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The Poetry Chronicles

The Gulf Coast Poets, a Chapter of the Poetry Society of Texas

Club News

Gulf Coast Poets Critique Group

This critique group meets every 4th Monday, except in the months of November and December. It is free and open to the public, Although an RSVP is required in order to participate. Kate Sanger, ksanger@fromtheasylum.com leads the critique. It meets at the Seabrook Coffee Oasis on NASA Road One.

Member News

Jam Bernstein announces the birth of her granddaughter on 8/19/08. Yes, she has photos and she even helped deliver and cut the cord. She says Lyla Marie Sunshine Bernstein is a keeper at 8.5 lbs., 20 inches long.



Summer coming to an end

The Gulf Coast Poets, a chapter of the Poetry Society of Texas, will hold its September meeting at Barnes and Noble on Bay Area Blvd. at 10:30 am on Saturday, September 13, 2008. **Marie Delgado Travis** will be the featured speaker at this meeting. Read about Marie on page 3.



November's featured poet is Ken Jones, host of a popular Houston reading series. December's featured poet is Larry Thomas, 2008 Texas Poet Laureate.

Check out our website to learn about upcoming contests. <http://GulfCoastPoets.info> We currently have no plans for a field trip in October, because the Houston Poetry Fest was cancelled, so we will meet that month, unless members propose an alternate trip at the September meeting.

Poetic Forms *Pantoums*

By Becky Ellisor

The poetic structure known as a pantoum originated in Malaysia as a common form for chants. French explorers brought the idea back to France and to this day, many think of it as a French poetic form.

Pantoums have a fixed repetitious structure. Any meter and any length of line is acceptable as long as the poem is written in four-line stanzas. If each line is numbered, lines two and four of each stanza become lines one and three of the next stanza. Only the final stanza is different. The final stanza includes line one and three of the first stanza (reversed in order.) The next to the last stanza provides the other two lines.

This form makes great poems for readings because it *is* chant-like. Even us modern day bards like the flavor of a chant.

My Poetry Pantoum

*Ink runs from the corners of my mouth.
Letters dance in front of my eyes.
Sayings bounce around in my ears.
My mouth vomits words.

Letters dance in front of my eyes
Brain draining sentences cobble together.
My mouth vomits words.
What kind of thinking is this?

Brain draining sentences cobble together.
I push thoughts down slides.
There is no time for thinking.
Will I always love this work?

I push thoughts down slides
No rhymes, no reason
Will I always love this work?
Heartfelt feelings, opinions and protests

No rhymes, no reason
Sayings bounce around in my ears.
Heartfelt feelings, opinions and protests
*Ink runs from the corners of my mouth.

*This line is the first line of Mark Strand's poem "Eating Poetry."

Gulf Coast Meeting Minutes June 14, 2008

President Mary Margaret Carlisle called the meeting to order at 10:35 am and welcomed those in attendance, with minutes taken by Debi Fairchild, Recording Secretary. Old minutes approved by those present. Copies of the newsletter were passed to everyone present.

A. Reports

1. The President talked about the by-laws and the club's purpose, which is the promotion of poetry and poets, and the education of poets, mentioning that we are a chapter of the Texas Poetry Society. Oscar Pena is the by-laws committee chair. He has been working diligently with his committee. Extra copies of the by-laws were available for anyone who did not see them online.
2. Treasurer's report given by the President. Leo Waltz, Treasurer, was not present. Beginning balance: \$1,348.91, ending balance: \$1,341.66
3. Larry Thomas was approved as an honorary lifetime member with a 19-0 vote.
4. Hospitality Chair-Ann Fogelman announced we had two guests, Professor John Thornburg's wife Jane and daughter Ellen. Ann also gave a bio for Tim Russett, the noted journalist of Meet the Press, who died of a heart attack recently.
5. Vice President, Lynne Streeter reported on the TAACCL Leadership Forum, a co-op of local arts' groups to exchange information and support each other. They wish to inform others about all the different arts groups in the area. TAACCL will be the umbrella organization for all the groups who decide to join them in this project. We have agreed to place their link on our website, and ours will be on theirs. Member Kay Cox will be the liaison for the Gulf Coast Poets, attend their monthly meetings, and report back to the board. Individuals are welcome to join The Arts Alliance, check their website for details: www.taaccl.org

B. Upcoming Speakers and Field Trips

1. July: Field trip to the Poetry Society of Texas Summer Conference sponsored by Northwest Poets.
 2. August: Board meeting only
 3. September: Speaker - Marie Delgado Travis
 4. October: Houston Poetry Fest [**cancelled!**]
- C. Speaker Professor John Thornburg read his poetry and gave a talk on Point of View in writing.
D. Door prizes included a book light given to Becky Ellisor, a book, *The Best Loved American Poems* given to guest Ellen Thornburg, and three journals given to Edith, Ann, and Diana. (Journals were gifts of Bill Turner and Sandi Stromberg from their trip to Europe.)
E. Gulf Coast Poets Contest Winners for May (See the Gulf Coast Poets website for poems and biographies.)

1. Mary Ann Goodwin - Byways
2. Ivy Kaminsky - Idiomatic Idioms
3. Denise Amodeo Miller - Vittles and Tea
4. Diana Dettling Buckley - Northern Lands

F. This month's poetry prompt was "Ice Cream," and these poets read their yummy poems:

1. Barbara Carle - Bungalow Bar
2. Mary Carlisle - Ice Cream Bar
3. Becky Ellisor - The Grove
4. Lynne Streeter - Dipped Cone
5. Ivy Kaminsky - Oh De Ice Cream

The Poetry Prompt for September is "Poetic Cruise." (Those who bring a poem on this topic will read first at the Read Around.)

G. The meeting adjourned at 12:10 pm. Some members went to La Madeline's afterwards for lunch with the speaker.

Marie Delgado Travis, September's Featured Poet and Presenter



Famous Palestinian Poet Dies in Houston

Mahmoud Darwish, whose poetry his fellow Palestinians embraced as the voice of their suffering, died on August 8 after heart surgery in Texas.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas declared three days of national mourning to honor the 67-year-old writer.

"The passing of our great poet, Mahmoud Darwish, the lover of Palestine, the pioneer of the modern Palestinian cultural project, and the brilliant national leader, will leave a great gap in our political, cultural and national lives," Abbas said.

An intensely private man who largely lived alone, he enjoyed a mass following across the Arab world, highly respected even in Israel.

(Taken from an article written by Alastair Macdonald and published by Reuters))

Marie Delgado Travis is proud of her New York and Puerto Rican roots. She worked in Advertising/Marketing for top international companies for over twenty years and earned Masters Degrees with distinction in both Literature and Law. Though relatively new to the literary scene, Marie has already won awards for her writing in poetry and prose, English and Spanish. Her latest honors include section as the Juried Poet at the 2007 Houston Poetry Fest; Honorable Mention in the Ninth and Tenth International Latino Book Awards (Book Expo America, 2007-8), in both the Best Poetry Book in Spanish and Best Poetry Book in English categories, respectively.

Marie won Second Place and two Honorable Mentions in the 2005 international Tom Howard Poetry Contest (over 1,600 entries received) and Honorable Mention in the Tom Howard Short Story Contest No. 13 (over 1,250 entries received).

Marie's work has appeared in Chicken Soup for the Latino Soul(2005) and its translation, Sopa de Pollo para el Ama Latino (2008), as well as in Across the Long Bridge: An Anthology of Award-Winning Poetry (2006). She is the Poetry Editor of www.alongstoryshort.net and Spanish Poetry Editor of www.languageandculture.net. Her work has also appeared in Lucidity, Ardent and Spiky Palm (literary journals), and other places on the web. Marie and her husband Edmunds, a retired attorney, live in Houston, TX.

American Life in Poetry

BY TED KOOSER, U.S. POET LAUREATE, 2004-2006

We mammals are ferociously protective of our young, and we all know not to wander in between a sow bear and her cubs. Here Minnesota **poet Gary Dop**, without a moment's hesitation, throws himself into the water to save a frightened child.

Father, Child, Water

I lift your body to the boat
before you drown or choke or slip too far

beneath. I didn't think--just jumped, just did
what I did like the physics

that flung you in. My hands clutch under
year-old arms, between your life

jacket and your bobbing frame, pushing you,
like a fountain cherub, up and out.

I'm fooled by the warmth pulsing from
the gash on my thigh, sliced wide and clean

by an errant screw on the stern.
No pain. My legs kick out blood below.

My arms strain
against our deaths to hold you up

as I lift you, crying, reaching, to the boat.

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Officers of the Gulf Coast Poets

Mary Margaret Carlisle President

Lynne Streeter Vice President

Debi Fairchild Secretary

Leo Waltz Treasurer

Website: www.gulfcoastpoets.info

Newsletter Editor **Becky Ellisor**



From the Editor:

I need help! Please submit poems and photographs and articles for this newsletter. Don't you want to see your work in print? Each month I would like to publish an article about different poetic forms and include an example poem. I wrote the first one about Pantoums (see first page) because I find it so easy to write in this format, now that I am familiar with it. I hope some of you will submit articles on Poetic Forms that I can include. Payment will be a surprise from me. Please send them to she@BeckyEllisor.com



Surely, one of you can come up with a poem about a cat that likes boating.