

“Geo-Poe” was a city-wide literary geo-caching adventure dreamed up and coordinated by Gregg Wilhelm in the Fall 2014. Fifteen writers (from established authors to emerging voices) penned short short stories surrounding the mysterious death of Edgar Allan Poe or stories written in a Poe-esque style. These stories were hidden around Baltimore in spots relevant to the narrative, and readers-seekers used mobile devices to find-and-read the story caches. Clues to each stashed cache were posted via social media. The project took on extra life as a reading was staged at Westminster Hall, Eight Stone Press published a chapbook, and a culminating event celebrating the publication of the chapbook took place at Atomic Books. Participants stated that the experience was a highlight of their year, and stories produced by the writers were uniformly excellent.

Election Day
Gregg Wilhelm

“Is that rockfish I smell on your breath?”

Clancy’s nose twitched and sent my vibrissa twitching. “What you mean?” I said.

Yellow teeth popped like kernels between his lips. “Is that fucking rockfish I smell?”

“No it ain’t.”

“Some bassy cologne you’re donning, is it?”

“Nope,” I lifted a hindclaw and smelled my crotch. “One hundred percent me-musk.”

“My nose don’t lie. If you’re not sharing, that’s against pack law.”

“Shhh...,” both foreclaws draped below my chin. “There’s old Ludwig now.”

Ludwig, surrounded by four burly stevedores, nodded toward the public house. “You sure?” one said loudly over the clop of hooves on cobblestones. “Every Sunday,” Ludwig smiled, “like a parishioner.” The largest of the men pressed coins like nails into each of Ludwig’s palms. “Best be, or we know who we *can* get.” He curled a bunch of fives in front of Ludwig’s face.

“That bootlicker done sold the poet down the river,” Clancy said.

“Come on,” I said. “I know a way in.”

We scurried behind the pub through mounds of apple cores, coffee grounds, and half-eaten bangers. “Job’s turkey!” Clancy said. “You *have* been holding out on us.” “Get your smeller out of there, ain’t got time for that now.” We squeezed through a crack in the foundation, crawled along floor joists, and up a pipe to a spot behind a cask. The bloke who paid Ludwig was already eyeing up the poet, who moaned a hymn into the crook of his arm upon

which his head rested. He spilled across the bar like an oily lake.

“Look at ’im, work’s half done,” he whispered to the others. Several men handled their drinks and parted as if the goon was Moses. “Look here, scrivener,” he poked a shoulder, “I have a question.”

“A question, sir,” the poet rose and stiffened, “is the start of no good thing.”

“It is if you know what’s good for *you*.”

Ash-colored crescent-moons cradled the poet’s eyes. He set down an amber-filled glass and daintily circled his arm through the air. “Even its mark is devious,” he said, “a meat hook ready to gouge.”

Red impatience cloaked the thug’s face. “Been to the polls?”

“First thing this morning.”

“Let me buy you another whiskey.”

“This? Just beef tea, lad.”

One of the ruffian’s compatriots opened a duffle and sorted through rumpled clothes before extracting a powdery wig and spectacles. The other two plugs circled behind and closed in. One said, “Let’s just get him to the bloody coop.”

“I knew Ludwig had it in for him,” I whispered.

“There it is again,” Clancy said. “My nose knows fish and that’s fucking rockfish.”

“Fine, I’ve been saving the tail. You can have it.”

“I knew it, you rat bastard!”

I catapulted myself onto the brute’s calf, sank hard into flesh, tasted a drop of warm cruor. Then I flung through the transom into an eerie October afternoon. My temple landed against a curb, and all went black.

*Hiding Place: Somewhere near The Wharf Rat, 801 S. Ann Street
Lancaster and S. Ann Streets, Fells Point 21231
Latitude: 39.28256340000001
Longitude: -76.59095969999998*

Based on theory that Poe was a victim of cooping, a ballot-box-stuffing scam in which victims were shanghaied, drugged, and used as a pawn to vote for a political party at multiple locations.