

2011 Virtual Yearbook

Guild Literary Complex

The Guild Literary Complex, a community-based literary organization, presents and supports diverse, divergent, and emerging voices through innovative programs including performances and readings. These include bilingual poetry through Palabra Pura, collaborative writing and presentation with the Poetry Performance Incubator, and the open-submission Gwendolyn Brooks Open Mic Award and Prose Awards for Short Fiction and Non-Fiction (see menu above). We believe that vibrant literature contributes to society and community, and that people should have access to quality literary experiences that engage them with dynamic juxtapositions of voices and ideas. **We look at literary culture and ask – what's missing?**



Our first-annual virtual yearbook is a tribute to all the aspiring, emerging, and established voices that make the Guild Literary Complex a staple among the Chicago community. All works provide a snap-shot of each artist's year of writing for 2011. They are original poems, prose excerpts, video presentations, and play excerpts.

This yearbook was first created in January 2012 during a week-long, Facebook event at: <http://www.facebook.com/groups/61451574441/>. It was one of the Guild's first experiments in virtual events. Thank you to everyone that participated! We hope you enjoy the results.

Interested in submitting next year? We will begin accepting 2012 yearbook entries in January 2013. Details will be announced.



Mike Puican, from "Man Digging Sidewalk"

"These are the early days of autumn.
Love rises. The mind soars. Let our
bodies keep watch over the work."

-Last line from his published poem in
Spoon River Review.

Kimberly Dixon, from "An Ex-Teen Mother"

Those eyes out from under a dark reef, blinking wet
and patient, track from my inclined head
down my flat belly.
A wave rolls past, filled with debris.





Shontay Luna, “Female Villanelle”

How hard it is for the female poet.
Awash in never-ending domesticity,
soul spilling to fill the cup.

Duty bounds as if on a conveyor,
that her needs never seem to arrive on.
How hard it is for the female poet.

At gatherings, no one knows her name.
So she’s called “So & So’s Wife (or mother).
Soul spilling to fill the cup.

Betty Frieden called it “the problem without a name”
a complete and absolute loss of identity.
How hard it is for the female poet.

When my kids were small,
I was in the closet, writing.
Soul spilling to fill the cup.

So how can I teach my daughters to follow their dreams,
if I don’t follow my own?
How hard it is for the female poet,
soul spilling to fill the cup.



Eileen Favorite, from *The Worship of Storms*

The siren sounded like smoke would sound if smoke made a sound.

-From her novel in progress

Larry O. Dean, “The Yellow Ham”

The Yellow Ham – poem-ish – Basic Cable Couplets

www.theyellowham.com

These couplets are comprised of a series of “found” poems with text adapted and/or modified from -- as well as inspired by -- listings for TV movies.





Damon M. McHugh, from “Welcome Home, Damon!”

Even Now, a year and a half later,
I can remember her like a photograph
Her little charming smile and
Shining red hair and
The way we always walked together, perfectly in step and
how her breath smelled like Dr. Pepper and
how her phone’s background said “I ♥ Damon” and
those really sudden hiccups that she said kinda hurt
but I always thought they were adorable.
And this break-up... well,
I just got hit by one of the Metra trains that I
Used to ride to see her on Saturday afternoons.
Like a car stuck on the tracks,
as those deafening horns and bells never seem to stop, even after the train has.
So I sat there
and literally held my head in my hands and
felt like an idiot because all I could do during that conversation was
stare at the patterns of the couch’s upholstery and repeat those little words
I love you.



Yolanda Nieves, from *Bless Me, Madrina!*

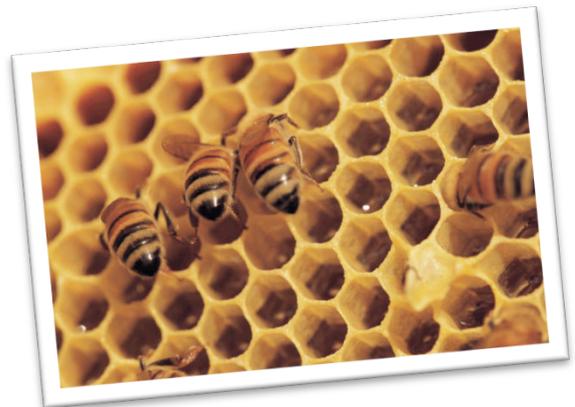
Some women are in love with the men of their dreams, not
the men in their life!

Elizabeth Levinson, from “The Beekeepers”

Appeared in the *Grey Sparrow Press*, Summer 2011

<http://greysparrowpress.net/archives/WINTER2012PoetryLevinson.html>

This is something I would like to try:
in a field of clover,
to watch them over,
to press the bellows
of a tin smoker...”



Bonny Brad Davidson, from *The Black Hole of Onliness from Inside the Kastle Walls*

When my sister's baby was born this morning, I became an only child. The only child in my family to have not given birth. The only child to have not given my parents a grandchild. The only child who will not have the first grandson or the first granddaughter. The only child who is barren.



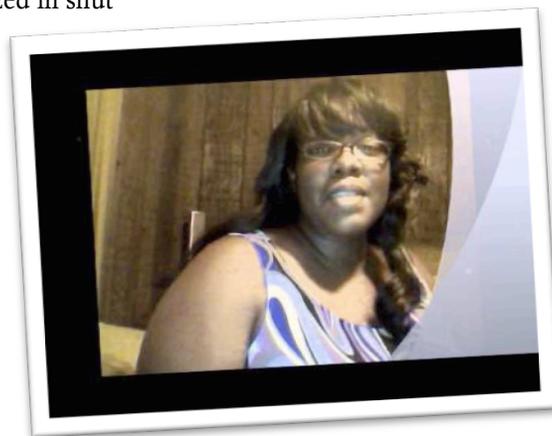
Kat Bustoz, from "The House of White Walls"

there was a family here
a family of ghosts
that tore the house
to the bone
They scraped at
white wall innards
and, leaving the house behind,
left them out to rot
the doors won't hang on
hinges anymore
the windows squeezed in shut

Savvy Brown, from "skin im in 2"

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ElqMJGIU6uM&feature=share>

for all the dark skinned girls in the world



Marianne Schaefer, from "Chicago is..."

...Chicago is and will always be
hot summers when hydrants flow free
cold winters when lawn chairs watch and see
who steals their space...



Andrea Starr Pelose, from *Perrault's Home for Children in Need*

All the lights at her house were asleep when she entered, the moonlight soaked through the windows, drawing bedtime stories on the walls. She went to the kitchen to set down her bag. There on the counter, as requested, was the paperwork, weighted down by an apple, crowned by a gold wedding ring.

Regine Rousseau, from "Dot"

From her collection, *Searching for Cloves and Lilies*:

My italic lover breathes cool phrases up my skirt,
and summer turns to fall. There is no chance of rain,
only suspicious breezes that carry memories of heat waves.
My leaves are electric, stubborn, and refuse to change color.
I wish I could shake your confession loose, from trees,
But keep the lessons and the lovers that helped me pass
the seasons you were gone.



Mary Hawley, from *Admitted Students' Weekend*

The Dean of This confers with the Dean of That.
Yes, all of our children are beautiful.
That is why we are allowed to borrow more than is usual.

I pay for yet another sweatshirt.

Vesna Neskow, from *Another Tempest*

Hamilton, the British consul, was deep into an impassioned debate with Clytemnestra on the British role in the Sudanese troubles. Clytemnestra claimed the Brits wreaked havoc in all their colonies. Though she gazed intently at Hamilton, giving him the impression that he was the only thing on her mind, though she spoke with gusto and authority, her thoughts were focused elsewhere. Poor Attie! A woman like Atlanta shouldn't marry at all. It was a waste of talent.



Susana Darwin, *framed stone*

From a writer who thinks in pictures...

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/burmesetigertrap/sets/72157628010632577/>



Esmie Cuevas Decker, from “My Mother’s Daughter”

This might just be poetry for you
But it’s the truth for me...
She said “Baby, use your words.”
And through Words,
I found my Voice
and with my Voice
I will tell her stories
and with my Voice
I will bring her Glory!
For every time my mother
was Knocked Down
Pushed Around
Ridiculed
or Beaten to the Ground
I will be every SCREAM she couldn’t let out!
I will be her Truth
and her reason to stand proud.

Sandra Santiago, from “From Immigrant Child”

Here, aqui, in this place,
my name becomes broken glass.
Syllables become shards,
unable to be picked up
by those who don’t care
about the fragility of respect
and self-esteem...



Robin Fine, from “Clutter”

My bedroom is filled with drawers of clutter
Reams of memories cascaded along heaps of
Momentos.
Momentos meant to remind me of the specialness of
A moment but now long forgotten.
Drawers filled with invitations and birthday cards
From people no longer in my life
From lovers who plied with with sonnets and champagne
But never seemed to satisfy my hunger



Aaron Helfer, from “Without a Love Season”

There’s nothing left for us to do
So what’s it that I’m clinging to?
A feeling, a thought?
A memory bought
With needles and pins
Stopped counting your wins
Drops of what was ours
Sleeping through, the hours
With no sense of certainty
Pouring through eternity
10,000 needles attacked our bed
10,000 pins jammed into my head

-Full text available at: <http://www.facebook.com/notes/aaron-helfer/without-a-love-season/10150465324481610>



Debbie Carlson, from *Untitled*

His eyes sparkled with the dreams only children know.



Favorite Memories from 2011

Mike Puican, long-time Board President:

“My favorite Guild Literary Complex moment of 2011 came during a [Palabra Pura](#) reading that was hosted by [Luis Umberto Valadez](#). The evening had started with an [open mic](#) and some very good Latino poets read, some of whom had been past Palabra Pura features. The last open mic reader was a young man who announced that he had never read his poetry in front of anyone before. Although he was obviously nervous, he read the poem and seemed to truly appreciate the audience's enthusiastic response.

Just as he sat down someone else walked up to Kimberly and asked if he could read and Kimberly agreed. It turns out it was Luis Valades's brother. He also had never read in front of anyone before. He was apparently inspired by the young man before him. Luis' brother was so nervous he was shaking but he recited his poem completely from memory. The poem was about the gangs and violence in the neighborhood he and Luis grew up in.

He made it through the poem and the audience applauded loudly. He said he had been writing poetry for a long time but hadn't shared it with anyone before.

A few minutes later, Luis began his feature by reading his poetry in a very theatrical style. He walked around the stage and around the audience in a terrific, over-the-top performance. It stuck me, as it must have everyone else in the room, that these events are such an amazing opportunity for memorable, deeply felt readings that mean so much to individuals who have a hunger to be creative.

These are moments the Guild Literary Complex is known for.”

Debbie Carlson, new Board member

“I'm sure a lot of people will talk about the annual benefit with [Richard Hunt](#) - but I'll do a shout-out for [Tour Guides](#) - what a fun, entertaining look at Chicago from a different perspective. It was like a letter from a from an old friend who you were reacquainted with after so many years, telling you about a part of their life that you knew of, but not really knew much about. Engaging, even for the non-poetry person, and held in a great new performance space.”

Andrea Pelose, Marketing Director

"Getting to know an organization that not only captivates its audiences, but cares about them culturally, personally, and compassionately. ...I also can't help but laugh remembering the little dance [Kimberly Dixon](#) did at the [Prose Awards](#) recognition event when I handed her collected winners ballots for our fan-vote.”

Andrea L. Change, new Board member

“There was a bit of sentimental nostalgia walking around the room with so many familiar faces from Chicago poetry scene that I kinda "grew up" with. While the slide show played in the background, there were hugs from [Marc Smith and Michael Warr](#). and conversations with [Gregorio Gomez](#), [Quraysh](#), and [Mary Hawley](#). It's not that often you have those voices all in the same room at the same time. Weeds, the Green Mill and the Guild Complex have been stalwarts in the Chicago Poetry scene for more than 20 years. When Michael Warr was on stage, he talked about being a part of a movement. I couldn't help but think in this room right then, greatness, yes. Legends, maybe but a movement absolutely. Just thinking of the greatness and creativity inspired by the people in that room I felt humbled just to say I was there. Thank you for giving me that.”