

feeling that hooked Rick "Hack" Hacker, who now performs with the Word Pirates.

"I was blown away," he said, recalling the first biker poetry slam he attended. "When I used to think of poetry I thought of old-time poetry with all this lace and flowery crap. But this was nuts and bolts, wind and denim." Hack has been writing ever since. His 1962 Harley-Davidson Duo-Glide is the inspiration for much of his work, including the amusing *I Can't Ride in Front No More*. It tells of differences between his beloved old Panhead and the Evos, and ends: *So twist them grips/get the wind in your hair/don't wait for me/I'll just meet you there.*

In Hack's poem *Two Lane Highways And Dollar-Fifty Beer* he tells of roadhouse fun on the first ride of spring. *Out of hibernation, you know it feels great/when it comes to nice weather/you can't predict a date/So work all winter/on your bike and show some pride/get it ready early so you too can enjoy the ride.*

Howard came into biker poetry more from the opposite direction, having been a mainstream poet (if there is such a thing) before penning stories on cycles. Not a bike owner, her perspective is from the passenger's seat, and as the daughter of a motorcyclist. Howard proudly tells how her dad's first encounter with her mother was when he pulled up to a bus stop and asked her if she wanted a ride. She wrote a poem about it, performed it at poetry slams, and also cut a video on it. Her passage into biker poetry came through Rob Van Tuyle, another Chicago-area poet who has steered his talents toward two-wheelers.

Van Tuyle's hilarious *If Jesus Rode a Motorcycle* found him on stage in a flowing white robe during Biker Poetry Nite at the Milwaukee Public Library last June.

*If Jesus rode a motorcycle/would it be a Harley?/I don't think so/considering his first choice of transportation was a donkey.*

Van Tuyle goes on to suggest it might have been a Vespa full of love and forgiveness, or a leaky '73 Sporty with no brakes. But in the end, he concludes that Jesus does ride a motorcycle and he has fun. *Jesus rides a motorcycle/be rides every one.*

Biker Poetry Nite, one of the more unusual events in the week leading up to Harley's 95th Anniversary bash, drew about 200 on a rain-soaked Tuesday night—not a bad showing for this off-the-beaten-path art form. Besides bikers, it's intriguing to nonriders, offering some rare, raw, and funny glimpses into a racy lifestyle often shrouded in mystique. It's poetry as it was meant to be, according to Marty Rosenblum, historian for the Harley-Davidson Motor Co. and author of Harley-Davidson poetry. "At its roots, poetry is a primal, basic form of expression," said Rosenblum, who has a doctorate in modern American poetry. Unfortunately, poetry has been turned by academia into an obscure and rather cryptic art form. "They've turned it into an existential crossword puzzle," Rosenblum said. Biker poetry, on the other hand, is more direct and its often borne of a specific intense or amusing experience.

"When you ride, specifically on a Harley-Davidson motorcycle, there's a natural inclination to express one's self and one's relationship to it," Rosenblum told us. Motorcycle poets, he said, are seeking to restore the spontaneous, visual, and sensual qualities that poetry should be all about.

Howard, whose Pirates performed at Chicago's Field Museum during its "The Art of the Motorcycle" exhibit, reflected all that and more in her piece titled *In The Rearview Mirror*.

It ends: *The sharp line of the highway/runs its stitch/through and through./Our rearview mirror/a glass bead/on its thread. Behind us/a trinket of/Time.*

—Blake Daniels

Experience The Power Of A True Legend.

# Bassriders®

ENTERTAINMENT FOR ADULT BIKERS • NUMBER 313 • JULY 1999



THE RAY  
HAN  
TROUBLE

L DEAL:  
s Volume 2

apllication of hits,  
n favorites and  
remastered.

70  
her"

72

le's  
Trouble,  
us tracks,  
her notes

V-49111)

word: SRV)

S. Pat. & Trm. Off. Marca Registrada / is a trademark of Sony  
Sony Music Entertainment Inc.

EK/ET 65873

REPRO

SONY

# CIRCUIT CITY®

Music Locations Only