

# INTHEMARGINS

## LITCITY



Blair, a Detroit-based poet, National Poetry Slam Champion and member of HBO Def Poets is the featured reader for the Nickel City Poetry Slam on Friday (Feb. 3) at 7pm at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery.

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**Gusto at the Gallery.** 3-10pm. "James Joyce with Gusto." An evening of readings and multi-media performances presented by UB's Institute of Humanities. The Nickel City Poetry Slam, presented by *just buffalo*, begins at 7pm with host N'Tare Gault and featured reader/HBO Def Jam poet Blair. Sign-up starts at 6pm. Albright-Knox Art Gallery, 1285 Elmwood Ave. (882-8700); free.

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**Along This Way: Storytelling in the African Tradition.** 2pm. Karima Amin and Sharon Holley lead a celebration of Black History Month with stories, songs, games, and music. Buffalo and Erie County Central Library Auditorium, downtown Buffalo. (832-5400); free.

**Writing Workshop: The Last Five Years - Writing the Memory from Reflection to Recreation.** 10am-2pm. Two-part workshop with instructor Marj Hahne. Next session Feb. 18. Musical Fare Theatre, 4380 Main St., Suite 810, Amherst (832-5400); \$90. Call to register.

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**Booksigning.** 7pm. Featuring Jay Gallagher, journalist and author of *The Politics of Decline*. Discussion will follow. Talking Leaves Books, 951 Elmwood Ave. (884-9524); free.

**Literacy Volunteers.** 3-4:30pm. Mentoring opportunity and training session for volunteers of all ages. Literacy Volunteers, 1313 Main St. (845-6500); free. Registration required.

**Open Reading.** 8pm. Featuring Brock Clarke, author of *Carrying the Torch*. Reception and booksigning will follow. Marie Maday Theater at Canisius College, 2001 Main Street. (883-7000). Free.

### RECURRING EVENTS

**Children's Writers & Illustrators Group.** 7pm, every third Thursday each month. Borders Books, 2015 Walden Ave., Cheektowaga (685-2844).

**EM Tea Coffee Cup Open Mic Poetry Series.** 7-9:30pm every Tuesday. EM Tea Coffee Cup Café, 80 Oakgrove Ave. at Hughes St. (884-1444).

**Just Buffalo Writers Critique Group.** 7pm, meets first and third Wednesday of every month. Open to just buffalo literary center members; call 832-5400 for membership details. Flux Gallery, Market Arcade Arts Centre. (832-5400).

**Moonlight Poetry Circle.** 9pm, first Friday of each month. Share poetry informally through spoken word, song, music, art, etc. 289 Winspear Ave (upper). All are welcome. More info: (903-2884).

**Northside Writers Group.** 7pm, first and third Thursday of each month. Ascension Lutheran Church, 4640 Main Street, Amherst. (626-4204).

Send weekly literary event info (name, description, location, date, time, and admission) to: [editorial@artvoice.com](mailto:editorial@artvoice.com), subject "In The Margins" or fax to: 881-6682. Listings must be received by the Wednesday before publication for consideration.

## BOOKREVIEWS



**Plain Heathen Mischief**  
by Martin Clark  
Random House, 2005 \$14 (paperback)

Can you imagine reading a book in which the hero is a minister who, at the outset of the story, is delivering his final sermon before leaving to commence a prison sentence for having raped one of his teenage parishioners? (He is only able to appear in his church this last time because he has accepted a plea bargain with jail time; thus he is guilty only of a misdemeanor.) Giving the author of *Plain Heathen Mischief* the benefit of the doubt, I thought I would try a few chapters. After all, the author, Martin Clark, is a Virginia circuit court judge who ought to know something about crime and whose previous novel, *The Many Aspects of Mobile Home Living*, not only won several awards but was also selected by the Book-of-the-Month Club. Thank goodness I did continue for I found this book delightful. Its hero, Joel King, did make a terrible mistake for which he pays by losing not only his church but his family as well. But he struggles back, making further errors as he does—no more rapes, however—eventually working his way into the reader's heart. Clark is equally good at portraying good and bad characters and both types are very well represented in this story. If you like the novels of Richard Russo and Anne Tyler or the short stories of Alice Munro or Annie Proulx, you'll enjoy Clark's writing just as well. I have already ordered his earlier novel. —*gerry rising*



**The California Poem**  
by Eleni Sikelianos  
Coffee House Press, 2004 \$16

*The California Poem* is Eleni Sikelianos' sprawling, ambitious, artfully messy, multi-media (writing, drawing, photography, collage) attempt to render California—the entire state—in a nearly 200-page poem. So the question stands: Did Sikelianos succeed? As I returned to the book over a two-month period I kept hearing the same voice repeating, "I didn't think anyone was doing this anymore!" The sheer bravado of undertaking such a daunting artistic project at a time when most poets are content to cobble together 60 pages of publishable poetry is to be applauded. The most immediate reference (what is a poetry review without a reference?) is to Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* with his inclusion of each and every person, star, beast, pebble, dream, and passionate flashes of the poet himself, walking the dusty streets of his beloved country. Sikelianos does love her California: I can't help but imagine her chanting her songs to Whitman across 3,000 miles and 100-plus years of American history. And, as Whitman was often a touchstone in his own poems, it was a pleasure running into the young Eleni throughout *The California Poem*: the quintessential adolescent poet stealing radios and silver quarters and hanging out with surfer kids at night by the bonfire. Did she succeed? *The Book of California* comes from a poet of greater breath (and breadth) than you'll find in a whole New York-full of poetry magazines, creative writing departments and literary receptions. *The Book of California* is a triumph. The ball is in your court, New York. —*peter connors*

### BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND: POETRY IN ARTVOICE!

As of March 1, In The Margins will again feature poetry by local writers on an irregular, though roughly monthly basis. The new poetry editor will be Florine Melnyk. Florine has worked as an editor for *ecopoetics* magazine, as well as a manuscript reader and editor for Buffalo's own Starcherone Books. Submissions of no more than five poems and no more than 10 pages in length can be sent by email to [florine@starcherone.com](mailto:florine@starcherone.com) or by mail to: Florine Melnyk, Poetry Editor: Artvoice, 810 Main St., Buffalo, NY 14202

luscious fish  
800  
maple



super bowl party begins @4:00pm

800 maple road williamsville 688.5800