

Action Report

Subject: Memorial Day Writer's Project (MDWP)

Activity: Poetry, Prose and Song on the Mall

Date: Nov 11, 2001

Location: Washington, DC

(Area 5, on the grass in the middle of the hill)

Veterans Day weekend 2001 has come and gone. This was the ninth year that members of the MDWP have read on the Mall in Washington DC. The MDWP enables us to honor those men and women who have served in the armed forces, and to remind those who don't know anything about Vietnam (the number gets larger each year) about who we are, what we did, and the sadness of war. I don't know about you, but each time I participate, I walk away enriched by the experience, seeing old friends, listening to your words, and sharing.

Special thanks to all of you who help make it happen and the rewarding experience that it is: Ed Henry, Mike McDonell, Briah Connor, Ken White, and Darrell Miller. These are the people who set up the tent. Thanks also to Suellen McDonell (MDWP photographer and supporter) and Cathy Solomonson; for her support, her wonderful poetry, and her sweet tooth. Thanks to all of you who brought food and drink. Parris Garnier (another newcomer) well known to the local poetry groups stopped by, left a gallon of coffee, then ran off to work. The coffee went fast. I know. Thanks Paris. Next time you'll get to read. Sam Hurst, host of Poets Anonymous pulled in just as we were striking the tent. It won't be that easy next time Sam. We'll send a military escort for you. Thanks to Ken White, we had two 1st Cav LRRP's with us. It was their first visit to the Wall and they spent the greater part of the day with us. That says something.

Special recognition to Ed Henry: Ed thought we might get more attention if we incorporated a waterfall and a rice paddy as part of the decor. Thanks Ed. It may have worked, but the Park Police shut down the waterfall.

Jonathan Myer: Jonathan honored us with some new material and as always, he did an excellent job and made us laugh at ourselves. Ray Campbell made a special trip from the Fla. Keys. Ray has a habit of letting you know how he feels about things. Ray read "Howl Baby," "My John," (John Lennon is Dead), "The Call" and "Red Files Revisited" - -All knockout stuff.

V. K. Inman: You did it again. V.K. stood up on a chair and took us back to boot camp. The words, the tone, and the voice brought back fond memories of the caring and nurturing we received as inductees (yeah right!). V. K. has a recording of his poetry, entitled "Our Most Noble Victory," available from Westminster Media.

Lad Carrington: Lad has to be back in Washington on Wednesday, but he made a special trip from Durham N.C. to read with us this weekend. Thanks Lad, the weekend wouldn't be complete without hearing "Do You Know Who I Am?" It's always good to hear from

you. Aside from being a fine poet, Lad has racked up over 115,000 miles on his Harley FXR and has written an excellent book resulting from his travels across America. The book is titled "Cowboys With Chrome Horses," by Jarrett Press.

We had some new participants this year and we hope that you will come back.

Paul and Susan O'Neill: Susan, thanks for reading from your new book 'Don't Mean Nothing' short stories of Vietnam and your rendition of Amazing Grace was absolutely beautiful. Everybody out there, buy Sue's book. It's a reading pleasure—guaranteed to bring back memories. Her book is available from The Ballantine Publishing Group.

Tom Brinson: Tom spent some time in Qui Nhon, so Tom and I have some more talking to do. Thanks for sharing your poetry with us. It's good to have you and we look forward to see you again.

John Thielke and Datrienne are frequent readers at Mariposa in College Park, MD. This is Datrienne's second time with us and a first for John. Their poetry was strong, sensitive, rhythmic, and thought provoking. Your spirit shines through. Thank you for participating and sharing with us. We enjoyed it very much.

Aside from our strong feelings about our country and war, creativity is a thread that runs through each of us. We produce something tangible: a story, a poem, a song, that reaches out to others with a message or to entertain. I am pleased to be associated with all of you. I'll see you again on Memorial Day weekend (if not sooner).

If I forgot someone. Xin Loy.