



POEM BY  
K. KOCH



THE BOOK OF  
MAGICAL POETRY

AN ANTHOLOGY OF MAGICAL POETRY  
LAY ON THE TABLE IN THE ROOKERY  
I OPENED IT AND BEGAN TO CHARM  
BEGAN TO CHARM THE BIRDS AWAY

"ROBIN REDBREAST AND SPARROW  
BLUEFINCH OF WAIST THAT IS  
NARROW  
JOYOUS KINGFISHER, CATBIRD SO BLACK  
ALL FLY AWAY AND NEVER  
COME BACK!"



DRAWN BY  
R. GROOMS



# The FORENSIC of Pi Kappa Delta

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## TRY LIVE AUDIENCE DEBATING

Have you ever tried to convince an audience of members of the Chamber of Commerce that the Federal government should guarantee employment opportunities to all citizens? Have you ever attempted to persuade an audience of policemen that recent Supreme Court decisions involving the exclusionary rule are defensible? These are just two of many challenging situations our squad at Southeast Missouri has faced recently while taking part in public debates, and although at times we found the experience frustrating, we have never regretted our decision to take part. We have discovered, as many others have, that debating before a live audience of interested laypersons is a rewarding and educational experience.

Audience debating can be justified on a number of grounds. In the first place, it helps fulfill an obligation which I believe all of us in forensics have — the obligation

to take before the public the significant issues which we study and analyze. Why should the information we have collected and the insights we have achieved be kept to ourselves, shared only with others who have made similar investments of energy in the topic? People in the community have a right to hear some of the brightest student minds in the country discussing some of the most important public issues of our time, and, what is more, they genuinely appreciate such opportunities.

In the second place, audience debating can be a deterrent to some of the less desirable habits debaters often fall into during tournament competition. Real audiences, that is those composed not solely of debate coaches and judges, are not very tolerant of squirrel cases, mile-a-minute delivery, or confusing jargon. Contact with a real audience can be

*(Continued on page 12)*





## NOTES ON THE UPCOMING CONVENTION

You probably will be reading this before the convention in St. Louis, and you can tell that my thoughts are running almost entirely with the convention. By this time the entries will be in our hands, and after checking the memberships of all the entries, they will have been returned to you certified and processed for registration. Please contact this office immediately if there are errors or questions after you have received your copy. We will do our best to rectify any mistakes. You should remember that if your questions deal with the contests or the rules of the contests, contact Dr. Roger Hufford, Clarion State College, Clarion, PA 16214.

It is the hope of everyone working on the convention that this one might be the largest in our history. You will not regret the time and money spent for this exciting experience. To most students it is a one-time experience in their college lives,

and most everyone feels it is worthwhile. The pressure is off, and yet the competition is worthwhile. You have the opportunity to meet other students from varying parts of the country, and to learn of their concerns, interests, and awards.

If your chapter has not yet paid the annual chapter fee of \$15.00, we will accept that payment at the time of registration. We will also issue a receipt.

We want all of you to visit the Pi Kappa Delta store. We will have supplies of all kinds for you. It would be well for you to take inventory of your chapter supplies before coming to the convention and pick them up at that time. It will save considerable time, postage, and inconvenience later. We will also have supplies which you can purchase, such as decals, certificates, pennants, and yes, again we will have the official Pi Kappa Delta "T" shirts. Since the Constitution as amended

*(Continued on page 12)*





## IE EVOLUTION IN PKD

**Larry Norton, Historian**

On March 31, 1920, at the Third National Convention held at Morningside College, Sioux City, Iowa, Pi Kappa Delta sponsored its first intercollegiate contest. The event was oratory, in which speakers from ten different colleges participated. Jacob Trefz, of Morningside College, won first place. Second place went to Adolph H. Brick of Fairmount College, and R. E. Untereiner, of Redlands University, placed third. The lone woman orator represented Huron College. Orations were limited to 2,000 words with no more than 200 quoted words.

It has been the policy of Pi Kappa Delta to add an event to the national convention tournament program when it has been established that: 1) The members desire it, 2) It has educational values as an intercollegiate activity, 3) It can be incorporated into the schedule. The suggestions of the Convention Evaluation Committee have served as a primary guide to the National Council in deciding what events to add or to modify throughout the years.

The popularity of the oratorical contest had been well established over several

decades prior to 1920. The first intercollegiate oratorical contest had been held in Galesburg, Illinois, on February 27, 1874. Out of this contest developed the Interstate Oratorical Association. Other oratorical associations followed; the Northern Oratorical League in 1890; the Hamilton Club Contest, sponsored by the Hamilton Club of Chicago; the Civic League Contest which included colleges from Ohio, New York, and Pennsylvania; the Peace Contests and the Prohibition Contests. It has been estimated that, in the first two decades of the twentieth century, ten thousand orations were delivered before three million listeners in the Prohibition Contests. Oratory had passed the tests of educational value and general acceptance.

The rules for conducting contests in oratory have undergone frequent but minor changes throughout the past fifty-nine years. Separate contests for men and women were established in 1924. The word limit was reduced to 1,500 in 1930 and to 1,200 in 1938. In the 1953 and 1955 conventions, a time limit of ten minutes was substituted for the word limit. The



word limit was reinstated in 1957 and lasted until 1977 when, upon recommendation of the Evaluation Committee, the ten-minute limit was reintroduced.

At the 1924 convention, extempore speaking was added to the contest schedule. There were nineteen men and seven women contestants. It soon became one of the elite contest events. By 1947, the maximum time limit had been reduced from ten to eight and then down to six minutes with two minutes allowed for answering a question. The question was first used in the finals for men in 1934 and in all extempore contests starting in 1936. A fellow contestant asked the question until 1947, after which time a judge was given that responsibility. In 1977 the preparation time was reduced from one hour to one-half hour.

The first local extempore speaking contest was probably held at Grinnell College in 1891. Two issues of *The Forensic* in 1921 refer to extempore contests at Macalester College, Huron College, Grinnell College, North Dakota University, and Hamline University. In about 1920 Macalester may have been the first to hold an intercollegiate contest. Apparently extempore speaking had a limited history as an intercollegiate activity before 1924.

From 1924 to 1969, no additional individual events were added to the national convention program. Experiments continued at the local and province tournaments with several other events, including interpretation.

In 1969 an interpretation event was added at the national level. Acceptance of this event had been delayed a few years by debate on the question of whether interpretation should be recognized as a "forensic" activity. The question may not have been decided, but the activity has become an acceptable part of the total tournament schedule.

In the late sixties it was apparent that individual events were gaining immense popularity. Tournaments throughout the country were including a greater variety with increased registration. By 1971 new memberships in Pi Kappa Delta, by way of individual events, had greatly increased in number.

In 1973 informative speaking was an added event at the National Convention in Omaha. Also, the number of rounds for all individual events was reduced from four to three to make room for more activities. The Evaluation Committee, that year, recommended that consideration be given to including such events as impromptu speaking, after-dinner speaking and rhetorical criticism.

In the January 1974 *Forensic*, Editor Georgia Bowman printed the results of a chapter survey of attitudes toward forensic events. There were very few negative votes for the eight events included in the 1973 tournament schedule. In a list of twenty-two other events, after-dinner speaking was most preferred by a considerable margin.

The Pi Kappa Delta Council added speaking to entertain to the 1975 program of events. In 1977 the Evaluation Committee recommended that interpretation be expanded into two events. Therefore, at the 1979 Pi Kappa Delta Convention in St. Louis, there will be another addition as interpretation of poetry and interpretation of prose become two separate events. Even though schedules become tighter, it remains easier to add events than to delete them.

## ***A Look Ahead to May . . .***

**Results from the  
St. Louis Nationals**

**Recap on the 1978-'79  
reform debates**

**Photos galore —  
and much more**

## **The Cover:**

Red Grooms, 1937 —

*The Book of Magical Poetry*, 1967  
(poem by Kenneth Koch)

Felt tip pen and wash  
589x890 mm.

Ruth C. Roush Fund for Contemporary  
Art 72.34

Appreciation is extended to the Allen  
Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin Col-  
lege, for permission to reproduce this  
drawing.



# **TO ORAL INTERPRETERS**

**George Boss**

**Interpreters, look into us with feeling.  
Let excitement and caring burn  
in your voices like colored candles.  
Comb your hair and your diction. Let  
no dishevelled words fall from your lips.**

**Become the phrase and image you read  
so meaning fits like cozy gloves  
on hearts, minds, faces, hands.  
Do not stretch feeling and thought,  
force them to fit your universe.**

**You must not strive to be mirrors only,  
for mirrors simply gather and duplicate  
among indifferent surfaces.  
Be more, not less, than reflections.  
Give the work breath with your dimensions.**

**Let the judge in you decide the time  
when you and "word" are ready to emerge.  
Then let the judge — your audience —  
observe worm turning to butterfly  
as word, you, world become metamorphosis.**

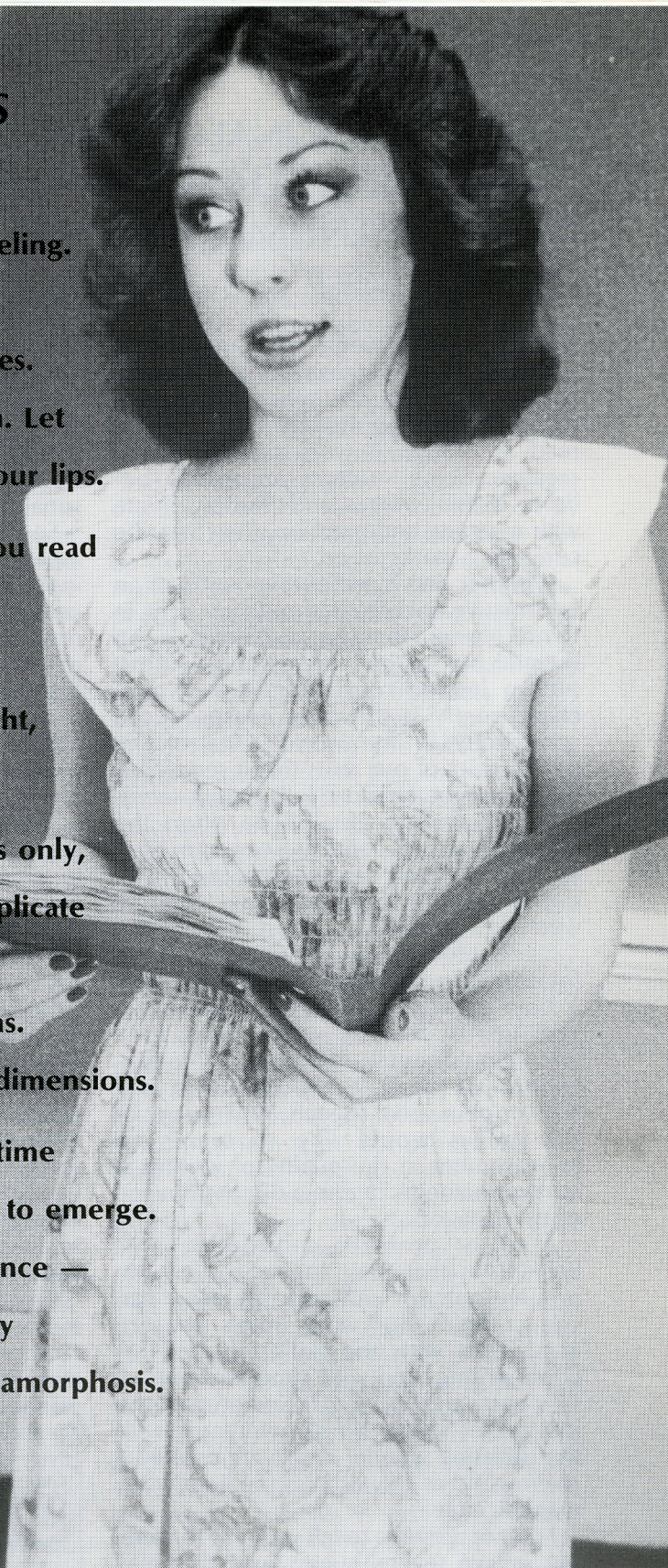


Photo by Bob Wood



# ORIGINAL POETRY: EMOTION RECOLLECTED IN TRANQUILITY OR SENTIMENT DRESSED IN CLICHÉS?

George Boss

One of the events that many find enjoyable and rewarding is original poetry. Unfortunately, in a number of contests, judges are hearing the trivial and the trite read as though it were significant and creative. Some students apparently believe, if their voices and bodies vibrate with meaning and emotion, they must be conveying works of art.

Whether one is presenting poetry or an informative speech, it should be kept in mind always that an audience is an integral part of its message and context. Judson Jerome remarks, "Next to zucchini, poetry is the most overproduced commodity in the world. One of the peculiarities of our art is that it serves our own needs much more fully than it serves those of anyone else."<sup>1</sup> Too often the poetry heard in contests seems to be a commodity that serves only the interpreter whose most pressing need is winning a round.

Undoubtedly those of you who write for original poetry believe that your work is both original and poetry. However, if your words are to qualify as both, then you should apply yourself as conscientiously to the craft as you would to your ADS or persuasive speech. What many of the judges would like to see is an improvement in the quality of writing at our tournaments or else a discontinuance of the category.

A major problem confronting participants is that they appear to lack the proper tools for self-criticism. How can you critique your work unless you are acquainted with the skills required for good writing, and with superior poets of the past and present? Sometimes the interpreter seems simply overcome with the titillating wonder of having created a poem-child as he mistakes mediocrity for magnificence.

I do not presume to tell you how to write, but I have several suggestions that may

prove of value. First let us consider the creative process itself and then the areas where skills are essential to produce satisfying and quality poems. We should be cognizant that all good writing derives from a point of view, a philosophy, a personal vision of life and our universe.

Several writers have pondered this aspect of the artistic impulse. Maritain insists man is involved with nature in the creative process. He affirms that "What matters to us is the mutual entanglement of Nature and man — let us say, the coming together of the World and the Self — in relation to artistic creation."<sup>2</sup> Indeed Miller reflects, "Writing, like life itself, is a voyage of discovery. The adventure is a metaphysical one: it is a way of approaching life indirectly, of acquiring a total rather than a partial view of the universe."<sup>3</sup> Even the shortest poem contains the author and his attitude toward the world.

Probably even the least talented poet writes out of an "urge." Lengyel states, "The urge to give shape and meaning to experience, to save a fragment from the huge and universal flux of things, to arrest a living moment from the unceasing process of dissolution . . . is a part of man's desire to transcend the limitation of his human condition."<sup>4</sup> To have a memorable moment we wish to save is obviously not enough. We must be possessed by the moment and possess the verbal skills to capture and recreate it.

To make this "urge" work for us we must exercise a creative attitude. Erich Fromm suggests three conditions for this attitude. These are the capacity to be puzzled, the ability to concentrate, and the ability to accept conflict and tension.<sup>5</sup>

George Boss is a published poet, member of PKD, and teacher of oral interpretation at Bloomsburg State College. His doctorate is from Ohio University.



Fromm further recommends that one should have "the willingness to be born again every day."<sup>6</sup> Such rebirth is equivalent to bursting into the day with fresh, verbal, musical, or artistic eyes and ears. Still the crux of the "creative attitude" for the budding writer is obtaining the verbal dexterity he requires for an original, novel, vibrant recognition of himself and his universe.

Should the poetic response to what is observed be initiated by thought or feeling? Wordsworth said poetry should spring from an emotion recollected in tranquillity.<sup>7</sup> Clearly the poet meant the writing did not occur on the spot when the observer was first excited. Rather he returned to his study and wrote as he regenerated the moment and the emotion with some degree of objectivity. Surely the thought of Wordsworth's poem, "I wandered lonely as a cloud," was inseparable from the feeling engendered by his rapt perception.

Poets like Wordsworth who have contributed to our ideas about the process of composing poetry do not assert that one must search for the unusual, the odd, the "spaced out" subject or expression. Most would agree with Emerson: "We are symbols and inhabit symbols; workmen, work, and tools, words and things, birth and death, all are emblems; but we sympathize with the symbols, and being infatuated with the economical use of things, we do not know that they are thoughts. The poet, by an ulterior intellectual perception, gives them a power which makes their old use forgotten, and puts eyes and a tongue into every dumb and inanimate object."<sup>8</sup> In effect, there is truly little "new under the sun" in subject matter. What should be "new" is your awake, shimmering view of things, of the commonplace. To accomplish this transformation you must be knowledgeable of the complexities of your medium.

What are some of the complexities that prospective poets should be concerned with? Let us realize that most offerings of the oral interpreter will be of the lyric type. Langer summarizes the demands made on the lyric poet. She avers that "The fullest exploitation of language, sound and rhythm, assonance and sensu-

ous associations, is made in lyric poetry . . . it is the literary form that depends most directly on pure verbal resources — the sound and evocative power of words, meter, alliteration, rhyme, and other rhythmic devices, associated images, repetitions, archaisms, and grammatical twists."<sup>9</sup> If you are serious about your role as a poet, you should be willing to deal with the difficult techniques that must be learned in the craft of poetry. You should be unwilling to inflict the superficial and indifferent on your audience.

Space does not allow for an adequate discussion of the factors touched on by Langer. However, some comments may be useful to stimulate your own personal exploration in creativity. One would expect, for instance, a thorough concern for form and content with freshness as a goal to be pursued. Perrin cautions us in this regard: "Struggling for freshness usually brings on either trite figures or strained ones. The figures to use need not be unusual, just the ones that come easily to your mind when you are trying to give an exact account of the subject. They should fit in their context and — most important — add something to the sense."<sup>10</sup> Perhaps it might be more to the purpose in the search for freshness merely to seek precision and concreteness in describing your thoughts and feelings, while avoiding clichés and strained expressions.

Another requirement for improved poetry is awareness of prosody and the effects of rhythmic structure. Hrushovski insists that "Practically everything in the written poem can contribute to the shaping of the rhythm — the words in their multidimensional organizations as well as aspects of the whole which arise implicitly from the line, such as tone, ethos, atmosphere, *stimmung*, or whatever we call them — although each element may, and does, have other functions in the poem too."<sup>11</sup> However, it should suffice for the beginning poet to practice with iambic, trochaic, anapaestic, and dactylic kinds of feet in order to develop versatility in the handling of variety of phrasing with stressed and unstressed syllables.<sup>12</sup> Just as a word should fit the context, the rhythmic decisions should relate to the poet's



mood and approach to form and content.

Regardless of what you have to say and wish to enter in the poem as content, the "turn of phrase" or individual idiosyncratic treatment of phrase and thought will identify you. A person's style is revealed in the "turn of phrase". To acquire style one must be open and versatile with language. Carl Rogers notes that a creative person must be open to experience, must possess an internal locus of evaluation, and be able "to toy with elements and concepts."<sup>13</sup> The poet will discover his style as he juggles words, phrases, sentences, and ideas — those that match his particular costume of self.

Selves that are distinctive and fascinating exhibit themselves in just a few lines as we can notice in the verses that follow. Consider how these poets alter the commonplace, dressing it in uncommon clothes or, if you will, rearranging its contours into a different shape.

From Wallace Stevens' poem "Sunday Morning, I:"

And the green freedom of a cockatoo  
Upon a rug<sup>14</sup>

In this poem Stevens has taken the quality of green belonging to the cockatoo and transferred it to freedom. Being on a rug, the cockatoo is free, and freedom relates to the greenness of his native habitat. The common word has been made uncommon.

From Elinor Wylie's "Escape:"

Making blind moons of all your eyes  
And muddy roads of all your hands.<sup>15</sup>

In this poem Wylie has transferred the known blindness of eyes to moons and the muddiness of hands to roads — not highly original, yet altering the familiar.

From E. E. Cummings' "My Father Moved through Dooms of Love:"

Scorning the pomp of must and shall  
My father moved through dooms of  
feel<sup>16</sup>

Cummings is renowned for the "grammatical twists" mentioned by Langer. His use of "must," "shall," and "feel" as nouns wrenches the familiar, yet the sense does not appear to be strained.

From Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*:

The evil that men do lives after them;  
The good is oft interred with their  
bones;<sup>17</sup>

This quotation is so well-known that we forget that it too has extended the common. The uncommon here is the separation of evil and good as beings apart from, yet residing physically within, the man who is interred. On a simpler level of imagery, if one were to say, "The woman walked" or "ran down the street," it would be a limited, unimaginative phrase. If, on the other hand, one were to say, "The woman fluttered" or "spiraled down the street," such verbs would provide uncommon images and give us a more precise description of an activity.

Turns of phrase, of course, also involve us in figures of speech.<sup>18</sup> Words for the poem rarely serve only one function. The above examples are evidence of the uncommon and exemplify types of imagery as well. In Wylie's lines, for instance, the images of moon-eyes and roads-hands operate as metaphors. "Green freedom" can be taken as a phrase that stands for the cockatoo and thus acts as a type of metonymy. The phrases beginning with "pomp" and "through," although not metaphors grammatically, operate in a metaphorical sense with the ideas implied. And Shakespeare's use of "evil" and "good" produces personification, as abstractions are endowed with the human capacity of living and dying. Other examples would be: "the maple leaves talk," "the houses weep," and "the streets gossip."

In spite of the fact that here we have no more than two lines of any poet's work, each can be identified by his singular treatment of rhythm and turn of phrase. Stevens can be recognized by his casual yet formal structure of iambic pentameter. Wylie writes in a formal, sentimental style and prefers iambic tetrameter. We identify Cummings by his frequent, odd shifts of syntax. Shakespeare, on the other hand, tends to instruct us often with maxims, and these are usually lofty thoughts couched in blank verse.

The preceding statements, to say the least, are an over-simplified evaluation of the styles of these fine poets. However, the samples do provide us with stylistic traces that are characteristic of their creations. Moreover, the examples have