

PoetryWest

The Muse News

January 2012

Meeting and Party in January

NOTE EARLY DATE! We often meet second Saturday in January, but the 1st Saturday is Jan. 7, so we will retain first Saturday – see you Jan. 7!

Poetry West meets from 10:00 a.m. to noon the first Saturday of every month. Our next meeting & workshop is January 7, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m., Casa Verde Commons House, 1355 Lindenwood Grove, Colorado Springs.

The Walk Poem: Location, Character, and Inspiration

Facilitator: Abby Murray

During this workshop, writers will be moving from the classroom after participating in a brief discussion about what a Walk Poem entails, according to a passage from Ron Padgett's book, *The Teachers & Writers (sic) Handbook of Poetic Forms*. We'll consider how taking walks has been inspiring poems since ancient Greece, and we'll look into a couple of pieces that have been inspired by hitting the road or strolling through a hometown (think Dante, Wordsworth, Whitman, Thoreau, Williams, O'Hara, Bishop and Snyder). Sample poems will be shared before writers leave the classroom (weather permitting, for a brisk walk outside; if not, there will be designated areas inside the building) in three groups. Each group will walk to the locations (10 min. at each spot), where a provided poem will be read aloud (by a volunteer "block captain") – then it's time to write! We will then reconvene, polish, and share, even if what is written are phrases. The exercise can certainly include people-watching, in addition to surroundings inside and out of windows. The best part about this workshop is coming away with at least three pieces to continue working on later. The second best part is picking up a new technique that whisks us away from our desk chairs.

Abby E. Murray earned her MFA from Pacific University and currently teaches creative writing at Pikes Peak Community College. Her poetry has been published in recent issues of *War Literature & the Arts*, *RHINO*, *Salt Hill*, *Confrontation*, and *Court Green*, and her first chapbook, *Me and Coyote*, was selected for publication by Marvin Bell in the 2010 Lost Horse Press *New Poets / Short Books* series. Her poem "Free Markets" was recently nominated for a Pushcart Prize. She hosts the monthly Colorado Springs Writers Reading Series at the BAC, and lives in an old house with her husband and three rescue-pets.

Jan. 27: PO(E)T-POURRI – Muse Madness

Join us at The Warehouse Restaurant, 25 W. Cimarron, Colorado Springs, from 6 to 9 p.m. on January 27, as we celebrate three simultaneous birthday/anniversary milestones: the 99th birthday of local **Poet Emirita Lois Heyna**, who will read selections from her seventh book of poetry; the 30th anniversary of Poetry West, which we will celebrate with a brief history and open mic; and the 100th birthday of *Poetry Magazine*. This is a **FREE** event, including a special cake for the occasion, but we would ask that you patronize our host by buying some

food and drink from The Warehouse. All kinds of poetry magazines and chapbooks, along with issues of *Poetry Magazine*, will be on display for perusing, as will be PW's 30th anniversary issue of *The Eleventh Muse*, and local poets' poetry books.

For further information on the Jan. 27 event, contact Julie K. Shavin at julianza@comcast.net, or (719) 375-1200; Loring Wirbel at wirbel@gmail.com; or Poetry West, poetrywest@gmail.com.

Musings

PW Board 2011-12 – SECOND NOTICE – BOARD CANDIDATES NEEDED

President: Julie K. Shavin

Vice-President: Loring Wirbel

Secretary: Cynthia Storrs

Treasurer: Ron Truax

Publicist: Julie Andrews

Webmistress: Janice Black

Member-at-Large: Ashley Crockett

Newsletter Editor: Loring Wirbel

Poets – ***Poetry West*** can use your help by volunteering for the board, or for officer positions on the board. Elections will take place as usual in February, with elections first, and a speaker the second hour, or hour and 15 minutes. Please think over whether you'd like to serve Poetry West in any capacity. The board is made of no fewer than four officers, no more than seven. Mandatory Board meetings are only four times a year, although this board has met every month but one. At this time, it looks as though our secretary, webmistress and treasurer will run for re-election, but that could change (Cynthia Storrs, Janice Black, Ron Truax). If you are interested in these positions, or President, Vice-President (who has been doing the newsletter), Publicist, or member-at-large (miscellaneous duties), please come forward. Express your interest/intent in throwing your poetic hat in the poetic ring. Email julianza@comcast.net so I can make a slate, or several slates from which to choose, for voting. It is VERY important to attend the February meeting. If you canNOT make it, please send your vote by proxy to me. Those running for election will be mentioned in the January and February newsletters and perhaps once as a newflash. There are loose job-descriptions for each office, and please note -- the current board is totally committed to transitioning new officers. March and April speakers are already in place, freeing a new board up a bit for planning National Poetry Month. The current board will also be lining up some things for NPM so the new board is not overwhelmed. NPM needn't be planned at the last minute. Thank you in advance for the gift of your volunteering. Working for Poetry West is highly rewarding, if not financially lucrative. Money never buys happiness unless it's in the billions, and I don't know those people. I don't think they are poets.

Julianza

Publication Kudos in Alamosa Journal

The Friends of the Library, Alamosa Public Branch, published several Poetry West members in Volume III of *Messages from the Hidden Lake*. High-fives to the following poets/artists:

Autumn Hall, first place, Adult Poetry; **Pat Nolan** and **Ben Humphrey**, Honorable Mentions; **Ron Truax**, Honorable Mention, Art; **Cynthia Storrs** and **Sandra McNew**, Poetry; and **Julie Shavin**, Art and Poetry. Julie's daughter **Amadea** was awarded first and third prizes in Kids' Poetry. Be on the lookout for a call for submissions for Volume IV!

Not Quite Prime Time

YARN Magazine has selected one of Julie Shavin's poems as their annual submission to *America's Best Non-Required Reading Anthology*. She feels dubiously honored, but basically thanks the publication, which is quite delightful, for finding her worthy in a non-required way.

PPAC Judges Needed

Message from Julianza Shavin:

I am chairing the Performance Poetry Award for PPAC this year, which extends backwards to July, and goes to June 2012. I have had people hop on board, only to fail to hear from them once it was clear they needed to join PPAC in order to be jurors. Anyone interested who gets around to performances, readings, open mics? I am thinking of writing PPAC and asking if there can be a special juror membership as opposed to full membership. With full membership for \$25, however, one has a shot at PPAC grants, a real perk. The guidelines for the juror position are not intensive. As a group, we decide the internal guidelines, e.g., strength of the writing and performance. Please contact me at julianza@comcast.net if interested.

News from the Poet Laureate's Office

Pikes Peak Poet Laureate Jim Ciletti wants to let Poetry West members know about the following events being planned: In early March, the Laureate's office will help coordinate student readings at various locations as part of the Poetry Out Loud series. Poetry West will be part of this effort, so stay tuned for particulars in our next issue. In early April, the office will sponsor an All-City Poetry Reading, tentatively planned for the Carnegie Room of Penrose Library in the first week of the month, watch for more details. Copies of *Poetry While You Wait* will be available in the March-April time frame as well. Finally, a Poet Laureate selection committee is considering candidates in early 2012 for the next Poet Laureate for 2012-14, who will be named in an event slated for late April.

Open Mics

Colorado Springs Writers Reading Series – Abby Murray hosts this monthly series the second Friday of every month. The next will take place on Jan. 13, 7:30 pm, at Business of Arts Center Main Gallery, 513 Manitou Blvd., in Manitou Springs. Sandra Knauf, publisher and writer for *Greenwoman Zine*. Suggested donation is \$2 per person. Enjoy some wine or beer at the bar during intermission and get to know local writers. For further information: cswritersreading@gmail.com or <http://cswritersreading.blogspot.com>.

The Live and Breathe Poetry Society – First and third Mondays of every month, at Marika's Coffee House, 739 Manitou Ave., Manitou Springs, hosted by Julie Shavin, 685-4438.

At the Table with Poetry West – Ashley Crockett and other PW board members host a casual group at Poor Richard's Bookstore every Sunday night from 5 to 7 p.m. Meetings will begin again on Jan. 8, but continuation after January will depend on the availability of a rotating roster of volunteers. Ever-evolving, this event is a meet, eat, drink, and listening happening; you are invited to bring a few copies of a work-in-progress for critique. *At the Table* is intended to attract new members in an informal way. We are looking for volunteers to help host *At the Table* during 2012, please contact board members if you are interested.

Haiku Society of America's local chapter meets the third Sunday afternoon of each month from 2 to 4 p.m. Their main meeting place is the Mediterranean Café, 118 E. Kiowa, Colorado Springs. Mark your calendars and contact Pat at RIVERPHOTO@aol.com for program and location details, around the first of every month.

Hear Here Poetry Open Mic at theLofty's, second and third Saturday of every month, 287 E. Fountain Blvd., #100, Colorado Springs.

Writers Group: Weekly meetings with improv exercises to hone skills. Thursdays at 7 p.m. at Barnes & Noble, Briargate, 1565 Briargate Blvd., 266-9960.
<http://www.barnesandnoble.com>.

Lectures and Special Presentations

Colorado Poets Center Events

Arapahoe Community College Workshops

January and April 2012
Arapahoe Community College
5900 S. Santa Fe Drive
Littleton, CO 80160-9002

In 2012, Rosanne Sterne will be teaching two six-week Poetry Workshops through the Community Education department at Arapahoe Community College. The winter term workshop will begin Jan. 26, 2012, and the spring term workshop will begin on April 12, 2012. Go to <http://www.arapahoe.edu/community-education> for further details.

Cultural Office of the Pikes Peak Region Events

Workshop: Marlene Milner Brown Bag Lecture

Wednesday, Jan. 11

11:00 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Cottonwood Center for the Arts

427 E. Colorado

Colorado Springs, CO 80903

Cost: Free

Marlene Miller, self-alignment coach and creator of “INNER”tainment, will be performing a free Brown Bag Lunch presentation based upon relationships, healing, and the process involved with discovering who you really are. Using what she calls “INNER”tainment, Marlene brings her humor, personal insight, and real-life experience into an interactive experience that invites all listeners to embark on their own “self-discovery” process.

Colorado College Events

CCState of the Rockies Project Monthly Speakers presents

Bidtah Becker of the Navajo Nation and Osvel Hinojosa-Huerta of

Pronatura Noroeste, on ‘Unheard Voices of the Colorado River Basin:

Bringing Mexico and Native American Tribes to the Table’

Monday, Jan. 30

7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Gates Common Room, third floor of Palmer Hall, CC

1025 N. Cascade (east of Tutt Library)

Cost: Free

For the fifth State of the Rockies Project Speakers Series event of the year, the Project hosts a talk on the issues surrounding Native American tribes, the Republic of Mexico, and the Colorado River. As traditionally underrepresented groups, our speakers will address the challenges facing their respective nations in the future as pressures continue to mount on the entire river basin. Bidtah Becker, a member of the Navajo Nation, is currently employed with the Navajo Nation Department of Justice, where she focuses on pursuing and protecting the Nation’s water rights. She is a graduate of the University of New Mexico School of Law, and the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service.

Osvel Hinojosa-Huerta is the director of the Water and Wetlands Program and the associate director of the Birds Program of Pronatura Noroeste, based in San Luis Rio Colorado, Sonora. He obtained his Ph.D. specializing in wildlife ecology at the University of Arizona. Osvel has worked in research and conservation projects in northwestern Mexico since 1997, especially in riparian and wetland areas in the Desert of Sonora. In recent years, he has designed and directed the efforts to restore the Colorado River delta, including the implementation of strategies to reestablish the water flows in the river, and the implementation of reforestation activities and wetland restoration. The Colorado College State of the Rockies Project is an undergraduate team research project that studies issues that affect the environmental, social, and economic health of the region.

POETRY PRISM

Mathias Svalina – *Destruction Myth*

By Autumn N. Hall

Unless you were savvy enough to grab a copy of Mathias Svalina's first full-length poetry book, *Destruction Myth*, at last April's workshop or Casa Verde reading, you have tasted but an amuse bouche of this creation-ist's 83-page offering. Douglas Adams once wrote, "There is an art...or rather, a knack to flying. The knack lies in learning how to throw yourself at the ground and miss." Svalina is the first individual I've met who has actually managed to follow this absurd advice unscathed.

In the beginning, Svalina titled every one of *Destruction Myth's* first 44 poems "Creation Myth," only concluding with the title poem. Asked whether it took longer than 7 days to create this at once gut-bustingly hilarious and gut-wrenchingly heartbreaking collection, he had this to say, "I actually started the poems that became *Destruction Myth* during NaPoWriMo and then ended up writing 2 or 3 a day and kept on writing them for four months. It really helped me to think outside of any Romantic paradigm of awaiting some construct of inspiration in order to write a poem, and let me merely write." A sampling of what he "merely wrote" follows:

In the beginning, I was a thesaurus.

In the beginning, the birds grew wings out of their chests.

In the beginning, there was a woman with a tool box full of paperclips.

In the beginning, the registrar took a left hook to the jaw.

In the beginning, there was a book, but every time a villager read the book it meant something different to her than it did to her mother.

Here is a book which will certainly mean something different to each person who reads it. But it might just imbue each person who reads it with the same sense of the awesome responsibility inherent in creation, the same awareness of the near-impossible challenge each creator faces in keeping the inhabitants of his or her world happy. Whatever it means to you, I believe you will find it, to borrow Svalina's own words, "Really funny and also asymptotically close to profound, which I think is the goal for absurdism, to ostend toward wisdom while always negating its own possibility for wisdom. Or maybe I think that's a goal for living in the modern world, not sure there."

For our *Metric Moment* below, author Autumn N. Hall offers her take on the Svalina style for a Creation Myth of her own.

METRIC MOMENT

In the style of Mathias Svalina:

Creation

In the beginning, there was Choice. And, of course, the usual void. With no alternatives or options, Choice really had no other. So, hoping for a Wild Card—and without even shuffling—Choice drew God from the void. And God, having an overactive bladder, right away had to go and make water.

Now Choice, anal-retentive and a closet germaphobe, immediately separated the water from the land in the interest of sanitation and hygiene.

This kinda rubbed God the wrong way, and being the fraternity type, he decided to rally a bunch of followers to his cause. Male and female he rallied them, muscle-bound and perky-boobed, he rallied them, and threw a wicked kegger. All across the land, people could be found making-out in stairwells, nailing beer bong and the odd martyr to trees, and singing along overly-loudly to Sweet Home Alabama regardless of their origins.

Not a big Lynyrd Skynyrd fan and none-to-happy with the resultant vomit, Choice, rather spitefully, created cirrhosis, Roadside Sobriety Checkpoints, and unintended pregnancies.

God, who really was just a fun-lovin' guy at heart, tried to make the best of things by creating the morning-after pill. But just in case it didn't work, or was outlawed unconstitutionally in any given number of right-wing conservative states, he also created chocolate gelato and pickles.

Choice, mean-sober, pulled a knife. And also a spoon and fork, the latter utensil of which fell flat and lodged in the first road, as seriously, who eats gelato with a knife and fork? Drunk on power and a bit out-of-control, Choice created fat cells and sugar cravings, which was very contrary and self-defeating when you come to think of it, as it pretty much made Choice moot.

God, beyond wasted at this point, could only manage to create balloons and cherries, which for some reason the females just kept popping.

By now, the kegs were drained and the people were bored and losing their buzz, so they left the party to wander the wilderness in search of another. Otherwise Sponsorless, they elected to forget all about Choice and God and turned instead to Facebook, Youtube, and Fox News for all future decision making.

Which turned out to be most fortuitous for the Gelato advertisers.

-- Autumn N. Hall

End-Rhyme

"Poetry often enters through the window of irrelevance." – John Keats (1795-1821).

If you would like to submit a review of a poet's work, please contact julianza@comcast.net.

Please submit January newsletter items to Loring Wirbel at lwirbel@gmail.com by Dec. 17 2011.