

Home :: Magazine :: Subscribe ::

For members ::

Community :: The Writer Books ::

Classifieds

Home : Departments : Poet to poet

Welcome torquere. [update profile](#) [logout](#)

FREE materials & more - Resources for writer's conferences!
[Click Here](#) for more information.



June-2005 Vol. 149, No. 6

Every issue of *The Writer* will help you become the writer you've always wanted to be--and help you produce the kind of writing editors and agents are looking for! Discover how to use the Internet to further your writing career ... learn the techniques that have helped other writers get published ... get the latest market listings ... hear about upcoming conferences and contests ... and much more!

- [Subscribe now](#)
- [Give a gift](#)
- [Renew today](#)
- [Order back issues](#)

Rhythmic and rowdy (excerpt)

Courtney E. Martin

The rise of spoken-word poetry

It was Friday night at the Nuyorican Poets' Cafe in New York City. The audience was packed so tightly that personal space became a moot point. Emmanuel Xavier took to the tiny stage, just inches away from audience members seated on the floor in the front row. He began what would become a journey via everyone's favorite vehicle at the cafe--poetry. It was a 20-minute awakening to the poet's hard times and new hopes.

Xavier recited poetry about his family, steeped in the brokenness that typifies many homes, dwelling in the ugly places of fathers who abuse and abandon and mothers who fail complacently. He read poetry about his heritage--the strange and beautiful mix of his Latino roots and his New York City experiences--and about his sexuality.

He performed after Sept. 11, so his last piece--a comment on what it means to be American--was especially powerful. Before beginning his reading, he wrapped himself in an American flag. Nestled in the folds of the red, white and blue, he moved the audience with words about how complex and multi-dimensional American-ness is. He urged those around him--who by now were witnesses to his art and his life--to resist the narrow definition of what it means to belong here, in America.

In many ways, his call to redefine American-ness mirrors the spoken-word poetry phenomenon, a call to redefine poetry. Spoken-word, or performed, poetry can be traced back to a number of cultural movements--the Beat Movement of the '40s and '50s, the Black Arts Movement of the '50s, and hip-hop music of the '80s and '90s.

This article is from the May 2002 issue of *The Writer*. To view the table of contents of this issue, [click here](#).



- Upload Your Work
 - Receive Feedback
 - Host Your WebSite
 - Meet Other Writers
 - Collect Statistics
 - Inspire Your Creativity
 - Write More Often
- www.Writing.Com

Click here for more information!

Market of the day

Find new markets for your writing, updated daily from our database of more than 3,000 publishers and publications. [More >>](#)

The Writer Books

Browse our catalog of books on writing, featuring *The Writer's Handbook 2005*. [More >>](#)

Affiliate Program

Join our affiliate program and earn 30% on every net sale generated from your Web site. [More >>](#)

Magazine

[Current issue](#)
[Feature stories](#)
[Departments](#)
[Online extra](#)
[Next issue](#)
[Back issues](#)
[Annual index](#)
[Meet the staff](#)
[Take our survey](#)

Magazine services

[Subscribe](#)
[Renew](#)
[Give a gift](#)
[Advertise](#)
[Contact us](#)

Resources

For members

[Literary links](#)
[Post your event](#)
[Web only](#)

Community

[Events](#)
[Writing groups](#)
[Forum](#)
[Writer Links](#)
[Announcements](#)

The Writer Books

Classifieds

Contact us

[Advertising](#)
[Customer Service](#)
[Editorial Staff](#)
[Kalmbach Publishing](#)
[Affiliate program](#)
[Submissions](#)

Press room

