



Le Pham Le's poetry captivates campus

Ears and hearts open for Le Pham's reading

Story by STEVEN AYALA

To celebrate the release of English Lab Coordinator Le Pham Le's book of poetry, "From Where the Wind Blows," the Reading and Writing Center held a poetry reading on Feb. 4 so everyone could experience the beauty and emotion of Le's poems not only in English, but in her native Vietnamese as well.

Le greeted everyone in a violet, traditional Vietnamese dress and hat while the twangs of sixteen-string Vietnamese music emanated from a small stereo. This created a unique ambiance in the Reading and Writing Center, which made for a relaxing mood as the announcers took their places in front of the microphone.

Video by Neha Tiwari
Click to play quicktime movie.
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English instructor Barbara Austin was the main narrator of the event and began things by reading the rave reviews Le's book received at <Amazon.com>. Austin also joked to the crowd that she was jealous of all Le has accomplished in such a short time, going on to say that Le has been invited to speak at such prestigious institutions as Yale, Stanford and the San Francisco Library. She then turned the microphone over to Le.

"In this collection, you will learn about homesickness," Le said about the selected readings from her book. The collection included: "Toward the Promised Land," "Song of a Soldier," "Simplicity," "Echo," "From All Paths of Life" and "When the Last Leaf Falls."

After each of her friends and colleagues read a poem in English, Le went on to sing them with the sixteen-string music, unlocking the true emotional beauty of her lyrical poems. The emotions and memories she poured into her words were felt more profoundly with the sound of her voice and the rhythm of the verses. The poems are like snapshots of Le's dreams and past experiences in Vietnam, put ever so delicately into words.

"I liked 'Simplicity,'" Nancy Ybarra from the Learning Center said. "It captured a moment in time."

Le topped off the poetry reading with her poem "From All Paths of Life," which is dedicated to LMC students who work so hard to make their future brighter than the

stars in the sky.

"We all rejoice in that desire to succeed," Sandra Alassio from the English department said about the poem. "It goes beyond the level of the student and culture."

Once the poetry reading concluded, Le was rewarded with two sets of applause before everyone went to help themselves to cake and coffee. Le, who never let her smile fade, stayed on hand to sign copies of her book, which were available with a \$15 donation.

"I wish everyday could be like today," Le said.

Anyone interested in holding a similar event to read poetry and short stories can contact Austin at ext. 3238, or by coming by her office at CC2 295, so she can set it up. Le's book can be purchased in the LMC bookstore and at on-line retailers like <www.amazon.com>.

Related link:

Le Pham Le's book on Amazon.com at www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/detail/-/0974630004/qid=1078976182/sr=1-1/ref=sr_1_1/102-0124199-5509742?v=glance&s=books

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