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LiteraryMary

ISSUE 22

JANUARY 2009

Changes, changes, and more changes!

Word from the Administrators



The most important thing that any member of LiteraryMary needs to know about the month of January is that my birthday is on January 18th. I will be thirty-five this year. Take the day off. Celebrate me.

January is a reason for members of LiteraryMary to celebrate anyway, as January 1st is the birthday of our lovely lady of literature, LiteraryMary herself. This year Mary is turning two. We are honoring our second birthday with the illustrious LiteraryMary print journal. If you haven't already purchased it, you may do so here:

<http://literarymary.com/Journal.htm>

January also brings another reason to celebrate. Father Luke has agreed to step in as co-owner/administrator of LiteraryMary. I will no longer be carrying the sole financial and administrative duties entirely on my shoulders and I am very happy about that. Chivalry is not dead and good men still walk the Earth. What this means for LiteraryMary is that Father Luke is now shouldering the title of owner/administrator, tech admin and poetry specialist. I would like to take a moment to extend a personal thank you. Father Luke, thank you.

Other staff mentions for this month: Sy and gigi have both stepped down from staff. Both will be missed. astronacht (Patrick) has stepped into a moderator position. We are all very happy about that. Our newsletter editor-in-chief, lostpoem has agreed to take on the title of moderator too. She will be one of a few now who multi-task for us. Thanks to the both of them for their hard work.

One more thing I would like to mention this month: There is a new feature which has been



added to the forum recently by Father Luke. You may have noticed the option for larger text boxes when you are making a post or critiquing/replying. This feature is nice for when you are doing critique and want to be able to see more of your text at a time, rather than constantly scrolling. Keep your eye out for more new features because he installs them faster than I can keep up. :)

That's about all I have for this month. 2008 is looking to be an exciting year for our LiteraryMary. We've had a lot of growth and have never had a better or more talented member base than we do now. There are lots of things coming up in the near future that I'm excited about, the Nooberama is under way which is very cool and pretty soon I'll be taking over the world... What? Don't act as if you haven't seen it coming.

Duck!

ms. vodka

Myth, Illusion, Joy and Wretchedness

by lostpoem



I once knew someone who for some strange reason had a profound impact on me at a very young age. Caught betwixt the burden of having discovered I could write and not wanting to write was like denying as well deceiving myself from being who I was. Of course as long as I can

remember, I have not only been a pain in my own ass but in others as well. Family can bear your faults tenderly and call you different and special, whereas society will reject you as the byproduct, and stamp your ass with incompetent, socially inept or mentally screwed. Or maybe you simply were unfortunate to have been conceived under a bad moon. Oh, how I both hate and love the moon! God knows what a useless empty piece of land that is, and yet, for some utterly incomprehensible reason humanity has worshipped it, poets have idolized it in innumerable ways alluding to it the symbolism of their beloved's beauty etc, or some other far-fetched analogy. We cannot help but worship that which is beyond our reach, and the means to experience it becomes the axis of our life's journey. The nuclei being 'the' desire.

This particular individual had a strange philosophy towards life, he said, since life was so vulgar, meaningless and pathetic, one could either cry incessantly or laugh hilariously on the very stupidity of the divine creator's intelligent design, which at the end of our frustratingly-maddening lives did not seem so intelligent after all. And I wholeheartedly agreed to his wisdom; a dimwit myself, but my not-so-dimwitted alter-ego securely invisible under the cloak of young age, the caustic-opinion-rejecter, refused to hog down her cognitive-sewers such a blatant conclusion of existence.

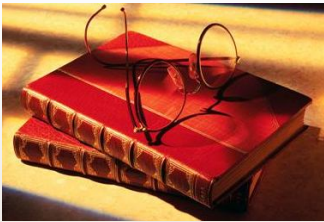
So despite my outward meek, tepid and rational persona, I set up a new front, prepared an army of my own, and lodged them in every nook and cranny of the mental stratosphere whence I could travel to thereby forfeiting any external claims on my thought-factory. My so-called friend had chosen to laugh on the world and laugh he did. Everyday, in every conversation, he could elicit and discern the mirth from the utterly un-laughable, which riled my pensive temperament. I did not believe that it was possible or even an easy alternative, to see the funny, to be safe, always from the bullets and torpedoes fate so amorously targeted at us. He often told me the necessity of positive thinking, (I said yes, and agreed) but I could not make myself practice it. The preacher preached and practiced his doctrine exceptionally well, but did he never stumble upon any holes,

obsessed freak. He could talk for two hours about what vegetable or fruit could cure eyesight, or strengthen the bones. And I thought to myself back then, how could a man, so goddamned educated, intelligent, and well-versed with the nuts-and-bolts of life, seem so stupidly self-centered and obliquely dumb to not realize the 'separation' of his being from my being. That I was the cause of my own life, and that <thoughts> were a result of my individual experience, and lastly I may just as well choose to disbelieve him until his method is proven compatible on my system.

I raise my objection to a positive approach. Simply because it leaves one with blind spots, insecurely exposed and put out there without going through a test-drive. No I do not adhere to the school of stoics, however if I am to believe in something or proceed in a certain direction hitherto un-trodden, I cannot merely do it from one happy-lotus leaf, like a carefree toad, and hop onto another one. I begin my alphabet from A – the problem. The issue, the chaos: the confronted self doubting the questioner, to the actual genesis of the very intent. Step one, from shit-tunnel of wretchedness and doom to step two, acquiesce of a possible solution. He preached the positive, I was gloom. He said light, I refused its brightness. I'd rather acquaint myself with darkness. It is impossible to build a skyscraper or a minaret (of the mosque) unless the constructor has dug deep into the earth, his measurements equaling the heights he proposes to which the building will stand erect at. My philosophy is I do not have a philosophy and refuse to have one. Philosophies are formed in one spurious moment of concrete thought, hence imprisoning the dynamic shift of both impulse and life.

I enjoy food as long as it fills my belly and gives me strength to move from one day to another. I do not like to sit dwelling on seasonal tastes, the coarse or subtle, cooked or over-cooked palate. There are more serious issues that concern man besides his food. No longer content with my friend's assertions over life or his ideology, I was restless to move on and find my non-space which would prove a thousand times more creative, productive and enchanting to my senses.

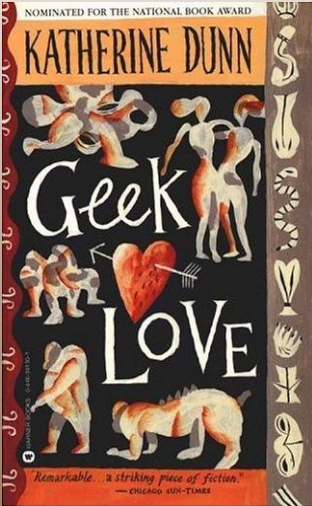
I admit to having fancied the moon myself though not out of idealization but a curiosity of its very bare and empty elemental existence, the randomness, the no-purpose, the void which proceeded from God, his scattered meteorology. God was no Van Gough, but he certainly was the gamer, the programmer, the player and the virus.



Recommended Reading: Staff Picks

Geek Love - Katherine Dunn

By Dru



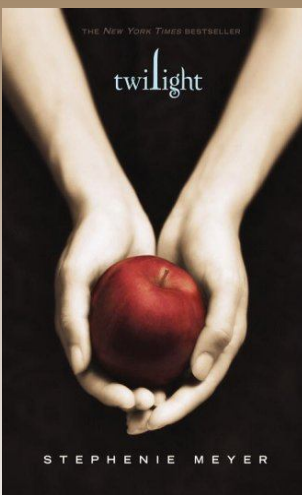
Screw Water for Elephants, if you want THE circus novel, read Geek Love. The premise is delicious: the Binewskies, owners of the Fabulon Carnival, need a way to amp up their act and decide that the best way to do this would be to pump Mrs. Binewski full of drugs, carcinogens, and shady chemicals so she can give birth to mutated freaks. Our narrator, Olympia, is an albino hunchback dwarf. Her megalomaniacal brother Arty the Aqua boy has flippers for arms. Elly and Iphy are Siamese twins who

share the same lower half, and Chick, well, he might look like a norm, but he's got a little something-something up his sleeve. Geek Love is a story about family, cults, and carnivals, about how we decide what's normal and what's freaky. Most of all, it's about really cool, disturbingly comic shit.

Read. Read now!

Twilight - Stephanie Meyer

By ms. vodka



Being a full time university student, I read many textbooks and otherwise assigned reading. All term, I'm bogged down with heavy reading, the equivalent of reading grape nuts; good for you, but if you eat it for too long... well you know what I'm getting at. Anyway, what I'm getting at is that recently, I feel deeply in love with the book 'Twilight' by Stephanie Meyer. Yes, I am aware that many of you are reading this now and shaking

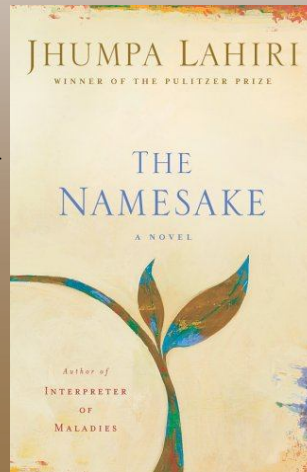
your lit snob heads. 'So trite,' you are saying, 'So predictable.' Yah yah yah. There is still value in reading for pure pleasure, of falling in love with a book, drifting away in a fairytale, losing your cynicism for a few days and believing that all consuming, obsessive love can work.

All I know is that when Edward speaks to Bella, I listen. When Edward touches Bella, I ache. When Edward saves Bella, I swoon. I could not put the damned book down. *What? Two hours have passed? I need to clean house? Do laundry? Make dinner. Well, I can read while I cook...* I'm not saying you should give up your lofty literature pursuits for good. All I'm saying is Stephanie Meyer does a damned good job of entertaining.

(<http://www.stepheniemeyer.com/twilight.html>)

The Namesake - Jhumpa Lahiri

By lostpoem



I was skeptical about reading this book, firstly because of its over-used theme of Asian immigrants trying to discover or reinvent their identities in western countries, secondly, literature balanced solely on cultural precepts does not sit well with me. It's like cheating the reader.

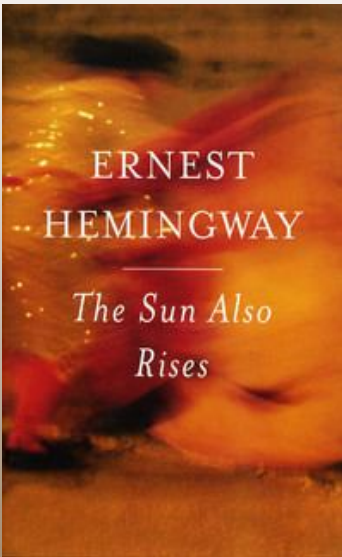
However to get on with it, The Namesake begins with a young man in his early twenties, who is of a Bengali (Indian) descent. He is very fond of books and one day while traveling on a train to visit his grandfather, he meets with a tragic accident. He is miraculously saved, when someone discovers him moving among the debris and rubble of the aftermath, and his hand clutching a copy of The Raincoat by Nikolai Gogol. The presence of this author's book at that particular junction of Ashoke's rescue leaves a deep impact on his psyche that eventually ends up shaping the rest of the novel.

After the accident he decides to leave the country and settle as far away as possible from all things that might be reminiscent of the incident which left him mentally and emotionally scarred. His parents and the many siblings, devastated by his decision, reluctantly bid him farewell, as he leaves with his newly wed bride (a union made possible through a formal arrangement by his family) and we find Ashoke, a doctoral student at MIT settling down in a tiny apartment with his wife, Ashima in America. This brings about a shift in Ashima's experiences as well as the birth of their first son, whom they end up naming as Gogol. This young man grows up, ok, to make a long story short, he has a sister, and both of them struggle to fit in the society, schools and friends, as second generation American-Indians, rebelling against their heritage. The book follows

through Gogol's initial dislike of his name and so forth. But, I'd rather not spoil it for you, so go read the book!

The Sun Also Rises - Ernest Hemingway

By Patrick



"It is awfully easy to be hard-boiled about everything in the daytime, but at night it is another thing."

I'm not going to claim that this quote perfectly sums up Hemingway's first novel, because if I did, you would know everything already and there would be no point in reading it, and in a strange display of understanding on my part for Hemingway, I want you to read it. I am, however, going to say that it's a very succinct quote that is quite representational of most

of the characters: lifeless and mechanical on the surface and displaced and tormented underneath. I'd have to say that the duality each character possesses is the strength of the book—the way everyone's pain is so hidden but so accessible, so very human.

This is my second time reading Hemingway, the first being *A Farewell to Arms* a little over two years ago. My impression then was that the book was a monumental waste of my time: I saw what was coming, the characters had little to offer me, and everything just felt very tedious. I'm not sure if I would feel that way again on a second read, as *The Sun Also Rises* felt quite similar at times, but overall it just left me cold. This, however, had me intrigued from the start. It still felt like I could have been unconscious for several parts during the book and missed nothing—sort of like it just trudged along at a steady, automatic pace—but every so often there was something that caught my eye, mostly involving a sudden revelation of character depth that was somehow more rewarding than it is in most books, most likely because it happened so sporadically.

Hemingway's technique elicits a multitude of reactions from me—mainly fascination, annoyance, and boredom. It's certainly an easy read in the sense that there aren't laborious, multi-clause sentences or narrative devices that require a lot of concentration, but that doesn't necessarily make it an easy book: as aforementioned, there's a lot to pick up on, especially with the characters. As a writer, there were a few interesting things I noticed that are somewhat unique to Hemingway, one of which being the way dialogue is arranged. I found it strangely effective that, in groups of three or more speakers, the tag-less dialogue was hard to pinpoint. It's almost as if it doesn't matter who was speaking, so long as those words were being said. I've never thought of attempting anything of the sort, having always

been a believer in well-paced and clearly-assigned dialogue, and I probably wouldn't try to incorporate it into my own writing, but it's an interesting distinction.

In the end, I can say that I've definitely had a change of heart where Hemingway is concerned. Before I was mostly certain that his work wasn't worth my time, but this book has proved me wrong. If there's anyone else out there who is feeling on the fence about this particular author and you haven't read his first major work, it might be worth doing so, even if you still end up on the critical side.

January Quotes



"ooh, ooh, yeahyeahyeahyeah! Forget what I said, do this instead!"

You know what else is a great conversation piece? A fake leg!"

- Nibblepoems

"british pop chicks are so much cooler than american pop chicks."

- ms. vodka

"I knew I shouldn't have used banana. A word always leading to the word "insult"."

- falcune

"C'est un fait de linguistique--quelque chose dans le cerveau.

And that's "brain", not "cervix", pervs."

- Patrick

"waiting with berated breath. or is that barreted, or is it naked, oops that would please you wouldn't it. LOL"

- G.K. Fralin

"How many times have I told you not to play with guns? But most importantly that THEY ARE UGLY DECORATIONS for XMAS!"

- Blemished.Rainbows

Featured Poem

The Widow's Gift by Chang Won-Jae



Alone around Christmas Eve
on a gay corner somewhere
I heard her whimpering
about two found copper coins.
"When is it about to take place?"
And this veteran signaled to me, "See
to it that you are not Him who receives;
for you will collect a reward in My name,
testifying, 'He is here,'
or, 'The hurting time is near.'
Go after them sons of bitches."
Then I heard the herd.
"Nations do rise against Nation
as coloreds do break every collar.
But before all these hues develop,
they will lay their imprints on you
and will fix your pallid strings,
cinching you upon your lawlessness
and pursuing you to a courteous lynchin'."
Howled.
Hounded by the IRS perhaps;
arrested by evaders personified,
I begged her for a just cause.
"A clash of one cymbal twice
for a name's sake", she thumped.
It must have been the jangle of change;
a lone timpani to a panhandler.
"More sake, please, mister coroner?"
Yet not a sound bar flew from her lungs
exalted in mortified abandonment of the sane.
And livid vets surrounding her sighed,
"By and by,
by your expiation expired
you will gain expectoration."
Hacked.
"Then to those who are expectant and pregnant
and to those who nurse their niggardly purses,
there will still be virgin signs
whet as sun and moon and stars do penetrate,

and on earth will sweat an indifference
amongst a still born population
purposeless as poplars roaring
as seeds shuddering by wounded winds.
Then upon those pervs who persevere
beyond emasculation and ejaculation
sedated by they themselves who reign,
will be granted them milky citadels in bowls
for their powers over heavens
will flower into rubble
flushed by a cricket's rube."

Taken aback.

Swirled by pigments of a marine usury,
she began to fiddle against gravity;
I straightened her up though crumpled inside
and ironed her cool phalanges assuredly
though percolated by imbibed bubbly;
must have been a pain blossoming cruel.
Heel.

Then she babbled a soulful parable:
"Behold the fig tree and all her trees;
as soon as they put forth spring leaves,
you will see their bitter fruits revealed,
then you will know the cut is always deep
when June and Judas draws effervescently near.
Hold a mind's eye to the blood of a breba fruit
in May and July beholding
heaven and earth bleeding once every month
though born twice a year;
brave as two bruised words;
as still as trailing buds' failures.
Be on guard against August chill,
so that figments of bounty
will not be taxed
with libations of liberation,
with lullaby's lubrication half-cocked,
and with a coinage that mints upon command
insidiously like pressed screams over barren planes."
Winced and choked.

Then I heard two Caesar heads
assiduously plucked like two quinces
from my treasured pocket
to a widow's treasury
by her sophistry
chiming,
"Who's put us out?"
Those who were once mine
now
appeal hysterically still,
"Were we all she had to gain?"
Good God;
so lost these
two pennies gone.



I Could Have Won: A Political Satire

By G.K. Fralin

Note: This was written and posted on Helium.com earlier in 2008.

What do you mean "How to win a Presidential Debate?" I am going to win this Presidential debate. All I need is a husband who cheats, a loud mouth, and accuses the other guy of things without any basis in fact.

In the other camps, I can be the son of an African who is seen in a photo in ethnic garb, be accused of being Muslim, (I'm not going to tell you anyway), and get Oprah to give me a kiss with a rapt look in front of millions.

Now, if I want to slide over to the GOP, I just have to be radical enough to realize that getting votes means unrealistic promiscuity, no I mean promises. Sorry for that slip. Anyway, that guy left office.

So, if I'm the new GOP leader in the run of candidates, I have a Scottish sounding name, a big sweet smile, and promises I likely can't keep either. But, I'll be damned if I'll let those damn donkeys run this country. They're all a bunch of left wing socialist louts.

Oops, Hi Nader, where do you stand on those issues? Do you have any, or are you here for the popcorn and cheap munchies. Oh, I know you are all about the consumer. By the way, what was your salary last year?

Okay, now I will put my bid in. I'm an average housewife who is slightly neurotic. I can cook up a storm of country style that can feed an army. That means I can fire the White House chef and his whole crew. All I have to do is move mom in and maybe a sister and we'll feed every dignitary a hearty meal they will love. None of that stupid little pigeon drumsticks and toy carrot crap.

My Dad, he'll be the Secretary of Agriculture. He's been a farmer longer than most of you have been alive. If anyone knows how to make a conservative and moral decision on how to aid the agriculture industry it's a Baptist from Kansas.

My brother will have to stay home. He has to keep the rest of the family in line. He is the oldest of the siblings you know. That's the way things get done in our neck of the sticks. Woods, I'm sorry for the slip on the cliché. I'll do better next time.

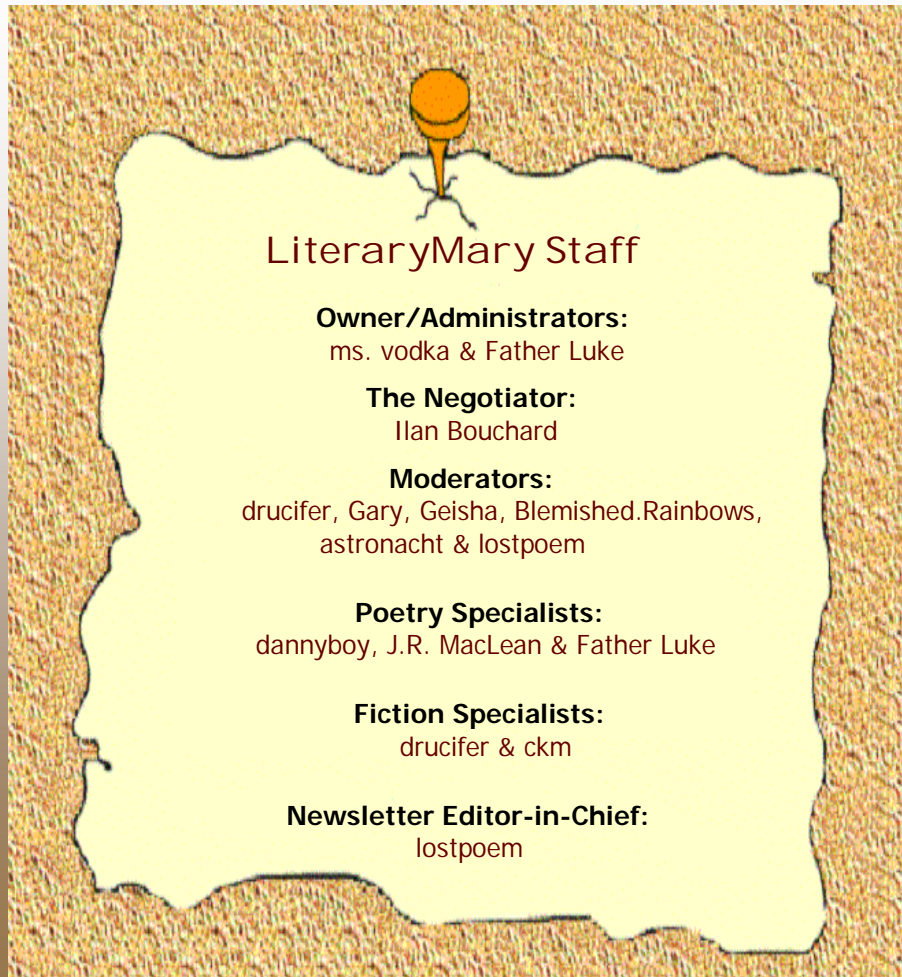
I've never put a pot in my mouth, none of that weed rolled in paper either. You know that stuff they call marijuana. Hey, I even spelled that without spell checker. I can pronounce it too if you ask me.

Kids will be legislated to have a 9:00 curfew until their senior year at least (of college). Parent's you're all failing to be authorities in you own homes. Health and Human Services or whatever your state calls it will get over it when they figure out they have to let us start raising our own children. Quite simply, they don't have enough people stupid enough to buy into that foster system anyway.

Taxes will be cut once I manage to get all the people out there to vote on a huge cut in the salaries of everyone who works on Capital Hill. Except maybe the Pages, they run their poor legs off. Ever notice how scrawny they are. We'll have them over to the White House for some good old biscuits and gravy. Hey Mom, bring along the fatback while your at it will ya?

Oh, almost forgot. We're closing all public schools and reverting to home schooling. We can provide that for free too. Teachers will keep their jobs, but they will only have to work on weekends when the parent's go away for their insanity. Woops, did my tongue slip again. Nope, I think that was the right word this time.

Vote for me in this upcoming election. I will set this country straight, or kill it trying.



Let' s have some cake and a cup of tea, and drop by these lovely member blogs and websites, to feast our senses on literary poetics, rants, thoughts and intellectual musings. Yes indeed, we offer the best of the best!

Most importantly, don' t forget to visit our website: www.literarymary.com

- ◇ <http://jeniferwills.wordpress.com>
- ◇ <http://fatherluke.com>
- ◇ <http://somnicide.wordpress.com>
- ◇ <http://www.wordsprings.blogspot.com>
- ◇ <http://www.dailynotebook.com>
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- ◇ <http://ilanbouchard.blogspot.com>
- ◇ <http://ashokkarra.com>
- ◇ <http://galivanting.wordpress.com>
- ◇ www.magicstallion.blogspot.com

If you would like your blog/personal webpage to be featured here, write to me at:
lost_poem030@yahoo.com