

# The ENVOY

~The official Canada Cuba Literary Alliance newsletter~



**-Mission Statement-** "To advance literary solidarity between Canada and Cuba through the creative expression of poetry, prose, visual art and photography."

-CCLA President, Richard Grove

## -IMPORTANT-

All CCLA members need to go to the Yahoo! Group website, [http://ca.groups.yahoo.com/group/envoy\\_ccla/](http://ca.groups.yahoo.com/group/envoy_ccla/) and click the button that says "Join This Group!" in order to see the monthly issues.

After you receive your confirmation, you will not be put on any mass mailing list; you will simply receive an electronic reminder that a new Envoy (PDF) has been uploaded for your reading pleasure.

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**Shon Bryr McLean,**  
Editor/ Coordinator of The Envoy.  
Photo taken by Conan Stark / 07.

## A Message from the Editor

*By Envoy Editor/Coordinator Shon Bryr McLean*

Greetings everyone!

I hope all is well.

January and February (so far) have been very busy months for me and thanks to the prolific nature and talent of CCLA member and contributing editor Gordon Higginson, he has yet again saved this issue from being completely without content by sharing his advanced tastes on the art of love; sticking to a nice February Valentine's theme.



On a not-so loving or romantic point of view, here is a message from CCLA member, RD Roy (haha):

"Friends,

Follow the dubious developments of J. Londry & RD Roy's controversial collaborative book "Life & Death in Cheap Motels".

Visit the ongoing (as long as it lasts) link for news and updates.

<http://www.thewhig.com/Community/NewsDisplay.aspx?c=10680> "

See you next month!

## Reviews

*Review by Gordon Higginson*

### Read the Love

"Trembling I await your approach," pianist and composer Franz Liszt wrote in a love letter to his mistress at the time, "come, bring me joy!"

Joy is what letters, books and poems about love have been providing for centuries.

So many great love stories have made great literature: Dante and Beatrice in "The Divine Comedy," Petrarch and Laura in Petrarch's Sonnets, Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet" and Margaret Mitchell's "Gone with the Wind" are just some of these classic love stories. More recently, Canadian poet Tom Wayman put together a collection of Canada's best love poems in 2001. The book, from Harbour Publishing, titled "Dominion of Love," begins with some famous Canadian love poems-- "You have the lovers" by Leonard Cohen, and "The Cinnamon Peeler" by Michael Ondaatje.

Many other notable Canadian poets are included like Earle Birney, Al Purdy, Margaret Atwood, Kate Braid, G. E. Clarke, Fred Wah, and others.

This anthology got me thinking: what is the classic or best or at least the quintessential Canadian love story? Is it Hollywood's musical (with its famous songs "Oh Rose Marie I love you--I'm always thinking of you" and "When I'm Calling Yoooooo") of a Mounties' love for his woman in the early 'thirties movie "Rose Marie" with singers Jeanette Macdonald and Nelson Eddy? Is it Anne and Gilbert in Lucy Maud Montgomery's "Anne of Green Gables" series? Or is it between Vancouverite star Pamela Anderson and the male population of North America? Or the allegorical seduction of Canada by the United States in the Guess Who song "American Woman"? What of Canadian novels like Gabrielle Roy's "Tin Flute" or Margaret Laurence's "Jest of God" or "The Diviners"?

Actually, I think the quintessential Canadian romance is Marion Engel's "Bear," a novel about a woman's affair with a bear. What could be more Canadian than a wild liaison with a ravaging fur coat? It seems symbolic of Canada and its relationship with nature.

But what of Cuba's great love literature? Perhaps Cuba's greatest recent love-poet is Dulce Maria Loynaz (1902 to 1997), whose poems became popular in the 'eighties. Her poems are very erotic. Cuba's great national hero and revolutionary, Jose Marti, also wrote fine love poetry.

As long as humanity survives, there will be more and more great love stories from Canada, Cuba and around the world. So much more moving love poetry to be written and read, whether on Valentine's Day or during the rest of the year!

## Poetry

If you wish to submit written work, please keep it under one (MS Word) page long. All submissions are subject to spelling and grammatical edits, if chosen. Not all submissions will make it into the Envoy.

**An Altar To Ochun**

*(Goddess of love and rivers in the Afro-Cuban religion of Santeria)*

*By Gordon Higginson*

What is love Ochun I know lust but not love so my altar to you is static steel mere fragments of metal not moving but ignorant show me what love is Ochun is love the young woman swinging the shopping bag as she leaves a store or the elderly woman laying flowers on the grave of her husband or the rocking moaning woman on the bus all these women are solitary as we all are but love draws together is love then rivers why else would you be associated with rivers or rather what rivers do to move us to you the ocean Ochun and channel our scattered particles the smallest drops into the larger the universe into you is that love that unites us to you a gathering and a movement to you my altar then should not be things but motions behaviours actions playing music singing speaking coming together with others my altar of love should not be a shrine but a flow what I do to bring together to join others to mass and expand the universe to grow you

**A Prayer To Ochun, My Love's Muse**

*By Gordon Higginson*

To know your heart, all occult ciphers' streams  
Must drench my speech and oil my tongue with blood  
And flow that lather all succubi dreams:  
Hence, Muse, immerse in night's conceits my flood  
Of verse, and spell my songs in demon's script  
--If only dark will 'suade your heart to fall  
In mine, then dye my lines with tempter's sip  
Which drowns all light but charms out sweet from gall  
And chills your love in seed that burns past ice--  
This corruption may birth your faith and grace  
In me; your favours deep will surge the vice  
I write sea-wards in size and gulf enough to 'brace  
Your cryptic heart. To gloss and speak your heart's true tongue  
Skills me all mysteries that love's waters can run.

**Abelard To Heliose: Contra Their Desire**

*By Gordon Higginson*

We bring our void. The seasons know my dust  
And watch my ruins powder each changing hue:  
Spring's green weeps 'neath my grey; not autumn-rust,  
But drossy-ash does summer's gold mournfully prove,  
While my breath dulls each winter's silver gleam  
For praising you and not the breath of love  
Whose word moves all 'cept we when we blaspheme,  
Invoking flesh as if our lust to move  
In each other were the unmoved verb--  
Without that verb, nothing reigns; against that verb, sin proclaims;  
Without that verb, love's tune cannot be heard--  
We sin, hence naught speaks past our days--our names,  
Our deeds, our souls, even our dust will not season our time  
When nothing follows death--No, not even this grieving rhyme.

## Upcoming and Ongoing

**News, Events, and Contests.** More details can be found on our website: [www.canadacubaliteraryalliance.org](http://www.canadacubaliteraryalliance.org)

REMEMBER – You can always cut and paste upcoming events into your online calendars or print out each Envoy to remind you of upcoming events and theme issues.

February 10<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, and March 3<sup>rd</sup>

At Clinton's, 693 Bloor St. W., Toronto, by Christie subway station.

The Art Bar Poetry Series is recognized as the longest running poetry reading series in Canada.

Performances start at 8:00.

Admission is free but donations are welcomed.

Please visit [www.artbar.org](http://www.artbar.org) for more info and directions.

Hello poets and poetry aficionados!

Just a quick reminder that the FREE WCDR youth poetry contest, ROCK PAPER SCISSORS closes at midnight Saturday.

If you know anyone with kids in grade school or high school who have not emailed their entries yet, please remind them that time is running out.

FULL CONTEST DETAILS available by clicking here: <http://www.wcdr.org/wcdr25/?p=1000>

*James Dewar*

*VP and Contest Coordinator*

*Writers' Circle of Durham Region*

### Canada Cuba Literary Alliance

For more information on membership guidelines, submissions, translations, or general info, please contact the

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**All members of the CCLA are eligible to have submissions published in the Envoy!**

**Aside from literature, we also enjoy publishing your photography and paintings.**

**Submit now!**

**Remember:**

**Monthly issues will be emailed to everyone who joins the Envoy group at Yahoo! Groups.**

Our Envoy archives can be found at:

[http://ca.groups.yahoo.com/group/envoy\\_ccla/](http://ca.groups.yahoo.com/group/envoy_ccla/)

