

THE POETRY SOCIETY OF VIRGINIA

SPRING NEWSLETTER, 1984

Dear Members,

To all of you who believe that what men say to each other, spoken or written is important, to all who care about the music of language, not simply English, but all tongues, I say, "Bravo!" Keep caring. Is "the pen still mightier than the sword"? Or was it ever? As poets, we are committed to a celebration of life, be it lived in the hamlet of Clear Creek or the Big Apple. Write down your dreams, share with us your griefs, ennui, cynicism, dismay, hatred, weltzschmerz and best of all, your love. We are better for that sharing.

Thank you for letting me serve as your president these three years. And thanks to all who served with me and to those who from time to time covered my lapses. The tangibles of the task have been few, a file of letters, several poetry books, a blue and white silk scarf made in London and left at a meeting by a member or guest--but the intangibles are there for me to savor for the rest of my life. See you at the next meeting.

For the love of poetry,

Lorraine
Lorraine

P.S. Check with me if you lost a scarf!

CONGRATULATIONS

ELLEN ANDERSON read at the "Pause for Poetry" meeting in Alexandria May 19th. PEGGY ANDERSON's poem, "Deafening," appeared in the Kansas Quarterly Dec., 1983. Peggy read her work at a March meeting of The Retired Teachers Assoc. of Portsmouth. ROBIN CASEY has served two years as Contest Chairman for the Shenandoah Valley Writers' Guild. EVELYN RITCHIE CRIM won an award in the Blue Unicorn's annual contest. One of her poems will be published in the Norseman. SCOTT DONALDSON's biography of Scott Fitzgerald, Fool For Love, published by Congdon and Weed, N. Y., is in the bookstores. ROSALIE JENNINGS was named Writer of the Year by the Shenandoah Valley Writers' Guild for her service to the organization and her success in publication. She will receive a plaque commemorating this honor at the spring commencement of Lord Fairfax Community College. HANNAH KAHN has a new book of poetry out. The title is TIME, WAIT, published by the University Presses of Florida. In 1983, SARAH LOCKWOOD was co-winner of the annual Gustav Davidson Award of The Poetry Society of America for her sonnet sequence, "Late Voices from The Merchant of Venice." The award was presented at the Awards Ceremony at the National Arts Club Gallery in New York. MARGARET MORLAND's book of poetry, entitled It Happens Thus, is now available. VIRGINIA MOORE gave a reading of her work at the "Pause for Poetry" meeting in Alexandria on May 19th. A film, using as its text TOM O'GRADY's sonnet collection Establishing a Vineyard, has been produced at Rosebower Vineyard near Hampden-Sidney. O'Grady and his wife Bronwyn appear in the film. GEORGIA LEE McELHANEY, who has served as judge in the SVWG contests, is a contributing editor of Pivot, a publication in State College, Pa. JOHN ROSENBERGER won both second and fourth prizes in the 1984 Contest of the SVWG--poetry classification. CHRISTINE SPARKS again coordinated The Christopher Newport College Writers' Conference, held April 7. Six other writers appeared on the program for the two-day event. Four of ELIZABETH D. SOLOMON's poems were published in the Artist's Corner of the Charlottesville/Albemarle Almanac. Solomon, a new member, was nominated

*My
"memorial"
issue
(P.2)*

THE POETRY SOCIETY OF VIRGINIA SPRING NEWSLETTER, 1984

for the Who's Who in International Poets. BRUCE SOUDERS read his poetry and conducted a course entitled "A close Look at Painting" at the Elder-hostel sessions at Shenandoah College and Conservatory of Music, May 14-18. Souders will read at his alma mater, Lebanon Valley College, Annville, Pa., June 9 at an Alumni Day celebration. VIETTE SANDBANK has had two poems accepted for publication recently--"These Bonds," a sonnet, by The Lyric and "Lost Music" by the Midwest Poetry Review. She also won first prize in a contest sponsored by the organization, Writers Unlimited. COLIN SARGENT's book of poetry, Luftwaffe Snowshoes, was published recently by the Portsmouth Community Arts Center. Sargent is currently editor of Greater Portland magazine and will be one of eight artists to present work at Maine! Writers! Live! this year. ULRICH TORUBETZKOY won first prize in the annual International Narrative Contest sponsored by Poets & Patrons, Inc. of Chicago. The winning entry was called "The Dream of Pilate's Wife." Along with that of a dozen American writers, Troubetzkoy's work will appear in the 50th anniversary issue of Orbis, an international literary magazine. In an interview that appeared in the fall issue of The Richmond Quarterly, she gave some of her views on the state of the art of poetry in the present day. EVELYN WADE will coordinate the conference of the Society of Children's Books Writers. CLARA H. WENGER won second prize in the Blanche Whiting Keysner Contest for her Mason sonnet "Tragic Judas."

A HEARTY WELCOME TO THE 1984-85 slate of officers elected at the May 5 meeting in Williamsburg. Serving are: President, Bruce Souders; Vice Presidents: Eleanor Braumiller (West); Mildred Conrad (North); Nancy Tucker Mann (East); Agnes Marcuson (Central); Clara Wenger, Recording Secretary; Robin Casey, Corresponding Secretary; Ellen Anderson, Membership Secretary; Howard Mumford, Treasurer. These officers will assume their duties July 1, 1984. The Nominating Committee, composed of Bess Gresham, Chairman; Mildred Conrad and Jeannie Bartlett, are to be commended for a job well done. Evelyn Ritchie Crim and Cathy Fultz have been appointed co-chairmen of the 1984-85 Contest Committee. Welcome!

*****NEXT MEETING: Portsmouth-Norfolk, June 22-23.

NOTE -- If you would like to have your sea/water poetry read at this meeting, please send it at once to Chris Sparks.

THE ANTHOLOGY COMMITTEE is hard at work ironing out the preliminary details for getting our Anthology underway. The cost of printing is almost prohibitive these days, but we believe, with everyone's support, we can produce another beautiful book we'll be proud to own and give to our relatives and friends. If you would like to make a pre-publication commitment for the purchase of one or several of the books, we would greatly appreciate this expression of your dedication to this mammoth task.

IN MEMORIUM

Vesta Crawford - Salt Lake City, Utah Mrs. R. W. Holloway - Naperville, IL
 Mrs. Charles Heaton, Syracuse, N. Y. Mrs. Henry H. R. Smith - Bealeton
 Mrs. Bernard H. Kyle, Lynchburg

from Canto LXXXI

What thou lovest well remains,
 the rest is dross
 What thou lov'st well shall not be reft from thee
 What thou lov'st well is thy true heritage...

EZRA POUND

November

Glenna Holloway
913 E. Bailey Rd.
Naperville, IL 60565

Bill Medland
judged
June Owens won
Deven Casilli
2nd HM

182 - A DIFFERENT ROAD TO SUN-UP *In Top 20*

My mother would have muttered a certain chant all day

183 - THERE WAS A WOMAN WHO USED TO GIVE ME FLOWERS - *In Top 20*

When I was ten I heard her called a whore

184 - ROLE REVERSAL

She laid out my days with hand-knit sweaters

Congratulations, Glenna
maybe next time the money -
Happy Holidays
Vivian Dec. 17, 1984



COASTAL MURAL

Mason Sonnet

We breathe silk fog that strokes the beaver-run,
Then climbs the day and flees from spears of pine.
The sea returns it with the twilight's rise
Describing sueded negatives of sun
In secret brakes where fox and heron dine.
From fir-napped hills we watch as moonshed vies
With nimbus rings in new-ginned cotton skies.
An artist rain will bleed the clay and sign
The shore in red, accenting dimpled sand.
We bloom in this kaleidoscope design:
Sweet-salty mix alive with seasoned fun,
Where puddled whitewash opals our fruit stand,
Ourselves new textures on this ancient strand
Infusing us in patterns just begun.

We enjoyed your poem.
Thanks for entering our Contest
J. Barnes

COASTAL COLLAGE

(Mason Sonnet)

We breathe silk fog that strokes the otter-run,
Then climbs the day and flees from spears of pine.
The sea returns it with the twilight's rise
Describing sueded negatives of sun
In secret brakes where deer and heron dine.
From fir-flocked hills we watch as moonshed vies
With nimbus rings in new-ginned cotton skies.
Tomorrow's rain will bleed the clay and sign
The shore in red, accenting dimpled sand.
We thrive in this kaleidoscope design,
This salty mix where seasons blend as one,
Where puddled whitewash opals our fruit stand,
Our selves new textures on this ancient land
Infusing us in patterns just begun.

2nd

COASTAL COLLAGE

(Mason Sonnet)

We breathe silk fog that strokes the otter-run,
Then climbs the day and flees from spears of pine.
The sea returns it with the twilight's rise
Describing sueded negatives of sun
In secret brakes where deer and heron dine.
From fir-flocked hills we watch as moonshed vies
With nimbus rings in new-ginned cotton skies.
Tomorrow's rain will bleed the clay and sign
The shore in red, accenting dimpled sand.
We thrive in this kaleidoscope design,
This salty mix where seasons blend as one,
Where puddled whitewash opals our fruit stand,
Our selves new textures on this ancient land
Infusing us in patterns just begun.

ONLY DAUGHTER, ONLY MOTHER

Let her remember the days I clung to her
while she protected me from dragons—
(actually a neighbor who took a switch to me
when he thought I broke a branch off his poplar—
actually the vicious pavement as I learned to skate—
actually a large doberman that snarled and chased me
till she ran between us and drove it away.)
So many dragons, all vanquished.

She knows they still lurk out there,
hiding in automobiles, multiplying in darkness.
But I must deal with them myself,
plus some mutations she never encountered.
And the fiercest of all is the one grown inside me
always ready to attack her hands.

Why are daughters' edges so razorish? Why do mothers
wear the dated giftwrap till it's tattered?
Even after it's bloodied they don't throw it away
but keep showing it to you, slyly pathetic,
slipping it under your eyelids at bedtime,
crumpling it under your tires on the tollway, fanning
the mustiness of it as you unroll your newspaper.
I keep finding ways to punish her for my guilt.

What arcane chemistry lingers here!
Readily combustible, potentially lethal,
a movable love-hate feast. Mother-daughter banquets
last for life. Fathers, husbands, sons can never attend.
It has been 20 years since I left her slanted roof,
and we are still feeding.

She is old now; her hollow bowl eyes
search my doorstep for slain dragons to fill them.
I mention the doberman and her magnificence.
"You were wonderful," I say, mellow with sincerity.
She says she doesn't remember that at all, refusing
a second helping of my profferings. She sniffs
at a current kettle, declining the ladle
designed for her grip. Tonight she punishes me with love.
But I am learning something I don't understand:
The diet has made us strong, the kindred armatures
within us are well-muscled and firm.
Our end of the bridge is failsafe.

ONLY DAUGHTER, ONLY MOTHER

Let her remember the days I clung to her
while she protected me from dragons—
(actually a neighbor who took a switch to me
when he thought I broke his tree branch—
or the vicious pavement as I learned to skate—
or a large doberman that snarled and chased me
till she ran between us and drove it away.)
So many dragons, all vanquished.

She knows they still lurk out there,
hiding in automobiles, multiplying in darkness.
But I must confront them myself,
plus some daylight kinds she never encountered.
And the fiercest of all is the one grown inside me
always ready to attack her hands.

Why are daughters' edges so razorish? Why do mothers
wear the dated giftwrap till it's tattered?
Even after it's bloodied they don't throw it away,
but keep showing it to you, slyly pathetic,
slipping it under your eyelids at bedtime,
crumpling it under your tires on the tollway, fanning
the mustiness of it as you unroll your newspaper.
I keep finding ways to punish her for my guilt.

What arcane chemistry lingers here!
Readily combustible, potentially lethal for some,
a movable love-hate feast. Mother-daughter banquets
last for life. Fathers, husbands, sons can never attend.
It has been years since I left her slanted roof
and still we are feeding.

She is old now; her hollow bowl eyes
search my doorstep for slain dragons to fill them.
I mention the doberman and her magnificence:
"You were wonderful," I say, mellow with sincerity.

She says she doesn't remember that at all, refusing
a second helping of my profferings. She sniffs
at a current kettle, declining the ladle designed
for her grip. Later, she punishes me with love.

But I am learning something I don't understand.
The diet has made us strong, the kindred armatures
within us are muscled and firm.
This end of the bridge is failsafe.

THE CREATION MACHINE

Eons before we encountered the womb
and ventured into death's arena, this
too-short apprenticeship we serve between
revolving epochs, there was staging room
where I remember bending toward the kiss
of light, becoming crystal tourmaline
then part of a pool flooding a ravine,
and next a mustard seed, the genesis
of being. And you and I met at times,
you in a storm, then a blue clematis.

But can you recall the others with whom
we shared galactic fires and helix climbs?
Or did we leave them in the early rimes
of cooling clay to plan a nobler tomb?

Our blazing fall must have been awesome when
the red giant burst and spewed us through the void.
Swift sidewise flashbacks of the beginning
ignite the ancient mind's dark navel then
vanish like a burned out comet's tail. Freud
said we forget what we can't face— Did spinning
through velvet silence, pressure of twinning
cells blank that memory? Or have we employed
soft padded rationale on which to lean
our origins? It may be we enjoyed
the centrifuge, imploded time. All men
were processed thus. The creation machine
we know as death will one day intervene
preparing us for stardom once again.

Glenna Holloway
913 E. Bailey Rd.
Naperville, IL 60565

NEW ASSIGNMENT

You still have that Rubaiyat smile
part earthy, part classic, full of riddles.
Mine was lost somewhere on all those trips
between Chicago and Beirut and the armpits of India.
It got so it wouldn't stretch back and forth
after I loaned it to an unwashed kid
with a Picasso sketch face, and to an old man
with a burn I could smell who helped me
the night I blundered into the wrong sector,
and to the big Assam mama cursing the bullet holes
in her embroidered hem between words as my interpreter.
Maybe there's a Xerox of my happy-face
in the bottom of my locker at O'Hare.

You still have those great virescent eyes
homing right to the heart of the matter
wherever that happens to be.
My mouth needs your teaching.

But I'm living at traffic lights
and fast food counters while my editor augers
channels to send me to the right spot in South America.
How I'd love to have dinner with you—
it would be a feast—
but I'm afraid
of crystal goblets, music and flowers that smell sweet.