

Rodney Torreson – Poet Laureate from 2007-2010

In my three years as poet laureate, I had two projects. My main project involved beginning a website that promotes the poetry of young people in the greater Grand Rapids area and provides them with articles on the craft of writing poetry, as well introducing them to the work of established poets. Though I did not build the website, it was designed according to my specifications, and I selected twelve young poets to serve as my staff, ranging from age 12-18, all of them being my own students or former students. (The ages of the young writers at *Through the 3rd Eye* (throughthe3rdeye.com) six years later, however, range from 14-25 and include but several of my former students. The others were recommended to me by faculty at several area colleges.) My second project was editing an anthology of poems written by young people. The anthology, *Cultivating a Sense of Place: Poetry by West Michigan Youth*, was published in 2009, with all of the poems having first appeared on the website.

Bio

Rodney Torreson studied under John Woods and Herb Scott, receiving MFA in Creative Writing from Western Michigan University in 1988. He is the author of four books, his most recent being *The Secrets of Fieldwork*, a chapbook of poetry published by Finishing Line Press in 2010. His two full-length books are *A Breathable Light* (New Issues Press, 2002) and *The Ripening of Pinstripes: Called-Shots on the New York Yankees* (Story Line Press, 1998). His poems have appeared in such periodicals as *The New York Quarterly*, *The Beloit Poetry Journal*, *Margie*, and *Passages North*. He was the recipient of the Bentley Prize for Poetry from the *Seattle Review*, and in 2005, two of his poems, "On a Moonstruck Gravel Road" and "The Bethlehem Nursing Home," were selected by Ted Kooser, Poet Laureate, for his nationally-syndicated newspaper column, *American Life in Poetry*.