

Poetry

West

The Muse News

April 2010

Meetings

1) Our next meeting is **Saturday, April 3, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.** The meeting will be at the Colorado College Worner Center, Rm. 213, Cache La Poudre and Cascade. Metered parking is available on Cache La Poudre, Tejon and other nearby streets.

Denver Poet Laureate Chris Ransick will present a workshop, **“Hidden Things.”** Participants will become “explorers,” fleshing out ideas which lie both within and around us.

Hidden worlds lie both within us and all around us, and each is a landscape rich with creative possibilities. In this workshop you’ll become an explorer, setting out to chart the terrain of *obsessions & inspiration*. This writing-intensive session will give you a satchel full of new ideas that will keep you exploring for a long time to come.

Participants should prepare by following these two prompts in advance of the workshop:

- A. Identify a specific subject you have always wanted to explore; it must be something that intrigues you, but about which you have not already gathered significant knowledge—an object, a place, a thing: *I have always wanted to know more about bats.* It should not be an abstract feeling like “fear” or “hope.” Write your subject down and bring that to the workshop.

- B. On the day of the workshop, carry a notebook and pen *everywhere* and write down anything you observe that you find unusual. You need not write extensively; just list things using a few details. Bring that to the workshop.

Chris will have copies of his books for sale, including the newly published collection *Asleep Beneath the Hill of Dreams*. Go to <www.chrisransick.com> if you'd like to contact him in advance or learn more about his work.

Ransick won a Colorado Book Award in 2003 for *Never Summer*. He was a 2005 CBA finalist for his short-story collection, *A Return To Emptiness*, and in 2006 published *Lost Songs & Last Chances*. Ransick holds master's degrees in journalism and creative writing, and was editorial assistant of the definitive work, *The Last Best Place: A Montana Anthology*. In 2009, he was awarded a planning grant from Colorado Humanities and the National Endowment for the Humanities to edit a comprehensive anthology of Colorado literature. His most recent collection of poems, *Asleep Beneath the Hill of Dreams*, was published in November 2009.

2) Juan Morales, will be our presenter on Saturday, May 1. Juan J. Morales is an Assistant Professor of English and the Director of Creative Writing at CSU-Pueblo. He received his BA from the University of Southern Colorado and his MFA from the University of New Mexico. His first collection of poetry, *Friday and the Year That Followed*, was the winner of the 2005 Rhea and Seymour Gorsline Poetry Competition and was published by Bedbug Press in 2006. His poetry has also appeared in *Acentos Review*, *Border Senses*, *Copper Nickel*, *Many Mountains Moving*, *PALABRA*, *Poet Lore*, *War, Literature, & the Arts*, *Washington Square*, and other journals. He is currently working on his second collection of poems

3) National Poetry Month Extra:

Manuscript Consultation & Private Workshops: April 7th, 6:30-7:30pm

Are you ready to submit your manuscript to publishers? Have you been considering a chapbook for your poetry? Are you curious about writing freelance articles or book reviews? Are you wondering if your work is ready to pitch to editors and agents? Do you need an editorial eye to look over your manuscript outline, synopsis, or query letter?

Author and editor Lori A. May will be available for four one-on-one sessions of 15-minutes each to meet with Poetry West members. Advance registration is required and selected members are invited to submit up to ten pages for feedback. Lori will also consult regarding general manuscript and publishing questions, so those without a manuscript in progress are also welcome to register. Visit www.loriamay.com for more info about Lori A. May. Sessions are limited to four participants and advance registration is required.

If you are interested in a consultation with Lori, please email Laura Stuckey at laura.off.rhyme@gmail.com. I will reserve a spot for the first four respondents, giving priority to non-board members. If you are one of the four, I will ask you to email me up to ten pages of work ahead of time. There is no charge for the consultation; Lori is donating her time and expertise. (Location TBA)

Author Book Signing and Meet-and-Greet, April 7th, 7:30pm

Author Lori A. May will be available to sign copies of her latest book, *stains: early poems*. Come meet the author, introduce yourself, and enjoy an evening of poetry. More info about the author is available online at www.loriamay.com. (Location TBA)

Lori A. May is a part-time writing instructor and a frequent guest lecturer and workshop presenter at writers' conferences and graduate writing programs. Her creative works have appeared in publications such as *The Writer*, *Two Review*, *Tipton Poetry Journal*, and anthologies such as *Van Gogh's Ear*. She is the author of two novels, *The Profiler* and *Moving Target*, and a poetry collection, *stains: early poems*. May is Associate Editor for *Northern Poetry Review* and Founding Editor of *Poets' Quarterly*. She has also served as Managing Editor of Marick Press. More information is available online at www.loriamay.com.

Musings

Lois Beebe Hayna Writing Center Opening. Lois Beebe Hayna received an honorary doctorate degree from Regis University for her contributions as a poet and author. Regis is celebrating the opening of the Lois Beebe Hayna Writing Center on their Denver campus in the University's Library. Dr. Hayna will read her poetry as part of the celebration.

Thursday, April 22nd from 4-6 PM
Regis University 3333 Regis Boulevard (originally 50th Ave.), Parking Lot 3 on Lowell Blvd.
Denver, Colorado 80221
For more information contact Barb at 720-218-5999.

Western State College has recently received full accreditation from North Central for a low-residency MFA in Creative Writing. The Director is **Mark Todd** and there are three concentrations: screenwriting, popular genre fiction, and poetry with an emphasis on formal verse, which **David Rothman** designed and will direct. This track will be one of the most comprehensive, exciting and rigorous program in versecraft in existence. **David Mason** is involved as an Advisory Board Member, and he will be speaking and reading at the first summer intensive in July. Contact David Rothman at rothmandavidj@msn.com.

Mar 1, 2010 was celebrated all over the world as Chopin(1810-49) 200 years birthday, **Yousuf Zaigham** was honored to be commissioned by Abe Minzer, the director of Classically Alive Music to write a poem under that subject. Zaigham's poem *A Letter To Chopin (over hundred lines long)* was enthusiastically received by Chopin smitten crowd at the Classically Alive salon.

Once again **Noel Black** at **KRCC** has recorded Poetry While You Wait poets reading their poems. One poem will be played every day in April. Last year, they played just after Garrison Keillor's *Writer's Almanac* at around 3:00 p.m. I assume that will be the case this year. Please tune in--many Poetry West members are involved in this project. Also note that KRCC is in the "early bird" stages of its Spring membership drive. Extra premiums if you join or renew now.

Calls for Submissions

The Big Picture Group is doing **Art Aloud** again this year. This is an art show designed to bring visual artists and poets together to create one work encompassing both. Poets can illustrate their own poetry or can work with another artist. There are artists looking for poets (and vice versa) on the Art Aloud Facebook page. More information, for artists as well as poets, is available at: www.figurativephoto.com.

CALL FOR POETS: A fifth venue has been selected for poetry for Art Aloud in April. Poets may bring anything to Black Cat Books in Manitou Springs, from 6-9pm, April 2nd. Bring your poetry -- and anything it "connects to" -- be it music, sculpture, dance, visual art, fabric arts, etc. You may collaborate with another artist. Reservation required. Contact Julianza at julianza@comcast.com and copy Bill Young: bill@figurativephoto.com.

Calendar of Events

Julianza Shavin is featuring poetry and maybe some music at Modbo **March 26** - friends, come out and hear, and bring your poetry; it's also an open mic, as always.

Pikes Peak Poet Laureate Events

March 28, Sustaining Muse event at Poor Richard's bookstore, 4-6 p.m.

April 1, Open mike at Woodland Park Library, 6 p.m.

April 7, City Dionysia Slam, FAC, 7 p.m.

April 10, noon gathering at COPPeR for "Poetry Can Happen to You"

April 9, Voice, Verse, Vision, 7:30, Tri-Lakes Center (\$12 adults, \$5 kids)

April 10, Voice, Verse, Vision, 7:30, Tri-Lakes Center

A Collaborative concert, poetry reading, and gallery show featuring original works by poets, composers, and visual artists from around the Pikes Peak Region. Several Poetry West members are participating.

April 11, Poetry While You Wait reading at East Library (I believe), 3 p.m.

April 17, "Poetry Can Happen to You" happens, locations and times TBD

April 21, Cowboy Music and Poetry with Duke Davis, Woodland Park Library, 6 p.m.

April 24, Inauguration of next Pikes Peak Poet Laureate, Penrose Library, 4:30 p.m.

Colorado College Visiting Writers Series

Poet **Jim Moore** will be reading with the Colorado College Senior Poets on **Thursday, April 1 at 7 p.m.** in Gates Common Room of Palmer Hall. Reception following.

Dan Chaon: Eminent novelist and National Book Award-finalist, author of *Among the Missing*, *You Remind Me of Me*, and *Await Your Reply*. **Tuesday, April 6th, 2010 at 7 PM** in Gates Common Room of Palmer Hall.

Michael Dahlie: Winner of the 2009 PEN/Hemingway Award and Colorado College alumnus, author of the wonderful new novel, *A Gentleman's Guide to Graceful Living*. **Monday, April 12th at 7 PM** in Gates Common Room of Palmer Hall.

Saturday May 1, 1:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m. All interested writers (18+) are invited to the first ever **Pikes Peak Writing Marathon**. This is a community writing event that is sponsored by the Southern Colorado Writing Project (CSU-P). It will begin and end in the Carnegie Reading Room at the Penrose Library

A writing marathon is a progressive, small-group writing activity (guidelines will be covered and the process explained on the day of the event). Bring pen/pencil, paper, and a small amount of cash for food and/or beverages.

The Baca retreat will be held this year from Wednesday, May 12 through Sunday, May 16. Cost will be \$40/night. The Baca retreat is meant to be a time for quiet renewal and refreshment for those who have given generously of their time to Poetry West – or to poetry and the arts in general. When possible we welcome new retreatants.

To guarantee peaceful, uninterrupted time to write, walk and contemplate in a beautiful southwest setting, the number of participants is limited. We would like all participants to find congenial nooks and crannies to work without distraction. We hope that every participant will be able to leave behind everyday cares and open themselves to new possibilities while at Baca.

It is required that each retreatant respect the writing time of others. Accommodations are dorm style and participants are required to clean up after themselves. Communal gatherings occur primarily around often-exuberant meals (kitchens and/or restaurants are available) and a festive reading at the end of the retreat.

For information or to reserve a place, please call Sandra McNew at 632-4374 or e-mail her at sandramcnew@aol.com with "Baca Retreat" in the subject line.

Poetry Prism

This section includes reviews of volumes of poetry as well as books related to poetry--in one way or another. *We need book review submissions for future newsletters!* Thanks to Ron Truax for submitting this review.

Dylan The Bard: A Life of Dylan Thomas, by Andrew Sinclair (Thomas Dunn Books, St. Martin's Press, NY)

Andrew Sinclair, a founding member of Churchill College, Cambridge, prolific author and filmmaker, historian and critic, has written what I never thought I'd need more of, another biography of Dylan Thomas. But this one's different. Having consumed many, if not most of the previous efforts on this theme (and being a veteran of two pilgrimages to the Boat House and Brown's Hotel bar in Laugharne, Carmarthenshire), I counted myself quite up-to-speed on Thomas's life history. But Sinclair approaches it as literary ethology, beginning with the Welsh bard Urien, through the bard Taliesin in the Dark Ages and so on, culminating the bardic tradition in the voice and vision of Dylan Thomas. The powerful influences of Druidic lore explode in Thomas's writing and oratory. The ancient Welsh bards and Celtic minstrels followed and haunted Thomas throughout his short life. This book is essential for the dedicated disciple, but probably not recommended for the more casual student of Dylan Thomas and his work.

Haiku Mind

A certain kind of hokum accompanies much of haiku today. People imagine it to be something other than it is in spiritual terms. But haiku is very, very simple. In the same way that you make yourself very simple by following the breath. You clear your mind, let go of everything else. In the same way, writing haiku takes you right to the heart of the moment. That's the Zen of haiku, really.

- Clark Strand, "Haiku Mind" (Summer 1997)

Thanks to Tom Barnes for submitting this excerpt.

Best Wishes for Karen Peace

Karen Peace, another poet-friend, was hospitalized mid-March with a small stroke, but she is in good spirits, is back home, and on the mend. Karen was the singer of the Lois Hayna poems for Poetry West when Lois was feted for her honorary degree. Please try and make it to Voice, Verse and Vision in April, when Karen's compositions, inspired by poetry from Poetry While You Wait, will be sung. Karen has also published a beautiful poetry chapbook, and is an organizer for the Pikes Peak Composer's Consortium, which had its first meeting with Karen as gracious hostess in her home! Our best wishes for a full and speedy recovery to you, Karen.

In Remembrance of Gwynne Stoll

The first night I met Gwynne, I don't recall the poem of hers she read, but it reached me, and I caught up with her after the reading to tell her so.

Now, most people in this country go through one or more elaborate dances and bobs and weaves when they meet somebody new. There's a lot of feeling out goes on before the first real feeling gets expressed.

Not Gwynne. Her whole self was right out there, the humor, the pain, the courage, the love. What a relief to be able to just start talking real about real things right off the bat.

She put me in mind of something Robert Penn Ward had said in an interview, and I looked it up when I got home. He said, "You know, the grandpas and the great-grandpas carried the assumption

that somehow their lives and their decisions were important; that as they went up, down, here and there, such a life was important and that it was a man's responsibility to live it."

Gwynne gave me the sense that she held that assumption, that she believed her life was important. It was. And that assumption is catching, for which I'll be ever grateful.

--Malcom McCollum

Deadline for May Newsletter Items

News items will be due on April 17. Please send your information to Ashley Crockett at ashleycrockett@gmail.com. *Thank you, Ashley, for taking over!*

"I began life wanting perfection and determined to have it. I got so I ceased to expect it and could do without it. Now I find I actually crave the flaws of human handwork. I gloat over imperfection."

-- Robert

Frost