

daily nebraskan entertainment

Poetry bubble bursts for prospective genius

You don't have to confess it to anyone; I'm going to do that. I simply ask you, in complete privacy: How many of you have ever tried to write poetry? Even if it was just a "My Mommy" valentine back in third grade?

Of course, you all smile and say "Yes, but I'd never let anyone read my poetry because it's so awful." Well, I write awful poetry, too, but I'm going to lay it out right here. I do it to demonstrate something, but believe me, that doesn't make it any less painful.

mark kielbaard
you have my word

Writing poetry is hard work, and I find that my poetry boils out of control and dribbles away into a mess. For example, last month I got this idea for an Ugly City poem, which every modern bard eventually

writes. It began well, but then grew demonically into an ugly monster:

Dirt City
You hollow cicada-shell nine-to-five creeps
Tracking the concrete where Doublemint sleeps
The gray mangled beastie whose body you threw
Dragging you down by the sole of your shoe.
In my neoclassical phase I tried a sonnet, but as the final couplet shows, sonnets were not designed for this century: "Before this hour had sighed and passed away / There were a thousand words I'd to you say."

I'm joking, of course, but I really have tried to write serious poetry. As with most people, the lines which seemed superb during the initial inspiration invariably looked ludicrous later. Alliterations which rippled at midnight grew sluggish at noon.

I'm going to give you a genuine example of my poetry, a brief work which I prized. Here it goes:

Light-colored Flame
I felt like the spirit of the dead waxwing,
Lying in the window-well, a broken thing.

It was deceived by the glass
So it died in the grass;
It thought it could fly
Into picture-window sky.

Whew. There it is. Go ahead and laugh. Susan Dodder, a gifted poet from North Dakota (who will be embarrassed to read this), studied that poem in Nebraska Hall last week.

She has been patient with me, considering all the times I've asked her to read my work, but this time she looked me in the eye and opened fire. "I felt like," "died in the grass," "lying in," "thought," everything was wrong, she said, and she explained and explained. *Light-colored Flame* went out with a puff of foul-smelling smoke.

I'm not a master poet. Even so, I cherished a fantasy of genius that only unwanted truth could destroy. We all cherish fantasies like that once in a while, believing that we could outpass David Humm if we really tried, play like Glenn Gould with a little practice or flatten Muhammad Ali with a supreme effort. When someone reminds you that you can't, it hurts. But those fantasies are harmless and fun.

Old Market to try filling 'theater gap'

Omaha's Old Market has a new theater—the Rudyard Norton Theater. Performing there is a new theater group, the Nebraska State Repertory Company (NSRC).

Dwayne Ibsen, NSRC board of directors member, said that planning for the company began about eight years ago. He said the company was formed to "fill a gap in Nebraska theater." NSRC will present classical theater to the people of Nebraska, he added.

The company, which dedicated its theater Aug. 28, will present nine plays this season, Ibsen said.

The company's first production, *Oedipus*, finished its two-week run Sept. 23. McArthur and Hecht's *Front Page* will open Saturday.

Ibsen said that until the company gets established, all performances will be in the Norton Theater. After they are better established, they plan to take their productions on tour in Nebraska and possibly in Iowa, he said.

The theater is named in honor of a long-time Omaha area actor and director. Norton has been active in theater in Omaha since 1925, working

with the Omaha Playhouse, the Bluffs and promoting ballet performances in Omaha.

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