

PATHOS · HUMOR · HISTORY · CREATIVE NON-FICTION

CALLAHAN COUNTY

STAR SPOTLIGHT

WRITERS SHOWCASE

(All submitters retain ownership)

Submissions sought

to:
StarP.O. Box 29
Eastland, TX
76448email: thebairdspotlight@att.net

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 orient-
ed; 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

Words You Can Use

Descant: This is melody, sometimes meaning the base counterpoint performed by trebles of the various sorts.

Eutaxy: When people act with ordered management, they act with eutaxy.

Festination: Where you see a person in a hurried walk, sometimes a symptom of a nervous disease, this can be described as a festination.

Gallimaufry: Sometimes known as hotchpotch, this concocted dish is a hash made of liver and other organs. There is no known version on present Texas roadhouse menus.

Hagiology: This word denotes the description of holy persons, or their writings. It can be the writing or study of saint's lives, or a saint's listing.

New Poetry Contest Open

A \$1,000 Grand Prize is being offered in a new poetry contest sponsored by Friendly Poets Guild. There are 50 prizes in all, totaling \$4,500.

To enter, send one poem of 21 lines or less to: Free Poetry Contest, 10499 Mills Tower Dr., Suite 35, Rancho Cordova, California 95670. Or enter online @www.friendlypoets.com. The deadline is Jan. 21, 2009. If you wish a winner's list please enclose a stamped return envelope.

"This is our first big contest of the new year," says Contest Director Joseph Mellon, "We expect to discover exciting new poets!"

For more information contact: Joseph Mellon, Contest Director call toll free 1-888-228-3820.

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
Fax: 254-629-2092

Literary Calendar

January 9, 1324: At age 70, Marco Polo died in Venice. Earlier in life as a prisoner of war, he had related his memoirs to a fellow inmate, "The Travels of Marco Polo."

January 10, 1743: For a debt of 8 pounds owed to a coffeehouse, the playwright and poet Richard Savage is arrested in Bristol.

January 11, 1936: Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler attended a dinner where they were introduced to each other in Los Angeles.

January 12, 1876: The author of "The Call of the Wild," Jack London was born in San Francisco. He was to occupy himself at various times also as a gold miner, sailor and tramp.

January 14, 1894: After a career as a seaman, Joseph Conrad moves to London and works on the manuscript of a story called "Alamayer's Folly," he had been writing aboard ship.

American Life In Poetry

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

I suspect that one thing some people have against reading poems is that they are so often so serious, so devoid of joy, as if we poets spend all our time brooding about mutability and death and never having any fun. Here Cornelius Eady, who lives and teaches in Indiana, offers us a poem of pure pleasure.

A Small Moment

I walk into the bakery next door

To my apartment. They are about

To pull some sort of toast with cheese

From the oven. When I ask:

What's that smell? I am being

A poet, I am asking

What everyone else in the shop

Wanted to ask, but somehow couldn't;

I am speaking on behalf of two other

Customers who wanted to buy the

Name of it. I ask the woman

Behind the counter for a percentage

Of her sale. Am I flirting?

Am I happy because the

days
Are longer? Here's what

She does: She takes her time

Choosing the slices. "I am picking

Out the good ones," she tells me. It's April 14th.

Spring, with five to ten

Degrees to go. Some days, I feel my duty;

Some days, I love my work.

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) 1997 by Cornelius Eady, from his most recent book of poetry, "Hardheaded Weather: New and Selected Poems," A Marian Wood Book, Putnam, 2008. Reprinted by permission of Cornelius Eady. 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.

Try This Out

One way to get your poetry or writing to move forward is to try it in a form differently than what you intend. An example would be to fix on at theme that is important to you, say "lives and buildings in a small town," and decide that you want to write a poem on that subject. But perhaps things are not coming to your thoughts. You can try an essay or narrative to get some thoughts down, and move from that to the poem you want to write. Let's say you spy an old building

that you remember. "Dad knew old Jim Motten who ran a music store out of that building in the 30's when our population could support such a business. For a while the Smiths tried to operate a small cafe there. Lot's of good coffee I drank there in the 1950's. Look at how it has deteriorated now. That front paint has worn." From this exercise you can then move the the senses and sounds and poetics of your enterprise. The point here is to use the story form to get to the poetic form.

A Long Engagement

A close look at Elizabeth Bishop's poem "The Moose" shows why it took her twenty years to write it.

By Toby Eckert

Poetry Media Service

Elizabeth Bishop claimed that it took her around 20 years to finish her poem "The Moose." Even for a poet as methodical as Bishop, that seems like an unusually long time. Taking up a theme she explored in poems such as "The Fish" and "The Armadillo," "The Moose" meditates on the transcendent power of nature, and its often startling intrusion into our modern lives. The poem also maps the terrain of Nova Scotia, where the young Bishop was taken to live with her maternal grandparents after being effectively orphaned by her father's early death and her mother's institutionalization for mental illness. (The poem is dedicated to Grace Bulmer Bowers, one of her aunts and surrogate mothers.) "The Moose" opens on a lyrical note, describing the landscape and towns along the Nova Scotian coast:

From narrow provinces
of fish and bread and tea,
home of the long tides
where the bay leaves the sea

twice a day and takes
the herrings long rides,
The phrase "narrow

provinces" in the first line not only establishes a geographical anchor but also serves as a commentary on the provincial lives of the inhabitants. The local diet "of fish and bread and tea," with its repetitive syntax and tight, iambic cadence, invokes a simple, somewhat monotonous existence. Life's rhythm is reflected in the predictable rise and fall of water, "the long tides / where the bay leaves the sea / twice a day . . ." which also manifests itself in the consistent rhyme scheme that evokes the sound of the ebbing and surging ocean.

Despite the poem's travel theme, Bishop is clearly in no hurry to get anywhere in particular. Not until the fifth stanza does the opening phrase, "From narrow provinces," find its verb. Only then does the narrative that propels the rest of the poem truly begin:

a bus journeys west,
the windshield flashing pink,
pink glancing off of metal,

brushing the dented flank
of blue, beat-up enamel;

The effect is unsettling, as Bishop suddenly introduces an ungainly metal machine into what heretofore had been a bucolic scene. From that point on, the reader is conscious of being separated from the landscape, moving through it in an artificial environment in which the outside world flits by the bus windows like scenes in a film: a woman shaking out a tablecloth after dinner, a ship's lantern shining red off the coast, a rubber-booted pedestrian. As the bus picks up speed, the lines do too. It is full night as the bus enters the woods of New Brunswick. Here, another significant turn occurs, with the landscape becoming hairy, scratchy, splintery; moonlight and mist caught in them like lamb's wool

on bushes in a pasture.
It is wilder than the more

human-inhabited world of the previous stanzas. The woods have a clinging, dense, claustrophobic feel. The atmosphere of menace outside the bus contrasts sharply with the one inside, where it is cozy and safe:

The passengers lie back.
Snores. Some long sighs.
A dreamy divagation
begins in the night,
a gentle, auditory,
slow hallucination. . . .

The narrator herself starts to drift off, and Bishop's syntax becomes incantatory and hypnotic. But the reverie comes to an abrupt end with the appearance of the poem's titular character:

--Suddenly the bus driver
stops with a jolt,
turns off his lights.

A moose has come out of the impenetrable wood and stands there, looms, rather,

in the middle of the road.
The domestic dream is punctured, as something huge and wild intrudes. Someone assures the passengers that the animal is "Perfectly harmless. . . ."--a sentiment Bishop undermines, or at least questions, by setting off the phrase with quotes and ellipses.

Some of the passengers exclaim in whispers, childishly, softly, "Sure are big creatures." "It's awful plain." "Look! It's a she!"

Taking her time, she looks the bus over, grand, otherworldly. . . .

The driver's observation that moose are "Curious creatures" could as easily be applied to the passengers. The poet, even as she shares some of the giddy excitement, questions the emotions stirred up by the animal:

Why, why do we feel
(we all feel) this sweet
sensation of joy?

The answer is never given. For Bishop, it seems to lie in the curious power of nature to transform a rather ordinary moment into a transcendent one. The creature's sudden appearance reminds these "civilized" humans of that other world they are simultaneously surrounded by and alienated from. The poet is reluctant to leave the scene, craning backward to see the moose "on the moonlit macadam." As the bus moves on, Bishop invokes the scents used to mark territory--the primeval and the mechanical:

Then there's a dim
smell of moose, an acrid
smell of gasoline.

The moment has passed. But for Bishop, those dim and acrid smells lingered powerfully enough to compel the exacting commitment of the memory to paper, even two decades later.

Toby Eckert is an editor and writer who lives in Alexandria, VA. This article first appeared on www.poetryfoundation.org. Distributed by the Poetry Foundation. Read more about Elizabeth Bishop, and her poetry, at www.poetryfoundation.org.

© 2008 by Toby Eckert. All rights reserved.