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365 POETRY @ SALT LAKE CITY PHOTO COLLECTIVE 01.05

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Photo: Maomi Blackburn

On Saturday evening, I finally got around to experiencing the spoken word up close and personal, attending the 365 Poetry Collective hosted at the Salt Lake Photo Collective. The feelings were amicable as I walked in and was immediately approached by the warmth of the people who organize the events: Maomi Blackburn, Abi Goddey and Brandy. While eating grub and partaking of boxed wine, I was happy to see everyone introducing themselves to each other, and felt genuinely pleased to familiarize myself with the people around me, despite my usual, quiet demeanor. With such hospitality, it was easy to see how so many people would feel comfortable in this environment to raise up with their voice to speak whatever one feels the desire to express.

What I dig most about poetry readings is the bravery of the readers. As someone who has terrible stage fright, it is inspiring to see poets get on a platform to speak their minds, metaphorically exposing their hearts raw on a platter to the audience without fear of any kind of judgment or repercussions. And so it went, with Jimmy starting (and ending) the evening with a poem contemplating how his parents met each other, and how any of us meet each other and fall in love. Following Jimmy, RJ took the stage with a poem called "We are Lifeguards," a recitation performed with a flair appropriate for a slam event. It was impressive to see some slam poets perform, including Gray Brian Thomas, Rebecca Mae, DeAnn Emmett and Benjamin Barker, but the point of the event is not necessarily to perform slam, according to Abi. What is intended by these events is to create a space where people can say "whatever the fuck they want" in an environment that is non-judgmental and open to speaking what you feel like. Nonetheless, slam was there, and was appreciated and snapped about by all.

Death—a popular theme of the night—was present with a piece by Gray that explores the possibility of living a life in reverse, waking up and starting our existence by coming out of our coffins and ending by being shoved back into our mother's vagina. Michaelle also explored this theme of death with her poem about nightingales, written as a reaction to losing a child and ending a relationship. One thing that the performers often expressed before they began their verse was how certain events in their life made it necessary to write their story down. It seems an important human element to crave sharing these stories, and the connections that are made by putting it to word stimulates a connection between the people around you. With a variety of speakers, there was certainly something there to relate to for everyone in attendance. I can only speak for myself when I say



that there were moments that would have succeeded in cracking open my tear ducts, were it not for my stubborn embarrassment of crying in front of other people, but in the aftermath of the evening, I had friends who expressed that tears crept up on them also.

Although there were several awesome moments, it seemed that most of the audience enjoyed the humor that was expressed by Jesse in his poem, "To the Boys Who May One Day Date My Daughter." So often, poetry can leave you with a feeling of heavy boots, and it was a breath of fresh air to have someone get up in the middle of the night to make things a bit more lighthearted. Jesse had a way of expressing the daddy-daughter interactions with clichés of the typical, overprotective dad, scaring away any potential suitors with overt masculinity, but twisted it in a way that made it liberating to realize that the protectiveness only stems from pure love. I also appreciated Brandy's poem, "Contemplation," when she talked about how "loving one's self is a full time job," and Goddey's selection from his story, "Lost," with a narrative written from the perspective of a woman.

These events take place every two weeks, and you can bet that you'll find me there again at the next one. This was the first time the affair was held at the Photo Collective, and hopefully it won't be the last. I'd recommend joining the group on Facebook (search for "365 Poetry") to get word on where the next function takes place!

Photos:



JANUARY UPCOMING EVENTS

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S	
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	NEXT WEEK

The Delphic Quorum, David Rhythm, Crazy Old Maurice, Intra-Venus & The Cosmonauts, Justen Cod @ City Limits

Lake Mary @ Kilby

[Blues 66 @ Spur Bar & Grill](#)

Deathbed, Another Mistake, Speak Out @ Kafeneio

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