

## Poetry Goes to The Movies

The Autumn 2013 Muses' Gallery is inspired by our love affair with cinema, motion pictures, talkies, movies, and Hollywood. The following poems share fascination with favorite characters, iconic actors, beloved films that enabled us to escape reality if only for a little while. Take your ticket, grab your buttered popcorn and jujubees and join us. The show's about to start.

Enjoy & keep on creating!

*Highland Park Poetry is always interested in ideas for future contests, challenges and our Muses' Gallery. Send your inspiration to [jennifer@highlandparkpoetry.org](mailto:jennifer@highlandparkpoetry.org).*



Elegy to the Alcyon  
By  
Marjorie Rissman

*Highland Park, IL*

You were born eighty six years ago  
Bringing untold pleasure to so many  
Tears often shed over sad stories  
Screams often echoed in the air  
Laughter lit up the silver screen  
Hands held in dramatic moments  
Kisses shared in balcony darkness  
Popcorn munched and soda sipped  
You were a favorite retreat from  
Every day stress and reality  
A place to recreate a fantasy  
First with live entertainment  
Then motion picture shows  
You were the best  
Even when run down  
And left to rot.



James Paradiso, Photographer

## An Evening at the Highland Park Theater

By

Michelle  
Kramer

*Highland Park, IL*

My eyes widened as I approached the lighted Mondrian marquee. Waiting in the vestibule, crammed like sardines, I uttered excitedly, "One for Flashdance." The stoic, bolo-wearing man rhythmically collected tickets. At the concession counter, I purchased a Pepsi and popcorn with real butter. Yum! As I made my way to the stiff seat, each step of my crimson Converse Hi Tops stuck to the soda spills on the concrete floor. The lights dimmed and the dancing mesmerized me instantly. Could I stretch and spin my awkward teenage body that gracefully? Did I have a sweatshirt at home I could cut and wear off the shoulder? And what was going on under that dinner table? The movie concluded with a triumphant dance audition, a handsome suitor bearing a bouquet of red roses, and an adorably oversized dog. I beamed with elation as the house lights came on, plotting my return to experience Flashdance for what would be three more times. Along with my fellow townsfolk, I courteously exited the theater, content after viewing an entertaining movie at a reduced price. What a feeling!

Through The Portal

By

Edward P. Kaufman

*Highland Park, IL*

*Blue, Red, Gold  
Black letters  
invite me to enfold  
and enter the realms  
in which my yesteryear  
dwells.*

*My pulse quickens  
with the sweet perfume  
of popcorn smells.  
"Out of the West"  
becomes the mysterious East,  
dancing on stage,  
magicians' wands wave  
to Clyde Beatty and Tarzan  
taming the wildest of beasts.*

*Nonstop from 8 to noon;  
a double, triple feature,  
a cliff hanging serial,  
and 25 cartoons.  
From noon till four,  
I quench my thirst,  
while 2 Feature Films  
and Coming Attractions  
bedazzle my eye.*

*Like the re-entry to sunshine,  
when through the palace's portal  
I burst, returning back outdoors  
to then re-create all that  
I saw, until dark.  
Was that Tarzan, I spied,  
swinging through tree branches,  
in my beloved Brooklyn's  
Prospect Park.*



James Paradiso, Photographer

## Mom and Dad's Date Night

By

Deborah Rohde

Home-made popcorn in a brown paper bag  
Nash Rambler wagon with folded down seat  
Kids in pajamas, pillows in hand  
Our night at the Drive-In was neat!



CINEscape

By

Kenny Sommer

*Highland Park, IL*

Lucy do you want to see a movie  
Great I'll pick you up at 7:30  
It's a sneak preview?  
A Romantic, Action, Adventure, Science fiction, Comedy  
A Directors cut  
Popcorn, nachos, Sprites and napkins  
Put on this helmet  
Open the doors  
Sit down, get comfortable  
12 D, buckle up  
No ones here?  
Screen opens  
Counts Down  
Colors of bliss floating  
Magical, mysterious sounds  
Matter of intensity  
What is happening?  
We're in the film.  
Writing, acting, projecting, producing  
Let our minds take us  
I'll get you home by 11:45 p.m.  
I promise, my dear.



Casablanca

By

Ron Daiss

Simply studio made, it evoked exotic Morocco  
But not simply because Bogart's Rick was  
Tough but human, hurt by a lost love,  
Not simply because Ingrid Bergman was  
Beautiful, loyal, and confused,  
Not simply because Paul Henreid  
Solidly stood against tyranny,  
Not simply because Rick signaled  
The band to play *La Marseillaise*,  
Suggesting a great nation may no longer  
Be the most powerful one.  
No, not simply because of characters cast,  
Because without gravel-voice, fat, scheming  
Sidney Greenstreet,  
Because without peculiar, brave but cornered

Peter Lorre,  
Because without completely corrupted, yet still ideal  
Claude Rains,  
This world would lack color-  
Variety, change, chance, soul!  
So the "gin-mill" owner and the crooked policeman  
Became better than we  
Or they imagined themselves,  
Becoming soldiers to liberate France-  
Keystone nation, its values, our values,  
The Tri-Colors, "Liberty, Fraternity, Equality"



## Movie Aberrations

By

Michael P. Wright

*Highwood, IL*

"Gorgo", the monster is following me  
"Mary Poppins" stopped by for coffee  
James Bond changed my grade to an "A"  
Lucille Ball adopted me into the Beardsley's

"Don Corleone" made me an offer I could refuse  
"The Heartbreak Kid" deserted his longtime  
girlfriend  
I wrestled Rocky Balboa to a draw  
Dated the "Unmarried Woman"

The Raging Bull beat me up  
Ferris Bueller ripped me off  
"What about Bob" caused a new Tourette tic  
"The Titanic" cancelled my reservation

"Crash" gave me an impeccable driving record  
The Oscars gave me the jitters  
Humorous movie tidbits, such a cinematic laugh  
Till death do us apart, eclectic movie aberrations so  
soothing.



## Ode to Woody Allen

By

Sandi Gordon Caplan

*Highland Park, IL*

I chose to write an ode about Woody Allen  
He is quite prolific, as you will find out  
Many books have been written-  
But not an “ode” have I seen  
So I’ve taken the liberty to do just that-  
A bio that I read about his work,  
is many, many pages long  
Unmatched by any American filmmaker to date  
Thirty two films to his credit (I counted)  
Written and directed by him

He has style, he has humor  
And he makes us all laugh  
His characters are always true to life  
Some are ambivalent  
Some are neurotic, some are as boring as can be-  
People will agree  
And some will not

One a year he delivers, with charm and grace  
And at seventy-eight he has never lost his pace

So let’s stand up and give this man his due  
I believe he is a gentle-man through and through.

## Long Ago at the Movies

By

Joe Glaser

Saturday in the steaming city was made for movies  
- eight cartoons!  
- a death-defying serial thriller!  
- two full-length feature films!  
and “Come on in, It’s COOL inside!” says the huge hanging  
banner.

Ticket in hand I am ushered into a riot of raucous chase music

mesmerized by familiar cartoon characters  
splashing violence liberally across the screen  
but always miraculously surviving.

Next I am launched into the fantastic adventures of Flash Gordon  
riding his shaky rocket to explore distant worlds  
where strange people seek the extinction of the human race  
until at the very brink of disaster it's "continued next week!"

And finally comes my main course  
and I feast on those two long films  
that draw me deep into their well-woven reality  
where heroines ache sadly beautifully  
and villains get their just desserts usually  
and heroes triumph amid glorious crescendos eventually  
all filling my expanding world  
of more than life-sized images and ideas and experiences  
- my accidental tutors  
delivering Hollywood lessons that I inhale deeply  
into the foundation I am building  
for my American dream.

Film after film I accumulate the fuel that will propel me  
towards the escape velocity I will need  
to reach my own outer space  
and explore my own universe.



Bond-age, an Etheree

By

Jennifer Dotson

*Highland Park, IL*

"Bond.  
James Bond."  
Em-eye-six.

Double-oh-seven.

"Shaken not stirred," is  
how he takes his cocktail.

Drop dead gorgeous, his women.  
But his femmes fatales don't last long  
in his adrenaline pumping world.  
Sleep with him and you'll never survive.



The Cinema

By

Samantha Younis

*Highland Park, IL*

You immerse yourself in a dark room full of strangers  
and escape to another world.

You sit there as someone tells you a story of a life you wish  
you

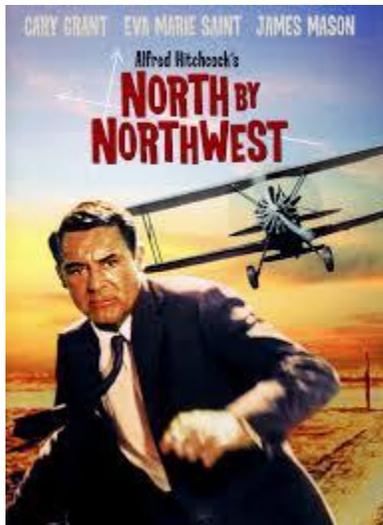
had, a life you're glad you don't have, or a life you can't even  
imagine.

The story touches every emotion in your soul, making you cry,  
love and laugh.

A tale of long ago in a faraway place, a thriller that chills you  
to

the bones or a love story like no other.

And when it's all over, you realize you weren't ready for THE  
END.



**North by  
Northwest  
By  
Joseph  
Kuhn  
Carey**

*Glencoe, IL*

Cool Cary Grant in a quiet cornfield somewhere in rural Illinois, his suit beautiful, elegant, dapper, tie and handkerchief neat as a pin, shoes shined & gleaming as the dark-windowed bus pulls away and leaves him alone in the middle of nowhere, waiting to meet the mysterious George Kaplan, occasional cars and trucks whiz by and throw heaps of dust on him, the quintessential man alone in the universe trying to find the answers, the camera cutting in gorgeous, fluid Hitchcockian-style like a Wimbledon tennis match

until a short fellow in a rumpled brown suit appears across the road waiting for a bus

and remarks about a plane on the horizon dusting crops where there are no crops, a harbinger of what's to come, but the scene unfolds slowly as if there's all the time in the world to build the tension and crescendo the moment in symphonic, rhythmic style until the viewer notices the plane coming in lower and lower at the same time Cary Grant does before he leaps to the ground and the plane roars by, missing him by inches with growling wheels, whirring propeller and sharp staccato machine gun sounds, but the best part comes next, watching Grant get up, cast a wary eye the field of corn a hundred open

yards away and then oh-so-slowly decide as the plane circles for another dive-bomb attack to run for it, his expensive suit coat and tie flapping behind him furiously as he races for the sheltering stalks of corn, just making it in time, only to see the plane

come back again to try to polish him off in a billowing white cloud of crop insecticide,

forcing him to give up his hiding spot and run back to the road to flag down a tanker truck that knocks him down and barely stops while the plane comes in

for the final kill and crashes into the truck in a fiery ball of flames, and while the people who stop to help watch and then, drawn by the undeniable magnetism of disaster,

move slowly closer step by step, unflappable, stealthy, cat-like Grant quietly gets into a farmer's

pickup truck, makes a U-turn and drives away as a bowlegged man runs after him yelling at him at the top of his lungs & waving his cowboy hat, watching helplessly as his truck disappears down the road with an upright white refrigerator

roped down tight to an otherwise empty pickup bed.

## The Key Theater

By

Gregg Shapiro

*This poem was  
previously  
published  
in Protection  
(Gival Press, 2008)*

I always wondered if anyone saw me break down, standing as still as a movie poster in front of the Key Theater on Wisconsin Avenue in Georgetown that Saturday night in March. It was right after watching

*Parting Glances* with Taylor and Bill. It was right after breaking up with John for the first time, over the phone, long distance. I pretended that I had something in my eye, rubbing and rubbing, my fingers shiny

and slightly greasy from tears, smelling like the fake butter they put on the popcorn at the concession stand. I pretended that I had a popcorn kernel stuck in my tooth, my mouth twisted into trying not to cry.

Taylor and Bill were at least half a block ahead of me, talking about the cute guys in the movie. Cute guys talking about cute guys made my chest hurt and breathing as strenuous as learning how to drive

stick shift that time Bizzy was too drunk to pull her Nissan 200SX out of the parking space across the street of The Zebra Room. It wasn't until Taylor and Bill got to the corner of the block where we had parked

Bill's car that they even noticed my absence, my lack of contribution to the conversation, and ran back, like two amateur athletes who had just completed their second marathon in record time, to where I stood

avoiding a crack in the sidewalk. They put their arms around me the way I imagined they put their arms around each other, the way the lovers in *Parting Glances* embraced. We walked to Bill's white Jetta that way, arms

hooked over and under and over, as quietly as if we were walking on sand. We walked the way Susan and I walked after sitting through all six hours of *Shoah* at the Key Theater. Susan and I left the theater, soggy, crumpled

tissues and napkins disintegrating in our clenched fists, our heads hung so low our necks hurt later as we compared the impressions our chins left on our chests. Taylor and Bill knew I would talk when I was ready, and I bet they

wondered what I thought of the movie. Whether I thought they were as cute as the guys who lived and danced and loved and died in New York City.



Hooray for  
Hollywood!

By

Gail Vescovi

I oughta be in pictures  
I always figured my life  
could be much improved  
with good lighting and  
an adept scriptwriter  
I could probably be  
downright pithy  
without ever having to be clever enough  
to know the exact meaning  
of that ludicrous word

I would especially appreciate  
having unlimited takes  
to get something just right  
then again, if my story were anything like  
*Groundhog Day*, it could be do-over hell  
on steroids

state of the art film technology  
offers lots of embellishments  
CGI in particular would help immensely  
where mere makeup might come up against  
its limitations at my beyond ingénue age  
I could be enhanced and diminished  
in all the right spots  
the magic of Hollywood, hooray

if I held the purse strings and produced  
I would direct myself down a yellow brick road  
right into the well muscled arms  
of several of the younger leading men of my choice

perhaps all at once  
devastating each of them  
to the most Oscar worthy extent

to have all the unpredictable,  
unremarkable components  
of my daily trials  
crafted by experts in their fields  
artistically arranged and viewed  
upon the giant screen,  
adored, adorned or even vilified  
would have to be more fun than  
today-not-at-the-movies  
then again, I could always end up  
on the cutting room floor



Mama, Marlene -  
Part I

By

Emma Alexandra

Marlene Dietrich floated through the haze of cigarette smoke  
Berlin's decadence tumbling from her perfectly outlined mouth  
Throaty, raspy, songs, harbingers of decline of the Weimar Republic  
Deep red lips, black on the silver screen, thinly painted eyebrows  
Sensuous movements in sheer, light clothing, colors presumed  
Pale rose pink, lemon meringue yellow, Warsaw spring sky blue.

Mama, as she fled from the second war to end all wars mayhem,  
Slaughter  
Riding the train to salvation, heart in her throat beating faster than  
that of a  
Fledgling bird thrown from its nest.

Remembered  
Marlene Dietrich singing "Falling in Love Again" in the *Blue Angel*

Miraculous sound permeating Warsaw's Palladium Theater  
Berlin cabaret scenes transported to Złota Street  
Złota, Polish for golden, silver screen, golden street.

Remembered

Her brother Adam mesmerized by Marlene, her amorous web  
Enlacing legionnaire Gary Cooper in the film *Morocco*  
Marlene singing the demise of a monstrous time  
Ivory cigarette holder perched between long fingers,  
Pearl trimmed collar sparkling on the silver screen.  
Silver screen, golden street, Złota.



Mama, Marlene,  
Morocco - Part II

By

Emma Alexandra

Mama on her way from Warsaw to Morocco, her escape route  
Through Germany in mid August  
Fleeing ahead of the rumors, two weeks before the thunder of tanks  
Approached, arrived, invaded Poland, Warsaw, September 1, 1939

Remembered

Berlin, song, empire supreme, Marlene Dietrich as  
Lola in *Blue Angel*, Amy Jolly in *Morocco*, Gary Cooper  
Mama's favorite male actor then, and forever.

Remembered

Nine years after experiencing the illusion of *Morocco*  
Magic of film, at Warsaw's Palladium, Mama travels.  
Morocco bound, on trains, more trains, reaching Spain,  
Crossing the Gibraltar by jittery ferry, landing breathless in Ceuta,  
Morocco,  
Jostled, jostling, women, men, chickens, luggage, buses to Casablanca,  
Joining her sister, sister's husband, sister's sons, ironic salvation

Marlene taking up the Allied cause through film and song  
Parading beauty, fame, and voice mocking murderous madmen  
Singing "You're the Cream in my Coffee" to adoring troops

Remembered

Anticipating strawberry ice cream after the movies at the Palladium,  
Enticing fragrance of roasted chestnuts assaulting her senses,  
Senses excited by the whirl of the film reel,  
Music, cigarette clouds blown from Marlene's perfectly formed mouth,  
eyes



Mama, Marlene,  
Morocco, Adam - Part III

By

Emma Alexandra

After Marlene Dietrich at the Palladium  
Mama and Adam, brother and sister walking leisurely along  
Złota Street, Polish for golden, silver screen, golden street  
Cafes alive with murmurs behind marzipan pastries.

Remembered  
Brother Adam flirting with a brightly dressed woman,  
Waiting in line behind him,  
Waiting for ice cream, vanilla with almond liqueur, 1930  
She orders, throws a lusty laugh, for anyone to catch  
Her breasts stretch the delicate muslin fabric into voluptuous shapes  
Begging caresses, eternal kisses,  
Brother Adam's slick dark hair  
Contrasts the young woman's casual blond curls.

They all order their ice creams. Blonde beauty asks for two.  
Her lover approaches.  
Takes a cone in one hand and reaches for her waist with the other.  
Brother Adam laughs, shrugs his shoulder in good natured defeat

Remembered  
Traveling toward an unknown destiny, in Casablanca  
Mama longs for Adam, for his laugh  
Silenced, somewhere, beyond train tracks and salvation  
Silver screen documentaries  
Recounting fragments surreal  
Chambers, smoke stacks, silent screams, muted atrocities

Mama, Marlene, Morocco, no Adam.