

Arts

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Don't give up reading for Lent

Morning Star Staff

The Okanagan's recently proclaimed poet laureate has some words and thoughts he wants to share with his hometown when he launches his latest book.

Vernon author John Lent will read selections from his newest book of poetry, *Cantilevered Songs*, at Okanagan College's Kalamalka Campus Friday.

"I wanted to launch this book in a proper way," said Lent. "I wanted to perform some of the poems the way they should be performed, and sometimes, in order to do that, you need to wait until you feel right about the performance."

Lent, who has published nine books to date, went on a demanding public tour of *Cantilevered Songs* last fall, soon after it was released by publisher ThistleDown Press. The tour included 12 readings in nine days, taking him to Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Calgary, Edmonton, Victoria, Duncan and Nanaimo.

For his first official Vernon reading, Lent plans to perform a sequence of his poems, entitled *Weightless*, and has involved a few friends in putting it together.

"There will be a few surprises," he said.

Lent, who lives in Vernon with his wife, artist/author Jude Clarke, is the current regional dean at Okanagan College Kai Campus. As a longtime professor of writing at the school, he has mentored many aspiring and working scribes, including world slam poet champion Shane Koyczan, who recently wowed the world with his spoken word piece, *We are More*, at the opening ceremonies of the Vancouver Olympics.

Lent is also known to many around the North Okanagan for his gravelly voice as one part of the jazz-blues-roots trio Lent Fraser Wall.

Lent's long contribution to the valley arts scene has recently been recognized with

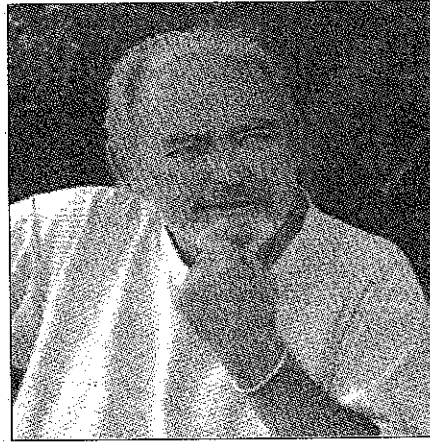


PHOTO SUBMITTED

John Lent launches his latest book, *Cantilevered Songs*, at the Lecture Theatre at the Kalamalka Campus of Okanagan College Friday at 7 p.m.

a nomination for a Lifetime Achievement Award as part of this year's Okanagan Arts Awards.

"It's quite simple," said Lent, laughing to himself. "I love writing and I love teaching. I'm a very lucky person. And for me, each book is a probe into that crazy mix of landscapes and consciousness that faces us each day and every day, the crease of it, its thickness. I love it. This book, more than any of my other books, tries to reach out for that crease, that thickness, as I live it out right here in Vernon."

The book launch will be followed by a reception, as well as refreshments and a book signing.

"We'll have a bit of party," laughed Lent.

Friday's book launch takes place in the lecture theatre at Kal campus and starts at 7 p.m. Admission is free and open to everyone.

