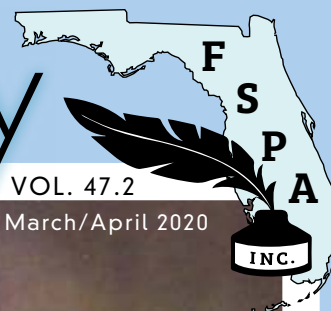


Of Poets & Poetry

A PUBLICATION OF THE FLORIDA STATE POETS ASSOCIATION

VOL. 47.2

March/April 2020



See page 5

SILVIA CURBELO

Cover photograph by Tom Errico

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Al Rocheleau

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

by Al Rocheleau

ORDER YOUR TWELVE CHAIRS COURSES: ALL FUNDS GO TO FSPA

"Most working poets are maybe 5% to 10% away from their ultimate potential, that of being finished poets, able to write uniformly fine work and to get published everywhere they deserve, and often. But most poets just settle for the easier 90 percent. They don't quite make it, since that other sliver of achievement is by far the toughest to gain, and I hate to see that, because it's that extra which makes all the difference. You get to know that when you get there, to the 100%, and that's why I made these courses: my students know; it's what the *Twelve Chairs* are for."

Dear Member,

Over the past year I handed over two different *Twelve Chairs* Courses to FSPA. One is the 12-hour Short Course; the other is the 180-hour Advanced Course. Many of you, about 30 in each case, have done these courses and the results have spoken for themselves. But the courses were delivered at live events, and that option is no longer available. Fortunately, the courses were recorded. Now, the audio of the full courses, with all visual handouts, are available on separate flash-drives playable on any computer system. These courses are now offered by FSPA for their own members at vastly reduced prices.

This means that not only does FSPA accredit these courses for you (the diplomas are handsome, and the accreditation is unavailable elsewhere), but also all funds paid for the courses come back to FSPA for use in its special projects. Right now, the most pressing project underway is the purchase of new PA equipment for the organization. Before the time of the 2020 October Convention, the existing PA equipment that we have used for years will no longer be available. The amount needed for the PA project alone will be in the vicinity of \$1,500.00.

If you have taken these courses already and reaped the benefits, thank you so much; congratulations on what you accomplished in the courses, and are still accomplishing with your writing. But so many members were not able or not geographically located to take those live courses. Well, here they are. The same courses. And you can do them on your own time, in your own place.

THE SHORT COURSE

The Short Course was delivered to several live audiences in 2018. It was derived from the much larger Advanced Course. Originally, the Advanced Course deconstructed all of the assimilated learning and private discoveries of my four decades of writing poetry. Rather than simply displaying the basic content of the journey in a conversational manual for any new or working poet as I had previously in the book *On Writing Poetry*, the Advanced Course dug much deeper. It covers everything I ever came to know or find inside of our art, to the tune of 180 hours of scripted and unscripted course content incorporating many disciplines, backed by several large volumes of grandmaster poetry going from present time back many centuries.

(Continued on next page)

The live course required 30 six-hour seminars per class (each class took three years, more than an MFA course), with more than 1500 handouts for each student. I did four complete classes from 2012 to 2018. No, there is nothing you will ever find anywhere quite like the Advanced Course, whether in live or recorded form.

And yes, the Short Course came after the Advanced Course. It had to, because I knew not everyone could commit to the Advanced Course, and I didn't want to leave those poets behind. Also, I wanted to design a course that could be done in a weekend by English teachers (with state CEU credits), helping these vital people who were otherwise not comfortable importing poetry instruction into their classes. So I pored over the scripts, recordings, and voluminous handouts of the Advanced Course, adding here and there, and then distilled the copious instruction of that big course into a sequential stream of short aphorisms and maxims. They begin with Seminar One of the Advanced Course, and end at Seminar Sixteen. (The later seminars of the Advanced Course are specific to further instruction in the legacy of grandmaster poetry, a legacy which all poets share, and to preparing the Advanced students for final construction of their required portfolios. Important material, yes, but not necessary for the Short Course.) The main theory of the Advanced Course lies within the first 16 seminars, and their distillation into sequential aphorisms and maxims make up most of the Short Course.

Each aphorism or maxim was purposely designed to ring the mind's bell on its own, in its own space and time. (Each one is delivered at a length of one or two lines only.) Each adds to what has come just before, and it presages what comes immediately after. Overall, the education spirals. Yes, there are explanations, some Q and A interchange, exercises and examples, and many supporting handouts. But the course moves quickly, and is designed to spark various little enlightenments and perhaps occasionally raise you slightly out of your seat.

The course originally cost \$50.00 per 6-hour session, in two sessions. The distance learning flash-drive of the Short Course is now available at the FSPA discount of 50%, meaning:
\$50.00 for the entire Short Course, including audio and handouts.

Here are just a few of the aphorisms and maxims you will find on the course:

(This list contains just 20 of the 1250 aphorisms and maxims from the Short Course. And you might imagine what you'll find in between these offerings...)

AESTHETIC WAVES TEND TO STICK TO US, STICK TO
WHAT IS IMPORTANT/UNIQUE, HAPPY/ SAD, BEAUTIFUL/UGLY.

TYPES OF AESTHETIC WAVES: 1) NATURAL— (AS OF A VIEWED SUNSET);
2) POETIC— "LIFTED" FROM WORK OF AN ARTIST.

PERCEPTION OF THINGS (1), FORM CONNECTIONS OF THINGS (2),
THAT BECOME CONCLUSIONS ON THINGS (3).

WE CREATE IN ORDER TO BE RE-CREATED; THE FORMULA OF THE POET'S ART IS:
OBJECT, TO SYMBOL, BACK TO OBJECT.

THE POET'S TRIANGLE CONSISTS OF: CRAFT, SCOPE, & VOICE;
WE ACQUIRE THEM IN SEQUENCE; EACH SUPPORTS EACH.

SYMBOLS UNWIND ON A SYMBOL STRING; THE STRINGS FLOW AND
ARE PUT INTO PACKETS OF PICTURES OF THINGS.

EVERY OBJECT, ANIMATE OR INANIMATE HAS A LIFE; WITH LIFE,
COMES ITS OWN SET OF VERBS THAT ASSIST THE POET.

OBJECTS AND THEIR MOVEMENTS ARE WHAT DRIVE YOUR POEM— NOTHING ELSE DOES.

WE AGREE SYMBOLS OF THINGS SOUND CERTAIN WAYS:
HARD / SOFT, STRONG / WEAK, HIGH / LOW, LIGHT / DARK.

RHYMED WORDS OR WORD-ROOTS (OBJECTS, ACTIONS)
MUST DESERVE THE RHYME WHICH WILL MAKE THEM RING.

RHYMES RING LOUDEST WHEN IN CLOSEST PROXIMITY TO A MATE;
THE RING LESSENS WITH MORE & MORE DISTANCE.

WE MAKE MEANING BY 1) CLEAR DESCRIPTION OF OBJECTS;
OR 2) A TRANSFORMATION OF ATTRIBUTES BETWEEN OBJECTS.

A PERFECT OBJECT IS DEFINED BY THE CLEAREST WORD;
THE OBJECT ITSELF CAN BE FOUND AT THE ROOT OF ITS WORD.

DEPARTING THE ROUTINE, THAT AUTOMATIC DRONING OF THE DAY,
MAKES SOMETHING NEW THAT MOVES THE MIND.

IT IS AN ACT OF ALCHEMY TO ADVANCE A PROSE STATEMENT
OF ANY KIND INTO A POETIC STATEMENT.

BETTER TO MOVE ON TO OTHER OBJECTS THAT DON'T NEED TO BE REPEATED.
(THE THESAURUS IS FOR TERM PAPERS.)

MORE THAN ANYTHING, POETS AND POEMS SAY SOMETHING;
SENSE AND OBSERVATION MAKE QUESTIONS &/OR ANSWERS.

THOUGHT OR EMOTION, SMALL OR GREAT, MAKES UP YOUR TAKE;
POEMS BUILD NOT WITH A SUBJECT, BUT WITH A TAKE.

SUBJECT IS THE VEHICLE THAT CARRIES THE TAKE— WHAT YOU HAVE TO SAY—
IF THAT'S NOT SO, "SUBJECT" IS USELESS.

POETS SHOULDN'T HAVE WRITER'S BLOCK; YOU COMMAND 1000'S OF OBJECTS
TO MAKE YOUR SUBJECT-VEHICLES.

That's just a taste of the Short Course; there are scores of nuts and bolts ("how to")
instructions as well, but are you intrigued? Ask those who have taken the course,
and decide if it might help you.

(Continued on next page)

If you wish, you can also go right to the Advanced Course. FSPA members receive an 80% reduction of cost of that original live course with me. So that cost for you is \$295.00, which can be paid up front or in six segments. We'll talk more about this course later. Right now, we do have members in the middle of doing both distance learning courses. Why not take part in one right now, and help FSPA with its current PA project at the same time? And by the way, I'm available by email or phone every step of the way on both courses. I can't wait to help.

Al

TWELVE CHAIRS COURSES ORDER FORM

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

E-mail address: _____

☐ TWELVE CHAIRS SHORT COURSE
\$50.00 Payment in Full

☐ TWELVE CHAIRS ADVANCED COURSE
\$295.00 Payment in Full ☐

Set me up on Payment Plan ☐

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A night photograph of a curved building with a large illuminated sign. The building's facade is lit with a series of purple lights along its curve. The sign, which reads "CAN YOU STAND PERFECTLY STILL AND HOLD THIS MOMENT OPEN?", is made of large, glowing orange letters. Below the sign is a blue railing. The background is dark, and the building's windows are lit up.

CAN YOU STAND
PERFECTLY STILL AND
HOLD THIS
MOMENT OPEN?

~ *Silvia Curbelo*

PROFILES IN POETRY



photograph by Tom Errico

the poet... **Silvia Curbelo** Q&A WITH AL ROCHELEAU

Tampa poet Silvia Curbelo came to the United States as a child from Matanzas, Cuba. Her poems pull from her personal experiences, but also touch a cord that is universal. She is the author of three poetry collections: *The Geography of Leaving* (Silverfish Review, 1991), *The Secret History of Water* (Anhinga Press, 1997) and *Falling Landscape* (Anhinga Press, 2015), as well as having her work published in anthologies that include *The Body Electric: America's Best Poetry* from the American Poetry Review (2000), *Snakebird: Thirty Years of Anhinga Poets* (2004), and the *Norton Anthology of Latino Literature* (2010). | Curbelo has served as the editor of *Organica Quarterly* and is the recipient of fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Florida Arts Council, the Florida Division of Cultural Affairs, the Cintas Foundation, the Seaside Foundation, and the Atlantic Center for the Arts, as well as being a Mid-American Review's James Wright Award and American Poetry Review's Jessica Nobel Maxwell Memorial Prize recipient. Currently, Curbelo is one of FSPA's nominees for the Florida State Poet Laureate.

The following pages are a window's view of her poems, and her take on poetry's landscape.

(Continued on next page)

Rocheleau: How has your dual experience as a young Cuban expatriate, then American, informed your work? **Curbelo:** Coming to a new country, learning a new language and figuring out how to navigate in a new world are definitely the kinds of things that shape you as a person – and I imagine, as a poet as well. I was separated from the only world I knew at age 11, and it was all very swift and final. They say you can't go home again, and that is meant as a kind of metaphor. But for me it was very literal. I really couldn't go home again, at least not for a very long time. So, in a sense, I was separated from my childhood. Even my memories seemed to be separate from my new life, enclosed in glass, things I could still see but never touch again. There is a clarity in that kind of remembering that invites powerful language to come to the surface. Many of my early poems were about that restricted and somewhat uncomfortable way of looking back. Another thing that comes to mind about this: English was my second language, and I didn't speak a word of it until I was almost 12. I wrote some poems in Spanish early on. Compared to the English language, Spanish is so fluid. Everything flows and spills over and trails off. It's almost too easy to be lyrical, to get carried along by the music. As I read more and more books in English, particularly poetry books, I learned to love the harder edges and sharp turns of the English language. I think that was an important influence. I stopped writing poems in Spanish altogether at some point in my late teens.

Rocheleau: Many find a dreamlike quality, albeit often combined with religious symbolism and the politics of freedom, to exist in the ethos of Latin-American poets, those like Neruda, Borges, Vallejo, and in earlier centuries, Marti and Sor Juana de la Cruz. Do you think, as we do, that this spiritual DNA has carried on to contemporary poets such as yourself, Virgil Suarez, and Alberto Rios? **Curbelo:** It's a beautiful and intriguing concept, the idea that whole generations of poets can carry and distill the essence of their profoundly brilliant predecessors. At the same time, it feels terribly presumptuous to think so. I'm going to pass on this question.

Rocheleau: Of those poets or other masters, can you comment on your own great personal influences? **Curbelo:** This is a question that comes up a lot. And I tend to always answer it the same way. I think the most important influences are the early ones, the first poets you read when you don't know what poetry even is yet, when you discover words have a life of their own. | Federico Garcia Lorca and Antonio Machado were two of my father's favorite poets. He had memorized many of their poems and would recite them to me as his own version of bedtime stories when I was a child. Or he would recite them to no one in particular as he stood shaving at the bathroom sink. But I was in the next room, and I could hear: Verde que te quiero verde. I would wander in, and he would ramp things up for my benefit, just to make me laugh. To this day, Lorca is still my number one. I'm not sure anyone has ever squeezed such beauty and mystery from the language – any language. | I also remember sitting in a Freshman Lit class during my first semester of college and listening to a young teacher read "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" out loud to the class. I had heard of T.S. Eliot, had even scanned some of his poems in anthologies, but nothing really resonated with me. Then I heard the poem out loud. It was a spectacular moment. I remember closing the textbook afterwards. I couldn't tell you the name of the book, Great Literature of the Western World or some such thing, but I remember the orange letters of the title seemed to be vibrating a little, and I could see the hair on my arms was standing up. There have been literally hundreds of moments like that in my life since then, a physical sensation brought on by a great poem, or a great line even. But that was the first time, or at least the first I can remember. | So I learned to love Eliot and carried his small books in my purse. I also remember being quite

(Continued on next page)

enthralled by Sylvia Plath around the same time. Then shortly after that, I discovered contemporary poets in the literary magazines – *Tendril*, *Antaeus*, the *Indiana Review*, the *Iowa Review*. That’s when I started reading the generation of poets that were making their mark at that moment, writers like Mark Strand, W.S. Merwin, Carolyn Forché, Marvin Bell, Adrienne Rich, Jack Gilbert, Susan Stewart, and a little bit later, Frank Stanford and C.D. Wright also became important to me. These were the living poets, not the textbook poets – not yet anyway – and they were opening doors for the rest of us.

Rocheleau: What do you think were the stepping stones of change and growth on which you treaded to or between your three collections, released in 1991, 1997, and 2015, respectively?

Curbelo: I would say life intervened in all the ways it tends to do. Things changed, and I changed with them. I did a little traveling in Europe and met some fascinating people along the way. I landed a job as an editor and got to correspond with and even get to know a few of my heroes. And I read a lot of wonderful work along the way that helped shape my world view and my own work. | My husband Tom and I raised a child. My father died. Then 12 years later, my mother, in 2004. That was the year I began writing *Falling Landscape*, my most recent book. The first poem I wrote after a short mourning period is called “Hurricane Watch.” 2004 was also the year when four major hurricanes threatened the Tampa Bay area in a matter of a few weeks. My life was in shambles, and it seemed the weather and the world around me were in terrible chaos too. My work had been changing slowly, but at that point the poems became less narrative, less autobiographical, more internalized.

Rocheleau: Many of your poems, such as “Tonight I Can Almost Hear the Singing,” seem not only aphoristic on the whole, but also constructed of separate small aphorisms than can themselves stand alone as statements of depth. Do you feel that such poems might be constructed as a mosaic of such smaller poetic inlays?

Curbelo: I’m always drawn to the integrity of the line, its singular beauty. I can spend an inordinate amount of time on just one line. It’s interesting that you bring this up because a lot of the time my writing process is very much about creating individual lines until I have several pages of them. They may be loosely connected or not. Then I go through them and start moving them around, arranging them in some way that makes sense, and throwing out others that maybe don’t seem to belong. So it’s very much like building a mosaic, or putting together a jigsaw puzzle of sorts. The final step for me is heavy editing, trying to remove all the lines I think may be unnecessary. I’m a big believer in creating a lot of space within the poem for the reader to enter and fill in. | One of my favorite poetry exercises involves writing tons and tons of haiku – very loose ones, not the 5-7-5 syllable ones, but just haiku-like things, one, two or three-line mini-poems. You walk around for a week or so making all sorts of haiku. You carry a notebook with you and continuously jot down these tiny poems. You keep doing that until you have a whole slew of them – the more the merrier. Then you look at them all together and try to fit them into one big poem. Because you’ve written them within a short period of time, it’s likely there will be something that connects many of these lines together. It’s a beautiful exercise, and it really immerses you in the creative process, so that you’re at the grocery store or standing in line at Starbucks and the whole time you’re writing these little poems in your head. I’ve had great success with it. | For a while I also became enamored of the list poem. It’s the same idea, but simpler, much more pared down. The lists can be metaphors, or they can just be single words that are evocative on their own, like harbor, or lantern, or face. You walk around all day making these poetic lists in your head of everything you see. It can get a little OCD, and it’s hard to shake it off.

(Continued on next page)

At some point you have to read a whole bunch of Shakespearian sonnets or something to help clear all the lists out of your head.

Rocheleau: When you teach poets, what major things are most important for you to get across?

Curbelo: I seem to be that rare exception in the literary world – I don't teach. I've been a guest lecturer and done short, one-day workshops, but even that has been minimal. I also never studied poetry at the university. I'm pretty much self-taught when it comes to poetry, so maybe my lack of interest with teaching comes from that.

Rocheleau: You have a strong relationship with Anhinga Press in Florida. Any advice for poets seeking to publish in journals or publish their collections here or elsewhere? **Curbelo:** It's wonderful to find a press that will nurture your career, and put out the new work and keep the old books in print. That's becoming quite rare, I think, so I've been fortunate. My first recommendation to anyone trying to publish is to familiarize yourself with every place you are thinking of submitting to. Pick up a couple of back issues of the magazines, or get an online subscription and read some issues cover to cover. This is particularly important if you're trying to get a book published. Before you send in your manuscript, buy a couple of the press' books and read them carefully. It's the best advice, and it serves a dual purpose. You get to know a little about the kind of poems the editors tend to favor, which may help you determine if your work is right for them. And by purchasing the books or magazines or online access, you help support the journals or presses and the poets they publish. Everybody wins.

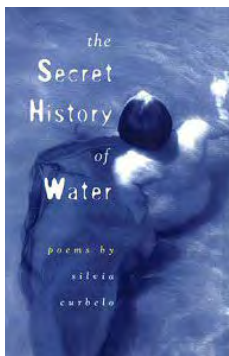
Rocheleau: In 2019 you received your second Hillsborough Arts Council grant, to go with various national and international prizes, grants, and fellowships. On the local side, your identification with Tampa is obvious. What is the state of poetry in West Florida? **Curbelo:** I can't speak for all of West Florida, but we've been very fortunate to have had a great roster of incredible poets and writers in the Tampa Bay area, starting with Peter Meinke, our current Florida Poet Laureate. Many people consider Peter the grandfather of poetry around here, someone whose kindness and generosity towards young writers know no bounds. I don't want to name any more names because it would be a very long list, and invariably, I would forget to mention someone. And this would cause much hand-wringing and mea culpas on my part, something I try to avoid. | We're lucky that the University of Tampa and USF now have excellent writing programs that attract some wonderful up-and-coming writers, so the new generation of poets is being shaped right in our own backyard, and a number of them may eventually lay down roots here. UT also brought the AWP (Associated Writing Programs) Conference to Tampa in 2018. It's the largest literary conference around – 12,000 people or more attend on any given year – so that was huge. | There have always been interesting journals coming out of our area as well, from the well-known *Tampa Review* to a small, obscure indie magazine called *white mule from the 80s*, to Richard Matthew's beautiful letterpress broadsides, this area has had its share of great publications. I've been involved with Gianna Russo's YellowJacket Press, which for a long time was the only press in the state publishing chapbooks by Florida poets. (Anhinga Press has recently started the Rick Campbell Chapbook series.) Greg Byrd and I actually edited their anthology, [*Glass Bottom Sky: 10 Years of YellowJacket Press*](#) about five years ago. | We also have an amazing reading series at the Dalí Museum, run by St. Pete's own Poet Laureate, Helen Wallace, and all kinds of weekly and monthly open mikes throughout the area. | I would love to see more interconnection between the different areas in West Florida and the rest of the state, more exchange, more writers coming in from other areas of Florida, and more invitations for our writers to read and lecture throughout the state.

(Continued on next page)

Rocheleau: You are among FSPA's current nominees for State Poet Laureate. While all candidates have their own perspectives, what do you think the new Laureate, when selected, should be looking to do with the weight of that position? **Curbelo:** I am honored for the nomination, particularly because there are so many Florida poets that are so deserving and would do an amazing job. Although I would like to add that our present Poet Laureate leaves an incredible legacy and enormous shoes to fill. For all practical purposes, the Poet Laureate becomes the face of poetry in the state of Florida, and that's a sobering concept and a huge responsibility. | I think most people would agree the PL's most obvious role is to bring poetry into unexpected places, to people that may not be familiar with it. To young people, of course, but also to adults who maybe haven't read a poem since their Lit 101 class. Even though there is more poetry being published today than ever before, poetry is still rather elitist and isolated, and not a part of people's daily lives. There was a time when newspapers and mainstream magazines were publishing poems, but that hasn't been the case for many decades. So why not work towards bringing some of that back? Why not have a Poet Laureate get up and read a poem in a place you would never expect it? Say, a baseball game, a sales meeting, a political rally? | Beyond that, I think the PL's second most important job is to continue to bring Florida writers together. I'd love to see more conferences like FSPA's and the FLAC (Florida Literary Arts Coalition) Other Words conference, and the old Sun Coast Writers Conference at USF St. Petersburg, which USF has talked about starting up again. | It would be wonderful to bring about a partially state-sponsored literary conference, a mini-AWP for writers in Florida that gets all the different arts councils involved. Is that doable? Who knows? A Poet Laureate could be instrumental in making something like that happen.

Rocheleau: You will be installed as a new FSPA Chancellor at the organization's 2020 Spring Convention (April 18 in Zephyrhills), and you have been given a free hand as what you may teach or read as we honor you during that event. Any hints on what we may expect? **Curbelo:** Yes, and I thank FSPA for the honor! At this point I haven't really decided what I'm going to do yet. More than likely, I'll be keeping things simple. I will probably have a few new poems to share, and a few old favorites, so I'll read those and discuss how they came about. Maybe I'll talk a bit about how I approach the writing of a poem, my own particular rituals and prompts, and the way a poem might take shape on the page. I'm not quite sure yet. It's still a work-in-progress.

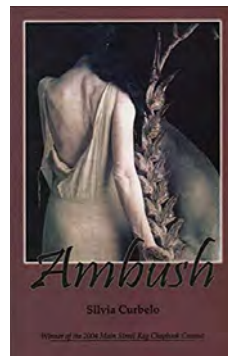
BOOKS BY SILVIA CURBELO



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POEMS BY
SILVIA
CURBELO

Before the Long Silence

Some words open dark wings
inside us. They carry us off
in the telling, the air going on
beyond language, beyond breath.

It's the small moments
that change everything.
On the last night my father
woke from a long, restless sleep
and pointed to a corner
of the room. A bird, he said.

—from *Falling Landscape* (Anhinga Press)

Learning to Play Coltrane

She thought it was green, not
the emerald green of Indian summer
but a green like a darkening plain,
or the shadow rivers cast.
She thought it was light, a glint
or a warning, the shine
at the papery edge
of storm clouds. The way
a voice rising and falling becomes
a premonition, a dampness
at the back of her neck. Or maybe
it was more of an imprint,
a memory of sound, some afternoon
after the circus has left town
and all that remains is a field
strewn with garbage, a music
of pasted stars and ruin.
And she thought of a color
like that, mud-green, the green
of a small sadness, shapeless
as the wind itself. And for a moment
she owned everything inside it,
the light, the field, the wind.

—for Adrian

POEMS BY
SILVIA
CURBELO

Tourism in the Late 20th Century

Blue boat of morning and already
the window is besieged
by sky. Grace takes no prisoners
in a town like this. Think of the girl
sipping white burgundy
in the local café, her straw hat
with its pale flower, indigenous
and small as the white roll
she's buttering one philosophical
corner at a time. Even the rain
that falls some afternoons here
is more conceptual, more a tribute
to rain than actual rain falling
on the tulips, a rumor
the wind carries all the way
down the beach.
And would you ask the sea
to explain itself? wrote Kerouac once
in a book about a woman
that was already a metaphor,
rose fading in its glass bowl.
He always knew the world is sentimental,
waving its lacy rags over the face
of the familiar, an architecture
of piano notes and hope.
And what about the girl,
her hat gone, her bread
finished, holding an armful
of tulips in the rain?
She knows each road leads

to other roads, to small towns
with solid names like Crestview
and Niceville, where even dust has
a genealogy and an address,
as if there's more forever there.
The tulips long to be metaphysical,
closed-mouthed, more faithful
than the rose. Let the windows
take over. Lean out the small
square of the day, past
the rain, past the idea
of rain, to where the sky
is snapshot blue, the sea
blue by association.

—from *The Secret History of Water* (Anhinga Press)

POEMS BY
SILVIA
CURBELO

The Lake Has Swallowed the Whole Sky

Some dreams are like glass
or a light beneath the surface of the water.

A girl weeps in a garden.
A woman turns her head and that is all.

We wake up a hundred times and
don't know where we are. Asleep

at the wheel. Saved by
the luck of angels.

Everyone touching his lips
to something larger, the watermark

of some great sorrow. Everyone
giving himself away. The way

the rose gives up its stem and
floats completely, without history.

In the end every road leads
to water. What is left of a garden

is the dream, an alphabet of longing.
The shadow of the girl. Perfume.

—from *The Secret History of Water*

POEMS BY
SILVIA
CURBELO

Painting Gala

Gala in childhood. In rain.
In white garments. On a train
with a book and a suitcase.
Gala with swans, untouched
by sadness, feathers
tumbling from her mouth.
Without shoes. With a glass
of warm milk, sitting
crosslegged in the garden chair.

Gala in a taxi. In sleep.
In love with silence, her good
friend, her confidante,
and behind her left shoulder
the road. A madonna,
a bird, a many-
ringed thing like a tree
trunk. Windblown.

Sullen as a starfish.
Marooned, a beached
thing, moonlight spreading
the great satin sheet of her dreams.
Her pillow licked by flames.
The nightgown burning. Torn loose.
Rising like smoke, like Gala

in her suit of lights. So many
stars in her arms, so many
dead leaves. Gala with stormclouds.
In freefall. With pearls in her lap
and blood money in her fist,
a sudden loneliness

in the folds of her green dress.
So many untold distances
unfolding from her
whispering fingers. Awash
in sunlight. Lounging poolside
with a paper umbrella in her drink.
Swallowing every wish.

—from *Falling Landscape* (Anhinga Press)

POEMS BY
SILVIA
CURBELO

Shine

The day seemed strangely
out of context, black and white
as our hearts. We hated the smell
of sunlight in the alleys, the ruined
voices on TV. We couldn't read
between the lines. We craved
meaning and sleep, a hole
swallowing a hole.
Elsewhere there were trees,
there were sidewalks
and food. We had music and
cigarettes and cars, the ownership
of light and noise, loneliness, air.
As if a boy had smashed open
all the windows. As if
the ashen sky meant rain
and nothing more. At night
we saw dogs rooting in the shadows,
and men walking in the cold,
their hands drifting out of warm
pockets reaching for what? Solace?
A match? Imagine something
shines in the dark and something
moves towards that small
brightness. Haven't you
ever touched someone
in just that way?

—from *Falling Landscape* (Anhinga Press)



Mary Rogers-Grantham,
FSPA Contest Chair

**Please see the
contest page on
the FSPA website
for rules and
restrictions.**

[Here is a link](#)

2020 FSPA Contests List

1 FSPA FREE VERSE AWARD

Subject: Any.
Form: Free Verse. 1 page limit.
1st PL \$100. 2nd PL \$75. 3rd PL \$50. 3 HM.
Entry fee \$3 per poem for FSPA members,
\$4 for non-members. Limit 2 poems.
Sponsored by FSPA, Inc.

2 FSPA FORMAL VERSE AWARD

Subject: Any.
Form: Formal Verse. 1 page limit.
(Include form name at top of page.)
1st PL \$100. 2nd PL \$75. 3rd PL \$50. 3 HM
Entry fee \$3 per poem for FSPA members,
\$4 for non-members. Limit 2 poems.
Sponsored by FSPA, Inc.

3 LISTENING AWARD

Subject: Listening.
Form: Any. 40 Line Limit.
1st PL \$50. 2nd PL \$35. 3rd PL \$15. 3HM
Sponsored by Linda Eve Diamond

4 TOMOKA POETS AWARD

Subject: At the Beach.
Form: Any. 40 Line Limit.
1st PL \$25. 2nd PL \$15. 3rd PL \$10. 3HM
Sponsored by Tomoka Poets

#5 WILLARD B. FOSTER MEMORIAL AWARD

Subject: Threat to the Environment.
Form: Any. 40 Line Limit.
1st PL \$25. 2nd PL \$15. 3rd PL \$10. 3HM
Sponsored by John F. Foster

6 ORLANDO AREA POETS AWARD

Subject: Theme Parks and Attractions.
Form: Any. 40 Line Limit.
1st PL \$25. 2nd PL \$15. 3rd PL \$10. 3HM
Sponsored by Orlando Area Poets

#7 JUNE OWENS MEMORIAL AWARD

Subject: "Secret Languages"
Form: Any. 40 Line Limit.
Note: This is the title of one of June's poems.
Poets may interpret it as they wish.
1st PL \$25. 2nd PL \$15. 3rd PL \$10. 3HM
Sponsored by New River Poets

8 THE POET'S VISION AWARD

Subject: Any.
Form: Any. 40 Line Limit.
1st PL \$25. 2nd PL \$15. 3rd PL \$10. 3HM
Sponsored by Janet Watson

#9 NEW RIVER POETS AWARD

(In Honor of our Deceased Members)
Subject: Any.
Form: Any. 40 Line Limit.
1st PL \$25. 2nd PL \$15. 3rd PL \$10. 3HM
Sponsored by New River Poets

#10 VILLANELLE AWARD

Subject: Any.
Form: Villanelle.
1st PL \$25. 2nd PL \$15. 3rd PL \$10. 3HM
Sponsored by Joyce Shiver

#11 HUMOR AWARD

Subject: Humor.
Form: Rhymed & Metered. 40 Line Limit.
1st PL \$25. 2nd PL \$15. 3rd PL \$10. 3HM
Sponsored by Sunshine Poets

#12 THE LIVE POETS SOCIETY AWARD

Subject: The Dark Side.
Form: Any. 40 Line Limit.
1st PL \$25. 2nd PL \$15. 3rd PL \$10. 3HM
Sponsored by The Live Poets Society
of Daytona Beach

#13 MIAMI POETS AWARD

Subject: Trees.
Form: Any. 50 Line Limit.
1st PL \$25. 2nd PL \$15. 3rd PL \$10. 3HM
Sponsored by Miami Poets

#14 KATE KENNEDY MEMORIAL AWARD

Subject: Any.
Form: Any. 40 Line Limit.
1st PL \$25. 2nd PL \$15. 3rd PL \$10. 3HM
Sponsored by B. J. Alligood

#15 WEINBAUM/GLIDDEN AWARD

Subject: Issues and concerns faced by LGBTQ
Community and those who love them.
Form: Any. 50 Line Limit.
1st PL \$25. 2nd PL \$15. 3rd PL \$10. 3HM
Sponsored by Robyn Weinbaum

#16 HENRIETTA & MARK KROAH FOUNDERS AWARD

(Free to FSPA Members)
Subject: Wedding.
Form: Any. 40 Line Limit.
1st PL \$25. 2nd PL \$15. 3rd PL \$10. 3HM
Sponsored by FSPA, Inc.

#17 PAST PRESIDENTS AWARD

Subject: Answers.
Form: Any. 40 Line Limit.
1st PL \$25. 2nd PL \$15. 3rd PL \$10. 3HM
Sponsored by Past Presidents of FSPA

#18 FRANK YANNI AWARD

Subject: Books.
Form: Any. 40 Line Limit.
1st PL \$25. 2nd PL \$15. 3rd PL \$10. 3HM
Sponsored by Frank Yanni

#19 JANET BINKLEY ERWIN MEMORIAL AWARD

Subject: Any.
Form: Any. 40 Line Limit.
1st PL \$25. 2nd PL \$15. 3rd PL \$10. 3HM
Sponsored by Poetry for the Love of It (PLOI)

Register today!

FSPA 2020 Spring Fling

The New River Poets chapter of Florida State Poets Association invites you to FSPA's first Spring Fling to be scheduled for one full day of learning and inspiration on April 18, 2020. The event will be held in a historic venue that will charm you and coax your poetic muse to come out of hiding.

Where?

The Old Richland Schoolhouse
8637 Richland School Road
Zephyrhills, FL 33540

Since the venue is a private home, tables and chairs to accommodate those attending the Spring Fling will be rented, and planners will need numbers well in advance of the event.

We are asking that you register no later than April 4, 2020.

REGISTRATION FORM

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Chapter: _____

or Member-at-Large _____ Non-Member _____

FEES

Member Registration: \$35.00.....

Non-Members: \$45.00

(registration includes one-year membership in FSPA).....

Hearty Country-style Buffet Lunch, catered and served

by Sonny's: \$16.00.....

(pork, chicken, mac & cheese, 2 vegetable sides, assorted breads, and beverages). Those with further dietary restrictions are welcome to bring their own brown-bag lunches.

Total.....

You have **two options to pay** for your registration:

1. Check or money order—send registration form and check or money order made payable to FSPA to:

FSPA

c/o Robyn Weinbaum, FSPA Treasurer
2629 Whalebone Bay Drive
Kissimmee, FL 34741

2. PayPal—go to <https://www.paypal.com/us/signin>

We are listed as FSPATreasurer@AOL.com. Please forward the e-mail receipt to FSPATreasurer@aol.com with registration form attached or with the registration information in the body of the e-mail.

FSPA Back to School!



Hosted by
New River Poets

April 18, 2020
at
The Old Richland
Schoolhouse,
8637 Richland School Road,
Zephyrhills, Florida

Link to
[Registration Form](#)

AGENDA

8:30-9:30am	Registration/social...set up book sales
9:30-10:00	Board Meeting/Open Mic
10:00-10:45	Welcome & Ice Breaker – Janet Watson
10:45-11:30	General Meeting/Installation of Silvia Curbelo as FSPA chancellor
11:30-12:15pm	Silvia Curbelo – Her Poetry
BREAK	
12:30-1:30	Buffet Lunch and Open Mic
BREAK	
1:45-2:45	John Davis, Jr. – Springing Forward, Creating a Poetry Habit
2:45-3:30	JC Kato – Stories in Verse
BREAK	
3:45-4:30	Lola Haskins -- The Romantic Poet, John Clare
4:30-5:15	Book-browsing and Meet the Author Book- signing with Wine and Cheese Reception
5:15 -6:15	Entertainment by New River Poets Al Rocheleau – The Poetry of Country Music

Presenters

FSPA 2020
Spring
Fling



Silvia Curbelo will be installed as an FSPA chancellor at the Spring Fling. After her installation she will share some of her poetry and talk about her own approach to writing. Learn more about Silvia in the focused feature included in this issue of *Of Poets & Poetry*.



John Davis, Jr. is the author of *Hard Inheritance* (Five Oaks Press, 2016), *Middle Class American Proverb* (Negative Capability Press, 2014), and two other collections of poetry. His work has been featured in literary journals internationally with notable appearances in *Nashville Review*, *The Common* online, *The American Journal of Poetry*, and other reputable venues. He holds an MFA from the University of Tampa and serves as associate dean for Keiser University of Clearwater. Learn more at <http://www.poetjohndavisjr.com>.



JC Kato is a longtime active member of New River Poets, FSPA, and the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators (SCBWI). She has written and published the children's series, *Summer In a Swing*, a small collection of storybook CDs in verse, as well as *Whale Boys*, a non-fiction novel in verse, about the 1841 whaling adventures of Herman Melville and John Manjiro. She is a recipient of the notable SCBWI Karen Cushman Award, co-editor of the FSPA anthology – *Cadence*, and enjoys her private "Dog Yoga" practice with her grand-dogs in Lutz, Florida.



Lola Haskins, twice-nominated for the position of Florida's Poet Laureate, was installed as an FSPA chancellor in 2016 and has been an avid supporter of our organization. Her thirteenth collection of poems is titled *Asylum* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2019). Its muse and guide, the romantic poet John Clare, is also the inspiration for her talk at the Spring Fling. The collection previous to that was *How Small, Confronting Morning* (Jacar, 2016), set in the woods and waters of inland Florida. Her prose includes an illustrated book of fables about women, a guide to the poetic life, and a book of true stories from Florida cemeteries. Visit her anytime at www.lolahaskins.com.



Al Rocheleau, FSPA president and founder of the Twelve Chairs Advanced Poetry Course, is an award-winning poet who has published over 200 poems and translations and authored *On Writing Poetry* (2009) and *Falling River: Collected Poems 1976-2016* (2017). He is also a musicologist with a vast collection of recordings. Al has written an opera libretto, and a suite of his poems was orchestrated for wind quintet. As a songwriter, guitarist and vocalist with a focus on folk, blues, and country music, Al promotes songwriting as a literary form. He has spoken at Emerson College and the University of Massachusetts and has performed and lectured on the work of Nobel Laureate Bob Dylan for FSPA and at the University of Florida.

More info

FSPA 2020 Spring Fling

SOME MORE TO KNOW ABOUT THE SPRING FLING:

We want to make this a convenient and exciting opportunity for poets to gather.

Please come back to school with us!

The Old Richland Schoolhouse is somewhat “off the beaten track” but GPS will direct you to this year’s Spring Fling location, and we will have signs posted as you get close.



The schoolhouse is not a hotel, and we realize that some attendees may want to spend Friday night or Saturday night (or both) at nearby accommodations.

We believe that having the opportunity to choose a hotel in a reasonable price-range is an advantage, so we have provided the names of a few places in Zephyrhills and the per night prices quoted to us. All are centrally located on Gall Blvd. in Zephyrhills.

Microtel Inn and Suites

wyndhamhotels.com, 813-815-3007 – from \$56

Quality Inn

choicehotels.com, 813-762-2000 – from \$67

Magnuson Hotel

magnusonhotels.com, 813-782-5527 – from \$65

FOR POETS WITH BOOKS TO SELL:

We will follow the tried-and-true method FSPA has been using for the past few years on our book tables. On a 3×5 index card inserted **in each copy** of your book, include information in the following format:

AUTHOR’S NAME

of the copy & number of total
copies that you brought to sell
(example: #1 of 4, #2 of 6, etc.)

BOOK TITLE

PRICE OF BOOK

Cards are collected when books are bought, and the poet will be reimbursed for any sales. Remember that space may be limited and there are usually many books to browse, so we recommend no more than a half-dozen copies of each book.

NATIONAL SPOKEN AND WRITTEN WORD POETRY CONTEST



NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE POETRY SOCIETIES

CASH PRIZES ■ 1st PLACE \$1,000
2ND PLACE \$500 ■ 3RD PLACE \$250

WINNERS WILL BE PUBLISHED NATIONALLY AND INVITED TO PERFORM
AT THE NFSPS ANNUAL CONVENTION, JUNE, 2020 IN KANSAS CITY, MO

**SUBMISSIONS ACCEPTED
JANUARY 1 TO MARCH 15, 2020**

- **SUBMIT YOUR ORIGINAL POEMS
IN BOTH TEXT AND AUDIO**
- **GUIDELINES AT WWW.NFSPS.COM
FOLLOW LINK TO ENTER**

Anne Bjorklof-Powers



The Vision

The old man reflected back many moons ago in his mind, to a time when the people of his village were content.

He knew this was his time to go upon the mountain, to seek the vision of the Great Spirit who would reveal to him as himself.

And help him to be guided in his future lives.

He went to the top of the mountain and placed his sun drenched body down.

Amongst the cactus and the weeds, after looking down at the canyons below and also peering into the adjacent valleys he realized that the Great Spirit was truly with him.

~ Anne Bjorklof-Powers

A native Floridian, originally from Tampa, Anne Bjorklof-Powers started writing poetry in high school. She went on to study music education in college, and also studied diamonds with the Gemological Institute of America.

Anne describes the main subject matter of her writing as “the environment and Native American Spirituality,” but she quickly adds “among other things.”

“I started going to coffee houses and open mics in the 1990’s (attending and participating in slams) performing my poetry, as well as singing.”

In September of 1992, she was one of the first poets to read her poetry on the air on the “Monday Morning Live” show on local Tampa radio station WMNF.

Anne is an At Large member of FSPA, residing in Eustis, Florida.

She continually performs at open mics for musicians and poets throughout Florida.

“I’m always learning how to improve my craft.”

Currently, Anne is working on a Native American children’s poetry book.

I'm Just Human

I'm human in the land of the free and the brave,
making love to all the trees.

I just want to bring you peace and happiness

Sometimes I screw up in life,
cause I'm just human and that's alright.

I take my life seriously if you please.

Forgive me if sometimes I fall to my knees,
giving thanks to the man up above,
he taught me how to love

Spreading a little wisdom on the earth, healing some
people from pain and sorrow.

I'm thrashing the earth hard, like a deer in the forest.

Running from conflict I head to the light.

Listening to the trees hearing their song.

Bright energy flowing to the earth, from Creator
his many songs, flow through the trees.
Ebbing like a tide, over and over, they speak
to our souls, all of our souls, putting his loving arms
around us, protecting us from harm.

So forgive me please when I sometimes fall.
I make mistakes don't we all, cause I'm, just
human flesh and blood.

~ Anne Bjorklof-Powers

Universal Department Store

Down on Broadway sat the Universal Department Store,
Looming big as life on the corner of Broadway and 49th
Visible from all sides of these streets.

People for miles around would come to shop here,
It was only one of two places to shop in those days.
Charlotte got her first dresses from their store, Grandpa
got his overalls from that store in 19 and 43 to wear
to tend to his turnip patch.

And Hilda got a new dress to start her new job.

And after a day of shopping at the store
we would all meet next door, at the soda fountain
for a nice Coca-Cola.

I remember those days very well...

not so long ago.

And as I watch from across the street the last brick fall,
from the clutches of the bulldozer, a voice calls to me
and says—

Save these old buildings for our children's children.

~ Anne Bjorklof-Powers

Anne became interested in learning about Native Americans in grade school and when her family traveled to Cherokee, North Carolina, to the Cherokee Reservation to see the production of "Unto These Hills." Her interest grew, and in her thirties she traveled to the Everglades to spend time with the Seminole tribe and attend the local pow-wows in Florida. Over the years, Anne has continued that interest through her research, writing and many return visits to her beloved southwest.

The Winter Season Dancer

The snow is thick upon the ground,
His breath shone in the air,
He was ready to dance and express,
what was in his heart.
He felt the power of the winter
blizzard and the softness
of the fallen snow beneath his feet.
His feet felt the rhythm of his heart.
And his head was lost in the clouds.

~ Anne Bjorklof-Powers

FSPA CHAPTER NEWS & UPDATES

CHAPTER PRESIDENTS

Big Bend Poets & Writers

Gordon Magill
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Live Poets Society of Daytona Beach

Robert Blenheim
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Steffani Fletcher
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Osceola Poetry Society

Mackenzie Riley

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New River Poets

Janet Watson
JMPWAT@aol.com



Tere Starr

When we meet:

The Miami Poets meet the first Wednesday each month from 1 to 3 pm during the Miami Poets Soirée at the Pinecrest Library, 5835 SW 111th Street, Pinecrest, FL

Bring poems to read, yours or those by favorite poets. We often get philosophical, discuss what poetry means, now and through the ages. And best of all, we share how poetry enhances our lives. Anything goes so long as poetry is in the equation. Each soirée is an act of creation.

Miami Poets

Miami Poets celebrated the eleventh anniversary of the Miami Poets Soirée in February. **Tere Starr** moderates the monthly gatherings each first Wednesday from 1 to 3 pm at the Pinecrest Branch Library. On second Mondays we meet from 1 to 3 pm with Group 10, the critique group facilitated by **Steven Liebowitz**. We continue to spread our love of the written word as we share poetry throughout Miami and beyond.

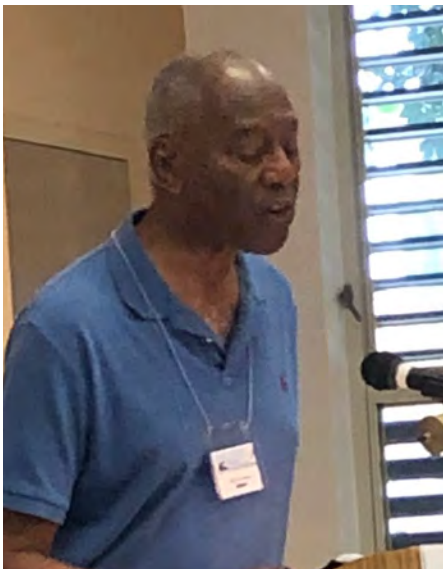
Achievements: **Zorina Frey** welcomes submissions to her online magazine, *45 Magazine Women's Literary Journal* at 45magazineiwa.com and invites you to participate in her online publishing course on Udemy, "How to Become an Independent Publisher." **Pat Bonner Milone, Rosa Douglass** and **Tere Starr** shared their poetry during Books & Books at Suniland's Five Minute Pieces.

Tere's poem, "To Touch," **Jo Christiane Ledakis'** poems, "The Riddle of Suffering" and "Acacia Blossoms Tumble" and **Connie Goodman-Milone's** poem, "Jazz Cat," were published in *Author's Voice*. Connie's poems, "Jazz Cat" and "Soft Cat" were awarded first place prizes for poetry and haiku in the South Florida Writers Association's monthly writing contests. **Marina Stevens'** poem, "Powers of a Cat," received a second place award.

Connie is a judge for the 32nd annual Junior Orange Bowl Creative Writing Contest and for the 2020 Miami Veterans Creative Arts Festival. Her letter to the editor, "Giving Aid," was published in the *Miami Herald*.

Patsy Asuncion was selected to be a featured poet in the first Women at Red Door 104 reading in Farmville, Virginia. She continues to host open mics on fourth Wednesdays at The Bridge Progressive Arts Initiative in Charlottesville, VA. Poetry is our passion.

~ Tere Starr, President



Mervyn Solomon



Zorina Frey



Connie Goodman-Milone



Robert E. Blenheim

When we meet:

The Live Poets Society of Daytona Beach holds its workshop meetings on the third Wednesday of each month at the Daytona Beach Regional Library at City Island. Meetings start at 4:00 pm and end at 6:30 pm and the group welcomes all poets, and anybody interested in poetry, to attend.

The Live Poets Society of Daytona Beach

Lately, the chapter's monthly challenges included writing Dorsimbras and In Memoriam stanzas. Themes for other challenges were "A New Beginning," "Something I am Thankful For," and "Secret Languages." At the meetings, analyzed were **Sarah Howe's** poem, "Tame," and **Mary Jean Chan's** "The Window," and we studied several poems by playwright **Harold Pinter**.

As to members' activities: **Vicki Iorio** has published a selection of her poems on the blogsite: underthebleachersmag.blogspot.com; **Stan Drescher** is working on various projects including *Tom the Magician* and *Secret of the Lake*; **John McKernan** has been published in various places recently including *The Whirlwind Review*, *Poetry Quarterly* and *American Journal of Poetry*; John's wife **Llewellyn McKernan** has also been published in *Appalachian Heritage* and *Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel*. Four members of the Live Poets read at Tomoka Poets' open mic at the Copperline Coffee and Café. And President **Bob Blenheim** has completed his judging for poetry categories of both Arizona and Illinois State chapters of NFSPS.

All poets are welcome to attend meetings of The Live Poets Society of Daytona Beach and everyone should find it to be one of the most creative and entertaining poetry groups in the State of Florida.

~ Robert E. Blenheim, President



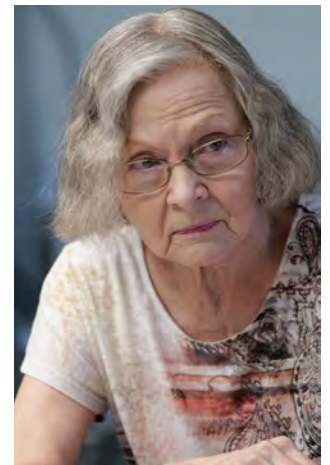
Stan Drescher



Bruce Woodworth



Justine Mathis



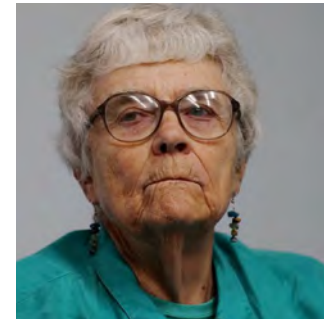
Llewellyn McKernan



John McKernan



Cherelyn Bush



Ellen Nielsen



Diane Neff

When we meet:

The Orlando Area Poets meet the third Thursday each month from 6:30 to 8:30 pm at the Maitland Public Library, 501 South Maitland Ave, Maitland, FL 32751.

Orlando Area Poets

The Orlando Area Poets announced the winners of our in-house contest at our January meeting. The theme was “Challenges,” our judge was **BJ Alligood**, and the winners were: **Lynn Schiffhorst**, first place, for her poem “Canon Rawnsley Persuades Beatrix Potter to Join His Movement to Protect the English Countryside,” **Mark Andrew James Terry**, second place, for “Enduring Freedom,” and **Holly Mandelkern**, third place, for “The Blessing of Cursive.”

The Maitland Public Library hosted the quarterly Poetry Coffeehouse on January 31, where many of our poets read their poetry and prose on the theme of “Double Vision,” followed by an open mic on any theme. The library announced the theme for the current quarter will be “Forgotten.” The next Coffeehouse will be on April 24, and because this will be National Poetry Month, it is also the theme for the annual contest. Entries are due between March 1 and April 1, with the winners announced at the Coffeehouse. See the website for more information: Maitlandpl.org. Workshops writing to the theme are held at the Maitland Library, hosted by Elaine Person. Check the same website for exact dates.

Peter Gordon presented a workshop, “Finding Your Poetry Audience,” at the Orlando Public Library Writers Conference in January.

~ Diane Neff, President



BJ Alligood



Holly Mandelkern



Mark Andrew James Terry



Janet Watson

When we meet:

The New River Poets meet the third Saturday each month from 1 to 4 pm at The Old Schoolhouse at 8637 Richland School Rd., Zephyrhills, FL 33540

New River Poets

New River Poets began a new year in poetry at our January meeting, celebrating with our annual potluck lunch. After a business meeting where we reviewed all our plans for the **FSPA Spring Fling on April 18th**, we entertained each other with parodies of famous songs and poems. Most were hilarious; all were great examples of the talent in our group.

March, 2020, marks the 20th anniversary of New River Poets as a chapter of FSPA, and we plan on celebrating that marker in a special way at the Fling. Several of our charter members have passed away, but we remember them in the FSPA contest categories that we have sponsored in their honor, and for the love of the poetry which they've passed on to us. We will always be thankful for the encouragement and friendship of those gifted New River "pioneers"--**June Owens, Harrison Owens, Patti Hannaway, Randy Cadman, Audrey Chenkin, Ruby Coe, Clark Roman, and Verna Thornton.**

Every year since our millenium-year beginning, individual members of New River have exhibited their devotion to poetry beyond our chapter. **Stephanie Andrews** continues to moderate her creative writing group at Shepherd Senior Center. **Cheryl Van Beek** will have a poem and short story published in the 2020 issue of *Odet*, a literary journal published in Safety Harbor. A short story by **Janet Watson** will also appear in that publication. **John Foster** will be reciting a poem at the Sun City Center "Follies" show and has been helping to edit an about-to-be-published poetry collection by FSPA member, **Terry Hagans**. **Ken Clanton** has prepared a forthcoming collection of poetry aptly called *This Book Is a Joke!*, with a foreword by John Foster.

A number of our members are polishing poems to be submitted by the NFSPS Contests' deadline of March 15, and we wish everyone well.

We look forward to seeing our friends from other chapters and members-at-large when you "Come to School" at the Spring Fling!

~ Janet Watson, President





Linda Whitefeather

When we meet:

Poetry for the Love of It Poets meet the 2nd and 4th Mondays of each month, 2:45 to 4:45 pm in Room 1A on the main floor of the Tallahassee Senior Center, 1400 North Monroe Street, Tallahassee, FL 32303.

Visitors are always welcome.

Poetry for the Love of It

There were no empty seats in the room! Poetry for the Love of It (PLOI) started 2020 with a crowd at its first meeting. Not only were all active members present, PLOI had four visitors. Three visitors included the current leadership of Big Bend Poets & Writers (BBP&W).

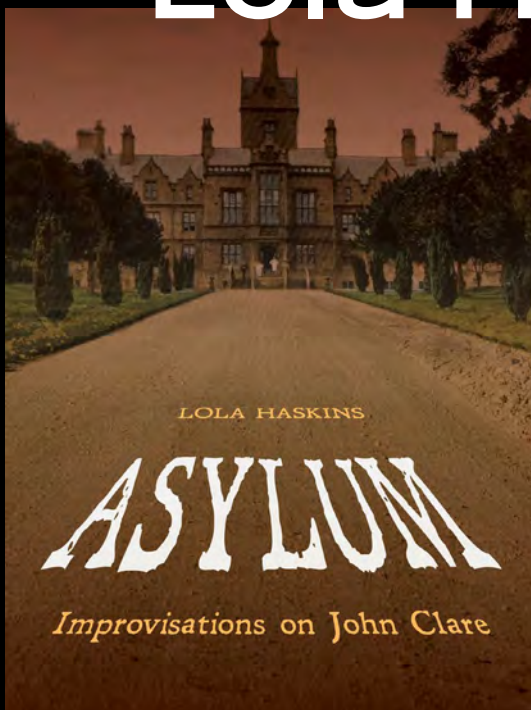
Joint activities discussed included a joint anthology, and a poetry workshop through the Lifelong Learning program of the Tallahassee Senior Center. Both of these activities have been undertaken by PLOI on its own in the past. Many details remain for future discussion. In addition, BBP&W invited PLOI to make use of its Facebook page to post meeting notices.

A list of notable poets for discussion for 2020 has been agreed upon. **Wallace Stevens**—a Pulitzer Prize recipient in 1955—started the year off. Poetry exercises for several months have also been selected.

If you have a friend or relative in the Tallahassee area, please encourage them to check out the PLOI daytime meetings. No one is required to “write” poetry. One can read the poems of others, or simply listen and comment. PLOI meets on the first floor of the Tallahassee Senior Center on the corner of N. Monroe Street and E. 7th Avenue. Usual meeting times are the 2nd and 4th Mondays, 2:45 - 4:45 pm.

~ Linda Whitefeather, Secretary
on behalf of Charles Hazelp, PLOI President

Lola Haskins Poetry



Published by University of Pittsburgh Press

Asylum presents the journey John Clare might have taken in 1841 if, when he escaped the madhouse, he'd been traveling in his head rather than on his feet. Ms. Haskins starts out with as little sense of direction as Clare had yet, after wandering all over the map, she too finally reaches home. The book's four sections are where she rests for the night. The first is a tender look at life and death. The second paints the world through which she walks. The third digresses to the supernatural and in the process is laugh-out-loud funny. In the fourth, she arrives in her dear north-west England, having learned from Clare that she too can be happy anywhere.

Now available on Amazon — Click here.

Learn more at lolahaskins.com



Gordon Magill

Big Bend Poets & Writers

Our work is rooted in the belief that literature is vital to sustaining a vibrant culture. We focus on nurturing literature's source: creative writers. Our mission is to foster the professional development of poets and writers, to promote communication throughout the literary community, and to help create an environment in which literature can be appreciated by the widest audience.

We meet once a month on the second Tuesday at Barnes & Noble bookstore. Meetings begin at 7 pm.

When we meet:

The Big Bend Poets & Writers meet the second Tuesday of every month from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm in Barnes & Noble Bookstore, 2415 North Munroe Street, Tallahassee, FL 32303

Recently we teamed up with the Tallahassee Council on Culture & Arts – COCA. Their [Poems on Panes](#) project will display poems by local writers in the windows in twelve businesses and offices until mid-April. To celebrate the twenty-four poets who submitted work for consideration, COCA and the Big Bend Poets & Writers held an Invitational Read-Around at one of our monthly meetings. Poets participating in the Read-Around included: **Cynthia Portalatin, Katie Clark, Donna Marie Decker, Penny Young, Gordon Magill, and Lynne Knight.**

In addition we organize and lead poetry reading events in local venues. One recent event was a collaboration with the [Never Forgotten Coast](#) and the Square Mug Café. This event included poetry, storytelling, music, and photography about hurricane Michael and its effect on Mexico Beach.

~ Linda Wright, Secretary
for Gordon Magill, President



Cynthia Portalatin



Lynne Knight



Katie Clark



Donna Marie Decker



Gordon Magill



Cheri Herald

When we meet:

The Sunshine Poets meet the second Saturday each month at 10 am at the Central Ridge Public Library, located at 425 W Roosevelt Blvd, Beverly Hills, FL 34465

Sunshine Poets

It is with sadness and regrets that I report the passing of long-time member and past-President of Sunshine Poets, **Natalie Warrick**, at the age of 91. A Michigan native, she had lived in Florida for over thirty years. Natalie was a retired teacher with thirty-five years of service in her home state. She remained an active member of Sunshine Poets until shortly before her passing. Natalie won many awards, published several volumes of poetry and regularly contributed verse to her church newsletter. Her sunny disposition and kind critiques will be sorely missed by our Sunshine group.

Sunshine Poets meets at the Central Ridge Public Library in Beverly Hills on the 2nd Saturday of each month at 10 am. We welcome all ages and levels of poets. A new form or technique is described and offered as a homework assignment. Homework and critique are optional, followed by an open reading. Lunch and fellowship follow the meeting at one of our local restaurants. Recent studies have included the limerick, ballads and the villanelle.

Joyce Shiver took a 2nd in Indiana and Illinois contests and two 2nds in Poets and Patrons of Chicago. Sunshine Poets will again sponsor a humor category in FSPA's annual contest and made a donation to FSPA's youth contest. Sunshine Poets has a [Facebook page](#). Contact: sunshinepoets@gmail.com

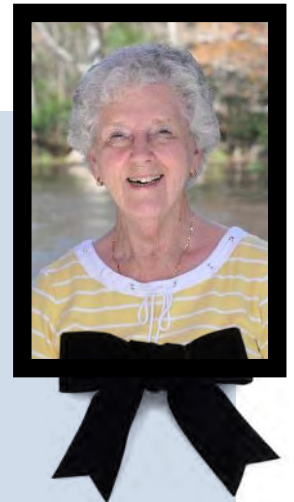
~ Cheri Herald, President

Resume

I've prayed this country through four wars,
my children through four marriages and two divorces.
I have degrees in English and education,
and can split an infinitive and dangle a participle
while teaching others not to do it.
I'm on the vestry,
the planning committee,
the search committee,
and the memorial committee.
I have a prayer list longer than Santa's gift list.
I'm a do-gooder June Cleaver dream child,
the never-get-in-trouble
always-do-what's-expected child,
an 'i' dotter,

a "t" crosser,
an honor roll,
cross-carrying, soul sister.
I'm not a Barbie wanna-be,
a bungee jumper,
a hot air balloon rider,
a parachute free faller.
If you need someone to tell your troubles,
give advice,
expand your knowledge,
run your programs,
organize your affairs---
(after I finish my rosary)
I'm available nine to five.

~ by Natalie Warrick
Looking at Life Through a Small Eye,
CHB Media, 2013, p.71





Suzanne Austin-Hill

Members at Large

Suzanne Austin-Hill

In November 1992 my mother, Honore B. Smith, lost her battles with colon and liver cancers at the age of sixty-seven. Nearly twenty years later, I retired and discovered that soulful, poetic expressions eased my mourning. *Sixty-seven Pages from the Heart* is dedicated to the woman who loved me enough to show me how, through her death, I could live to the age of sixty-seven (and beyond). Poetry continues to be an ointment, an elixir, and a tonic that pours out from my heart.



[Link to the book](#)



Jill Clark

Jill Clark

On Saturday, April 11, from 2:00-3:00 PM, **Jill Clark** will be hosting a Reptile Poetry workshop at the [Lyonia Environmental Center](#) in Deltona, FL. The kids will take a tour of the Center's live reptiles, learn some fun stuff about these beloved cold-blooded critters, and then write a poem (and frame it) concerning their favorite. The theme of the workshop aligns with reptile poems in my children's poetry book *Loose Balloons*.

Also, Clark will be a speaker for the Authors for Authors Writer's Conference in Melbourne, Florida, on Sunday, April 26, from 10:00-11:00 AM: Take It Personally: Friends with Poetry Benefits.

The following month, she will be presenting: "How to Velcro Your Writing and Make It Stick" on Sunday, May 16, from 10:00 to 11:00 AM in Fort Myers for the Gulf Coast Writers' Book Club.

To purchase a book, you can order directly through the author's website: www.jillswriterscave.com. The books are gift wrapped and cheaper—with free giveaways included for the child.

Poetry Challenge

How the High School of Performing Arts (PA) Grew to Be

In the soil of the lots of Grand Central Stables;
 It is here that our story began.
 City expanding, immigration exploding
 Need for an architectural plan.

The tenement children needed a place,
 A little piece of academic heaven.
 Snyder, a "Super" for the Board of Ed,
 Built a Romanesque Public School 67.

By day in shops and factories they toil
 To stave off family starvation.
 So New York Evening High School you became,
 Ensuring students a choice of vocations.

Typewriting, phonography, electricity, and drawing,
 Mathematics, languages, and classes for the disabled.
 Educational advantages offered in the light of day
 High School of Commerce was what you were labeled.

Corms, still defying concrete, provide for her survival;
 Four-year curriculum with performing arts study, both free.
 PA, Alma Mater, our generous, bountiful, nourishing mother
 For likes of Al Pacino, Melissa Manchester, Arthur Mitchell, and me!

~ Suzanne Austin-Hill

Poetry Challenge

Glorious Golden Pearls

*Little Boy Blue, come blow your horn –
The sheep's in the meadow, the cow's
in the corn (Mother Goose)*

To the kitchen we take the yellow ears
Unzipped from their heavy husks,
The tassels streaming silken threads,
From kernels plump and luscious,
Like shiny sovereigns,
Glimmering golden spikes
Waiting for the boil.
In just 10 minutes the ears are ready
To roll on bars of sunny, salty butter
And with the fingers
Then bring the dripping kernels
To waiting mouths.
With toothy skinning, the cobs,
So full of kernels sweet,
With surgeon's skill are stripped
Of all the glorious golden pearls,
The luminous yellow citrine, the yellow topaz.
Little Boy Blue falls fast asleep under the haystack
As sun-drenched summer disappears.

~ Judith Krum

Next Issue: Editor's Choice Poetry Challenge

Prompt: Home

Form: Any

Line limit: Up to 20 lines

Submit by: April 15, 2020, to Mark@TKOrlando.com

The winning poem(s): Will be featured in our May/June issue

Of Poets & Poetry is published six times per year: January, March, May, July, September & November.

FOR SUBMISSIONS

Due Dates:

January: Due by December 1
March: Due by February 1
May: Due by April 1
July: Due by June 1
September: Due by August 1
November: Due by October 1

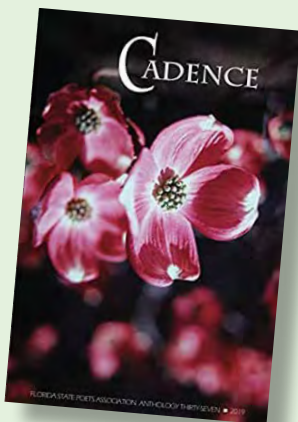
Submittal Specifications:

Format for text:
Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx),
RTF, TXT, or PDF format files.
Please do not embed your
submission in an email.

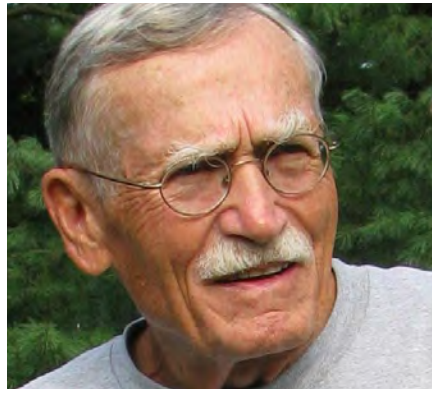
Format for images:
150 to 300 pixels/inch resolution
but no larger than 3.5M in JPEG (.jpg)
format. If you are unable to do this,
contact the Editor at 407.620.0158.

Note: Please know that we will make every effort to include all qualified submissions, if space allows, and we may choose to edit your submission.

Email submissions to:
mark@TKOrlando.com



[Click here](#) to purchase the 2019 FSPA Anthology, *Cadence*.



Peter Meinke

In the News:

Poet Laureate Peter Meinke earns the Florida Humanities Lifetime Award

The Florida Lifetime Literary Award for Writing is bestowed on a living Florida author for a distinguished, highly regarded, and influential body of work that has had a major influence on the lives and thinking of the citizens of Florida. These contributions can be academic, non-fiction, fiction, or any combination of the three.

O, Miami Poetry Festival

The festival begins on April 1 and runs until April 30. During the month, the festival committee works side-by-side with Miamians to bring poetry to the forefront of civic life, co-producing, on average, 41 events and 23 projects. This year's goal is for every single person in Miami-Dade County to encounter a poem. Wow! For more information: <https://www.omiami.org>

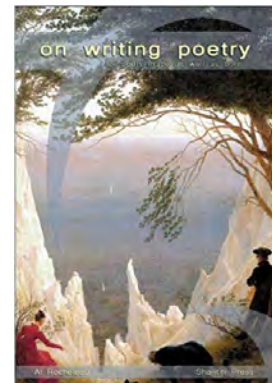
2021 Burrow Press Poetry Anthology Submissions

Poets often respond to the day's news, and Florida does the news best (or worst, depending on your stance). The 2021 Burrow Press anthology seeks poetry submissions inspired by News from Florida. For this submission, news is loosely defined as important events, topics, politics, or people, and ranges from the major headlines to lesser-known to should-be-known-but-isn't-yet. Burrows Press is looking for unexpected explorations of Florida's mythos written by Floridians: the native, the decades-long snowbird, the transplant, the defector.

For more information: Here is the [link](#)

Al Rocheleau's On Writing Poetry Named One of the Best Poetry Manuals Ever Written:

The book is listed on bookauthority.org (a site featured on CNN, Forbes, etc.) on a list of the seventy-five best poetry manuals ever written. It ranked number 16, (can I hear an OMG) between books by American Poet Laureates Mark Strand and Ted Kooser. I'd say that is good company. Here is a link to the [list](#)



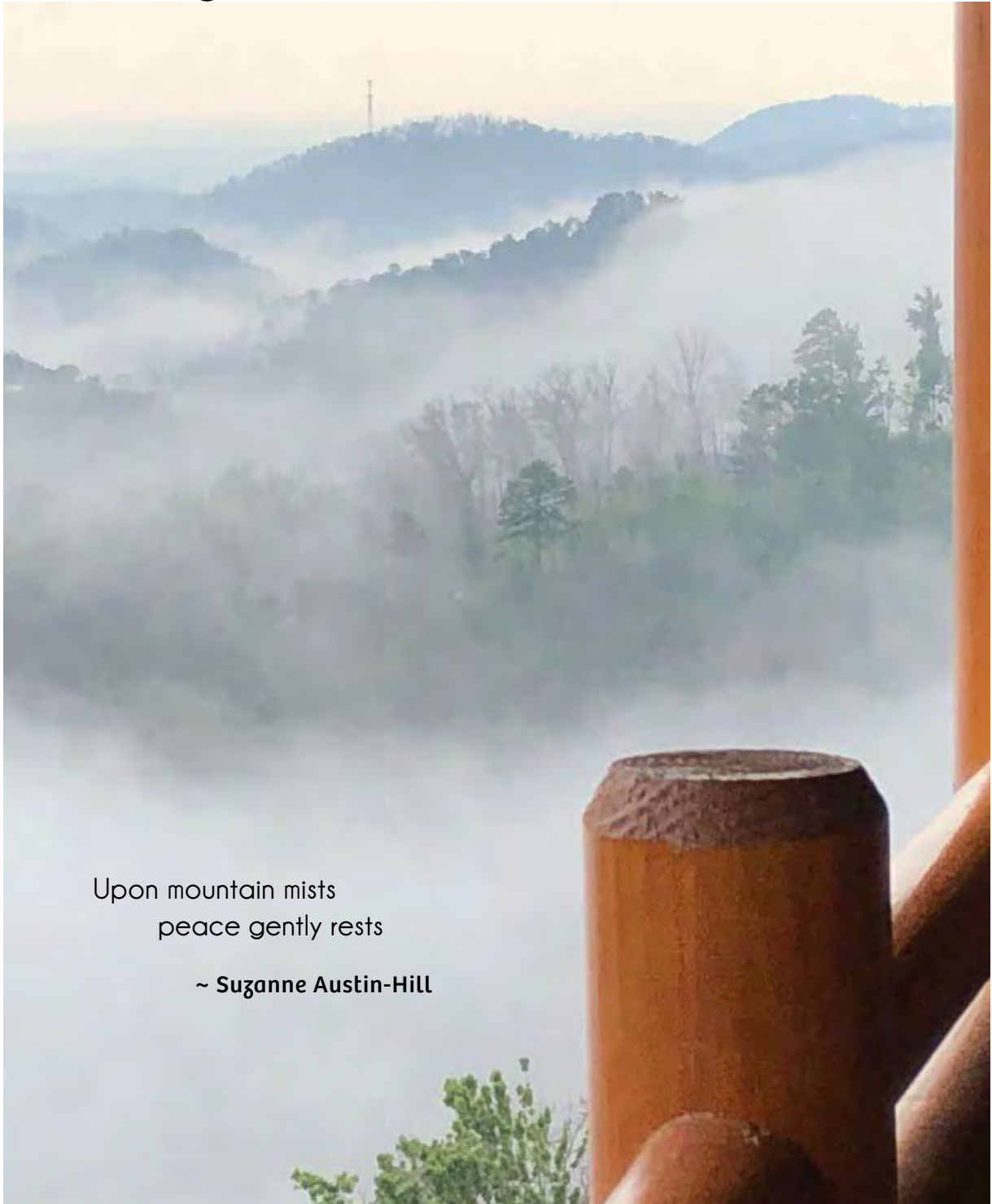
link to the [book](#)



We hope you enjoyed this issue of FSPA's Of Poets & Poetry.

~ Mark Andrew James Terry, editor

A Little Lagniappe:



Upon mountain mists
peace gently rests

~ Suzanne Austin-Hill

My Happy Place, The Great Smoky Mountains, July 2018, Photograph, Suzanne Austin-Hill

Do you have A Little Lagniappe?

If you have a short poem associated with an image that you created, and would like them considered for publication in *Of Poets & Poetry*, please send the poem and image to me at mark@TKOrlando.com.

FALLING LANDSCAPE



POEMS
SILVIA CURBELO

Silvia Curbelo's Newest Release

"Silvia Curbelo's poetry is accomplished, daring, full of energy and intelligence; it is the generous manifestation of an authentic and original gift."

~ W. S. Merwin

"With a knack for disguising wisdom as plain-spoken observation, Curbelo's poems are infused with insight the way sunlight fills a quiet room. The lyric voice is rarely this accessible, this unwavering, this pure."

~ Campbell McGrath

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