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.
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

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, demanded 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

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