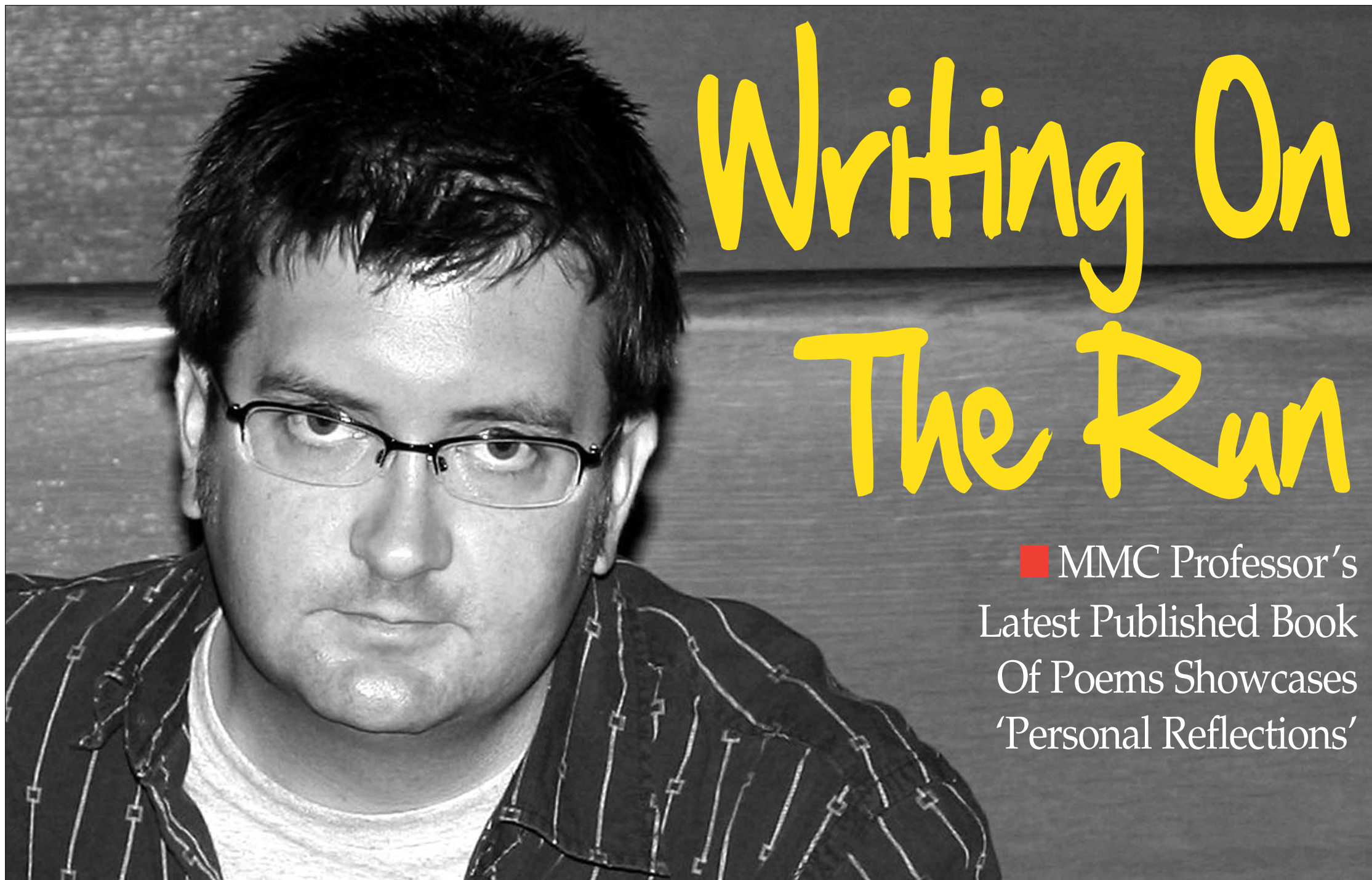


# RiverCity

TV Listings  
Inside

SECTION B | Friday, February 12, 2010



## Writing On The Run

■ MMC Professor's  
Latest Published Book  
Of Poems Showcases  
'Personal Reflections'

COURTESY PHOTO

BY NATHAN JOHNSON  
nathan.johnson@yankton.net

**J**im Reese is used to writing on the run — and that isn't likely to change any time soon. Between raising two children with his wife in Hartington, Neb., and teaching English at both Mount Marty College (MMC) and the Yankton Federal Prison Camp, the 37-year-old has very little time to devote solely to writing.

"I'm always writing on the run, it seems," Reese said during an interview in his MMC office. "I could be writing when I'm driving a car, making goulash or any other spare moment. I'm always writing notes and ideas I have, and I try to set aside some time after grading and talking to students to compose things."

Amid the demands of everyday life, he has managed to compose enough material for his latest poetry collection, "ghost on 3rd," which was just published by New York Quarterly Books.

Reese is a fan of confessional poetry and the gonzo journalism of Hunter S. Thompson. With references to friends and family members throughout the collection, it is hard to imagine that Reese doesn't have a very personal role in the scenes described.

"You can make up anything you want, but for me, poetry has always been another form of expression," he said. "It's my personal reflections on what I see and experience. I think this will last a lot longer than (a photo). I like an old box of photos, but I think this is more important, so I end up writing a lot of personal things. I don't wake up and say, 'What can I dig up in my own personal life to put on the page?' Sometimes

it just happens that way."

Reactions from loved ones to being included in his poems vary, according to Reese. Some appreciate it. Some don't. And it's not unusual for those who haven't been part of a poem to joke about the fact that they feel left out.

"Now I've started, so I guess I have to write something about everybody at some point," Reese said.

The title of the book comes from a poem Reese wrote about the days gone by fishing with his grandfather, who is now dealing with Alzheimer's disease in a nursing home. The poem closes with the lines "Sleep, Grandpa, sleep./You are the ghost on third/and I'm sending you home."

The poem was originally titled, "Hunting for Crawlers," but it evolved into something else over time.

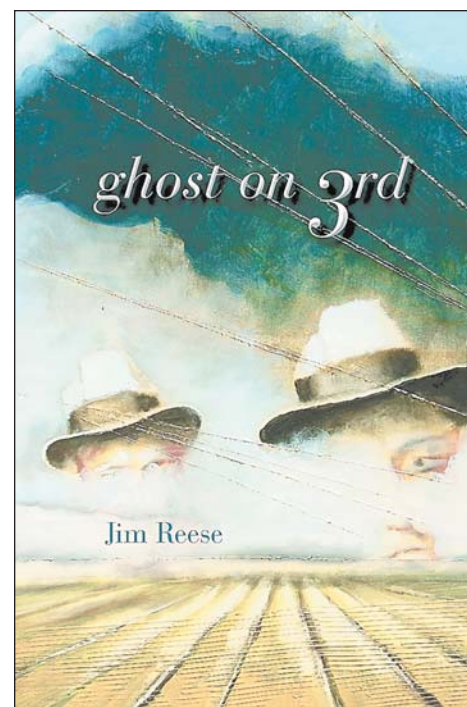
"I was playing kickball in the gymnasium with my niece, nephew and daughters," Reese recalled. "I heard one of them say, 'Ghost on third,' because we didn't have enough players. I instantly was taken back to when I was a kid playing kickball in grade school. I hadn't heard that saying in so long."

"I had been trying to think of a title for the book, and I knew then that was the title," he continued. "I tried hard to write a poem about that day, but it didn't work. I looked at that poem about my grandfather, and I changed the ending of it. It worked perfectly, I think."

Putting together a book of poems is similar to assembling a mix tape of favorite songs, according to Reese. Poems are sequenced to hit certain emotional notes and often come together to tell a greater story.

Reese said Ted Kooser, the former poet laureate of the United States, advised him and other graduate students at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln about when it's time to collect poems into a book.

"Ted told us once, 'If you have 30-40 poems you've written, and they've been published in national journals or magazines,



you should think about putting a collection of poetry together," Reese stated. "I remember how scary that sounded when I heard it. I didn't think there was any way I could do that."

Time and experience in the publishing industry diminished those fears, he said. Reese grew up in Omaha, Neb., and while studying and teaching in the Great Plains, he has spent some time reflecting upon the art produced here.

"There is not a single art form that defines the Plains," he said. "Common-sense values such as physical labor, honesty in human relations, emphasis on the primacy of family and community, and intimate physical, emotional and spiritual connections to the land are more important now than ever. Plains art forms and aesthetics are different from urban

■ REESE, Page 8B please

## Jesus Christ Pose

BY JIM REESE

I walk both sides of this fence.  
I have no sympathy for those who premeditate  
and execute heinous crimes.

In a theatre practicum in San Quentin  
I watch you, a prisoner, standing  
in the center of the room.

You raise your hands, palms up,  
head dangling down,  
your Jesus Christ pose.

You begin to stand on one foot.  
The room is quiet. People begin  
shifting in their seats.

Minutes pass. You begin to lose your balance.  
Every morning, you say, after my foster father left  
for work,  
she made me stand in the corner like this.

When your desperate left foot  
hits the ground  
you scream in the voice of a child

being beaten.  
And now I understand why  
some of you are here.

**Valentine's Day** February 14<sup>th</sup>

*Valentine's Day*

**"SWEETHEART OF A DEAL"**

Starting at 6:00 p.m., first drawing at 6:30 p.m. Win a "Sweet DEAL" qualifier for a chance to win the "Sweetheart of a DEAL" Getaway Package. Drawings every 1/2 hour. All 1/2 hour drawing winners qualify for the "GETAWAY PACKAGE."

**DRAWING AT 10:30 P.M. - MUST BE PRESENT IN THE PIT FOR THE DRAWINGS.**

**SIZZLING COUPLES' SLOT TOURNAMENT**

**\$40 ENTRY FEE INCLUDES:**  
Two entries to the Couples Slot Tourney,  
2-\$5 Blackjack Match Plays, and  
Strawberries and Champagne!

**100% payback | \$250 added purse**

**Registration time 5:00 p.m.**  
**Start time 6:00 p.m.**

Evening Entertainment - 7:00 - 11:00 p.m. .... Krissy Marie

**February 16**

*Mardi Gras*

**Fat Tuesday Hot Seats**

Fat Tuesday Hot Seats will be held every 1/2 hour from 7:00 to 10:30 p.m.

**VALENTINE'S Sweetheart Special**

Earn 25 points while playing slots and redeem at the Player's Club booth for your Sweet Gift!

**FEBRUARY SWEETHEART SPECIAL FOR TWO!**

**\$99 + tax** Room for two, dinner for two, breakfast for two! | \$20 for \$30 of coupons & a bottle of champagne!

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