

PenChant

To increase awareness and appreciation of the Literary Arts

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JUNE 2004

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POETRY IN THE PARLOR

Starting at 3 p.m. on June 19, for the second time in only eight years, Job Conger will recite Vachel Lindsay's poems at the Vachel Lindsay Home, 603 S. Fifth Street. The first time, in 1996, he was a member of the Vachel Lindsay Repertory Group. This

time, he's going solo. Job has attended almost every reading since the monthly Poetry in the Parlor series

*June 19th
Job Conger at Lindsay
Home for Poetry in the
Parlor*

was launched last summer by site director

Jennie Battles and highly recommends them to all who know about Springfield's most famous poet and want to know more.

Job extends a personal invitation to PWLF members and friends to come to

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POETRY CRITIQUE

By: Barb Robinette

I am interested in setting up a poetry critique circle with 3-5 people. (If we have more than 5 people, we can always set up 2 groups.)

The idea is a simple one—we circulate our poems among each other either by email, or snail mail if someone doesn't have email access.

Four (4) 20# sheets of paper in one envelope only costs one (1) first class stamp, and I think 5 sheets is ok too but I'm

not sure about that. I do know that 4 works fine.

Anyway—we can circulate our poems within the group what-

...constructive criticism to make our work better.

ever way works for all. The concept is to send our poetry out and provide each other with comments focused on improving the work.

For myself, I find it very hard to be objective about my own

poems as I surely know what I mean but am blind to try to see it from someone else's viewpoint. That's where a poetry critique circle is invaluable because, as long as we're respectful of each other's work, we can offer encouragement and constructive criticism to make our work better.

If you are interested in this, please contact me, Barbara Robinette. Even though I now live in

Arkansas, I'm really not all that far away--300 miles/6 hours--from Springfield. You can contact me one of three ways:

By email:
robinette70@centurytel.net

By phone: 870.458.3090

By snail mail:
777 Briarwood Road
Viola, Arkansas 72583

I hope to hear from at least a few P&WLF members!

POETRY IN THE PARLOR

(Continued from page 1)

the house at 1:30 to enjoy a personally escorted tour of the house, which he will lead prior to his presentation in the parlor. He promises that the only words leaving his lips will be the poems of himself and Vachel. No long, boring introductions.

To serve that purpose, he has prepared a special four-page handout to introduce the poems he shares and provide additional information about himself and the home's former occupant.

During 2004, the 125th anniversary of Vachel's birth, director Battles has planned



something special just about every Saturday at the home.

Anyone who can't attend June 19 should visit most any day, Tuesday through Saturday, noon to 4 for a free guided tour.

For more information about Job's presentation, visit his Vachel Lindsay web site <http://www.aeroknow.com/lindsaypoet.htm>

NANCY GENEVIEVE TO BE FEATURED @ B&N

A poet who embraces her western Kentucky heritage in attitude, language and image, Nancy Genevieve's poems, stories and essays have appeared in numerous literary journals. June 24th, Nancy will be the featured artist at the PWLF open mic event held at Barnes & Noble Booksellers.

Nancy teaches creative writing at the University of Illinois at Springfield.



Among her writings are NYX: Mother of Light, published in 2001, and the second in the trilogy, NYX: Daughter of Chaos. The third book in the trilogy, NYX: Sister of Erebus, is forthcoming.

Please join us at 7 p.m. on June 24th to enjoy the words of Nancy Genevieve.

A WORD FROM VICKI

For writers, words are our tools and our treasure. Our love of words, our feel for language, our ability to use words -- "mere words" -- to affect others is part of what being a writer is all about. Writers can wield their vocabularies with precision and can be effective as writers because we know words, and we

know words because we like to learn them, use them, think about them, and talk about them. This column, which I hope to make a regular part of Penchant, will feature words that have caught my attention, words that I have thought about, words that I think are interesting, and some words that I just want to play around

with.

One such word is "akimbo". It's not used much, and recently I read it being used in a way that I thought was incorrect. The first time I read the word, in Treasure Island, the writer mentioned a woman standing with arms akimbo. I looked it up. Akimbo

(Continued on page 8)

DO YOU KNOW THE POET?

Poem # 1

New Years 2002

“Sleep here,” she slurred. Patting her unwashed sheets crumpled in themselves near the corner of her twin bed. The chance to touch her vulnerable, swollen flesh excited even his dulled senses.

Between the sheets, her hesitation evaporated in measured, slow breaths, allowing his arm to pass across her sucked stomach, coming to rest beneath her breast.

(Number nineteen or the big two-O?)
The double digit did not diminish the significance of each man as he left his path in her memory. This one’s trail became wider, deeper each time he came.

Her arrival was later. Harder. The first moans flew from her mouth, the tingle, shivering, coming again (and again). Her eyes stretched stark before rolling back to her head. She occupied this thing that filled, it occupied her lids, drooping in relief.

Exhausted, recoiled, she recalled how long she had held it in. Her past, sticking in the glue of regret, shook free.

Poem # 3

CLOCKTOWER

When mortality's chimes ring dolorous tones
Minds flow like salty streams
Into the brine of tears;
Faces twist in death's image:
A mirror's reality.

There is the clocktower -- dark obelisk
Whose iron pinions
Grind into eternity.
Hour hand -- a surgeon's lancet
Severing dreams with entropy.

Poem # 2

A Wry Auden Idea

As readers, most of us, to some degree, are like urchins who pencil mustaches on the faces of girls in advertisements.
- W. H. Auden

I am often awed when
I read. The French lyric goes:
“Thank Heaven for little girls”
And I might add
That I might add mustaches
To their well-read looks
In ads when I’m reading books.
I have a myriad of reading experience
To draw from. Would Auden be
Able to unabashedly read me
Without smiling awry at my audacity?
To further twist Auden’s idea
I’ll state, “I contemplate and feel
That I’m drawing on others
(With metaphorical mustaches)
When I write (as well as read).”
My sole satisfaction lies
In the fact I’m not drawing flies,
Yet.

Poem # 4

**High School Senior and
They Like Me!**

Oh, my poems were shared
with a flourish and a shout!
With the sincerity of a madman
who had nothing to lose
my words came out.
And the people, great and sma'
watched and listened, some in awe.
They had never felt the gust
or heard the rapture
of the written word
spoken so passionately.
And as I bowed,
everyone acknowledged me
with clapping hands,
polite approbations,
smiling faces,
lifted my heart on their soaring expectations; told me what a
great guy I am
going
to
Be.

DO YOU KNOW THIS POET?

Poem # 5

FOR JIM

Outside the window flies a flag half mast.
 On the ground a shadow's cast.
 The flag, it represents a man
 Who dies for it in Viet Nam.
 But that's not just a flag to me.
 I knew him as a boy, you see.
 A reckless driver, crazy kid.
 You wouldn't believe the things he did.
 A rebellious teenager with long hair.
 Just another punk kid who didn't care.
 Well, another rebellious teenager is gone.
 Killed, so young, by Viet Cong.

Poem # 8

Neighbor

Through my
 Stained window
 I stare into
 A girl
 Five feet
 Three inches
 Raven waves snaking
 Her bare shoulders
 Hundred ten pounds
 Perky tits, round
 Cherry ass crouched
 Around spider legs
 Stoned
 Again, a joint
 Grasped in his
 Left hand, the right
 Her tiny head
 Makes me
 Ache to be
 Hundred ten pounds
 On his
 Lap



Poem # 6

The Creatures

In spring the flowers do their best
 To overcome the other with prettiness
 A fawn will come shyly out of its den
 And start to romp and play in the wood.

And other creatures start their way
 Toward food and fun
 But if you see one in the wood
 Let them be in their own home.

Poem # 9

Ice

My winter heart
 is hard, cold as the rock, but subtle
 as its gray shadings, restless
 as midnight water, impatient
 as branches in bridal
 wrappings, waiting for
 the unveiling sun
 that frees the water
 in the ice, lets it run,
 wrap the stone, darkening
 the steel color, smoothing
 and rounding and wearing
 down, loosening
 stone into itself, letting it
 breathe.

Poem # 10

Peace

And the Lord said, "Peace I give to you,
 "Not as the world gives do I give to you."
 This peace the world gives – this peace
 Is soldiers on patrol in a desert strip,
 And silence – the silence of fear –
 And a mushroom cloud
 Hanging
 Above us. But I have known
 The strength and calm and quietness of prayer.
 I have reached out to touch the infinite,
 And heard, "Peace I give to you,
 "Not as the world gives do I give to you."

Poem # 7

Content

All things fall
 together before us
 say the whispering
 English trees.
 An old man
 nods and watches
 clouds pour
 into cotton clouds
 barely missing
 the tops
 of moors. He
 walks a lamb-
 topped walking
 stick, as the
 sun glides
 across land,
 turning blank
 ground to grass.
 And I smile.
 He tells me
 once again
 that all things
 fall together
 before us.
 And once more
 I believe, warm
 and content.

Poem # 11

A Mystery

A mystery to me
is the force?
which induces some people?
to speak in questions?
even when they're not asking any?

They end -- nearly --
every phrase?
with a sing-song curly cue
change of PITCH?
which
grates on the ears more?
than the proverbial
BAD ho DISsin CHU pock dude YO
ne nu na nu na nu na nu?

Yet, there's only one part of modern society?
maligned for consistently talking like THIS?
and it isn't Jackie Mason imPERSONATORS?
and it isn't pubescent young ladies?
Something of a shame it is --
about a one and seven eighths on a scale of 10?
that the only ones who are not tolerated?
by most of modern society
when they talk this way?
are the poets.

Poem # 13

Life's Highway

Objects may be nearer
Than they appear;
But the past is definitely clearer
Through my rearview mirror.

You can't drive forward
While you look back.
You might rear-end a Ford
Or a Porsche, jet black.

You have to obey the signs
And stop when they say, "Stop."
Don't cross the centerline
Or squeal your tires on the blacktop.

It'd best to drive safe and steady,
Wearing your safety belt;
But it's fun to drive fast, Freddie,
In a front seat made out of felt.

DO YOU KNOW THIS POET?

Poem # 12

Stand Forever

Stand forever
grand my beautiful
oak tree.
Never let a soul
chop at thee.
Stand so proud
in the spring
and summer breeze.
And be the
grandest of all
other trees.



Poem # 14

Cornfield

So sad, the shackled, bent world --
black fields where the corn
willows over its dreams.
I have taken this world into my heart.

Tonight, there is only this sea,
row after row of secret flowering
where tears overflow the stalks

and the dark flowers.
The corn has wept into the sleeping farmer;
from its rows of bowing heads
a cloven moon ignites, yellow on the horizon.

Cold field, turns a shoulder
against the harvest,
a thousand field-hands,

a thousand seasons of blossoms
in crestfallen silks.
In a hush that will burn them golden,
they dream of harvesting the sun.

And they shudder in moonlight,
to face the blossoms of their bodies --
a flowering descent into
dark, faceless soil.

DO YOU KNOW THIS POET?

Poem # 15

Asked out

she asked me out for baked pressed duck
but I've seen too many a floating fowl
in sewage pools to soon allow
much daffy past my flat, dull lips

She asked me over to fix her truck
but unlike most men, I don't know
a carburetor from an axle
or Cadillacs from battleships.

She asked me to her church potluck
forgetting I am ill at ease
mixing God with Mac and cheese
though both are cheesy food for thought.

She asked me over to try my luck
and play my cards right, although to keep
playing the sex game seems a steep price
to pay for such an empty pot.

Poem # 17

One more Heartache can't Hurt

First a heartbreak
and then again
three times more,
I gave up then.

When I first met you
I thought at last,
someone loving,
someone caring,
someone true

So now you are leaving
I am left alone
alone and disbelieving
that love can be true

Just say goodbye
Please don't cry
you are not the first
others hurt me worse

Leave don't worry
my life is of sand and dirt
used and walked on
and one more heartbreak can't hurt.

Poem # 16

It's My Joe

Grandma, I am so afraid,
I don't know what to do.
The first thing that I thought of
Was to come and talk with you.
I don't think I can say good-bye.
I cannot let him go.
So far, it's just been someone else,
But now, Gram, it's my Joe.
Grandma's smile was touched with sadness,
As she rocked back in her chair.
The sorrow in her wise old eyes
Told me that she'd been there.
"My Daddy died in World War I
Leavin' Ma and me behind.
My Ben came back from World War II,
But it never left his mind.
Your Father lost his leg in Nam,
Your Uncle Pete, he died.
I thought that I'd run out of tears,
But still, I cried and cried.
Cousin Danny, he served in the Gulf.
He made it home okay.
Your Joe, he'll answer duty's call,
And you, you'll wait, and pray.
Sweet Baby Girl, it's just begun,
So don't you pine and fret.
It's only your first War, my child.
Trust me, you aren't done yet.

Poem # 18

FOR THE WILD

SUNFLOWER in
the mud wide
yellow face

to the east I
will
sit

by you
all day and more
and with my

broken pink...fan
the flies far
far away

from
your Sunday
face that

graces my
grey
day in the

slamming

of
a
door.



ANSWER PAGE FOR "DO YOU KNOW THIS POET?"

Poem #	Poem Title		Poet (Use letter associated with Poets listed)	Then or Now? For "Extra Credit" write down which you think it is—Then or Now
1	New Years 2002	.....	
2	A Wry Auden Idea	.....	
3	Clocktower	.....	
4	High School Senior and They Like Me!	.....	
5	For Jim	.....	
6	The Creatures	.....	
7	Content	.....	
8	Neighbor	.....	
9	Ice	.....	
10	Peace	.....	
11	A Mystery	.....	
12	Stand Forever	.....	
13	Life's Highway	.....	
14	Cornfield	.....	
15	Asked Out	.....	
16	It's My Joe	.....	
17	One More Heartache can't Hurt	.....	
18	For the Wild	.....	

- Poets to Choose From:**
- A. samBdavis
 - B. Anita Stienstra
 - C. Melissa Macomber
 - D. Barb Robinette
 - E. Blake Scranton
 - F. Dan Blackston
 - G. Paula Collins
 - H. Job Conger
 - I. Liz Huck

Fill out the form, make sure to include your name at the bottom in the space provided, and send it in to:

PWLF
 ATTN: Siobhan
 P.O. Box 5666
 Springfield, IL 62705

Or email it to:

siobhan@pwlf.com

The person with the most correct answers will receive a prize. In case of a tie, the correct answer sheets will be whittled down to one winner first by the "extra credit" Then and Now column, and then by a random drawing from the tying responses.

Deadline for submission to be considered for the prize, post-marked or delivered on or before June 24th. Target date for announcing the winner is the June 30th IMO's.

Good Luck!

Your Name: _____

Email Address: _____



Poets & Writers Literary Forum

P. O. Box 5666
Springfield, IL 62705

Email: submissions@pwlf.com

PWLF

To increase awareness and appreciation of Literary Arts

Check out the website—www.pwlf.com for a look at who participated in the poetry reading for “Art on the Square” in Taylorville. A great time was had by all!

Thanks to Michelle Merker and to all who attended.

Something worth Writing About!



Poets & Writers Literary Forum of Springfield

Calendar of Events

June 2nd —7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Open Mic at IMO’s

June 3rd—Fiction Faction @ the Pitchford’s

June 16th—7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Open Mic at IMO’s

June 19th—3:00 p.m. Job Conger @ the Lindsay House

June 21st—Board Meeting @7:00 p.m.

June 24th—7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Open Mic at B&N

June 30th—7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Open Mic at IMO’s



A WORD OR TWO FROM VICKI

(Continued from page 2)

means hands on hips and elbows bent outward.

Since the definition implies arms, is the phrase "arms akimbo" redundant? Should we say, or could we say, "She was standing akimbo"? And if we did, would people know what we meant? I'm inclined to think that they wouldn't.

Some writer described a man "with his legs akimbo", and I've been trying to visualize the person's posture. Feet on hips and knees bent outward? Plié in the first position? That would be standing like a ballerina, heels together, toes turned out, and then doing a deep knee bend. I checked several dictionaries to see if the meaning has changed or been expanded since I looked it up the first time. None of my resources show any such changes, so I'm still trying to figure out what

this guy was doing. Any suggestions?

The second word is "ineffable". In *The Naming of Cats*, T.S. Eliot referred to "his ineffable, deep and inscrutable singular name". Since we have the abbreviation "effing" to mean what you think it means, does that affect the way you react to this word? Do you know what it means? The dictionaries define it as "inexpressible, indescribable, unutterable, unspeakable, that cannot be spoken, beyond expression." That fits pretty well with some of the usages of "effing": e.g. he's an effing idiot; he's an indescribable idiot.

My unabridged dictionary gives, as the first definition, "too overwhelming to be expressed or spoken", and the second definition, "something too awesome or sacred to be spoken."

The word is used in a religious context, and that usage is reflected in the dictionary sample sentences. Writer Maxwell Nurnberg notes that the word is often used in other contexts to have a strong derogatory meaning, "as though there were no words vile enough or low enough." If someone is "effing," they aren't so vile and low that we can't find words for them.

What or who is? What or who -- thing, person, being, experience, would you consider ineffable, in either the positive or pejorative sense?

Arms akimbo, I stand before the computer screen,

mouth pursed to hold back the words I want to scream

at the ineffable gremlins that meddle unseen ...