

Remembering Mike Amado



(left to right) Poet Gloria Mindock, Editor of Cervena Barva Press, Poet Mike Amado, Poet Doug Holder, Founder, Ibbetson Street Press and Co-founder, Bagel Bards.

Poet Mike Amado: The Passing of a Young Poet by Doug Holder

It must have been hard to walk in the basement of Finagle-A-Bagel in Harvard Square on a cold, gray Saturday morning, and sit down with the original members of the Bagel Bards, a bunch of grizzled gray-bearded veterans of the local poetry scene. Here he was, all of 30 years old, and a sufferer of advanced kidney disease to boot. And because of his health life was indeed difficult. Mike didn't finish college even though he was quite bright, and he had to survive on disability and the limited life that came with it. I never heard him talk about a girlfriend or a love interest. It must have been a lonely life for a young guy. And so there he was at the table, shaking a bit, perhaps stuttering, but saying his piece, and exhibiting an enthusiasm and energy that could put us all to shame.

Mike became a regular, accompanied by his pal Jack Scully. Scully had sparked his interest in the Bagel Bards, after reading an article about the group in *The Boston Globe*,

written by Ellen Steinbaum. He slowly worked his way into the hearts of all the members. He work shopped his poems, took advantage of every reading opportunity offered, started to publish in the Bagel Bard house organs, as well as a wide variety of small press magazines. Mike even started a poetry series in his hometown of Plymouth, Mass.

Last Summer (2008) Mike attended the Solstice Writing Workshop at Pine Manor College and came back to the group beaming. He made new strides in his writing, and made new contacts in the poetry world.

During his time with us Mike published two collections of poetry: "Stunted Inner Child... (Cervena Barva Press), and "Rebuilding the Pyramids: Poems of Healing In A Sick World," with the Ibbetson St. Press.

The last time I saw Mike was at the Somerville News Writers Festival (Nov. 22, 2008) He was in his element, dressed in a resplendent Chinese tunic, chatting it up with the faculty at Pine Manor College, and the many poets and writers he knew in the community. He was excited about the prospects of his new books.

While I was at work I got an email from a poet and a close friend of Mike's, Irene Koronas. Mike had passed away surrounded by family and friends. Mike lasted way longer than he was expected to. He was fighting this disease since he was 13.

But in the time I knew him I never got the sense that he was jaded. He continued to be a rabid music fan, always had a child-like enthusiasm for poetry, and displayed an iconoclastic sense of humor. I will miss seeing him coming through the doors of the Au Bon Pain every Saturday morning with his pal Jack who towered over his slight figure like a gentle, protective giant. I'd always say "What's up, Mike." And god love him, he always had a scoop.