

# EAT Poems #3 – EAT Justiss: The Poetry of Alan Justiss

## track list

Track #	Contributing Artist	Title
1.	<a href="#">Heather Stafford</a>	<a href="#">- Churches, Schools, and Jails</a> 01:56
2.	<a href="#">Al Letson</a>	<a href="#">- Is Yours</a> 00:41
3.	<a href="#">Mark Ari</a>	<a href="#">- Fishing in the Dark</a> 01:06
4.	<a href="#">Troy Lukkarila</a>	<a href="#">- Almost All</a> 00:43
5.	<a href="#">Alan Justiss</a>	<a href="#">Speaks</a> 00:35
6.	<a href="#">Nestor Armando Gil</a>	<a href="#">- I Have Stolen Bread</a> 01:13
7.	<a href="#">Jennifer Ray Miles</a>	<a href="#">- Just Friends To Love You</a> 01:06
8.	<a href="#">Clark and Noah Lunberry</a>	<a href="#">- Born So Blind</a> 01:12
9.	<a href="#">Gary Jones</a>	<a href="#">- Save the Heat Express the Sun</a> 02:02
10.	<a href="#">Heather Sielicki</a>	<a href="#">- I Was Never One</a> 02:54

## about

Born in 1943 in Northeast Florida, Alan Justiss would grow up to drop out of school and fake his age in order to join the US Army at 17 years of age. After serving with an airborne unit, he spent the rest of his adult life on drink, drug, travel, and words. Five marriages. As many children spread out over decades and states. Work as a painter of houses, handyman on the job. His last marriage was ten years without drink or poetry. When it collapsed, Justiss returned entirely to his loves: beer and the click clack of manual typewriters. He collected his life obsessively, recorded the mundane details of his days religiously in wall calendars, and meticulously numbered and dated his more than 30,000 pages of poems. 20 years this was his life, without a home for at least 14 of them. He surfed couches for months at a time, eventually reducing his welcome to ashes. A house where Alan lived burned down -- every room except the one where Alan write and sat and slept, amidst a tinderbox of dry pages and a hoarder's bounty of magazines, newspapers, envelopes. Artists, musicians, writers, sought him out.

His influence on the lives and artistic practices of a legion of creative people cannot be overstated. Painting were made of him, poems written, songs composed. The delusions that inspired his belief that his work would someday be important were not delusions at all. His work was important right there and then. He was unofficially Jacksonville, Florida's poet laureate, a title bestowed upon him within the local media and among the questionable types who are known to dig poetry.

People who regarded him as friend will widely agree he was always also teacher -- both example and anti-example. He was 86'd from every respectable poetry reading he ever made a habit of attending. He was revered and reviled often by the same people in all the corners of literature and poetry into which he wandered. Drunken and rude, sober and charming, Alan Justiss best drank alone in the company of his aptly named Royal Companion typewriter. His awful visions were best served by the weight of ink on the page, the open ended time to put it all down. The last few years of his life were in a comfortable high rise with a view of the St. Johns River, finally the beneficiary of social security to punctuate a life in which nothing much had ever been secure about his social situation. He died on Valentine's Day of 2011.

The poems themselves are a gathering storm of wild language, ranging from profound and beautiful to unintelligible. Those that find purchase do so with an intimacy and precision that borders on the uncanny. It is from among these -- the poems that most moved their readers, touched them most closely -- that this collection, this wordstorm, is gathered.

Nestor Armando Gil

Much as I love the poems, it was the man that got to me first. It seemed right to pay tribute to Alan in this way, to have a few of his friends read his poems and to make a record of it. I guess you can say I'm paying a debt. Saying thanks. The poems are what we have of Alan. And when you hear them, he's all there in them. That's pretty terrific.

Mark Ari

## credits

released 06 September 2012  
Cover Photo: Shelton Hull  
Cover Design: Ivonne Lopez  
Produced by Mark Ari and Nestor Armando Gil

This album is #3 of the EAT POEMS series, produced and edited by Mark Ari. More info: [arifiles.com/2012/05/14/eat-poems/](http://arifiles.com/2012/05/14/eat-poems/)

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