

Cobourg Poetry Reading



Mark Clement

June 19, 2008

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by

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**Cobourg Poetry Reading
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c/w Audio CD**



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Introduction

The Cobourg Poetry Workshop is a vital group of poets who meet monthly to read and discuss their original poetry. The group also organizes a public reading on the third Thursday of each month where members take turns presenting their work to the public. The poems in this book were read at "66 King East" on June 19, 2008.

Mark Clement spent the last 25 years of his working career in Toronto and after retirement in 2006 he and his wife moved to Cobourg. The poems in this book represent work done during the last year and some of them were prompted by exercises done as part of the Cobourg Poetry Workshop.

In 2007, The Cobourg Poetry Workshop published "The Local Lot" the first annual anthology which included work by 19 local poets. The second annual anthology will contain 15 local poets and is scheduled for release in late August 2008. It will be available at the Avid Reader in Cobourg and Furby House in Port Hope or by contacting the author of this little book or any member of the Cobourg Poetry Workshop.

What You See

There is no question
that my soul is perfect.

There is however,
a problem
which prevents this truth
from being self-evident.

My soul
cannot convince
my gray matter
to give over control
of my mortal machine.

Consequently
I appear to the world
as a miserable son-of-a-bitch.

The Parrot

One day I saw a parrot
wearing brown shoes, green socks
and a three-piece suit.
I stopped this parrot
to make my point.

“Parrots don’t wear green socks !”

He skewered me with his parrot eye,
adjusted his tie and said,

“Parrots don’t wear green socks !”

What Does It Take ?

What does it take to write a poem?
Is there an exotic concept that reveals
a life or the earth as it whirls through
the imagined universe of atoms.

Are we looking to explain that we can
explain all things. Stars explode and a leaf
falls as seasons roll through our lives.
Reason builds our poetry and we cry.

We cry and laugh and paint ourselves
in the centre of a canvas and it becomes
a poem, or is it light or music or math
that matters as we translate the sun.

Flowers become love and sightless night
is fear that a problem is not resolved
and unseen patterns will paint
ugliness on our delicate canvas.

Words flutter like summer leaves
then like anxious birds they fly
from tree to lawn. We cast our imaginary net
until snowflakes revel an infinite variety.

Finally the turning seasons become
a landscape painted on the white page.
This exploration of ourselves grows
and then we call this panting a poem.

For the Love of Poetry

We seem surprised
as our children transform
our technical inventions
into social transparencies
that we kept locked in a drawer.

Inverted pictures
of famous private actions
were only printed in tabloids,
inventions of our inner desire
for superior feelings.

There is never a news event
exposing a child's poem
describing the joy of snowflakes
or the thrill of a late evening
game of hide-and-seek.

Has Pandora's box been opened?
Have the contents been spilled
onto the internet for all to see,
for all to lament that our nature
is now a public poem.

Poetry as exposé, as unlocked diary
is like a growth hormone, real,
repetitive and strangely surprising
to those who have forgotten
their love of poetry.

Dream Machine

Get rich quick
Get rich don't work hard,
Get rich It's easy
Get rich do what you want
Get rich work smarter not harder

Listen to me – I know !
Listen to me – been there, done that
Listen to me – worked 12 hour days
Listen to me – been poor
Listen to me – I'm trustworthy
Listen to me – this is real
Listen to me, Listen, Listen
I will give you your birth advantage

We train
We support
We provide a rock-solid road map
We have proof this works

Insert testimonials here...

Small investment – big bucks

Avoid emotional suffering
Avoid financial suffering

Have fun – fire the bad guy boss
Have fun - Live the American dream
Have fun - You can do it
Have fun - it's simple
Have fun - Anybody can do it

Tired of work
Tired of bills
Tired of your car
Tired of missing family functions
Tired, tired, tired

Work 40 years to retire – ugh !

Think like a millionaire
No – like a billionaire !
Re-write your attitude

Test ideas Fast !
Follow the master plan
(this one is different)

Want a new home
Want new fancy car
Want to help others
Want exotic holidays
Want to help family
Want quality time
Want to help worthy causes

No Multi-Level-Marketing
No market timing problems
No selling to family & friends
No stocking of products
No sending out spam
No hotel meetings
No home meetings
No cold calls
No selling
No closing
No experience necessary...

Create - total financial success
Create - take life by the horns
Create - get whatever you want
Create - control

- your time
- your income
- your dreams

Don't miss out...
Dreams are just one click away...

Do you cut yourself out of Your Life
With - Limited beliefs
- fears & doubts
- skepticism

Act now! – get the big bonus
Dreams are just one click away...

Politics As Entertainment

For our time in history

The pundits and their polls
are like weathermen whose job
does not depend on being right.
Local evidence as global doom
is a distraction clipped from
every wagging tongue and stuffed
between commercial reality.

Mendacity mingles smoothly
with medieval righteousness
and Caesar declares that peace
is an imperative, that he has time
and will save his loyal legions
for another unnamed distraction.
The pundits revel in the mud.

Johnny goes to school and shows
his ID at the door then learns
that creation has more than one story.
Meanwhile, the debates on TV
are not about the latest hi-tech
fantasy war game that Johnny plays
instead of doing his homework.

The Empty Can

There is a discordant rattle
as the stone driven swirls
of a city wind propel the can
along the early morning street.

Should I chase the waste,
do my city civic duty and collect
this empty emblem of our care less
expression of personal power?

It's a knee jarring jog as I compete
with nature's disorganized gusts
that flow smoothly from the lake
expecting trees and leaves to rattle.

Half a block and I'm a few feet away.
The can sings steadily ahead of me
when a sudden corner-driven gust
pushes its music into the street.

It is flattened by a passing car.

Diversity

It doesn't matter how you paint your skin
or drape sackcloth across your bones
to celebrate an ancestral theme.

It doesn't matter if you foreswear labour
to celebrate ancient script or burn
a scented stick to stimulate the mind.

It doesn't matter if you heed the bells
that call you to communal sacrifice
or if you sleep and dream away a day.

It does matter if your strident horn
to urge the car ahead to go on green
is always at your fingertips.

It does matter if your children don't know
how to search the wild universe
to find the colour of their cloth.

It does matter if the children
can't put words right together
and feel clearly explain they how.

It does matter, it does matter
if the lion is the only predator.
He can't eat everything.

The Sky is Falling

As predicted by Chicken Little

These are hard times for mankind
as religions quote ancient scribes
to justify oppressive truth and war.

The end-times are near and the earth
is getting colder, no wait, it's getting hotter
and we will all suffocate in our CO2.

Meanwhile, oil prints dollars, coal
is gouged from the young earth
and those devil fossils keep appearing.

Why did Chicken Little run across the road?
Because over there, the sky seemed clear.
Unfortunately, the clouds followed him.

The Shoe Disaster

If you walk with bare feet
on the hottest summer day, the grass
is cool and soft sand squishes deliciously
through your toes. It is difficult to walk
silently through fallen leaves or stand
on sun-warmed stones that languish
by the summer shore. Fallen twigs
in the cool forest nip at your soles
and sharp pebbles on the path
emphasize that the earth is underfoot.

All of these reminders are lost
because we now wear sturdy shoes.

Winter Dawn

The sun is fixed and we
cannot stand still long enough
to let it warm the winters. Instead
we bask in the weak reflection
of our cold companion. It illuminates
early morning demons. They scurry
along the fenceline, skim
freshly fallen snow, engulf low
black bushes but leave no footprints.

The air carries no telltale odour.
Fresh and clean, some say. But then
the lost sun forces this creation,
this world of living things, shadows
with ill-intent or mythical creatures
fallen from a heaven of light.

All of this can be explained.
If you focus on the window glass,
you will see a reflection
of the mad inventor.

It's Almost Spring

I arise filled with the expectancy of birds
that flit through empty tree branches
searching for signs of renewal.

The clouds didn't show up today
and the bold sun on icy sidewalks
has turned them into gray mush.

Cold air spills through the open window.
Destiny is chilled but the winter wind
has failed and I am encouraged.

I have not listened to the news
so my heart is free to imagine
time filled with quotidian sunlight.

I think I will dress lightly,
not turn on the TV and sing
to those boisterous birds.

The Evils of Sugar

It was a lazy do-nothing afternoon and we were being informed by a TV program, complete with experts and a host who had all the right questions.

"I understand that sugar is bad for you."
Said the sweetly smiling host.

"Yes it is!" replied the guest.
"Have you seen my article on the web?
I detail 146 health problems caused
by consuming the 'white-death'.
There is one problem I'm sure
your viewers will be interested in.
Specifically, sugar can upset relationships,
mineral ones in the body that is."

We watched the entire program
and agreed that it was interesting.
"Let's go to Tim Hortons!" I suggested.
Again we agreed and took off.

As usual, I went in to get our treat.

"Two coffee, black with 3 sugar and...
two honeydipped,
sugarcoated,
chocolatefilled
large, sweet
donuts."



Cobourg Ecological Garden Path

