

Film

selected by [Emory Gillespie](#) in the [December 12, 2012](#) issue

In Review



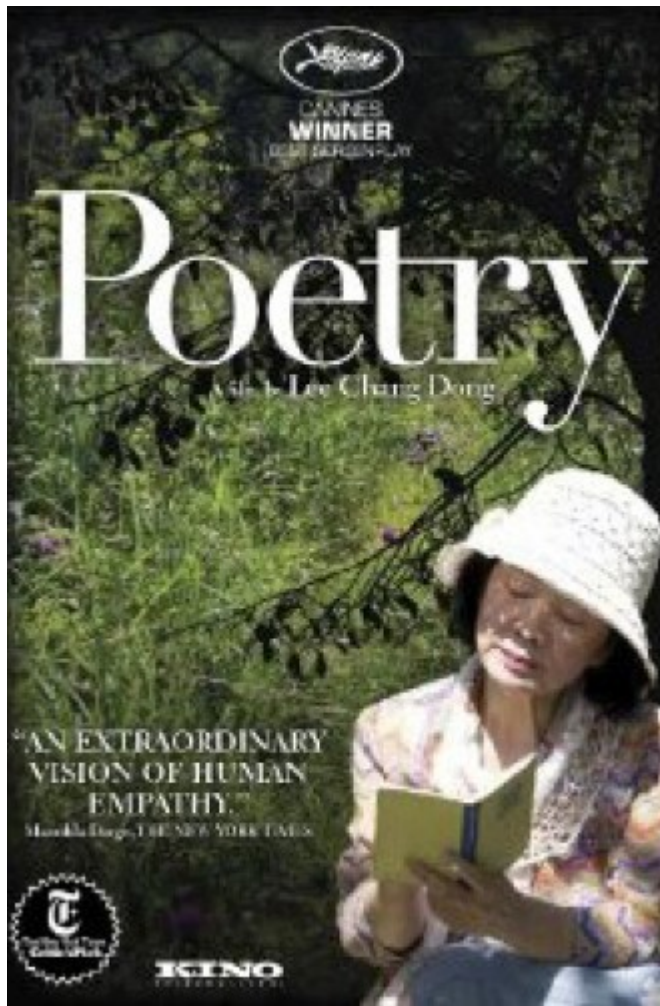
Romantics Anonymous

Directed by Jean-Pierre Ameris



Four Lions

Directed by Christopher Morris



Poetry

Directed by Chang-dong Lee



The Taste of Tea

Written and directed by Katsuhito Ishii

Romantics Anonymous, directed by Jean-Pierre Améris. My son called me and said, “I’ve just found your next favorite movie. It’s got three things you’ll love: chocolate, a romantic awkwardness you can believe in, and a guy who sweats so much around women he has to run to the restroom and change his shirt.” And for a fun evening with other cinéastes, you can count the allusions to *The Sound of Music*. Also, notice how the director, Jean-Pierre Améris, uses the camera lens like a pair of glasses, seeking to correct his own debilitating shyness. *Délicieuse!*

Four Lions, directed by Christopher Morris. Think Monty Python’s holy hand-grenade skit goes Muslim fundamentalist. Think Walter, Donny and the Dude of *The Big Lebowski* go to terrorist training camp. This film has the bite of Shakespeare, with enough newly minted expletives to cover a refrigerator door. “You monkey bollock

duster.” I’ll be watching this film again with the closed captioning, so I don’t miss one word of how these wannabe jihadists attempt to demonstrate that microwave settings, chicken beaks and squat jogs are the stuff that theological epochs are made of.

Poetry, directed by Chang-dong Lee. In South Korea, a grandmother named Mija discovers that a member of her family has committed a heinous crime. But there’s no vendetta here, at least not in the typical Hollywood sense. Rather than fight violence with violence, Mija ventures through the thicket of hard truths, and as she does the cinematography becomes more attentive—as devoted and delicate as a poem about an apple. *Poetry* left me with a great sense of clarity about human autonomy and the human resolve to endure, perhaps even flourish, after confronting the inner and outer contours of a miserable situation.

The Taste of Tea, written and directed by Katsuhito Ishii. Katsuhito Ishii wraps up one crisp metaphor after another and serves them up with a light touch. Watching this film is like tasting sherbet on a hot summer day. It’s like a flip book illustrating our sweet, fleeting existence. Watching this quirky, endearing family eat their rice, act out their anime cartoons and sing their campy songs, I met up with this truism: with all the mysteries unsolved, it’s still a delight to be in this world.