



## Richard M. Pflum

July 2, 1932 - March 15, 2018

The story of Richard Milton Pflum, born July 2, 1932, died March 15, 2018 at the age of 85. He was the first born of Joseph Harold Pflum and Mildred Louise Pflum (Davison), then came Carol Jean and his two brothers Ronald Joseph and David Charles.

He graduated from Howe High School. During his life, he was in the Army and toured Germany. He obtained a BS in chemistry from Purdue. With that degree, he taught chemistry for awhile. He worked at Stark & Wetzel as a chemist. He lived in Bloomington for a few years. He attended IU and Butler to obtain a Masters Degree in English. He also had a degree in audio visual science.

Richard had knowledge of a wide variety of things and could converse for hours on various topics. He had an interest in Astronomy. He built his own telescope but later purchased equipment to enjoy spending time watching the sky, mostly at night.

Another interest was classical music. He had season tickets several years to the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra. He listened to CD's often at home, and while living at Miller's Merry Manor. He would talk about Mozart or Bach or whoever was playing at the moment with the nurses.

His biggest passion was poetry. Richard worked at Central State as an orderly. He organized a writing class there with some of the patients. After it closed, he retired and devoted his life to writing poetry and his interests in astronomy and music, which he sometimes wrote about in poems.

He would spend hours at his computer writing or re-writing his poems. Richard was a published artist, he had 3 published books and was working on a fourth. He was the founder and life member of the Indiana Writers Center. He would often attend seminars or visit poetry readings. He was well known in the poetry world and made several close friends. Please read below one of his poems:

Poem with BIG feet

This is the poem that walks  
on big feet, that stomps on  
all smaller poems, that says,  
“get out of my way” when it  
walks through the barroom door.

This is the poem that interrupts  
the conversation you are having with  
your girlfriend and talks her into  
dancing and then leaving without you,  
so you must go home or dance by yourself.

This is the same poem which sits down  
beside you the next day and eats all of  
your French fries and wants a big bite  
from your cheeseburger. That gives you  
free advice about your terminal inadequacies  
And offers you a gun, though it admits,  
“this is the coward’s way out.”

This is also the poem which tells you  
that any greatness you might achieve  
in this world is due to it, while

all failures are strictly your own.

This is the poem which is always suffering because no one appreciates its true merit, a poem that knows it could have been a millionaire or an important politician had it chosen to be something else.

This is the poem I avoid trying to write though it's always around beating its chest, complaining: intimidating the lyrical, quieter, often deeper poems.

Still, because its feet are so big and its space requirements, enormous, perhaps it can't help stomping on other poems and things. Perhaps it is not even cruel, just deprived: having grown up without lessons on the cello, and never enough cheeseburgers on the backyard patio.

Richard Milton Pflum

# Previous Events

## Remembrance Service

MAR **20**. 7:00 PM (CT)

Friends Poetry Salon

## Memorial Visitation

MAR **22**. 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Shirley Brothers Washington Memorial Chapel  
9606 E. Washington Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46229  
(317) 897-9606  
<https://shirleybrothers.com/>

# Tribute Wall

EZ

“ *"Chopin and Cherries" page 34 - my favorite poem about music! Will listen to the Raindrop prelude with my student, a little boy, and read it again and again. How wonderful, your legacy continues!* ”



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**Eva Zadorozny** - July 07, 2024 at 09:26 AM

RP

“ Dick and I were longtime friends, both in Bloomington and Indianapolis, but Bloomington in particular, going back to the '60s when we had some good times being poets together. If we happened to be on the same venue for a reading, people seemed to get a kick out of the shared “Pf...” of our names. Someone once suggested that it sounded like a couple of guys doing a road show. We even took on the daunting task of creating and editing *Stoney Lonesome*, a poetry magazine that went through six issues. I stepped aside after the first two issues, but Dick hung in and continued with a variety of assistant editors. Like others who knew Dick, I too was always impressed with his wide ranging knowledge of science and classical music, both of which served him well in his poetry. We saw less of each other after he moved back to Indianapolis, but his reputation grew, deservedly so, as he published his books and actively shared with others his time and gift as a poet with his Poetry Salon as well as the readings he organized. He was, and will continue to be, a significant presence on the poetry scene.

*Roger Pfingston*

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**Roger Pfingston** - March 21, 2018 at 08:45 AM

JP

“ I miss Dick already. Somehow, knowing that such a devoted poet roamed the world, comforted me in our troubled times as art triumphed over banality whenever Dick was around. His dedication to the quality of his own poetry made the poems shine; he was never not revising! And, oh, his love of classical music. And the sky. And good food. And, yes, his appreciation of women. I have been happy to be the publisher of much of Dick's work, and believe he will never really leave us, as his poetry remains, sustaining and nurturing our souls.

*My condolences to his family and friends. One fine human being has left it to us to carry on his love of poetry.*

*--Jim Powell*

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**Jim Powell** - March 20, 2018 at 05:49 PM

 Mike Rothman

“ Richard had a passion for poetry, the intensity of which few have for anything in life. With him, the search for the perfect phrasing and structure of a poem was never ending, whether it be his own work or that of others. I credit Richard and his Poetry Salon in significant measure for the renewed seriousness with which I approached my own poetry when taking up the pen again. Though we battled over words many times, I always came away the better poet for it. - Frederick Michaels

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**Mike Rothman** - March 20, 2018 at 10:53 AM

JA

“ My friend, I am so sorry to see you go. Your words will live long and inspire many more of us. Godspeed, Poet!

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**Jason Ammerman** - March 20, 2018 at 09:35 AM

JC

“ *Ave atque vale, from a friend and neighbor, Jared Carter.*

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**Jared Carter** - March 19, 2018 at 08:50 PM



“ *1 file added to the album Memories Album*



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**Shirley Brothers Mortuaries & Crematory** - March 19, 2018 at 04:15 PM

JM

*I knew Dick from the Indiana Astronomical Society. This morning ran across his book of stories and poems - **The Haunted Refrigerator** - miss you and your humor!*

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**John MOlt** - January 28, 2024 at 01:18 PM