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AggieLife

Shout it out!

Slam poetry is an outlet for students' emotions

By DINO RAMOS
 THE BATTALION

Generally, there are two types of poetry. There are poems that have structure, meter and are meant to be read in English class. Then, there also are poems that are better said out loud.

Slam poetry is a type of poetry that needs to be vocalized. It is a form of self-expression that is utilized as an emotional outlet. Slam poetry provides an opportunity for poets to give an emotional outpour of humor, sorrow, happiness and anger. Poets can share these emotions one at a time, or all at once, together. Slam poetry has elements from all emotions but mostly centers on anger.

"It is definitely an opportunity to express my anger out of all the emotions," said Anthony Guevara, Class of 1999. "It gives me a chance to say what's on my mind about anything and calling it art."

In the recent past, poetry was read in "beatnik" coffee house settings. Today, poetry sessions still exist in coffeehouses such as Sweet Eugene's in College Station, but there are now more venues where you can find people reading slam poetry and other types of poetry. Places such as libraries, bookstores, college campuses and even street corners are popular places where people can be found speaking their mind.

Slam poetry is for the most part, a performing art. Slam poetry can be read as mere words on a piece of paper, but if the poem is performed, it can be seen in a totally different light.

"When I read regular poetry, it is as though I have to think really hard to decipher what it means," said Tasha Joseph, a senior microbiology major.

"When I go to a slam poetry session, I totally feel what the reader is feeling and where he is coming from."

The elements of slam poetry are for the most part, simple. Unlike traditional poetry, slam poetry does not have any structure, and there are no boundaries.

Feelings play the most important role in slam poetry. When writing a slam poem, one is basically speaking his or her mind and makes it blatantly obvious in what they are speaking about. Many slam poets write about bitter break ups, estranged parents, bad childhood experiences and basically, bad-natured history.

Popular among the minority community are slam poets speaking about political and ethnic issues. This stems from cultural poetry written by poets who have written about their culture in an artistic manner.

Many cultural slam poets have taken this to a whole new level. In the Asian-American community, a popular group among slam poetry

lovers is a group called "I Was Born With Two Tongues." The group is comprised of four individuals that are from different Asian backgrounds, ranging from Korean, Filipino. They recite poems about stereotypes, political issues and respect Asian family traditions.

"I was first introduced to 'I Was Born With Two Tongues' when I was at a conference in New York," said Marissa Class of 1999. "I was never exposed to anything like that here in Texas, and their hit so close to home."

Navo said that ever since she saw "I Was Born with Two Tongues" perform it has opened the doors to many different types of poetry and has even inspired to write her own.

Slam poetry can give people the opportunity to vent anger as an art form. It can be an alleviation of the pain one feels from the end of a relationship or from the sudden death of a loved one.

"When I broke up with my boyfriend after two years, I wrote a lot of poetry and read it to my friends," said Joanna Crum, junior biomedical science major. "It didn't help much, but overall it did make me feel better because I was practically screaming the words I wrote."

So when people like the world is against them or have a bad day with many angry personalities, instead of building up frustration, eventually exploding, they can write angry emotions down and recite it to a group of friends. This can alleviate some anger and make others aware of how they feel. After screaming their words out, they can then hear themselves a slam poet.

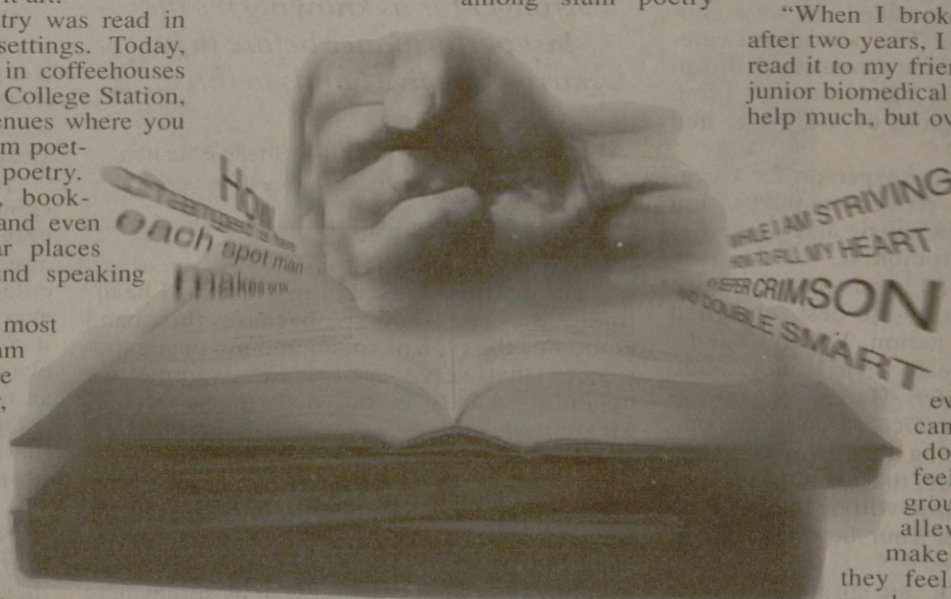


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