

CALLAHAN COUNTY STAR SPOTLIGHT

WRITERS SHOWCASE

(All submitters retain ownership)

Poetry Foundation and Chicago International Children's Film Festival Award \$10,000 Poetry Film Prize

CHICAGO — The Poetry Foundation and Facets Multi-Media are proud to announce that Fear of Snakes, by filmmaker Andreas Mendritzki, is the winner of the second annual Poetry Film Prize. The prize awards \$10,000 to a filmmaker whose use of verse in film opens new artistic vistas and inspires children to appreciate poetry.

Mendritzki's film is based on the poem of the same name by Canadian poet Lorna Crozier. Unique to the field of poetry as well as to the film industry, the Poetry Film Prize celebrates the best film based on a poem or poet while also recognizing excellence in language and cinematography. Jury-selected from among more than 90 entrants, the award was presented on Sunday, November 1, at the closing night ceremony of the 26th Annual Chicago International Children's Film Festival (CICFF). The Poetry Film Prize was created as part of Reel Poetry, a larger initiative between the Poetry Foundation and CICFF that highlights the possibilities of poetry in films, especially those directed to younger audiences. Based on a young girl's memories of a summer day when she overcame her fear of snakes, Andreas Mendritzki's winning film Fear of Snakes (Canada, 2009, 6 minutes) artfully depicts a reflective and intimate poem.

As the filmmaker describes it, "For me, the film—and Crozier's poem—remind me of what 'adults' often forget: Children are much more aware of their surroundings than we give them credit for. They are every bit as attuned to the gravity of events as their older kin—in fact, probably more so."

Nicole Dreiske, founder and artistic director of Facets, underscores the significance of such a prize as it relates to children's learning: "Creating films based on poems gives children a special opportunity to connect to poetry in ways that are richly layered and deeply meaningful. The music, the images, the cinematography, and the poetry reading itself open new sensory and emotive paths in children's minds, and create a unique tapestry of experiences from each poem. By encouraging excellence in this highly specialized area of filmmaking, the Poetry Foundation has created a visionary bridge for children in our digital age to enjoy and appreciate poetry."

"Overwhelmingly, the jury felt that Fear of Snakes demonstrates perfectly the way in which a poem can serve as the narrative base of a film," said Anne Halsey, media director for the Poetry Foundation. "Mendritzki is a talented young filmmaker, and we hope that this prize will inspire and enable him to continue bringing poetry to young audiences via film."

Mendritzki's success lies in using a poem as inspiration for creating a narrative that children and adults can relate to. As he points out, "Our lives are marked by specific events—seemingly small events—that for one reason or another lodge themselves into our absorbent young minds. This film speaks about issues that children can undoubtedly comprehend, and about an event similar to ones they might have experienced themselves. It provides them with a short sensorial adventure, an empathetic view of their own fears or those of their friends, brothers, sisters, or cousins. For adults, it is a guided tour back into one of these life-marking moments, and a reminder of our own childhoods and the events that shaped them." Since graduating from the Mel Hoppenheim School of Cinema in 2008, Andreas Mendritzki has been actively writing, directing, producing, mixing, and watching movies. He has a particular interest in and love for film sound, and in 2008 he was the winner of the Atlantic Film Festival's Best Sound Design award. Mendritzki is a founding member of the Montreal-based production company GreenGround Productions.

Initiated in 2007, Reel Poetry is a multi-program partnership between the Poetry Foundation and the Chicago International Children's Film Festival designed to engage children as audiences, aesthetes, and appreciators of both poetry and film. To date, the program has reached more than 4,360 Chicago-area middle school students. The collaboration celebrates poetry, making the art form's complex beauty and craft relatable to a young audience. Supported by special curriculums for teachers and discussions facilitated by trained media educators, the Reel Poetry program is designed for upper-level elementary and middle school students and has garnered the attention of public school teachers and arts educators across the country.

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.

My Heart Is a Lonely Gardener

My heart is a gardener.

My heart is a gardener, though my thumbs are not. I admire the generous abandon of morning glories twining a trellis or a taut string. I respect the fervid intensity of petunias springing up between bricks along the path. I feel the ardor of the rose, reaching lush arms up to the kiss of morning's dew. Splashy scarlet petals among the green curl of new palm fronds inspires my fervent adoration of the Genius who created such limitless beauty.

I admire afar, however. History demonstrates my astounding ineptitude for husbandry. Plants, whether loans, gifts, or purchases, languish and sicken in my care.

"You can't kill this one," says Mrs. Greenthumbs, pushing aloe vera or pothos ivy into my arms. "It thrives on neglect."

Not my neglect.

I read this classic pronouncement: "The most common fault among gardeners is over watering." I check the pots currently in sick bay. Not a waterlogged plant in sight. I must look farther afield to identify my faults.

I do keep a ready list of excuses. There's the toddler, who loves to harass the houseplants. The puppy, who digs in my lawn and roots in my flower beds. I even include the teenager who occasionally mows the irises and trims the nasturtiums. Besides, I'm so busy.

I am periodically seized by the conviction that this ancient art is learnable. Perhaps I acquire an old, little-known trick guaranteed to make tomatoes bloom. I try again. For a short span hope springs anew that this time, this plant will survive. Somehow disappointment seems always to follow.

So it is that my heart is a lonely gardener. It reaches back to Eden and forward to the Millennium, when my hands as well as my heart will respond to the Gardener within.

Ruth V. York
Cisco, Texas

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

American Life in Poetry: Column 242

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

There are lots of poems in which a poet expresses belated appreciation for a parent, and if you don't know Robert Hayden's poem, "Those Winter Sundays," you ought to look it up sometime. In this lovely sonnet, Kathy Mangan, of Maryland, contributes to that respected tradition.

The Whistle

You could whistle me home from anywhere
in the neighborhood; avenues away,
I'd pick out your clear, alternating pair
of notes, the signal to quit my child's play
and run back to our house for supper,
or a Saturday trip to the hardware store.
Unthrottled, wavering in the upper
reaches, your trilled summons traveled farther
than our few blocks. I've learned too, how your
heart's
radius extends, though its beat
has stopped. Still, some days a sudden fear darts
through me, whether it's my own city street
I hurry across, or at a corner in an unknown
town: the high, vacant air arrests me—where's
home?

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 ©1995 by Kathy Mangan, from her most recent book of poems, Above the Tree Line, Carnegie Mellon University Press, 1995. Reprinted by permission of Kathy Mangan and the publisher. Introduction copyright © 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.

Watching Planes A'leaving

I swore that when you let I wouldn't ever dry
Thinking mem'ries would somehow help me to cope
But when you faded like the planes up in the sky
Every heartache deep inside me then awoke.

Now I'm settin' here and watching planes a'leaving
As they quickly disappear into the sky
And my heart begins to hurt with that ol' grieving
In remembrance of the night you said goodbye.

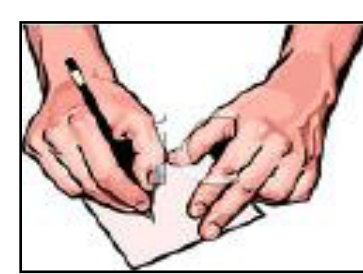
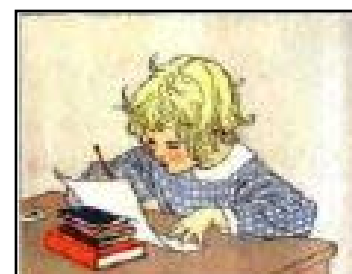
A mighty push will send the planes into the wind
Leaving nothing but the trail that fades so fast
And then if you should tail the grail that ever ends
Getting close will make you feel its fiery blast.

I look and see the planes nose up to catch the rush
Of the breezes that will cause the wings to soar
How come the same ol' wind that helps the plane so much
Will erase its fading trail forever more.

My life I've spent a' searching for the trail that fades
And I've nothing in my pockets for to show
But cancellations and the ever long delays
And the tears which down my cheeks will ever flow.

- Weldon L. Smith
Eastland, Texas

Wanted: Writers & Poets



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