



March / April 2008

CREATED AND ISSUED BY:
CARRBORO RECREATION AND
PARKS DEPARTMENT

Issue No. 11 (since June 2006)

ARTICLES

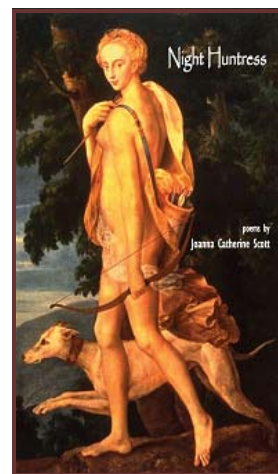
The Poetry of Joanna Catherine Scott	2-3
Spotlight on Open Mic Night at the Open Eye Café	3-5
History of National Poetry Month	6
Ways to Celebrate Poetry	6
Upcoming NC Poetry Contests and Submission Deadlines	7
Poetry Alive in Carrboro, including the Town of Carrboro Youth Poetry Contest	7
Poetry Events Round About NC	8

Joanna Catherine Scott

Joanna Catherine Scott is the author of the novels *The Road from Chapel Hill*; *Cassandra, Lost*; *The Lucky Gourd Shop*; and *Charlie*; the nonfiction *Indochina's Refugees: Oral Histories from Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam*; and the poetry collections *Breakfast at the Shangri-la* and *Fainting at the Uffizi*. However, before her writing career, which has garnered her much praise and a trove of poetry awards, Joanna had a diverse array of home lands, careers, and experiences. Joanna Catherine Scott has degrees from both the University of Adelaide and Duke. She has been

a schoolteacher, mother, and taught logic and British analytic philosophy at the University of Australia. She has worked for a consulting company specializing in hazardous waste management and toxic and safety issues for electric plants. Joanna went from there to work as a White House appointed Special Assistant for the National Emergency Preparedness Office. When her husband was appointed ambassador to the Asian Development Bank, she moved with him to Manila where among other things she worked at an abandoned babies home.

Along her many travels and among her many professions, perhaps two experiences provide the



most influence on the poetry we read from her today. The latter experi-



Photo by Laura Shmania. "View from Open Eye Café, Looking at the Century Center Clock"

To see more photos by Laura, go to her on-line photo gallery at www.butterflites.smugmug.com



Voices from Poet's Open Mic Night

Depending on the direction you take, you may pass the metal rooster sculptures outside an antique shop. When you arrive you open the doors to Open Eye Café and immediately smell the aroma of coffee brewing and delicious herbal tea blends. There is music in the background. You turn to the right, pass the lighted pastries, pass the tables filled with laptops, and books, pass the

intent yet relaxed faces. You enter the back room and there they are, soon to be friends comfortably gathered around a table. They await you to enter and others to begin Poet Open Mic. Night. Open "Mic" can be a bit of a misnomer. Sometimes the group prefers a more intimate setting and the microphone is not in use. If the weather is nice the group may go outside and

enjoy the night air and streetlights. This is a safe place to share your poems. Some present have been published, some jot things down in a notebook and read while rearranging a line or two, others come with their own work or an appreciated poem written by another other, typed and ready to go. This is an encouraging group to try new ideas with. Perhaps
Continued on page 3

ence involved her time in the Philippine Refugee Processing Center in the mountains of Bataan. As she describes, "This camp housed 17,000 souls from Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam who had fled Communist persecution in their homelands." There she was given a painting of Vietnamese boat people on the high seas with an inscription that read, "A people forced to go a dangerous drama across feats of dark-

ness and turbulent seas in favor of freedom." Joanna wept at those words and returned the next day to listen to the stories of the artist and others. From that period came her first book, *Indochina's Refuges: Oral Histories from Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam*, and ever since, all of her books have been inspired by the "true stories of the voiceless" An earlier but equally powerful experience came as Joanna was a young

women in Australia. There, she married and gave birth to three children, was turned on her head by the Women's Revolution, lost her children in a divorce and took the train across the great desert of southern Australia to Perth. In Perth, she met a PhD student from Duke who persuaded her to go with him to North Carolina and pursue her education at Duke.

Though later reunited with her lost children, she recalls crying for them every night when she first came to the US. After two years of this her husband said, "Stop it! Stop!" So, Joanna stopped and since then she says, "everything I have done, every book I have written, has been a sort of recompense."

When her husband was appointed ambassador to the Asian Development Bank, he and Joanna went to live in Manila, Philippines. Many significant events took place for Ms. Scott during her time there. She witnessed the Peoples Power Revolution and the demise of the Marcos regime; was invited to the Philippine Refugee Processing Center as an official visitor; found her inspiration for her first book among the stories she gleaned from so many refugees; and last but not least in importance, Ms. Scott and her husband adopted three Korean orphans. The poem, "Coloring In" can be found in Joanna's first poetry collection *Breakfast at the Shangri-La*, winner of the Black Zinnias. 2003 Poetry Book Award from the California Institute of the Arts and Letters.

Coloring In

Miss Lee, the social worker, worried over us. *From Korea to the Philippines? Is that advancement for an orphan?*

Sure enough, no sooner here than wax-winged Marcos melted from supremacy. Revolution in the streets,

and in the sky, fighter jets defecting to the rebels' side. Meanwhile, our three new children squat around a low

glass table out on the lanai, mull over pages in cheap coloring books, arrange new crayons in a triple row.

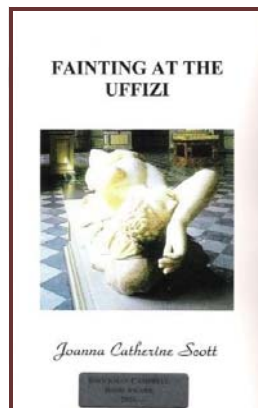
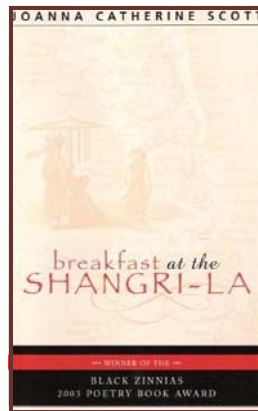
While dictators collapse above their heads, short-wave squawking in another room, they color dancing girls

in swirling skirts, a boy swinging a baseball bat, a dog, a family at a meal. Green trees and grass, a yellow sun—

such simple things, but how they bow their heads above them, how they work to stay inside the lines.

With that rapt expression people wear when nothing matters but the task at hand, they color for themselves new lives.

Joanna Catherine Scott



Joanna Catherine Scott with her dog, Lola. Lola is a Lhasa Apso. Joanna calls her Lola-palolo.

Night Huntress is described as
 "Narrative prose poems of loss, grief and
 resolution following the drunk driving
 death of a young friend."

This collection includes 'Rain, Blue Ridge
 Mountains,' winner of the Rita Dove
 Poetry Award, and can be preordered at:
[http://www.mainstreetrag.com/store/
 ComingSoon.php](http://www.mainstreetrag.com/store/ComingSoon.php)

Praise for *Night Huntress*:

"Stunning. One of the finest manu-
 scripts I've ever read. Compelling
 from beginning to end, these prose
 poems—each alive in heart-pulsing
 language—tell a story of grief, mad-
 ness, agony. How is it possible, the
Night Huntress asks, that the pain
 born of a tragic loss can culminate
 into a peace that passes understand-
 ing? Read this collection, and you will
 know that you are in the hands of a
 masterful writer whose prose poems
 are so lyrically controlled you won't
 want to miss a single step, image,
 metaphor. Scott spins various points
 of view into a journey—a mystery of
 the heart so profound you will feel
 transported into myth and parable."

~Irene Blair Honeycutt, *Waiting for
 the Trout to Speak*

The Boy at the Nightclub

The boy at the nightclub does not remember. He had been drinking, he says, and cannot swear the girl in the back seat of the convertible was real.

Pressed, he is certain she was there, her blond head glistening in the artificial light.

But he does not remember her inside the nightclub, or in the parking lot, although he remembers he came out to be sick.

He does not remember her opening the car door, or climbing in, although, he says, and there is fear in his eyes, she was there, she *was* there.

He recalls the color of her hair, how its blondness had a green cast, how it flowed around her as the car shot off, like seaweed, he says, like something swaying underwater, something tossed about and eddied by a violent current.

He has seen such things, he says, because he is a diver, had been out that very day, was caught in a rip, and, frightened, came home to have a drink.

That is how he puts it, although when he had drunk one, he drank another, and another, until the girl appeared, her skin luminous as shallow water underneath the street light and her pale hair swept about.

She turned to him, he says, and beckoned, although he cannot remember her face, he was too busy being sick..

He is weeping, and the two policemen asking him questions look at each other over his bent head, shrugging slightly, telling each other he is no good as a witness, that he was having visions, telling him sternly he was lucky not to have gone with her, lucky to have fallen face-down in an ocean of his own creation, floated until morning amongst brightly colored fishes hot as blood.

Joanna Catherine Scott

Poetry Open Mic Night cont.



you are reading your poem set to music for the first time, trying your hand at translating from ancient text, or maybe you entered Open Eye for a different reason all together, but the voices called to you and you remember "I have a poem of my own" – on my laptop or in my back pocket. Sometimes, you

have nothing or no desire to read. You are welcome to listen. Everyone is applauded, moving lines or captivating word play noted. Ages and interests vary as do styles and subjects, but for two hours on the first Tuesday of every month you have friends and a supportive audience. Please join us now as we

sample some voices from Poetry Open Mic Night at the Open Eye Café.

Poems begin on page 4 . . .

If a poem is written well, it was written with the poet's voice and for a voice. Reading a poem silently instead of saying a poem is like the difference between staring at sheet music and actually humming or playing the music on an instrument.
- Robert Pinsky



Up on the Blocks

If I sold my soul on EBay
What would be the asking price?
A thousand dollars for a life best thrown away
Do I fulfill my worth?
Am I worth the light of day?
Can you match the price I've paid?
Blood, sweat, tears through all these years
A quarter for a quart a nickel for a pint
Don't tell me that I might
Sell out for less
Than this ugly Persian rug
Cause pain don't sell
And happiness just don't make music
So I'm throwing it all away
I'm selling out on EBay
Maybe a good trade in
On a pile of dirt
To bury what is left
So what is it worth?
Cause I'll never use it
And I'll never accuse it
Of being worth a damn
So why don't you buy it
And why don't you try
And see how you like it and...
Beg for your money back

Mikkos Josey

you liked the gift I gave you, you said
a flip book of photographs dedicated to our perfect friendship
“Note” I wrote in a note, page 1
underneath the shot of us standing in the creek
side by side, staring into my hands
examining a rock which I remember for its exceptional smoothness
which I’m sure you remember too
“Note” I wrote, “that this album is only half full...
...we got a lot more livin’ to do”
dated 1/27/08. the day before I crossed the country
they day before life hit *me*
the day before I realized
driving alone across the cold Texas Desert
that the album was as full as it would ever be

Joseph Scott



Dark Brown Suede Pumas

The effervescent funniness that permeates college campus ladies and gentleman floats in coffee-stench air. We all love star-torn loners wailing away on their notepads. It's a down vest Polar Fleece January night, full of head-nods, poke-ins, note-taking. Up at the bar, a white sweater stretches to accommodate her hands, now behind her back, and pushing, full force, forward and upward at the barista dude. “The book of General Ignorance” blares from a chest-top. Umbrella-boy, cautious, finds a quiet corner, as F-bombs float at Gillian from a newly-arrived admirer. Small Carolina students filter in to the increasingly multi-cultural meeting room: a concrete and sofa and card-table and schoolhouse-bench-desk decorated box that outstrips most coffee houses for ambiance. Ear phones become a secondary defense (again the laptops are the number one wall) as the glance comes back strong from Puma-girl. Peruvian art goes mostly unnoticed, but proximity leads to new friendships today.

Doug Stuber



Affinities

Bodies' attraction accounts for much:
litters of snuggling kittens, lions, pigs;
the midnight appearances of children
in parents' beds; solar systems;

raindrops. Because India
burrows under China, Everest is
Growing and on the move.

Judith Ferster



Old Shoes

This life is
like old shoes.

At first,

They feel
comfortable, and you
run around.

Then, they seem stiff,
and hurt, and you
try to break them in.

They don't
let you
go barefoot!

Going barefoot
in this very public place is forbidden!

The shoes wear on you,
and you begin to feel
okay in them.

You've been
wearing
them for a while.

But you really
just want to be barefoot,
so what is the trick?

You want to feel
barefoot in your old shoes.

You want to get
Very comfortable
in them. You want to
use them every day.

You want to get
behind them somehow.

You wish they'd never
Put them on. But,
you are wearing shoes!
The exile is still there.

One day, you will
die, and they will kindly
take your shoes off.

Eric J. Slavin

In the Desert

We were sleeping, taking cover in a concrete house.
We slept shoulder to shoulder on top of our foam mattresses.
We slept in the morning and after having stood guard all night, we hardly slept,
our eyes open inside their lids,
and we lay in sweat-soaked boxers, in our own stench,
in thirsty air the color of sand.
We were afraid of the day—
none of us could sleep without a gun in his hands,
we lay like boys clutching our favorite stuffed animals.
And it was in our underwear that we woke up to voices and gunfire
And it was from behind closed eyes that we shot back.
Like a nightmare the details were gone as soon as it ended
and only the immediate aftermath can be recalled for when you're later asked—
usually after the question "What was it *really* like?"
by clean collegiate guys who want to know because they almost joined up, too—
if you ever killed someone when you were out there in the desert.
For when I tell them that
looking out on from behind the wall on the bleached canvas that was our playground, I
was looking now through a sheer pink mist and I could smell death, like burnt hair and
carrion, not human. And I looked for the root of the smell but it was gone—their bodies
had evaporated into the air. All vanished except for the insurgent who had gotten into
the driver's seat of a car that had exploded from the surge of gunfire. I saw two arms
suspended above the driver seat, tendons still tensed, fists clenching the steering wheel,
and I saw charcoal where two shoulder joints used to be and I saw a form of crispy ash
resting on the smoking seat.
And I say, he shot at us, and we shot back.

Katharine Pelzer



For more information on
National Poetry Month visit
poets.org

What is National Poetry Month?

National Poetry Month was established by the Academy of American Poets as a month-long, national celebration of poetry. The concept was to increase the attention paid by individuals and the media—to the art of poetry, to living poets, to our poetic heritage, and to poetry books and magazines. In the end, we hoped to achieve an increase in the visibility, presence, and accessibility of poetry in our culture. National Poetry Month has been successful beyond all anticipation and has grown over the years into the largest literary celebration in the world.

The goals of National Poetry Month are to:

- Highlight the extraordinary legacy and ongoing achievement of American poets
- Introduce more Americans to the pleasures of reading poetry
- Bring poets and poetry to the public in immediate and innovative ways
- Make poetry a more important part of the school curriculum
- Increase the attention paid to poetry by national and local media
- Encourage increased publication, distribution, and sales of poetry books
- Increase public and private philanthropic support for poets and poetry

Ways to Celebrate

Read a book of poetry—"Poetry is a response to the daily necessity of getting the world right."

Memorize a poem—"Getting a poem or prose passage truly 'by heart' implies getting it by mind and memory and understanding and delight."

Revisit a poem—"America is a country of second acts, so today, why not brush the dust of these classics and give them a fresh read?"

Put poetry in an unexpected place—"Books should be brought to the doorstep like electricity, or like milk in England: they should be considered utilities."

Bring a poem to your place of worship—"We define poetry as the unofficial view of being, and bringing the art of language in contact with your spiritual practices can deepen both."

Attend a poetry reading—"Readings have been occurring for decades around the world in universities, bookstores, cafes, corner pubs, and coffeehouses."

Play Exquisite Corpse—"Each participant is unaware of what the others have written, thus producing a surprising ~sometimes absurd~yet often beautiful poem."

Read a poem at an open mic—"It's a great way to meet other writers in your area and find out about your local writing community."

Google a poem—"Many people carry single lines of verse with them, sometimes for years, and are eager to remember the rest of that particular poem."

Young People's Poetry Week—"You'll find party ideas, poem starters, crossword puzzles, award certificates, lists of poetry books for kids, and more."

Put a poem in a letter—"It's always a treat to get a letter, but finding a poem in the envelope makes the experience extra special."

April is the cruelest month—"To mark tax day, the Academy distributed thousands of free copies of *The Waste Land* at selected post offices across the country."

Take a poem out to lunch—"Adding a poem to lunch puts some poetry in your day and gives you something great to read while you eat."

Put a poem on the pavement—"Go one step beyond hopscotch squares and write a poem in chalk on your sidewalk."

Recite a poem to family and friends—"You can use holidays or birthdays as an opportunity to celebrate with a poem that is dear to you, or one that reminds you of the season."

Start a poetry reading group—"Select books that would engage discussion and not intimidate the reader new to poetry."

Buy a book of poems for your library—"Many libraries have undergone or are facing severe cuts in funding. These cuts are often made manifest on library shelves."

Start a commonplace book—"Since the Renaissance, devoted readers have been copying their favorite poems and quotations into notebooks to form their own personal anthologies called commonplace books."

Add verse to your email signature—"Many email programs allow you to create personalized signatures that are automatically added to the end of every email you send."

Celebrate Poem in Your Pocket Day—"New Yorkers are encouraged to carry a poem in their pocket and share it with friends, family, coworkers and classmates."

Copyright © 1997 - 2008 by The Academy of American Poets.
For the complete list of 30 Ways to Celebrate visit:

<http://www.poets.org/page.php/prmID/94>

- **The National Federation of State Poetry Societies** conducts many contests each year. Each submission must be postmarked no later than **March 15, 2008**. For details on each contest's requirements please visit http://www.nfsps.com/poetry_contests.htm
- **Press 53 Open Awards Writing Contest for Young Writers** ages 13-17. Youth may submit may submit 1 story up to 5000 words or 3 poems by **Mar. 31, 2008**. Reading fee included. Go to <http://www.press53.com/Contests.html>
- **2008 Robert Watson Poetry Award**—Submissions must be received by **April 2, 2008**. <http://www.springgardenpress.com/contests.html>
- **Town of Carrboro Youth Poetry Contest**— Submission Deadline is **April 4th, 2008**. For Carrboro residents and ages 18 & under, youth divided by elementary, middle, and high school levels. See below (Poetry Alive section) for more information! Winners will read poems on Carrboro Day.
- **Main Street Rag's Annual Poetry Chapbook Contest**—Winner receives \$500 and 50 copies of chapbook. All entries receive a copy of the winning manuscript and are considered for publication. Entries must be postmarked by **May 31, 2008**. \$15 reading fee. Details at <http://www.mainstreetrag.com/ChapCont.html>



April 22 is Earth Day

“It is only when we are aware of the earth
and of the earth as poetry that we truly live.”
- Henry Beston, 1935, *Herbs and the Earth*



Poetry Live!

**Poets Open Mic
Open Eye Café,
Carrboro**

March 4th and April 1st

7-9pm Free

This event provides a casual and comfortable setting for people to celebrate, share, encourage, write, read, and listen to poetry.

Recommended for ages 15 and up unless accompanied by a parent.

**Poetry on Your Plate
Century Center,
Carrboro**

Fridays, April 3rd -April 17th

12pm-1:00pm Free

Celebrate national Poetry Month with a menu of local poets reading from their works. Bring your lunch, enjoy coffee from the Open Eye, and feast on Poetry!

Co-sponsored by the Carrboro Cybrary.

Recommended for ages 18 and up. 918-7372

**Town of Carrboro
Youth Poetry Contest!**

Submission Deadline:
April 4th, 2008

Must be 18 years or younger & a Carrboro resident at time of submission. Contest divided into elementary, middle, and high school levels. Winners will read poems and participate in a ceremony on Carrboro Day, May 4th.

Send your poem by mail to:
Carrboro Youth Poetry Contest
ATTN: Kim Andrews
100 North Greensboro St
Carrboro NC 27510

Include your name, school name, address, phone number, email, birth date, & a little information about yourself.

For these and other events contact:

Carrboro Recreation & Parks Department
919-918-7364.

Or visit:
www.townofcarrboro.org/rp

Round About

Poetry Hickory

Tasteful Beans
29 2nd St. NW, Hickory

Tuesday, March 11 and
April 8

This new monthly event is hosted by CVCC instructor Scott Owens & co-sponsored by Main Street Rag. Every 2nd Tuesday. Featured readers followed by an Open Mic. Details: asowens1@yahoo.com

Poetry Reading with Coleman Barks

Asheville School
Asheville

Thursday, March 6th
Free and open to public

Mr. Banks is a renowned translator of Rumi poetry.

For information contact John Gregory 828-251-5321 or at gregoryj@ashevilleschool.org

Poetry Reading

Regulator Bookshop
Durham

Friday, March 7
7:30pm

Francine Sterle will read from and sign copies of her ekphrastic (based on visual works of art) poetry collection, *Nude in Winter*. For artists and poets alike. For information call 919-286-2700.

Poetriio Series

Malaprop's Bookstore
Asheville

Sunday, April 6
3:00 pm

Poet Sally Buckner, author of *Collateral Damage*, will be one of three readers.

For information call 828-254-6734.

Gastonia County Public Library

Gastonia

Saturday, April 12
2:00pm Free

Chuck Sullivan and Joanna Catherine Scott will read from and sign copies of their newly released poetry books. Afterward they will discuss the process of refining their poetry for publication. 704-868-2164

Literary Open Mic

McIntyre's Book Store at
Farrington

Every first Thursday
night at 7:00pm
monthly.

Farrington Village in
Pittsboro.

For more info call 919-542-3030. Sign up upon arrival.

Friday Noon Poets

Amity United Methodist
Church, Chapel Hill

On the corner of Estes and Martin Luther King Jr. Rd. (aka Airport Rd.)

Contact David Manning for information call 919-462-3695, or visit dbtm@mindspring.com

Poetry Reading Series

University North Carolina
Greensboro

UNCG offers a variety of evening poetry readings throughout March and April and beyond.

For more information visit www.uncg.edu/eng/mfa/mfa-series.html or contact Jim Clark, Director MFA Writing Program 336-334-5494.

Created and Issued by: Carrboro Recreation and Parks

- We welcome any comments or suggestions for future programs, articles in the newsletter, or the West End Poets' Weekend.
- Do you know of anyone that would like to receive this newsletter? Email us.
- Submissions can be sent to Allie Hansen at athletics@ci.carrboro.nc.us

100 North Greensboro Street
Carrboro, NC 27514

www.townofcarrboro.org
www.westendpoetsweekend.com

West End Poets Weekend Coordinator:

Kim Andrews
Phone: (919) 918-7367
kandrews@townofcarrboro.org
Fax: 919-918-4475