Cristo Rey Re-entry Program: 
The Class and Their Poems

The high school “drop-out” or “bored to death-out” (whatever the case may be) no longer has to roam Lansing streets in search for something to interest him. He can be “interested” and receive high school credits in the process while attending the Cristo Rey Re-entry Program. The class is taught by David Hollister, popular high school teacher (among students and progressives) Ingham County commissioner and general community asset. The re-entry program was established by the Lansing public schools in reaction to a student walkout at Pattengill Jr. High School last fall. Students enroll in the program on a contract basis. If they complete a designated amount of work, they receive comparable credits.

An integral feature of the class is the emphasis on self-expression. Often the structured environment of high schools inhibit student voice. However, in the class, Hollister creates the type of atmosphere in which the student feels free to air his opinions. Class conduct essentially is informal and open ended. Students are encouraged to express themselves in a variety of forms.

For the past several weeks the students have been communicating their sentiments through poetry. The subject matter of their poems ranges from the intensely personal, as found here in Kathy Bell’s poem “Wedgewood Acres Youth Home Quiet Room,” to the more abstract themes of love, war and society in general. But the primary importance of each poem is that the student has conveyed thoughts and feelings that normally would never have been expressed.

—Robert Sickels

Man and woman is a combination
Held together by emotion,
But only a small string of it.

They experience love, hate,
selfishness and giving.

In one coupling a child is made,
Into a world of love, hate,
selfishness and giving.

He grows like a tree
Slow
Growing its leaves of experience

Growing wiser
Seeing past combinations

Afraid to bring another child into this world

He prepares his mate
With the pil!

—M. Luiz

Last night I had a dream.
I was alone on Earth.
Like a young stream,
The ocean had given birth
I walked between structures in a city
Expecting to hear a voice I knew.
For myself I felt pity.
In silence a dove flew.
I stare at what I own
And I ask, “Why me?”
There must be others alone
Especially one I must see.
So I walk in wonder
In the early morning sun.
My existence I ponder.
There is someone.
Now we are alone with sorrow and joy
To play with the world
Like a child with a toy.

—Fidel Mejia

The Nation
Parents and teachers program... their kids... to think...
the way they way they...
want them to
And after awhile their brains are like... sponges... absorbing every...
Thing they say
Not letting them feel

—Paul Snook

Can I say what’s on my mind to them,
tell them that I’m in a pit and can’t get out,
no, Inside a locked door,
blew up.
The room is hot and quiet. I breathe
musty air, alone.

I pound on the door, no one hears
still pounding a cold sweat runs
down my body till I fall back to the corner

talking to myself, saying what
others should hear
the door is opened

Hiding my face, I walk out,
run to an open place, cry
hope people will listen
They will.

—Kathie Bell
coming to harm
I
her blood is wired to
undersides where tubes
have been grown in
a pattern she is pink
and she swells
beneath him their stomach
skins adhering wet
his moth moves
along her until the
nap is standing.

II
she lay dying in
america her mouth
fingering an austrian
rosary bead and her
bowels slipping through
rest home drainage
systems slowly slipping she
circulated and stared.
voiding on the bed asleep
on plastic pads she
mentioned her german
in concentration camps they
snapped her bones, the
broken pencils.

III
she cast her streaked eyes
on the needle and out over
the lake to catch
and knit you into
her interest, her long
white back and thrust.
she ships you to settle
in her shrunken siberia
and you taste between
her legs while she starves
you the lease is measured
between her kitchen and
your child.

Carolyn Forche

The depth of glass
for
some

ANTI-GHAZAL
(for jim harrison
and statton)

No patron of the Hiltons
you travel glass walls
of your briefcase
reading in bars and universities
ride into town on the back
of a cowgirl, spurred in the dust
of her flanks, you make a rodeo of love

We sit in some bar
drinking beer like poems
Statton (well into it) smells Eros
from your sensorium / decants
in a smile, drips sharply

cutting your eye
it falls into his hands

(auspiciously descriptive)

for a closer look
thighs fourteen years old
draw to him in the shoal
closing him in tightness
of water, you reel

grab the waist of a glass
and, like the whiskey turning in your stomach
has done you a favor, smash it
on the head of Kate Millet

(yet afraid to cut
skin of snake)

Carolyn Forche

Poetry

1st. "coming to harm," Carolyn Forche
2nd. "Anti-Ghazal," Mike McCormick

Robinson: for poetry, Daryl Jones, Roger Meiners
and Dennis Pace.

The Festival committee would like to thank those
organizations and individuals who have donated
prizes in the Creative Writing Competition:
Happiness Holding Tank, The Honors College,
Paramount News Center, Tom Sawyer's Book Raft,
Red Cedar Review, Pan Hel, and The State News.

Creative Writing Award Winners

Fiction

1st. "Life As We Know It," Alan VerPlanck
2nd. "The Moonwalk," Thomas Bran
3rd. "Four," David Ziffer

Honorable Mentions
"Toccata," John McIntyre
"Breakfast Was," Cathy Hendricks

Although only first, second and third prizes were
available within the writing contest, from the large
number of entries (1,100 poems and more than 70
stories) there were several pieces which the judges
felt should not go without notice and have been
designated for honorable mention.

The judges for the fiction competition were
Richard Benvenuto, Albert Drake and John

Mike McCormick

2

She sat on the stool
a cheerleader graduated
Magna Cum Laude
from a nightclub
legs suffocating
her jeans defined
the thin line of
dream and reality

She hung into your eyes
a smile, and...

AND THEN WHAT?

and then you wished
her ass would drop
into your lap

But she married
the fullback
and will never
read your poems

3

Casting for tarpon
swimming in your drink

At thirty two if you catch him
what will be left?

Ah! eightball and arm wrestling

Yes, you live well
the lives of your poetry

4

1:01 AM
I leave you with Statton
sinking deeper in the depths
of Key West

The drive home was long
headlights pulling me into rain
they shovel night from my eyes
drag slowly like rusty days
through a glare of wet glass

Mike McCormick
LADY Mew,
wind.
black
to
shrugs
can't
ocean
man,
logging
Bicentennial
on
ivies?
crazy
media
we,
me
that
away
of
they:
upon
her
Festival
a
arm
from
from
"I,
the
sparrow,
Amy
the
they
poetry,
The
work
fine
encounter
works
scavenging
leaves
writing
well
swirl
itself.
from
the
man,
as
never
head.
an
old
which
know
music
and
gulls
the
the
flutter,
O.K.,
slow,
this
Ingham
and
sand
slowly.
laugh.
love
he.
and
prance
man
well
will
of
The
Hugh
ache.
as
program
says
so
bands
the
Jazz
perspectives
to
stripped
taking
the
shakes
it
Dennis
No.
dirt
white
across
David
with
fat
yesterday
Festival
Hall
frail
come
old
to
by
one.
well
the
flies
say
skin
man,
corner,
old
to
crackle
dance,
Jacobs
encounter
rebounds
will
on
man
the
in
by
Media
restless
bank
the
spires
mast
poetry
we
little
your
inland,
branches
in
Writing
the
crazy
man
Amanda,
films.
even
pick
giggling
his
curb,
ripped
to
curtsy
in
rungs.
singing
in
climbing
fissioning,
path
the
the
her
hears
they
got
Contest
The
salt-tang,
fiords,
cut
know
comes
even
as
black
moving
one
like
with
exploring
some
mountains,
experience
Media
the
horizons.
forms
for
awards
in
kiss
the
him
when
poets
waiting
olden
and
flame-oranged
wrinkles
and
on
and
me
mossing.
of
the
arts.
the
listening
shade-gaze
8
man.
(for
feature
the
long
down
patterns
free.
noses
MAN
as
tomorrow
your
isles
On
by
the
dances
back
sing
his
to
give
complete
flower
with
kinetic
rhe
crazy
moving
or
SCANDINAVIA
Kalmbach,
ON
shakes
artist)
festival
II
rot
at
kisses
more
ud
the
get
red
mostly
Lee
man
mossed
he
also
break
members
He
&
County
the
says
that
with
waves
look
raggy,
pieces
tear
Pace,
I
and
me.
way.

THE CRAZY MAN

Ah, the crazy man, he shrugs the snow from his peppered beard
And shakes his shoulders outward square.
Smiles. "The crazy man he says nothing but
Leaves conversation well comprehended, golden.
I pick up the pieces for the winds to blow away
Above my head they fall upon him.
Singular the crazy man he loves and dances
To sleep-talk audience we give him weigh.
And wonders we trodding in snow bank
Time-lent stripped against the steel sky
Laughs away olden time.

Ah, the crazy man, they points, says:
"Crazy do sometime, yesterday O.K., tomorrow maybe."
Crazy man, he shrugs the snow from his peppered beard
And patterns the branches about the ground.
Imagines spring on white dreams, say they:
"The crazy man goes a way. He'll pay."
The gold sky clinks, pirate ship furts
Upon sea upon sea of gulls and crying
Ladies in flower waves the mast back,
And rebounds for child smiles.
Only the crazy man laugh.

The crazy man, knows you the path with the ivies?
They kiss the mosed rot log and the years
Stands by by the gum drop in corner, shaky and raggy,
Cheeks flame-ored with night warmth dreams
Sings ditties and shanties he on sand bands
Sifting, sifting the flies me goes and comes
And comes mostly midnights in cloaks that cruel
Striptease go one, one one, one one.
Crazy man count on his thumb while dances
On fine leathered skin and wrinkles he noses
And snowes the black to become it white.

The crazy man pointes and curtsey at me.
Ha-ha leaves us snowes in spite and we,
We come back slow, slowly. The gold on the greening dirt
Sits, begs to the taking and piggling I hears by the
Ladies in waiting the waves lapping rhythm,
Syncope: "I, I know know I, know I."
Falls and prance over me logging and moshing.
Steps faster and shakes snow from his peppered beard.
We kises the sunset with drool. He says nothing but
Bends love on perspectives in crazy horizons.
Oh, the man. The "crazy" man he.
— Vicki Jacobs

STREET LADY

Where she got an old man like that
I'll never know
And I can't get her to even look into me
As long as she's ripped on her old red wine.
Oh. Amanda, with a name like that
You shouldn't even turn my head.
But, you do
And you're so little and frail
In your draf Army jacket
Like a sparrow, scavenging the curb,
Walking arm in arm with your fat old man.
— Jeff McCormick

TO ANNI ON TOURING SCANDINAVIA

Adrift inland, swirl eyes to the spires
Where pigeons eddy. On fiords, follow isles
Of white gulls fissioning, fixing.
In black mountains, shade-gaze to hawks
Careening valleys, climbing the glistening
Summer on molten rungs.
Am among the restless: restless hear
Me flutter, new, and crackle the wind.
For me sing when the singing breaks;
At the blow of the ocean salt-tang, ache.
— Amy Lee

The Ingham County Bicentennial Media Festival &
Creative Writing Awards Presentation No. II

Tonight at 8 in the Wonders Hall Kiva,
the Media Festival will feature the presentation of awards in the Creative Writing Contest as well as a short program of experimentation and encounter in media and the performing arts. The festival attempts to bring together examples of new MSU work in poetry, film, dance, music and media, as well as work exploring those artistic forms which cut across traditional categories moving toward more complete expression (for the artist) and more complete experience (for the audience), and some works moving to break down or bridge this artist/audience gap itself.

Featured will be poetry by Hugh Fox, mixed media by Dennis Pace, poetry by Jim Kalmbach, kinetic sculpture by David Kirkpatrick, a dance/music encounter featuring members of Orchesis and the MSU Jazz Band, and several films. The three winning poets in the writing competition also will read from their work. Admission to the Media Festival is absolutely free.
Cristo Rey Poets cont’d

Peace Will Come
I don’t want the songs of war
Team of sorrow I want no more.
Young lives are wasted,
The sweetness of life never tasted.
Fight for freedom, so they say,
Unexperienced to this day.
Our leaders escalate to end.
Brothers, your minds they will bend.
They train to hate and kill.
The thought of a dead child makes me ill.
A war in vain,
Tell me Lord, is it worth the pain?
But peace will come, I’ll tell you how
Mushrooms against the sky.
Peace Now!

— Fidel Mejia

I don’t see nothing much
except for drugs
and that’s ok.

— Rudy Cazanova

I don’t see nothing much
but people being
drug off to jail
for being
drunk
or using drugs.

I don’t see why they don’t check it out
where they got it
cause they could have
picked it up off the street
and not know what it was.
— Lee Nichols

God
Where is he, is there really a god?
Yes there is a god, but he is not
going to help the people.
Why, I’ll tell you why
when some of the people crucified
him. That’s why. There is pollution
the war! Poverty. That’s why the pigs
are so bad.
Why did they kill him
Because he was different from them
That’s why society is so bold.
That’s why I say the pigs
are so bad. They are like the
people who crucified him
But he will come back
at the end. Why? Only you
can answer it yourself.
— Abel Garza

Society
Society is mentally hooked on construction
Like a Junkie on smack
concrete they have no care about
But...the money from its arches
Builds more arches not ragged people
Not broken wooden walls
Not muddy flooded basements
Society is looking for more concrete
As junkies searching for the next fix.
— Paul E. Snook

Hell as devil and hell is like fire
Clouds as smoke smoke as pollution
Black as the night light as the sun
Life as the lakes, rivers’ as death.
— P. Lopez