

PenChant

To increase awareness and appreciation of the Literary Arts

VOLUME 12, ISSUE 4

APRIL 2006

By the Way—A Book Review by R. David Skinner

Editor's Note: The following is an excerpt from the review of David Radavich's book, By the Way. Mr. Radavich will have copies available for purchase when he joins PWLF as the featured reader on Wednesday, April 19, 2006 at IMO's. Please plan to join PWLF in what is certain to be another wonderful evening of poetry.

Imagism holds to the idea that the subject or object of the poem should be dealt with in concrete language and with the most economical use of words. Radavich is certainly vigorous in the Strunk & White fashion. He chooses his words carefully and pulls his lines together for the utmost impact and clarity. Rarely obtuse, hardly ever abstruse, Radavich delivers his lines with the clarity of hindsight and the simple elegance of a poet given neither to the sentimentality of the confessional nor the ostentatious ver-

bosity of the Romantics.

One measure I find myself tending toward in reviewing any book, especially of poetry, is the quotidian quality of its content. Whether right or wrong, I find the measure to be of the same importance within a collection as prosody, imagery,

...Radavich leaves a lot of room for contextualization in the poem itself.

and meaning are in a single poem. On this measure, Radavich scores about as highly as any book I've reviewed to date. One particular 'couplet' stands out most for its resonance through so many of the poems in the collection:

To learn loneliness
is not alone,
"Reading the Poet" 93

(Continued on page 5)

By: Vicki Bamman

A WORD OR TWO

"Life is an adventure or it is nothing." I think Helen Keller said that—someone did—and Helen should know, if anyone does. With "Tornado 2006," we had an unusual sense of adventure in just getting to the grocery store or church or out of town.

"Adventure" is defined as an exciting or unusual experience. It was

all of that—when the power went out and we took shelter where we could. I remember the last time Mike and I spent so much time in the basement was after the Easter ice storm of '78, and that was because we had a gas stove down there. That time we made candles. This time we had candles, so we sat on hard wooden chairs and

read by candlelight and made plans for making the basement more comfortable for "next time."

The prefix "ad" means "to; toward; at; or near." The base word "venture" means a risky, daring or dangerous undertaking. I couldn't find any extensions of the word without the prefix. There's misad-

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A CHALLENGING MEMORY

by Blake T. Scranton

Today I reconnoiter
 A not so recent (nor near,
 To be redundant) memory.
 Imagination takes me
 Back to a summer barbeque;
 Perhaps you remember it too?
 I shan't forget it soon.
 T'was a certain Sunday afternoon
 Among a multitude of similar
 Pool gatherings at the resident
 Goddess of Cookies and Wine's
 Residence. T'was divine
 How we pooled our edible resources.
 I bought and brought garden burgers
 And wheat buns, as a matter of course;
 'Cause t'was a garden party.
 Or was it salmon patties
 With bread, sesame seed ones?
 Or perhaps it was turkey hot dogs, extra longs?
 Whichever it was, I pulled off the cooked
 Meat (or soy imitation) with the requisite tongs
 And laid it in the bed of bread,
 Which had already been broken
 As a token of gratitude,
 When this incorrigible bug
 With a bad attitude
 Desecrated my sacrosanct meal.
 How could he be so smug
 As to despoil my food?
 Indubitably, I could feel
 An anti-ebullient mood
 Coming on. I have had a history
 With these cretin creatures.
 I don't give them much latitude
 When they lower their altitude
 When flying over my food.
 It's really quite rude.

Were I to be another type of beast
 It would not be a fly, nor a bee, or a flea.
 Those three would be the least
 Likely life form chosen by me.
 Some exclaim,
 "Ugh, a slug!"
 For me it's nearly the same,
 Except it's, "Ugh, a bug!"

**Poetry from the
 ten Word
 Challenge—
 Can you guess
 the ten?**

DOWN THE ROAD

by: Siobhan

My choice of words places me firmly in
 between the ebullient and the smug
 Not arrogant nor joyous, sacrosanct,
 unholy or incorrigible. I
 stand in the wheat fields and wonder at life
 blissfully aware (and un-) that we are
 a blip on the screen, a bug crawling one-
 way mirrors watched by some cretin who cares
 beyond the length of imagination
 but only when it suits conversation
 around the Olympian barbeque.
 Indubitably we are mere playthings.

When it's time to reconnoiter, perhaps
 our follies will amuse our ancestors.

WRITING PROMPTS

Found at a blog called 52 Projects.
 Project #105

Write the story of your life in 400 words. (Or
 fold a sheet of paper in half, and write the story of
 your life on it.) When you are done, write the story
 of your life in 400 words again -- but don't repeat a
 single detail. The first time, write about all the
 houses you ever lived in. Then write about all the
 jobs you ever had. All the people you kissed.
 What you wanted, when. Then, write about the
 people you knew and how they influenced you.
 Write about the clothes you've worn. The foods
 you've eaten. The things you believed. The times
 you changed your mind. Embarrassments.
 Triumphs. Write about the forces of history that
 have shaped you: what was going on in the world
 when you were born, or the first story on the news
 that you remember? Write about the way you
 looked or the way that you thought you looked.
 How many different people lurk inside the truth of
 you?

Find the ten words at www.pwlf.com

APRIL 2006

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		<i>National Poetry Month</i>				1 All votes must be received by 4/1/06
2	3	4	5 Open Mic @ IMO's 7:00 p.m.	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19 Featured Reader David Radavich @ IMO's 7:00 p.m.	20	21	22
23 Election Committee & Board Meeting	24	25	26	27 Navigating the Maze reading - 7 p.m. @ the Hoogland Center for the Arts	28	29
30						

MAY 2006

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3 Open Mic @ IMO's 7:00 p.m.	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17 Open Mic @ IMO's 7:00 p.m.	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

BY THE WAY—A REVIEW

(Continued from page 1)

To take this from its context seems to bring it to the level of axiom. But within its context, both on the scale of its parent poem and its extended family, the collection as a whole, its resonance is as powerful as its seeming simplicity. Nowhere could the line (despite its break, I shall consider it a line unto itself) be better illustrated than in the poem "Birthday," from page 101 of the book:

Every year a leaf falls,
one at a time, hands,
days full of raking, scattering

and I come to see
the bare tree
of us

against the sunlight
strewn in branches, shimmering
naked against all

those colors
you give me tumbling
free within
a small space, a time together

walking in woods

Like so many of his poems, Radavich leaves a lot of room for contextualization in the poem itself. One could imagine that the narrator is accompanied by a person in this poem; on the other hand, it begs of absence—poignant unalone loneliness. Perhaps it is the tone of the poems throughout the book that bring me to this intuition of the poem, as section two deals with can-

cer and this poem falls within the eighth and final section, "Departures." It raises the question of the nature of the departure—could be divorce, but seems more likely death than distance. Is the tree a tree? Or is it a cross in a wooded cemetery? The final line salutes Frost, and in so doing brings the snow of the allusioned poem into this remembrance as well.

Read the whole review in Prism 8.2 - coming soon!

WHERE THERE'S A WILL—OR NOT

By: Liz Huck

Imagine this: A student at UIS writing a thesis on "Springfield poets at the turn of the twenty-first century" uncovers the work of a fascinating but little-known local poet. He would like to use some of her unpublished poems, as well as excerpts from her journal and some letters and e-mails. It would powerfully illustrate his major point.

If the poet is still alive, he will contact her and ask her permission. She knows (as you probably do, since you are reading this newsletter and therefore are a writer or interested in writing) that everything she writes is automatically copyrighted, whether she registers the work with the US Copyright Office or not. So she will decide whether and on what terms to let the student use her work.

But if the poet isn't living, her work is still copyrighted. Not only

the poems, but the letters and the journal. The student must find out who inherited the poet's copyrights and seek permission from that person. Because somebody *did* inherit them. Even if the poet never made a will; even if the heir doesn't realize that he or she now owns the poet's work.

Suppose you were that poet. Who inherits your copyrights? What arrangement would that person make with the student? Do you approve?

Now, I am *not* a lawyer (please consult one if you have any questions), so I'm not going to give you any legal advice or information. I tell this story about the student only to give you two things to think about. First, someone will inherit your copyrights, whether you plan for it or not, whether the heir knows it or not.



Second, even if you don't expect that anything you write will ever make anybody's fortune, you have good reasons to consider this. Any extensive use that anyone wants to make of your writing after your lifetime will require your heir's permission.

If you care about the way your work survives into the future, be sure you know who will control it after you, and that you're happy with that arrangement. Or take the necessary steps to change it.



Poets & Writers Literary Forum

P. O. Box 5666
Springfield, IL 62705

Email: submissions@pwlf.com

If you are interested in contributing to the PenChant, please contact any of the PWLF Board members.

It is through the contributions and energy of all that we are successful.

Your Forum needs strong leadership. Please either volunteer or encourage anyone you know with administrative skills to volunteer for the Board.

Let's keep the Forum thriving.

PWLF

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Poetry and Prose Wanted: .
Information on deadlines and submission guidelines available at:

- ~ www.pwlf.com
- ~ www.pitchblackbooks.com
- ~ www.daybreakpoetry.com

Submit work today!

Poets & Writers Literary Forum of Springfield Calendar of Events

April 1st - Ballots for the Board are due by Saturday, April 1st.

April 5th—7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Open Mic at IMO's

April 19th—Open mic followed by FEATURED READER

David Radavich from Champaign
7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Open Mic at IMO's

April 27th - 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Navigating the Maze Reading @ the
Hoogland Center for the Arts - Club room

May 3rd—7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Open Mic at IMO's

May 17th—7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Open Mic at IMO's

Last Sunday of each month—

Poetry Parnassus @ Joe's to Go—South 6th Street 1 to 3 p.m.



A Word or Two

By: Vicki Bamman

(Continued from page 1)

venture and peradventure but no misventure, no perventure, no disventure, no malventure, no unventure...

Misadventure means "an unfortunate accident; bad luck; mishap." Venturing and adventuring can be things one does, things one seeks, but misadventure is not. The prefix "mis—" means bad, or badly, wrong or wrongly. So your misadventure is because you ventured "wrongly" "to, toward, at or near something."

"Peradventure" is both noun and adverb. As a noun, it means uncertainty, doubt, chance, or question. Its use as an adverb is considered archaic; it was (or is?) a synonym for maybe or perhaps. The prefix "per—" means "throughout; thoroughly; utterly; very." Here my word analysis skills fail me completely—I can't make a connection between doubt or uncertainty and "thoroughly"

"toward" "a risky undertaking." Can anyone help?

Addendum: When I wrote the paragraphs above, I used the dictionary on my computer, which does not give any information about word origins. Hoping to find the connection I mentioned, I sought out the biggest dictionaries I could find, and—to my chagrin, I found that I was wrong about the premise that venture was the base word for adventure and its derivatives. In fact, venture began as a variation of adventure! The root of both is the Latin word *adventurus*, meaning "to arrive!" Now I don't know how we got from "arriving" to risky undertakings and "thoroughly, utterly, very." Can anyone help?