

## Tom Yuill, Nominee for Cambridge Poet Populist

### General Statement

I am honored to have been nominated to be the next Poet Populist of Cambridge. I moved to Boston for graduate study in poetry at Boston University in the fall of 1997, and have lived in Cambridge since the summer of 1999. I include a selected list of my readings and public speaking engagements on my cv, however, three highlights seem worth mentioning here.

At the request of then Mayor Ken Reeves, I read poems as part of a ceremony celebrating the legalization of same sex marriages in Cambridge in 2004. I read, along with poet Rosanna Warren, as part of the Grolier Poetry Bookstore's reading series. The invitation was extended in 2010 to celebrate the publication of my first book of poetry, "Medicine Show," by the University of Chicago Press, which can be purchased at Harvard Bookstore, the COOP, the Grolier, Barnes and Noble at BU or on Amazon.com. I can provide the Committee with a copy upon request. In December of 2011 I spoke about poetry at the Morning Service in Appleton Chapel in the North Church, Harvard Yard. That service has is non-denominational, and features speakers ranging from Senator Edward Kennedy's former Chief of Staff to Harvard Professors and students. I am a member of the literary and academic communities here, but am also a participant in and believer in local government and community involvement.

If asked to serve my first thought would be to make my tenure inclusive. I would love to include friends and mentors in public readings, such as David Ferry or Tim Seibles. Both are former Cambridge residents and good friends. But I should also want slam poets, activists and open mike hosts and organizers of local readings to be included.

I could also imagine publishing a poem written by a poet who lived in (or lives in) Cambridge every other week in the Cambridge Chronicle and, say, also reading the poem on local television, and inviting public comment or response.

More importantly, I would like to establish a connection with Cambridge public school students. I could work with the Mayor, the English teachers and perhaps the principals to establish monthly workshops. I know brilliant poets who teach and could help with this. Perhaps an initial reading or direct address inviting the students to participate would be helpful, and I would be happy to do that. The most intense linguistic endeavor in any language tends to be its poetry, so engagement with high school students would give them a chance to express themselves and empower themselves with advanced speech but it would also sharpen their linguistic capacities in general.

I believe I have the experience, colleagues and enthusiasm to do honor to your nomination, should I be asked to serve as Poet Populist, and I thank you in advance for your consideration.

With every good wish,

Tom Yuill