

Here are the answers
Tom wrote to my questions:

- Name
Tom Trusky
- Date
21 November 1998
(over the European Union!)
- Birthday - Place
14 March 1944 - Portland, Oregon
- Address
617 N. 18th, Boise, Idaho 83702 USA
- Occupation
Professor
- Hobbies
Books, Films
- Favorites Color - Flower
Green - Hydrangea
- Scientist
Darwin
- Writer
Melville
- Artist
James Castle
- Sport
Ice Skating
- Singer-Band
Buffy Ste. Marie - The Band
- Song
"Imagine," by John Lennon
- Actor - Actress
Chaplin - Nell Shipman
- Movie
Birth of a Nation
- City/Restaurant
New York - Lindsey St. Cafe,
Darwin, NT Australia
- Season
Fall
- Historic Figure
William O. Douglas
- Planet
of the Apes
- Sex - what's that?
Probably too much.



Tom Trusky, 1944-2009

Reflections in honor of the founding Director, Idaho Center for the Book



21. Year you'll always remember...
and why?
1980? -
The 1st S.F. Gay Parade I Saw...
22. Religion, what's that?
Depending in whose hands,
a pillow or a club.
23. Lucky #
3
24. Do You Believe in
Love at "1st" Sight?
Yes, and many sightings
25. How Do You Imagine
The World In 2022?
Desperate
26. What Do You Want To Be
Remembered For?
A voice for the talented,
deserving, forgotten, silent.
27. Do You Have A Question For Me?
Who does your hair?
28. The Composition Book's
Owner Answer:
Two Polish Guys - Zig & Tom

Then I thought about an email Tom mailed me on
11/26/09 (what day did he die?) that ends with his thoughts
on poetry...Here are the lines:

"Don't poets know Time is valuable? That their sub-
jects—though they be the heads of pins or
Palestine—should somehow have meaning or reverb
for the reader? How presumptuous for Hughes to
presume we care about the minute and meaningless—
as presented—detail of Life w/Sylvie? Or Ashbury:
yes, meander can be meaningful once or maybe 20
times. But an entire career? Perhaps he sees Life
thusly but, if so, he said it 20 times all right already.
Ezra had it right: Make it new."

"I wish that you had known him."

What a strange and disorienting thing to find myself
saying, or thinking, so many times in the season or so that
has passed since my friend Tom Trusky died. Those who
knew him were devoted to him, or were not; and all had
their reasons. But it is when I try to express the meaning of
his passing to those who did not know him that I feel most
profoundly the failure of language—failure to convey
experience, and failure to explain the heart. This story has
many authors and (like sorrow) no obvious ending.



MEATS ROYALE by Tom Trusky, Boise State University, USA

While erudite readers may be familiar with the "Cheeseburger Royale,"
so eloquently described by John Travolta in Pulp Fiction, I suspect only
erudite carnivores - and now a few satiated bibliophiles in Boise, Idaho
- may be able to define the title of this brief article which precedes a
full-blown web "documentary" about it that I hope to have on-line by
September at <http://english.boisestate.edu/ttrusky/studwork.html>

For some time I've been intrigued by ancient writing materials and
methods which preceded the invention of paper, codex, and print-
ing press. To instill an appreciation in my students for these modern
advances, I've often required them to try their hands at, for instance,
digging up and working with Idaho clay to produce tablets (see <http://english.boisestate.edu/ttrusky/ipods.html>) or I've required them to
experiment with ancient structures, such as the scroll (see <http://english.boisestate.edu/ethiopian/index.html>). For a few years, I had students
make ancient adhesive, sepia (from cuttlefish ink sacs), early acidic, as
well as sympathetic (invisible) inks. These activities are always indulged
in at the outset of my undergraduate Introduction to Book Arts course
and are served up as shish-kebab appetisers.

Three years ago, however, I realised I might offer a new course called
"Before the Book," a course dedicated to exploring ancient writing
methods and materials, yet drawing on Western American materials,
artifacts and history. My interest in creating this course had undoubtedly
been whetted by reading Peter Hessler's reports from China in The New
Yorker and then his remarkable book, Oracle Bones. (While I'd known
a bit about these Chinese artifacts, pre-Hessler, I knew as much about
them then as I now know about Australian clycons, my next mania.) One

chapter into Hessler, it struck me I might require students to make Idaho
Oracle Bones. Chapters later, I'd learn a few others had also attempted
to recreate these Chinese "fortune cookies," with no or limited success.
Oracle bones, should you not have Blackberry, iPhone or Hessler handy,
contain perhaps the earliest Chinese writing (circa 1,400 BC). They're
generally believed to have been created after both the invention of
Mesopotamian cuneiform and (later) Egyptian hieroglyphs. Two features
especially fascinated me about them: characters were inked onto, then
carved in scoured tortoise shells or animal scapulas (shoulder blades,
generally of oxen—not clay or papyrus. Secondly, also in contrast to both
Middle Eastern predecessors, oracle bones did not record current events
or the past; instead, they were preoccupied with the future. Writings on
shells or bones posed a question or described a situation. The bone was
heated until it cracked (metal rods were somehow involved and grooves
or holes were made for or by them). Priests (as they are wont to do) then
interpreted these cracks: It would rain next week. The (Shang) king
should not go hunting. Etc.

While we have some desert tortoises in Idaho, and local pet stores have
armadas of tiny, green-shelled turtles destined for toilet immortality
once their newfangledness has faded in the hands of youthful, gaming
owners, initially I fretted requiring students to practice scapulimancy in
the "Before the Book" course I was concocting. Then I remembered Bob's
Meats Royale.

For well over thirty years I had whizzed past Meats Royale, a local game
butcher shop on Overland Road, a heavily-traveled Boise thoroughfare
that well over a century ago had been a spur of the Oregon Trail on which
white immigrants bent on gold, fertile fields and genocide had Westered.

In the late 1960s, only the shop's grandiose name had caught my
attention. Post-Travolta, however, each time I passed the place, it made
me grin. Now, however, as I drove to meet Bob in 2007, I was nervous.
Was I destined for Pets-R-Us, if Bob wouldn't supply antelope, bear,
bison, cow, deer, elk or moose shoulder blades for student bones?
Fortunately, Bob was most obliging and immediately agreed to provide
what to him was nothing more than osseous refuse. Best, he agreed to
supply all, gratis! Unfortunately, though, my visit was untimely: hunting
season was months off. Accordingly, from fall 2007 to winter 2008, I
periodically collected gratis, meaty bones, initially storing them in my
home refrigerator's freezer. With the acquisition of large moose and
other blades in fall 2008, however, I was forced to find bigger cryo digs,
a walk-in freezer in our university student union's restaurant kitchen.

I also boiled and cleaned a few of the bones, gripped by the foolish belief
that I, like my students, should endure my own assignments. On one
of my prepared bones I brushed a question that likely has crossed most
minds of the Book Arts Newsletter readers:

THE BOOK WILL LIVE
THE BOOK WILL DIE

For the oracular response to that inscription, readers are referred to the
forthcoming oracle bone pages on my web site; likewise, I refer them to
Meats Royale for the best rib-eyes in Boise Valley—if not the entire Gem
state. <http://english.boisestate.edu/ttrusky/studwork.html>

Idaho Oracle Bone tools and ingredients. Staff at Meats Royale suggested adding
Borax to reduce the perfume of boiling meat and bone, if cooked at home. The
aluminum cooking tub is a product of China, available at WalMart. Four
different approaches to cracking bones were employed. Shown is the author's
bone; in the background and courtesy of Wal-Mart, an authentic made-in-China
barbeque unit (Chinese briquets included—all for \$6.99!), aka a somewhat
reasonable version of the presumed traditional Chinese method of heating/
cracking shoulder blades or tortoise shells with fired charcoal.

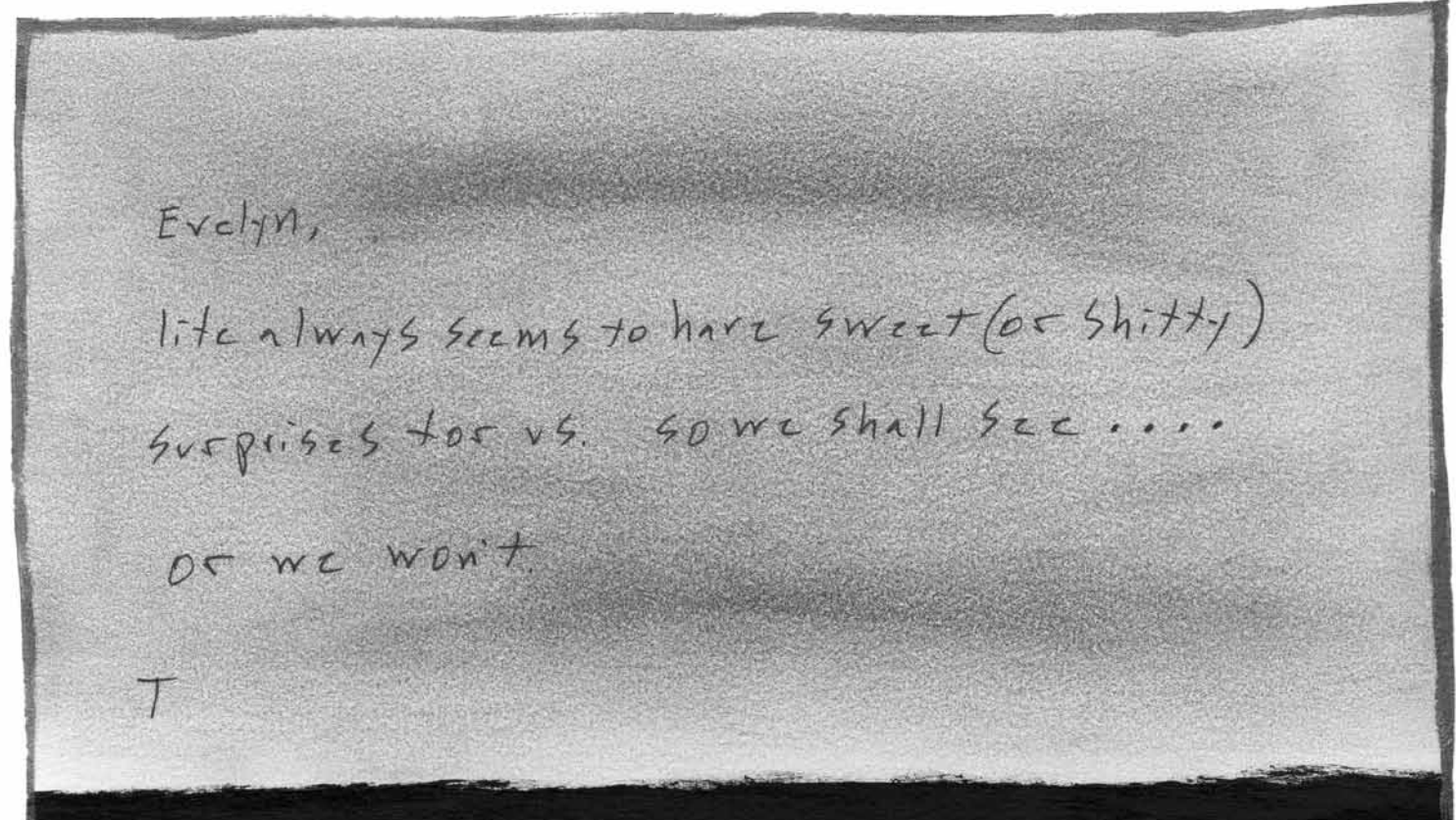
thirteen Spectral Dreamhouse Apparition Through Fog

On a concrete foundation
the dreamhouse situates
multicolor walls between private and
neighborhood, doorless dreamhouse without
walkway or address the dreamhouse smoke-swirls
mobile floors to trace, drift, and never furnish

Less and less objects
I mean fewer and fewer objects
In the dreamhouse no collecting occurs
or a collection of surfaces
in phenomenal space
so the world never gets in
inhabiting unfocused cloud-colored window frames
no targets no concentrates

As an autistic person's fantasy of
meal and sleep the artist's dreamhouse(Castle)
correctly sates a few appetites

(written Nov 30, 2009 secretly writing for Tom Trusky
without knowing yet that he had died)



"I'm interested in your typewriter
anthology plot—have had a long
affair w/typewriters and have
attempted to order titles about
them (& concrete poetry) for our
library..."



Tom introduced me to paper making...Tom introduced me to arborglyphs. Tom introduced me to the bookarts. Tom introduced me to my artistic
potential. I melded the components together...to create Immigrant Shadows: Tracing the Herders' Legacy. Tom's description of the installation was
so eloquently flattering. "There is a stunning purity, simplicity and profundity to Immigrant Shadows. Earle Swope's pulp arborglyph castings and
Amy Nack's aspen leaf panels and canopies distill and recreate the essence of grove carvings. We leave the exhibit filled with awe and appreciation
for a little-known multicultural (Basque, Peruvian, Chilean)—yet uniquely Western American—phenomena."

"I've been thinking about inflicting an assignment on my
Intro to Book Arts students next semester to BECOME
a key on a typewriter and then produce a book by/for/or
about themselves as a typewriter. (I always teach some
archaic pre-book/book structure. Usually these are clay
tablets or scrolls, etc.) Perhaps some of these productions
might be of interest for your anthology? (I should alert
you that student works ((let alone their instructor's)) vary
greatly in quality. Mine is an Intro course which means
anyone may take it. Or teach it.)

"Since I have a class (or classes) my thought is we might
BECOME typewriters. (And I think I could entice
students from the past and friends and other "loose keys"
to join in.) As in I want to make us into a simplified key-
board—letter/symbol keys only? (still thinking this one
out). We'd be a documented human typewriter, taking
aerial shots and videos of students with their typewriter
key on the top of their head. The video of this would show
them being "depressed" and typing out a message.

You know, like "The end is near." "Bush is a wanker."
"Etc." It would be kind of Busby Berkeley or June Taylor
Dancers (if either of those archaic allusions work for you).
"Is any of this plot-in-progress of interest to you?"

From: "Tom Trusky" <ttrusky@boisestate.edu>

OK, you can control the larfing

So many times I

asked Tom for advice on work or teaching or life. He never gave
me one word answers, instead he usually reposed my question in
a way where I could find my own way to my own answer.
Tom helped me to look inside and see what I was. He helped me to
see things locally not to look nationally. He helped me to believe
more fully in the "dumb" little joys of life. To seek it where you find it.
Joys are fleeting and may not ever be the same again.

He once offered me this advice:

As blabby Gramps/Granny probably told you, "No one knows that the future
holds," but if you have stoopid dreams, wild desires, silly notions, you
only go—as you know from beer commercials—'round once. Defining what
you want to be for at least 10 minutes, then plotting how you can become
that whatever, what else can you do but go for it? Or live a Life of
Regrets.... Always keeping in mind that the next 10 minutes you may
discard your fireman's uniform and don a tutu or a tofu.

I miss you Tom



INVITATION
to the Idaho Commission on the Arts

A farm, forty years ago,
how it died.
Like the black bull, gored,
red bellows
a trail through willows
skirting Squaw Creek.

How a husband,
lucky with a greenchain job
at Horseshoe Bend,
left for the paved road
two hours before the boys,
an hour from Arithmetic
at Sweet.

Here is a pantry
put up a decade of winters:
sweet corn, plum, eggs
in waterglass by the dozen.

“Come in.”

You know what they say
of country hospitality,
how a person, alone, mid-winter,
can go mad
without a diary—
the back of last year's calendar,
4-H flyer, the rude brown almanac
kraft bags
can afford.

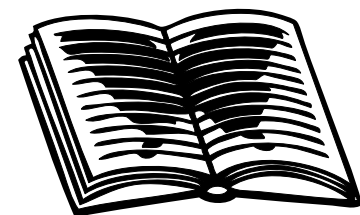
“Come in.”

These are lupine. These, snowflake.
Take off your hat, your coat. Stay awhile.
Listen. Listen.

Tom Trusky



Learning Vowels, commemorating a national literacy campaign; Mexico, 1946.



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*Book, construed to include
all forms of written language.

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published in idaho

I Go to the Ruined Place:
Contemporary poems in defense of global human rights
Edited by Melissa Kwasny and Mandy Smoker
Lost Horse Press, <http://www.losthorsepress.org/>

Reviewed by Adrian Kien

Depending on your media outlet, you can find new reports on human rights violations every minute. The subject seems so huge that we feel apathetic toward it. Sure we are against torture, killing and even playground bullies, but what can we do about? First of all, we can acknowledge it and this is where we find the call for submissions to the new poetry anthology Melissa Kwasny and Mandy Smoker put together.

We are increasingly witness to torture, terrorism and other violations of human rights at unprecedented degrees. What do your instincts tell us and what is our response to these violations? What is our vision of a future wherein human rights are not only respected but expanded?

The resulting contributions became **I Go to the Ruined Place: Contemporary poems in defense of global human rights** published by Lost Horse Press in Sandpoint, Idaho. One might question whether we really are experiencing more human rights violations now than in the past. Depending on how we unfold the map, all the rivers in our human history run with the gunk of atrocity. We have no limit to the meanness of which we are capable. However, our need to respond to atrocities is just as timeless and timely as Abu Ghraib and the detonator on a suicide vest. We have an obligation to pay witness to injustice through means beyond simple news reporting. We need to experience the pain and healing that only poetry can offer, to return dignity to those who have had it usurped.

The new anthology goes further than addressing the obvious human rights violations of torture and the war on terror. Its vision encompasses the rights of immigrants, prisoners, homeless and homosexuals; the voices of survivors of wars in Southeast Asia, the Middle East and America; and importantly, the experiences of contemporary Native Americans.

There are many heartbreaking and raw poems in the collection such as Li Young Li's "Self Help for Fellow Refugees." Li's poem goes beyond the topical treatment of refugees in America to the more general feeling of alienation that is familiar to all of us. In Bangladeshi poet, Taslima Nasrin's "Noorjahan," we have an unflinching depiction of a woman being stoned. Nasrin asks us, "Are these stones not striking you? . . . Are these arrows not piercing your body?" Lois Red Elk's poem "Not All Ghosts are Dead," seethes with Catholic School nuns' treatment of Native Americans and the anger and sadness of wounds that will not heal.

The authors in the collection appear in alphabetical order, giving all of the experiences a sense of equality. Following each poem is a brief biography of the poets listing some of the poets' other publications. Many of these poems were first published in small poetry magazines and journals that some readers may be unfamiliar with. We should be

encouraged to seek out these journals and to realize that our voices have more outlets than the sound-bites offered in cable news.

As readers, we may ask, what is to be gained from a collection like this? How does a poem do anything to help create a better future? Unlike the people in these poems, we have the option to just close the book and tend to our lives. It is easy to succumb to apathy. However, these poems pay witness to suffering in ways that we cannot appreciate through headlines. The lyric experience is timeless. Every time we read a poem, we give breath to that experience again. Our lungs and mouths physically participate in the poem. This is something beyond the cliché of "those who forget the past are bound to repeat it." In poetry we give voice to the voiceless, which is what we need, now and always.

Some of the proceeds from the sale of **I Go to the Ruined Place** will go to the Bonner County Human Rights Task Force in Idaho.

Lost Horse Press is an independent, nonprofit press located in Sandpoint, Idaho, and dedicated to publishing poetry of high literary merit. Established in 1998, Lost Horse sponsors *The Idaho Prize*, a national poetry competition.

Adrian Kien received an MFA from Boise State University where he continues to teach writing and poetry. His translations of the French poet, Christian Prigent are forth coming from Free Poetry Press.

* * *

The Old Man Who Talked To The Trees

By Diana Baird, with illustrations by Sharon Harp Gregory
Borderline Publishing, <http://www.borderlinepublishing.com>

This colorful storybook for young readers follows Willie, a raincoated habitué of the Idaho State Capitol grounds, as he converses with the park's (recently removed) presidential trees. Willie carefully explains to the trees that they are to be transformed into objects of wood-working art and craft, such as bowls, sculptures, clocks, and items of furniture, to be displayed in perpetuity in the newly renovated Idaho State Capitol. Luckily, the trees have no anxiety on this score.

Diana Baird has created a value-added storybook in **The Man Who Talked To The Trees**; in addition to the fanciful tale and child-like illustrations, the book includes historical information on the visits to Idaho of Presidents Harrison, T. Roosevelt, and Taft, which occasioned the planting of the trees in question; and documentary photographs and information about the State House renovation and the collection of handcrafted wooden artifacts. Questions for classroom discussion, and a short essay by State Representative Max Black round out the package. SB

Standing Invitation

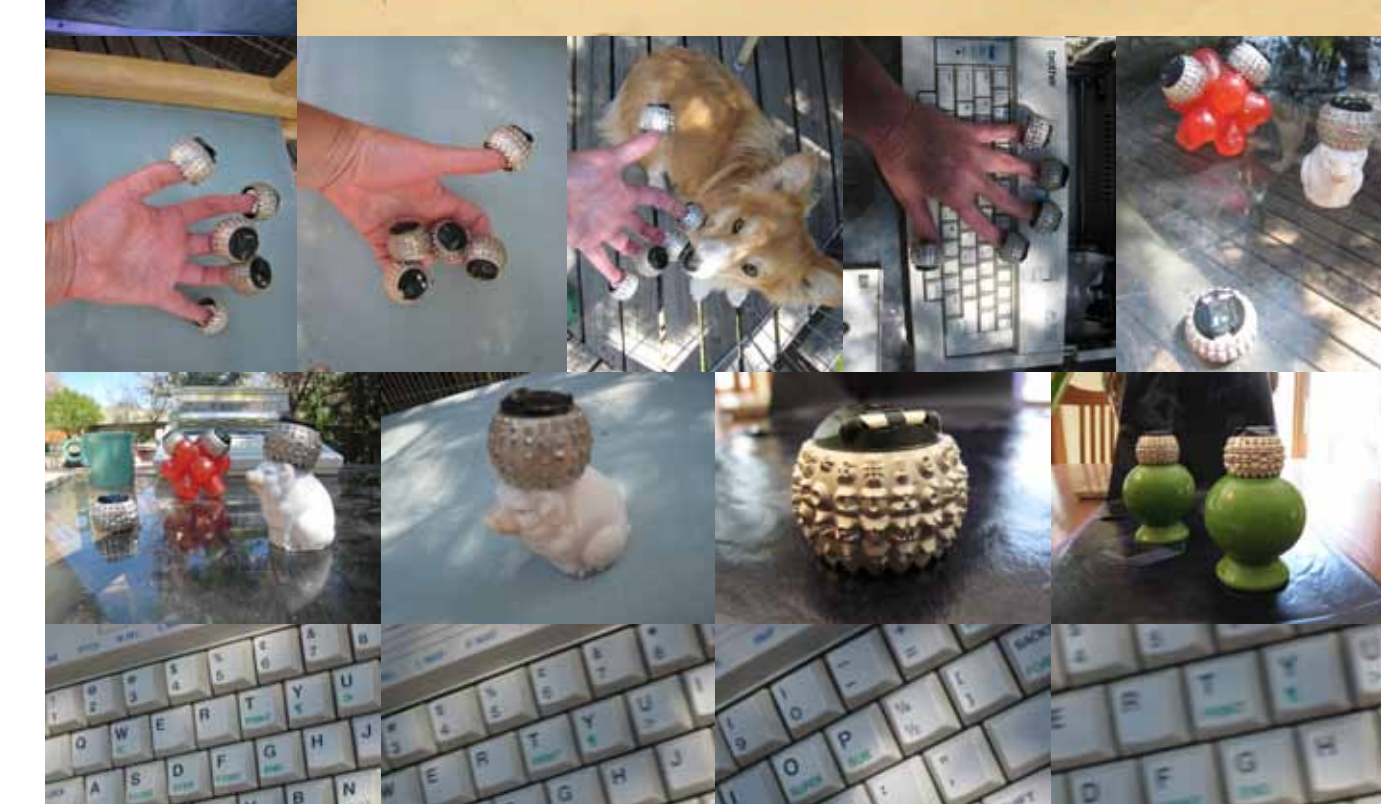
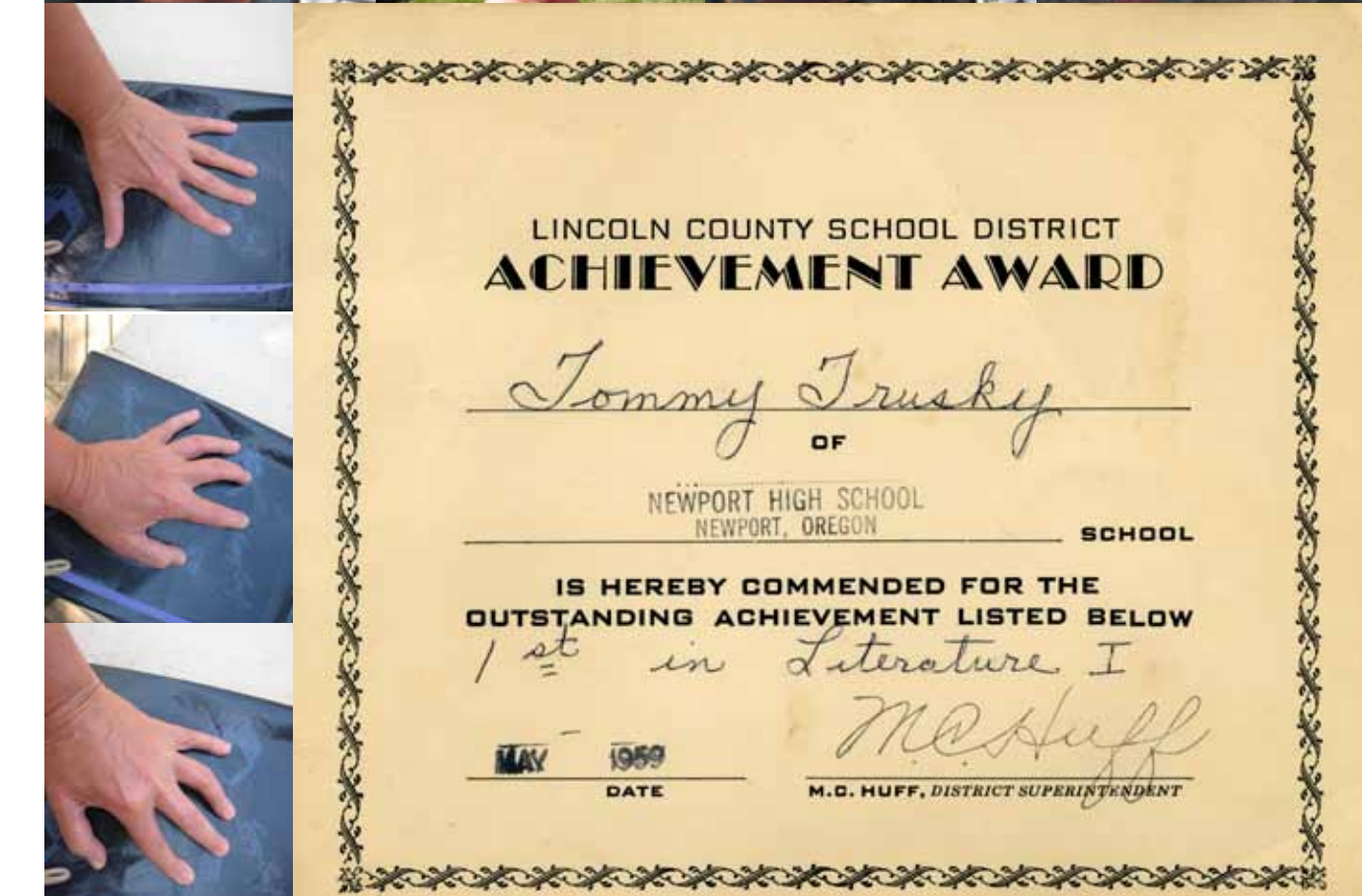
*The I.C.B. Newsletter cordially invites
your thoughts and contributions. Respectfully yrs.,
Idaho Center for the Book @boisestate.edu*

Idaho
Center
for the Book*
newsletter

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**"I think you owe your audience
some responsibility for meaning. Surely you had some
idea, some vision, some hope, some dogma, some truth,
some beauty you wanted to communicate."**