

# V E R S E

March 1998

## Monthly Meeting

Thursday, March 5 - 7:00 p.m.  
Daily Grind, Marshfield

### CLARIBEL ALEGRIA

It's very difficult sometimes to reconcile art and reality, but I have never thought that the poet had to be in an ivory tower just thinking beautiful thoughts.

### MARILYN CHIN

I believe I have a mission, and that I have many stories to tell on many levels—on a personal level, on the familial level, and on the historical-social level. I feel that my poetry has a strong social and political context.

### DAVID MURA

I think that if poetry gets too far towards the realm of the aesthetic, the formal, and the beautiful and doesn't acknowledge the other side of existence—the history that we live in, the changes and the darkness of history—then the life goes out of poetry, and it becomes an escape.

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## BODY VIEWING

This morning I watched a husband and wife  
say goodbye — A kiss, a lingered embrace, a  
pause while remembering.

Love is lonely.

I watched silently, thinking, drinking in that  
loneliness, knowing not to turn away my  
stare but only feeling the magnet keep  
pulling at my eyes, my empty heart.

I viewed the bodies of husband and wife.  
The two became one flesh. What God  
joined let no man separate,  
a cruel reality now.

His flesh is as dead as hers.  
All I can do is watch, view the body, see and  
believe.

Love is lonely.

DOUG SEUBERT

## A WARNING

My four-year old son and I  
amble hand in hand through  
the hardware store  
searching for furnace filters.

Abruptly, a gray-haired woman  
wearing a long black coat  
appears before us,  
leaning on her cane.

She stares at my blond,  
blue-eyed boy  
as if she wants to cry.  
“They don’t stay young,”  
she says in a voice etched by years.

Is she a store oracle employed  
to forewarn mothers?  
Where are her children now,  
the ones who didn’t stay young.

I gather up furnace filters along  
with the gift of her time filter:  
Honor this moment,  
love this child,  
they don’t stay young.

LINDA ASCHBRENNER

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## COUNTRY TOUR

As she hopped up  
on the make-shift stage at dusk  
she felt it again, a panic attack.  
Was this a prelude to full-blown insanity?  
How sick she was of her nightly performance.  
She was a fraud, yet the audience liked—  
no, *demand*ed her old routine.

She felt out of tune, out of step,  
seeking transcendence.  
“Get on with it,” she told herself.  
As her familiar country tune  
floated across the green field and new moon,  
the cricket dreamed of  
mellow cellos, crystal chandeliers,  
and the Lincoln Center.

LINDA ASCHBRENNER

## SLEEP DISTURBANCES IN THE UPPER ATMOSPHERE

A blood red question  
seeps through my snug morning slumber  
and your chipper words form a puzzling arc  
far above me, like alien craft or 747 lights  
I see blinking overhead on cold, clear nights  
when I’m brave enough to face the stars  
at the end of our driveway.

Do spirits too grapple with intrusions  
into their dreams,  
or is theirs a pure white sleep  
secured by a jaunty orange snow fence  
to keep out drifting words  
and the spell of the moon’s bite.

LINDA ASCHBRENNER

## DEAR DEAN

If I knew it would be the last time  
it would have been different.  
I wasn't there to see you —  
though you did help me carry  
three loads of baby stuff up two flights of stairs  
so I could come to see my brothers.  
But you were quiet and sad.  
You hardly came out of your room  
at all that night  
except to eat dinner.  
You commented about the shrimp  
you had at lunch.  
The deadness in your voice  
stopped me cold in my baby busyness.  
I didn't know what to do with the dread.  
Anyways, my brothers were leaving  
in the morning.  
I'd see you again.  
When I went in your room to say good-bye  
you were dozing with the TV on.  
Your hair was out of place  
and the bald spot you hated, obvious.  
Failed marriage, businesses, schemes.

Broke, two sons dying of AIDS,  
clinging to pathetic lies and secrets.  
Looking at you  
I felt a tenderness that was painful.  
As I left, you hugged me so long it was awkward.  
“Don't forget, these years with your kids are  
the best years of your life.”  
We both knew you could just as easily have said,  
“Don't turn out like me. Nothing but regrets.”

My baby is in school now.  
Your few possessions divided.  
Your phone rang at my mother's for months with  
guarded inquiries from secret lovers she'd suspected  
all along. I don't know how she stood it.  
Still, I miss you.  
I hope you know  
that those of us who stayed with you  
to the end  
were never fooled by who you  
pretended to be.

ELIZABETH LONDO

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## LATE

Winter can be late  
real cold holding back  
A blessing

It will be cold, latitude requires it  
North winds give a sense  
Dark cold coming

When winter is late, life's easier  
wood lasting nicely  
Chickens still outside

Soon the snow will come, - O  
snow, cold winter  
The resting

frost free places live *their* life  
warm, lush, bugs, green,  
Seems easy

They're full there, easy living brings them  
air conditioners, shorts  
No rest

I was born in the cold, December  
I have lived in the cold  
probably die cold

This is alright, cold is cleansing  
Dark seasons bring reflection  
life's possibilities

Spring will come, bring life, more work  
I like winter, seems long,  
life's short

DAVID ROBERTS