

Kaj-Mahkah: Earth of Earth

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Free



*a referred literary & arts journal
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Many thanks to Dr. Kenneth Holmes, Prof. Ali Ovlia, Prof. Donald Love, JoAnn Wilson, those that submitted works, and other contributors in the publication of this journal

the underground

the space where we cultivate what we create
that which fills the universe and spilleth over
And where we remember it
no one can see.
It rages cries in the hidden places of our minds.

Art enlightens civilizations and broadens the mind. Keep the arts alive.
Submissions open February 2 and close November 30.
<http://www.geocities.com/kajmahkah/>
kajmahkah@yahoo.com

Kaj-Mahkah: Earth of Earth is a referred journal that publishes original works of art, prose, poetry, and drama annually. Based in St. Louis, Kaj-Mahkah unearths creative and artist cultivations from persons of any age, background, race, and sex out of gratuity. It is a non-profit effort to further the Arts. If you would like more information from the Editor, see the website at <http://www.geocities.com/kajmahkah/> or email her at kajmahkah@yahoo.com.

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None were submitted.

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None were submitted.

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Poetry by Bridget Batterson

A silly song sad

I guess I don't care anymore
I guess I don't really mind
Sort of makes me a broken war widow like
Love...love strangely love sweetly
Love madly, forget me
like blood relatives
this stain on my heart means I will
forgive you always
means you cannot ever wrong me too
badly
I'll get over it
Means I'm sunk, I'm a goner-
I'm yours
Doesn't matter you are lukewarm, while
I'm boiling
Or that your heart can be like an ice chest,
while I'm a tropical clime
No matter how foggy your love is-
Mine shines
and strangely I don't mind.

Her majesty

Blue and aquatic jungles
Pools of light touch the blind fish
In the deepest pit of the ocean
Her majesty, the moon now swims.

Graveyards of his people, 1

Black skies, big eyes, halo round his head
Kneeling in the graveyards of his people
Pure white sorrows dripping down his face
Years ago his people cried
Were their tears so white as his?

Poetry by R.D. McManes

How far

Love is not
a star or even the moon
 not the night sky
 not the universe
 certainly not heaven
 most assuredly not hell
it is more, and farther away:

The edge of eternity, the edge
of sanity, swaying to and fro;
 the unlicked stamp
reserved for a letter, we never mailed;
 the unfinished room
where we sit and reflect
 on infinite possibilities:

We bask in wonderment
at how far we have come
 at how far we have to go.

"without a single word"

soundless
a light touch conveys
 pure emotion

seconds long
years short
 somehow immeasurable
 somehow timeless

this dispels the myth
passion and love
frequently coexist

and everything
right is understood
the void is filled
by wordless love.

senses

you wish to feel
open your heart
you wish to touch
imagine your fingers

you wish to think
silence the mind

you wish to see
close your eyes
and dream

a past becomes
the future in the present
and for that moment
muddy becomes clear
clear as crystal

R. D. McManes is the author of seven books of poetry. Mr. McManes has had poems published in Saucyvox, Literary Expresso, Prairie Poetry, Write On, Scrivener's Pen, Mipo Magazine, Swooping Hawk Quarterly, Poems Niederngasse, Taj Mahal Review, SP Quill Quarterly Magazine, and Baroque Review. He has also conducted poetry workshops and related literary presentations for the Kansas Author's Club and resides near Scranton, Kansas. His author website is <http://www.macpoetry.com/>.

Poetry by Charlie Lee McWilliams

Young Flower of Liberty

Young flower of liberty, you were born a bud
in a country called Viet Nam
your roots are buried in rice paddies and mud
Like your forefathers, you're a son-of-a-gun.

You were planted in a place called Saigon
to advise and to teach
But the wind has blown your seed to places like Qui Nhon
not to advise, but fight to keep the peace.

There's danger from Nha Trang to Da Nang
the enemy is all over your camping ground
Young flower of liberty, here you make your stand
to live or die for freedom all around.

Young flower of liberty, you have a special name
Although you are jeered and booed
hold you head up and feel no shame
Freedom loving people owe you everlasting gratitude.

Where Is That Letter?

Where is that letter you promised me every day?
I don't hear from you as I did before.
Has your love for me died since I went away?
I don't believe you love me anymore.
I can't believe you love me anymore.

O how I waited each day for a letter to come my way!
But the mailman continues to pass my door.
Where is that letter you promised every day?
What has become of the one I adore?

What did I do, what did I say
To make you turn your back on me?
Let me hear from you right away.
Send me that letter you promised every day.

A Lonely Man Cries

Oh what a sad sight
when a lonely man cries
You can hear his sobs day and night
No one can tell where his trouble lies.

A lonely man cries for no reason at all
needing love at any cost
But just as the leaves must fall
Love for him is long lost
The touch of a friendly hand
A lonely man prays to the one above
to send someone who'll understand

Charles Lee McWilliams, born 1931, served in the military for many years before working in the St. Louis Public School District as a janitor. He then retired and spent the rest of his years with his wife before she died in 1990. These poems were written while he served as a sergeant during the Viet Nam war and were probably published in war time publications to ease the soldiers' souls. Sgt. McWilliams is 74 years old.

Poetry by Matthew Sims

A Cohesive Lost

i see your face when i close my eyes,
it's an emotion so unwise.
i want to rip my heart out and ask it why it lies.

i am locked in my head
with all of these things i have done.
i rushed to you without a heart,
and all that's left for us
are the withered vines feeding on our mistakes.

you passed your scars unto me
and i accepted them from you,
like you were a priest handing me the
promise of eternity.

the truth of our descent will never set me free,
and the lies that mask it with
anchor me tightly to this obscurity.
but my heart burns with satisfaction
when i feel around this darkness
and it's your familiar sickening breath
sighing next to mine.

The Fleeting

the image at the end
is becoming clear.
i tremble at its inevitability
realizing this tension will not lessen;
this itch on my heart, this gloaming
will not be satisfied so easily.

there is something greater than we are.
but i'm refusing to see it.
my denial wraps me up and covets my logic
because now my eyes see with love.

i won't know where to point my finger
or where to redirect this passion,
that's oiled the engine in my heart.

my love wants you still and unchanging,
yet my pain refuses to forget
the shape of your fleeting silhouette.

leaving your presence feels like
being cast from the sun
and left on earth to wander.

is this the same fate i was cursing
when you stepped into my life?
is this the bitterness of one who's left alone?

Prose by N. Andreil Martin
Film Analysis of "8 Mile"*

The sequence opens with a man and a mirror, a clear reflection of who the character wants to be portrayed as. A reflection of a dream that he wishes, wants, and needs to live. Reality stares back at him and he pukes all over himself. The dragon of failure and rejection stares him down, winning the battle. So begins 8 Mile.

8 Mile is a movie in which the main character Jimmy tries to make his aspirations of becoming an established rapper real. He faces opposition because of his skin color, being an Anglo-American, and where he comes from, a trailer park. He gets knocked around, pushed down until he proves he has melody, a flow of words gushing from his mouth at speeds inconceivable to his audience. He gains respect after showing people, namely those at a club named The Shelter, that he has what it takes to be a rapper regardless of his skin color.

The movie opens to introduce Eminem as an actor and make sure the audience identifies with Jimmy as he gets hyped up to pursue his ambition. The movie's theme and Eminem's acting skills were well received. But unlike the glowing reviews of most newspapers, magazines, and individuals, I dislike the film. There are adult issues addressed but the way the characters deal with them is childish and often abrasive. There is no emotional connection from the actors to the characters. How would the actors behave if these characters' lives were theirs? That question is never answered.

The film is clearly a Pop culture movie made only for money. Curtis Hansen, the director, seems to be selling himself to the younger generations of America in order to fill seats in theatres. His other films, such as "The River Wild," "The Hand That Rocked the Cradle," and "L. A. Confidential," are better works of his repertoire. I happen to dislike L. A. Confidential because it seems artificial, though it is based upon real events. Hansen could have made the characters more realistic if they possessed personalities and idiosyncrasies of their own. The same is said of 8 Mile; the characters were flat and puppet-like.

The lighting in all the movies is stunningly gorgeous, but if Hansen spent as much time with actors as he does the lighting he would have a better response from the audience. Hansen uses dark lighting, instead of bright, to reveal the facets of human nature. The dark lighting also emphasizes the crudeness of the setting, Detroit, Michigan. It beautifully represents the life in which the characters live. Jimmy lives in a trailer park with his mother, Stephanie, who does not seem to understand the meaning of responsibility. She cocoons herself with incompetent men and faces her harsh life unsavorily by drinking and gambling. Jimmy's ex-girlfriend is pregnant, or so she says, and he deserts her because he cannot cope with it and the problems that ensconce their relationship. Yes, the lighting reflects these themes quite well.

The depiction of the movie's setting is commendable. But every city has poverty-stricken neighborhoods. Hansen, in effect, uses the association of Detroit's bleak history of poverty to piggyback pressures it brings instead of showing how the characters' were personally affected by it. What drives Jimmy's character to pursue a career in the entertainment business is not revealed

to the audience. But the gritty feel of the surrounds is a great asset to the film. It shows how impossible it is to make something of one's self without pushing and fighting for survival. Even the car Jimmy drives attests to that fact. He had to strive to make it a reliable mode of transportation, something that is coveted by many in his neighborhood. It would have been a great accomplishment if the characters and actors were portrayed as well as the setting. Instead, the film in its entirety lacks individuality.

Other films that reflected 8 Mile's theme, such as "Far and Away," "Music of the Heart," and "Mr. Holland's Opus" do a better job of portraying fictitious characters as real people. They are not just reflections in a mirror, like Hansen's 8 Mile. These films have facets, texture, and life. The object of 8 Mile is to reflect a dream becoming reality, but it did so in the basest of ways.

Watching Hansen's film is like looking through a gossamer shirt. It lacks the substance needed to embody the skeleton presented by Hansen and his entourage. As reported by a member of the audience, "8 Mile cannot escape from the limitations of the fictionalized star biopic. There have been dozens of movies about emerging music stars and their families, their early sponsors, their first big breaks, and so on, many of them with more range and specificity of detail than this one," (Knipp, IMDB). He explains that the movie is good in his opinion but that it lacks detail or the fine inscriptions that could make or break the movie's reputation.

Ebert states, however, that 8 Mile "stands aside from Britney Spears, the Spice Girls, and other hit machines who have unwisely tried to transfer musical ability to acting careers. Like Prince's "Purple Rain," it is the real thing," (Ebert, Chicago Sun-Times). Some of the statement is true; Britney and the Spice Girls should stick to their singing careers. Prince's movie, however, is good because the acting is good and the movie itself permeates with its own personality.

8 Mile lacks that quality, thus becoming another movie that made millions but impacts no one except Eminem and discredits Hansen's talent. As Williams states, "without a larger story to tell, 8 Mile must rely on its characters and the false drama of rap competitions. Eminem acquits himself as [Jimmy] because he doesn't do much besides brood and rap...when the rapping is separated from studio production values, we hear how unremarkable it is," (Williams, St. Louis Post Dispatch).

Williams sums up the performance quite aptly. Eminem as an actor in this film is okay. It would be a disaster, though, if he continues to star in other movies. He is chosen to portray this character because his past life's publicity, before he made it in show business, would sell the movie and fill theatres. It guarantees that the movie would not flop because it compels the public to glimpse Eminem's "life."

In essence, the experience of watching 8 Mile is like eating a bucket of stale, tasteless popcorn. It lacks flavor and pizzazz to make it more edible than what is advertised. This film is a waste of time and money for Hansen and his entourage. He could have done a much better job if he made the event live by giving the characters personalities and idiosyncrasies. It fits nicely, though, into the Inspirational Drama/Pursuit of Aspirations genre. The difference between every

movie in any genre is its personality, the individuality and uniqueness that 8 Mile lacks.

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Fin.

<http://geocities.com/kajmahkah/>
kajmahkah@yahoo.com
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