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CALLAHAN COUNTY

STAR SPOTLIGHT

WRITERS SHOWCASE

(All submitters retain ownership)

American Life In Poetry

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

David Wagoner, who lives in Washington state, is one of our country's most distinguished poets and the author of many wonderful books. He is also one of our best at writing about nature, from which we learn so much. Here is a recent poem by Wagoner that speaks to perseverance.

The Cherry Tree

Out of the nursery and into the garden where it rooted and survived its first hard winter, then a few years of freedom while it blossomed, put out its first tentative branches, withstood the insects and the poisons for insects, developed strange ideas about its height and suffered the pruning of its quirks and clutters, its self-indulgent thrusts and the infighting of stems at cross purposes year after year. Each April it forgot why it couldn't do what it had to do, and always after blossoms, fruit, and leaf-fall,

was shown once more what simply couldn't happen.

Its oldest branches now, the survivors carved by knife blades, rain, and wind, are sending shoots straight up, blood red, into the light again.

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)2008 by David Wagoner, whose most recent book of poetry is "Good Morning and Good Night," University of Illinois Press, 2005. Reprinted from "Crazyhorse," No. 73, Spring 2008, by permission of David Wagoner.

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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.

Poetry Foundation Year In Review

January 2009

The Poetry Foundation, like many, will remember 2008 as the year of the great financial crisis. From poets and their publishers, to schools and literary organizations, this year's economic collapse has afflicted everyone in the poetry community in ways that are both far-reaching and painfully individual. The Foundation's own challenge was to protect the value of its endowment and continue its work to support poetry and poets.

The U.S. stock market finished 2008 down 34% for the year. Losses on other types of investments, including real estate, private equity, and international, were similar. Thanks to the cadre of prudent fund managers who are responsible for investing the Foundation's endowment, our resources were not directly affected by defaults in the mortgage market, the failures of Wall Street firms and custodial banks, or the more recent losses of charitable foundations that were invested with Bernard Madoff. Although the value of the Foundation's portfolio has declined in line with the markets in which it is invested, there were no write-offs or permanent losses, and the endowment is positioned to participate fully in the eventual market recovery.

As a matter of prudent management the Foundation has adopted a budget for 2009 that will not exceed 5% of the value of the endowment, a common policy in the foundation world and one that the Poetry Foundation has heeded in its five years of operations. At the same time, we are doing everything possible to maintain our work on behalf of the field and to preserve our direct payments to poets and writers, publishers, and prizewinners.

The lean economic times notwithstanding, the Foundation continues to develop a broader and more engaged audience for poetry. All of the Foundation's programs, including its new initiatives, enter 2009 intact. The site for building the Foundation's permanent home in Chicago has been purchased and prepared, and a beautiful design by John Ronan Architects awaits the groundbreaking. When market conditions turn more favorable, we look forward to the sale of a bond issue and the start of construction. And the Harriet Monroe Poetry Institute, a think tank dedicated exclusively to issues of intellectual and practical importance to poetry, will see 2009 as its first formal year. Katharine Coles, poet laureate of Utah, former head of the creative writing program at the University of Utah, and founding director of the Utah Symposium in Science and Literature, is already at work as the Institute's inaugural director. She has selected as a first field of study for the Institute "Poetry and the New Media."

While tending to its responsibilities on the business side of the house — the necessary left-brain activity of an arts organization — the Foundation continued its mission to discover the best poetry and to celebrate it through publication, prizes, and criticism. This year the Foundation increased its number of Lilly Fellowships, our annual awards for emerging poets, from two to five. Providing \$15,000 to each of five fellows, the fellowships provide no-strings-attached assistance to young poets at a formative time in their careers.

Poetry, for its part, published many first-time contributors (over two hundred of them in the past five years). To quote just one of the spirited and

articulate poems from these newcomers, Sarah Lindsay's "Zucchini Shofar" begins:

No animals were harmed in the making of this joyful noise:

A thick, twisted stem from the garden is the wedding couple's ceremonial ram's horn.

Its substance will not survive one thousand years, nor will the garden, which is today their temple,

nor will their names, nor their union now announced with ritual blasts upon the zucchini shofar.

Shall we measure blessings by their duration?

And it ends:

This moment's chord of earthly commotion will never be struck exactly so again —

though love does love to repeat its favorite lines.

So let the shofar splutter its slow notes and quick notes,

let the nieces and nephews practice their flutes and trombones,

let the living room pianos invite unwashed hands,

let glasses of different fullness be tapped for their different notes,

let everyone learn how to whistle,

let the girl dawdling home from her trumpet lesson

pause at the half-built house on the corner,

where the newly installed maze of plumbing comes down

to one little pipe whose open end she can reach,

so she takes a deep breath and makes the whole house sound.

Discovery and celebration: they are apparent in each new issue of Poetry, and they are a legacy going back to the magazine's very beginnings. Harriet Monroe and Ezra Pound, her "foreign correspondent," chose the poets they published with a combination of personal enthusiasm, neighborhood familiarity, and a perfect willingness to go against the grain. Publishing the new talents of their day — Eliot, Stevens, Moore, and Williams, among many — they tapped into a reservoir of underground energy that came to be known as Modernism. The rest, as they say, is history.

Speaking of underground energy, the Foundation tapped into a load of that this year through our blog, Harriet, and through the Printers' Ball. Inspired by Harriet Monroe's "Open Door" policy*, the blog has become an agora where, with suitable noise and excitement, aesthetically diverse poets come to debate the art form. The Printers' Ball, in a parallel way, showcases Chicago's independent publishing scene. One might think of the Printers' Ball and Harriet together as a kind of Salon des Refusés, that historic exhibition where the Impressionists found their identity in opposition to the French Academy. Whether any poet-descendants of Rimbaud, Dylan Thomas, or Ginsberg were present at the recent Printers' Ball, I don't know, but the fact that the police showed up at the prior year's ball is a positive sign. It seems more than merely appropriate that the Foundation remain open in every way possible to the emergent talents and the underground energies of the moment.

Across our programs we continue to cultivate new poetry readers among the youngest members of our culture. This year Poetry Out Loud, the national recitation contest, reached more than 250,000 high school students across the country. The Foundation appointed

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.

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

the second Children's Poet Laureate, the renowned and delightful Mary Ann Hoberman. Our growing collection of successful audio programs, available on poetryfoundation.org, includes the popular monthly podcast featuring the editors of Poetry. In 2008 listeners downloaded our audio content more than five million times. The multifaceted Poetry Everywhere project received a Parents' Choice Award for its online educational curriculum. Classical Baby (I'm Grown Up Now): The Poetry Show — our collaboration with HBO and a kind of poetry primer for young children and their parents — premiered on television in April and received an Emmy Award for Outstanding Children's Program.

financial crisis, it seems that the old models, both business and social, are broken. At such moments in history, when there is no going back, poetry can intuit the future. As Yeats wrote after the failed Easter Rising of 1916:

All changed, changed utterly:

A terrible beauty is born.

A few years later the Republic of Ireland was formally established.

Sincerely,

John Barr

* The Open Door will be the policy of this magazine. . . To this end the editors hope to keep free of entangling alliances with any single class or school. They desire to print the best English verse which is being written today, regardless of where, by whom, or under what theory of art it is written.



Photo by Patrick Ready

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:

Literary Editor
Eastland/Callahan County
Newspapers
P. O. Box 29
Eastland, TX 76448
email: thebairdspotlight@att.net

Within His Arms

**Repent we all our awful deeds
He'll wash them all away
And then forever after heed
Him each and every day.**

**For He forgets each awful sin
That each of us has done
And then we know He will again
For each and every one.**

**How great to know that he forgives
When I my sorrows show
From death I rise again to live
Within His arms enclosed.**

**- Weldon L. Smith
Eastland, Texas**

Words You Can Use:

Chatoyant: Here is when you see a glow on an object that presents various colors, most especially seen on a piece of metal or glass. A rainbow might be a type of this, or the colors you see in oil on water. Now you know the name of it. Be careful if you use the word in Comanche, Texas.

Dactylogram: This is a finger print, the normal kind, or like you used to press into the mud when playing as a child.

Eolation: When the wind wears down a rock over time, or gives it a special shape, it is the act of eolation.

Grossulariaceous: This describes something that has traits like a gooseberry. It is probably used in the eastern United States and some parts of Britain. It has nothing to do with automobiles.



The pen is mightier than the sword