

# First hand - tales of childrens' book business

Three leading figures in the world of books for children and teens will be the guests for the Birmingham Bloomfield Children's Book and Author Society's luncheon Tuesday, Oct. 18, at the Community House, 389 S. Bates, Birmingham.

They are Jose Aruego, illustrator; Nancy Carlson, writer and illustrator; and Paula Danziger, novelist.

Aruego was born in Manila in 1932. He was trained as a lawyer in deference to his family's wishes, but soon decided to follow his natural inclinations and become an artist.

He studied at Parsons School of Design in New York and soon became established as a magazine cartoonist. When he switched to illustrating children's books based on Filipino folk tales, his work again met with ready acceptance.

Aruego, who now lives and works in New York City, has also illustrated many books for other authors. These books include "Leo the Late Bloomer," "Gregory the Terrible Eater" and the "Little Mouse" series. Aruego lives in an apartment filled with exotic plants and an outstanding collection of antiques.

CARLSON, BORN in Minneapolis in 1953, describes herself as "an artist who enjoys making up

stories for children." And she has produced more than a dozen picture books using her multiple skills. Some of her lovable anthropomorphic characters are Harriet the dog, Loudmouth George the rabbit and Louanne Fig. Her most recent book is "I Like Me."

Danziger, born in Washington, D.C., in 1944, is a former junior high school teacher who found that her very sense of humor was better suited for writing for that age group than teaching them.

Danziger deals with issues that are important to her and to her readers — in a word, survival. The first of her books in this vein was the award-winning "The Cat Ate My Gymsuit," followed by its sequel, "There's a Bat in Bunk Five," "The Pistachio Prescription," "Can You Sue Your Parents for Malpractice?" and her newest, "Remember Me to Harold Square."

A CASH bar will open at 11:30 a.m. and the luncheon will begin at noon. Books will be sold after the program and the authors will be available for autographs.

Tickets are \$18 and may be ordered by mailing a check, made out to BBGBAS, c/o Baldwin Public Library, 300 W. Merrill, Birmingham 48012. Reservation deadline is Friday, Oct. 7. Tickets will be held at the door.



When she writes and talks about herself, Paula Danziger has a bright, lively sense of humor.



Nancy Carlson enjoys children and animals as much in real life as she does when she writes about them.

# Memories of Detroit and family fill poet's work

By Jack Zucker  
special writer

Lawrence Joseph will read his poems at 4 p.m. Tuesday, at the Rackham East Conference Room, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 764-6296; at 4:30 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 29 at University of Detroit Law School, 651 E. Jefferson, Law School Atrium, Detroit; and at 8 p.m. Friday, Sept. 30, at the Poetry Resource Center of Michigan, 621 S. Washington Ave., Royal Oak, 399-6163.

Lawrence Joseph is a Detroit poet who doesn't live here any more. But his roots are in the Detroit area and so are most of his subjects, from his father's threatened grocery to a machine shop junkyard on Brush Street, where "hands are warmed over fire in oil cans."

Joseph resembles Philip Levine, Detroit's most famous poetic expatriate. Both are gritty realists who choose to look at the worst, both also use surrealism to express anger at an unsafe world.

Joseph's method of choice is juxtaposition. He will take us to a board room on Wall Street and move us quickly to the underside of a New

**Poet Lawrence Joseph reminds us that rich and poor, powerful and powerless, live metaphorically three feet from each other in our cities.**

York bridge, where we see, not a romantic tug boat, but a man without a reason to live:

Before the picture window vista  
Of the East River, I hear Miss  
Masses of steel and light

Newman — she insists she be called  
Miss — expounding her aesthetic.

"This city, the ultimate art!  
Juted beyond heaven, a miracle  
That is human and works."

This city of my own, dull gray,  
rose, yellow, murky pink skies.

I know what I'm saying. I know  
tomorrow I may forget

the man whom I see tonight

on Pearl Street under the Bridge

who appears at first to have no head.  
He asks me to tell him

who he is, to take him, please  
to the police. . . .

This acute rendering of the man's  
problem shows us Joseph's intensity  
and power. "I Pay the Price" makes  
us wonder what Joseph would do  
with the millions of homeless. But  
Joseph offers accurate and intense  
description, not political remedies.

If some New York executive can  
praise the skyscraper's beauty, if she  
can write poems to the financial  
power that built them, Joseph tells  
us, large areas of insensitivity exist  
in our "best and brightest."

Joseph reminds us that rich and

poor, powerful and powerless, live metaphorically three feet from each other in our cities.

Though insulation from the poor may be essential self-preservation for sensitive men and women in the city, other men, like Joseph's father in his grocery, like Joseph as a young man, are forced to know the poor up close.

They feel the humanity of their customers and clients, but also suffer their angers.

In "By the Way," Joseph ventures a theory:

What if poverty and anger  
and the desire for thrills,  
and tribal attitudes, exist  
not only on the streets but inately  
— inherently, if you will,  
within the boundaries of the nation,  
social and economic classes, our  
time?

Joseph seems to think that such  
miseries are inevitable. He doesn't  
tell us which "boundaries" and  
which "factors" are responsible for the  
plight of the very poor, but he has  
presented a 20th century dilemma to  
us in honest and unsentimental  
terms.

Through his images we can

surmise a diagnosis, if not a prognosis. Though Joseph is reluctant to reveal his sympathy for the underclass, it is in fact the source of his major power.

Lawrence Joseph is also an ethnic poet — his group, Lebanese Catholic. Not only are Lebanese details included in sections of his larger social poems, but the outside world is made relevant to the Lebanese. In "Sand Nigger," for instance, Joseph indirectly ties his grandmother's food to Midwest divisiveness:

Lebanon is everywhere  
in the house: in the kitchen  
of steaming pots, leg of lamb  
in the oven, plates of kausa,  
hushwee rolled in cabbage . . .  
At dinner, a cousin  
describes his niece's head  
severed with bullets, in Beirut,  
in civil war.

The poet's use of Lebanese speech rhythms adds to the excellence of these poems. Details of conversation and cuisine abound. We are brought to Joseph's father's grocery in Detroit: "Today, again, in the second year of the fifth recession, my father holds pickled feet, stomachs and hearts, I lift crates of okra and cab-

bage, let down crates of buttermilk and beer . . . I sell the blood on the wooden floor after the robbery . . ."

Joseph not only creates the speech of the Lebanese people, but also shows the anguish of their business lives.

The warmest of Joseph's poems (a vein he might explore further) is "My Eyes Are Black As Hers." "Atama held his tender awe. She alone knew to touch, sang to herself thoughts of her own though never did anyone listen but he. He knew in her dresser her powders and perfumes, rose-colored creams. He knew in her closets stilled perfume of her dresses . . ."

Lawrence Joseph was educated at the University of Michigan, Cambridge University, and University of Michigan Law School. At Michigan he won the Hopwood Award for poetry. His first book of poems, "Shouting at No One," received the Agnes Lynch Starrett Poetry Prize from the University of Pittsburgh Press.

He has been published in "Poetry," "The Paris Review," "Partisan Review," "Stand" and "Michigan Quarterly Review." A teacher at St. John's University School of Law, he lives in New York City.

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