

East Coker Poetry Group

Newsletter May 2006

Forthcoming meetings - all at the Helyar Arms , 7.30pm
In the Skittle Alley
[except the August Meeting]

Thursday May 25th

Rachael Clyne

Modern, lively poetry by Rachael Clyne of Glastonbury, who has just had her first collection, 'She who walks with stones and sings', published this year.

Wednesday June 21st

The Poetry of Thomas Hardy

Presented by members of the Thomas Hardy Society from Dorchester.

Tuesday July 25th

There is no formal meeting in July, however if anyone wishes to talk about anything relating to the Poetry Group or just talk about poetry, then come to the Helyar arms for an informal evening.
[meeting in the bar]

Saturday August 26th

Poetry Group Garden Party

Our first 'outside' event. Keep this date clear in your diary. Further details nearer the time.

Anne Bingley has found many apt quotations on the subject of poetry and I have scattered some of them throughout this newsletter, starting with (of course) T.S. Eliot "*All Language is inadequate, but probably the language of poetry is the language most capable of communicating wisdom*".

Obsessed With Pipework is not a plumbing catalogue, but locally produced open quarterly publication that promotes new poetry to 'surprise and delight'. Editor Charles Johnson says 'Obsessed doesn't want safe poemswe want poems that go to the high wire across the abyss.....Risk the fall. Test the boundaries. If you crash, crash with panache..... I love to see poets flying'.

For more details contact – Flarestack Publishing, 8 Abbot's Way, Pilton, Shepton Mallet, Somerset. BA4 4BN Tel. 01749 890019

e-mail : cannula.dementia@virgin.net

Coleridge said '*It is not the poem which we have read, but that to which we return, with the greatest pleasure, that possesses the genuine power and claims the name of essential poetry.*'

Haiku Competition

Our April meeting hosted by Catherine Simmonds on the subject of Japanese poetry excited a lot of interest in the deceptively simple form of Japanese poetry - '**haiku**'. A **bottle of wine** awaits the winner of our latest competition – to write a haiku poem. For those who missed the meeting, here is a very brief outline of haiku :-
Haiku is a three line poem that, if written in Japanese, has a syllable count of 5-7-5. In translation the syllables may not conform to this convention. There is usually a word suggesting the season that the poem is set in. The poem has two natural halves that, written in English, may be identified by a colon or dash between them. Still baffled? Then here are some classical haiku (translated from Japanese) to get the flavour :-

On a withered branch	Dark night –	Come, let's go
A crow has settled –	plover crying	Snow-viewing
Autumn evening.	for its nest.	Till we're buried.

The subject can be anything – here is a very modern (English) haiku that, whilst not having an obvious seasonal word (perhaps because English weather is the same all year!), it does conform to the 5-7-5 syllable count :-

Faceless, just numbered.
Lone pixel in the bitmap –
I anonymous.

By Chris Spruck from 'Haiku for People'

Please send any entries for this competition to me before the 14th June, as the winning entry will be announced at the meeting on the 21st June. Catherine Simmonds and I will be judging the entries. Good Luck!

T. S. Eliot Festival

On the weekend of the 20th – 21st May, a poetry appreciation weekend is being held in the village of Little Gidding near Huntingdon to celebrate the visit, 70 years ago, of the poet T.S. Eliot. Little Gidding (along with East Coker) was then immortalised in verse as one of the 'Four Quartets'.

There are many events planned :-

Saturday 20th 12 Noon Picnic Lunch. 1.00pm Poetry prize giving and talk by Ruth Padel. 2.15pm Poetry workshop / walk to Steeple Gidding / poetry reading. 3.30 Tea. 4.00pm **Launch of the T.S.Eliot Society** and Open Forum followed by a reading of the poem 'Little Gidding'. Evening programme with buffet Supper – 7.30pm Talk on T.S. Eliot and Beethoven Quartet in the Church (Church only has seating for 45).
Sunday 20th Special Church Service + Lunch.

That is rather a potted version of the events planned but if anyone is interested, then further information can be obtained at

www.poetrylibrary.org.uk/events/poetryappreciation

Or from Ferrar House, Little Gidding, Huntingdon PE28 5RJ Tel 01832 293383

Heinrich Heine - *'Poetry is simply the most beautiful, impressive and widely effective mode of saying things, and hence its importance'*.

Poems Poems Poems

Poems sent in by Members of the East Coker Poetry Group

I REMEMBER IT WAS MAY

By Dawn Lawrence

I found the old house suddenly,
Led there by chance on tired feet.
May's blossom fell. I remember it was May
Because the falling blossom smelt so sweet.
I remember well the large soft bed,
The striking clock, the looking glass.
I lay, amused to count the strokes,
And hardly slept as each hour passed.

As the echoes climbed to twelve,
I heard a footstep on the stair:
The door swung open silently
And suddenly three girls stood there!
I still remember each white dress,
The lighted candle in each hand:
But why they came on that May night
I did not then quite understand.

Silently they all held hands,
Each combed out her long dark hair:
Each dropped her dress. How I did stare
To see all three stand naked there!
I remember how I thought I dreamt,
And felt that I would wake quite soon
But still the candles burnt so clear
Like little drops of silver moon.

The three walked to the looking glass,
They peered and turned themselves about,
Then each exchanged a secret smile
Before they blew their candles out.
I remember how I watched them glide
In silence, backwards, to the door:
Each slipped again into her dress
And then I never saw them more.

Limericks For those members who missed the March meeting, the winner of the February meeting Limerick Competition was Sue McKerracher. Iona Lambe was runner-up. Copies of all the (excellent) entries were available at the March meeting, but if you missed getting one I can send one in the post if required.

Sally Jackson writes: 'Having much enjoyed the contributions to the Limerick Competition I thought I must have a go myself. Despairing of finding any new rhymes to Coker which had not already been explored I tried another tack'

EAST COKER LIMERICK

By **Sally Jackson**

A young Coker lady from East
Fell in love at first sight with a priest.
The pair went to West
To get themselves blest;
Lived in North while the family increased.

When the arrival of children had ceased
They decided to move back to East.
No South could they find,
So that was declined:
They looked at the Moor
But the soil was too poor;
They examined the Marsh
And found it too harsh;
They tried out the Wood
But that was no good;
And climbing the Hill
Did not fit the bill.
So they settled in Up – 'til deceased.

Material for the next newsletter, or any correspondence, can be sent to :-

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Tel. 01935 862623

Or alternatively, contact Joyce Best on 01935 862317

Why not visit our Website - www.eastcokerpoetry.org.uk