

## CALLAHAN COUNTY

## STAR SPOTLIGHT

## WRITERS SHOWCASE

(All submitters retain ownership)

## American Life In Poetry

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

People singing, not professionally but just singing for joy, it's a wonderful celebration of life. In this poem by Sebastian Matthews of North Carolina, a father and son happen upon a handful of men singing in a cafe, and are swept up into their pleasure and community.

**Barbershop Quartet,  
East Village Grille**

Inside the standard lunch hour din they rise, four seamless voices fused into one, floating somewhere between a low hum and a vibration, like the sound of a train rumbling beneath noisy traffic.

The men are hunched around a booth table, a fire circle of coffee cups and loose fists, leaning in around the thing they are summoning forth from inside this suddenly beating four-chambered heart. I've taken Avery out on a whim, ordered quesadillas

and onion rings, a kiddie milk with three straws. We're already deep in the meal, extra napkins

and wipes for the grease coating our faces and hands like mid-summer sweat. And because we're happy, lost in the

small pleasures of father and son, at first their voices seem to come from inside us. Who's that boy singing? Avery asks, unable to see these men wrapped in their act. I let him keep looking, rapt. And when no one is paying attention, I put down my fork and take my boy's hand, and together we dive into the song. Or maybe it pours into us, and we're the ones brimming 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 Sebastian Matthews, whose collection of poems, "We Generous," was published by Red Hen Press, 2007. Poem reprinted from "The Chattahoochee Review," V. 28, no. 2,3, 2008 by permission of Sebastian Matthews. 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.



A scene at a lake.

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

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.**

## Words You Can Use:

**Meleagrine:** To be or act like a turkey, or to be in a group of birds of the turkey genus, is what this adjective describes.

**Pantarchy:** This noun is to denote government by all people involved. Is that like democracy?

**Quidnunc:** This is a person that gossips, or someone who is inquisitive. If cats could talk it might refer to them.

**Rosorial:** This adjective describes something that causes laughter. It might be a joke, or it might be a cartoon. Maybe it is a word.

**Wanted:  
Writers &  
Poets**

*Any and  
all ages*



*The pen is mightier than the sword*

## Poetry Media Service

A POEM A DAY

How a good idea turned into a great website--Poetry Daily.

By Michael Chitwood  
Poetry Media Service

For Don Selby, a good idea was born with a glance.

In 1995, Selby was publishing law books. He had stepped into the office of colleague Diane Boller, and there on the shelf beside a book titled Liability of Corporate Officers and Directors was a very different sort of book, a collection of poems by W.S. Merwin. Selby knew Merwin's much-lauded reputation among contemporary poets but was surprised to see that another person at the decidedly nonliterary publishing firm did. It didn't take long before he and Boller were trading favorite poems. "I think the first poem Diane showed me was a Frank O'Hara, and I'm sure the one I gave her was an A.R. Ammons, who I was reading at the time," Selby said. Ammons is a North Carolinian but taught many years at Cornell.

From the exchanges, the excellent poetry Web site Poetry Daily ([www.poems.com](http://www.poems.com)) was born.

"The law publishing business was one of the first to get involved with electronic publishing," Selby said. "We had that experience, and Diane and I knew that poetry publishers struggled to get poets their deserved audience."

The two hatched the idea of online poetry publishing that would feature a new poem every day, drawn from established print poetry journals. During business travels, they made side trips to visit such influential editors as Joseph Parisi, then editing Poetry magazine in Chicago, and Peter Davidson at the Atlantic Monthly. Everyone they talked with thought the idea was a win-win. A poem would be selected from the magazine and featured each day. The poet and the magazine would get well-deserved attention, and Poetry Daily would have its content.

So, in 1997, Poetry Daily came online, and it's been onward and upward every since. There are a number of poetry Web sites now, but I think Poetry Daily is the best

each) of poems drawn from the Web site. There's a lot happening in contemporary poetry. If you're not plugged in to the world of small literary magazines and college reading series, you might not know about it. But with Poetry Daily, you can get a regular dose or just an occasional tonic. Either way, you get the real thing right at your fingertips.

You can read "Today's Poem," which comes from prestigious magazines such as Poetry, Paris Review, Threepenny Review, the New Republic, Southern Review and others. Some days the poem might come from one of the very fine smaller magazines that perhaps aren't known to as wide an audience but should be--journals like Field, crazyhorse and Beloit Poetry Journal. Selections are also made from recently published books from both mainstream and small literary publishers. There's a brief bio note about the writer and information about the publishing source.

"We read like crazy," Selby says. "We are getting more review copies now in addition to the literary magazines. We are looking for authentic poems, poems that aspire to serious art but we try to avoid aligning ourselves with a particular school or approach. We just want to make the general reading public aware of what's being published in poetry."

If you want to dip deeper into the poetry world, the site also features "From the Newsroom," a section that contains links to reviews and news items concerning poetry. On a recent day, there was a review from the New York Times, an announcement of the Washington State Book Awards, Mary Karr's poem selection for the Washington Post and an article about four poets and their "day jobs." In that delightful piece, Irish poet Dennis O'Driscoll notes that at Revenue and Customs he "got a life from work: a living which freed me from literary drudgery; access to a distinctive linguistic register; stimulating subject matter; and the welcome distraction a busy office provides from the obsessive anxieties which bedevil the isolated full-time poet." Not what you might expect a poet to say. Poetry Daily delivers that kind of surprise every day.

In addition to the online version, PD has published two print anthologies (full disclosure, I have poems in

each) of poems drawn from the Web site.

There's a lot happening in contemporary poetry. If you're not plugged in to the world of small literary magazines and college reading series, you might not know about it. But with Poetry Daily, you can get a regular dose or just an occasional tonic. Either way, you get the real thing right at your fingertips.

Michael Chitwood's poetry, book reviews, and articles appear widely. This article originally appeared in the News & Observer. Distributed by the Poetry Foundation at [www.poetryfoundation.org](http://www.poetryfoundation.org).

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## As You Used To

Lead me along as You used to

By keeping me right as before

Teaching me how I can please you

Being my Guide forever more.

Don't let me grow so complacent

By keeping me fixed on Your love

If faltering please erase it

And keep my eyes on You above.

Lead me again as You used to

When my heart was a blazing wind

Willing was I then to run through

Deaths Valley again and again.

Lead me as You did yesterday

However rough that road may be

And lead me again Lord I pray

All the way through eternity.

I will e'er walk close to Your side

Forever walking hand-in hand

I know You'll ever by my Guide

As You lead me along again.

Weldon L. Smith  
Eastland, Texas



**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)**