Editor’s Page

Guest Editorial by Mark Sconce

The Power of Poetry

Whilst knocking on doors for Barack a few years ago, I encountered a lady of about 40 standing defiantly in her threshold, eyeing me suspiciously. Brandishing my badge and literature, I asked if she intended to vote Obama this Primary Day. She replied that, while she liked Obama, she just couldn’t get to the polling station. In that instant, I knew I had heard a Russian accent.

On a whim I broke into a poem by Alexander Pushkin in Russian. Her jaw literally dropped.

She said, " *Da*! For that, I go to vote." This is but one of many examples of the power of poetry I have experienced over the years. And if you read January's "cover poem" by Bill Frayer, *Mother Mexico*
, you also experienced the power of poetry. Along with my own "cover poem"
Pedro Loco
, Bill's lyric lines represent a turning point in the attitude of the powers-that-be at
El Ojo del Lago
. There was once talk about reducing poetry's presence in the magazine. So Lakeside poets can only be happy with this turn of events. But we want more!

The crown of literature is poetry. It is its end and aim.
It is the sublimest activity of the human mind. It is the

achievement of beauty and delicacy. The writer of
prose can only step aside when the poet passes.

- William Somerset Maugham

If you believe, as I do, that poetry is the highest branch of literature, it follows that this very magazine, devoted to good writing, should expand its space for poetry. And that is what I am proposing in this Guest Editorial. If *El Ojo Del Lago* can find space for a monthly Bridge column, a Wildlife column, and vaguely funny old jokes, I believe it can institute a new niche, a Poet's Niche—an every month niche. Not for the use of our Lakeside poets. Their space need not change. But rather a niche for the poets whose poems you have read, recited or memorized in high school, college or along life's way.

The ones that made you ponder, wince or cry. The ones that made you experience the Power of Poetry. Shakespeare "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day? Thou art more lovely and more temperate..." Keats "Already with thee! Tender is the night." W.B. Yeats "O body swayed to music, O brightening glance/How can we know the dancer from the dance?" E.A. Poe "All that we see or seem/Is but a dream within a dream," A.S. Pushkin "Always contented with his life, and with his dinner and his wife." Lord Tennyson "I hope to see my Pilot face to face/When I have crossed the bar." Longfellow 'The bards sublime/Whose distant footsteps echo/Through the corridors of Time." Walt Whitman "I hear America singing, the varied carols I hear."

Will Lakeside poets be upset by this poetic intrusion? Not likely. All the ones I know, myself included, have healthy egos, yes, but we also know who our betters are. And that includes the current lions and lionesses: Billy Collins, Rita Dove, Robert Pinsky, Maya Angelou, Seamus Heaney. The recently departed ones: Robert Frost, Carl Sandburg, AE Houseman, Dylan Thomas, Edna St. Vincent Millay, TS Eliot, Vachel Lindsay, Cole Porter, John Masefield, Boris Pasternak—there are plenty to choose from!