

East Coker Poetry Group

Newsletter August 2006

Saturday August 26th

Poetry Group Garden Party

Our first 'outside' event at Bubspool House, East Coker - poetry and finger food

Forthcoming meetings at the Helyar Arms, Moor Lane, East Coker 01935 862332 - 7.30pm in the Skittle Alley, everyone welcome

Tuesday September 26th

Trains and boats and planes and poems

David Cloke provides an evening of poetry with a transport theme

Tuesday October 24th

East Coker Poetry Group annual competition

The winning poems (see below for details of how to enter)

Tintin talk

Although not a poetry event, group member Amelia Bennett has arranged for the author Michael Farr to give an illustrated talk on Herge's Tintin at Coker Court on Saturday 12th August, at 7.00pm. All ages welcome. Tickets are available from Amelia (01935 423894) or John Darling (01935 862229) at £2.00 for adults, children free.

Poetry events in Dorset and Somerset

There are poetry evenings in Glastonbury from 5.30pm-7.00pm on the first Tuesday of the month (except August). 'poetry@speakingtree' involves readings and discussions and it takes place at 5 High Street. For more information, call Jo on 01458 834405.

The Poetry Café holds regular events at the Garden Cafe, 16 Stony Street, Frome. Telephone 01373 454178 for more information or visit www.poetryfrome.co.uk.

The Thomas Hardy Society in Dorchester holds lots of events during the year and an annual festival in the summer - www.hardysociety.org for more information.

It's worth popping into Ottakars book shop in Yeovil from time-to-time to see if there are any author evenings coming up. You can search the database of events at www.ottakars.co.uk.

Annual poetry writing competition

The subject for our poetry competition this year is “The Seasons”. As the October meeting, the winners will be announced; prizes given and the winning entry read, so start putting pen to paper.

Everyone is welcome to enter the competition. You don't have to be a resident of East Coker.

- Your poem can be short or long.
- It can be in any form – sonnet, limerick, haiku.
- It must be mainly in English.
- It can be typed or handwritten.
- It must be on the subject of “The Seasons” and the judges will be looking for evocative words and phrases.

The deadline for entries is October 1st. Post them to East Coker Poetry Group, Church Cottage, Burton Cross, East Coker, Yeovil, Somerset BA22 9LY or email them to info@eastcokerpoetry.org.uk. Please include your name, address, age (if under 18) and telephone number.

The judge will be last year's winner Ros Treloar, from New South Wales, Australia. The first prize will be a meal for two at the Helyar Arms, up to the value of £60, and there will be two runners-up prizes of a bottle of wine.

Competition rules

1. Only one entry per person.
2. Poems must be original works.
3. The deadline for entries is Sunday 1st October.
4. Entries should be addressed to East Coker Poetry Group, c/o Church Cottage, Burton Cross, East Coker, Yeovil, Somerset BA22 9LY
5. The judges and their families are disqualified from entering.
6. The judges' decision is final.
7. The winners will be notified on or before Tuesday 24th October.
8. There is no cash alternative to the prizes on offer.
9. The organisers reserve the right to make public all or any part of the entries submitted, with no copyright fee due to the author.

Haiku competition

The winner of the haiku competition was announced at our June 21st meeting - congratulations Iona Lamb! There were nine entries for Sue Demetriadi to judge. Poetry-lover Sue, who had only recently returned from a trip to Japan, stepped in when Catherine Simmonds was taken ill. Our best wishes to Catherine for a speedy recovery. Here are a few examples of the entries. Thank you to everyone who took part.

A mistle thrush singing –
The damp, rain-threatening air
Amplifies his song.

Iona Lamb

Swallows slice still air,
Hills settle into the haze –
Night comes, wearing pink.

Iona Lamb

Blackthorn petals drop
As hawthorn flowers open –
A pale, fragrant hedge.

Iona Lamb

Laughter lit my life
Letter this on my tombstone –
A vital sentence.

Anne Bingley

Ministers of grace
Save us from politicians –
The chaos-makers.

Anne Bingley

Raindrops in the sun
Autumn mist on spiders' webs;
Gossamer and stars.

Sally Jackson

Stefan Saggiari's Wingless Way

He travelled around the world,
five continents; three oceans:
Taking his time on the slow boat.
Earthbound, without a single flight.
Filling the gaps the planes leap over.
No hurry to return:
Travelling light.
Two years of the dusty miles:
The hidden landscapes.
The people seldom seen.
The places missed.
The in-between.

No sullen delayed departures
from airport lounges incessant
with the roar of aircraft ever present.
Instead came face to face with cobras:
Was threatened with a kalashnikov.
Trucked across deserts:
Robbed in Peru.
Canoed down rivers:
Been places few
had ever been before.
But his abiding memory -
was the kindness of the poor.

*David Cloke - based on an article by Charles Starmer-Smith,
The Telegraph, April 15th 2006*

Tuneful Memories

I was only born when war broke out: a baby in the 'forties':
My father was a navy man: my uncle flew on 'sorties'.
I loved to hear the songs they sang: all those heroic tales,
To watch the true old war-time films whose magic never fails.

I often get the songs mixed up, between the two world wars,
But still the music warms my heart and opens many doors.

There was 'Oh, Mr Porter - what a silly girl I am!'
And lots of squeaky records played on the radiogram.
'Keep the home fires burning' was a favourite song of mine:
I loved: 'We'll gather lilacs', and the old film 'Lilac time'.

The words were words of comfort, they were easy words to learn:
Remember - 'When the fields are white with daisies I'll return'?

There were all those tender verses by wives and sweethearts sent,
Received by some besieged platoon beneath a desert tent.

One tune still echoes in my head: it's strange - a little scary,
To hum a song I hardly knew: 'The road to Tipperary'.
'Rosemarie' and 'The White Horse Inn', were musicals I knew,
'Rose of England' was a song I loved to sing all through.

I sometimes hear a tuneful air, a stirring, tender tune
From a bandstand, carried on a breeze some summer afternoon,
And then I feel a rush of tears that magically rolls back the years.

Dawn Lawrence

The Ballad of OOSHIBOO **(with apologies to Longfellow's Hiawatha)**

Canto 1

Ooshiboo the Great White Feeder,
Sat alone upon the prairie,
Sat down in the chicken run.
All the chickens stood around him,
They had flocked to meet their feeder
Meet and greet him on his way
Longing for the food he brought them
Twice a day he ought to bring it
But he brought no water for them
Brought no corn and maize to cheer them -
He had brought his sketching things
He had brought his painting water.

All the chickens stood around him
Deeply waiting, sadly tweeting
But he had no eyes to see them
He was gazing at the sunrise
Gazing at the glorious sunrise
And the super-glorious sunset.

Painting things that others saw not
Pictures none could understand
Painting things in strange wild colours
Trees in red and clouds in purple.

Canto 2

Ooshiboo the Great White Feeder
Had a daughter, one fair Margaret
And a beauteous handmaid Lizzie
And retainers Swift and Bugg
They had got his supper ready
Supper for their Chief at sunset
Called they o'er the great wide prairie
Calling "Oosh, your supper's ready!"

He came running from the prairie
Calling, "Daughter, come and help me!
For the chickens are all starved
And the Buckeye has gone out"
Cocks and hens had passed away
One and all had gone for ever.

Then was howling and loud wailing
In the kitchen and the pantry
And the supper went uneaten

Canto 3

Now he paints alone in splendour
Waiting for his wife's return
From his other wigwam Walton
He will have to face her anger
Face her righteous indignation
But at heart he is rejoicing
For no tweets will now distract him
And evermore he'll paint in peace!
Margaret Alexander, 1930

And finally ... a piece from the Daily Telegraph, 7th June, 2006

Now for 50p, you can download iPoetry

The era of the iPoem arrived yesterday with the unveiling of an internet site that will offer more than 1,000 poems to download for 50p each.

Verse by poets such as John Hegley, Jean "Binta" Breeze and Benjamin Zephaniah will be available through a service inspired by the Apple phenomenon iTunes. Each poem will be spoken by the writer.

The site, among the first of its kind in Britain, will also offer film downloads to illustrate the poems. It was welcomed as revolutionary by Andrew Motion, the Poet Laureate, who said: "This is

an area with huge potential. If we can have symphonies and religious sermons to listen to on our iPods, why not poems?"

Poems spoken by their writers can already be heard on some internet sites and on the not-for-profit website The Poetry Archive, which was set up by Prof Motion last November, has attracted 250,000 visitors. But the files on The Poetry Archive cannot be bought and downloaded on to an iPod.

The new site, ipoems.org.uk, which will go live in October, will contain 1001 recordings of modern poetry which can be bought for 50p each after an annual subscription of £10. The first month will be free.

For more information about the East Coker Poetry Group, call David Cloke on (01935) 862623 or Joyce Best (01935) 862317.