

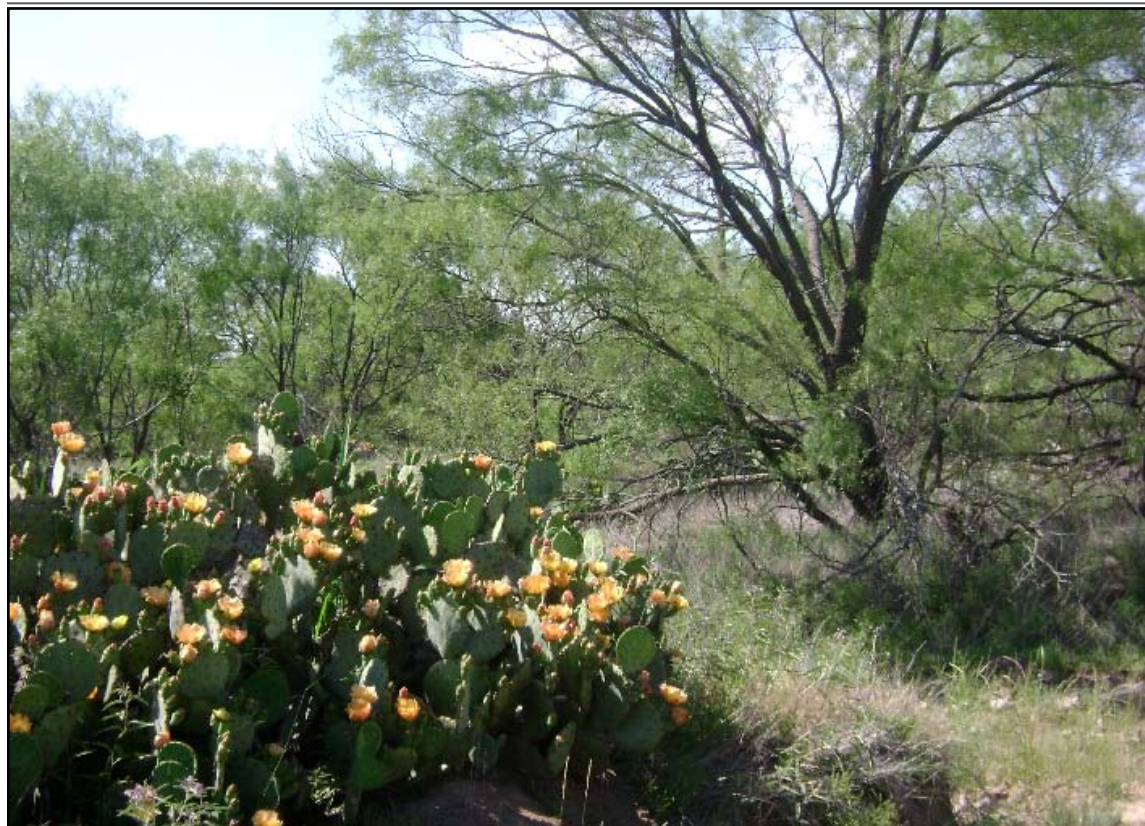
PATHOS · HUMOR · HISTORY · CREATIVE NON-FICTION



CALLAHAN COUNTY STAR SPOTLIGHT

WRITERS SHOWCASE

(All submitters retain ownership)



Texas Cactus

Photo by Patrick Ready

Words You Can Use:

Ennea-eteric: If something happens every ninth year, then this adjective can describe it. Remember this for the right time to use it.

Spandrel: A word this is that denotes the corner design of stamps, particularly postage.

Testamur: When you pass your university examinations, you might get this, a certificate of the accomplishment.

Ubiquity: When something is everywhere, this word can describe it. Some politician's names are like this. It would be interesting to know if there is a word for "being somewhere."

Poetry Media Service

THE ORIGINAL CONFES-
SIONAL (ALMOST) TELLS
ALL

An interview with W.D. Snodgrass.

*By Hilary Holladay
Poetry Media Services*

Hilary Holladay: I want to play a little word association with you. I'll say a word or a name, and you free-associate at will. "Confessional poetry."

W.D. Snodgrass: Well, it's a term I dislike intensely, because I don't think I was doing anything very different from what poets have done for years and years and years. One of the major influences that took me toward writing poems about losing, I thought, my daughter surely was Mahler's Kindertotenlieder [with lyrics from the poems of 19th-century German poet Friedrich Ruckert]. As a matter of fact, all the German poets of that era, even if they'd never been married or had a child, wrote poems about the death of their children; they would make up a child to lose. It became the symbolic center of loss, and losses that might have been of all sorts but were often compacted into that image.

When I went into psychotherapy in Iowa, the doctors there were also very influential in saying, "You're not writing about what you're interested in." I was writing things that had some religious overtones. I wanted nothing to do with religion, and I just put it in the poem because that's the sort of thing that the models we were given at [the University of Iowa] would have had. If there was a tiger lily, then surely that had to do with Christ.

HH: So it was confessional, in a sense. You were confessing to your therapist.

WDS: Yes, but that didn't affect the poems. M.L. Rosenthal came up with that term [confessional poetry]—he was a friend—but I hated it be-

cause it suggested either that you were writing something religious and were confessing something of that sort, or that you were writing bedroom memoirs, and I wasn't doing that, either.

HH: And yet the label stuck, and it gave scholars and students a way to categorize you and Robert Lowell and Anne Sexton and Sylvia Plath and a few others, and so—

WDS: I don't think it really applies to what I was doing. And you'll pardon me for saying so, but I was [writing personal poems] first. And Lowell hated it at first. He said, "Snodgrass, you have a brain. You can't write this kind of tear-jerking stuff!" It was all part of a kind of snobbery in the academic world. You weren't supposed to have love relationships or anything of that sort. You were supposed to be some kind of priest. I decided [writing personal poems] is probably wrong, but it's what I have to do right now. I don't like the fact that then that can be made into an argument for the writing of poetry as a form of therapy. It may not be anything of the sort. I don't know that it served that purpose. It was just where my feelings lay right then.

HH: You influenced [Robert Lowell]. Did he influence you?

WDS: Early on, yes. I had to quit reading him altogether for many years because I didn't want to get back under that influence again. He wrote to me and said he was taking those poems of mine [from Heart's Needle] as a model, and it just scared the hell out of me! I thought, "Holy God! Here I'm doing something that even I think may be a stupid mistake." In the meantime, he caught hell from his teachers the same way I caught hell from him. He went and read

some of his more personal poems to Allen Tate, who gave him exactly the same kind of hell.

I should say that one other thing that moved me in the direction of the personal poems was that I became interested in music again after a while. For as much as 15 years there, I stayed clear away from music. One day I turned on the radio and there was a tenor, Hugues Cuénod. One of his first records that came out in this country was a collection of songs from 16th- and 17th-century Spain and Italy. I listened to this recording, and my hair simply stood on end. I listened to him and thought, "Jesus Christ! My poems have got everything except that kind of passion and that kind of straightforward head-on-ness."

These two musical influences, that and the Kindertotenlieder—both moved me in [the more personal] direction, as did Jarrell's criticism, although he didn't suggest positively that I should be writing about my personal concerns. My doctor supplied that!

HH: Let me wrap up by asking you about your name. You use your name, Snodgrass, in

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.

a number of your poems, and you told me that the pseudonym you've used occasionally, S.S. Gardons, is "Snodgrass spelled sideways." Why do that? Why put your name in your poems?

WDS: Well, why not? It's one of the things that's on your mind all the time. Of course, as a child I got kidded about it all the time, and everybody makes up brilliant parodies of it which are so obvious that I don't think I need to go into that. In a certain sense, you're always writing about yourself. Although you may not write so directly about yourself and the quality of your mind, that's ultimately what you're writing about, always.

Hilary Holladay is a professor of English at the University of Massachusetts, Lowell, where she teaches African American literature, literature of the Beat movement, and modern poetry. This article originally appeared on www.poetryfoundation.org. Distributed by the Poetry Foundation. Read more about W.D. Snodgrass, and his poetry, at www.poetryfoundation.org

© 2009 by Hilary Holladay. All rights reserved.

More Than A Feeling

**The headlines list each contribution
Portraying the donors name and face
Portraying wealth as the solution
For all the ills of this human race.**

**Many there be who give of their time
And give of their love for many years
They're unrecognized and it's a crime
That pits this Earth with the saddest tears.**

**Go store up bags of sweet compassion
Go plant your rows of concern
And opt to change the mood and fashion
By profession care with every turn.**

**Tunefully then we whistle along
Laughing, lifting up those unadorned
Streamlining fashion with our love songs
And by showing love should be performed.**

**For love is more than just a feeling
Much more than hoping that all is well
It's value is shown in believing
That proving our love will never fail.**

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

American Life In Poetry

Column 219

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

As we all know, getting older isn't hard to do. Time continues on. In this poem, Deborah Warren of Massachusetts asks us to think about the life lived between our past and present selves, as indicated in the marginal comments of an old book. There's something beautiful about books allowing us to talk to who we once were, and this poem captures this beauty.

Marginalia

Finding an old book on a basement shelf--
gray, spine bent--and reading it again,
I met my former, unfamiliar, self,
some of her notes and scrawls so alien

that, though I tried, I couldn't get (behind
this gloss or that) back to the time she wrote
to guess what experiences she had in mind,
the living context of some scribbled note;

or see the girl beneath the purple ink
who chose this phrase or that to underline,
the mood, the boy, that lay behind her thinking--
but they were thoughts I recognized as mine;

and though there were words I couldn't even read,
blobs and cross-outs; and though not a jot
remained of her old existence--I agreed
with the young annotator's every thought:

A clever girl. So what would she see fit
to comment on--and what would she have to say
about the years that she and I have written
since--before we put the book away?

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 Deborah Warren, whose most recent book of poems is "Dream with Flowers and Bowl of Fruit," University of Evansville Press, 2008. Poem reprinted from the "Hudson Review," Vol. LXI, no. 3, Autumn 2008, and reprinted by permission of the author and publisher. 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.

Rhymes For Today: Metamorphosis

**Verdigris
Remiss
Bliss
Miss
Benefice
Analysis**

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