



Scribbles

Newsletter for the Big Bend Poets
February 2017 Tallahassee, Florida



I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;
I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.
I love thee with the passion put to use
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose
With my lost saints,—I love thee with the breath,
Smiles, tears, of all my life!—and, if God choose,
I shall but love thee better after death.

~ another love sonnet by E.B.B. ~

February Meeting:

Tuesday, February 14, 2017, 7- 9pm, Barnes & Noble, North Monroe St., Tallahassee, FL

- ◆ Announcements & News
- ◆ Bring your Seasonal poems! "Love" themed poems are encouraged for the 'loving-est' day of the year—for a *Celebration of LOVE!*
- ◆ **Editor's Poetry Challenge:** *February (or Winter) Haiku.* You may adhere to a more Japanese style haiku or write in the American form, but keep with a traditional theme of Season and Nature.
- ◆ **Open Mike @ 8pm.** What you read is your choice. This is a good time to try out something new and experimental. Just remember you are in a public venue.

Sonnet I

I thought once how Theocritus had sung
Of the sweet years, the dear and wished—for years,
Who each one in a gracious hand appears
To bear a gift for mortals, old or young:
And, as I mused it in his antique tongue,
I saw, in gradual vision through my tears,
The sweet, sad years, the melancholy years,
Those of my own life, who by turns had flung
A shadow across me. Straightway I was 'ware,
So weeping, how a mystic shape did move
Behind me, and drew me backward by the hair;
And a voice said in mastery, while I strove,—
"Guess now who holds thee!"—"Death" I said.
But there
The silver answer rang,—"Not Death, but Love."

~from *Sonnets from the Portuguese: A Celebration of Love*,
by Elizabeth Barrett Browning, St. Martins Press edition, 1986.

Poets & Poems:

~ one of the most beautiful love poems
ever written in the English language ~

Sonnet XLIII

by Elizabeth Barrett Browning

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight
For the ends of Being and ideal Grace.
I love thee to the level of everyday's
Most quiet need, by sun and candle-light

The above poems are in the public domain.

POET: Elizabeth Barrett Browning was a prolific writer and reviewer during the Victorian era, and during her lifetime, her reputation as a poet was at least as great as that of her husband, poet Robert Browning. The poems printed here and the other forty-two sonnets in *Sonnets from the Portuguese* were written for her husband, who called her "his little Portuguese."

If you are passionate about love sonnets, you owe it to yourself to revisit those of E.B.B.

February Celebrations

African-American History Month

Groundhog Day: 2/2

International Book Giving Day: 2/14

Valentine's Day: 2/14

President's Day: 2/20 (3rd Monday)

Mardi Gras: 2/28

Editor's Corner

Writing Poetry is never for the faint of heart! - PLS

This past week I was reminded that February 2nd was Groundhog Day. It is a day that is much celebrated in the North—but not so much in the South. Spring seldom waits for another six weeks before showing it's face down here. However, that is not why I mention the holiday in this column.

I was thinking of the Bill Murray movie, *Groundhog Day* and how Bill's character keeps reliving that day—day after day after day—with slight adjustments. Writing poetry can sometimes pose a similar problem where you find yourself stuck writing the same type of poem—theme as well as form with, well—slight adjustments. Actually there is nothing wrong with that premise; think of it as 'variations on a theme'. Start with a basic poem you have written and that you like. Is there anything that you can do, not just to improve it, but perhaps to present it in a different light or from a different point of view? Think of what you can add or even take away from the basic poem, the do it. Actually lots of leading poets have done just this very thing over the course of their lives. Some even did it with entire books; same title, but with slight changes. Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* is one such book. This is a great thing about poetry. You can, over time, re-write poems, make changes, say new things or the same thing, just in different ways. Poetry Lives as you breath new life into it. Embrace those changes! And don't forget to come out and...

Celebrate Love at the upcoming meeting on Valentine's Day!
Happy Writing everyone!

~Patricia Stevenson-Gingrich, editor

Bits & Pieces

Bits & Pieces will return in March.

ATTENTION! ALL BBP MEMBERS! Please remember to send your personal & poetry news, announcements, photos, or changes in email addresses and other contact information to Patricia at patriciasg.bbp@gmail.com by the **25th of each month** for publication in the next issue of Scribbles!

Shorts—

This month we have two "short" poems including one from a member of our sister FSPA chapter *Poetry for the Love of It*, also in Tallahassee.

It Begins

By Linda Whitefeather, PLOI, 2017

A long harsh winter
Descends across the land.
The weak enslaved.
Survivors diminished.
Stand. Resist.
Or we all perish.
In this, our hour of discontent.

February

By Patricia L Stevenson, 2011

February.
Eight degrees Fahrenheit.
Wind chill... 20 below.
Three feet of snow and falling.
Sitting on a log by the Lake.
Bundled in coat and red plaid scarf but still
Shivering. Breathing in the icy air.
Lungs frozen. Staring at the waves
Frozen and sculpted by the wind.

February.
Punxsutawney Phil saw his shadow
The heating system strains and groans
Against the frigid temperatures.
Boots sit in the corner where
Snow melts into the carpet.
My gaze moves from the puddle
To the little pink inflatable Palm tree
On my desk and I dream of Piña Coladas.
February.

Written about Erie, PA
Published in *FSPA Anthology 30, 2012*



FSPA & You

Membership for 2017. If you haven't gotten around to joining FSPA for 2017, you can still do so. Download the membership form from the FSPA website (listed below), complete it and mail to the address indicated on the form along with the appropriate amount of payment. \$25 for a regular membership and \$10 if you are a full time student.

2017 FSPA Poetry Contests: If you are considering entering a poetry contest this year, make it the FSPA annual contests. There are 26 different categories to enter in 2017. Cash prizes are awarded for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place in each category. First place winners are also published in the annual FSPA anthology published in October. This contest is Open to both members and non-members. The categories, prizes, and any special directions as well as all rules for submitting your poem/s are posted on the FSPA website.

2017 FSPA Annual Spring Fling: The 2017 Spring Fling will be held the weekend of April 21-22 at the Clarion Hotel on East Fowler Avenue in Tampa (near Univ. of So. Fla). The event is being hosted by New River Poets of Wesley Chapel and Sunshine Poets of Crystal River. Details and registration information for the annual spring event is in the January/February edition of OPAP and will also be on the FSPA website.

www.floridastatepoetsassociation.org

National Federation of State Poetry Societies (NFSPS)

2017 National Poetry Contest. Submission period began **January 1**, and runs through **March 15, 2017**. 50 categories and over \$6,000 total cash prizes. \$1,000 top prize in one category and \$500 in two other categories, plus publication of winners. Categories and Entry Rules are listed on the website nfsp.com

New Contest!! The BlackBerryPeach Spoken Word Poetry Prize Contest is **new for 2017**. Winners receive Cash Prizes and an invitation to perform at the National Convention in Ft. Worth, Texas in June. Visit the NFSPS website for details and entry information. A full size poster is available for downloading.

NFSPS 2017 Convention: The 2017 National Convention will be held in Fort Worth, Texas, June 29-July 2. Full information will be in upcoming issues of *Strophes* and on the NFSPS website.

Check for all NFSPS activities and events at:

www.nfsp.com

Book of the Month

Selected by the Poetry Foundation

Extracting the Stone of Madness: Poems 1962 – 1972, by Alejandra Pizarnik, translated from the Spanish by Yvette Siegert. Published by New Dimensions, 2016. Ms. Pizarnik, a significant Latin American poet died in 1972 at age 36 and is still a "hidden treasure" in America. This is the first full length collection published in English. The collection has been reviewed by most major poetry book reviewers in America. Booklist calls it a showcase of Pizarnik's exquisite range. Boston Review writes, "...darkly beautiful poems... both violence and respite..., hell and paradise."

Big Bend Poets website!

New postings coming soon!

March 2017

BBP Meeting: March 14, 2017

Is there something you want to learn about Poetry?

Attend the February meeting

And help plan future meetings and events!

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