
Poetry from the heart

Event brings out raw emotions

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It was a night of expression, raw emotion, laughter and heartache, all the feelings that come with a first break-up, disillusionment of a relationship or even a one-night stand. These were the components of Tuesday night's Poetry Slam.

As the lights dimmed at Cal State Fullerton's Underground Pub, late arriving students squeezed through the crowd to get a better view of the contestants, as the cheers rose for the brave souls who took the stage. Despite the hustle and bustle of trying to find a decent place to sit, the energetic vibe transformed the inside of the crowded pub.

First-time contestants shared the spotlight with some returning poetry winners from last year's event, but only one contestant took the \$100 prize.

The winning phrase that won much applause and laughter came from a tall, thin, fair skinned, red-haired contestant.

"I'm a white guy that loves black women," said Bobby Williams, 21, also known by his stage name "Double B."

The Indiana native dazzled the audience like an old pro, despite the fact that this was his first appearance at Cal State Fullerton's Poetry Slam, which he heard about online.

Whenever Double B took the stage, he would tell his poems with his body moving in a natural grace, like a fish in water. He would twist his scrawny limbs all over the stage to make the audience travel with him to his experiences.

He has been residing in California since October, and even though he hates the traffic, he has enjoyed himself here.

"I love the people, I love the sunny weather, and the smiley-like attitude of California," Double B said.

The poetry he writes comes from his real life experiences and different things that are on his mind. Even the most mundane situations are turned into a work of art.

His final recital, titled "Flowers," garnered hysterical laughs from the audience, and came from the stereotypes he had to face when he dated a black girl in St. Louis.

"People just really gave us trouble for that, and so I just kind of converted it into a poem," he said.

Double B does poetry and rap for a living. His latest CD came out in summer 2007, titled "And then everything got all awkward and I had to take her home." After experiencing success with his CD, he is now working on a new one.

The second place contestant was the returning winner from last year's event, Eric Morago. The 28-year-old poetry major from Long Beach State, shouted his verse with deep emotion and vigor.

When the spotlight hovered over him, one could see the veins bursting out of his neck, as he shouted his poem to a shocked audience.

"I believe in writing good poems and performing them as if I'm really trying to connect with the audience," Morago said.

His intensity stems from his fascination about relationships between human beings.

"Not only romantic relationships, but fraternal relationships and spiritual relationships," Morago said.

Morago has taught poetry workshops at middle schools and high schools. He is also the co-founder of Use Your Words, a poetry workshop, which targets young people behind bars.

He has been writing poetry for three years and plans to publish a few "real" books with his work.

One of the few women to participate in the poetry reading was CSUF student, Marissa Duran, 19, a communications major.

Duran considers her poetry style to be eclectic and with a rhyming flow, which often embodies her mood.

One of her poems titled 'Breathe in Breathe out,' came from a break up that Duran went through, and in turn, she converted her heartbreak into poetry.

Part of what inspires her is one of her favorite artists, Frida Kahlo.

"Even though she is not a poet, her art and just the way she lived her life, it's really inspiring to me," Duran said. "I would like to someday strive to be like her."

Taking into account the rollercoaster of emotions experienced by all the attendees, people look forward to next year's event, which promises to be a representation of the contestants' originality and creativity.