

The Greater Boston Intercollegiate Undergraduate Poetry Festival

By Pat Pattison

Every year, Mass Poetry brings together professor-nominated undergraduate poets from over 15 colleges in the Greater Boston area. With a professor or faculty's guidance in practicing and revising a poem, one young artist from each institution performs an original set at the intercollegiate showcase. This year's event took place at the GrubStreet Center for Creative Writing. Student poets were each given three minutes to read.



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Student-Poet Acacia Hui represented Berklee this year.

Acacia Hui, a Cantonese-American poet hailing from New Jersey, is a senior majoring in Music Therapy and minoring in Psychology. Acacia channels her passion for creativity into various forms: from poetry to songwriting to even knitting, Chinese knotting and jewelry-making. In the coming Fall, she will be working as a Music Therapy intern at Kennedy Day School at Franciscan Children's Hospital in Massachusetts.

Acacia read three of her poems: first, her Terza Rima:

The Morning After

As dawn disperses last night's biting chill,
The morning light gingerly peeking through
To see my aching form sink deeper still

Into cocoons of quilts I stole from you
(Despite your bleary-eyed whining). You reach
Out, keen to pull me close and cling like a glue

That I can't peel off. Sluggish silence breached,
You mutter (musty morning breath against
my neck) how morning had swiftly approached -

And here I lay curled up, all cramped and tensed,
Recounting the night's blunders - the poor meal,
The drinks...and you. And though I lie, now fenced,

I pray the coming of Today will bail
Me from your sickly hold: I pray I'll heal.

Next Acacia's English Sonnet:

Winter Song

As clouds begin to smudge the sky with grey
And heaven's misty eyes dampen the earth,
The whistling wind whips through the entranceway,
The trees shaking their lanky limbs beneath.

Despite the Winter's aching, moaning chill
And sickly, sopping earth squelching beneath
My weary feet, the usual woe has still
Not yet struck bone, nor rattled 'bout my teeth.

Though Winter tries its melancholy spell,
How odd! I tremble less within its cold -
I do not fret: warm joy will always dwell
When drawing near to fervent love so bold.

I dare to dodge the wind's punishing sting:
The warmth of your embrace could rival Spring.

Finally, her Italian Sonnet:

Looking Glass

As breath-fogged mirrors hold my weary twin,
My lips can utter forth no ounce of praise.
A younger me would wail, her eyes ablaze
Upon the sight of sagging double chin,
“My once unblemished flesh rots from within!”
Time’s cruel touch meets my disconcerted gaze:
See here! The reckless years (and months and days)
Have pressed their grief deep into dimpled skin.

And yet, wandering fingers trace my thighs
And marvel. Silken scars carve tales of old
And even now, the crinkles near my eyes
Whisper of trials conquered, yet untold.
My body, though worn, has brought me thus far.
Would giving it grace be all that bizarre?

In addition, since Berklee still get a BOCO at Berklee spot, Judson Evans, founder of the poetry circle “The Garden,” nominated Dylan Ever.

Dylan Ever makes poems out of folklore and fiction, interweaving characters, creatures, and confused twenty-somethings. In her art she loves exploring combinations of music, visuals, and writing, and can often be found plucking at a guitar, building spaceship-esque synthesizers, or out writing poetry for passersby on her typewriter.

Dylan read three poems, the first in Blank Verse:

who’s a good boy?

the dog is walking me today, despite
the fact that i'm the one that bought the leash.
he yanks my arm out of the socket, barks,
runs after some plump squirrel. makes me look
so childish. standing there, abandoned, like
the time you took my virtue out the door
and told the dog, while smiling, to go fetch,
and i just watched it happen. chew toy-esque.

Dylan read two poems in Free Verse. Here's the first:

give me a kiss

You. small stoned skipper You
flat snapped wire tapped
made of peanut brittle You
ding dong ditcher, emotionally. there's
never anyone to answer.
what a waste. chronic sewer rats make
pacts to don hats and coats and
moonlight as suitors.
give me roses. promises
lie between buck teeth beneath
fat wanting eyes. present
gifts they have fished out
of street trash and
rewrapped, done up in bows
of shoelace and twine.

You, Mr. Backbone of a Bandaid in a Public Pool,
i formally decline.

Dylan's second Free Verse Poem:

take a hike, body

slowbody

heavy body

can't make it do anything body

can't take it from any body

can't move away from no body

tryna get some fresh air in the

nostrils of this

dang body

try to feel the breeze between

two cold feet on the

metal body

fire escape body

might go somewhere nice body

somewhere where no one expects anything of this body.

somewhere where none dare to ever touch body

they might linger and stare but

nobody will ever say

HEY, EVERYBODY!

look at this body!

twice timing, tongue tying
lying to everybody body
lying to itself body
always getting gone body
running on home, body

what you running from, body?
ain't nothin' in your own body to be
so
scared of, body.
only your own heart in that
thick slick of a
cage, body

it's screamin' against you, body
it's leanin' into you, body,
body, you're all that heart has.
nobody else can have that heart unless they rip it out of
your body, body.
even then all your shivers will
touch that body too, body.

else
what was the point of that
donor card,
body?

lying dead body.
get well soon body.
full of holes body.
stole your parts body.
now they want art, body.
they took everything, body.
now they want art out of your parts, body,

ARE
YOU
GONNA
MAKE
IT?

take a hike, body.

It was a wonderful evening. The quality was high, and we are proud of the work our two poets, who acquitted themselves beautifully. Thanks to Mass Poetry and GrubStreet for organizing and hosting the event. Berklee has been participating in this event for at least the past decade. Plans are in the works for hosting the event soon. Stay tuned.