

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

Here's a fine poem by Chris Forhan of Indiana, about surviving the loss of a parent, and which celebrates the lives that survive it, that go on. I especially like the parachute floating up and away, just as the lost father has gone up and away.

#### What My Father Left Behind

Jam jar of cigarette ends and ashes on his workbench, hammer he nailed our address to a stump with, balsa wood steamship, half-finished-- is that him, waving from the stern? Well, good luck to him.

Slur of sunlight filling the backyard, August's high wattage, white blossoming, it's a curve, it comes back. My mother in a patio chair, leaning forward, squinting, threading her needle again, her eye lifts to the roof, to my brother,

who stands and jerks his arm upward--he might be insulting the sky, but he's only letting go a bit of green, a molded plastic soldier tied to a parachute, thin as a bread bag, it rises, it arcs against the blue--good luck to it--my sister and I below, heads tilted back as we stand in the grass, good luck to all of us, still here, still in love with it.

American Life in Poetry is made possible by The Poetry Foundation ([www.poetryfoundation.org](http://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 Chris Forhan from his most recent book of poetry "Black Leapt In," Barrow Street Press, 2009, and reprinted by permission of Chris Forhan and the publisher.

Poem first appeared in "Pleiades," Vol. 28, no. 1, 2008. Introduction copyright (c) 2009 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.

### Words To Rhyme With

Lickspittle

Whittle

Brittle

Belittle

Transmittal

### 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](mailto:thebairdspotlight@att.net)**

### Making Your Story Most Interesting

You might find that you have written a story, in any of the genres, and that it does not seize you like you had envisioned it. Some how it doesn't "grab your shirt" like you thought. In the dramatic enterprise, it has been said that actors on the live stage have to overact, for their emotion to be transmitted over the distance to the audience. Part of this has to do with the physical distance. Part of it has to do with the translation of the script, through the medium of the actress or actor. If you read a stage or screenplay, you may find it to be droll, uninspiring. But when the performer works it into life, it enthuses you. That is the translation that must occur. Your trick is to do it in your writing. Most often that is done with the characters, whether they be dog, human or rock. Short phrases act. Longer phrases or sentences often emote to the reader a less active state, a more contemplative one that is less emotional. Try using the emotional marks, like the exclamation mark! Make a rock "rock!"  
- Patrick Ready

### Outstretched Hands

Unsympathetic passive crowd  
On whose dull ears I cry out loud  
Be friend to me or neighbor please  
Behold my pleas from bended knees  
Yet no man hears and no man sees  
My outstretched hands.

Lo are not ye my neighbors still  
Though pass my way each day until  
Thy heart grew dread the finding out  
The truth which was so noised about  
That bended knees and pleaful shout  
Bring outstretched hands.

Each day I raise and angry voice  
And curse aloud my neighbors choice  
Which wrought in me a life alone  
And damns each night to wish it gone  
But then you came and love was shown  
With outstretched hands.

O bosom friend how rich we be  
Indulging in such quantity  
Of flagrant days and day since when  
My heart you took to mold and mend  
Defying curse of current trend  
With outstretched hands.

- Weldon L. Smith  
Eastland, Texas

### Contacts of interest for writers:

**NFSPS Poetry Contests for 2008**  
Madelyn Eastlund  
310 South Adams Street  
Beverly Hills, Florida 34465

**Poetry Society of Texas Membership Committee**  
Lee Carroll  
3909 Gable Lane, #611  
Fort Worth, Texas 76155  
[leecarroll.fwps@gmail.com](mailto:leecarroll.fwps@gmail.com)



*The pen is mightier than the sword.*

### Submissions sought

to:  
**Star**  
**P.O. Box 29**  
**Eastland, TX**  
**76448**

email: [thebairdspotlight@att.net](mailto: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](mailto:thebairdspotlight@att.net)**

### Words You Can Use:

Magstrand: A fourth year university or college student is denoted by this, but not usually in College Station, Texas.

Ocreate: If the cowboy was wearing leggings or boots, he was "ocreate."

Parastatic: Understood to be used by researchers around Leoncita, Texas to describe the mimicry of animals, for protection. It is not clear if it refers to actions or sounds.

Quaestuary: This is a person who is in business for a profit.



Time passes by...photo by Patrick Ready

### Those That Came Before Us

Sometimes we know our family history, sometimes we do not. But it is curious to think about those that came before. Take a great grandmother and grandfather, or the pairs that bore them. We did not get the chance to know them personally. What did they think and feel? What attributes came down from them? What feelings did they have, and how are they different? How are they the same. We got the knowledge of fire and the wheel from their ancestors. But did they feel about the sun the way we do? It was there then, it is here now, and does basically the same thing now as then. There are trees, living things, that are old, and that participated in the world in our ancestor's time. Our families may have even seen the same tree, that we have seen. That can be an important thing to note, and to write about. When you create a story, realize that your characters have a history, and an influence from history, that precedes the narration of the story itself. This can add a depth. Each character can become a person.

- Patrick Ready