

January 13, 2007
 Volume 3 Issue 1

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Copyrights

Meeting Format

- Bring copies of your work to distribute for reading (12-15 copies)
- Initial thirty minutes for beverage selection/preparation and discussion of upcoming literary magazine submissions, handouts and events.
- Readings begin clockwise from any beginning point. Group turns reader's copies face down until reader begins to read.
- After each writer completes reading, reader waits until all group responses are com-

pleted before responding to critiques. Brief critiques and responses are encouraged depending on size of the group.

Publications

For viewing your Art/Photography in this newsletter, your publication updates, Art exhibits, scheduled readings or events, e-mail or call me in time for each month's newsletter within a week or two following the writers group meetings. The Artsbridge web site is updated once a month. If the newsletter update deadline is missed for your event, email me to forward to the members.

Seeking Artwork/Photography for the Monthly Newsletter To be displayed below or with Poetry/Prose



Photography
 Alan Fetterman

**Next meeting of Artsbridge/River Poets:
 February 10, 2007 - 1:00 - 4:00 PM
 Lambertville Public Library, Lambertville, NJ
 2nd fl “The Peggy Lewis Gallery”**

Submissions for 2006-2007 Anthology - Slight Publication Delay

There will be a couple months delay in completion of the anthology due to my re-locating. I am in the process of selling my house. Once work resumes, I will be notifying the writers/artists/photographers of their inclusion in the anthology. I anticipate publication by Summer 2007.

Artsbridge is a registered 503C non-profit organization, comprised of painters, sculptors, photographers, writers, actors, musicians and filmmakers in the Delaware Valley dedicated to improving the public understanding of the arts in all the creative disciplines. The group supports local, state and regional arts and artists through its sponsorship of events focused on education, exhibition and performance.

Announcements

My Advise to Writers With Writers Block

Write when you wake up in the middle of the night and can't get back to sleep. Write in the morning when you are at the breakfast table drinking your first cup of coffee. Keep a notepad in the bathroom

to jot down ideas that come to you while you are sitting on the commode and contemplating your belly button lint. Even if it's only a sentence or two; it will keep on rolling around in your head until you are compelled to tell the whole story. When you are finally in that heightened mood, unplug your phone, and put a "do not disturb" sign on your door. The words will flow from you as if they have been waiting a lifetime to be released. You will hardly be able to type fast enough to keep up with your thoughts. This is the kid in your id that has been sitting in the corner of your mind sulking, finally allowed to come out and play. DO NOT CENSOR THAT KID!!! Now you are on a roll. Don't stop until the pangs of hunger and need to sleep are so overpowering that you may pass out. This might be a good time to invest in a good supply of "Depends," so you won't even have to stop to pee. Next comes the tedious part...book title, story /poetry book titles, dedications, and lastly the most necessary duty of a writer, EDITING!!!! EDITING!!!! EDITING!!!! Go over each and every sentence with a fine tooth comb. Read it out loud to yourself. Tape it and listen to it. Watch for needless/run-on sentences, grammar errors, keeping in character, and finally you are ready for the most boring task of all for a writer, punctuation. Lastly, if you follow the advise of this muse, you will be well on your way to being a rich and famous author hobnobbing with the other literary giants.

ARTSBRIDGE/RIVER POETS PRESENTS 1ST ANNUAL 55 WORD FICTION CONTEST

Friday, February 23, 7:00 - 10:00 PM

Full Moon Café, 23 Bridge St.

Lambertville, NJ - 609-397-1096

Reservations to Read Required!
Audience Reservations Recommended.

\$55 First Place Prize

*\$10 Cover Charge Includes
Hors de Oeuvres & Beverages*

Bring up to ten 55 word stories, (55 words - no more no less). Includes beginning, middle and twist/ironic/surprise ending. Title is not included in count. (Check out 55 word website for sample published stories).

<http://www.birdandmoon.com/55words/guest.html>

Great Quotes

"Whether you think that you can, or that you can't, you are usually right."

- Henry Ford (1863-1947)

"Try to learn something about everything and everything about something."

- Thomas Henry Huxley (1825-1895)

"I am ready to meet my Maker. Whether my Maker is prepared for the great ordeal of meeting me is another matter."

- Sir Winston Churchill (1874-1965)

Congratulations to Writers Among Us

Still time to check out Bill Donlen 's school play "Anything Goes" Feb 9th - 7:00 pm, & Feb. 10 - 2:30 pm, matinee. \$7 for adults, \$5 for seniors and students. Tickets are available by calling 215-943-4123 or by e-mailing: billydpix@yahoo.com

Hobo Terminology - Seeds For Stories

Grifter - A petty swindler or confidence man. They may be one who operates a dishonest game of chance at a carnival or circus. They often drive a vehicle a stolen, unregistered, without insurance, not inspected and without a drivers license. When they become established to one place they may become squatters, often illegally connecting to utilities and other services. They take advantage of other people and that has become second nature to them in everything they do.

Thank You

To Allen Hoey for a wonderful reading on Jan. 27 at Lambertville Library.





Writers Work - January 2007

DID YOU SEE HIM?

I didn't see Him in the Christmas Shop in New Hope,
Candle and Wreath Shop in Peddlers Village,
Longwood Gardens
Christmas Floral Show or the Christmas Light Show.
I didn't see Him in the Christmas Parade.

I saw Him on the windowsill of an elderly lady's
apartment, in the Children's Christmas pageant and in
photographs of Christmas' Past, Public square in
Carbondale PA, the Moravian Putz in Bethlehem PA.
I saw Him in front of some churches.

Did you see Him? Is He in your heart or in the closet?
Bring Him out. Come let us Adore Him.

© Carole Harris

"So Still the Air"

So still the air forms a
Floating, foggy haze.
This early morning mist on the mirror
Makes the trees more mysterious.
This mist does not mar the image with ripples
But puffs across it like smoke,
The reflection of reality is slightly blurred and beautiful.
The quiet nearly complete allows
For the distant sound of traffic humming.
What wonders will this day of autumn light
and coolness bring.

©Bonnie DeCarolis

Walking in the Rain

I love walking in the rain
Feeling my pain,
Thoughts of naked bodies drive me insane,
When I live my life I go against the grain,
I love walking in the rain.

I love strutting my stuff,
Feeling so tough,
No one feels threatened by a crazy creampuff,
Once you think about it, this world ain't so tough,
I love strutting my stuff.

I love being on fire,
Plucking my lyre,
I hate being the one voice holding up the choir,
I want to find the wellspring feeding my desire,
I love being on fire.

I love walking in the rain
Feeling my pain,
Thoughts of naked bodies drive me insane,
When I live my life I go against the grain,
I love walking in the rain.

© Mason Loika





INTRODUCING OUR SPECIAL GUEST POET - HUMBERTO AKABAL

the grandmother

The night begins,
 when the moon
 –Grandmother of the villages–
 comes out with her lime-white candle
 to light up the silence.

The darkness
 hides in the canyons,
 the small birds
 roll up their songs
 and the trees
 lie on their own shadows.

The grandmother
 who hasn't slept for centuries
 sinks
 into the eyes of the night.

Freedom

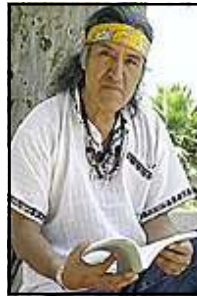
Blackbirds, buzzards, and doves
 land on cathedrals and palaces
 just as they do on rocks,
 trees, and fences...

and they shit on them
 with the complete freedom of one who knows
 that god and justice
 belong to the soul.
 early hours

In the high hours of the night
 stars get naked
 and bathe in the rivers.

Owls desire them,
 the little feathers on their heads
 stand up.
 prayer

In the churches
 you can only hear the prayer
 of the trees
 converted to pews.



Humberto Akabal Poetry translated by:
 Robert Bly and Miguel River
 Permission to publish granted by Robert Bly

Humberto Ak'abal is a [Maya-Quiché poet](#) from [Guatemala](#). He is considered one of the most important living Guatemalan poets. He writes in [Quiché](#), his native language, as well as in [Spanish](#). In 2003, Humberto Ak'abal was awarded the [Guatemala National Prize in Literature](#) for his body of work but declined to accept because of the past treatment of the Guatemalan [indigenous](#) peoples.

Humberto Ak'abal (whose Mayan name means Storm at Dawn) was born in 1952 in Momostenango, Guatemala. He left school after sixth grade to herd his family's sheep, but he never stopped reading and writing poetry. His first book of poems, *El animalero*, was published in 1990. A selected volume, *Ajkem Tzij/Tejedor de palabras* (Weaver of Words), was published in 1996.

Although Humberto Ak'abal had been writing poetry about the marvels found in nature for fifteen or twenty years, it wasn't until the Quincentennial of 1992 that his work was recognized in greater circles, after indigenous needs and rights gained international focus as a result of the meetings held to commemorate the anniversary of Columbus' arrival in the New World. Since then he has become well-known in Europe and moves in international literary circles. There is an intense love, wonder and amazement for the miracles found in nature in his poetry. His poetry focuses on his personal experiences of day to day living and growing up in a village.

His poems are short like haikus, often written in his native tongue, K'iche, and lately presented in bilingual editions. He also includes the Mayan glyphs for page numbers in some of his collections, bringing his reality and heritage to the written page.

~

Thanks to River Poet, Bill Sloane for introducing us to this fine poet.

This Old House

Strange how this house sparkles lately,
and how is it I never noticed
on certain nights the sky pallet paints
shades of lavender and gray mist
before turning to black
just outside my window.

This house I fell in love with
just a few short years ago,
lately wraps around me
as soft as an old cashmere sweater,
hides the dust and dreary chores from my eyes,
exposes old nook and cranny treasures before me,
belies the long list of reasons for leaving,
failing joints,
too much empty space,
too many steps,
and the gardener has lost her touch.

As I go through the motions
of sorting pansy yellow plates,
and English Garden cups,
wrap them carefully in tissue,
mark them "for house sale,"
I wonder how much of me
will be left behind,
like some old ghost blowing in
the new occupant's ear.

© Judith A. Lawrence



The Prisoner

I am the prisoner
I move
Inside the darkness
Of the skin
Beneath the tendon
With the bone
Held by a mesh
Without, within

A bloody home
What do I care
A cave of meat
Or what you will
All in good time

All beauty fair
Cannot defeat
The freedom call
O, let me out
Can you not see
Or hear me shout
With every sigh
I wait my time
Soon, always free
All you need only
Do is die

Go, two score years
Then excavate
A hundred bones
A hundred hairs
Vanished the soul
As is your fate
Gone to your God -
I am now theirs

Then leave me out
So I may bleach
And always grinning,
I will teach
As I know how,
A symbol white
-forever, now-
Of endless night

© George Dabrowski

Maybe

It's that time again.
Time to create another poem
I have no words to write.
Creating does not come.
I'm dry.
Maybe it's because I have one overwhelming thought.
Seven years ago a surgeon stopped my heart,
Held it in his hand, cut it open,
Replaced the aortic valve, cleaned some calcification
from the mitral valve,
And created a four way heart bypass.
When I interviewed him before surgery, he made the
comment, "I get all the difficult ones."
That wasn't too comforting.

Now a recent echo cardiogram shows the mitral valve
may be leaking blood.
I'm scheduled to go back to Cleveland Clinic in
February to get evaluated.
I may need more open heart surgery.
I saw a cartoon recently in which the doctor was
speaking with his patient.
The doctor said, "I'm afraid you may need surgery."
The patient replied, "You're afraid, I'm terrified."

© Robert Muller, 1/2/07. All rights reserved.

Dear Robert,

We are thinking, praying, and wishing you good luck
with your evaluation, and treatment. May your guard-
ian angel be carefully watching over you. Keep your
spirits up, and your terrific sense of humor intact.

Warm regards,

Judith

Revelations

She who had been running so long
stepped inside a tree
asking it please to hide her.

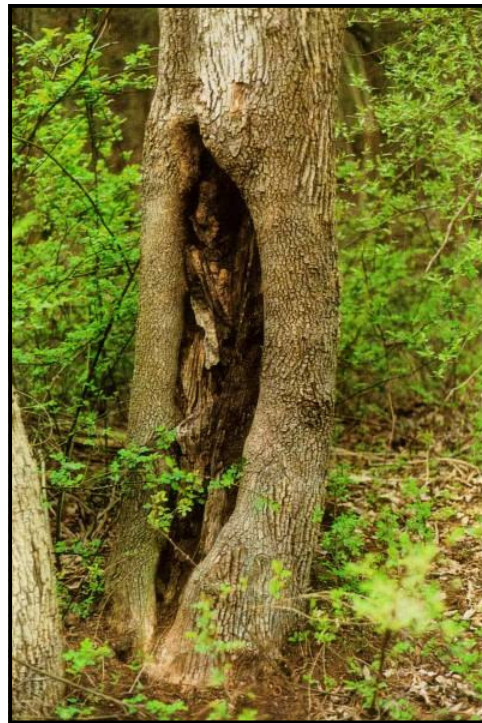
In a moment of ancient magic
the tree wrapped itself around her
healing the wound through which she entered.

In its dark embrace she slept
her pursuers long gave up the chase
she dreamt of freedom and of life.

The tree had no sense of time
it relished the warm being within
felt her life become its life.

In its decay a century later
the tree's wound reopened to reveal her
eternally one in its heart.

©as observed by Elizabeth Ludlow Bowman 4/2002



YELLOW IS THE COLOR OF TOMORROW

For Jorge Luis Borges (1899-1986)

"I speak of God's splendid irony in granting me at one time 800,000 books and darkness." Upon being named Director of the National Library in Argentina

See! The girl reading on the front porch steps
is me,
every book written by You,
Jorge Luis Borges,
blind poet of The Argentine.

Later I sit in an auditorium in Texas
baby Sarah in my belly
coming to expose both of us
to the presence of greatness
as they march you down
the aisle
proud bridegroom of
literature.

I rise in my seat as you enter
and stare for one glorious moment
from beginning to end
above the heads of alien Texans
in the great University
your erect form
steadfast as a cattle rustler
brought to trial
invincible
straight from your tales
though you are really frail
vulnerable
blind
without heirs
confined in this stuffy room
unlike your heroes who
roam the plains and dance
with señoritas innumerable
your life is your mind.

I swivel in the little cage
of my chair
my heart fluttering
like a bird as you pass by
and glimpse your
eyes that have seen the wide world,
dead now,
unlike you
and the endless plain that is your mind.

You ascend the stage
they give you a long introduction
- does it please you, O Master? -
All I want is to hear you speak
so my baby and I can glimpse your heart,
O man of many tongues

Your speech is incomprehensible
Nevermind
Your voice is all the rivers that flow
in your country,
the canopy of the Rain Forest
the poverty of your people,
the corruption of the politics
you tried to fight but failed
the dignity of the lizard living its
life for the Lord
the taste of mango
ripening on the vine
with its tender yellow flesh

Yellow, the color of the sun
that rises every morning
Yellow, the color of hope,
the color of the pages of all the books
you've ever written
which linger lonesome long after your death,
O Matador of my Heart.

©Ruth Deming

“Thirteen Pink Petals”

Teotihuacan outside of Mexico City –
I always thought those pyramids were Aztec.
Today I learned that Mayan people
Had a hand in the life that lived there.
I was led to learn that: a remembering,
Like I remember visiting the expansive site
Twenty years ago,
Waiting for the right time to write about it,
Like right now.

Gray and heavy lumbering clouds hung low
That afternoon in the Valley of the Sun,
Though the clouds were swept
By a strong and steady warm breeze
A stream of a breeze.
The light and cloud created a midday twilight,
Transition time.

I was one of few visitors there.
A crowd of local trinket vendors
Desperately pursued me, selling
Clay flutes and other mementos.
I soon realized a deeper moment.

The only temporary escape
From the hounding vendors
Was scrambling as best I could
Straight up the aching stone stairs
Of the central pyramid:
They did not follow.

I sighed with relief at the top.
And then I sighed again
As I gazed out far into the vista valley,
The vista sweeping like the wind itself.
I breathed in the vista with my eyes

Glancing down at my feet,
I saw thirteen pink flower petals, fresh,
Strewn closely together,
Juxtaposed so strongly upon the weighty stone.
How strange – who left these here?

Though the wind was strong and steady,
The magnetism of the pyramid
Held the petals in place,
They did not move.
Just as I felt the petals held by the stone,
So I felt myself drawn by the force
Of the place where my feet stood,
The petals and myself held in place
By some unseen force,
As if out of time.

Then, pausing, out of a daze, the next moment,
Knowing that I had once proudly stood
Here atop this mountain pyramid ~
Teotihuacan: then speaking the
Name in my native tongue.
Long, long, ago.
I was no stranger to this wind,
This sight,
No interloping foreigner,
No, I was that afternoon
Making an unintended visit
To a former ancestral home,
And the petals were there to welcome me.
I have no doubt that it was so,
Because of this moment,
This, and three dreams given to me,
Of which word cannot be spoken.
You may doubt my story,
If you like;
No matter to me.
That was a distant past,
But time travels in circles.

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Bad News Sells

Hear-breaking news they say
Re-run throughout the day
Someone who didn't plan
And things got out of hand.

Fires, floods and hurricanes
Storms sweep across the plains
Rain-heavy mountains fall
The news records it all.

If only the dam had held
There'd be no news to sell
No one who hadn't planned
To tell the tale first hand.

Reporter's microphone
Won't leave the hurt alone
Asking just how does it feel
To lose your only child?

Pictures of sinking ships
Under the waves they slip
When finally help arrives
There's no one left alive.

©Sheilah Ludlow Barr



Picture Yourself

Picture yourself in the lounge of a high school en-
sconced on a desk-chair and surrounded by junk food ma-
chines, and students milling around making choices.

Imagine being used as a totem, keeping the peace
by your mere presence. Kids manufacture out of what-
ever's needed.

Talk is next year they're replacing you with a life-
like dummy.

© Elaine Restifo, 1998-2007

Gentle Giants

It's true, what they say,
an elephant doesn't forget.
That's how they find water holes
when rains don't come,
how they find forage
when trees are felled, their trails farmed,
their graveyards fenced.
There's a price on those massive heads,
caught in traps
sold to zoos
trained for a circus
mowed down for their teeth.

Sociable giants,
they greet each new arrival,
trunks entwine,
The injured lean on the strong,
mothers and daughters side by side,
progeny encircled
While you still can
watch them play,
shuffling in the dust,
wallowing in the water,
tossing spray in the air.
Listen, though you may not hear,
what they teach us
what we have lost
as they go the way of the buffalo.

Apology to contributor - poem un-signed - please claim

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No poem/prose may be reproduced without express permission by the author.**

All photos in this newsletter are subjects for poems in our new anthology. Create a poem in reference to one of these photos to submit for the Artsbridge 2007 Spring Anthology, or if you have a painting or photo to submit for the anthology, please email to Judabah@aol.com, or bring a copy to the writers group meeting.

With Authors permission, all poems published in this newsletter will be entered in the Anthology submissions process. Since many of these poems are a work in progress presented initially in the group meetings, and the poem may be selected from the newsletters by the editors, the Author will be able to revise and submit a final version before publication. Due to the limitation of space in this newsletter, other poems or prose read at the meetings are also being considered for submission. During the selection process, all Authors will be contacted by the editors for legal permission to enter their work into the anthology and for final changes.

Any poem published in our own Writers Group Newsletter may still be submitted to other literary magazines and contests. Since it is an internal publication for the Artsbridge/River Poets members, it is not considered commercially published, for example a literary magazine, or an anthology, or online ezine, so is still eligible for submission elsewhere as an unpublished work.

When we publish our own anthology book which will be commercially available to the public and one or more of your poems have been accepted for the book, then you would need to sign a rights to publication agreement giving one time rights for the anthology. You then have to acknowledge the previous publication to wherever you submit it to next, which the publisher either lists on an acknowledgement page, or under the poem, for ex. previously published by Artsbridge/title of Anthology & date published. Alternately if you submit a poem for the Artsbridge anthology, it is accepted for inclusion, and it has been previously published by another publication, then our anthology would need to acknowledge where your poem had been published before. Dependent on the literary publication or contest, some publishers seek work never before published, and others have no preference as long as you acknowledge where it was previously published.

