

Austin Poetry Society

P. O. Box 684672, Austin, TX 78768
www.austinpoetrysociety.org

November, 2009

Muse-Letter

Thomas Cable On "Poetry in the Ear"

On Saturday November 21, 1:30-3:30 p.m., we meet in the **Austin History Center**, Ninth Street at Guadalupe, to hear the renowned authority on prosody, Dr. **Thomas Cable**, present a program on "Poetry in the Ear: the Musical Art." Dr. Cable is the Jane and Roland Blumberg Centennial Professor in English at the University of Texas. He is the co-author of *A History of the English Language*, the best-known and most frequently quoted textbook in the field. He is also the author of *A Companion to Baugh and Cable's History of the English Language* (3rd ed., 2002), *The English Alliterative Tradition* (1991) and *The Meter and Melody of Beowulf* (1974). Scott **Wiggerman** will open the meeting as featured poet.

Parking on Saturday is free, both in the Library parking lot and on the street. ADA access is on the east end of the building (Guadalupe Street entrance).

Because of Thanksgiving, we're observing Fourth Thursday early, on the third Wednesday. On Wednesday, November 18, at 7:00 p.m. in the NeWorldeli, 4101 Guadalupe, our monthly reading features poets Barbara Youngblood **Carr** and Dr. Marvin **Kimbrough**. An open microphone always follows.

Welcome to New Members

We're very pleased to have these new and renewed members since last month:

Shawna M. **Graves** G. Mark **Jodon**
Mike & Joyce **Gullickson** Jon **Pearson**

If you're not a member, print out an application form from our website (<http://www.austinpoetrysociety.org/membership.htm>), whip out your checkbook, and join up.

Monthly Contests Continue

In the October meeting, members voted, 7 to 6, to continue holding Monthly Contests. An insufficient number of entries (fewer than five) were received to conduct either a General or a Light Contest this month, but entries were retained in the hope we will receive enough additional entries for the following month, submission deadline November 21st.

Rules for the monthly contests are posted online, www.austinpoetrysociety.org > Choose Contests. Submit at the meeting or by postal mail two copies of each entry, indicating either General or Light in the upper right corner of both and your name in the upper left corner of only one copy. Bring entries to the meeting or mail them early enough to arrive by the deadline.

CONTEST RESULTS, SEPTEMBER SUBMISSIONS, 2009

LIGHT Verse Category

Critic/judge: Shirley Elliott Cosby

Poet	Poem	Critic's Rating	Popular Vote
Shubh Bala Schiesser	Gone...Gone...Gone	1	3
Nancy Fierstien	The Doctor Says I Ought To	2	1
George Klawitter	Canadian Baby	3	2 (tie)
Mary Riley	Ridiculous Riddle	4	2 (tie)
Greg Silver	Autumn's Arrival	5	2 (tie)

GENERAL Verse Category

Critic/judge: Shirley Elliott Cosby

Poet	Poem	Critic's Rating	Popular Vote
George Klawitter	Back to the Basics	1	3 (tie)
Shubh Bala Schiesser	Twilight in Austin	2	1
Greg Silver	High Schoolers in Name Only	3	3 (tie)
Thom Moon 10	What Astonished Me Most	4	4
Nancy Fierstien	Something's Amiss	5	2

The September Critic/Judge

Our gratitude goes to Shirley Elliott **Cosby**, who kindly judged last month's contests. Shirley lives in Emory, Texas, but previously she lived in Austin for seven years. She joined the Rusk County Poetry Society in 1989 with only a handful of poems, but she soon learned a variety of poetry forms, rhyming skills, etc. She retired in 2001 and now enjoys having the time to pursue her writing. She has won local, state, and national contests, and her work has appeared in *Lucidity* and *Illya's Honey*.

Kicking a little stone, he turned to me
 And said, "Tell me, do you write poetry?"
 I never had, and said so, but I knew
 That very moment what I wished to do.
 -- W. H. Auden, "Letter to Lord Byron,"
 Part IV, *As I Walked Out One Evening*
 (New York: Random House, 1995)

Huffstickler Poetree Grove

Most of you know that the Board of Directors of APS initiated a proposal to name a city park the Albert Huffstickler Poetree Grove. The Board thought it would be appropriate to honor the life-long Austin poet by establishing an official place for poets and poetry in his name. The Parks and Recreation Department has passed the question on to the City Council, which will consider it in the weeks to come. It's important for poets and poetry organizations to show up and endorse the naming of the park, since other names have been nominated.

The land is a small triangle at the intersection of South 1st and César Chávez, just north of Ladybird Lake. It's downtown, across from the City administration building, and it is already landscaped with several large trees, paths, and limestone benches. It could become a gathering place for poets visiting Austin, and when local folks are jogging north of the Lake, it's only a few steps to a bench where you might even stop to draft a new poem.

The Council meets Nov. 19, Dec. 10, and Dec. 17, and announcement of the agenda happens only a few days before the meeting. It could be any of those dates. We will try to get the information out, but you can also check online. The agenda for the November 19th meeting will be posted on November 16th: http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/council_meetings/public_meeting_agenda.cfm?meetingid=195.

A Note on the State of Poetry to Elzy from George Klawitter

I too read *Poetry* magazine. I do not like very much of the poetry, but I do enjoy the book reviews and the letters to the editor. I frankly don't know what constitutes poetry these days. Some things I read seem like good old paragraphs to me. I don't know how they can pass themselves off as poetry.

Meanwhile, I continue in my despair over the state of poetry in Texas. Not that there isn't enough of it. The fact is there are too many good poets so that I despair of having any time in the sun.

Fifty years ago surely there were not so many good poets around. Now when I pick up the *Texas Poetry Calendar*, I sink deeper and deeper into depression as I realize that we are surrounded by excellent poets who keep churning out excellent poems. Not that I am arguing for exclusivity or anything like that. I feel up against such a block of writers all struggling for a place in the sun I'm lucky to get a place under a tree.

And yes, I read garbage by big names in magazines like *The New Yorker*. Whenever they printed a poem by John Updike I knew I was in for nausea. The guy was a prose writer but *The New Yorker* would print his poetry as if he were Robert Frost.

Right now I think one of our best poets is Maxime Kumin. I find that I am enjoying quiet hours with books of poetry nowadays more than I ever before did in my life. That, of course, adds to my own creative depression.

Here's a good line. It's actually a title from a CD of poetry and music put out by a Wisconsin potter twenty years ago: "The Best Poets are Dead and I'm Not Feeling so Good Myself These Days."

-- George [by permission]

Deepest apologies to **Archibald MacLeish** (1892-1982). Last month we attributed this beautiful (and famous) fragment from his "Ars Poetica" to Wallace Stevens in error. Thanks to alert poets who caught it for us. From just this much, you can see that reading MacLeish will be worth your time.

A poem should be palpable and mute
 As a globed fruit,

Dumb
 As old medallions to the thumb,

Silent as the sleeve-worn stone
 Of casement ledges where the moss has grown--

A poem should be wordless
 As the flight of birds.

Yearbooks and Anthologies

We have mailed the *Yearbook* to members who couldn't pick them up at meetings. Members who haven't received one should let us know. The 60th *Year Anthology* is at the printer, and we really do expect to have them at the November 21st meeting in the Austin History Center. If you have a poem in the anthology, you get a free copy, which you may pick up at the meeting. We hope to hand-deliver as many as possible in this way, but when we tire of that process, we'll mail you your copy. Extra copies are available whether you have a poem in the anthology or not, but we're asking that for each additional copy, you contribute \$10 to replenish the publications fund.

Poetry Coming Down All Around Us: *Achievements*

Kaye Voigt **Abikhaled** will have three of her German poems in *Das Fenster*, a U.S. magazine entirely in German (and published since 1904!) in December. Titles of the poems are: "Sylvester", "Aus Geröll ein Garten", and "Die Alten".

Usha **Akella** will be an invited poet in the Sixth International Poetry Festival in Granada, Nicaragua (2010). The festival draws some of the world's top poets, this year including Nobel Prize winner Seamus Heaney. Along with two others, Usha will represent India there. She has also received a query on attending the Kolkota Book Fair to read. It is the world's largest open book fair, attended by millions and some of the best writers.

Barbara Youngblood **Carr** will be a featured poet for the APS Fourth Thursday reading, which because of Thanksgiving happens on the third Wednesday, November 18th. She was interviewed on November 11th by Dillon **McKinsey** on his weekly program, *Writing on the Air*, Radio Station KOOP, 91.7 FM. The broadcast will also be streaming on the web at <http://koop.org>.

Dr. Marvin **Kimbrough** will be a featured poet for the APS Fourth Thursday reading. On October 14, she was also a reader at Poetry on the Patio, a twice-a-year event she helped to establish in the Downs-Jones Library at Huston-Tillotson University many years ago.

Former Austin poet Sue **Littleton** recently visited Chile with some forty other writers and poets. They were doing readings, presenting books and attending the Santiago Book Fair. Sue presented her poem "Corn Woman" and her un-love poem, "A Love Affair," which was presented at the first AIPF. With another poet, she was honored by being chosen to read privately for another group of writers. While in Chile, Sue visited the houses of Pablo Neruda and also the graves of Neruda and Matilde Urrutia, overlooking the sea at Isla Negra.

Garrison **Martt**, former President of APS, and the Past Poetry Project performed Halloween poetry at the Yarborough Branch Library on October 31st.

Katherine Durham **Oldmixon** is finishing up work on an MFA from the University of New Orleans, Louisiana, and putting final touches on the APS 60th anniversary anthology.

APS member Brenda **Riojas** was one of three poets from the Rio Grande Valley who participated in the Feria del Libro San Miguel de Allende FELISMA 2009 (Book Festival) on Oct. 16 and 17. They were billed as Tejanos en Transito, and they read at the Plaza Civica. Brenda also read from her book *La Primera Voz Que Oi* on Oct. 28 at the Domestic Violence Awareness Luncheon in Harlingen sponsored by Casa de Proyecto Libertad.

APS member F.J. **Schaack** read on November 11th as featured poet at the premiere of *Whispers*, MCed by Patrick Schmidt at Barnes & Noble La Frontera (Round Rock).

Shubb Bala **Schiesser's** poems, "Austin Inferno," "Love Your Enemy," and "In the Museum" have appeared online in <http://www.drashpit.com>. She is pleased that her first entries in the APS monthly contests won a first place (Light Category) and a second (General Category). She attended Scott **Wiggerman's** Texas Writers League sessions on the sonnet and also attends Scott's critique group monthly. Recently, she began attending the APS Critique Group managed by Beth **Kropf**. A relatively new member of APS, Shubb previously worked for years for the Texas Rehabilitation Commission. Now she volunteers with Safe Place and Habitat for Humanity. Poetry reading, writing and painting bring her joy.

Liliana **Valenzuela** will be editing an upcoming issue of *Borderlands* which will feature translations prominently. Watch for announcements.

Mariann G. **Wizard's** "Ft. Holabird Haiku" is posted on *The Rag Blog*, <http://theragblog.blogspot.com/>. For Austin oldtimers, this blog is a resurrection of *The Rag* newspaper, which began in the 1960s. It features many of the original journalists and contributors. On November 3 with Larry **Piltz**, Mariann read from her work and discussed poetry on The Rag radio show (KOOP-FM). They were interviewed by Thorne **Dreyer**.

Austin is Poetry City: *Events*

November 12, Thursday, 7:00-9:00 p.m. The Round Robin Revue at Maui Wowi Hawaiian Coffees and Smoothies, Wimberley, 14200 RR 12. Poetry, music, open mic. Bring poems and songs of thanksgiving. Welcome back Thom Moon 10, recently landed, from across The Pond. Info: call Wimberley Wordsmiths: (512) 847-3858. Non-perishables accepted for Crisis Bread Basket, Wimberley

November 13, Friday, 7:00 p.m. APS member and 2010 Texas State Poet Laureate Karla K. **Morton** signs her book, *Redefining Beauty* at BookWoman, 5501 North Lamar, A-105. Published by Dos Gatos Press, *Redefining Beauty* is a collection of poems that came out of Morton's journey through diagnosis, treatment and recovery from breast cancer.

November 14, Saturday, 11:15 a.m. through the afternoon. Poetry Society of Texas 53rd Annual Awards Luncheon Banquet, Bistro Room, Crowne Plaza Suites, Dallas Park Central, 7800 Alpha Road (just off LBJ and North Central Expressway in Dallas. Reading of the winning poems in the 100 PST contests and presentation of the Edwin M. Eakin Memorial Book Publication Award. Info: (361) 573-2273 ore-mail nbaass@earthlink.net. Banquet tickets are \$28; see http://www.poetrysocietyoftexas.org/PST_home.html >PST Awards Banquet.

November 14, Saturday, 4:00 p.m. In Houston, APS member Kelly Ellis will be among the poets reading their work for the 2010 *Texas Poetry Calendar* at the Blue Willow Book Shop.

November 14, Saturday, 5:00 p.m. **Brave New Books**, 1904 Guadalupe, under in Chase Bank Underground, will host a debut reading from: *Pleadings from the Pleiades*, poetry by Ken Jones (Poetry in the Arts Publications). The book revolves around the theme of extraterrestrial contact. Rice Moorehead will provide acoustic music. Thom the World Poet will assist in the open mic portion of the event. Copies of the book will be available for sales and signing. Light refreshments will be served.

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Austin is Poetry City: *Events* (continued)

November 14, Saturday, 6:00 p.m. Notable Austin poet Dave Oliphant has a signing/reading for his autobiography, *Harbingers of Books to Come* (Wings Press, San Antonio), at the Barnes and Noble, Arboretum. The 538 page memoir traces Dave's life from his first publication fifty years ago through the 25 books he has seen into print between 1962 and 2009. Aside from the autobiography, his most recent book was a 513-page bilingual volume by the world-renowned Chilean "antipoet" Nicanor Parra that Dave translated as *After-Dinner Declarations* (Host Publications, 2009).

November 19, Thursday, 7:00 p.m. BookWoman, 5501 North Lamar #A105 will feature Judith Infante (San Antonio), Cyra Dumitru (San Antonio), and APS member Margie McCreless Roe.

November 21, Saturday, 7:00 p.m. Borderlands honors Issue 33 poets, hosted by Judy Jensen, who overawed us with the work of Float Press in our October meeting. BookWoman, 5501 North Lamar #A105. Local poets whose new works appear in this issue include Joe Ahearn, Alice Batt, Joe Blanda, Jill Alexander Essbaum, Cindy Huyser, David Meischen, upcoming Texas Poet Laureate Karla K. Morton, Katherine Durham Oldmixon, Kathleen Peirce and Abe Louise Young, among others. Bring a poem that spurred you on and feel free to invite friends and family to share in the festivities.

November 21, Saturday, 8:00 p.m. and Nov. 22nd, Sunday, 4:00 p.m. Austin Singers Fall Concerts, "A Poetic Portrait," at University Presbyterian Church. www.austinsingers.com. Winners of their High School Poetry Contest will read winning poems.

November 22, Sunday, 4:00 p.m. The *Borderlands* / Barnes & Noble Community of Poets features Thirsty Thursday Dripping Springs poets, presented by Nancy Fierstien, and organized by Deb Akers. Among the poets will be APS members Angie Meyer and Doyle Fellers. Barnes & Noble Sunset Valley, 5601 Brodie Lane.

December 4, Friday, 7:00 p.m. In Dallas, APS member Kelly Ellis will be among the poets reading their work for the 2010 *Texas Poetry Calendar* at Half Price Books

December 5, Saturday, 3:00 p.m. A reading for the 2010 *Texas Poetry Calendar* is scheduled at Book People in Austin. Readers include Beverly Voss, Joe Blanda, Usha Akella, Cindy Harper, Ysabel de la Rosa, Jerry Hamby, Mary Parham, Lynn Edge, Stan Crawford, Frances Schenckan, Debra Winegarten. and APS members George Klawitter, G. Mark Jodon, and Christa Pandey.

December 5, Saturday. Expressions has "Another Night for Peace" featuring Herman Nelson and John Berry, and music of Darrell Mayers. Doors open 6:00 p.m. Showtime 7:00 p.m., at the Baha'i Center, 2215 E.M. Franklin Avenue, 926-8880. Admission: a dish for the pot luck/cans for the poets pantry. All ages reading.

December 12, Saturday, 11:00-Noon. APS Poetry Critique Group with Beth Kropf, upstairs at the Central Market dining area. Nudge: make a list of things, subjects, objects, feelings and images that you don't think belong in a poem. Then write a poem about one of them. (Source: John Drury, *Creating Poetry*.) The Group usually meets last Saturdays, but not this month.

December 15, Tuesday (registration deadline). The Association of Writers and Writers' Programs holds what is probably the country's biggest writing conference and book fair each year. In 2010 it will be in Denver, with presentations by a list of poets as long as your credit card bill, including for examples Sandra Cisneros, Rita Dove, and Gary Snyder. The conference is April 7-10, 2010, but December 15 is the deadline for early-bird discounts on registration. Early registration also helps you get discounted hotel rates. Find out all about it at <http://www.awpwriter.org/conference/2010awpconf.php>.

Until January 3rd. "The Life and Legacy of Edgar Allen Poe," one of those HRC exhibits which provide a good reason to live in Austin, continues to offer us the gift of an actually intimate acquaintance with the somber poet. Get to know him through the desk on which he wrote, the original manuscript of "The Raven," or James Earl Jones' reading of the poem.

January 6-9, Wednesday-Saturday, 2010. The annual Writers' Festival at the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor in Belton includes keynotes by Kelly Cherry and Andrew McKnight, concerts, coffee houses, and master classes. To register, contact Audell Shelburne, ashelburne@umhb.edu or phone (254) 295-4562. Registration forms will be available at the APS meeting on November 21st. Individual events, \$25; single day, \$50. Full registration, \$175.

Poetry Contests for APS Members

The National Federation of State Poetry Societies (www.nfsps.com/) sponsors fifty contests annually. In 2009, several APS members took honors in those contests:

Shirley Elliott Cosby: 2nd place in Contest 10, 3rd place, Contest 34, plus three Honorable Mentions;

Jerri Hardesty: 2nd place, Contest 27, plus two Honorable Mentions;

Betty Mol, Honorable Mention, Contest 31; and

Lisa Salinas: Honorable Mention, Contest 41.

To be qualified to enter all of the NFSPS contests, you must join a state poetry society (ours is the Poetry Society of Texas (PST), www.poetrysocietyoftexas.org).

PST membership qualifies you with modest fees to enter the hundred contests of PST and the fifty contests of NFSPS. Entries for NFSPS contests come first with submissions between January 1st and March 15th. This year in the spring, the Austin Poetry Society will also sponsor 21 annual contests.

Preserve Your Work

Insecure about having your poems in a computer? **Back them up.** You can do that with an external hard disk, on CDs, on a flash stick, or online through a service like www.mozy.com (\$5 a month). Your backup should not be inside your computer; that's the part that may crash. What's important is to establish a routine to back up your files at regular intervals if not constantly.