

# Celebrating National Poetry Month

It's here again — April, National Poetry Month. People (well, mostly English teachers and poets) tucking a poem into your pocket; people talking online about trying to write a poem every day for 30 days. Poetry readings everywhere you turn.

It's a lot of fun. Unless you happen to think poetry is a test that everyone passes but you. That's not fun.

I liked to start my American Lit poetry unit with Lucille Clifton's "Homage to My Hips." "these hips are big hips. / they need space to / move around in. / they don't fit into little / petty places /... these hips have never been enslaved. / they go where they want to go / they do what they want to do ... I have known them / to put a spell on a man and / spin him like a top." We had a video, too, so we could see and hear her. Suddenly everyone was sitting up straighter. If poetry was a test, they had all passed. What was not to like?

And we didn't have to explain it. We just had to take it in. Feel it. Believe it, maybe. At least we had the feeling that's what Clifton wanted us to do.

Of course, the students didn't enjoy every poem we shared. I don't like every poem, either. Or every song, though I love music. Or even every kind of ice cream. You get the idea.

But I have liked a lot of the poems I've heard in Pendleton lately. Keyshawn Jackson's and Giovana Angel's performance poem at the student-led March for Our Lives put me right under a desk hearing gunshots and screams as I imagined texting my own

mother "I'm scared" and then imagined texting my own child to "run, hide, don't panic."

Maggie Chula's reading at First Draft in March moved me, too. Inspired by the Japanese fabrics, colors, and symbols in a quilt Cathy Erickson had titled "Radiance," Chula and Erickson began working in

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collaboration on a series of quilts and poems in the voices of Japanese-American internment camp survivors — a quilt and a poem for each of the camps. In Chula's "Equilibrium," a former newspaperman finds himself stuffing newspaper in the cracks of the tarpaper-shack barracks to keep out the sand and wind and rattlesnakes of the Topaz,

Utah, camp. Then he salvages scrap lumber left in a pile from the camp's construction to make a crude table and chairs. The poem's last stanza begins, "I have learned how to face a sandstorm with a strip of cardboard / plastered with glue, then to use this sandpaper to smooth out / the incongruities of our lives."

Chula happened to be reading to a master quilter and to a fine furniture maker in the audience — and as Colleen and Jeff Blackwood listened, I thought ahead to next First Draft, when Clemens Starck will be our featured writer. According to Starck, who worked as a carpenter to support his life as a poet, "both carpentry and poetry are crafts. I mean, you take raw materials — whether it's a stack of lumber or a dictionary — and you put them together and you make something."

Or, as he says in Journeyman's Wages, "The country is / going to hell, but a good mechanic / can always find work."

Clem Starck writes about many things, but human work — whether it's "Studying Russian on Company Time" or laying "Slab on Grade" ("For years people will walk on it, / hardly considering that it was put there / on purpose, / on a Thursday in August / by men on their knees") — is the subject of the poems that touch me most.

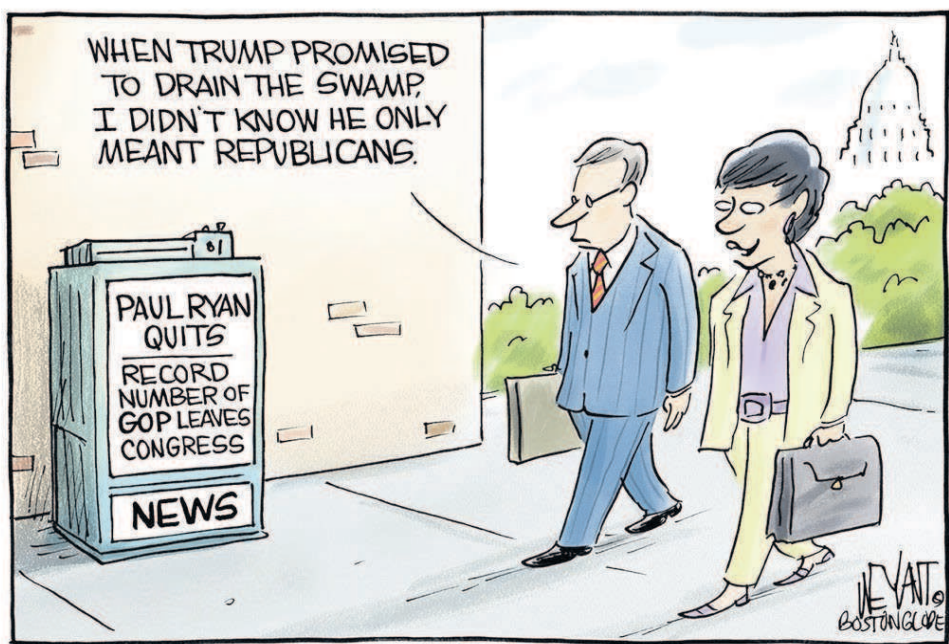
Starck lives near Dallas, Oregon, but he's no stranger to the Dry Side. When he left Princeton to study on his own, he worked on a railroad section line between La Grande and Pendleton, then as a ranch hand in Grant County, where he read literature by kerosene lamplight in a homesteader's shack and



## BETTE HUSTED FROM HERE TO ANYWHERE

began teaching himself to write poems. You'll like him. April 19, 7 p.m. at Pendleton Center for the Arts. Four winners of BMCC's Arts and Culture Festival poetry contest will read at the open mic, too. And it's free. Happy National Poetry Month!

Bette Husted is a writer and a student of T'ai Chi and the natural world. She lives in Pendleton.



## Trade war, trade talks

Throughout his successful campaign, President Trump persistently focused on the U.S. trade deficit and what he termed failed and unfair trade agreements. As President, he pulled out of the Trans-Pacific Partnership negotiations and moved to renegotiate free trade agreements with Canada and Mexico (NAFTA) and South Korea.

This past March, the President imposed tariffs on steel imports (25 percent) and aluminum (10 percent). After a chorus of complaints, most exporters around the world were given exemptions, with the very noticeable exception of China.

Trade tensions with China have been building for a long time. For years, the United States has been complaining about currency manipulation, restrictions on U.S. exports, and limitations on U.S. companies seeking access to the Chinese market. One study points to Chinese exports to the United States as responsible for at least a quarter of U.S. manufacturing jobs lost since China joined the World Trade Organization in 2001.

Over the last few years, U.S. policy makers have focused on the loss of U.S. intellectual property — at a cost of many hundreds of dollars. President Trump recently threatened to impose tariffs on almost \$50 billion in Chinese imports. China then threatened tariffs on almost \$50 billion of U.S. exports. The President then threatened to impose tariffs on an additional \$100 billion of Chinese imports. China has threatened further retaliation.

Oregon's interests will be affected by a battle of tariffs. In its initial list, China targeted soybeans and other agricultural products. Eighty percent of Oregon's soybeans are exported to China. Wheat? Umatilla raises more wheat than any other county in Oregon. President Trump has already asked Secretary Sonny Perdue to take every possible step to protect American agriculture.

Economists, the financial world, and many global industries contend that tariffs are the wrong tool. Instead they call for bringing complaints to the World Trade Organization and acting in concert with allies in Europe and Asia.

What is most striking, however, is that U.S. opinion overwhelmingly agrees that China's trade practices are a major problem and something must be done. Recent reports by the U.S. and European Union chambers of commerce in China raise complaints about the less welcoming environment



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there. In a March 14 *New York Times* column, Tom Friedman, a leading cheerleader for globalization, agreed there is a real trade problem with China. Fareed Zakaria, another influential commentator with an internationalist vision, has expressed similar views.

Higher tariffs and stricter policies on investment are likely to lead to serious negotiations with China. It is much less clear, however, that China will change its policies that have served it so well. China poses a systemic challenge that will require a strategic response by the United States.

China has a long-term strategy to become the global economic power and the global leader in innovation. Every year China devotes a higher percentage of its growing economy into research and development. It makes serious investments in education and aims to develop a series of world class universities. Their "Made in China 2025" policy sets targets for leadership in 10 high-technology industries. These same industries define America's economic future as well.

In part, China's growth draws on the Soviet heritage of state-owned companies and borrows from the industrial strategy pioneered by Japan. China has developed active domestic markets and competes in global markets. Global investments initially targeted needed raw materials, but have more recently focused on acquiring leading technology firms.

How should the United States respond? First, the United States

needs to adopt a competitiveness approach that focuses on productivity raising investments in such areas as range research, infrastructure, education and training, and export promotion. Second, the United States needs to adopt an industrial strategy that promotes the key economic growth engines of our future. Third, we need to complement the growth strategies of the states, recognize the imperatives of national security and innovation, and prepare for the challenges of new technologies and advancing competitors. Finally, we need to make sure that the benefits of national growth and global engagements are broadly shared.

We need to be acting now.

Kent Hughes is a public policy fellow at the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington, D.C. He is a 1958 graduate of Pendleton High School.

## A business tax fairy tale

Inconceivable! This word rang out time and time again from the lips of Vizzini when I recently watched "The Princess Bride" on DVD while riding my exercise bike off to nowhere. I had not watched this classic movie since its release in 1987, more than 30 years ago. The story was epic then, and is epic still, in my opinion.

Then on April 6, another story unfolded — unfortunately very real — which could have concluded with a happy ending, but it did not. So, what happened? With my apologies to "The Princess Bride," let me explain it this way:

In the castles far away on the Potomac River, King Donald in his White Castle and the counts and countesses in their very large Castle on the Hill passed and signed into law tax breaks for their subjects and small businesses throughout the land. The small shop owners, located in every village, both large and small, would receive a federal tax break. It was received with great rejoicing from sea to shining sea.

But in the section of the nation governed by Princess/Governor Kate, all was not well in her Salem Castle, which she shares with the counts and countesses of OregonMyOregon, as this part of the nation is sometimes known. Princess/Governor Kate and those loyal to her did not want to give the federal tax break to the 192,000 small business owners across OregonMyOregon. Inconceivable!

The amount of gold coins these businesses could have kept in their own pockets, over the next six years, was worth \$1.3 billion. Princess/Governor Kate wanted to keep the gold in the state coffers instead leaving the coins with the hardworking taxpayers who had earned it in the first place. Inconceivable!

All that needed to be done was to not connect OregonMyOregon's tax code to the new federal one. The 2018 OregonMyOregon legislative short session provided the venue to disconnect, even though many citizens feel the short session was never intended for this type of legislation.

But rumors began to circulate during the short session in the Salem Castle. Princess/Governor Kate was not happy with her counts and countesses in the two legislative chambers. After all, it was an election year and she might be defeated in the upcoming election if this kind of legislation were to pass. The counts and countesses of her party paid little or no heed to Princess/Governor Kate, and voted SB 1528 without an affirmative vote of any of the counts and countesses of the other party. It was sent to the desk of Princess/Governor Kate. She had three choices. She could veto it, sign it, or put in her desk drawer and it would become law anyway. She had 30 days



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to decide. On April 6, she let the people of OregonMyOregon know she planned to sign it into law. Inconceivable!

But do not fear, good people of OregonMyOregon, the battle is not over. Besides being a bad and an unfair law for the 192,000 small business owners, Princess/Governor Kate and her supporters still have serious opposition. The battle will continue, because the counts and countesses who did not support SB

1528 do not want a bad ending to this story. The next stop is the courts. Stay tuned as this unfolds.

Many people of the land are upset, and a petition for a referendum is beginning to be circulated. Because it took Princess/Governor Kate 30 days to finally sign the bill, a month was lost to collect signatures, making it more difficult to get in on the November ballot. Princess/Governor Kate is no dummy.

Three issues the courts of the land will be asked to determine:

1. Tax laws, by law, have to begin in the House of Representatives. This bill unlawfully originated in the Senate. Notice the "SB" not "HB", on SB 1528. Some have called it taxation without representation, and that is never a good ending to any story.

2. OregonMyOregon's constitution requires 60 percent vote of the counts and countesses in each chamber to pass tax measures. SB 1528 never received 60 percent of the vote in any chamber. Inconceivable!

3. Some of the advisers to the ruling party advised SB 1528 was not a tax increase. Tell that to the 192,000 small businesses and shopkeepers across the state. But the ruling party liked that advice and passed the bill, even though that was not the only advice offered to the discussion. The courts will be asked to determine what tax bills and issues fall under the Constitution.

One last edict Princess/Governor Kate has done is to call all the counts and countesses across OregonMyOregon to the Salem Castle in June to figure out what to do, costing \$50,000 a day to conduct business. That is a fair amount of coin. Inconceivable!

"The Princess Bride" story ends happily, with Buttercup and Wesley marrying, Inigo Montoya avenging his father, and the heroes riding off on white horses. The story of SB 1528 is not over, and it has the opportunity to end much better, for there are several issues still in play.

But at the very least the governor's race just got a whole lot more interesting.

State Senator Bill Hansell has represented Senate District 29 for the past six years. He and his wife Margaret live in Athena where he was raised on a wheat and cattle ranch.