



Poets on Craft: Joseph Fasano and John Guzlowski

By Bunkong Tuon on October 7, 2020 in Conversations, Main Posts, Poetry

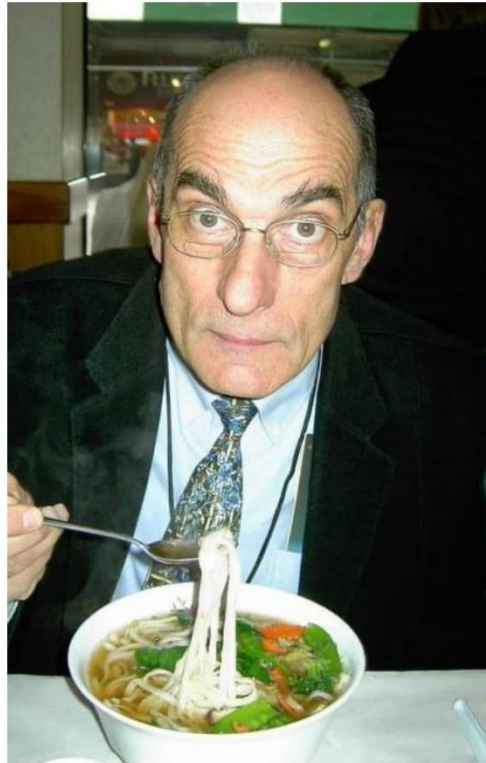
Poets on Craft is a cyberspace for contemporary poets to share their thoughts and ideas on the process of poetry and for students to discover new ways of approaching the writing of poetry. In the face of a pandemic that is both viral and political, it is a resource for strength and creativity, friendship 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 eleventh post in the series, we have Joseph Fasano and John Guzlowski.



John Guzowski's writing appears in *Rattle*, *North American Review*, *Crab Orchard Review*, and other journals. *Echoes of Tattered Tongues*, his poetry memoir about his parents' experiences as slave laborers in Nazi Germany, won the Benjamin Franklin Poetry Award and the Eric Hoffer/Montaigne Award. His most recent book of autobiographical poems is *True Confessions* (Darkhouse Books). He is also the author of the Hank and Marvin mystery **novels (reviewed in the *New York Times*) and a weekly columnist for the *Dziennik Zwiazkowy*, the oldest Polish daily newspaper in the US. John is also a retired professor who spent a long long time teaching writing.**

I absolutely believe in inspiration, the muse that speaks to me. When I first started writing, I thought the idea of a muse was just a gag, some bullshit left over from the Greeks. But then I finally came to believe in the muse after that. What I noticed was that thoughts and words are always popping into my head, and I don't know where they're coming from, but there they are, and I have to

write them down immediately because the muse isn't going to whisper twice what she whispered once. Sometimes, I hear a phrase in my head, a combination of a few words or phrases, and I like the sound or the image or the thought, and I write it down. Sometimes, if I'm lucky, as soon as I start writing the word or phrase I heard in my head, it will lead me to another phrase and another. I don't try to force it. I just try to let the words lead me to where they want me to go.

What follows after this is generally a slower process of revision and playing with the poem. When I was teaching creative writing, I used to tell students that editing wasn't editing, it was really experimenting. When you make a change to a poem, you're experimenting with it, playing with it, trying to see what else you can do. Sometimes this process takes a couple days, sometimes longer. How do I know I'm finished? When I can read the poem out loud and it feels fluid and like it came from me immediately without hesitation or any kind of editing. That's when I know it's finished.

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<https://www.culturalweekly.com/poets-on-craft-joseph-fasano-and-john-guzlowski/>