

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Poets on Craft: John Compton and Sally Delancy

Bunkong Tuon · Wednesday, February 10th, 2021

Poets on Craft is a cyberspace for contemporary poets to share their thoughts and ideas on the process of poetry and for students to discover new ways of approaching the writing of poetry. In the face of a pandemic that is both viral and political, it is a resource for strength and creativity, friendship and beauty, love and rejuvenation. It is thus a celebration of the beautiful and eclectic minds of contemporary poets. This series is intended for educational purposes only.

The format is as follows. I emailed poets these questions: “Generally speaking, how do you build a poem? How do you start a poem? How do you move from one line to the next? How do you know when to end a poem?”

With the exception of length requirement, poets are free to respond in whatever manner they find appropriate to their styles and concerns.

Access to *Poets on Craft* is democratic. Generally speaking, anyone can have free access to these posts. With that said, please consider supporting our poets by clicking on the links in their bios and purchasing their work.

For this twenty-sixth post in the series, we have John Compton and Sally Delancy.



john compton (b. 1987) is a gay poet who lives in kentucky with his husband josh, their 9 dogs and 2 cats. he has published 1 book, which is being re-released, and 6 chapbooks published and forthcoming: *train ride elsewhere* (august 2016/tba) from Pressed Wafer (tba); *a child growing wild inside the mothering womb* (june 2020) from ghost city press; *i saw god cooking children / paint their bones* (oct 2020) from blood pudding press. he has been published in numerous magazines and anthologies. he is the owner and editor of voiceluxjournal.wordpress.com.

the poem usually starts collecting itself inside my head, without warning. i have to grab focus, looking intensely on the lines so that i can begin writing them down, and not forget. once started, the lines unfold and rework themselves, meaning i edit as i write. i look at each word and its meaning. each line and its purpose.

i like the sound words make, the invisible pauses. the lines break themselves. a conclusion to the individual thought or a suspense, an excitement in what will the next word bring as you're reverting your eyes. the endings of my poems are simple: i am satisfied and too scared to add more because i may ruin it!



Sally Delancy is a poet living in Trinidad and Tobago, West Indies. She holds a B.Sc in

psychology and M.Sc in counselling from the University of the West Indies. Her poems have appeared in *The Australia Times Poetry Magazine*, *Writers' Morning Out*, *Rise Up Review*, *Rigorous Magazine*, *The Wild Word* magazine, "Life in Quarantine" Project, Stanford University, USA, *The Phare Literary Magazine*, *From the Soil*, and *Spillwords Press*.

Every poem is different, and while some have seemingly fallen out of thin air, the majority usually begin with me paying attention to the world around me. For instance, I may smell a particular aroma, hear a song, read an article over the internet or unearth a random image from my mind's eye. I would then transcribe everything I wish to say on the matter to my notepad or laptop, seldom do I stop to edit. Occasionally, I may write while listening to music, but time of day is an important factor. I must admit that real magic begins by late evening and at nighttime.

Weaving my way through the writing process is more of a cyclical or recursive than a linear process. For example, I may write a stanza and move on to the next, only to acknowledge that a line in the third stanza might be best suited for the first and so on. During the revising and editing stage, I would re-read the poem, make additional notes and highlight those words and imageries to which I wish to give life. As a rule, I always read my poems aloud and usually with a tape recorder so my ears may catch what my eyes didn't. Finally, I would file the poem away for a few days, weeks or even months in order to see it through a new lens and with fresh emotions.

Though I subscribe to the notion that a poem is never truly finished, there comes a time when you know that you've said all that you've wished to say and that it's ready to present to the world. You then do so with self-confidence and bravado!

(Featured image by Alexis Rhone Fancher)

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