

By Lynn Berry
Guest Contributor Christopher Sedlmeyer

At its best, poetry celebrates a life change. The drama of its language and sound, the suspense of its shortened lines and stanzas are designed to take our lives out of the doldrums and recreate a larger-than-life epic story of our unique experience on this planet. Almost as soon as humanity began to compose words in an artistic way, poetry has been used, sometimes almost exclusively, to record our personal history. The earliest European poets literally earned their daily bread by documenting in poetry and song the events of his lord's life and family. Although this form of oral history and poetic storytelling has nearly gone extinct, the lithe hand of poetry still writes history in our own day as we reach for the greeting card to mark birthdays, anniversaries and graduations.

The featured poem this month makes a splendid case for creating our own poetic history as Vernonia resident, Kala Cota, celebrates the birth of her grandchild in a poem that describes a love that transcends the generations. Cota's poem is an excellent example of what is called confessional poetry, which is essentially a type of poetry that is written about the poet's own thoughts and feelings, usually in a style that is similar to normal spoken language. Thus, there is no need to concoct the complex meters and rhyme schemes of Shakespeare, Spenser, or Dante to mark an occasion or celebrate a person we love; poetry meets us where we are and gives our lives a voice that sounds like us.

THE INKWELL

A Grandmother's Love

Before you were conceived, I loved you
The hope of you has been in my heart
The promise of you in my own children
A dream since my son first fell in love
And found his other half to share his life

Before I knew if you would be a boy or girl, I loved you
Exactly as you will be, no matter what
My love has been unconditional since you were just a wish
It will be unconditional forever...
Nothing will ever change that.

Before you came into this world, I loved you
The smile on your mother's and father's face
When they heard your heartbeat for the first time
The anticipation of your arrival, the joy you will bring
To our family, the memories we will make with you

Before you are born you have a history of being loved
That goes back longer than you can know
You are a hope, a wish, a dream, and a gift from heaven
From the moment of your arrival you will know
You are loved.

-----Written by Kala Cota: Aka Grammy Kala

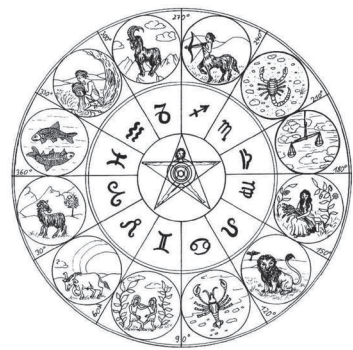
---**Writer's Idea:** Confessional poetry gets its name from its personal quality, like the poet is sharing a page his or her personal poetic journal. Sometimes the tricks we use in poetry, like Cota's repetition of the phrase "I loved you" in the first line of 3 of the 4 stanzas of her poem and the way she breaks up her lines, help us to express in poetry what might not flow as easily in prose. Try journaling in a free verse and see if poetry opens up the page and allows the words to fall out however they need to, rather than in a way that makes grammatical sense.

---**Writer's Tip:** Writing forces us to explore our thoughts and feelings and order them into words, sometimes just for us and sometimes of other readers as well. Consistent journaling helps to make those mental paths smooth and allows us to get very good at "seeing" our internal world and translating what we are feeling and thinking into art.

---**WE ARE LOOKING FOR LOCAL POETRY. WE NEED YOUR POEMS!!**
Please send your original submissions to InkwellVernonia@gmail.com or by mail: PO Box 73 Vernonia, OR 97064. Please include your name and contact information.
Write--Express--Expand.

Lynn Berry holds an M.A. in English, specializing in feminist literature and literary criticism. She has spent several years teaching Literature, Composition, Poetry, Creative Writing, and Critical Thinking at various school districts and colleges, and occasionally provides writing workshops.

Chris Sedlmeyer holds an M.A. in English, specializing in archetypal criticism and medieval spirituality. He has written for the American Benedictine Review and currently writes a weekly blog on Carmelite spirituality and discernment for the American Province of the Order of Carmelites of the Ancient Observance.



Your Horoscope: May 2013

By Ms.Luna

Projects galore! Clean out the flower beds and prepare to plant.

Taurus (Apr 20- May 20) Life is good and

moving along more slowly. Recharge your mind and body, and enjoy the pause in activity. There is much to be said for 'playing things by ear.' Ignore other peoples 'hard luck' stories, these are not your problem. Figure out what is most important to you. Things in general are improving.

Gemini (May 21- June 20) Your mind is in hyper-drive this month. Your swinging emotions could lend a hand to bad judgment. Do not spend money to feel good. The best advice now is to put your head down and work. Let others work out their own troubles. You need to concentrate on your own needs at this time.

Cancer (June 21- July 22) Relax and let go. Many changes are coming so establish a set of routines. Get your love life in order. If you are single, this is not a good month to meet 'the one.' Discuss your hopes and needs with your loved ones. The open communication will go a long ways to bring much needed security.

Leo (July 23- Aug 22) You may need to make some 'real world' choices near the 15th and 16th of May. Acquaintances are important. At this time, you may have to choose sides and make a commitment. Think things through, weigh your

options and choose. Your path will be set by May 28th.

Virgo (Aug 23- Sept 22) Take some time to relax and contemplate quietly. There may have been much disruption in the past few months, now is the time to stick to your guns and know your needs. Don't allow anyone to push you around because they suspect your indecision. Take care of business and get back to your dreams.

Libra (Sept 23- Oct 22) You may feel pushed and pulled in different directions by those with ulterior motives. Make yourself the center of your own attentions. You may have difficulty having confidence in yourself, but since you know this, you will be better prepared mentally to assert yourself with more confidence when it is needed. Consult with yourself. Do not seek advice from others at this time.

Scorpio (Oct 23- Nov 21) Nothing is hidden from you this month. You will benefit from your relationships with friends and your mate. This is a good month for family financial planning, but not for investments or loans. If you can't wait, read all the fine print and consider getting an expert opinion. Also, drive with extra care.

Sagittarius (Nov 22- Dec 21) You will have to manage your time wisely due to all that is happening in your life. Family talks can be confusing near the 18th to the 26th. Ask questions rather than assume you understand. Listen to your intuition if you sense someone is stretching the truth. Send out resumes on the 11th and celebrate yourself and your accomplishments at the months' end.

Capricorn (Dec 22- Jan 19) The universe gives you a reminder to slow the pace in order to make time for yourself and your own interests. Your sixth sense is more active and dreams could offer guidance about both the present and the future. Send out resumes, attention will be drawn to your skills now.

Aquarius (Jan 20- Feb 18) Take your time when working around tools or ladders to avoid accidents. Also drive with care. Put your cell phone completely away when driving. If you want to host a get-together for friends or family, the 11th, 12th, or 25th are good times to entertain. A stroke of luck is possible. Try the lottery on the 28th.

Pisces (Feb 19- March 20) You will have the creative inspiration to design and plant gardens or redo a room- all on budget! You can find bargains everywhere from yard sales to thrift shops. Plan a long weekend at a nearby location. Save and be thrifty so you can have a financial cushion for unexpected expenses at months end. Tell no one of your savings, not even close or longtime friends. Put your thoughts on paper.

Aries (March 21- April 19) Stick to your guns and control your finances. Time away will help you relax and cleanse your mind. You will be able to leave the past behind and begin in a fresh new place. Communication with persons closest to you may be difficult, but very important. Go ahead and say what you need to. This will set good things into motion for the future.