

Stipulated Poem

Nuyorican Poet's Café: My Cultural Icon

*Poetry the vital sign of a new culture needed to be heard live.
Miguel Algarin, Founder of the café in 1973*

I dream of being in the Nuyorican Poet's Café--
venue of theater, film, spoken word, poetry slam.
Go over the Hudson River bridge of Long Island Freeway
and you're also near hip hop, comedy, art, Latin Jazz jam.

I would fly to Boston, see family and friends
then head to the Lower East Side--Alphabet City,
in the Big Apple where a sound bite never ends,
find the iconic café full of artistic creativity.

I'd take my fifth book of poetry along,
but there's no slam poem in my repertoire,
so I'll take "Suprapoeming" my most strong
performing poem for my debut night noir.

I'll howl like yippee hound dog Arwen
after the poetry slam at the Open Room,
dramatically read my one poem, then
nurture my emergent slam poem to bloom.

I'll watch some hip hop, hear some jazz.
I can't dance. My knees say, "Nevermore".
But I will listen to poets' razz-a-ma-tazz
spotlighted with or without a judge or a score.

I yearn to see this multi-cultural diversity
despite the crowd, rude staff and disgusting bathrooms.
It is the place for artists in New York City--
the café where ground-breaking work mushrooms.

I believe I can write a slam poem this year.
For poet's this café is plenty of heaven.
I want to go there, experience my share
at the stages for the arts in 2011.

The café is the most integrated place on the planet--Allen Ginsberg

Stipulated Poem: In a Stipulated Poem you decide the form and the elements to include. This was a Stipulated New Year's Poem Contest with January 1st, 2011 deadline. I chose to use the elements in a-b-a-b quatrains. This poem was to be 28 lines and include: a world famous bar/tavern (Nuyorican Poets Café served wine and beer and was a former Irish Bar.), a famous bridge (Long Island Freeway bridge over Hudson River), a personal triumph of 2010 (My fifth book of poetry: *Poems That Count Too*), A favorite pet (son's dog Arwen), a major river (Hudson), a US city with "ton" ending (Boston), word nevermore (in 5th stanza) I believe (7th stanza), a glimpse of future year (wish to go to Nuyorican Poets Café), 2010 at the end (it rhymes with plenty of heaven in line 26). The poem had to be written in one hour. This poem was written wearing mittens during grandson's basketball practice December 31, 2010 after checking the Internet for Nuyorican Poet's Café data. It is the site of the first Poetry Slam in New York City in 1989. This poem won co-first place and \$20. Create your own stipulations alone or with a group.