

PenChant

To increase awareness and appreciation of the Literary Arts

VOLUME 10, ISSUE 10

OCTOBER 2004

FEATURED READER @ IMO'S

Please join PWLF on Wednesday, October 20th as we welcome Doug Martin for a featured reading. Doug is a former poetry editor of the Cimarron Review and the Mid-American Review, where he was the coordinator of their annual James Wright Poetry Prize. He has been awarded numerous honors for his scholarship and poetry, including a Randi Eldevik Award for his study of Old English prosody, a

Theodore Morrison Scholarship in Poetry from the Breadloaf Writers' Conference, and an Academy of American Poets Prize.

Holding a Ph.D from Oklahoma State University, he has two books forthcoming: *A Study of Walt Whitman's Mimetic Prosody* (Edwin Mellen Press) and *Moon-Time*, a book-length poem (Mellen Poetry Press). Currently the Vice President of the

Oscar Wilde Society of America and a member of the alternative country band, "The Delicious Militia," Martin is a lecturer in the English Department at Indiana State University.

The evening at IMO's on the 23rd will begin with a brief open mic at 7:00 p.m. followed by our feature. We hope you can join us.

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A WORD FROM VICKI

I've been reading some Nero Wolfe books. If Rex Stout were alive, I'd have to write to him about some of his word prejudices. I'm assuming that the way he said Wolfe used words reflected his own preferences and prejudices, and I would really like to have a word with him about some of them.

In one of the books, he wrote that women don't know how to scramble eggs properly. It takes 40 minutes, and you do

it with a double boiler. He says you "disturb" the eggs gently now and then! That doesn't sound like "scrambling" anything to me. As a verb, scramble clearly implies something done in haste, with the parts intermixed. The first two definitions in my dictionary are: to collect or gather up in a hurry or without method. 2. to mix together in a confused way. The fourth and fifth ones are: 4. to put (aircraft) into the air

quickly to intercept unidentified aircraft. 5. to break up or mix (a message, radio or television signal, or telephone message) so that it cannot be received and understood without special equipment. The third definition in the dictionary is about cooking eggs. It doesn't say the eggs are cooked quickly but since the other definitions are all about haste and confusion, there's no way you can construe the

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POEM FROM FEATURED READER—DOUG MARTIN

TOWARD PORTAGE

Maybe now I imagine the morning
 as the lied-about afterlife of last night's rain
 freezing as it did the cornstalks,
 the unraked leaves that are an eulogy for the barn,
 and the barn holding a hundred bales of hay.
 The wind too much like a life,
 and our son in that wind--he's watching,
 at dusk, near maples on the hillside,
 a drunk man ditch the hotwired four-wheel drive
 he's stolen. The man is a month here from Arizona,
 and as the half-moon looks down on him
 like the face of an Ohio state trooper,
 he knows he will be lucky to get out of this one to safety.
 It is one of those times when my son and I feel the emptiness,
 like the morning you left and chose not to let us
 be with you when you die. I know this man
 will walk off south, toward Portage, into drifts,
 tired of hunting for his lost wife.
 Love is the only thing which grows worse with practice.
 I don't know where you live now, and this man
 will go on walking too, as if a palpable wind inside him
 could turn luminous, and the luminous
 gradually lengthen into calm.

*FALL GATHERING 2004*

By: Wms & Paula Collins

We will be holding our Fall Gathering this year on Saturday, October 23rd. It will be from 2:00 pm into the evening, at our home, 1803 Henry Street, Springfield, Illinois.

We will provide soups, snacks, and soft drinks. Please bring anything you might like to contribute to the food, musical instruments, poetry, and lawn chairs for sitting around the fire. With all due respect for those invited, please Do Not bring: Alcohol, Drugs or Children. We look forward to having a fun play day with our grown up friends.

Please RSVP to Wm S & Paula Collins, by phone 217-585-8859, or by e-mail to wmscollins@yahoo.com.


We hope you will join us.
 Thanks !!

Directions: Off Adlai Stevenson Dr. between Dirksen Pkwy and 5th/6th Street, there is a railroad underpass. At the very top of the underpass on the West side (towards 6th Street) is a turn to the North on Woodward, the only way you can turn. On Woodward, go two blocks, turn right on Henry St, go two blocks. 1803 sets on the corner of the curve.

Map to 1803 Henry St. by email (wmscollins@yahoo.com) available on request.


October 2004

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

					1	2
3	4	5	6 IMO's open mic at 7p.m.	7 Open Mic @ Sunsup Kaffe hosted by Jill Manning 7 p.m.	8	9
10	11	12	13	14 Open Mic @ Sunsup Kaffe hosted by Jill Manning 7 p.m.	15	16
17	18 Board Meeting @ Pitchford's 7 p.m.	19	20 IMO's 7p.m.— Featured Reader Doug Martin	21 Open Mic @ Sunsup Kaffe hosted by Jill Manning 7 p.m.	22	23 Fall Gathering @ the Collins' 2 p.m. until?
24	25	26	27	28 Barnes & Noble open mic at 7p.m.	29	30
31  Happy Halloween						

November 2004

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

	1	2	3	4	5	6
		Please let your voice be heard—VOTE!	IMO's open mic at 7p.m.	Open Mic @ Sunsup Kaffe hosted by Jill Manning 7 p.m.		
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
				Open Mic @ Sunsup Kaffe hosted by Jill Manning 7 p.m.		PWLF Trivia Night
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	PWLF Board Meeting @ Pitchford's		IMO's open mic at 7p.m.	Open Mic @ Sunsup Kaffe hosted by Jill Manning 7 p.m.		
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
						
28	29	30				

TWO POEMS BY H

Provided by Job Conger

Wolves

In this dread season, when the leafless trees
Shew winter's rage, and the keen, cutting wind
Blows fierce and fell across the prairie wind,
How pleasant to repose secure at home,
And listen to the savage din abroad.
But ah! how fares it with the traveler now,
Who late, and wandering in a region strange,
Sees nought but level snow before him lies,
As oft he pauses – dubious of the road –
While night's dim curtains darkly close around –
Then desperate plunges through the snowy waste,
No path to guide him, and no fire to warm;
Till down he sinks at last, and black despair
Brings hideous shapes and fancies to his eyes.
Meanwhile, faintly at first, and mingled with the blast,
The long, loud howl of wolves upon his track
is now distinctly heard -- -- --
Ah me! what horror then his soul alarms,
As nearer, and more near, he sees them come,
Their dusky forms contrasting with the snow,
While open-mouthed, and ready to devour,
Their green eyes fasten on their destin'd prey.
No help is nigh – to heaven he calls in vain –
While the pale moon, as if to mock his woe,
Shines calm and cold upon the pallid scene.

(This poem was published in *Sangamo Journal* on January 22, 1846. It is the 61st of 71 poems published there.)

The Improvement of Modern Times

Tempora mutantur

Now, for a thousand years, the world has lain
In deepest ignorance and mental night;
At length breaks forth the cheerful light
And mind resumes her long disputed reign.
Fell superstition, by the vapors fed,
Engender'd in the dark abyss of time;
The morning sun far hence hath sped,
And Science takes her onward march sublime.
The dreams of ignorance no more prevail:
The monk is gone, the convent low is laid,
And all their nonsense but the idle tale
Of some old crone still ling'ring in the shade.
The nations now a brighter vigil keep,
And stand erect, like giants rous'd from sleep.

(This poem was published in *Sangamo Journal* on September 7, 1843. "Tempora mutantur" means Times change.)



WHAT TO LOOK FORWARD TO...

In the upcoming issue of *Prism*, delayed for a myriad of reasons, the reader is sure to find something to enjoy. Whether you crave a simple story from the eyes of a child, or the perspective of an old woman; whether you fancy light verse or dark; or even if your tastes run to the critical essay, *Prism* has something for you.

We welcome many newcomers to the pages of our literary quarterly this issue. They

Have you submitted work lately?

live in nearby Taylorville and as far away as New England and Colorado. The decisions were difficult but we believe you will find the content well worth the wait.

As we look toward the December issue, we are culling through submissions from across the globe – Ireland to California, Arizona to Ohio, New Jersey to Tanzania. It promises to be another stellar issue – have you submitted any work lately?

Check out the website for Dr. Ethan Lewis' essay.



Poets & Writers Literary Forum

P. O. Box 5666
Springfield, IL 62705

Email: submissions@pwlf.com

If you are interested in contributing to—or taking over the task of editing—the Pen-Chant, please contact any of the PWLF Board members.

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

PWLF

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Poets & Writers Literary Forum of Springfield Calendar of Events

Oct. 6st—7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Open Mic at IMO's

Oct. 18th—7:00 p.m. Board Meeting @ Pitchford's

Oct. 20th—7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Open Mic at IMO's

Oct. 28th—7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Open Mic at B&N

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

Every Thursday night at 7:00 p.m.—Open Mic at Sunsup Koffee Kafe
hosted by Jill Manning



A WORD OR TWO FROM VICKI (CONT.)

(Continued from page 1)

cooking of “scrambled eggs” as something you do leisurely.

Wolfe (and presumably Stout) also didn't accept “contact” as a verb. My dictionary lists contact as a noun, adjective, adverb, and interjection, as well as a verb. Wolfe rejected Webster's Third International Dictionary because it said that you may use contact as a verb and that the words “infer” and “imply” could be used interchangeably. I could rant about both of these prejudices, but I have a different point to make.

And that point is that the dictionary is one of our best tools. It is not prescriptive, telling us how we may or may not use words. It is descriptive, telling how words are used. Knowing how words are used, knowing what meanings a word has, allows us to communicate clearly. When two people use a given term to mean two completely different things, misunder-

standing results.

I remember encountering the medical term “monster” once. A group of women I worked with were very upset about this word until someone looked it up in a dictionary and told them that it meant someone who was born with only the brain stem. They grumbled about the cruelty of using that term for someone's child, but that bit of knowledge defused what was becoming an ugly situation.

When we don't know the meaning of the words we use or when we attach idiosyncratic meanings to them, we decrease our ability to communicate. When we refuse to accept certain usages, we are limiting the choice of words that we have to express or describe a particular thing. Wolfe, or Stout, committed both of these errors.

Let's try not to.