

From: Wolf, Karin
Sent: Wednesday, October 14, 2015 10:35 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: 2) Poet Laureate Nomination Caitlin McGahan nominated by the Harlem Renaissance Museum
Attachments: Caitlin McGahan Bio 2015.doc; Chapbook Rain.doc

From: Wolf, Karin
Sent: Tuesday, October 13, 2015 4:14 PM
To: 'Barbara Schrank' [REDACTED]; Kia Karlen; Kia Karlen; 'Yvette Pino'; 'Yorel Lashley'; 'Sarah Sosa'; 'Rick Tvedt'; 'Briony Jean Foy' [REDACTED]; 'Cedric Johnson'; 'Ginger Ann'; Carter, Sheri
Subject: 2) Poet Laureate Nomination Caitlin McGahan nominated by the Harlem Renaissance Museum

From: Caitlin McGahan [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, October 02, 2015 11:48 AM
To: Madison Arts
Subject: Poet Laureate Caitlin McGahan nominated by the Harlem Renaissance Museum

1. Evidence that the candidate has an established presence as a productive public poet in Madison and has a history of advocacy for poetry. I have been the co-slam master and creative director for Urban Spoken Word for the past 6 years, won the Grand Slam Champion position twice, and competed on 6 Madison teams at the National Poetry Slam competition. We offer workshops for both children and adults, and also hold fund raisers for local non-profits. Urban Spoken Word is a safe haven for those who wish to share their work. I am also the co-founder of the Harlem Renaissance Museum and help run and create workshops for children and adults, and organize the visual and live exhibits at the museum
2. Evidence that the candidate possesses a large body of work, whether published, self-published or unpublished. I have one published body of work, and also have a large body of work that is currently unpublished, and would be happy to show it to you
3. Selections from the candidate's works. (8-10 pages of poetry) please see the attachment
4. 3 Personal and professional references for the candidate. David Hart, Martel Chapman, and Eric Schulenburg
5. Evidence of the candidate's current residency in Madison. I have resided in Madison for 9 years, and would be happy to provide the required paperwork
6. Evidence that the candidate will be available for the two-year term in Madison. I live and work in Madison, and do have the time to successfully complete a two year term
7. Evidence of established relationships that will enable the poet laureate to further develop the community partnerships necessary for effective service. We have worked with many schools doing workshops both at the school, and at the museum. We have a sound connection to a group of teachers in Madison, and other non-profits, such as the Rainbow Project.
8. A 500 word statement of intent from the poet nominated. Include ideas of what you would like to focus on as poet laureate.

I am honored that the Harlem Renaissance Museum is submitting an application on my behalf to become Madison's poet laureate.

If I am selected, I will focus on outreach and making poetry accessible to the masses during the course of my tenure. I will do that in a few ways, many of which I so currently as the creative director for the museum.

First, I will establish office hours at libraries, nursing homes and community centers to assist youth in developing their writing skills.

I will also conduct free workshops and readings at the same outlets to help bring the arts to marginalized areas and populations.

Finally, I would like to partner with the Madison Metropolitan school district to create a mentor program for young writers.

While entrepreneur and artist usually contradict each other, Caitlin McGahan is both. As a gifted poet from Melencamp's version of Small Town, she paints pictures of love, life, and passion with words. Shortly, after her graduation from the University of Iowa, with a Communications degree and a Business minor in 2005, she hit the slam scene like a semi truck with daisies in the cargo. Winning poetry slams all over, she was a 2 time grand slam champion of Madison, and six time member of the nation poetry slam team. She is also co-slam master and creative director of Urban Spoken Word and the co-founder of the Harlem Renaissance Museum. She strives to help the museum provide wonderful workshops for children, display thought provoking visual exhibits, and create dynamite live exhibits, helping to make the museum one of the go-to jazz spots in the city. Caitlin is a professional in the fashion industry and has a blog , the Figure Eight, a leading voice for curvy women. She aspires to own her own business soon. She believes in the power of hard work, the magic of poetry, and the desire to follow your passion.

Vagabond

Caitlin McGahan

"All that is gold does not glitter,

Not all those who wander are lost"

-J.R.R. Tolkien

Rain

The rain makes myself sit tighter to my frame

And my skin more malleable

With each kiss you leave your lips imprints on my

Ribs like memory foam marrow

Your taste buds creating an erotic architectural tattoo

More magical than the Maori

Your fingertips embroidering their prints into my cells

Installing more energy to help

Like adding 150 more chakras so that I can finally see myself

And feeling your energy merging with mine

I know you see me

You see my goodness

You see my humanness as divine

Your persistence in helping me realize my existence

Has been as consistent as the sunrise and I thank you for in

And in the rain I want your hands and trace your life line with my tongue

Taste your decades like a fine wine

Feel the pulse of your veins take me back to our past lives

I want to look into your eyes like a crystal ball

And have you portray our future lives

Get lost in your smile and feel the resonance in your voice

Move the energy in my insides

Wrap my arms around like a bow in this present time

Bathe in your sweet breath as you cocoon around me

Keeping me safe as the rain melts my walls down

Like an all-encompassing kiss

You provide my soul incubation as my wall starts melting down

Like a too tight suit you help me out of its casing from a protection

That I no longer need

But it did serve its purpose

The moon comes and I see my shadow start to surface and it's

No longer tattered and torn more like a new leaf

Tailor made from its genetic recipe and

You help me sew my shadow

Back to my feet like Peter Pan

My shadow sometimes separates from me

Because of all the years that spent

Floating above everything

So, that I didn't have to be there

You help put me back together again

Trace my shape igniting my curves that never end

Roll my hips to the movement of the infinity sign

Your soft touch sealing myself into me for all time

My body now thrumming from the shift in

Energy like a bass line

My mind resetting for this new time

Threading my heart to yours

Cast in the moonlight we move like the sea tides

Our heat swirling above us past the tree line

Causing the buds to burst into bloom

Childhood

She slides down her childhood at the playground

Surrounded by the melodious birdsongs

But where she ain't supposed to have to worry about the bees yet

Unless it's something she likes

Then it's the bee's knees

But, she's not supposed to have to worry about the birds

And the bee, just yet

So, she takes the ride down her childhood

Like Chutes and Ladders, like Candy Land

And at school, all she's hoping for is a damn Candy gram

Cuz to her, it means someone notices her

Someone see and cares about her

So, she waits

With her heart suspended

Waits to hear the sound of her heartbeat reinvented

But, until then she only hears the deep and empty echoes

Of the cavern where her heart is intended

Like a wishing well that provides only misery

On the outside, she has learned how to tie her shoes

And how to be ashamed of her birthday suit

And is told she needs clothes to cover it up

But, this is something she already knows cuz she feels more naked

Than most

When she ain't got no clothes

Cuz her childhood has been skinned from her immortal soul

And how can anyone feel comfortable in that?

She gets good grades

Well liked in school

But, all she feels is the panic of the fox when the hands of the
hound get too close

She can't see much past her nose

Looking for a place to live

Looking for a home

A word that's been unknown to her for years

Hangman and Twister take on more sinister directions

Than the first time the box was opened and she's feeling like

Pandora

And where the hell is Hope? She's been waiting on her

But how can you really be waiting on something when you're feeling

your nothing

Feeling like a cold frozen raindrop amongst a storm

Hitting up against a fogged over window

How is anyone going to see that?

Foggy she's having trouble seeing herself these days

Trouble even realizing she has a self these days

Still looking for that word home

But it's been put up on some back shelf

Just out of her reach

Oh for the good old days when bubble baths were clean

A mermaid's dream

Where hugs were messages of pure honest affection and your

Bedroom was a safe haven

Where the only playground dangers were woodchips lava tag and

Too high monkey bars

But now she's existing in a different kind of bar

Sliding down fireman's poles and using a new kind of blow

Than the breath that she used to use for Bubble Yum bubbles

Sometimes when she remembers she has feeling in her toes
She'll come down off the stilts of her high heeled throne
And dig into her purse and pull out a well creased Candy gram and
Feel home
If only for a moment
If only for a moment she feels sick for the sun
Tired of dancing in this nightmare circus and she some fucked up
Version of
Artemis providing a full moon with a well-placed G-string
And a smattering of sequined stars just below her solar sign tattoo
Reminding her that there is a world outside this zoo
And putting on her tennis shoes
She steps out into the sunlight
In search of a playground slide
With a parachute

Frances Bean

I'm so happy, cause today I found my friends

They're in my head and I'm so...

Dad? Can you hear me? I love you, but I hate that song. My name is

Frances

I might be Gothic pink but

Smack removed me from her care

I understand the blues real well

2 weeks into this world and the authorities said I couldn't be there

Because if it wasn't for bad luck

Couldn't be with the unannointed son of grunge and his mistress of

I wouldn't have no luck at all

Strife

I was born under a bad sign in the fall of 92

But so goes the life of the child offered

to star crossed lovers

The story of King Solomon and the child. 2 women claimed to be its

Who loved each other's flaws

Mother

More than they cared to admit

Cut the child in half was his order

They were survivors because that was all they'd ever known

But the true mother sacrificed it all to save the one that she had

Not limber like pine trees, but more like dried rose petals

Carried in her womb

Powerful to look at, full of memories gone by,

But, my mother

But it was only a matter of time until they crumbled to dust

My mother and the world fought over me, no King

Til they snapped only leaving the thorns behind

Solomon to breathe truth into my mother

Fate and circumstance

In her Larry Flynt fashion this half ass actress didn't even make a

Stamped me rock royalty

Big scene

I am the puzzle pieces of a musical genius

She handed me over to the world not as a sacrifice of her self

Submerged in heroin addiction

But saw this as an escape from a bad dream

And laced with a mother's insanity and smack

Leaving a hole in my soul much bigger than her bands dreams of

Album setting record sales

Much bigger than they'd ever dreamed they'd succeed

A hole in my soul like being #1 on the billboard charts

That crazy bitch would fight for the attention that I got

Even though it was full of negativity

And my daddy

Was a genius who

Spent so much time with heroin his fingers were pruned and you

Could see the residue in his wrinkled fingerprints

And stunted lifeline

My daddy left me with Lamia, the goddess who eats her young.

I am spinning from the unwanted attention

And overplayed songs of grunge

I dress up in his pajamas that he married my mom in for a photo

Shoot

I have a suicide themed 16th birthday party. How does that

Celebrate me?

I am the ice queen, modeling the eerie looks of my father, which I

Try desperately to try to cover with tattoos and dye

I have no boundaries, no foundation

I allow my voice to be mix with 100s of others for a single song

I am afraid to let my own voice be heard alone

But the camera, the camera catches the stories in my eyes so well

That I feel safe there

I feel home

I buy myself a home, a mansion paved in dollars that still reek of

Despair

I can still hear my daddy choking on his guitar strings

He said that lyrics were harder to write than melodies

Yet, his story has been told more times than I care to count

And Courtney, cuz that's all she is to me now, tries to retell and

Rewrite my life story

No bitch, I wasn't with David Grohl, and no I will not respond to

Your crazy ass on twitter

I am rebuilding my life in a mansion far from you

Here we are now, entertainers....

Is a phrase that's been used far too often and I will not be
Entertaining you all no more

But my hips are exactly what you see
"Oh my God, Becky, look at her butt!"
I'm no valley girl, I'm not dumb or stupid
Don't think I don't know what's going on
I'm not Becky, I am the butt
No butts about it, I've got a big one and Ima proudly shout it
And no this isn't a big girl rage, out to crush and destroy
All those toothpick shapes
This is a glorious celebration
Rejoicing in the self and working what your Momma gave ya
And though I may need a schoosh more jean material,
I can work it high and low
I can drop it fast and slow

Size Too Big

I am whatever you say I am, if I wasn't than why would you say..
You've drawn a picture of me
With words that have never left my lips
Which have not yet waded hip deep into my consciousness
I can proudly place my hands on my hips and
Squish in just a little bit more, and still not feel my hip bones
Protruding like Skeletor
But, I know where my syct bone is
It holds me steady no matter what my weight it

And I look around and I am happy to see all of us in different shapes and sizes

But, I see a lot of double digits passing by, and some of us don't

Walk with pride

Due to the scorn of the fashion industry, and cultural guises

And its size 2 expectations

Which Tyra Banks just made them push to a size 4

Cuz they were only making garments for size 0s and they just ended

Up being

Shiny, bright colored materials well stitched into body bags

Cuz these young girls were starving themselves

Carving their own coffins

Trying to purge the marrow from their bones to be lighter

With no wish to rise higher into the sky than their 5 inch heels will

Allow them

And in the move, Role Models, the ideal shape of a woman is not

Shaped like a Coke bottle

And has been reduced to the mantra of

"Big girls do way more stuff"

This phrase is portrayed so often on the silver screen that people

Don't realize what it means

We're not so desperate that we'd bend over backwards or forwards

Or any which way to be unseen

So, please don't worry about little old me and what I eat

I don't want to be smaller; I want to honor what was given to me

Cosmo may say I'm fat

But, I ain't down with that

I am whatever I say I am

If I wasn't, than why would I say I am

At Last

At last my love has come along

And my lonely days are over

And my life is like a song

At last

You up in heaven with angels pray
Suspended souls saw behind your eyes

Helping now to take your own blues away
Courage that others never dared to find

You and Billie lifted us all up as you put your blues on parade
Your feet

But none other strong than you
A natural compass your blind guide

Music makes the breath stop like all the air sucked out the room
Your tongue tasted success your wings took you on the high rise

And the heart rewind to a kinder time
But your knees grew weak when commanded to sing on demand

Lost in thought honey sweet tempo and rhyme
Throughout your entire lifetime

Escape into your mind's eye
But that voice

A place where you don't hear the children cry
Your voice

Four corners surround your womb in the night sky
Grew up quick

Pillaged not but you and Billie still share a bass line
Piece by piece

The love of song and the courage to shine
Now Billie she had woman thrust upon her before her years

And there's no getting, but the getting time
Almost more letters than age the day she learned fear

Bringing down the house with your own clothesline
Didn't get a chance to have that childhood wonder

You hung your dreams out to remind yourself
But still both you and she took your thrones mightily

It's none but the getting time
Evoked the thunder of applause and dynasty

You followed the course of your spine
And wore your crowns regally atop your heads

Took notes with your throat and mic checked time
Though bruised

There are parts of you that will never be dead

Timeless

A voice so golden it makes angels sit up and sing

It makes people take note

It helps little girls dream big

To look past the what ifs and ask the why nots

Thank you

Ms. Etta James

You help little girls

Dream big

At Last

At last my love has come along

And my lonely days are over

At last

Sauteria

Ready or not, here I come, you can't hide I'ma find you and make

You want me

She practices Sauteria

Not to conjure up spells or incantations

But like Sauteria through casa de Santos

She pulls ideas and mysteries

From thin air
Plucked from spider's tales and the secrets they keep
Like plucking notes from guitar strings
In their webs allowing
She plays a shell game with the souls of the fallen
Her to continue to see far into many
And of the sane
More seasons that which she had originally
They come to her for solace for comfort
Accounted for
To rage
With the scent of charcoal still in her hair
She carries no crystal ball
Her heart melted on the pyre long ago
But wears hot pink heels of suede
Her hands cracked from a previous life making lye
With a matching lip
To help others wash the blame away
Leaving muddled tea leaves in her wake
Eyes lit like embers from the gods desert made
That she uses to stare down into
Playing hopscotch and tic tack toe with rubies and
The fates of many at the bottom of her muddy bowl
A concoction thicker than blood
She is the winds mistress
Mixed with powdered souls
She carries many messages inside her and is
It remains on the earth long after the rains
Held up by its arms and mascara
They wait through all precipitation for her
She wears the wings of hope on her lashes
Their muse to the underworld and interpretation
Maybe it's Maybelline but more likely
Mami Wata
An older version of crushed kohl and ink wells
She sucks on river rocks to soothe the taste buds

That have grown cantankerous

From having to recite so many stories

You can see the drum beat silhouettes

On the bottoms on her feet calling the orishas to join her

Speak

Speak

It's like you've put on as your second skin

An overcoat of flesh

That's how deep I feel you in

Me

That pulsating base of your voice

Vibrates me from the inside out

Hibernating in my very essence

Mind fucking me everywhere

The powerful energy that exudes outside my skin

Filling up my flesh as well as the room I'm in

I feel so buoyant like a marshmallowed smore

Hot and sticking and sweet

Your vocabulary performing tantric acrobatics

As you awake my serpent within

Inspiring the Kundalini energy so high

That I want to make love to the sky

Or at least persistently try until I come into

Exhaustion among the stars providing a new milky way

Northern lights and shooting stars

I want to hear you pray to my all-knowing thighs that

Hypnotize your eyes and make your mouth water

More than any super-size ever could

I wanna do you so good

I want to shake the trunk of your tree and climb your mountain top

I so hot I melt your snowcapped peak

In a glacial release causing an avalanche of pleasure

Now I don't just want you to fuck me

I want you to move me

Like the grains of sand are moved by the tides of the ocean I want

You that focused

On your stroking your touching and your caressing

So that you don't have to

Be guessing because you'll know my heart spirit and flesh so

Effortlessly

You'll tease me like the wind to a dandelion fluff

Slow, gentle tickling until poof there's no puff

I want that kind of naked exposed expression paid homage to me

A selfless contribution of time technique and energy

All to hear me gasp and scream

But don't worry baby I'ma get you yours

It's gon be so good all you'll hear is that roar in your ears

As you start to feel light headed

Those little gasps that you make as I take you in more and

Squeeze

As your powerful force starts rising you're now gripping my handles

Of love

So that you maintain some kind of connection to this Earth as you

Burst forth with a powerful ahhhhh

And as the waves pleasure lap around all around you

You smile and say, "good things come to those who wait"

He said, "Hell yea, they fucking do"

Twilight

Seeing twilight from

The backs of your eyelids

Makes your tears look like stars

Like memories

Each encapsulating a crystal ball

Dancing through the fog of

Melting dreams

What once held your future

Now lies moldering

The pit of despair

The place where your heart used to be

Now echoes- an empty cavity

Whenever someone walks by

And they do walk by

Because something Wicked This Way Comes

Is not just a Bradbury story

And you search to see if they have a piece

Of your heart

That was once chopped up and

Thrown into the air like confetti

Doled out like out party favors

So you scan the nightmares that float by

Cuz it is not by chance they come this way

You lie in wait in the forest of

The bones of your body

Wait as they search to take another souvenir

A lock of hair, a pound of flesh

You breathe in and the warm breeze

Brings to your ears the beat of your heart

You grab the piece that adorns their neck

Reclaim the memory

That they have stolen from your mind

Fit the piece of your heart back into your chest

As you keep watch for others to pass by

In the twilight, filled with stars

Door

She weaves herself

into the fibers of the wooden door

Hoping to tap into its strength

that it once had when it was a tree

Holding on to the Earth's floor

But, she lacks

Roots

So, she carves images rather than initials

That leave her blind from the weeping

Dropping fast like unasked nakedness

Like a chalk outline of her soul

Sodering the memories of her own blood

Onto the dirt floor

Her anger tasting metallic

Like crushed dreams and

She realizes she has now opened her tongue

With the enameled keys of her teeth

Finally allowing her secrets to breathe

Rather than suffocating unseen

A snake with feet

You cast your net wide

Targeting

Your prey

Calculating those who wouldn't speak

But, you were wrong about me

I've been waylaid, but not made obsolete

Fighting still

Fighting hard to breathe

By now the hieroglyphics have turned to dust

And, maybe you've been able to fade

Your memories

But, mine are still bright like the white high top sneakers

That I wore to chase the breeze

Like the laughter that I can still feel

Like the soul you tried so hard to steal

Relentlessly

But, I am made of stronger stuff

I will not be weighed down by

Your casualties

I will not be the masterpiece

Of your mistakes

I may lack roots

But, I have given myself

Wings

For anyone who's ever felt like

*they don't have a voice, remember the power
of words. Put them down on paper, take care with
your words. You are a worthy scribe of your own life.
Keep it pushing.*

-Caitlin

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