

Potpourri

by JULIE CANDLER
Special Writer

An evening of poetry can be as exciting as what happens when Margot Fonteyn and Rudolf Nureyev get together. It was that way last week when W. D. Snodgrass, who lives poetry, and obviously loves his life, delighted 23 Birmingham poetry fans.

Snodgrass brought the spirit of John Keats into the family room of the Edward Lawrence home at 283 Lake Park. Gathered there was a loyal band of poetry lovers who have been meeting continually since 1950, when they signed up for a "Conversation in Poetry." They were part of Detroit Adventure's "Conversations in the Arts" program.

THEIR FIRST conversation leader was W. D. Snodgrass, of Wayne State University, who earlier won a Pulitzer prize for his book of poems, "Heart's Needle" (published by Knopf).

The lean, moustachioed and young-looking poet shifted positions and gestured frequently as he sat in the center of the room. (That's because Potpourri unknowingly took the place of a Pulitzer prize winner—O horrors!—when he got up to distribute poetry just as Potpourri entered.) The uncomplaining Mr. Snodgrass took his glass of iced tea from beside the comfortable couch which had been his seat and moved to a hard-backed chair in the room's center. Like I was saying, "O horrors!" But by then it was too late to return his place to him without making a scene.

Now I think I know why poets usually read their own work aloud so well. Only a poet can achieve the feeling the rapture that evokes beautiful drama from a Keats ode or a Whitman work.

WITH A TRUE poet's enthusiasm for a masterful literary achievement, Snodgrass finished reading a Whitman work and said, "After that poem, you don't feel like writing very much."

When he had finished reading "Ode to a Nightingale," he said to the intent circle around him, "What do you think of that?"

It was hard to find the right words to answer, and Snodgrass knew that. He followed his question with, "That's like taking you into the Cistine Chapel and saying, 'Well, what do you think of that? How about them apples?'"

WHEN HE had finished the melodious tones of the Keats ode "To Autumn," Snodgrass said: "These words could be understood in any language. If you went to Guatemala and got up in the square and read this aloud, the natives would all applaud!"

He told of a woman who actually did read beautiful poetry in English to Guatemalan natives, who loved it. "They would come to her and say, 'Talk like rain, Missy.'"

Among the poetry lovers there was Mrs. W. W. Chao, 3075 Patch Drive, who has organized four or more poetry evenings each year for the sympathies. At a recent evening with poet Don Hall (University of Michigan), there were 42 at the Harry Winston home. Another concert of poetry was at the Eliot F. Robinson home.

Among the group with poetry fever are Mrs. Herman J. Linn, Mrs. James L. Cameron, Jr., Mrs. Francis Loud and Harold Harley, who's a poet himself. There is a goodly group of men (bless 'em) among the poetry-struck.

FREDRIK DEUKER, whose one-man show opened this week at Gallery Galactic, 132 Madison in Detroit, is also a one-man dynamo. He is design director for a Detroit firm. He has produced enough good art work in his off-duty hours to make himself the man behind a long list of one-man shows in New York, Chicago and Detroit. He and his wife are currently putting the finishing touches on a handsome contemporary home, complete with two studios and a gallery, at 21905 Stabain, Southfield.

Contributors Donate \$1800 in Award Money

Contributions ranging from \$5 to \$100 resulted in a total donation of \$1,800 in awards for the Festival Art Exhibition. The Awards Committee of the 1963 Birmingham Arts Festival wishes to recognize and express its gratitude to the friends and patrons who gave financial support to the Festival Art Exhibition Awards Fund.

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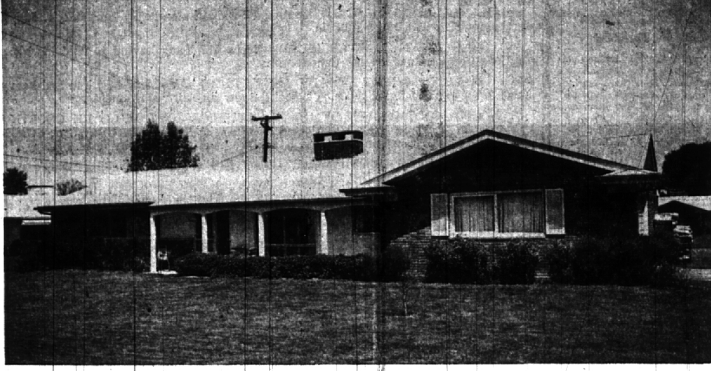
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