



CALLAHAN COUNTY STAR SPOTLIGHT

WRITERS SHOWCASE

(All submitters retain ownership)

Double Vision

by Ruth York

(continued from last issue...)

It was great fun painting there. Distant purple mountains were framed by the lodge's wrap-around veranda, where a rustic, rock wall, waist high, soared in stone columns to the roof. I did several sketches from different positions around the porch.

The sky darkened in late afternoon. As I packed, sunlight split the clouds and spotlighted the lodge. It was inexpressibly lovely. Excitement made my skin prickle. I had to capture it, capture it quickly. My camera!

I dropped the backpack to the rock floor behind the lodge, threw a leg over the wall and slid down the steep slope to a rocky ridge jutting northward. Here I could catch the full effect of the lodge, golden against the dark, turbulent sky. I clambered over boulders to the end of the ridge.

I turned and stood up, camera in hand, conscious of the uneven surface beneath the soles of my hiking boots and the emptiness at my back. The light was going. I had to get it now.

I snapped several frames. If only I was a little more to the right. I glanced around ? and started involuntarily at the emptiness yawning behind me. A jolt of adrenalin tightened my limbs and throat, jerked my knees.

And then I fell. My mouth opened to scream but my throat clenched shut. I grabbed wildly but found no hold. I pitched head first down the flank of the boulder beneath me.

I ended hanging by my left foot while the rest of me embraced a rock the size of a pickup. The camera clattered down the ravine.

My skin smarted from scraping against the boulder, but no injuries were evident except the ankle where my boot had caught between two boulders. I breathed an incoherent prayer of thanks and appeal.

I turned my head cautiously. A rock-strewn ravine stretched down between my two imprisoning rocks. An experimental wiggle convinced me that movement equaled pain. If my foot came loose, which seemed unlikely, I'd fall in the ravine.

I wondered how long you can live upside down. Doesn't the blood pool in your head? Already my tense muscles ached.

It was almost dark now. The clouds had thickened, lowered. I suddenly felt cool. A breeze was blowing up the ravine. Thankfully, the rock I embraced was still warm.

(to be continued....)

Essay On The Holiday

The holidays are nice, but tend to be too expensive, tiring, and stressed. It's shop, clean, polish, plan, primp, spend, wrap, worry, then do it some more. Guests arrive that you truly enjoy, but sometimes you are too tired to get the full pleasure.

The house is decorated and wonderful smells are coming from the kitchen. After the greetings, new news is shared, babies tickled, oldsters honored. Everyone sits down to a perfectly beautifully decorated table. Every head is bowed, ever eye closed as thanks is given to God, help asked from him for our country, for our soldiers, and amens are echoed. The head of the table carves the beautiful turkey, and plates are filled with familiar fare of turkey and dressing, with gravy, cranberry sauce, mashed or sweet potatoes, and other green vegetables and family old recipes tried and true favorites. Pumpkin pie, pecan, and others and fruit cake and other cakes and candies are enjoyed as well. A sigh of well being is heard echoed.

Christmas gifts are opened among laughter and shouts of glee and surprise. Old hymns are sung. Men go outside to talk man talk and children go out to play with toys. The women gather in the den, and shoes and earrings come off. Talk is of days gone by. Albums are brought out and tears are shed for those loved ones missing in body, but their spirit is here and very strong. They are surely smiling at being remembered. Current events are discussed and future plans.

After it is over, an inner sigh of relief, and also a sadness that it is over. Another year is gone, another expected, and life goes on.

- Joy Conner
Eastland, Texas

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 libel material.

American Life in Poetry

Column 249

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

One of the wonderful things about small children is the way in which they cause us to explain the world. "What's that?" they ask, and we have to come up with an answer. Here Christine Stewart-Nunez, who lives and teaches in South Dakota, tries to teach her son a new word only to hear it come back transformed.

Convergence

Through the bedroom window a February sunrise, fog suspended between pines. Intricate crystals—hoarfrost lace on a cherry tree. My son calls out, awake. We sway, blanket-wrapped, his head nuzzling my neck. Hoarfrost, tree—I point, shaping each word. Favorable conditions: a toddler's brain, hard data-mining, a system's approach. Hoar, he hears. His hand reaches to the wallpaper lion. Phenomena converge: warmth, humidity, temperature's sudden plunge; a child's brain, objects, sound. Eyes widening, he opens his mouth and roars.

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Our Posterity

Down she laid the brush and sighed
Ending months and months of frustration
Hoping to ne'er again, meet such a fix again
For her struggles tempered elation.

Grandmother had come to plead
For her daughter who had lost a child
O please paint this for me, for our posterity
A portrait so loving and so mild.

So she agreed to begin
After seeing and unclear picture
A young hispanic kid, having succumbed to
S.I.D.S.
So she began mixing her mixture.

Til light or too dark she heard
The perspective must be perfect here
And soon grew to be, much clearer as did he
She knew she was through when fell a tear.

The grandmother Ohhh'd and awwdd'd
For the artist went beyond measure
The parents began to cry, for they could hardly try
To thank the artist for their treasure.

- Weldon L. Smith
Eastland, Texas

(Note: The poet's wife, Sue, was the artist and this is a true story.)

Poetry Media Service

ALL AROUND THE WORLD THE
SAME SONG

How globe-trotting poetries may not beat scrawls in a cave.

By C.K. Williams

Poetry Media Service

All over the world, if not every day then in every age, beautiful paintings and poems and pieces of music and buildings are generated: one can almost imagine little flaring lights on the surface of the earth, like those seen in photos from space, though they are much more sparse and scattered than the illuminating devices that bespeckle our globe. And then over time these embodiments of the beautiful are harvested, amassed, collected in books, in museums, in concert halls, to be distributed into the lives of individual human beings, to become crucial elements of their existence. Often, our experience of beauty will be the first hint of what each of us at some point will dare call our soul. For don't those first stirrings of that eternally uncertain, barely grasped notion of something more than mere mind, mere thought, mere emotion, usually first come to us in the line of a poem, a passage of music, the unreal yet more-than-real image in a painting?

And isn't it also the case after all that beauty is the one true thing we can count on in a world of insufferable uncertainty, of constant moral conflicts? I've wondered sometimes if humans invented gods to have something appropriately sensitive, grand, and wise enough to appreciate these miraculous modes of beauty that are so different in material and quality from anything else in the world. Might gods have first been devised not to assuage our fears and hear our complaints and entreaties, but for there to be identities sufficiently sublime to understand what those first painters and sculptors—and surely, though the words and tunes have been lost, those poets and singers—had wrought?

Perhaps this is why those first great artworks were executed deep in caves, so as to be certain the divinities who were their audience wouldn't be distracted by the wonder of the natural world, and so lose the concentration necessary to glory in, and be glorified by, these singular human creations that equaled and even surpassed what had been given by nature for meditation. And perhaps that's why poets, who may half-remember such matters, go off into what can look to others like solitary caverns, shadowed with loneliness, but which surely aren't. C.K. Williams's new book of poems, Wait, will be published in spring 2010. He will also publish a prose study, On Whitman, around the same time. He teaches in the creative writing program at Princeton University. Excerpted from "All Around the World the Same Song," originally published in the March 2009 issue of Poetry magazine and available at www.poetryfoundation.org. Distributed by the Poetry Foundation.

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Writers And Poets!

The Eastland/Callahan County Newspapers announce that the Baird Star will be publishing submitted poetry and short stories. We will also be publishing a literary journal in the near future.

1. We ask for first-time publishing rights. All other rights will remain with the author.
2. There will be no payment, but you will get your works before the general public. We will be sending sample copies to other organizations, the literary world and libraries for their archives and your notoriety.
3. Short stories should be brief. Poetry should be no longer than 24 lines.
4. Each submission should be typewritten, single spaced, with author's name and contact information in the top right hand corner. You must include a SASE for the return of the submission.
5. Please address all submissions to:
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Eastland/Callahan County Newspapers
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