## Lynch from page C1

Participating authors include Elmore "Dutch" Leonard, Loren Estlemen, Tom Sullivan, Car-olyn Hall and Jane Briggs

olyn Hall and Jane Briggs Bunting.
With his brand of Twain-like homespun wisdom and knack for endearingly quotable phrases, Lynch has been cited by literary critics for his precision and clari-ty. And, of course, his ability to "turn a phrase."

'turn a phrase."
Apparently, in his OU speech,
"The Traffic in Language,"
Lynch will seek to clarify for an
audience of fledgling and professional writers the path to
improved poetic communication.
"For me, writing is separate
from an intellectual pursuit,"
said Lynch. "It's all about writing for the acoustic pleasure of
rhyme and meter."

rhyme and meter.

rhyme and meter."
Learning to write, according to Lynch, is foremost an exercise in learning to listen.
"My mether said, 'You have two eurs and one mouth. Listen wrice as much as you talk."
It's advice, he confesses, that isn't always easy to follow. Lynch impishly admits his love for blather. A hereditary condition, he said, handed down from generations of Irish storytellers.

#### Returning home

Raised in a house where "talk was the precious currency," Lynch easily recalls that contentiousness was a linguistic game among his grandparents, parents, aunts and uncles. As if speaking in voices from past gen-erations, Lynch's poetry com-bines his love for conversation with an inherent sense of music.

Not surprisingly, when pressed to explain the "acoustic pleasure" of writing, Lynch recites several verses from the renown Irish poet William Butler Yeats.

ler Yeats.

And then, in a perfectly metered interpretation, Lynch invokes images of the northern lip of the county of Shannon in Ireland where his great grandfather emigrated in the late 1890s.

It's a place that he returns to for inspiration and for a poet's greatest tool - a sense of place.

In a small hut located on the

**™** 'My mother said, 'You have two ears and one mouth. Listen twice as much as you talk"

Thomas Lynch Author

land where his grandfather once farmed, Lyach worked on his current book of poems, "Still Life in Milford."

in Millord."

By the way, noted Lynch, the title is his dig at critics who can't get beyond the stereotype of undertakers. Still Life, he said, isn't the obvious euphemism for a deceased body but a reference to an actual painting.

Lynch inherited the Ireland farm from his cousin, North Lynch. A place Lynch describes as: "A small house separated from the Middle Ages by two light sockets and a hot plate."

In late, Soutember, Lynch

In Inte September, Lynch returned to Ireland to work on a book of poems in progress, tenta-tively entitled, "Bodies at Motion, and at Rest."

tively entitled, "Bodies at Motion, and at Rest."

He stood and looked out the same window where his great-grandfather once observed the change of the sensons. And from his ancestors' view of the land, Lyneli wrote:

"...here in these ancient remedial stones/where Nora Lyneh held forth for ninety years/the last two decades of them on her own./Alone by the fire in the silence she/recited the everyday mysteries/of wind and rain and darkness and the light...She speaks to me still. If she speaks to you,/ready your best nit. Write what she tells you to."

For many who have watched Lynele emerge as a poet since the early 1980s, there's no separating the bard from the expert organizer of ritual and liturgy for the dead.

"Even though many people are histories whemselves from their distancing the bard hemselves from their distancing the period of the second of the s

for the dead.

"Even though many people are distancing themselves from their backgrounds, the fundamental obligation is to care for our dead," he said.

The obligatory voice resounds with poetic precision.

Front-row seat

Since 1948, the Lynch family has built an impecable reputation as funeral directors. Lynch's father, a one-time Marinu who wanted to serve his community," opened a funeral home in Birmingham and Royal Ook.

Since then, the business has grown to Milford, Walled Lake, Clawson and Plymouth.

Lynch moved to Milford after completing his degree in morturary science at Wayne State in the early 1970s.

When he spenks of his success as a poet, he never fails to note his primary responsibility.

"People who don't read pectry in Milford will go and plunk down \$20 (for a book) to support un, said Lynch. "Writing poetry for me isn't a hobby but my obligation is as a funeral director."

On the type of gray Monday, that gives the beginning of the

gation is as a unieral director."

On the type of gray Monday that gives the beginning of the week a bad name, Lynch looks down from his second-story office at Lynch & Sons.

From below, the roar and rum-From below, the roar and rum-ble of motorcycle engines can be heard, revving in unison for a fellow motorcyclist killed in a head-on collision. "Yealh, you could say I have a front-row sent to human nature," Lynch said as he fell back his high-back leather chair.

Lynen said as he tell onch in his high-back leather chair. Sitting amid an office filled with books of literature and con-soling words for the bereaved, he considers the relationship between directing funerals and arranging words on a page. Being a better funeral direc-tor makes me a better writer, and being a better writer has made me a better funeral direc-tor. For Thomas Lynch, it's all about reclaiming a fundamental netion that through family, ritu-al and poetry, the meaning of life presents itself.

Maybe there's something to

presents itself.

Maybe there's something to Lynch's notion of poetry as the ultimate portable art form.

But more than likely, what has gotten the attentior many people outside of Milford is Lynch's incisive view of the changing landscape.

"Maybe there is something to being at the existential toll booth."

# Exhibit from page C1

artistic statements.

"Some artists might be apprehensive about entering other shows, but with 'Our Town' they're not as intimidated," said Danielle Bodine of Bloomfield Hills, a mixed-media artist who has two pieces in the show.

While many local galleries-exhibit work of regional artists, the supply of artists simply over-whelms the supply of galleries-exhibits can afford to turn down an opportunity to exhibit and sale their work.

In the last several years, "Our Town" has both encouraged students and monprofessional writes that entering the exhibit wouldn't devalue their work.

Generally, established artists atay away from art fairs because of the retail atmosphere and white they perceive as low standards.

"A lot of people who hesitate about going through a gallery will go through 'Our Town," said Nancy Thayer, one of the area's finest abstract painters, whose work is featured in the latest issue of American Pointing.
Actually, it was Thayer's idea to select Thomas Linggman, chairman of the department of art at the University of Toledo, as juro of the exhibit. Linggman is the first juror of 'Our Town' from outside the area. Thayer also serves on the exhibit's executive council.

To make the show even more

utive council.

To make the show even more

attractive to attract professional artists, Thayer persuaded Linge-man to offer a one-person show at the Toledo Art Museum featuring

the Toledo Art Museum featuring the top artist in "Our Town."
Ironically, Thayer's large-scale evocative paintings were not selected for the show. Several people associated with the selection process admitted to "being embarrassed" by the omission of Thayer's work. And rightly so. Can an exhibit that purports to represent the "art of the community" achieve its objective when one of its best artist's work isn't presented?

when one of its best frict's work isn't presented?

Theyer remained philosophical about the conundrum.

"Regardless of the quality, it is art from our community," he said.

#### Conversations from page C1

scope, Dubuffet's work is more grounded than the abstract expressionists, and more substantive than the frivolous popart chieanery. Klein admires Dubuffet as a draftsman with an impeccable cye for composition. And as an artist who saw the relevance in exploring the possibilities of graffiti and the art of children, unaffected by the artifice of "civilized society."

From Dubuffet to the primitivism of Basquait is a logical connection in the recent history

of art. But how far has the 20th century evolved in five decades? Klein, whose gallery special ress in 20th-century American and European art, contends that he's had many important shows, but can't think of one exhibit that could compare. When pressed to explain why Dubuffet has such an impact on him, he can only point to how it makes him feel.

And that alone is too often

And that alone is too often overlooked in today's art. It's not just pretty pictures, escapism and entertainment. Art, as

Dubuffet taught, is about authentic feeling.

In the days when Congress is planing impeachment hearings about the president's sexual affair while the U.S. can't manaffair while the U.S. can't manage a coherent strategy to stop
the slaughter in Kosovo, there
seems to be a need to reexamine
the message in Dubuffet's work.
You can almost hear the drip,
drip, drip of coming to grips with
the moral hollowness of our times.
And for a moment, you might be
struck by the notion that the practice of denial has gone on too long.

### Auction from page C1

autographed drum sticks from his days with Seger to raise funds for the state affiliates of organizations founded by the Kennedy family to help people with disabilities.

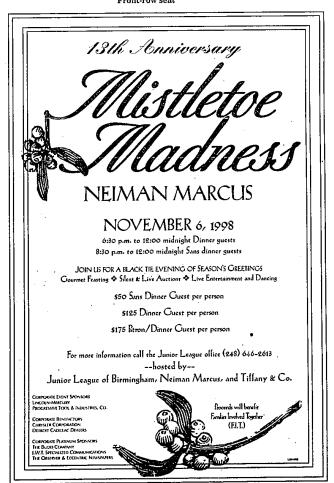
In addition to Martin and his band Jam Pact, Boy II Boyz will perform under the direction of Birmingham musical therapist Margaret Hull. Hull's weekly sessions with the duo is one of the Very Special Arts programs providing opportunities for children and adults with disabilities to grow through the arts. Special Olympics provides year-round sports training and competitions

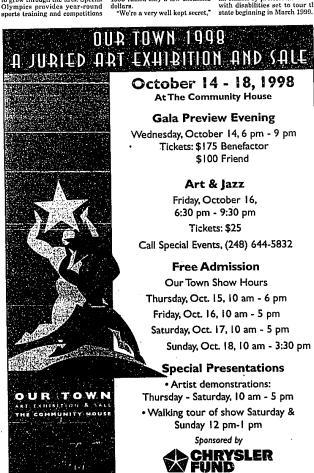
for persons with mental retardation.

Lora Frankel, Very Special Arts Michigan director hopes to build name recognition for the organization by associating it with Special Olympies. Although the group celebrates its 26th anniversary noxt year in Los Angeles, Frankel said when mentioning Very Special Arts she still receives blank stares of non-comprehension. Proof is the auction. This is the third for Very Special Arts yet the last in 1995 raised only a few thousand dollars.

said Frankel. "Many people know about Special Olympics but not Very Special Arts. We work quietly in the schools and provide mini-grants." rovide mini-grants."
Frankel and Olds have been

Frankel and Olda have been hard at work securing items for the auction. According to Olds, donations are down because artists are tired of being the enes who are always asked to give so he's still looking for works anyone might want to donate. The money raised from the auction will support programs such as an exhibit by professional artists with disabilities set to tour the state beginning in March 1999.





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