

PATHOS · HUMOR · HISTORY · CREATIVE NON-FICTION



CALLAHAN COUNTY

STAR SPOTLIGHT

WRITERS SHOWCASE

(All submitters retain ownership)

American Life In Poetry

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

In celebration of Veteran's Day, here is a telling poem by Gary Dop, a Minnesota poet. The veterans of World War II, now old, are dying by the thousands. Here's one still with us, standing at Normandy, remembering.

On Swearing

In Normandy, at Point Du Hoc, where some Rangers died, Dad pointed to an old man 20 feet closer to the edge than us, asking if I could see the medal the man held like a rosary. As we approached the cliff the man's swearing, each bulleted syllable, sifted back toward us in the ocean wind. I turned away,

but my shoulder was held still by my father's hand, and I looked up at him as he looked at the man.

American Life in Poetry is made possible by The Poetry Foundation (www.poetryfoundation.org), publisher of Poetry magazine. It is also supported by the Department of English at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Poem copyright (c) 2007 by Gary Dop. Reprinted from "Whistling Shade," Summer, 2007, by permission of Gary Dop.

Introduction copyright (c) 2008 by The Poetry Foundation. The introduction's author, Ted Kooser, served as United States Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress from 2004-2006. We do not accept unsolicited manuscripts.

Literary Calendar

November 14, 1851: "Moby Dick" was published by Harper & Brothers in New York. Herman Melville may have based his novel on stories of Mocha Dick, who is said to have wrecked seven ships and killed thirty men.

November 16, 1849: Fyodor Dostoevsky received a death sentence, that was later commuted to hard labor for four years in Siberia. This was for engaging in socialist activities.

November 17, 1919: Shakespeare and Company, an English-language book store and library, was opened by Sylvia Beach in Paris, France.

November 18, 1865: In the last issue of the Saturday Press, "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County" was published. Its author, Mark Twain, instantly becomes a success.

WANTED: Poetry and/or short stories for this page each week.

Mail to: Star P.O. Box 29 Eastland, TX 76448 or e-mail to thebairdspotlight@att.net

net



The Last Tomato photo by Patrick Ready

Words You Can Use:

Spadger: Sparrows were a delicacy in the Elizabethan era. This word came from that for something small and tasty.

Tabescent: Smoke drifts away. This is more like the wasting away and deteriorating from disease.

Uberous: Here is a word for rich and plentiful. Perhaps used first by politicians to denote taxpayer money that drifts away.

Assot: A verb that means to make a fool of oneself or someone else.

Brachiate: Thought to be a verb used in some zoos on the east coast of the United States, to describe the swinging from limb to limb, maybe like a monkey.

He Touched Me

The gentle touch of a father's hand
The gentle voice of a mother's love.
Help to prepare for our journey
In this cruel and sinful world.
As we journey down life's highways
The problems and trouble we face
each day.

Just a word of encouragement from a friend

Would ease our burden along the way.

When we sink so deep in sin
We are always searching but for what.

His presence seems so far away
And all hope seems to be lost.
And then He touched me
And I feel His presence so near.
I realized that Jesus didn't leave me
That it was I that left Him.

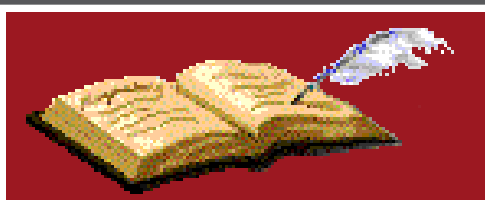
By Bob Harbin

Wanted: Writers & Poets

Any and all ages



E-mail address: thebairdspotlight@att.net



The pen is mightier than the sword.

Submissions sought to: **Star** P.O. Box 29 Eastland, TX 76448 email: thebairdspotlight@att.net S.A.S.E. for returns --WANTED--

20 lines, double spaced or less Poetry

Fiction or Non

Each entry with brief biography notes. All must be family oriented; no smut, slander or liable material.

Out Of This World

Poet Albert Goldbarth discusses his 1950s space paraphernalia collection.

By Richard Siken Poetry Media Service

Albert Goldbarth is the author of over 20 books of poetry, including, most recently, The Kitchen Sink: New and Selected Poems; his many honors include two National Book Critic Circle awards.

Richard Siken: What do you collect?

Albert Goldbarth: 1950s outer space stuffs, toy spaceships and robots. Also, I have a bunch of homages to the manual typewriter, some old manual typewriters, some of them quite beautiful as physical objects, and lots of old typewriter ribbon tins with beautiful designs lithographed onto the covers. I've always been a hoarder, a kind of bower bird-like creator of displays from out of my hoard. By my standards, there isn't a real line of demarcation between "junk" and "collectibles." The question is: is it lovely to my eye?

RS: Do you type on the typewriters you collect?

AG: No, I just look at them and imbibe the aura they have for me. That's true for the toy spaceships and robots. For example, many of them, as you know, are meant to be wound up, or they're battery operated. Some of them are extraordinarily intricate and very jazzy performance objects--they move, they beep, they clang, they spark--but generally I just like to look at them. Sometimes, when I'm moving around my spaceships, I feel that I'm doing something similar to what Joseph Cornell did--arranging his bird eggs and feathers and clipping from magazines--although I know there is some element of hubris in saying that.

RS: How many objects do you have in your collection?

AG: I've never counted, but I've been accumulating these things for well over 20 years now. I love a certain kind of 1950s outer space look--Cadillac-finned rocket ships, bubble-helmeted space guys and gals, fantastically futuristic space guns that go zap. I also have a cornucopia of old kids' coloring books, comic books, paperbacks, pulp magazines, board games. A lot of it is just packed away--there really is no more room for display--but the brunt of it exists in what would be, in a more normal household, the dining room. After a long time in negotiations, my wife and I have yielded [this room] to the outer space collection.

RS: What's the most important item in your collection?

AG: Although it's hard to pick, that might be a Buck Rogers spaceship. It's from 1934, created by the Marx Toy Company--that was a very famous producer of American toys from the '20s up into the early '60s--and it is probably the first commercially produced toy spaceship ever. To my eyes it's just lovely, faithfully produced from the way the spaceship looked in the Buck Rogers comic strip. It's just fantastically, almost ichthyologically finned, with the most beautiful array of deco colors displayed all over it.

I suppose one of the nice things about the toy spaceships--and in some sense the toy robots, too--is that no mat-

ter how imaginative or surreal they are, they're made, by definition, out of the real material they would exist in if they existed in our actual world. You're looking at a tin spaceship, opposed to a plastic spaceship or a carved wooden spaceship. You're looking at a tin robot, and they have the look of working models, something someone might actually stumble over if they walked outside and saw this spaceship parked at the curb. So at one and the same time you have this fantasy object that never could exist, made of a material that we choose to believe has an actual existence in some other nearby universe.

RS: Why tin? Why not some other metal?

AG: The story that has come down to me, through various sources, is that after World War II, when the Japanese economy was virtually dead, due to our own intervention, the Japanese realized there were all these tin cans around that the American soldiers had left behind. They collected them, smoothed them out, and used them for the original batch, as fodder for the first generation of Japanese tin toys. There's a sort of symbolic lovely revenge that evened the economic playing field. The original tin they had at hand and was free, and to this sudden lucky windfall they were able to add new techniques in vibrant color lithography and new possibilities for windup and battery-operated mechanisms, so that long before the Japanese became the primary inventors of transistor circuits or Toyota cars, the world of American childhood was being defined by tin Japanese space fleets.

RS: Do your friends and family understand your obsession, or do they give you grief?

AG: Obsession? Who said it was an obsession? My wife understands. We've had our moments of disagreement over dust issues. On the whole, I think she's intellectually supportive, even though, on a day-to-day basis, I think she might walk through the dining room and think of other uses to which it could be put. Friends generally tend to find it pretty amazing when they walk into some of the rooms here. Often, if they haven't seen the things before, and they're at a loss for any other analogy, they say "Ooooh, it's like a museum" or "Ooooh, this is the ideal toy room I dreamt of as a child." [My favorite reaction is from] those who really see these things with the same kind of understanding of the era and the pizzazz of innocence that these toys possess.

Albert Goldbarth is the 2008 winner of the Poetry Foundation's Mark Twain Poetry Award for humor in poetry. Richard Siken's poetry collection Crush won the 2004 Yale Series of Younger Poets prize and was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award. This article originally appeared on www.poetryfoundation.org. Distributed by the Poetry Foundation. Read more about Albert Goldbarth, and his poetry, at www.poetryfoundation.org

© 2008 by Richard Siken. All rights reserved.

Callahan County Star

Subscription Rates:

\$18.00 In County

\$19.00 Out of County

\$23.00 Out of State of Texas

888-227-1708 or mail to

P.O. Box 29 Eastland, TX

76448