

Of Special Interest

Time announced YOU as the Person of the Year. Congrats!

Pickled herrings were invented in 1375.

It's 2007!

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Incandescence talks about ekphrastic poetry on page 3.

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And more....!



General Announcements

Squills E-Zine

It's the second edition of the brand, smackin', universe austondin', koopa thumbin', new Squills e-zine! If you'd like to see something you wrote in here, just contact Nate!

Contests!

In November, YWS held a six word story contest. In all, nearly two dozen people participated! To see who won, check out page 4.

There will also be a January Contest. For more details, check out page 4 as well.

Submitting

Squills needs articles! All articles should at least be 100 words long and 500 at most. If you have something, either PM it Nate or e-mail it to webmaster@youngwriterssociety.com. And remember, Squills lovvvvvvvves filler articles, otherwise Nate has to write nonsensical stuff

such as the filler article found on page 3.

Happy New Year!

The Young Writers Society wishes everyone a happy and glorious New Year! If you have a resolution, let everyone know over in the "2007 Resolutions" thread in the Lounge.

Editor's Note

by Nate

It's typical this time of year for most people to look back and think about the past year; that is, what they accomplished, what was left undone, people scorned, people loved, regrets, proud moments, etc. So I wanted to take a look back at YWS in 2006.

On the whole, it was a very successful year. Membership recently crossed 2,000, and posts now exceed 150,000 on the site.

Not only that, but YWS is now recognized by Writers Digest as one of the 100 best web sites for writers. To top that off, YWS was one of only two young writer sites on the list.

But, 2006 also saw YWS go offline for two months. On May 22nd, YWS went totally dark, not to come back until July 23rd. At the time, YWS was simply too expensive to maintain.

However, during the intervening months, I was

able to do some research, and discovered that I was being ripped off. So I switched, YWS came back, and has since become more successful than ever before.

Here's hoping that 2007 brings a lot for YWS. By this time in 2008, I'm hoping that YWS will not only be larger, but will continue to be a great resource for young writers ages 13 to 27.



*"If you've ever
found yourself
at a loss for
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The Importance of Planning

by Claudette

Do you plan extensive outlines that could be called 'a novel' if it weren't in outline form? Or do you not plan at all? Planning is a really helpful thing to do, whether it's for a short story or novel. It doesn't even have to be outlines; it could be as vague as what your story is about.

If you've ever found yourself at a loss for words while writing, maybe you didn't plan enough! Here are some things you can jot down while planning that will most likely help you later:

-Who is your main character and what kind of person are they?

-Where does your story begin?

-Who are the other characters?

-Where does your story end?

-What do you want the reader to feel while reading?

-What point of view will this be written in?

-What does my MC want? What is stopping my MC from getting that?

-In the end, does my MC get what he wants or no? Why? How does this affect the other characters and the story as a whole?

This may not look like an outline, but it's planning! Some people go into writing with no idea what you are doing, and if that works for you, great! But for the rest of us who need help, these questions may be an

excellent place to start. But this is only the beginning, you can come up with thousands of questions to ask yourself that will help you know more about your story. Just take some time to think about what you are doing, and get to know what you want to do through and through, and the writing will become a lot easier.

New User Level: Junior Moderators

Due to the rapid growth of the Young Writers Society, Big Brother has not been able to effectively moderate all forums. To combat this problem, Junior Moderators are being introduced to YWS.

Junior Moderators are every bit like Moderators, except only in specific forums. So

whereas a Moderator can moderate any forum, a Junior Moderator can only moderate in specific forums. Incandescence and write me are the first Junior Mods, operating in the poetry forums.

Very shortly, more Junior Moderators will be added while the Mentors user

group will be phased out. If you are interested in becoming a Junior Mod, please PM Nate with your request as well as which forums you would like to moderate.

In your request, you should also answer: What is the question to 42?

Ekphrastic Poetry

by Incandescence

Ekphrastic poetry is poetry that responds to another work of art of a different media. For instance, poetry about the 'Mona Lisa' is considered ekphrastic poetry. I have always admired and written many ekphrastic poems. I think my interest in writing about paintings stems from having a painter cousin, and so I started reading ekphrastic poetry and investigating the answer to a question many writers have asked me: *what's the point of ekphrasis if the audience is unaware of what the poem is responding to?*

It's a valid question: it is highly unusual that a poem is published along with a reproduction of the art to which it refers. For that reason, it seems obvious to me that the poem had better be able to stand alone without the reader necessarily seeing the work of art. I wrote a poem, for example, on a piece of art made by Scottish artist Andy Goldsworthy from pieces of ice. The entire work disappeared as the sun rose on the day he made it. I would never have known of the work had he not filmed its creation -- a sort of film ekphrasis, really. I saw the film *Rivers and Tides* in which this piece was shown, wrote a poem about its creation and dissolution, and published it in

a lit journal that has no way of reproducing the work itself. Naturally, I was thoughtful about the whole question of whether it stands on its own, especially as not that many people know of Andy Goldsworthy.

Keats' "Ode on a Grecian Urn," by contrast, has all but superseded the artwork that was its taking-off point. Perhaps it does help to have seen a photo of one Grecian urn at some time in one's life to understand his poem -- perhaps even that's not necessary.

But I was transported by a small book poet Lynne Knight published a few years ago, a collection of poems based on a traveling Impressionist art exhibit, "Impressionists in Winter." Knight's *Snow Effects* is a stunning collection, and the poems, which I believe could stand alone, are enriched by color reproductions of the paintings they are based on. It's the only example I know of in which an ekphrastic poetry book has reproduced the art along with the poetry.

Maybe that's an extreme example, but I think ekphrasis should work the way any other allusion does in literature or art. That is, if you get it, wonderful! If you don't, it shouldn't detract from the

work. *Wide Sargasso Sea* is of course a brilliant novel in response to *Jane Eyre*. But you need not read *Jane Eyre* to appreciate *WSS*. It only adds to the appreciation - the appreciation does not depend on it.

So what's the point? Yale literary theorist Harold Bloom called rhyme 'the burden of belatedness'. In the same vein, I would say the perils of ekphrastic poetry are even more pronounced because it's overtly derivative by design. In the broadest sense, we're all plagiarists or ekphrasists. We inhabit a cultural tradition. We are derivative, we react to and bounce off one another. No one is a complete original. I think it's a false grail to strive for hermetic purity.

The question of ekphrasis, then, is really the age-old question we all encounter: what strophe hasn't already been plowed, what metaphor hasn't been beaten to death? There are still many more for us to find, and there always will be. Despite a poetic tradition spanning three millennia, our environment is constantly changing and shaping itself, allowing for more reflection and analyzation than ever before. Those bleak moments of inspiration, of divine wit and insight--they are what compel us to keep reading and writing about the world.



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Why Nintendo? Why???

By Nate

So I've been anxiously awaiting the Nintendo Wii for years now. While I didn't like the GameCube at all, what Nintendo was saying about it's new console sounded awesome.

For one, it had the virtual console, which meant I could

play Super Mario Brothers again, and get a chance to play all the Super Nintendo games I never got since my family had a Sega Genesis.

Well Christmas came, and Santa left a Wii under the tree. But since that day, I've barely played it.

Now I have not barely played

it because I didn't want to, but because I can't get my hand on the controller. When I go home, there's my Mom playing bowling on Wii Sports. I come back later, and there's my Mom and two of her friends playing. I come back later, and my brother is playing Zelda.

I hope one day to play...



November's Six Word Story Contest

Of all of his works, Ernest Hemingway called the following story his absolute best:

For sale: Baby shoes,
never worn.

It's simple and it's very short, but it says a lot.

In November, we asked members to come up with

their own six word stories. Snoink, Griffinkeeper, and Nate judged the entries.

At the end, there were two entries deserving of first place, so rather than giving one first, and the other second, both are first.

The winning entries are Trident for:

A candle lit, in her

memory.

And Bobo for:

Madam:
They fought bravely.
--The President.

Both winners will receive either a YWS T-shirt or mug (their choice).

Congrats to all who participated!

January's Winter Poetry Contest

It's January, which means it's winter, unless you're living in the Southern Hemisphere, in which case it's Summer or something like that. In any case, it being January and what not, it's time to have a winter themed contest.

So for January, the Young Writers Society is proud to announce a winter poetry

contest! The rules are:

1. It must be winter themed
2. It cannot be longer than 20 lines

That's really quite it. All submissions should be posted in the "Monthly Contests" subforum of "Contest" with the title,

"January 2007 Contest – Title Of Poem."

If you are interested in judging, please PM Nate. The ideal judge is someone who has been on the site for a few months, critiques often, and critiques well.

Good luck to all who participate! First prize is a t-shirt, second prize is a mug!

A Book Review by Incandescence

Steve Mueske's debut collection, *A Mnemonic for Desire*, touches not only on memory and desire but articulates a way of looking at the world. It reconciles the lyrical with the grim, examines the impulses toward hope and despair. With so many poems so remarkable in range, the work looms large. The book itself is long for a first collection--116 pages, with characters as varied as a

black and yellow spider, a small blue god, Phillip Glass, Frankenstein, and an Amazing New Device That Brings Back the Dead in Lifelike Holographic Images.

Readers are introduced to the recurring theme of survival with the very first poem, "This Far in August". Mueske observes that "Every wild weed believes it has only one season," and a nearly extinct butterfly

"knows only the pang of hunger/and a new season with the freedom/ of wings." That the world continually transforms is a hinge for this collection: the idea of survival despite change.

This poet's voice comes out of his emotional honesty--authentic, unflinching. The self may change, but Mueske is not afraid of the dark.

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"We are a species that needs and wants to understand who we are. Sheep lice do not seem to share this longing, which is one reason why they write so little."

- Anne Lamont

Information On User Levels

Administrator

A site admin handles the duties of ensuring that the Young Writers Society runs well day in and day out.

Moderator

These are people that ensure

all discussions are civil, that all topics are in the right place, and that YWS is an orderly place.

Mentor

Always out there answering questions and handling low-level moderator duties.

Greeters

Exactly what the title suggests! They greet new users and welcome them to YWS.

About The Young Writers Society

Created in November 2004, the Young Writers Society (YWS) is the largest dedicated site for young writers.

As part of the site's ongoing

efforts to promote writing as a pastime, dozens of forums for all types of writing from poetry to screenplays are available.

Since the site started, YWS

has morphed from a simple forum without its own domain name to a full fledged website that makes other young writer websites look extremely puny by comparison!