

# PenChant

To increase awareness and appreciation of the Literary Arts

VOLUME 11, ISSUE 10

OCTOBER 2005

## A SONG ALSO RISES

On September 10, PWLF's own Job Conger was honored to be the featured guest at "Poets in the Parlor," a Saturday program offered at the home of Springfield's best known poet, Vachel Lindsay. We can only assume that this venue was tailor-made for Job, whose love and appreciation of Lindsay's poetry is well known among PWLF members and the community at large. Job recently wrote *Vachel Lindsay: Strange Gold* which Sam Davis, reviewing it in the *Illinois Times* calling it a "compelling argument for Lindsay's worth as a 20th-century poetic influence."

Job paid homage to Vachel at his presentation by reading and performing some dozen poems and songs – Vachel's and his own. Many of us

had had the pleasure of hearing Job's on the guitar and his musicality underscored and greatly enhanced his interpretation of Lindsay's work. In his presentation, aptly titled "A Song Also Rises," Job emphasized how, despite the fact that Vachel confessed to having "ears of lead," he instructed many of his poems to be "sung." Job's interpretation of what Lindsay meant by "sung" meant gave the audience a greater understanding of how music influenced not only Lindsay's poetry, but also poetry in general.

Job shares Vachel's assessment of when a poem has song potential (or should we say poet-ential). The lyric must have a fairly regular meter; but more than that it must contain a mes-

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## A WORD OR TWO

By: Vicki Bamman

This time I have three words.

My columns do not usually address current topics in the news, but occasionally the misuse of a word or the appearance in print of an unusual word gets my attention. The three words I want to consider have appeared repeatedly in recent news stories. They are: hate, blame, and bash. A recent letter to the editor listed definitions of these words. They weren't dictionary definitions; they were his personal definitions.

The dictionary defines hate as "1.) to dislike very

much; detest; 2.) to be very averse or unwilling; dislike; 3.) to feel hatred." (Hatred, by the way, means "very strong dislike." As a verb, dislike is defined as "to not like, object to, have a feeling against." When I consider these definitions, I realize that I hate a lot more things than I want to admit!

Blame means to hold a person or thing responsible for something bad or wrong, or to place responsibility for something bad or wrong on a person or thing, with a secondary definition of "to find fault with." There's a lot of blam-

ing -- people finding fault with other people right now.

Bash means: 1.) to strike with a smashing blow; hit very hard, 2.) to set upon vigorously with hostile words, arguments, or abuse; assail. So, those who are being hostile toward others, arguing with them or abusing them, (abuse, verb, definition 3.) to use harsh and insulting language about or to.)

When a person criticizes another, they sometimes say "I don't hate this person, but...." and express, directly

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## BOOK REVIEW

by David Pitchford

### ***Eve's Red Dress: Poems* by Diane Lockward**

*The following is an excerpt from the review written by D. Pitchford. For the full copy, please visit the website [www.daybreakpoetry.com](http://www.daybreakpoetry.com) or [www.pwlf.com](http://www.pwlf.com). This review will also appear in full in the 8.1 issue of Prism, due out in October 2005.*

This collection, and its title poem, are aptly named to set the slightly irreverent tone of a wonderful collection of poems. I was first drawn to Lockward's book by the website linked in the signature of an email I received from her. There was something hauntingly familiar about the lines sampled on the webpage. I thought perhaps I'd read her work before. As it turns out, though, the voice in those poems is very much like that of Siobhan, whose collection *Through the Longing Daze* I assisted in editing. Very seldom, in fact never, have I read two collections as sibilingsque as these two wonderful books.

Lockward, as a poet, has neither modesty nor shame – which lends the greater power to her verse for its honesty; in tone confessional, her lines add to that style the meaning-making so important for poignant poetry. One might expect such confessional seeming poetry to contain vapid shock-for-shock-sake verses sprinkled throughout, but *Eve's Red Dress* shuns such poetaster stunts and cuts to both the heart and mind to find a lesson. Yet such lessons come through subtle narration and are skillfully enough wrought to avoid didactic tone.

Like Billy Collins and Ted Kooser, Diane Lockward writes to a broad cross-over audience; her verse appeals to Joe and Jane Public, but

also to Mr., Ms., and Mrs. Academe. Her verse is accessible enough to enjoy without having to complicate it with all the abstractions or abstruse verbosity of the kind that drive people on the street to "I hate Poetry" group sessions. And yet there is such a rich content of allusion within each poem, with just a few exceptions, that the mid-to higher-brow reader can ponder them and find layers of meaning below the surface.

Lockward's greatest strength is likely her judicious, seemingly intuitive sense of line. Few poets I have read have as good a feel for line-breaks. Take for instance these lines from "The Mystery of the Missing Girl", "I became a girl detective and searched / my grandmother's attic. . . ." taking the first line as a sentence makes sense and leaves a great deal to the reader's imagination, it paints a complete picture. But then the line carries to zoom that picture to one locale. Readers identify with both pictures, and having both pictures enriches the poem more than had the line end-stopped at *attic*. Once you've read the poem, you should return to the title and consider the meaning there (it would spoil it to explain further).

## BOARD BRIEFS...

In an effort to keep the membership abreast of things going on at Board meetings, we will endeavor to include tidbits of information from recent meetings. Please remember that as a member of PWLF you are welcome to attend any board meeting. We do ask that you contact a board member to verify the time and place of the meeting prior to attending to ensure that you have the most current information.



- ⇒ *Mark Pence has asked if PWLF would organize some poetry for First Night. The board is enthusiastic about the idea. Questions exist and therefore this will be a topic of discussion at the Board meeting in October as well.*
- ⇒ *It was suggested that at midnight, or at another appropriate time, we have a reading of "Abraham Lincoln Walks at Midnight" by Vachel Lindsay. Further, the Board will invite Job Conger to present "On the Building of Springfield."*
- ⇒ *A "Second Night" celebration with poetry was suggested—or Twelfth Night, which is on January 6. Instead of looking for new venues, it was suggested that PWLF could do more gatherings; the annual meeting was a success, and having more parties would be a way to bring the membership together.*
- ⇒ *Parties and poetry readings could have themes! Like Twelfth Night and Mardi Gras.*
- ⇒ *Vintage Visions - Liz is looking at a publication date in late October.*

# OCTOBER 2005

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IMO's Open Mic  
7:00 p.m.

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21 Dr. Leonard @  
Gwendolyn Brooks  
Library 3-4 p.m.

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IMO's Open Mic  
7:00 p.m.

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PWLF Board Meets  
@ IMO's 7:00 p.m.

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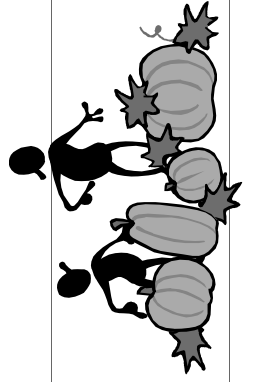
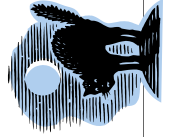
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# NOVEMBER 2005

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

## THE COLLINS' FALL GATHERING 2005

We will be holding our Fall Gathering this year on Saturday, October 22<sup>nd</sup>. It will be from 2:00 pm into the evening, at our home, 1803 Henry Street, Springfield, Illinois 62703-4243.

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 and Paula S Collins, by phone 217-585-8859, or by e-mail to

[paulascollins@sbcglobal.net](mailto:paulascollins@sbcglobal.net) or [wmscollins@yahoo.com](mailto:wmscollins@yahoo.com), or by mail to the address above.

Directions: Off of Adlai Stevenson Dr. between Dirksen Pkwy and 5th/6<sup>th</sup> Street, there is a railroad underpass. At the very top of the underpass on the West side (towards 6<sup>th</sup> 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. available by email on request. We hope you will join us.

## CLASSIFIEDS

**Poetry and Prose Wanted:** The editors of the literary journal, Prism Quarterly, are seeking quality writing for the pages of Prism. Information on deadlines and submission guidelines available at:

~ [www.pwlf.com](http://www.pwlf.com)

~ [www.pitchblackbooks.com](http://www.pitchblackbooks.com)

~ [www.daybreakpoetry.com](http://www.daybreakpoetry.com)

Submit work for consideration today!

**Willing to Work:** One teenage boy available after school for yard work and odd jobs around your place. Hourly or flat fee—prices negotiable—contact Ian at 217-529-9244.

**This space for 'rent':** Poets & Writers Literary Forum of Springfield is looking for Corporate Sponsors. If you know of a business that might be interested, contact one of the PWLF board members to discuss this fantastic opportunity.

**Writers Sought:** Do you write? Do you have something you want to say to the writing community of Springfield or the world in general? PWLF is looking for (more than) a few good writers to contribute articles, book reviews, sketches and cartoons to the monthly newsletter, PenChant. If you believe you are the writer we're looking for, please contact the editor of the newsletter: [submissions@pwlf.com](mailto:submissions@pwlf.com) for information on how you can get your work published monthly.

**For Sale:** Black lacquer headboard for Queen size bed and dresser with mirror. Great condition! Comes with a two drawer nightstand. If interested, contact Siobhan at [siom1@hotmail.com](mailto:siom1@hotmail.com) - price negotiable. Let's make a deal!

## A SONG ALSO RISES

*(Continued from page 1)*

sage that transcends the poem. In addition to giving his own insights into Lindsay's poetry, Job shared the thoughts of other critics, including Lindsay scholar Dennis Camp.

Kudos also for the printed program Job prepared which served well as a guide for the performance and as an attractive memento to remember the day. Great job Job!

If you would like to explore Job's creative world, visit him on the web at [www.aeroknow.com/poemsofjob.htm](http://www.aeroknow.com/poemsofjob.htm) You may also email him at [writer@eosinc.com](mailto:writer@eosinc.com).

Corrine Frisch

(with special thanks to my "spy" Ethan Lewis)

## THE JOY OF LEX

Have you discovered the joy of lex? Would you characterize yourself as tending towards heteronyms or homonyms? Or would you just be content being an autonym? Given a choice, would you rather go for a toponym or retronym?

Well, I understand if you would rather not share

such intimate details of your lexical adventures with just anyone. But remember, no matter what your personal preferences happen to be, always practice safe lex. Do not engage in discourse--whether oral or graphical--with strangers.

-- Anu Garg, [wordsmith.com](http://wordsmith.com)



Poets & Writers Literary Forum

P. O. Box 5666  
Springfield, IL 62705

Email: [submissions@pwlf.com](mailto: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.

## Poets & Writers Literary Forum of Springfield

### Calendar of Events

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

Oct. 17th—7:00 p.m. PWLF Board Meeting at IMO's

Oct. 19th—7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Open Mic at IMO's

Oct. 21st—3 to 4 p.m. Dr. Leonard @Gwendolyn Brooks Library

Oct. 22nd—Fall Gathering at the Collins'

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

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

Nov. 21st—7:00 p.m. PWLF Board Meeting (location TBA)

Last Sunday of each month—

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



## DIVERSITY MONTH EVENT

October 21, 2005 – Gwendolyn Brooks Library (Illinois State Library) 3 to 4 p.m.

October is *Diversity Month* at the Gwendolyn Brooks Library in Springfield, Illinois. As part of this program of events, in the Poetic Presences,

Culture and Expressions segment, Marcellus Leonard will speak and read from his book *Shake the Thunder Down*.

Visit him on the web at [www.daybreakpoetry.com](http://www.daybreakpoetry.com)

## A Word or Two

*(Continued from page 1)*

or indirectly, their dislike. Why are people so resistant to admitting that they hate someone? Perhaps it goes back to childhood, when our parents and teachers scolded us for saying we hated somebody. More likely, it is the connotation of the word: it is a very strong word with a load of bitterness and loathing that simple 'dislike' does not convey. Also it is now associated in our minds with hate crimes and violence. So when I very much dislike someone but don't wish violence against them, I disclaim hatred.

When someone finds fault with another, or holds them responsible, or uses harsh language about them, the

recipient of the blaming or bashing accuses the speaker of 'blaming' or 'bashing' -- as if identifying and labeling the remarks invalidates them! In fact, it's a form of ad homonym argument -- you say that I'm responsible and I say that you're bashing me and your bashing me makes you the person who is in the wrong.

I said I had three words -- I actually offered definitions for five. I could have included other definitions for even more word, but I'll save that for another time. Hating, bashing, and blaming have become behavioral as well as verbal clichés and I wish they'd go away.

**PWLF**

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