

Tyke Writer

The Interchange

(Bradford Writers' Network) Newsletter

Issue 10: February 2002

Events Guide

Interchange @ the Priestley

A workshop held every Tuesday from 8pm at the Priestley Centre for Arts, Chapel Street, Little Germany.

It provides a friendly and informal gathering where members can share their work. Also gives a forum for constructive feedback.

Interchange @ the Melborn

Every last Wednesday of the month, Interchange hosts an open mic performance event for writers, performers, poets and singer-songwriters.

Be there at 8pm for an 8.30pm start at the Melborn, White Abbey Road.

Write recovery

RESIDENTS at the Salvation Army are exploring their creative side through a new workshop programme including creative writing.

As the workshops develop, the organisation hopes that an outside tutor can be brought in to give extra tuition and feedback.

Many, though not all, of the residents are recovering from either drug or alcohol-related problems.

The initiative is part of a series of programmes aimed at

By Mark Cantrell

helping their rehabilitation back into mainstream life.

"There are people there who do write," says one project worker at the hostel on Leeds, Road, "but nobody has focused on that before, so it's about focusing on what they can do — they've got the talent so let's see what they can do with it. This has been running this a week and it has produced a deluge of poems and song lyrics.

"Once it is up and running, it will be good to have someone from the outside to give feedback. There's always a barrier between staff and residents, which doesn't seem to exist with outsiders. The people who come in don't know the personal problems and histories so it's more comfortable for the residents," he adds.

Anyone interested in going in as a tutor should contact Dave on: 07799 161559.

A grand chance for new playwrights

FANCY £1,000 to help make your new play a reality?

The Red Ladder Theatre Company and BBC Northern Exposure are seeking bright new playwrights aged 18 or over. Two places are open to Bradford writers.

The money will be available to winning

entries to develop the play over a 12 month period. There will be workshops and readings as the play develops, followed by a rehearsed reading by professional actors.

Anyone interested in applying should send a synopsis of a new play on a single A4 page, along with

the first ten pages of a play already written, or that you would like to write, a one page CV, and your contact details.

Deadlines are 11th March and 5th August.

Send to: Outwrite > Red Ladder Theatre Company, 3 St Peter's Buildings, York Street, Leeds, LS9 8AJ.

Not Dark Yet

Bruce Barnes treats us to a delectable mixture of fact and fiction in this short story. So which is which? Bruce isn't saying...

THE words of a Dylan song have taken up residence: 'Not dark yet, but it's getting there'. Austin, Texas, is going into its murk; across the railway tracks, the warehouse has nearly gone, and the vehicles at the far end of the car park are moving in that direction.

I can see to the far end of the Café

Mundi's patio, a figure drinking at a white table, but beyond that is a rich velvety dark, the sort that I pay attention to away from home.

For a moment, Café Mundi is not of this world; the cantina sprawls along an invisible border with 'not even room enough to be anywhere'; ghosts of gringos gallop through on hard ridden horses.

They come out of the café, poets and their audience. I've enjoyed tonight's poetry but left early for a breath of air, after the teenage slam team had finished their reading. I am getting a feel for the local poetry ... plenty of gritty realism and slice of life stories.

One poem I liked because it seemed to breathe its ordinariness; he calls at the supermarket, drives home with the groceries in the back of the pick-up, walks in through the open door but she's gone.

Thom comes over, wearing his excitement. Poetry is his adrenaline; his lit up face seems to feature in much of Austin's poetry activity. He organised tonight's reading, and the preceding workshop that includes a creative writing exercise, 'What do I really want!'. The missing 'I' lets me avoid the issue and write about a hel(I) more than heaven allows.

Thom wants me to meet Douglas, and takes me over to the figure sitting at the white table. He introduces us and goes off

to circulate. Dressed cowpoke style in Levi jacket and jeans, Douglas is tall and thin, with a pinched face. There is a film over his eyes making them seem dull and listless and yet he has been to England, London and Stratford on Avon, wants to go again. He can trace family back to the Mayflower. I listen, slow to pick-up on his chatter, feeling uneasy that Douglas may be ill but not knowing any more. The dark has swallowed the warehouse. 'Behind the immutable things there's some kind of pain.' And then, out of nowhere, I am gabbling, gabbling tonight's writing exercise... I really want to be home with Joy in Bradford, I really want to be irredeemably happy, I really want to stop running away from writing, I really want... , he stops me to ask my help.

Douglas is writing an opera, he's writing it in his head, (I do lots of that too), but he wants my help. The opera is about Karla Faye Tucker, a Texan woman sentenced to the death penalty in 1984 for the murder of

Cyberspace workshop

WRITELINK, a website and monthly newsletter dedicated to writers' resources, is running a free email short story writing workshop.

The course is divided into six lessons. Together, these cover the basics of short story writing, including plots, characterisation, finding a voice, dialogue, hooks and twist endings.

The six lessons are aimed at the novice writer and are delivered by email. They include optional exer-

cises that students are encouraged to complete to hone their skills.

Print-on-demand publisher PlaneTree publishing has supported the course, thereby enabling it to be free. Full instructions on how to sign up for the course can be found at <http://www.writelink.co.uk>.

Alternatively write to WriteLink, 7 Melbourne Road, Newbold, Coleorton, Leicestershire, LE67 8JH. Don't forget to enclose an SAE.

her ex lover, Jerry Lynn Dean and his girl friend, Deborah Thornton.

The way Douglas tells it,... how the police found the pickaxe embedded in Jerry's chest, how at the trial she boasted that she had an orgasm each time she plunged the axe down, how on death row she found Jesus, and married Dana Brown, a prison chaplain, how her petition for a stay of execution went to the Supreme Court, how Dana was by her side until the last... it leaves me on a knife's edge between disgust and laughter. For a moment, I am gob-smacked, but then go with the audience at 'Spring-time for Hitler', into fits and starts of incredulous laughter.

He waits for me to finish. I can see he's upset and Texas, the land of slice of life stories, can't excuse my laughter. But he presses on and says most of the script is done. He's got the tunes; he hums one for me, its long careful notes hang on the night air sounding just mournful. Nothing of Dylan's, not the March of the Treaders, not White Christmas. He tells me he cannot

write: he rests his elbows on the table, and holds up his frozen fingers, as if he was skeining an invisible tangle of wool. He says it's multiple sclerosis.

I say that I am sorry. That can be a confusing predicate at the worst of times: sorry, the expression of concern at the world's calamities gets tangled up with sorry, 'I apologise...I am at fault', and when that happens, 'I feel like my soul is turning to steel'. But this time, when I say, "I am sorry", the film drops from his eyes and he is, never was, a medical condition. I am apologising to a fellow writer, poet, human being who has asked for my help and I have been unable to provide. The tour schedule, the flight back to Bradford, the rough and tumble of life may have conspired to make helping him more difficult, but I feel comfortable in the leading role of sorry-sayer. And I'll get round to writing Karla Faye Tucker' story sometime. As I get up to leave, the white table stings my fingers with static electricity.

Bruce Barnes

Fair Trade Poetry

GOOD food and red-hot poetry is promised at an open mic event planned for the end of February at the Fair Trade Café (FTC), writes Mark Cantrell.

The event is scheduled for Thursday February 28th at the café, which is off Great Horton Road, just up from the City Centre.

"I hope to be reading and there'll be other readers in an open mic slot," says Ed Reiss. "It should be a good event. Food will be provided. There is a charge,

but the funds go to a good cause."

For those who don't know, the Fair Trade Cafe provides good value and ethical veggie food. It's opposite the University, just off Great Horton Road, on the corner of Ashgrove, down the steps next to the Anglican Chaplaincy (though the cafe is not itself a 'religious' place). Some special food is expected to be on the menu, according to Ed.

Further details from Mike on 01274 727034 or 01274 428337.

Merry Christmas Everyone

Over in Kabul
A baby cries
As through the skies
Another bomb flies

Over in Jerusalem
A general dies
As even Evita
Has tears in her eyes

Merry Christmas everyone

Shops are loaded
In the Christmas sales
Losing your job
Come the new year

Merry Christmas
Merry Christmas everyone

Planes are grounded
Foreign holidays cheap
Bargain fares
Advertised everywhere

Merry Christmas
Merry Christmas everyone

Can't get to the sales
There is not a train
Can't get away
There is not a plane

No plane in the sales
No train in the sales
Is not a bus
Available

Merry Christmas
Merry Christmas everyone

Patrick Blues

A Question Of Timing

Running stop signs
Into dead ends
Crossing the line
Losing your friends

Always been looking
Over your shoulder
Not even cooking
Just getting older

Still not finding
Things you crave
Burning your mind
Digging your grave

Hard to think
Head's in the sand
Maybe you'll sink
Just can't understand

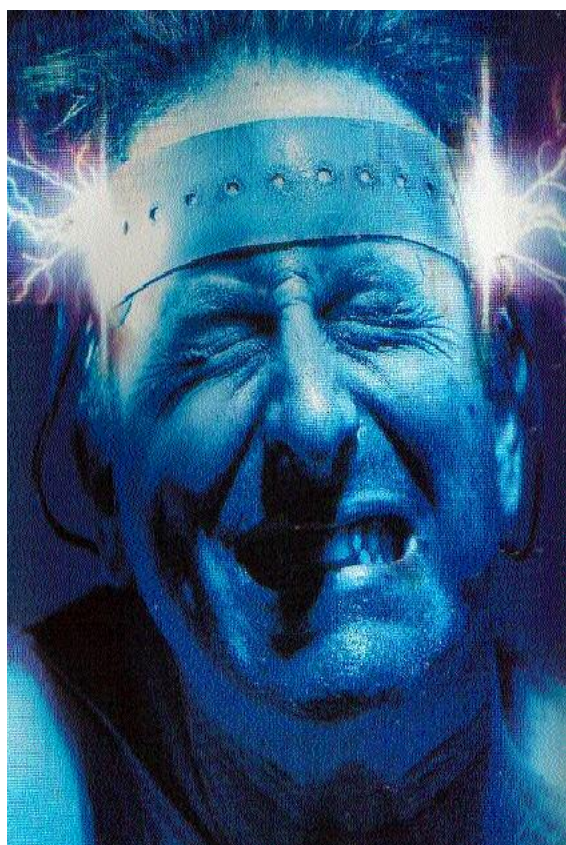
Running away
Going to fall
Still, it ain't gonna pay
Whilst your back's to the wall.

Chris J Adams

Shocking stuff

STREET poetry will feature in a demo this month against the use of ECT, otherwise known as electro-convulsive shock therapy.

The action called by disconnECT Leeds is on the 21st Feb at the Dept of Health HQ at Quarry House, Leeds, next to the West Yorkshire Playhouse.



The Tyke Writer is the monthly newsletter of the Interchange (Bradford Writers' Network).

For further details of the group, or to get involved, come down to the Priestley Centre for Arts, Chapel Street, Little Germany, Bradford.

Or contact:
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Editorial contributions are welcome, but will be edited for space and style.

All contributions must bear the author's name, which may appear as a byline. Contributions are also preferably recieved in type written form.

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Laugh? I nearly went to hell

A writer died and was given the option of going to heaven or hell.

She decided to check out each place first.

As the writer descended into the fiery pits, she saw row upon row of writers chained to their desks in a steaming sweat-

shop.

As they worked, they were repeatedly whipped with thorny lashes.

"Oh my," said the writer. "Let me see heaven now."

A few moments later, as she ascended into heaven, she saw rows of writers, chained to their desks in a steaming sweat-

shop.

As they worked, they, too, were whipped with thorny lashes.

"Wait a minute," said the writer. "This is just as bad as hell!"

"Oh no, it's not," replied an unseen voice. "Here, your work gets published."

Author Unknown