look down that obsolete road. No one ever used it anymore because it only led to the old fairground (which was now no more than an overgrown field) and Fletcher's Woods. That is, no one except Milton.

Every instinct, every fragment of knowledge I had managed to store in the recesses of my fevered little brain told me to go home, that this was a bad idea. It would have been relatively easy to contrive some fantastic story for Marco and Reggie, thus winning some prestige for myself in neighborhood lore, but something else drew me down that darkening road. I had to know.

My 1977 Boog Powell baseball card pattered in the spokes of my bike as I coasted down the hill. A weak breeze would occasionally ripple through the twisted trees as though they were breathing. Aside from

that, everything seemed intensified with a striking stillness that made my skin crawl. My heart was beating so violently that I fully expected to keel over with a massive coronary at any second. I knew that even the first note of circus music would do me in.

As though to further dramatize the whole thing, heat lightning began to flash in the dusk. I coasted down the length of the hill and stopped just past the empty field where the old fairground used to be. I sat fossilized on my bike, listening nervously for a distant calliope or the nightmarish screams of an old war. Nothing. The cracked asphalt of the unlighted road led to a gravel path that emptied into the unholy darkness of Fletcher's Woods. I remember very clearly thinking that the black opening of those woods looked like the mouth into which one might be swallowed into hell. The spooky heat lightning, the black woods, the deranged old man wandering around in there—it was too much for me. Now I wanted only to get out of there as fast as possible.

As I was about to turn my bike to do just that, something caught my eye. I noticed a dab of red across the field at the distant edge of the darkening woods. It was the fire engine red of Milton's bike leaning on its kickstand. I don't know how I could have missed it initially, since it looked about as sore thumbish as a happy face in a De Kooning painting. Before I could even consider panicking, I saw Milton.

He was sitting on a stump at the very edge of the old fairground, earnestly whittling some form or other out of some little knot of wood, as a pleased as a child with a toy. He was so thoroughly entranced in his private world that I dared not move. Although I was relieved that he wasn't wearing clown make-up or battle fatigues, I was afraid that he might chase me. The hill that I'd coasted down was quite steep, and I wasn't sure how quickly I could pedal back up. The very thought of attempting an escape through that spooky path in Fletcher's Woods gave me the shivers.

As I sat there as still as a frightened deer, something strange happened. I began to feel much, much older. Something about staring at that sad bike with the little red flag on the back made me feel like sobbing. Each soundless flash of heat lightning only deepened the effect. Whatever the tragic assemblage of facts were in the true story of that lonely old man, I knew that I'd never really understand.

Looking back on it now, it seems likely that Milton was merely an abandoned mentally retarded man who became the pariah of our town. Maybe he was manic-depressive, or even some kind of tortured artist for whom the world was a dull knot of wood in need of whittling, a bungling orchestra in need of a conductor. I suppose it's even possible that one of those wild stories about him was actually true. Maybe when I followed him that day long ago, when the sun hung a little longer in the heavens and the moon was holy, he was whittling out the haunted figure of a clown. I never found out. All I know is that everyone's life is a strange story, and hidden somewhere within their entangled web of facts and wishes and fears is a grain of truth.

# Lite

The Lite Circle, Inc.

Guidelines for Writers

1. Founded in 1992, The Lite Circle is a non-profit literary organization devoted to the encouragement of emerging voices in the arts. *Lite: Baltimore's Literary Newspaper* is a bi-monthly publication featuring art, literature, and book reviews. Formerly a quarterly magazine, it is now a free tabloid publication carrying one story and several poems per issue. A literary supplement is published on the off-months. We seek to give emerging writers and artists the opportunity to reach a broad, literate audience, and to keep our readers informed of literary events in Central Maryland. *Lite: Baltimore's Literary Newspaper* is distributed in the Baltimore area and Central Maryland, with a press run of 10,000 copies. The Lite Circle also publishes book-length manuscripts in cooperation with authors under the imprints "Lite Circle Books" and "Sunrise Press." The "Guidelines for Writers" apply to all Lite Circle publications, and the term "Lite" as used here refers to all Lite Circle publications.

2. Lite holds one-time publication rights to all material accepted for publication. All other rights remain the property of the author. Terms of payment: For *Lite: Baltimore's Literary Newspaper*, 5 copies of an issue in which submission appears. For Lite Circle Books/Sunrise Press: 1 contributor's copy (unless other arrangements are made).

3. Electronic submissions to Lite are encouraged. Email submissions to: [pkinlock@bcpl.net](mailto:pkinlock@bcpl.net) (attachments OK; Microsoft Word or WordPerfect format preferred). Submissions may also be sent as ASCII text in the body of an email; special formatting such as italics or bold should be noted. We will also accept documents on disk (WordPerfect or Microsoft Word format preferred). Please include contact info/short bio. Hard copy submissions to Lite should be on plain 8-1/2" X 11" paper, double spaced, typewritten or computer printed, with no handwritten editing or other marks anywhere on the document. Notes concerning the copy may be made in legible handwriting on accompanying separate sheets. Copy must include the author's name, address and telephone number on the first or last page; for multiple simultaneous submissions, each work must be a separate document, each with the author's name, address and telephone. Please include short bio.

4. Word limits--Poetry: generally no more than 30 lines, but up to 50 lines may be accepted for poems in stanza, section, or any divided format; Fiction: 1,000 to 4,000 words (longer pieces may be used in serialized form); Humor: 300-1,000 words. Reviews: 300 words. Due to the enormous amount of material we receive, response time averages 6-12 months.

5. Lite reserves the right to do all editing appropriate to maintain grammar, stylistic consistency, and standard punctuation without advance notification to the author. We suggest that deliberate deviations from standard grammar and spelling be noted on a separate sheet to avoid editing problems. Lite will do everything possible to advise writers in advance of publication of any proposed changes which may affect the author's meaning or stylistic integrity; writers may withdraw their manuscripts from consideration should they conclude that proposed changes are unacceptable, provided notification is made within three days of notice of proposed changes.

6. Lite will not accept manuscripts which contain the following: sexually explicit language or graphically depicted sexual scenes; gratuitous expletives; pointless or graphic violence; material denigrating any race, nationality, gender, or religion. Authors accept all responsibility for factual errors contained in any submitted manuscript. By submitting to Lite, author agrees to the editorial policies and conditions as stated in these guidelines.

7. If hardcopy material is rejected, submissions will not be returned unless a SASE of suitable size with sufficient postage is provided.

The Lite Circle, Inc.  
Lite: Baltimore's Literary Newspaper  
Lite Circle Books  
P.O. Box 26162  
Baltimore, Maryland 21210  
Web: <http://litelcircle.dragonfire.net>  
Email: [pkinlock@bcpl.net](mailto:pkinlock@bcpl.net)



# 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.

Check your level of support:

- Regular (\$13) - subscription to *Lite: Baltimore's Literary Newspaper*, free or reduced admission to Lite readings, and a 10% discount on all Lite Circle Books and back issues.
- Student (\$10) - same as Regular. Must be at least a half-time student.
- Supporting Member (\$25) - same as Regular, but with a 25% discount on all Lite Circle products and a listing in each issue of *Lite*.
- Patron (\$100) - same as Supporting Member, plus 3 free books of your choice and a 10% discount off any advertisement placed in *Lite*.

Date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_ Apt./P.O. Box \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Your donation is fully tax-deductible.

## New! Lite Circle Books

proudly presents

# Lower Than the Angels

An exciting new anthology of science fact, science fiction, & fantasy

edited by *Vonnie Winslow Crist*  
 & *David Kriebel*

Includes work by Jack Chalker, A. C. Crispin, Lawrence Watt-Evans, John Flynn, Robert Wayne McCoy, Bruce Boston, Steve Sneyd, Bud Sparhawk, Don Sakers, W. H. Stevens, Marta Knobloch, Rosemary Klein, Dan Cuddy, Patti Kinlock, Elisabeth Stevens, Stacy Tuthill, Donna Eason, Sam Beard, Judy Chernak, and others.

**ORDER YOUR COPY NOW!**

**\$14.95** (check or money order payable to the Lite Circle)

LTTA c/o Lite Circle Books, P.O. Box 26162, Baltimore, MD 21210.

For more info, call (410) 719-7792.

## Want to be part of the organization behind Baltimore's Literary Newspaper?

If you like the idea of doing something worthwhile for hard work and no pay, maybe you can be one of us.

We need people to help out in:

- Administration
- Advertising (*earn commissions!*)
- Distribution
- Editorial
- Fundraising
- Marketing and Public Relations

Please send a letter and your resume to:

The Lite Circle  
 Volunteers  
 P.O. Box 26162  
 Baltimore, MD 21210

*The Lite Circle is a nonprofit organization.*

# L I T E B Y T E S

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

We receive a calendar of events for children for the 27 branches of Baltimore's Enoch Pratt Free Library. Here are a few examples of events in October. We urge parents to contact their local library for a schedule of events.

·**Govans Branch**, 5714 Bellona Ave., (410) 396-6098.

—After School Games on Wednesdays in October, 3 p.m. Ages 9-13. Call to register.

—Halloween Happenings, Saturday, October 30, 2 p.m. Ages 5-12. Come in costume and join the special activities and treats.

·**Hamilton Branch**, 5910 Harford Rd., (410) 396-6088.

—Laptime Storytime, Thursdays in October, 11 a.m. For two-year-olds and their independent caregivers.

·**Herring Run Branch**, 3801 Erdman Ave., (410) 396-0996.

—After School Film Program, Wednesdays Oct. 6 & 20, 3:30 p.m. Ages 6-12.

—Stories & Crafts, Mondays Oct. 11 & 25, 10:30 a.m. Ages 3-5. Call to register.

—Art Workshop with John Neal, Saturday, Oct. 30 at 2 p.m. Ages 4-12. Call to register.

—“Kids On The Block” Puppet Show, Wednesday, Oct. 13, 10:30 am. Ages 3-12. Call to register.

—Halloween Arts & Crafts, Wednesday, Oct. 27 at 3:30 p.m. Ages 5-12. Call to register.

·Call for submissions: **Brain Storm**, a magazine of young writers, 2nd issue. Open to all elementary students in MD. Theme: “Family.” No entry fee. Fiction, poetry, short stories, essays, or anything else you write on any theme can be submitted. Send typed or neatly printed submissions with name, address, age, phone no. and email address to: Maryland Writers' Association, P.O. Box 129, Arnold, MD 21012. Please keep a copy, as submissions cannot be returned. Please do not send original artwork; send a photocopy. Middle and high school students may submit their work for the Spring 2000 issue.

For more info, contact Connie Harold (410) 263-5038 or [herald@toad.net](mailto:herald@toad.net). Web: [www.marylandwriters.org](http://www.marylandwriters.org).

·**The Borders Store in Columbia** at 9051 Snowden River Square Parkway is moving in October to 6151 Columbia Crossing Circle, Columbia, MD 21045. Phone: (410) 290-0062. Fax: 410-312-4995. The last day at Snowden Square Drive is October 24. The first day at the new Columbia Crossing store is October 30.

·**Adrian's Book Café**, 714 S. Broadway, canceled all its musical events and readings for September. Adrian's survival as a business is in question. Whether a new owner will be found or the current owner will be able to take measures to resuscitate a fine bookstore & eating place must be answered by September 30<sup>th</sup> according to *Lite's* source. Perhaps an extension in time for new business arrangements can be made. Adrian's gives Fells Point a touch of class. It will be sad to see such a friend die.

·*Lite* hears that another Baltimore fixture, **Louie's Bookstore Café** on Charles St. in Mt. Vernon, has closed its doors for now but

new ownership is in the works, with some Italian fare added to the menu. We'll keep our readers posted.

·A new face in the City that Reads: **Broken Wing Bookstore**, 1751 East Pratt St. (corner of Ann St.), and Broken Wings & Things, 832 W. 36<sup>th</sup> Street. According to the flyer *Lite* picked up at the Baltimore Book Festival, Broken Wing features a diverse collection from new age/occult to war novels to cook books and bills itself as “the largest and cheapest bookstore in Baltimore.” *Lite* looks forward to browsing.

·The reading that was originally scheduled for fiction writers from **Ed Fain's anthology *Great Writers, Great Stories: Writers from Maryland, Virginia and Washington D.C.***, is rescheduled for Wednesday, November 10 at 7 p.m. at the School 33 Art Center, 1427 Light St. in South Baltimore. Fiction writers Barbara Diehl, Lalita Noronha-Blob, Liz Larson, and Molly Bruce Jacobs will read. All except Ms. Diehl are past *Artscape* Fiction winners; there is a good chance that Ms. Diehl will be in that elite group as well in the future as her narratives are extremely accomplished.

·**The Baltimore Writers' Alliance** announces its Sixth Annual Conference will be held on November 13, 1999 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Towson University in the University Union, Osler Drive. Sponsored by the Towson University Master's in Professional Writing Program, the conference, titled *Literary Arts 2000: Writing and Getting Published*, features Christopher Dickey, son of the late James Dickey and author of *Summer of Deliverance: A Memoir of Father and Son*, and Lyn Lifshin, poet and author of four anthologies of women writers. In addition, the conference offers opportunities for attendees to interact with 20 experienced writers, agents, publishers and teachers. Workshop topics address writers at all levels and will include poetry, nonfiction, novel, short story, online publishing, legal issues, finding grant money and finding the best publisher. Registration fee: \$65 (postmarked on or before Oct. 16); \$75 after Oct. 16; BWA members \$60; Registration plus BWA membership \$90.

For more info, contact Barbara Diehl at (410) 377-5265/email: [bdiehl@bcpl.net](mailto:bdiehl@bcpl.net), or Tracy Miller at (410) 321-1179/email: [tmiller@towson.edu](mailto:tmiller@towson.edu).

·**Steve Cunningham**, web page editor of the *Maryland Poetry Review*, recently took Myriam Gorospe as his bride. So if you see Steve, a hard-studying medical student, at a reading and see him smiling more than the average medical student, that is why. *Lite* wishes them a happy life together.

·Though it is almost a year off, the dates for next year's **Geraldine R. Dodge Poetry Festival 2000** have been announced. It will be held on September 21, 22, 23 and 24 at Waterloo Village, New Jersey. For information either write: Geraldine R. Dodge Poetry Festival, 163 Madison Avenue, P.O. Box 1239, Morristown, NJ 07962-1239, or phone (973) 540-8443 ext. 139, or email: [festival@grdodge.org](mailto:festival@grdodge.org). Visit the website:

*Continued on page 7*

*Lyte Bytes, cont. from page 6*  
[www.grdodge.org/poetry/](http://www.grdodge.org/poetry/).

The **Hamilton Poetry Contest** ran its course. Apparently there are no civic-minded poets in Hamilton. Not one poem was received. *Lite* can be gotten at the *Hamilton Public Library*, at *Hamilton News Mart* and at *Valentino's Restaurant*, and at numerous other locations in the Balto. Metro area and surrounding counties. (Note—you don't have to live in Hamilton to write about it.) I will extend the contest to November 30, 1999. However, maximum line length is now limited to 17 lines. (We don't want anything rounded off.) The prize is publication in *Lite Bytes*.

Send entries to Dan Cuddy (the address in this paper).

"The Faces of Impressionism" premieres at the **Baltimore Museum of Art** on Sunday, October 10. It runs through January 30, 2000. This blockbuster exhibit features paintings by Monet, Renoir, Manet, Cassatt, Degas, Cezanne, and others.

**Crescent Cauldron Ezine** announces its premier "Equinox" issue: <http://crescentcauldron.dreamhaven.net>. Submissions of fiction, poetry, art, essays, humor welcome year round.

For more info, visit the website, email [crescent@dreamhaven.net](mailto:crescent@dreamhaven.net), or send SASE to: Crescent Cauldron, P.O. Box 5607, Baltimore, MD 21210.

The Enoch Pratt Society has named **John Barth** as this year's recipient of the prestigious Lifetime Achievement in Letters Award. Mr. Barth will be honored at the annual Pratt Society dinner on October 28.

Poet and author **Marc Colasurdo** will teach "Wisdom Writing: Sacred & Secular" at the Waldorf School, 4801 Tamarind Rd. \$60 for 6 sessions. For registration/info call (410) 367-6808 ext. 204.

"Lite Verse at Bibelot." Join Lite Circle Books for a publication party/author reading for **Lower Than the Angels: Science Fact, Science Fiction & Fantasy** edited by Vonnie Winslow Crist & David Kriebel on Friday, October 15, 7:30 p.m. at Bibelot-Timonium Crossing. Bestselling author Jack Chalker will read, as well as other contributing authors.

A second reading will be held Friday, November 19 at Bibelot-Woodholme. Time TBA. For more info, call (410) 719-7792, (410) 889-1574, or email: [pkinlock@bcpl.net](mailto:pkinlock@bcpl.net).

#### ♥ LITERARY PERSONALS ♥

**To place a personal ad:** send your ad (no more than 350 characters, including spaces and punctuation, plus 32 character headline) to: *Lite Personals*, PO Box 26162, Baltimore, MD 21210. Enclose check for \$10 payable to *The Lite Circle, Inc.* Fee includes postal forwarding. Include phone no., fax no., or email address. No obscenities or sexual references. *Lite* reserves the right to reject any ad copy it deems unsuitable for publication. Ads run for 2 months.

**To reply to a personal ad:** write to *Lite Personals*, Code No. (listed at end of ad), at above address. Your reply will be forwarded to the advertiser.

#### ♥ AUTUMN ROMANCE ♥

SWM, 30's ISO SWF, late 20's-early 30's, n/s, nm with warmth, beauty, intelligence, integrity, and creativity for possible LTR. I'm 5'10", br/br and I've been told I'm good looking. I enjoy poetry, reading, exercise, scintillating conversation, shared intimacies. Please write and show me the kind of woman you are. Photo appreciated. Code 002.

### Running Backwards

For as long as he lives  
And probably for even longer  
He'll be a kind of signal  
That's even better than a grandmother  
Better even than a bean on dirt  
Of what's coming  
Better than a strong smell of straw at night  
He'll be a rooster like no one else

As soon as it could  
Life got started  
It couldn't wait  
It didn't know how to  
It's the same with Tom  
One of these days  
That's as far away as rust  
He'll be forgotten almost completely  
The only place he'll get thought of  
Is on ledges  
Where one things turns into another  
Even now the best way to think of him is to run backwards  
With arms wide apart

Hiram Larew  
Upper Marlboro, MD

### Sudden Kiss

Standing close  
by fateful accident  
not planned design

we breathe  
each other's desire  
wanting the moment  
to last

forever  
is not long enough  
the sudden kiss  
seems a little sin

but feeds the fire  
is this how  
love affairs begin?

Dawn Zapletal  
Millbrae, CA

nothing clandestine

bound for the caerulean or  
the great burning how should i,  
canescent, be knowing?  
my head sings with fireflies,  
all i taste in my nose is  
the iodine of an ultimate ocean

no point to ask the young man  
hair leopard-tufted blond and black  
ringed at ear and lip  
his skin stained vermilion with  
Kaposi (so in this century  
Eros marks out his followers)

or the old man joy-divided  
alone at a marble-topped table;  
he dreams of lanky young sailors  
wet pavements and seaport pubs,  
glimpes only over oiled water  
the long dark coastline of Elysium

Ivor C. Treby  
London, England

### Amnesia In Media Res

Lay me down tonight for  
I have no feeling today.  
No story to tell you.  
No psalm of seduction  
to tickle your ear and  
test your fidelity.  
No spiritual feast to consecrate  
your liturgy of faith purged  
by the usually bloodletting.  
Why blame me?  
Did I misplace the surgical tube  
that suctions words from inkwells?  
And for all your screaming there has  
never been a transfusion to quell the  
painful delirium of solicitude that  
wakes the sleeping giant to the  
shadows scaling up the  
plaster wall.

I could protest.  
If I told you that the farmer is subject  
to his own rustic delusions  
you would still insist that he  
feeds malnourished children far and wide,  
while his own health, emaciated from  
the rigors of diurnal labor, fades into  
transparency, a specter, a shepherd.  
But every philanthropic seed falls on  
fallow ground at some point in time.  
And today my satchel is deplete,  
and my storehouse is naked.  
Both fodder and fairy dust oscillate  
in dizzying acrobatics, caught by the  
wind and thrown to the pigs who  
know no difference.

At dusk, the bean to beanstalk myths  
return to the night sky and  
loop the crescent moon  
like a million fireflies arrested in  
their ritual mating dance,  
pruned by machetes and seared by  
drought. Those stories have plummeted  
like Lucifer on the night when his  
sad music failed to make the  
triumvirate fetch his garments and  
compel him to stay for one more  
shot of whiskey.

Frank S. Palmisano III  
Baltimore, MD

### Journalism 101

Newsprint lies atop  
an ambiguous footfall  
begging next day's life

Mel Tansill  
Catonsville, MD

Calendar, cont. from p. 3

**7:30-9:00 p.m.** Opening reception for "A Land of Heroes," photographs of Finland's Karelia by Douglas Goodhill. Waldorf School of Baltimore, 4801 Tamarind Rd. Exhibit hours M-F 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., weekends by appointment. For more info, call (410) 367-6808.

Sunday, October 24

**3:00 p.m.** Enoch Pratt Free Library, Central Branch, Poe Room. Sara Jeter Naslund reads from her novel *Ahab's Wife: Or, The Star Gazer*.

Monday, October 25

**7:00 p.m.** Barnes & Noble-Towson Circle. Discover New Writers Book Club. B&N's Dana Featherston leads a discussion on the novel *Rose's Garden* by Carrie Brown.

**7:30 p.m.** Dana Bloomfield reads at the Readers Café, Hanover, PA. Free. Includes "open stage." For more info, call Curio Coast Productions at (410) 343-3478 box #5.

Wednesday, October 27

**7:00 p.m.** Barnes & Noble-Towson Circle. Vaguely Jewish Book Club. Susan Weiss leads a discussion on Salman Rushdie's *The Moor's Last Sigh*.

Biblot-Canton. Author Patricia M. Wallace discusses how the on-line environment can influence the way we behave in her new book *The Psychology of the Internet*. Discussion and signing.

Biblot-Cross Keys. In her debut novel, *The Ladies Auxiliary*, Tova Miris tells the story of the close-knit world of the Orthodox community in Memphis, TN. Discussion and signing.

Thursday, October 28

**7:30 p.m.** Biblot-Woodholme. Ruth Gruber was an eyewitness to the boat that the British kept from reaching Palestine. Discussion and signing of *Exodus 1947: The Ship That Launched a Nation*.

Friday, October 29

**7:00 p.m.** Enoch Pratt Free Library, Wheeler Auditorium. Novelist John Barth reads from and discusses his works.

Saturday, October 30

**2:00 p.m.** Enoch Pratt Free Library, Dundalk Avenue Branch, 912 Dundalk Ave. Trevy A. McDonald reads from her first novel *Time Will Tell*. For more info, call (410) 396-8547.

**Literary November**

Wednesday, November 3

**7:30 p.m.** "Function at the Junction" Reading Series at the Coffee Junction, 803 Frederick Rd., Catonsville. \$2 admission. Towson Univ. writers to read. Names TBA. Open reading follows. For more info, call

(410) 719-7717.

Friday, November 5

**10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.** Patricia Polacco, author of *Chicken Sunday*, *Mrs. Katz and Tush*, and *Welcome Comfort*, visits The Children's Bookstore, 737 Deepdene Rd., Roland Park. For more info, call (410) 532-2000.

**7:30 p.m.** Barnes & Noble-Annapolis. Join host Sam Beard for "Poet's Night Out/Annapolis Lites," reading and discussion group sponsored by The Lite Circle.

Saturday, November 13

**9:00-5:00 p.m. The Baltimore Writers' Alliance** Sixth Annual Conference, *Literary Arts 2000: Writing and Getting Published*, Towson University in the University Union, Osler Drive. Sponsored by the Towson University Master's in Professional Writing Program. Featured speakers: Christopher Dickey, and Lyn Lifshin. Other guests include 20 experienced writers, agents, publishers and teachers. Workshop topics include poetry, nonfiction, novel, short story, online publishing, legal issues, finding grant money and finding the best publisher. For more info, contact Barbara Diehl at (410) 377-5265/email: [bdiehl@bcpl.net](mailto:bdiehl@bcpl.net), or Tracy Miller at (410) 321-1179/email: [tmiller@towson.edu](mailto:tmiller@towson.edu).

**1:00 p.m. The Harford Poetry Society** meets at the Harford County Library in Bel Air. For directions/info, call (410) 877-1625.

Friday, November 19

**Time TBA.** Biblot-Woodholme. "Lite Verse at Biblot." The Lite Circle hosts a reading and publication party for *Lower Than the Angels* (Lite Circle Books). Many of the authors included in the anthology will read. For more info, call (410) 719-7792.

Saturday, November 20

**1:00-3:00 p.m.** Biblot-Timonium. Alan Britt, editor of *Black Moon*, author of *Bodies of Lightning*, and Poet-in-the-Schools for the Maryland State Arts Council, will lead a writing workshop, "Imaginative Writing—Discovering the Extraordinary in the Mundane." Free. Sponsored by *Late Knocking* literary magazine.

#### To Have Your Event Listed

please send information to:  
Dan Cuddy, Calendar Editor  
41 Odeon Ct.  
Baltimore, MD 21234  
Tel. (410) 882-4138

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. Note: Lite: Baltimore's Literary Newspaper is published bi-monthly. A literary supplement is published in the off-months.

Question about your  
Lite membership?  
Call (410) 889-1574 or  
email: [pkinlock@bcpl.net](mailto:pkinlock@bcpl.net).

## LITERARY NEWS

Cont. from front cover

swans swimming in an alpine lake. This tranquility was painted by Baltimore artist Crissy Lipka. But peace is only a temporary emotion in his window. Anyone with vision will notice the box of the board game *Class Struggle*. Nelson Rockefeller and Karl Marx are arm-wrestling on the cover. Normal's worker (you know which side he is on) Courtney said the game was designed by a former University of Maryland History professor Bertell Olman. Olman didn't get rich (so you know what side he was on). The game was donated to the display window by Rebecca Roth who is Courtney's mother. Talking about families, a homeless waif baby doll is holding a weathered copy of Tolstoy's *War and Peace*. War won. Next to that figure is a red rubber heart, not the valentine kind, the pulmonary kind. Overhead is a Dracula head gotten at Goodwill. Who bit whom (?) first. Dracula or the rabbit? Bet on the rabbit. Also in the same window is the painting of a matador by Peter Pan, who at one time was a partner in the Normal's bookstore conglomerate. Yes, Pan like in sauce or frying. No, not like in peanut butter.

Since Normal's is a used bookstore (probably with the widest selection in town) there are quite a few titles that indicate where our society has been and where we are going. One book found in the store's window is *How to Cash In On Your Worries*. But if you can't "cash in on them" you may want to read a comic book titled *Minimum Wage*. If that doesn't do it, read *Cut n' Run* by Frank Deford, a book ostensibly about football, but certainly a philosophy prevalent throughout American life. If that doesn't do it, read something from *Loose Watch: a Lost & Found Times Anthology*, a poetry anthology. Between football and poetry you have a good primer of American wisdom except for the erudition in *Shock Value* by John Waters or in *Hollywood Babylon* or in *The History of Torture: Perversion the Erotic Form of Hatred*. These books are found in Normal's windows, as are *Letters of Flannery O'Connor: The Habit of Being* and *I Married A Priest*. If this is all a little too much to stomach, try reading a rather dry work, *Martini Straight Up: The History of the Martini*. Or if this variety of American culture appalls you, one must read *The Shrinking Man* or *Violin Music in the Age of Shopping* by Jon Rose. These titles are not made up. Check out the windows for yourself. Don't overlook *Berries*, a cook book (faded blueberries are on the cover). And Guillaume Apollinaire's *Alcools* are awaiting in translation. There is also a comic book entitled *Do-It-Yourself: Home Physical Exam*. This book gives insight into one's shrinkage and nasal passages.

There are other things in the Normal's

windows besides books as I mentioned above and will mention here. You can't overlook the clown holding a black card with the words "Death Will Surely Come Your Way. The Wise Prepare For It. Have You?" The clown is smiling. On the more lively side, to take your mind away from death, there is a poster: *Golden Throat's Sweet Hearts of Rodeo Drive*, which has a picture of a Goldie Hawn-look-alike in bikini and cowgirl hat and boots. Has she read *History of Torture*? I don't know but I bet she has read Al Franken's book *Rush Limbaugh is a Big Fat Idiot*. To go along with Goldie is a record album: *The Continental Piano of Harry Grube at "Cocktail Time"*. It must be Grewbee as in groovy rather than Grube as in lube. And while talking about groovy or someone who needs a lube job, there are five (or maybe six—only his hairdresser knows for sure) busts of Elvis. The suffering eyes like plaster Elvis, not the "cool" I'm All Shook Up Elvis. But capping, enveloping, embracing this whole mishmash of Western Civilization is a photo of Irish performance artist Andre Stitt holding a sign that says "I Love You" in a public square in England. I don't think he was arrested for the exposure of a basic human emotion, idealistic though it is.

The point, the lesson to be learned, the sales pitch, the communication to be cyberspaced or read on a yellowing and eventually disintegrating piece of paper is that America & Western Civilization has more things on its plate than the medieval world had in its cloister. Well, maybe that's not the lesson. The news is that somewhere out there in the world of objects there is a reflection of the mixed up minds that produced those objects. The world is one big sideshow. And so are Normal's windows.

DAN CUDDY

### A Lazy Weekend at the Baltimore Book Festival

An old saw says the world will come to your door, but as *Lite* watched Baltimore parade by our booth at the Baltimore Book

Continued on p. 9

Need an event covered? Call News Editor  
Dan Cuddy at (410) 882-4138.

SpotLite, cont. from page 8

Festival, we concluded that fewer people attended this year than last year. *Lite* suggests running next year's festival Saturday and Sunday *only* rather than opening for what was a rather slow four-hour stint Friday evening. (Thanks go to Lisa Hurowitz for staffing our booth that night while our mundane alter-egos put food on the table, plus Sat./Sun. help from Marisa Canino, Wendy Stevens, and Vonnie Crist.) Talks with some of the other small presses and literary organizations scattered about the Washington Monument verified that the weekend's pace was relaxed.

*Lite* shared close but amiable quarters in one of the tents ringing the base of George's statue with Towson University's free literary magazine, *Grub Street*. Their table was beautifully decorated with flowers, candles, and an Indian-print tablecloth donated, we hear, by Clarinda Harris. It was faithfully manned by students who, at one slow point, organized an impromptu poetry reading which attracted some attention. If you didn't get your copy of *Grub Street* at the book festival, pick one up at TU—it's well worth the read. It's been around since we went to school there, and that's a decent track record. (We'll just say it was sometime before T.U. dropped the "state" from its name.)

While business was slow, opportunities for networking abounded. The usual suspects lurked in hot booths, including Dolphin-Moon Press, WordHouse, Maryland State Poetry and Literary Society, Baltimore Writers Alliance, Maryland Writers Association, Harford Poetry Society, Little Ned Stories, Baltimore Science Fiction Society, Contemporary Museum, VIAS/Visions International, Woodholme House Publishers, Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America, The Urbanite Magazine, Neighborhood Congress/CHPA, Fighting for Fairness, and too many more to mention. (For a complete list of activities/vendors who participated, check out the website: [www.bop.org](http://www.bop.org).) We chatted with Danuta Kosk-Kosicka, James Taylor, Tom Chambers, Diane Scharper, Clarinda Harris, A.C. Crispin, Brad Ferguson, Ed Fain, Douglas Goodhill, David Diorio, Brian McQuade, Rachel Klein, John Schweitzer, Barbara Diehl, Barbara Simon, Rosemary Klein, Sam Schmidt, David Brady, Dennis Barnes, Steven Cunningham, Leeane Dinkin, Mark & Jul Owings, Sue Wheeler, and Gabriele Hourticolon, to name a few.

There were readings, talks, and book-signings for every taste. Highlights included the four past Maryland Poet Laureates on Sunday (hosted by HoCoPoLitSo): Roland Flint, Linda Pastan, Reed Whitmore and Lucille Clifton; plus an inspiring talk by primatologist Dr. Jane Goodall at 3 p.m. Saturday (hosted by Bibelot and the Baltimore Zoo). We tried to buy a copy of her new book *Reason for Hope: A Spiritual Journey* on Sunday, but it was sold out. (We will console ourselves with the photos our friend snapped until our book beams in from cyberspace). For the first time *Lite* toured the Peabody Conservatory Library, a gorgeous building whose

architecture soars and whose book stacks are, unfortunately, closed to the public. We also visited the Peabody Institute open house, listened to some lovely chamber music, discovered that *An Die Musik* had not gone out of business, just moved south of Towson; bought cold, refreshing (cheap) sodas and located flush toilets. Finally, we marveled at the play of stained-glass light in Mount Vernon Place United Methodist Church, completed in 1872, which guards the northeast corner of the monument in Gothic splendor. Note to hikers: two years ago we climbed all the way up George bearing a backpack and camera. We were tired as hell but the view was fantastic and we have the photos to prove it. We were ashamed of ourselves for having lived here so long without trying it once.

Another delight was a half-block away from our tent: Constantine's Greek Kitchen. We ate ourselves silly with stuffed grape leaves and chicken souvlaki (except on Friday when the chicken slid out on a spurt of tahini sauce). Last year the ice cream stand was half a block away; we were gastronomically seduced then, too. Temptation approached in the guise of a certain *Lite* staff member sucking down cold vanilla in the sweltering heat. The weather was cooler this year, but temptation still beckoned. She doesn't wear cheap cologne, she waves gyros. We tried to compensate on Sunday by eating a salad at Donna's, but all that green frilly stuff made us feel like a squirrel. A word to the wise: if you use the restroom at Donna's, for heaven's sake take the key INSIDE or you might be a peep show. Indoor plumbing was a luxury; with all the food handling that goes on at events such as the book festival, handwashing stations at ALL portapot areas are a sanitary necessity. A few ATMs wouldn't hurt, either. (Are you listening, Martin O'Malley?)

The theme this year was George Washington; in fact, persons in colonial garb strolled about Mt. Vernon all weekend. There were plenty of activities for children: storytelling, crafts, assorted characters we would probably know if we had children and didn't just act like them: snapping photos, people-watching, tapping our toes to cool jazz (when we weren't manning the booth or eating Greek Food). At least we know Winnie-the-Pooh when we see him, but who the heck was the Giant Rat? (We wondered at first if he were a promotion for "Rat Rubout," but he didn't look bureaucratic.) No Teletubbies, but we did see Raggedy Ann and Andy, Edgar Allen Poe, and Little Red Riding Hood walking arm-in-wing with Titania (the Fairy Queen) from Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. We missed Mark Twain (and the giant can of Old Bay handing out coupons) from last year.

Let's just hope that Amazon.com doesn't come to the book festival next year along with Bibelot, Borders, and Barnes & Noble; if their TV commercials are accurate, there won't be enough room for their stock in George, Mt. Vernon or the City that Reads.

PATTI KINLOCK

## Lite Reading: BOOK REVIEW

*Where They Ain't*. Burt Solomon (The Free Press, \$25.)

Baltimore native Burt Solomon's exhaustive and precise research has produced *Where They Ain't*, a thorough and engaging volume that explores the state of professional baseball at the end of the 19th century.

Central to Solomon's work is his attention to the original incarnation of the Baltimore Orioles, a club that fought its way to three consecutive National League pennants in the mid-1890s. Using bunts, hit-and-runs, and the "Baltimore Chop," the Orioles reinvented the national game. The exploits of Wee Willie Keeler, John McGraw, Hughey Jennings, and Joe Kelley, a quartet of Hall of Famers known as "The Big Four," are well chronicled, as is "Foxy" Ned Hanlon, another Hall of Famer who was the architect and manager of the Orioles baseball dynasty.

Despite the extensive research concerning how the game was played at the turn of the century, it is Solomon's understanding and appreciation of the game as a business that allows his work to be truly enlightening.

Solomon provides background on the Players' League, an ill-fated attempt by professional ballplayers to avoid the labor rules established by the owners of both professional circuits, the National League and the American Association. Likewise, the demise of the American Association after the 1891 season, which left the 12-city National League as the only major league in the land, is chronicled.

Most importantly, however, Solomon examines "trust baseball," which appeared in the late 1890s. The Brooklyn and Baltimore clubs were owned by the same magnates, as were the St. Louis and Cleveland franchises. The result was one strong team for each trust, as well as an awful one. The 1899 Cleveland Spiders, owners of an atrocious 20-134 record, bear witness to this.

Solomon focuses on the demise of the Baltimore club after the 1899 season, as well as the American League franchise in Baltimore that bolted after the 1902 season for New York. It is Solomon's immense appreciation of irony that fulfills the work, as he notes Baltimore's joy upon returning to the major leagues in 1954, as well as the anguish and sorrow in Brooklyn three years later when the Dodgers moved 3,000 miles away to Los Angeles.

*Where They Ain't* is sure to be appreciated by any baseball fan, but especially by those who long for the days when Wee Willie Keeler's credo "Keep your eye clear, and hit 'em where they ain't," described the prevailing theory of how the game was to be played.

PATRICK STEVENS

### Are you a Pagan? Do you practice Magick?

If so, I would love to hear from you. I am an anthropology graduate student studying contemporary Paganism and I am attempting to circulate a survey in the Pagan community in order to collect data. All replies totally confidential. Information will be used for academic purposes only...no ulterior motives. If you are interested, please send a SASE to: **Survey**, P.O. Box 5607, Baltimore, MD 21210. Web: <http://crescentcauldron.dreamhaven.net/survey.htm>.

## Don't Miss the Lite Circle PUBLICATION PARTY

for

### Lower Than the Angels

edited by David W. Kriebel &

Vonnie Winslow Crist

Friday, Oct. 15, 7:30 p.m.

Bibelot-Timonium

Readings by bestselling author

**Jack Chalker** along with

**Dave Kriebel, Vonnie Crist,**

**Rosemary Klein, Dan Cuddy,**

**W.H. Stevens, Donna Eason,**

**Barbara Diehl, Patti Kinlock,**

**Sam Beard, & many more.**

Second reading

Friday, Nov. 19, 1999

Bibelot-Woodholme

Details in the November literary

supplement & on the Lite website:

<http://litecircle.dragonfire.net>

For more info, call (410) 719-7792.

## POETRY BALTIMORE Poems About a City

Edited by Sam Schmidt &

Virginia Crawford

Featuring Josephine Jacobson,  
Lucille Clifton, Kendra Kopelke,  
and other prominent Maryland poets  
(plus some new voices!)

Send \$8.95 plus \$1.00 shipping  
and handling to:

WordHouse, Inc.

Poetry Baltimore

P.O. Box 6240, Baltimore, MD 21206

Lite Circle Books presents

## Essential Fables

Poetry and Art by Vonnie Winslow Crist

Acclaimed by Pulitzer

Prize-winning poet Mary Oliver.

**ORDER YOUR COPY NOW!**

Send your check or money order for \$9.95  
plus \$1.00 postage and  
handling to:

Lite Circle Books/Essential Fables

P.O. Box 26162, Baltimore MD 21210

For more info, call (410) 719-7792

New! From Lite Circle Books!

## A Fine Thin Thread

Poems by Virginia Aten Pritchett

Illustrated by Vonnie Winslow Crist

**ORDER YOUR COPY NOW!**

Send your check or money order for \$9.95  
plus \$1.00 postage and  
handling to:

Lite Circle Books/A Fine Thin Thread

P.O. Box 26162, Baltimore MD 21210

For more info, call (410) 719-7792

# Markoe and the Black Moon

by  
Christopher A. Henry

Illustration by Moira Lachen

The boy stood before the mirror, carefully washing his hands. He twisted the knob until the water scorched his fingers. In and out, in and out, he scrubbed his palms raw, watching the suds swirl down the drain. Steam rose.

"You're steamin' up the place, Markoe," he heard Trevor say behind him. "That water's too hot for a baby like you." Trevor swatted the back of his head with a hard open hand, and Markoe could hear Chad's moaning, barnyard laugh behind him. He didn't turn around.

"Next time, it's the toilet torture," Trevor said. And Chad laughed his mule laugh again. The boys' room door swung open, and a streamlined chaos of giggling, snorting, shouting and screaming breezed in from the hallway. The door closed back into place and he was alone.

Wringing his red, wet hands together, Markoe looked for traces of dirt and germs in the slick foam gurgling in the sink.

Markoe knew the toilet torture: down on his knees, Chad pushing hard on his shoulders, pinning his legs to the wet cement tiling, Trevor forcing his head to the water's surface, so close that he could see the brown grunge flaking the lips of that mysterious black hole at the bottom of the bowl. "Hey, your face looks dirty," Trevor would say. "Better wash it. Your mommy still wash your face for you? Wipes your ass too, I bet." Followed by Chad's acquiescent honk.

At that moment, Markoe would be forcefully drawn face to face with the clear, still water at the bottom of the bowl. It smelled of piss and disinfectant. Soon, scoops of it would drench his face, and he would shut his eyes and clamp his lips together and shudder.

But in his mind, Markoe escaped. He swam in the clearest water imaginable, somewhere far away, Mexico. He'd seen pictures of Mexico before, in his mother's memory book. The turquoise water haunted him, and that's where he fled while Trevor and Chad took their filthy pleasure, trying to drown him.

Markoe twisted the tap off, the last vapours of steam rising from the sink. Staring at his twin in the mirror, he pushed two ropes of straw-coloured hair out of his face with dripping fingers. He paused, drawing his two faces closer together. He concentrated on his eyes, focusing hard.

Not long—not long before his features compressed and exaggerated, turning almost elfin. His ears sharpened at the top to two tent-points and thick lobes drooped down on each side of his shrunken head; his eyes were squeezed, like fossil fuel, into two tiny wet black balls, and his blonde hair withered. He spent hours in front of his mirror at home, doing exactly this: waiting for that moment when he was no longer himself, when he could see the faces within.

The door opened again, and his reflection snapped back into place. A boy Markoe did not recognize came in and walked into a stall, slamming the door behind him.

The brown paper towels slid easily out of their shiny silver holder. As Markoe drew them out, he watched them grow black as he dried his hands. His fingernails were too long, he noticed, and he resolved to trim

them when he got home. But home was still hours away.

The second recess bell pealed through the hallway and he opened the door. Instantly absorbed, the crowd swept him along in a faithful rush to the door at the end of the hall and beyond.

Markoe soon stood alone on the slope of the small grassy hill beside the teachers' parking lot, tying two soft twigs together. He made a perfect bow, and he held it in the palm of his hand for a moment before pulling it apart with his index fingers. The pieces fell to the ground.

A small band of teachers stood in the parking lot, smoking cigarettes. Mrs. Hollingsworth, Markoe's third grade teacher, stood among them; she spotted Markoe and quickly turned her back to him. People always look meaner when they smoke, Markoe thought; their eyes narrow and their brows fall in shame or contempt. He would never smoke, he told himself.

Clusters of children played nearby, some in pairs, some in huge gossiping groups: skip rope, tag, monkey-in-the-middle...even hide-and-go-seek was being played in broad, wide-open daylight by children desperate to recapture the Saturday afternoon adventure of disappearing among the trees and creeks of a thick patch of forest.

But there was nowhere to hide here (unless it was under a car, Markoe thought, which was where he'd hide if he were ever asked to play); a schoolyard is an open, yet bounded space, each child carefully accounted for by burning, watchful eyes.

Miss Daley, a new teacher, was on recess patrol. Her thin arms and long blonde

hair were being grabbed by hundreds of tiny fingers, each desperate to hold her hand. She walked slowly and carefully, setting a rhythm that the children followed. She was the youngest of the teachers, but she was a quick study: she "understood," and to simply touch her hand was to be consumed by acceptance.

Spotting Markoe with her dreamy stare, she smiled righteously, blankly. He again felt pulled to join them, to be guided in a proper, planned motion around the schoolyard instead of standing alone on the hill. She had approached him the week before, her hand reaching out. *You must be lonely. You can walk with me if you want. Maybe make friends?* The children behind her watched her work with awed, expectant eyes. She was trying to win a new child over, as they too had been won.

Markoe shook his head. Miss Daley shrugged and turned away, her arms held open and low by her sides as the children flocked and re-gathered. From behind, Markoe could just make out the fiery halo that shrieked and popped above her head; he wondered why her hair never caught fire.

But Markoe didn't need friends or belief or acceptance, especially now. It was only a few days before, but it was forever to him:

He first spotted Helen from his classroom's window, walking by on the sidewalk that ran next to the school. She was a perfect autumn picture, beautifully framed by the construction paper orange pumpkins and black broomstick-witches that hung around the window. Shoulder-length chestnut hair hung suspended over a black jacket, and a long, floral-print skirt barely

scraped the sidewalk. She carried a handbag marked by a bright yellow sunflower.

She walked slowly, without purpose, stopping every few steps to look at something on the ground, probably a leaf, beautifully stamped in its rich autumn berry blossom on the sidewalk.

On that first day, Markoe sat sweating anxiously in the darkened, suddenly airless classroom, ignoring the Hallowe'en video that Mrs. Hollingsworth played on the tiny screen at the front of the class and not understanding his own twisting guts. Helen stopped again, as if remembering something, and she turned to face the school. And Markoe.

She smiled—a genuine smile, one that filled him, one that he actually believed. Heat swelled from her blushed cheeks and burst through the window to touch him. Time cracked. And the name dropped into his head like an acorn, as if it had been there all along: Helen.

Markoe followed her with his eyes that day, watching her pass from one end of the window to the other, out of the black cat's jaws, past the skeleton, and into the soft folds of the white-hooded ghost.

Markoe craned his neck but she soon disappeared, gliding beyond the frame. Loneliness slipped back into place, like a window falling from its catch; but something was left, a fingerprint on the pane. The cat hissed, the skeleton winked and the ghost chuckled kindly. And the Headless Horseman, perched atop his midnight steed, roared his approval through a jagged mouth full of flame. Ichabod's screams pierced the classroom and the music thundered.

An hour later, face down in the toilet, he was in Mexico, and Helen's hand caressed the back of his neck as he floated in the still ocean. Black flecks of stars hung in the bright sunny sky and a great black moon sat suspended. In Mexico, on the first day he saw Helen, the night was turned inside out.

He sat on the hill that afternoon at recess, a small sketch pad opened on his lap. His pencil moved easily over the paper and he drew Helen from memory, from what he gleaned from those brief moments. She marched elegantly over the surface of the black moon, her flowery skirt swishing like a fish tail, conquering craters and jagged moon rocks. A cat threaded itself between her legs in a figure-eight, while a smiling ghost circled above. Helen reached a hand before her, as if expecting nothing more than a palmful of space.

Markoe looked up from his drawing to find a sunflower bobbing before him.

Helen had returned. She smiled coyly, her skirt billowing with each step before falling back around her legs.

Markoe desperately wanted to return to his work, to transpose this very moment into shade and space, but his eyes simply wouldn't fall to the sketchpad; they had been summoned and they were powerless.

Helen's face turned and found him. A smile widened, expectant.

She continued past the parking lot, where the teachers smoked. Mr. Webster, the sixth grade teacher, turned and followed Helen with narrow eyes, a cigarette dangling beneath his moustache. A smile crawled across

*Continued on page 11*



Markoe, cont. from page 10

his thick lips. Helen's smile remained.

Mr. Webster nodded his head slowly.

But Helen kept walking. Markoe watched her vanish around the corner; Mr. Webster watched too, stubbing his cigarette on an upturned heel.

The bell rang, and the children streamed back inside the school like ants. Markoe glanced down at his drawing and found it covered with bits of wood and lead—his pencil had snapped into pieces like a twig. The lead marked his hands.

Markoe looked up to see Mr. Webster, his hands stuffed in his pockets, walking back inside the school, using the teachers' door. A bored frown made his mouth droop like a second moustache.

Markoe gathered his sketchpad and pencils and walked to the school, his head still burning, but hanging low.

Later that night, by the light of a small reading lamp, Markoe lay on his bed reading *Robinson Crusoe*. An island is a perfect place, he thought; it's dry and pure land, solidly protected from the foamy tangle of confused waves and salt water that surrounded it. Nobody looking for his hand or membership, trying to pull him down from his hill only to drown his head's burning pride in an ocean of flushing water.

Music blared from the living room, and Markoe heard his mother laugh. Somebody else laughed, too, maybe his father. Glasses clinked and he smelled smoke. His parents were like prophets that didn't care for his belief or acceptance. They would go on without his involvement. They revelled, loudly preaching the truth to themselves, asking no questions, expecting nothing.

But like Crusoe, Markoe had found that he wasn't alone on his island—the print had been cast.

Each day, Helen walked by; each day her smile seemed more desperate. She knew, as he did, that time is like a lit candle, and it melts to a stub. Each night, sitting cross-legged on his bed as the smoke and stench and screaming and laughter fumed around him, Markoe searched his heart and found it empty, save for Helen. His body burned, his heart resolved.

On the last day, after carefully washing his hands and being swept into the schoolyard, he climbed atop his hill and awaited her arrival.

But that fifteen-minute recess was spent as a prisoner confronting eternity, waiting for a release that never comes. Standing on the hill, Markoe's eyes followed the empty sidewalk that stretched out before the school like wings spreading to a hidden oblivion. The recess bell chimed again, and his spirit

began to shrivel.

Sweating and tortured, Markoe spent the rest of the day sitting at his desk, unengaged and silent. Nobody approached him or offered understanding; he alone allowed himself to indulge in an eclipsing hope, blinding but fast disappearing.

After school, he ran back up the hill as the bell punished him again in even, bodily strikes. He held fast, the streaming mob of children fleeing around him. The urge swelled within him to be swept along, to be dragged. He remembered and he resisted.

The engines started up and the cars, too, escaped the school. The drivers were shadowy, solitary figures, hunched over black dashboards and peering through opaque windshields.

A blanket of chilly calm was being eased over the schoolyard and Markoe was soon alone, standing on the hill. His lips moved wordlessly, a desperate prayer to the dimming horizon to present, to produce his Helen.

The late afternoon sky became edged with darkness. Markoe was the sole witness to the black hands that reached from behind the clouds to pull the day to pieces, slowly at first, but always leaving less and less to bear. Until there was nothing.

He shivered. He tried to pull thoughts from his head, like books from a shelf, but came up empty. He coughed up something that landed on his tongue, something that tasted like when you bite too far into an apple and crunch the core. Although he spat it out at the darkness, the taste remained.

The night sky lay dead above him, like meat hanging from a hook. Markoe's legs grew tired and he knelt down on the grass. First one knee, then two. His body crumpled, and he was powerless. He fell on his side.

Rolling onto his stomach, he pushed his face into the cold ground to keep himself from crying. He pressed his tongue against the grass and dirt beneath, hoping to scrape away the foul taste in his mouth.

Markoe remained huddled against the earth that he could never own, his body softly quaking with the sensation of hopes being ripped from his chest. He waited.

Looking up, his bleary eyes followed a single beam of light that set the sixth grade window aglow. He hadn't noticed that before.

Instinctively, Markoe stood up. Drawn to the light, he descended the small hill and carefully approached the window.

Peering inside, he saw Mr. Webster kneeling before three pumpkins on a table. The blade of a knife flashed briefly, before sinking into the flesh of the last pumpkin. He cut

sharp, narrow triangles for eyes, and carefully trimmed out a smiling mouth, crowded with teeth.

Markoe watched as he removed a disk of orange skull and dropped a candle inside. He lit them with a long, single match.

The lights went out, and Markoe saw their faces glow fiercely, proudly, like three brothers. They were indivisible in the darkness, protected by a united, burning strength and sheltered by the darkness that surrounded them. Markoe pressed his hands against the window.

But the classroom lights came on again. And as quickly as he had lit the pumpkins, Mr. Webster blew them out, one by one. Exposed in the light, they were left cold, dead and mute, forever trapped beneath a cold fluorescent sky. Extinguished. Cruel.

Mr. Webster wiped the blade of his knife on his pant leg.

At that moment, Markoe understood. Not just about Helen, but about everything. Nothing escaped those black hands. And the knife.

He fled behind the school, to the tree-bounded field. He ran until his stomach rolled and his sketchbook felt like a brick in his arms.

Panting, he fell back on the grass. For a long time, he lay accusing the canopy of autumn stars speckled coldly before him. If he could touch one, he thought, it would be the coldest, darkest, spikiest thing imaginable, like something you would find at the bottom of the blackest sea.

Markoe understood.

Thoughts of anger and confused revenge—though sharp and still bitter—were fast withering. But the foul taste in his mouth remained, as if it had been there all his life.

He opened his sketchbook and found the picture he had drawn of Helen. The moon she walked on was still black, like the one inside his head; the ghost still flew and the cat still wove a path around her, but everything had changed, leaving nothing but cold. Her outstretched hand was empty.

He tore the drawing from his book. Ripping it in careful shreds, he placed each piece in his mouth and chewed carefully. Shred by shred he consumed the drawing; when the paper grew hard against his molars, he swallowed.

Piece by piece, inch by inch, Markoe filled the void in his heart, consigning Helen to the past and bearing her memory on the wind of a cold autumn night.

There was no moon that night, but then how can you see a black moon in the darkness?



## The Baltimore Science Fiction Society

Presents the Annual Maryland Regional Science Fiction Convention

# BALTICON 34

April 21-23, 2000



Guest of Honor:  
**Octavia Butler**

Art GOH: **Wendy Pini**

Editor GOH: **Richard Pini**

Filk GOH: **TJ and Mitchell**

**Burnside Clapp**

Fan Art GOH: **Stephen Stiles**

Special Magic Guests: **Dennis**

**Haney & Steve Myers**

1999 Compton Crook Award

Winner: **James Stoddard**

**Baltimore Omni Inner Harbor Hotel**

(410)752-1100

Special room rates apply for convention members only.

Hotel Rates: \$113+tax  
Single/double/triple/quad

Membership Rates:

Adult \$30 / Child (age 6-12) \$15  
until 6/30/99

Adult \$35 / Child \$18 until 12/31/99

Adult \$40 / Child \$20 until 3/31/00

Adult \$45 / Child \$23 at the door

For more information, contact:

**BALTICON 34**

PO Box 686, Baltimore,  
MD 21203-0686

Ph: (410) JOE-BSFS (563-2737)

e-mail: bsfs@balticon.org

web: <http://www.balticon.org>

## For the Holidays

...and throughout the year.

Beautiful wreaths, Christmas ornaments, decorative pillows, toys, and other wonderful creations—each individually handmade with care by

**Coventry Crafts**

a family-run business since 1989

2103 Coles Blvd.

Norristown, PA 19401

(610) 275-7442 or (410) 719-7792

**We Ship Anywhere!**

**Coming Soon! From Lite  
Circle Books**

## River of Stars

Poetry & Art by **Vonnie Winslow Crist**

**RESERVE YOUR COPY  
NOW!**

Send your check or money order for  
\$9.95 plus \$1.00 postage and  
handling to:

Lite Circle Books/River of Stars  
P.O. Box 26162, Baltimore MD 21210  
For more info, call (410) 719-7792

## HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

Lite celebrates its 10th anniversary in the December '99/January '00 issue of *Lite: Baltimore's Literary Newspaper* with works by Lite Circle staff and a little about the faces behind the newsprint. Also join us for a special anniversary **Masquerade Dinner Ball** in December (time/place TBA). Watch for details on our web page and in the November '99 literary supplement.

**New! From Lite Circle Books!**

## Penny's Hill

A chapbook of poetry by **Hugh Burgess**

**ORDER YOUR COPY NOW!**

Send your check or money order for  
\$5.00 (includes \$1.00 postage  
and handling) to:

Lite Circle Books/Penny's Hill  
P.O. Box 26162, Baltimore MD 21210  
For more info, call (410) 719-7792

**rescent cauldron**  
eZine

Submissions/Inquiries  
Wanted!

**equinox issue** vol. 1  
premier issue

P.O. Box 5607  
Baltimore, MD 21210

Email: [rescent@dreamhaven.net](mailto:rescent@dreamhaven.net)

<http://rescentcauldron.dreamhaven.net>



CALLING ALL WRITERS!  
**STOP!**

*You are NOT ALLOWED to put down this magazine without reading about  
Lite's 1999*

*Poetry and Short Fiction  
Contest*

*Winners in each category will receive the following prizes:*

**FIRST PRIZE: \$75**

**SECOND PRIZE: \$45**

**THIRD PRIZE: \$15**

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, 1999**. 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. Winners will be notified by March 31, 2000. Maximum story length 6,000 words. Maximum poem length 50 lines. Please mail entries to:

The Lite Circle Literary Contest  
P.O. Box 26162  
Baltimore, MD 21210

For more info, please call (410) 719-7792 or (410) 889-1574.