

3121 Oxford Road
Madison, WI 53705

Monday, October 03, 2011

Madison Arts Commission
Department of Planning & Development
215 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.
P.O. Box 2985
Madison, WI 53701-2985
Attn: Poet Laureate Nomination

To Whom It May Concern:

It is with utmost personal regard and admiration that I nominate Robin Elliott Lee for the position of Madison Poet Laureate for the city of Madison, Wisconsin. I have known Mr. Lee for most of his life and have been following his poetry for the 15 years that he has been writing. As a resident of Madison since 2004, he has created an established presence as a prolific public poet, not only through his own production, but also through his advocacy for the literary art.

Robin has established his presence and shown a history of advocacy for poetry in a number of ways. As a prolific writer with more than 1000 poems to his name, Robin has shared his talent in both written and oral form. He writes and shares a poem a week on the internet through his self managed internet social network "Creative Collectivity." Topics range wide; from political to spiritual, humorous to melancholy. During the protests on the capitol square in the early months of 2011, Mr. Lee read several of his poems encouraging social justice and equality to the multitude in attendance.

Robin's advocacy extends beyond his own on-line publications and public appearances. Since 2005 to the present, he has published a free art and poetry magazine called "The Kit n' Caboodle". This poetry outlet, giving voice to the general population, features submissions from many local artists and writers. Robin has also organized and managed several poetry readings and open mikes for artists in the area. In addition, he hosts an on-line forum for writers and creative thinkers (www.creativecollectivity.ning).

One of Mr. Lee's strengths, in addition to writing poetry, is his ability to establish positive relationships with people of all ages and diverse backgrounds. Everywhere that he goes, Robin has shown the ability to lead, listen, unite, inspire, and activate. Last year, he collaborated with several others on the writing and production of the *Renewsical*, a musical about renewable energy and energy conservation. This creative endeavor has been performed throughout the state and recognized by the EPA through a grant for creatively outreaching to the public on the topic of energy. He has self published collections of his own works and been published in collections by others. He currently has many projects in the works.

Robin Lee writes with his head and his heart. As a teacher of young writers and a private poet myself, what appeals most to me about Robin's writing is his ability to write for others' reflection, not just his own. While my poetry is a means for me to sort my own feelings and issues, Robin's poetry often reflects the feelings and issues of the larger population. Through his voice, he gives voice to others.

It is my firm belief that Robin Elliott Lee, as Madison Poet Laureate, would serve with enthusiasm, inclusiveness, and distinction. I highly recommend that he be considered for this position. Please feel free to contact me if you need more information by e-mail (jklampe@charter.net) or by phone (608-238-1012).

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jody Lampe".

Jody Lampe
Teacher
Shorewood Elementary School

To the Madison Arts Commission;

It is with great satisfaction and respect that I recommend my close friend Robin E. Lee for the honor of becoming the next Poet Laureate for the City of Madison. Through his involvement in the community, his ability to reach out to and connect with a diverse constituency, and his innate talents as a writer, I am confident that he has skills and makeup that will allow him to serve with dignity and aplomb.

Robin is an energetic and highly-productive writer who displays an undeniable passion for poetry. It is a rare day when you don't see him carrying around his pocket notebook, which is always at the ready to capture ephemeral moments of inspiration. He writes multiple poems a week, and has over a thousand works to his name. Each week he posts one of his favorites to an online creative writing forum, to which he has a significant and loyal subscribership.

As an enthusiast of poetry and an amateur poet myself, I find appreciation in the unique and effective style that embodies Robin's works. His poems feature a clean, satisfying, and unpretentious structure that renders his work compelling and approachable to a readership diverse in age, background, and ideology. He has a knack for being able to open up and explore complex topics in his works with rare perspicuity and insight, and is able to effectively and succinctly convey his ideas and conclusions. That being said, he is as adept at writing about the mundane as he is the profound, and can bring levity and wit to even the most prosaic of topics of everyday life. He has also exhibited a capacity to take on a wide breadth of subjects and viewpoints in his work, and this adaptability will lend itself well to the expectations of the position.

Robin has worked to great lengths to further the participation in and distribution of poetry in the Madison area. He is the editor and publisher of the Kit-N-Kaboodle, a free periodical that publishes work from local writers who would otherwise never see their work in print. He is also the creator and administrator for a local social networking site designed specifically with writers and artists in mind, www.creativecollectivity.ning.com. He has also organized poetry readings, and has read his own works at innumerable functions to a diverse collection of audiences.

As a human, Robin is a charismatic, outgoing person who never seems to tire or get discouraged. He is one of those folks who seem to be universally loved and respected, and you are just as likely to see him engaged in cheerful conversation with someone half or twice his age as with someone closer to his own. He has a real talent in getting people gathered and organized for worthy endeavors, and has put on fundraisers for a variety of causes that would not have happened without his dedication and initiative. His lighthearted, amiable demeanor disarms even the most guarded of audiences, and this makes his public readings that much more effective.

Robin E. Lee has many estimable qualities both as a poet and as a human being, and I am confident that he would perform superbly in the role of Madison's Poet Laureate. I can't think of anyone more perfect for the position.

October 3, 2011

To Whom it May Concern:

It is my great pleasure to write this recommendation of Robin Lee for the honor of Madison Poet Laureate. I know Robin personally, I have seen his work develop over the past several years, and I am confident he is ideally suited for the position of Poet Laureate.

Robin is an excellent choice because he is a gifted and prolific poet and he brings poetry to people it would otherwise not reach. Robin writes poems of all types for all audiences. Robin writes to both inform and entertain and topics range from his life in rural Wisconsin to political commentary. While there is a clear political streak in Robin's poetry, it connects rather than polarizes its readers and listeners.

Robin is absolutely prepared for this position. As Poet Laureate, Robin would be charged with contributing to and facilitating important parts of the Madison arts community. While the position would be an opportunity to extend his outreach, he already serves this role in several ways. Robin has been involved with a few local art and poetry zines, often donating significant time and money to ensure that amateur and aspiring artists get published and widely distributed. While these zines do not likely offer professional success, it is the sharing of poetry and art that motivates Robin. Similarly, Robin manages an online forum for poets and creative writers at creativecollectivity.ning.com. Beyond sharing his poems online, it is his facilitation of others' artistic work that reveals his true love of – and commitment to – poetry.

Robin is a great choice as the face of poetry in Madison. While Robin can write poetry that is emotionally affective, he likes to make poetry fun. While Robin takes poetry personally, he respects others' interpretations and contrasting works. Finally, and most importantly, Robin can write poetry for amusement, but prefers to write toward an important purpose. One example Robin can be very proud of is his contribution to the "Renewsical" – a musical about renewable energy and energy efficiency that featured several such purposeful poems. I attended the Renewscical at the Barrymore, where I had the opportunity to see how an audience connects to Robin's informed but fun approach to writing. This example, which demonstrates a form of writing that simultaneously facilitates thinking and laughing, shows how Robin would be a perfect fit for the position of Poet Laureate.

Robin is intelligent, poetically gifted, and fun to be around; he is an ideal candidate for this honor. He will contribute to the Madison arts community, facilitate continued growth, and proudly serve and represent the many artists of all stripes throughout Madison. Additionally, Robin's able alliteration abilities amaze and his rhyming skills induce thrills. You won't be disappointed.

Sincerely,
Garrett Jones
garrettnjones@gmail.com

Nomination of Robin E. Lee for Madison Poet Laureate

Robin Lee is well known in Madison. He's well known for his charity work, his art, his music, but mostly he is known for his poetry.

Robin has lived in Wisconsin his whole life, and has lived in the heart Madison (Downtown/ Willy Street/ Jenifer Street/ Rutledge Street/ and presently 2634 East Dayton Street) for six years. In those six years he's been actively pursuing his dream of sharing his many messages, ideas, and philosophies through poetry. His belief that poetry is not only the clichéd "language of the soul" but also a tool to educate, communicate, entertain, and connect with society keeps his work inspired and his objectives clear.

Beginning writing at a young age, Robin Lee has evolved from a tinkering wordsmith to a devout lyricist. As a student at the University of Wisconsin Stevens Point he became well versed in the many styles techniques of the art. His initial contributions to www.leftoverbags.com (the ultimate experience) were his first attempt of using poetry to capture the public's attention and encourage them towards environmental stewardship. Through that endeavor he learned the power of poetry and became determined to share that power with others through a multitude of projects and self publications

His free Zine, The Kit-N-Caboodle, effectively gives untraditional poets and artists who aren't as inclined to seek publication a voice. The social network he developed "Creative Collectivity" offers poets, artists, writers, and "free thinkers" an opportunity to share their work and feedback. The musical he co-wrote, "The Renewal- A musical about renewable energy" showed the ability that poetry has to transcend demographic lines, make learning fun, and stir interest in advocacy. With over 1000 poems ranging from humorous, political, personal, and spiritual, he is prolific and varied; and with that wide range he attempts to share the beautiful art of communication through poetry. Naming him the prestigious title of laureate would grant the credentials needed to share that beauty even more.

Robin has a history of working with organizations has proven his ability to branch out and connect with the Madison community. He volunteered countless hours with WORT community radio. Has held fundraisers, where his poetry was read, for "Clean Wisconsin Foundation," the Madison Nature Conservancy, The Madison Children's Museum, the Salvation Army, the Save the Children Foundation, and The Midwest Renewable Energy Association. His intentions of using his art, for goodness sake, to benefit a community, are ever present in his many endeavors. His outgoing personality and presence in many social scenes of Madison has made Robin especially advantageous in the realm of event planning. This position, were he to get it, would only provide the kind of leverage this artist needs to bring his community action to higher level.

Please accept this nomination for Robin Lee to be taken into consideration for the Poet Laureate of the great city of Madison.

Poet's Statement of Interest

I, Robin E. Lee, would be extremely honored and willing to commit myself to being Madison's Poet Laureate. I feel my experience and passion in the "Sacred art" would qualify me as a worthy candidate. I am willing to serve a four-year term with dignity and enthusiasm. This would be an opportunity for me to share with others, what I have come to learn as one of the most important forms of human communication. In these very busy and tumultuous times, the poet plays an important role in society; the poet that is heard plays an even more important part. Please let me play that part; consider me for this honorable position.

Sincerely,

Robin E. Lee
2634 East Dayton Street
Madison, WI 53704

Moderation

-Stay moderate, work together;
but don't work so hard you die.
Figure our things for yourself,
question how and why.
-Try remaining civil.
Don't forget to disobey.
Don't be blinded by business.
Don't believe all others say.
-Take some time to admire nature.
Watch the egrets jabbing grace;
the green golden glow of the Marshfield,
the sun on the pretty girls face.
-Throw your line into the rapids,
you just may snag a bass.
Kick it into high gear,
cause the days are moving fast.
-Try to limit your luxuries;
the ones you have please try to share.
Help eachother to move foreword,
with courtesy and care.
-Always remember your origins,
as humble as they may or not be.
Remember who built your bridges.
Remember who planted your trees.
-Smile at your neighbors,
even if you don't know their name.
We may be different players,
but we're playing the same game.
-Respect what came before you.
Respect what's going to come.
Youth learn from your elders.
Elders listen to your young.
-"Your example will inspire others,"
or so the fortune goes.
But which step you take, to make or break
the cookie never knows.
-Cherish every sunset;
and every drop of H2O.
Appreciate just being,
cause you don't know when you'll go.
-Stay moderate, work together,
Try to semble peace.
Cause if we can't forge semblance,
our troubles can't find release.

Winter Walk

-I decided I needed to go for a walk. I decided to go outside.
Tired of being a coward of the cold, no longer wanting to hide.
-I took care of my business. Drank some water hit the potty
Kiss Mrs. Lee with diligency, and bundled up my body.
-I take a couple of steps out, and what's to be found?
A lowly leftoverbag submerged in the ground.
-I'm a stranger to my neighbor. He's one to me as well.
So many layers around the face, who's inside we never tell.
-The sun's setting already; a metallic, blue, pink, and grey,
It beacons so I follow; along my merry way.
-The cold catches quick. It stiffens my ink.
The pink the sun lowers, the temperature sinks.
-Past the houses, down the road.
I freeze my frown, in bitter cold.
-Under the trees, around the track,
sneaking through, the gas station's back.
-Along the abandoned, chemical plant,
I've been here before, but don't know where I'm at.
-There's a train station, but there isn't a train.
My skin begins to sting, with all of winter's pain.
-Over the Yahara, into Tenney Park.
The skaters skate for fun's sake, and wait for the dark.
-I see god when I see the sunset. I pray with reverent sighs.
Try to steal it with a picture, and conceal it with my eyes.
-And as color fades, and twilight dims,
the glow-fire of city, begins to begin.
The streets they grow dark, houses enlight,
a Madison day turns to a Madison night.

Not Ready for Bed

-I'm not ready for bed;
not yet, not yet.
There's too many things
I don't want to forget.
-I'm not ready to sleep.
My thoughts run too deep.
There's too many memories
I want to keep.
-The hour is late,
I know, I know.
But the day was good
so I don't want it to go.
-How do I make the smiles stick?

How do I make the hugs last?
How do I keep the present,
from becoming the past?
-It'd be nice to be a better man.
But I do the best I can.
And if I could do it over,
I'd do it all over again.
-Sparkly eyes,
The graze of soft skin
The presence of soul,
glowing outside from in.
-Belly's full of poison.
Mind is full of dreams.
Heart is full of adoration.
Body jumps to extremes.
-The echoes of the laughter,
the music's resounding sound.
Presenting life with honesty
lets opportunity be found.
-The future's always uncertain.
That's a well known fact
but you can often see where you're going,
if you just back track.
-Little successes and big fat failures.
and lots and lots of work,
around the corner of every decision,
consequences lurk.
-I don't want to forget the moments,
the dances and the views.
I don't want to forget the reason,
I'm kept up by the muse.
-Peanut butter in the morning
Peapods in the day.
What I wouldn't give to hear,
the things I'd wished to say.
-I'm not ready for bed.
Not yet, not yet.
There's too many things
I don't want to forget.
-I'm not ready to sleep
My thoughts run too deep
There's too many memories
I want to keep.