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Hybrid Feature by Grady Kane-Horrigan



Application for the Post of Lesser Poet Laureate of the Principality of the Cloudy Valley and Environs

1. Please provide a brief autobiographical paragraph.

Imbecility, bolstered by privilege.
Unfortunate encounter with lightning.
The wheelchair confines.
I look to make my mark.

2. What is the fire that burns inside you?

What passions rage in my heart, is that what you mean? If you are inclined to the Heraclitean view, that all life is but an expression of fire, that every occurrence is but the fusing of fuel and energy, then I see what your question implies. From where I'm sitting, the whole world is on fire.

It's possible I'm dodging the question.

3. Please compose a poem on the subject of *salt*.

Salt, always salt, never sweet.

Your tongue burns: savor it.

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Published on Talking Writing (<https://mail.talkingwriting.com>)

Blood laced with salt. Tears taste of it. You piss it, sweat it

Tell me: a sweet fuck or a salty one?

i thought so

(Time elapsed: 6 min, 49 sec)

4. How will you make use of this posting to improve the lives of the citizens of the Cloudy Valley and Environs?

While I am touched by your faith in the mighty offices of poetry, I feel this question belongs on the application for the Greater Poet Laureate. I myself have no wish to improve the lives of the citizens of the Cloudy Valley and Environs. (Perhaps I should point out that I'm new to the business of poetry, having composed my first poem a scant seven minutes ago.)

As the former Librarian of the Sunken Township of Ash, it is my desire to impress on the Cloudy Valley's garrison towns that despite the siege, despite the Empty Sky initiatives, despite our current hardships, life is still somewhat decent. The rumors of the Southern Valley Blockade Wall have so far proven untrue. The signal jamming and dream incursions are still intermittent.

Would this were so for the Sunken Township of Ash.

5. What unique qualities will you bring to this job?

Un-intention. Disambiguity. Lycanthropy. Mockery. It's possible I find this question to be stupid.

6. Provide us with an example of a poet whose work has influenced you and describe why.

Ah. So many to choose from. I remember the child who drew elegiac chalk murals of his conscripted mother's name on the sidewalks, waiting for her return from her tour of duty. The Dementia Grenade that finished his mother's service also took her ability to recognize him. Long after her homecoming, he carried on with his drawings. A poet, maybe. A survivor, truly. Don't ask me which I have greater respect for.

7. How will you use your office to best serve the children of the Cloudy Valley and Environs?

Poets can have a huge impact on the lives of children. "The Factory of Delights" by C. Arthur Harperstone was my introduction to both poetry and workplace safety standards. I still have my oil-stained copies of *The Pipe-Wrench Poems* and *O Millworker: A Child's Workplace Primer in Verse*. Such treasures! Sometimes, I still take one off the shelf and cradle it in my three-fingered hand, trying to remember what it was like to be a child.

8. Please list any other positions you have applied for this week.

1. Assistant to the Director of the Office of Misfortune Alleviation
2. Security and Perimeter Maintenance, Public Library
3. Liaison to the Department of Emotional Regulation

Minions of a hellish bureaucracy they may be, but we love the hard-working women of the Bureau of Applications, Petitions, and Appeals. (Doris if you're reading this, consider how much easier your job would be, freed from the onslaught of my desperate pleas, *if you sent this application upstairs.*)

9. Final thoughts, comments, remarks:

(function(i,s,o,g,r,a,m){i['GoogleAnalyticsObject']=r;i[r]=i[r]||function(){(i[r].q=i[r].q||[]).push(arguments)},i[r].l=1*new Date();a=s.createElement(o),m=s.getElementsByTagName(o)[0];a.async=1;a.src=g;m.parentNode.insertBefore(a,m)})(window,document,'script','https://www.google.com/analytics.com/analytics.js','ga'); ga('create', 'UA-18260536-1', 'auto'); ga('send', 'pageview');

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A thing of beauty is a joy forever, and our lovely valley, despite her blemishes and blights, her smoldering orchards and black algae pits, her slag river and ochre-hued snow storms, the drone swarms, the night quakes, and the fever springs, despite everything, is a place of singular beauty. It is home. Consider me for this position or don't. I look to make my mark, one way or another.



Art Information

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Grady Kane-Horrigan is an occasional writer and a sometime artist who lives in New York's Hudson Valley with his wife and three sons. His yearly gallery show at the Mohonk Mountain House Barn Museum has made him a local legend, mostly among his friends, family, and coworkers. He is the illustrator of *A Child's Christmas in Brooklyn*. You'll find his essay "[Canidae Vulpis and the Wilds of Parenting \[7\]](#)" on the *Illuminous Flux* blog.

For more of his writing and artwork, see [Grady Kane-Horrigan's website \[8\]](#).

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