



Fairfield poets team up to create anthology

'This Enduring Gift' contains more than 700 pages and poems from 76 writers

MATT MILNER

Courier Staff Writer

FAIRFIELD — The idea started as a sort of literary time capsule, a chance for people to have a snapshot of Fairfield and its people at this particular point in time.

To Freddy Niagara Fonseca, the idea sounded simple enough: Ask a handful of poets in Fairfield for samples of their work. It was an outgrowth of a well-established passion for poetry.

He wanted pieces that the writers thought would be remembered and deserved to be remembered, as well as ones that best represented the authors.

"How many poems are read after a number of years? If you realize that, there's not that many," Fonseca said. "So I thought, 'Hey, I know all the poets here. What would it be like to create an anthology of Fairfield poets?'"

What he got wasn't the handful of samples he expected. The completed volume, "This Enduring Gift," mushroomed to more than 700 pages and poems from 76 Fairfield writers.

"At the beginning I did not know it was going to be that many people," Fonseca admits.

For James Moore and Gale Park, the anthology was a chance to share their love of poetry with the wider community and see what other people could do. Both have written poetry for years.

"I'm a songwriter," Moore said. "I've always written poetry."

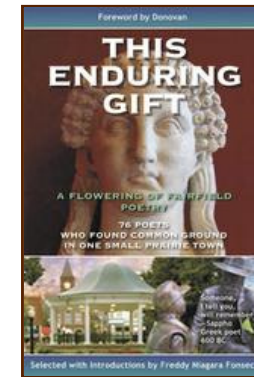
Moore was also drawn to working with Fonseca, whom he called a "colorful character." Fonseca conducts poetry readings at Revelations, a Fairfield bookstore and restaurant. It's a well-known event among the artistic community.

"Freddy has been doing this series for a long time. He's a great cultural lighthouse," he said.

Those readings are actually how Fonseca and Park met. They ran into each other on the street one day and he recognized her from the audience at the readings. They talked for a while about poetry and he told her about the anthology.

Park doesn't think Fonseca knew she wrote poetry when that meeting took place. But when he found out he asked her to submit something for consideration. Four of her poems made the cut.

Like Moore, Park's background has always included some poetry. She grew up hearing snippets of Longfellow and other poets in her home.



poetry book Artwork provided

"I've liked poetry ever since I was a kid," she said. "My father used to quote poetry all the time.

"I guess it stuck."

No one involved with the project knows quite what the reception will be when the book comes out on Sept. 11. Everyone hopes it will do well.

Fonseca hopes Fairfield will embrace the book as representative of the current town. Anthologies of New York poets have their own feel. So do works from Chicago or San Francisco. He hopes this one from Fairfield will have a similarly distinctive sense of place.

"It's kind of a snapshot of time," Fonseca said. "Ten years from now if someone did something like that it might be different."

But that's for another time.

On the Internet

www.thisenduringgift.com (<http://www.thisenduringgift.com>)