

Of Poets & Poetry

A PUBLICATION OF THE FLORIDA STATE POETS ASSOCIATION VOL. 47.5

September/October 2020



VIRGIL SUÁREZ

See page 4



Cover photograph: self portrait of the poet

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

• From The President's Desk	2-3
• Profiles in Poetry	4-15
• FSPA 2020 Annual Conference	16-21
• 2021 Executive Board Election Ballot	22
• Member Spotlight	23-28
• Contest Committee Report	29
• FSPA Contest Sponsorship Form	30
• Twelve Chairs Short Course	31
• Chapter News & Updates	32-38
• Editor's Choice Poetry Challenge	39
• In the News	40
• OPAP Submission Information	40
• A Little Lagniappe	41

FALLING LANDSCAPE



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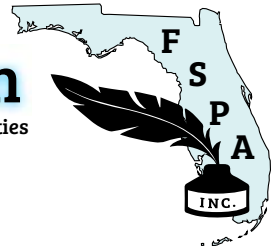
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Al Rocheleau

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Saying goodbye.

I think that lives are lived in a string of little epochs. “Epoch” implies something really large that hinges on its own importances, and no matter what someone else may think, the events of those epochs as they are happening are all-important to us. “Little” implies not so big, not so much as we thought when we look on the track of time as one would in a rearview mirror on a long highway, as the magnificent horse who saw us fly by beyond the fence gets smaller and smaller. So I will likely get smaller to you and much as I might try otherwise, the thises and thats of our times will likewise do the same to me. That’s regrettable, but as Bob Dylan said “It’s life, and life only.” The past seven years as a member of FSPA, however, and including the last four as an officer and these last two as president, have amounted to one of those fine and complete little epochs one pins to the wall of experience fondly, and with solid gold pins.

And no, I’m not totally going away. Just a few thousand miles away, up a high desert ridge where it was 117 degrees yesterday. (As Lucifer said to Beelzebub in an outtake from *Paradise Lost*, “but it’s a dry heat.”) So, “Why this?” you ask. Long story. Long move. And not enough space to tell of it all here. I will remain a member of FSPA even in Nevada, and will come to events that I can and help with whatever I can, but otherwise, yes, I’ll be gone, and officially gone in October when I give over the presidency at our much-awaited next convention.

Boy, the friends I’ve made at FSPA! It includes some of the greatest poets in the United States. What an honor to know them. And just as important, just as much an honor, was the opportunity to know and love so many others who aspire, undauntingly, to be great, and are climbing those steps. Some of our number we have sadly lost, and we know we will yet lose others (or them, us, since lots of us are old), yet we can remember the sound of every voice, and always hear them anew in their lines.

Yesterday, I found on Facebook a once-young poet, Clem Brown, now in his sixties like me, who in 1976 gave me a copy of his first book, a saddle-stapled volume mimeographed at the Catholic orphanage where he worked. I found myself looking through that book again recently, as I had seemed to every time I moved, while packing for the current trek. I was glad to have found Clem again, and he was elated that I still had the book, of which there was never more than a few copies extant. Back then I was a prose writer, a writer of stories, just beginning the move (more moves!) into poetry. But isn’t that what our work does for one another? We experience each other in our poems, and through that, the moving parts of ourselves. The people we know, even with the passage of time and place, never diminish in size or color or depth *when* we have their poems.

But back to business. Did I accomplish much as president? Not sure. Certainly the past year has been a blurry one. I think the best thing I may have done was find you all a bunch of great people to serve on our board and various committees, including several who could succeed me and do a better job. The next best thing was to grow the chancellor panel with remarkable poets of stature and a desire to help us. I've left you, too, the Twelve Chairs courses to use as you like. More than fifty of our members have taken part in at least one of the Twelve Chairs programs live, and having almost 200 hours of teaching on flash drive should be of some service to members who couldn't avail themselves of those live events. (It has also helped to pay for a new PA system, a permanent asset for FSPA, so thanks to many of you on that score!)

Now, I don't for a minute pretend that those classes are all you might need for your own work, or that others don't have better solutions for this or that. Those things are simply what worked for me over forty years, broken down for you to pick up if you like, and I do hope that some of it helps. It has been so gratifying for me to see my old students succeed, which is of course what any teacher wants. For me, being president of FSPA was always about helping poets write better poems, and trying to be there for them. No, I didn't get everything accomplished I wanted to, but I'm sure that could be said too of Mary-Ann, of Joe, and in fact all of our presidents past. You accept the honor of being elected to the office and you do what you can, as those who follow also will.

What now? I have been working on a book off and on for several years, one that will take several more years to complete. It is a novel about the relationship of Christopher Marlowe to William Shakespeare. It contains within it a play, a collaboration, written in the different blank verses of two giants. To do this project involves lots of research, not only of Marlowe and Shakespeare (and somehow getting a clear personal image of the mind and heart of each), but also of the lexicon of the Elizabethan and Jacobean eras, the full history of the time, and the negotiation of various contentious schools of Shakespearean authorship, avoiding those treacherous shoals and somehow pulling off a good book. Can I do it? Who knows . . .

On the semi-retired side, I want to pursue musicology, my hobby of fifty years and across tens of thousands of recordings in all genres of music. (Yes, my vision of headphones and an easy-chair would be nice to realize!) I would also like to master the keyboards I own, continue playing guitar, and do some composing and recording. Of course, all the above comes second to my duties caring for a family member who requires a lot of attention, and who accompanies us to the outskirts of Las Vegas, where the distant lights beyond our mountains are like Christmas in summer.

Well, there you have it. Perhaps some of you will visit. And when I can, I'll visit you all. And of course, I'll read your poetry, and perhaps you will still read mine. Thank you for everything you have done for me. A new epoch approaches, for me and, in some wonderful new hands, for you and the future of FSPA.

With love and respect, God bless you,

Al

A conversation
between Al Rocheleau
and FSPA's Chancellor

VIRGIL SUÁREZ





Photograph by Carlton Temple

VIRGIL SUÁREZ

Virgil Suárez was born in Havana, Cuba, in 1962. At the age of twelve he arrived in the United States. He received an MFA from Louisiana State University in 1987. He is the author of eight collections of poetry, most recently *90 Miles: Selected And New Poems*, published by the University of Pittsburgh Press. His work has appeared in a multitude of magazines and journals internationally. He has been taking photographs on the road for the last three decades. When he is not writing, he is out riding his motorcycle up and down the Blue Highways of the Southeast, photographing disappearing urban and rural landscapes. His 10th volume of poetry, *The Painted Bunting's Last Molt*, will be published by the University of Pittsburgh Press in the Spring of 2021.

Artist Statement:

Both my photographs and mixed media art try to capture the erasure of time. Both also concern themselves with decay, detritus, and the decomposition of man-made things. Both of these things also inform my poetry and writing. Nature wins each and every time. Humankind eventually will perish and the planet will recalibrate itself. Even in the face of some cataclysmic and/or nuclear disaster the planet will survive and morph into something new. I am also concerned with the plight of the underdog, the inaudible voices that perish daily trying to survive—my attempt to preserve witness to the mundane and the daily grind of lives being worn down to nothing.

(Continued on next page)

Rocheleau: Most of two American generations have missed out on the unique allure of Havana, as well as the hard effects of its political isolation. Can you share something of your young life there?

Suárez: I had a wonderful childhood in Cuba, since basically I was raised by my mother and grandmothers. I had a chance to receive all of that wonderful sensory tropical material early in my life. Marvelous fauna and flora. A fern that when you touched it the leaves would close. A multitude of butterflies and colors of ladybugs I've never seen again. Fish. Flowers. Fruit. Amazing. The child was fine, but the child's parents were not. My parents decided to leave for all of the political reasons someone would not want to live under a dictatorship. My parents did not want me conscripted into the military by the age of 15, so the clock ticked while we all waited for our exit to be granted. In the meantime, I lived my life as an only child spoiled principally by his paternal grandmother who read to me from the Harvard Edition of *A Thousand And One Arabian Nights* and who told me these marvelous stories of living in Manhattan as a young girl. My grandmother was a retired teacher earning her American retirement in Cuba. She told me stories and taught me basic math. We left Cuba in 1972 and she did not survive long enough to leave with us.

(Continued on next page)



Photograph by Carlton Temple

Rocheleau: Was your great “The Dirt Eaters” a personal poem or emblematic?

Suárez: No, that poem is a literal poem. I ate dirt as a child as I played with mud and made forts and soldiers out of the dirt. By the time we left Cuba there was a great scarcity of toys, so the kids in the neighborhoods reverted to all sorts of entertainment and DIY toys. Darts made out of chicken feathers, a twig, and a needle. Sling shots made out of bicycle inner tubes. We played with snails. We went to the stream to fish little mosquito fish to keep in glass bowls. We hunted butterflies. We hunted lizards and used them to fish spiders out of their holes. We climbed mango trees. We hunted, we hungered for something to do, and we waited for our parents to be allowed to leave.

Rocheleau: You were twelve or so when you emigrated to the United States from Cuba. What was that change like for a boy soon to grow into manhood?

Suárez: It was very drastic. The first thing that everyone realized, mostly teachers, was that I was deficient in all sorts of things, including math and science. I could read and write okay, but I was in trouble academically, so it took me a while to catch up. Spanish teaching is mostly memory learning. You read and recite back after you memorize it. Boring. No chance to be imaginative nor creative. This was in the two years we lived in Spain and then in the United States where we arrived in 1974, it was a brutal realization that I was going to live inside of a monster I could never tame. My first class on my first day of school I was assigned physical education and I was made to take off my clothes and shower with another 200 kids. I was so nervous that I fell and hit my head on the slimy tiles. It was a horrible afterbirth into what my father called living in a country where people “barked like dogs.” I have never really recovered from that trauma. I’ve written about it time and again, trying to understand but I keep drawing blank cards.

Rocheleau: Was there for you a fulcrum between the two cultures on which some of your poetry depends?

Suárez: Yes, my parents, my home life. My home language. I arrived too late to forget Spanish, but young enough to learn English quickly. I think the worlds of home and the outside have served my poetry well. Often, my work is informed by the mixture of the two or some sort of cultural translation of customs I ended up performing. Also representation of how both of those worlds mix in my work to create something new. Although I tend to write solely in English, Spanish is always lurking in the background in particular with my vernacular and syntax.



Photograph by Enrique Grosso

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Self portrait of the poet

Rocheleau: What is the main difference you find between writing poetry in Spanish versus English?

Suárez: I don't write much in Spanish but only as a way to insert certain codes or untranslatable things into my lines and images. I use Spanish sparingly, but musically it helps to be bilingual. I think being able to use both languages at the moment of creation is like jazz to the ears. There's a groove. A sonorous call and response. I am also a firm believer that part of the job of the poet is to go beyond his/her/their boundaries to discover work that they can import back through translation or through the work as editor.

Rocheleau: Which Latin poets have most moved you or inspired your work over the years? And among English and American poets?

Suárez: Early influences were Gary Soto, Lorna D. Cervantes, Tato Laviera, Pedro Pietri, and so many others. But earlier influences were also folks like Neruda, Guillen, Parra, Borges, and then in English I owe a lot to Edgar Allen Poe, Whitman, and of course Ginsberg. Denise Levertov became a favorite. Current poets I love are Denise Duhamel, Charles Harper Webb, and the late Adrian C. Louis.

Rocheleau: You incorporate both pathos and humor in your poems. How do you decide which way a poem will go, or how the two roads might meet?

Suárez: For me that is the magic of discovery. I sit down to write with just an inkling of an idea and then I let the poem surprise me. I never know if it is going to be a humorous poem or a serious one until the words start combining on the page. Part of me cannot resist being funny or witty, tongue-in-cheek. For some reason I cannot resist the urge when I am writing overtly political poems. Politics is absurd. You have to have a great sense of humor to survive the political fuckery of the times.

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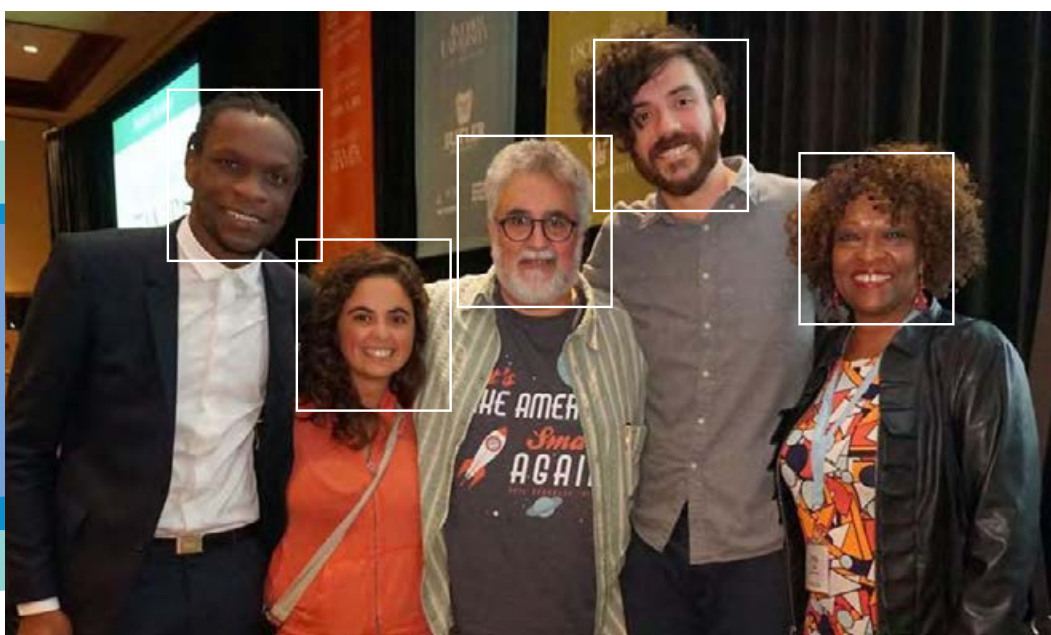
Rocheleau: You have a strong social voice; what are the difficulties a poet must consider when addressing political issues in their work?

Suárez: I only react to things that really hit me hard, like children being kept in cages, clowns and hocus-pocus bullshitters pretending to be presidents. I can go on and on. A poet can write about these things and in my case I cannot resist the urge to be funny to hit back hard with more absurdities. The fact that American Politics have been turned into the NFL. Red vs. Blue. And depending on what team you play then they expect you to send them money. WTF? You get shit from both, and they expect you to pay to play. Blue is only slightly better than Red. I've been independent most of my life, but the Red team has lost its mind on religious fanaticism and extreme neglect of their civil duties to safeguard humanity, so Blue is all we have left.

Rocheleau: You often write of family, as many of us do. What takes such a poem beyond ordinary reminiscence to resonate in the mind and heart of another?

Suárez: This is an excellent question on which I never try to ponder beyond the basic need of trying to relate a universal about human experience. Family is an important aspect of the human cycle. My reminiscences are only a way to get at those universals. Birth, childhood, marriage, children, death. I know that my upbringing and my family life has been exceptional in ways that others are not. I think time and environment and political circumstances have marked my family and myself. My journey has been different. I think this is the early realization or epiphany that made me think I could be a poet. I am a working poet.

(Continued on next page)



*From left to right: Ishion Hutchinson, Gabriela Suarez, Virgil Suarez, Kabeh Akbar, Rita Dove.
Photograph by Fred Viebhan*

Rocheleau: I shared a place with you years ago, along with another FSPA supporter, Sue Walker, in an issue of *Poetry Salzburg Review*. It was indeed one of your family poems and I have taught it in several of my classes. What encouragement might you have to share for poets who want to try their luck submitting to journals?

Suárez: Don't give up. Don't think that nobody likes your work because one hundred journals have turned you down. Your work will be received somewhere. We all get published for a first time and then it's what we make of it. Nobody is going to come look through your drawers to publish your work. You have to be proactive. You have to promote your work, and the younger you are the more you have to do it until two decades later when some editors will contact you and invite you to submit new work. Again, don't give up.

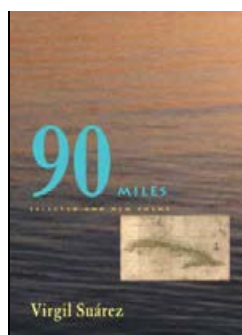
Rocheleau: What have you found to be the greatest natural strengths, as well as weaknesses, of the younger poets with whom you engage at FSU?

Suárez: My students are eager, and I love that about them. And they are disciplined and want to write. Their main weakness is that they need to read more. Read more. Keep reading. Reading for the poet is like breathing. You can't write poems if you are not reading poems. Talent alone is not going to keep you writing poetry. Reading contemporary poetry will help you keep writing.

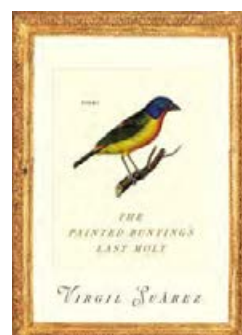
Rocheleau: If you had just a few minutes to spend with an aspiring poet, perhaps a momentarily lost or demoralized one, what one thing about our art would you like to leave them with?

Suárez: Read! Write! Revise. Read more. Always read. Always engage with long-dead and present poets. Don't give up. If it is in your blood, you will not give up no matter rejection or travail. Difficulty and rejection are part of the writing life for the poet. The less you fear the act of creation, the stronger you will be. Be thick-skinned too. Don't take rejection sitting down. Be the best promoter of your work.

TWO RECENT BOOKS



[Link to Book](#)



[Link to Book](#)

AFTERBIRTH

A rat snake slithers
into a Cardinal's nest
snug on the Y branch

of a Camelia bush.
The snake devours
each of the three

nestlings. I watch
from the porch,
a distance of twenty-five

years. One. Two. Three.
Lumps inside the snake.
A broken rosary.

The day breaks
Into a flood of blood.
Bird parents' ruckus,

as they try desperately
to save their offspring.
Between the trees

Shadows speak in riddles.

~ **Virgil Suárez**

BIG PHARMA BLUES

Better living through pharmacology,
except when CVS can't fill a pres-
cription, claiming your mental
health pills are no longer available.
Suddenly, the old fears emerge:
a man drifting through the back
roads, wandering between burning
pines and wild boars grazing
at his feet. If this is how the world
ends, then I want to be food
for the animals. They can sniff
out danger and the flesh of this
man gorged on Japanese natto
and tobiko. Sometimes you have
to lose in order to come back
in new formulated chemistry.
Nature doesn't need medicine
to know how much fuckery
there is in the human heart.

~ **Virgil Suárez**

ECO PRINTING

We gather ferns,
fallen leaves, tendrils
of Spanish moss.

We place the plants
between sheets of water
color paper.

Stack the sandwiched
flowers inside a plastic
container, press them

down with planks
of wood and heavy rocks,
add tea, coffee, and ash

for good measure. We
discuss the nature of evil
in the world. Green

spiders float on this soup
we've made. Nothing
changes for the smaller

creatures. What corrupts
absolutely is our hunger
for control. Who will save

us under the weight
of our own sorrows?
It's midday. All we can do

is wait for the paper
to tell us what stories
will make us cry or sing.

~ Virgil Suárez

THE GALL OF MY BLADDER

I'm going to miss you, you little fucker,
after all the paté and fois gras and hog's
head cheese (not to mention those sweet
scrapple sandwiches) I shared with you.
After all the unconditional love
I showed you and now you cannot
live with me anymore, which is fine.
I happily grant you the divorce,
and effective this Friday, I've convinced
the surgeon to pickle you in a jar
and let me bring you home so every day
you can witness my consumption
of all that low fat, low sodium, high fiber
food traversing my gullet and stomach,
and I will play you that duet made famous
by Barbara Streisand and Neil Diamond.
There will never be any more flowers
between us, or love songs, but/and when
someone brings me that slice of pancetta
and I catch you licking your chops, I will
feed it to the dogs and let you suffer.
Yes, for the gall of it, and for old fuckery.

~ Virgil Suárez

THE COTTON BALL QUEEN

In 1970, Havana, Cuba, my mother
took it upon herself to inject

B12 on the butt cheeks of as many
neighbors as brought her doses

and paid for her service. My mother
wanted to be a nurse but was not

a nurse, but the house filled with women
waiting for their shots and I, at eight,

watched them lower one side of their
pants or shorts or pull up a dress

to expose their flesh to the needle.
The needle disappeared into the flesh.

My mother swabbed their skin
with a cotton ball drenched in alcohol

after each shot and threw it in a bucket
by the kitchen door. When she was

not looking I reached for a handful
and went outside to look at how

the blood darkened. I wrapped my
toy soldiers in the used cotton.

They were wounded. Cuba
was sending military personnel

to Viet Nam. My mother shot up
more people, "patients," as she called

them. When my father came home
there was no trace of anyone ever

been over. My mother expected
me to keep her secrets. On the mud

fort I had built in the patio all my
soldiers lay wounded, bloodied

and dying. At night I dreamt
of the house filling with mother's

pillow cases full of cotton balls.
In the United States, my mother

worked in a factory, sewing zippers
at 10 cents a piece. 25 years.

She never looked up from her machine.
Her fingers became arthritic . . .

Every time I cut myself shaving, I reach
for a cotton ball to soak up the blood.

Blood is a cardinal taking flight
against the darkening of the sky.

~ Virgil Suárez

SUCCULENT GARDEN

for Laure-Anne Bosselaar

These are days when song birds
Perch near-by, offer regal plumage

And amorous chirping to invisible
mates gathering moss and twigs

with which to make an early
nest. Melancholia is in the way

the sun casts shadows on the deck.
Tall and skinny, cut and disappeared

Into that place of constant anticipation
of bridging the distance and separation

between the departed. Here now, there,
Where we make sanctuary for ourselves.

All this blushing in the morning sun
of the love taken from us too early.

~ **Virgil Suárez**



Florida State Poets Association Annual Conference

ORLANDO — OCT. 23-25

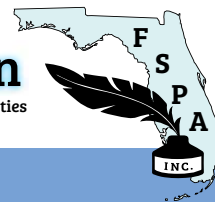
2020: Giving Vision Wings



Safe social-distancing practices in effect

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46th FSPA ANNUAL CONVENTION

TO BE HELD AT THE MARRIOTT ORLANDO LAKE MARY

1501 International Pkwy, Lake Mary, FL 32746

SCHEDULE

FRIDAY — October 23rd

- 3 PM Registration Opens and continues through the evening
- 4 PM Member open readings
- 5 PM Dinner on your own
- 7 PM Speaker: **Carol Frost**
- 7:45 PM Break
- 8 - 10 PM Contests Readings (Part 1)

SATURDAY — October 24th

- 8 AM Presidents meeting
- 8 AM Member open readings
- 9 AM General Session
- 10 AM Speaker: **Silvia Curbelo**
- 11 AM Speaker: **Denise Duhamel**
- 11:45 AM Announcements
- 12 Noon Lunch on your own
- 1:30 PM Contests Readings (Part 2)
- 2:30 PM Break
- 2:45 PM Speaker: **Virgil Suarez**
- 3:30 PM Break
- 3:45 PM Speaker: **Peter Meinke**
- 4:30 PM Contests Readings (Part 3)
- 5:15 PM Pre-Dinner Break
- 5:45 PM Chancellor's Dinner
- 6:30 PM Chancellor
- 6:45 PM Installations/Chancellor Readings
- 7:45 PM Break
- 8:00 PM Speaker: **Lola Haskins**
- 9:00-10 PM Contests Readings (Part 3 *Cadence* distribution)



SUNDAY — October 25th

- 9 AM Wrap-up / additional *Cadence* distribution
- 10-Noon Member readings and/ or critique circles

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46th FSPA ANNUAL CONVENTION SPEAKERS

FROST



7:00 PM, Oct. 23 — Carol Frost **Changing Everything — A Revision Workshop**

Please bring a poem you are willing to look at again and a sense that, in Emily Dickinson's words, to "dwell in possibility" and that may help you in your "Occupation" as a poet to "gather Paradise." Of the several strategies for revision Frost will name, changing everything is the one she will focus upon and practice.

CURBELO



10:00 AM, Oct. 24 — Silvia Curbelo **Unlocking Your Next Poem: Strategies for Creating Fresh, New Work**

From variations of old brainstorming exercises to learning new ways of listening to the language in your head, this short class will explore different approaches to finding and shaping your best work.

DUHAMEL



11:00 AM, Oct. 24 — Denise Duhamel **Laying the Foundation: Concrete Imagery in Poetry**

"Show don't tell" is a mantra often taken as a given in creative writing workshops. But why do we prefer concrete nouns rather than a string of abstractions and continually ask for "details please, more details...?" This workshop will help you discover (or re-discover) the pleasure of concrete imagery.

SUÁREZ



2:45 PM, Oct. 24 — Virgil Suárez **An Immigrant's Poetic Journey: How To Make Poetry Out of Memory**

Suárez will present a poetic sampler of the process by which immigration and memory combine in the poet's heart to create universal poetry.

MEINKE



3:45 PM, Oct. 24 — Peter Meinke **The Laureate's Swan Song**

Meinke laments that he already greatly overstayed his appointment as Florida's Poet Laureate, but at last it seems the Legislature has remembered he's still here, and is in the process of choosing a new Laureate. Ready to leave the stage, he thinks the FSPA is the perfect place for his last official reading. Meinke will talk about the position, about poetry, and read some poems, too---which is what he really wants to do.

HASKINS

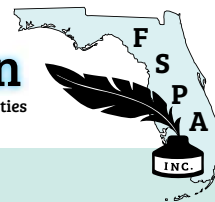


8:00 PM, Oct. 25 — Lola Haskins **Honoring John Clare**

Haskins will talk about his life and poetry, then explain how his 1844 escape from a lunatic asylum made her most recent book (Asylum: Improvisations on John Clare, University of Pittsburgh Press, 2019) possible.

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46th FSPA ANNUAL CONVENTION

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)

Oct. 24 Chancellor Dinner Entree Selections

Vegetarian Couscou w/Quinoa, Spinach, Garbanzos, and Sautéed Vegetables in a Tomato Sauce **\$28**

Pan-Seared French Cut Chicken w/Roasted Potatoes and Green Beans with Almonds and Garlic Au Jus **\$34**

Braised Short Ribs w/Celery Root Puree, Roasted Root Vegetables, and Red Wine Au Jus **\$36**

Blackened Grouper w/Corn Succotash, Heirloom Grains, and Lemon Butter Sauce **\$38**

Entrees include salad, rolls, dessert, tea and coffee

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
c/o Robyn Weinbaum, FSPA Treasurer
2629 Whalebone Bay Drive
Kissimmee, FL 34741
2. PayPal.com—go to 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.



46th FSPA ANNUAL CONVENTION

Book your room!
for the 2020 FSPA Annual Conference



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I plan to pick up my anthologies at the October Convention

YES _____ NO _____ (please √)

Florida State Poets Association

An affiliate of the National Federation of State Poetry Societies



IT IS TIME FOR OUR ELECTIONS

About Elections: An FSPA Nominating Committee was elected at 2019 Spring Fling. The members are, Peter Gordon, Carl Johnson, Judy Krum, and Alice R. Friedman, Chair. Officers to be elected are President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. Mail-in ballots will be distributed through the OPAP and new officers will be installed at the Fall Convention in October. Write-in candidates will be provided for.

PLEASE VOTE!

Nominating Committee Report: Attached is a ballot for the next term of FSPA officers. We need all paid FSPA members to cast their vote for the upcoming term of officers. If you have any nominations not currently listed on this ballot, there is space to write them in. Please be sure to return mail your vote no later than September 15, 2020 so that the ballots may be counted prior to our October convention. Thank you.

~ Alice R. Friedman, Chair

.....CUT HERE.....

2020 - 2022 Executive Board

Election Ballot — Deadline to mail: September 15, 2020

		Check Current Name	Write-in Another Name
President:	Mary Marcelle	_____	_____
Vice-President:	Mark Terry	_____	_____
Secretary:	Sonja Jean Craig	_____	_____
Treasurer:	Robyn Weinbaum	_____	_____

Member Signature: _____ Date: _____

Print Your Name: _____

PLEASE MAIL TO:

Carlton Johnson, FSPA Nominating Committee Member
700 Melrose Ave, Unit L-22 , Winter Park, FL 32789

Lupita Eyde-Tucker

by Janna Schledorn

When you are a mother, home-schooling five children, sometimes the only place you can write a poem is in a parking lot. Lupita Eyde-Tucker, Space Coast Poets member, shared how an hour alone in the car turned her into a poet.

“I’ll never forget the day in 2013 when I was driving to the bank in Orange Park, and sat in the parking lot, glued to NPR listening to an interview between Marie Howe and Krista Tippett on the radio show *On Being*. I sat in my car for a whole hour and it changed my life,” Eyde-Tucker said.

She said she had trained her family early on that “moms need time alone” and that she took those opportunities to run errands alone or spend time at the gym.

(continued on next page)

“Some days I would go to the gym and never leave the car. I’d just spend the whole 45 minutes in the car in silence and it was glorious,” Eyde-Tucker confessed.

When she began writing poetry after that pivotal NPR show, she spent a lot of time in Panera, trying to isolate the creative space to write. She mentioned one Spring Fling seminar on reverie taught by Al Rocheleau that was an “epiphany.”

“I didn’t know it [reverie] had a name and that I could consciously try to enter that state,” Eyde-Tucker said. Previously, she would struggle with creative ideas coming at night and tossing and turning trying to remember those inspirations to write down the next day.

Since 2013, Eyde-Tucker has been working on what she calls a do-it-yourself MFA. She has immersed herself in workshops, conferences and critique groups. Those that stand out include the Dodge Poetry Festival in 2014 and 2016, the Palm Beach Poetry Festival in 2017 (which has continued to grow into her “poetry family”), and the O, Miami Chapbook Workshop in 2017, leading to her first published volume, *Creek Lover* (see page 25).

Besides these positive experiences, this pursuit is sometimes frustrating, which has led Eyde-Tucker to pursue an MFA from the University of Florida this fall.

“I need more than platitudes to spur poems to the next life,” Eyde-Tucker explained. The O, Miami workshop helped her to realize that she needed and wanted that “sustained creativity, community, and dedication to craft twenty-four seven.”

While in these years of crafting her own poetry education, Eyde-Tucker has been extensively published and won outstanding awards. Her list of achievements include a Pushcart Prize nomination in 2017, the 2019 Betty Gabehart Prize for Poetry, and an invitation to be a Staff Scholar at Bread Loaf’s Translator’s Conference in 2020. She has poems and translations published in *Nashville Review*, *Columbia Journal*, *Women’s Voices for Change*, *Raleigh Review*, *Florida Review*, and other prestigious journals.

(continued on next page)



Yet applying for an MFA seemed both natural and essential for her, and she kept getting “green lights.” Eyde-Tucker is dedicated to her art and to poetry and took seriously the application questions about the kind of poet she is and wants to be.

“It’s one thing to write, and it’s another thing to be able to write about what you write. Being an artist means respecting your gifts and putting the art first. Ultimately, I want anything I do to be about the poetry and nothing else,” Eyde-Tucker said.

Seven years after that parking lot experience, Eyde-Tucker served as guest host for the National Poetry Month: Dirty Thirty challenge in April. She shared her experience with that life-changing radio program with more than 400 Facebook participants, as well as providing daily poetry prompts during a month of pandemic. This parking lot poet has not only become an artist in her own right, but a mentor and teacher and inspiration to other poets.



[Link to the chapbook](#)

Creek Lover

Lupita Eyde-Tucker went into the O, Miami Chapbook Workshop in 2017 with a “vague idea” of writing about Pawleys Island, South Carolina.

“I already had written a few Pawleys poems. But I still had to write at least six to eight pages more,” Eyde-Tucker said.

Eyde-Tucker’s in-laws own a house on the island that the family visits once a year, providing plenty of memories and plein-air experiences. Beyond the natural beauty of the island with the roaring Atlantic Ocean on one side and the pristine salt marsh on the other, the poet turned to research.

“I did a lot of research online and in books about Pawleys and salt marshes to create a word bank of colors, images, flora, fauna, and lingo that I knew belonged in the poems somehow,” Eyde-Tucker explained.

The finished chapbook came out in fall 2019. You can order a copy and find out more about Lupita Eyde-Tucker on her website notenoughpoetry.com

How to Ride a Train in the Andes

In a coastal sweatland shanty town, I vowed
to clamber onto the corrugated steel
roof of a train car, to throw my life

up first like a knapsack, charcoal-cleanse
my nose, my lungs, my pores—be delivered
aching, for twelve-hours up a shifty seam

of steel my Abuelito laid
the one who carried the train on his back
Hold my breath, stay low, remember

to not drink chicha on the roof with the local boys
not to lose my head, or turn my back
on the tunnel like bisabuelo did. Hold tight

until the train stops just past Devil's Nose
in a tiny Andes town, overlooked
by wooden window balconies

steel-sliced cobblestone kingdom
bearing a cordillera crown. Here
I let my fingers stroke the velvet mountain's cloak

and from the furrows of the knitted fields
I see my Abuelita come running
the one waiting for the whistle

tired of air-kissing the cheek of fate
watch her smudge coal off her brow
watch her tuck family secrets down her blouse

purchase a ticket to another life
The first man who crosses my path
she vowed: Con ése me largo.

~ Lupita Eyde-Tucker

"How to Ride a Train in the Andes" first appeared in *Philadelphia Stories*,
and was a runner up in the 2020 Sandy Crimmins National Poetry Contest.

Sábado en Alausí

Soy la mesa puesta y las velas. Somos el libro sagrado que nadie lee. Eres el puño en la puerta, la que hace desaparecer la comida. Soy la baraja de cartas, las palmas sobre el mantel. Somos los cajones escondidos por debajo de la mesa, el intercambio de miradas. Eres el cuchillo en la mesa, la que corta el fin de semana. Soy el aroma de tu plato preferido, la víctima de tu palillo. Somos el palo preferencial. Eres la sospecha, la espada en el pantalón. Soy la respuesta rechazada, la suplicación. Somos los naipes repartidos, los culpables de tu desdicha. Y tu, cuatro paredes, apretándonos la garganta. La mesa volteada. La cuarentena. Caída y limpia.

Saturday in Alausí

I am the table set and the candles. We are the sacred book that nobody reads. You are the fist on the door, the one that makes the food disappear. I'm the deck of cards, palms on the tablecloth. We are the secret drawers under the table, the exchange of glances. You're the knife on the table, the one that slices the weekend. I am the scent of your favorite dish, victim of your toothpick. We are the chosen suit. You are the suspicion, the sword in the pants. I am the rejected response, the supplication. We are the cards dealt, the scapegoats of your misery. And you, four walls, squeezing our throats. The table overturned. The quarantine. Winner takes all.

~ Lupita Eyde-Tucker

"Sábado en Alausí / Saturday in Alausí" first appeared in *Columbia Journal Online*, October 2019 and was a finalist in *Columbia Journal Online's* Fall Contest 2019.

Ode to la Conquista

My mother is an ancient invitation to dream
the saliva left on the hand that was kissed

the perfume of the ocean, the maddening wind
the tightening winch on a torturous reach

My mother is something to bet the kingdom on
the illiterate one of noble lineage, sweat pooled

between the scapulae, between eyebrows
My mother is the blood puddled around the throne

My mother is one eye over the shoulder
a Sabbath prayer beneath the breath

the rot of brine between the boards
shrieks of secret spoil in island forests

My mother, the woman with gold in her veins
the thin air on the mountain, the hole in the earth so deep

~ Lupita Eyde-Tucker

"Ode to la Conquista" first appeared in *Raleigh Review*, Spring 2020,
and received an Honorable Mention in the Tom Howard /Margaret Reid
Poetry Contest by Winning Writers.



Marc Davidson
FSPA Contest Chair

Contest Committee

Hello, FSPA. I'm Marc Davidson, your Contest Chair for 2021. I'd like to start with a huge thank you to Mary Rogers Grantham, who's been leading this effort with aplomb for many years now (and deserves a rest!). She'll be a tough act to follow.

For those not familiar with the process, here's what's happening. Right now, I'm looking for sponsors for the individual categories of the contest. Last year we had 19 categories and I'd like to have at least that many this coming year, so I need a least 3 more. If you'd like to sponsor a category, you get to decide the form, the subject, and the amount of the prizes. Contact me at flueln@hotmail.com before September 10, which is the deadline. There is also a form on the next page for your convenience.

The rest of the process is as follows. The 2020 winners will be announced in October (at the convention if we have one) and the brochures for 2021 will be made available. If you would like to enter any of the categories, poems will be accepted between May 1 to July 15, 2021 (July 15, 2021 is a "Post-marked By" deadline). There is a fee per poem which will be explained in the brochure, but it's not expensive. Then the judging begins. Your poems are sent to the folks around the country who have agreed to be judges, who make their decisions and return them to us by mid-August. We make out the prize checks and award certificates and then we hand them out in October 2021.

During my years participating in these contests, I'm always blown away by the intense creativity and writing talent of those who enter. I'm really looking forward to seeing what you folks send me!

But of course, since I'm a poet, too, I have to try and say all the above poetically, so here goes:

I've taken on the task of contest chair
to grant dear Mary Grantham some relief.
Although I am untried at this, I swear
I can be good as your next contest chief.
We are accepting sponsors for each type
of poem that we'd like to win awards
Until September 10, then without hype
the contest will be set to move towards
its judging phase. The judges, then in place,
will bend their minds to read what you submit
next year when all submissions come apace,
then in October next we'll see what's fit.
My job merely to shepherd this great task
That you submit great poems is all I ask!

Sponsored by Poetry for the Love of It (PLOI)

You only have a few more days!

DEADLINE: SEPTEMBER 10th!

2021 FSPA Contest Sponsorship Form

Please return completed form no later than September 10, 2020, to:

Marc Davidson
2 Braddock Avenue
Daytona Beach, FL 32118
flueln@hotmail.com

Your name: _____

Sponsor name (if other than your own, e.g. FSPA Chapter):

Your mailing address: _____

Your email: _____

Your phone: _____

Category number: _____

Category name: _____

First prize award (minimum \$25): _____

Second prize award (minimum \$15): _____

Third prize award (minimum \$10): _____

Honorable Mention (if applicable): _____

TOTAL: _____

Please make your check out to FSPA, Inc., and attach to this form.
or pay using [Paypal.com](https://www.paypal.com) to FSPATreasurer@aol.com

Contest specifications

Poem subject (write a specific subject or "Any"):

Poetic form (write a specific form or "Any"):

Other instructions (e.g. rhyme scheme or other aspects of form):

Line limit: _____

Thank you very much for sponsoring a 2021 FSPA Contest Category!

"Most working poets are maybe 5% to 10% away from their ultimate potential: able to write uniformly fine work and to get published everywhere they deserve, and often. That's what the Twelve Chairs course is for." ~ Al Rocheleau

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Trial
of
FSPA's
Twelve
Chairs
Short
Course**

We are offering our Twelve Chairs Short Course on a free, one-month trial period, so you can experience the benefits of this powerful poetry course at your leisure.

The Short Course was derived from the scripts, recordings, and voluminous handouts of the 180-hour Advanced Course, distilling the copious instruction of that larger course into a sequential stream of short aphorisms and maxims, such as:

THE POET'S TRIANGLE CONSISTS OF: CRAFT, SCOPE, AND VOICE

WE ACQUIRE THEM IN SEQUENCE; EACH SUPPORTS EACH

OBJECTS AND THEIR MOVEMENTS DRIVE YOUR POEM

A PERFECT OBJECT IS DEFINED BY THE CLEAREST WORD

THE OBJECT ITSELF CAN BE FOUND AT THE ROOT OF ITS WORD

MORE THAN ANYTHING, POETS AND POEMS SAY SOMETHING

SENSE AND OBSERVATION MAKE QUESTIONS AND/OR ANSWERS

THOUGHT OR EMOTION, SMALL OR GREAT, MAKES UP YOUR TAKE

POEMS BUILD NOT WITH A SUBJECT, BUT WITH A TAKE

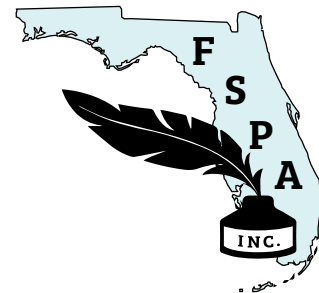
That's just a taste of the Short Course; but are you intrigued? Now you can try the course out at home, free. FSPA is offering a one-month trial of the accredited Twelve Chairs Course on a flash-drive, compatible with any computer system.

The drives contain the full Short Course along with all course handouts. After one month, if you are enjoying the course and its benefits, simply send in your \$50 payment. If you are not happy with the course, you can return it. No obligation.

To obtain your free trial month, simply email Robyn Weinbaum at FSPATreasurer@Aol.com

or mail your request to:

**Robyn Weinbaum, FSPA Treasurer
2629 Whalebone Bay Drive
Kissimmee, FL 34741**



FSPA CHAPTER NEWS & UPDATES

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Sunshine Poets

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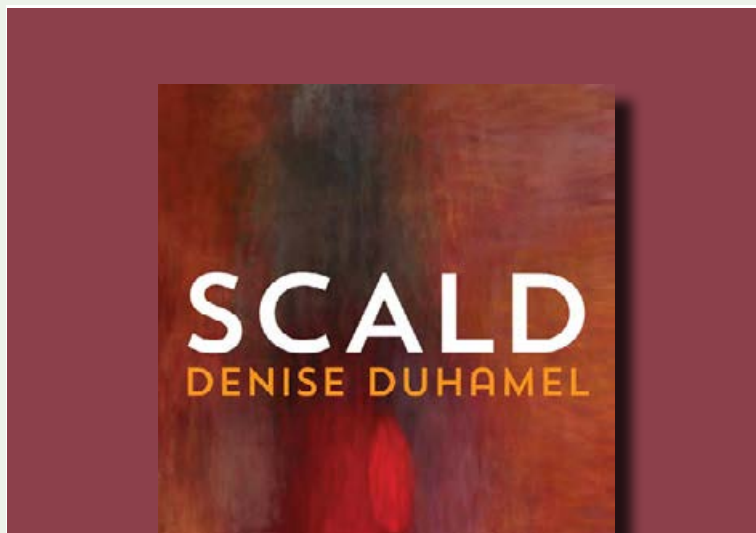
Tomoka Poets

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New River Poets

Janet Watson
JMPWAT@aol.com

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• <https://mailchi.mp/bf76829821ed/florida-state-poets-association-email-list>



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“Denise Duhamel’s *Scald* deploys that casual-Friday Duhamel diction so effortlessly a reader might think heck, I could write like that, but then the dazzling leaps and forms begin. . . Duhamel’s sentences don’t even break a sweat, sailing on with her trademark mix of irony, grrrl power, and low-key technical virtuosity, like if Frank O’Hara, Carrie Brownstein, and Elizabeth Bishop had a baby.” —*Chicago Review*

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Tere Starr

Miami Poets

Miami Poets continue to meet remotely for the first Wednesday Virtual Miami Poets Soirées, facilitated by **Tere Starr**, as we share our poetry and inspiration by Zoom. We join **Steve Liebowitz** on second Mondays for virtual poetry critiques. Thanks to technology, we're able to gather in between and connect with the Miami Poets who no longer live in Miami. It's so good to see **Patsy Asuncion** on our screen from Virginia and **Jo Christiane Ledakis** all the way from the Swiss Alps. Achievements: Patsy continues to host the popular Virtual Open Mics from Charlottesville, Virginia. Tere joined the readings from Miami in June and July. The events can be viewed on Patsy's YouTube channel which has over 17,300 views. Patsy serves as Adult Poetry Judge for Charlottesville, VA Public Library System and the WriterHouse Organization. Her poem, "One Hundred Days," was published in *voxpoetica*. **Jo Christiane**'s poem, "Bubbly Jinx," appears in *The Author's Voice* along with **Pat Bonner Milone**'s poem, "I Can Breathe." Pat's essay, "Waging Peace," was awarded a second place in the South Florida Writers Association's monthly writing contests. **Connie Goodman-Milone**'s pink pencil vanda haiku won first place in the poetry category. Her letter, "Just Disappear," was published in the *South Florida Sun Sentinel*. **Lori Swick** was featured at the July Virtual Author's Showcase Series, sponsored by the South Florida Writers Association and the Suniland Books & Books. Her presentation, *Dreaming: The Sacred Art*, celebrates the dream experience as a way to deepen spiritual awareness and serve as a source of self-healing. Tere continues to host virtual Poetry Soirées for the Brandeis Women's South Miami Chapter. The Miami Poets believe that poetry resonates best when it's shared.

~ Tere Starr, President



Patsy Asuncion



Jo Christiane Ledakis



Lori Swick



Robert E. Blenheim

The Live Poets Society of Daytona Beach

The Live Poets Society of Daytona Beach is still ‘meeting’ on the computer, and relatively active with president Blenheim doling out difficult challenges every week since the virus invaded our lives.

These weekly challenges have included writing poems on the following themes: “The Silent Film Era,” “The U.S. Post Office,” “A Fruit or Vegetable,” “Death” (that’s a fun one!), and “Secret Languages.” These challenges have been heroically met, members sharing their poems through emails—marvelous work that continues to inspire the chapter to keep writing.

Two Live Poets won NFSPS poetry awards: President **Robert Blenheim** won a First Place, a Third Place and three honorable mentions, and **Llewellyn McKernan** garnered an honorable mention, the first of which is probably many awards for her in the future.

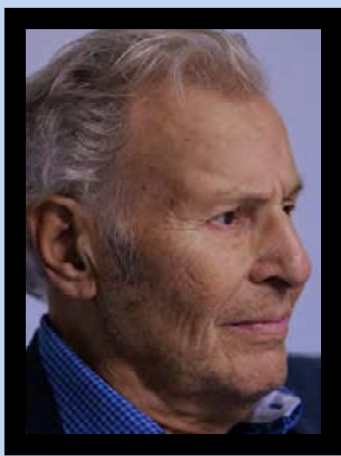
Some individual members have been taking part in Zoom.com poetry workshops as well, including Vice President **Vicki Iorio**, whose had four publishing acceptances this Summer including work in NYSAI, the *Long Islander-Walt’s Corner*, *Home Planet* and *Whitman’s Corona Anthology*. **Jackie Vores** has been pricing jewelry, reading Lee Child books and watching classic movies on TCM. And perhaps most active in their computer ‘meetings’ is Tomoka Poet **Marc Davidson** who seems to attack every challenge the Live Poets put forward with great creativity, sometimes sharing two or three poems a week. He has done a lot in his own way to support the Live Poets Society.

Many of the Live Poets are keeping busy watching movies (a great way to pass the time in isolation from the virus), like **Jesse Sam Owens**, and especially Bob Blenheim who’s been studying all the works of Ingmar Bergman (one more time), along with a viewing of many classic Hammer horror films. Apparently Count Dracula, the Werewolf and their fellow monsters are a relief compared to the real-life horrors of our time. (A great idea for a future poetry challenge!)

The accompanying pics of a few of the Live Poets show masks have become a part of their daily lives. (President Blenheim thinks his looks have improved wearing one.)

It is hoped all of the Live Poets can survive intact until they can meet at the library again when it is safe to come out of hiding.

~ Robert E. Blenheim,
President



Stan Drescher (1931–2020)

The Live Poets was shocked to learn of **Stan Drescher’s** passing. His warmth and sense of humor that moved all of us to tears and laughter in his funny rhyming verses will be forever missed.
R.I.P., Stan!



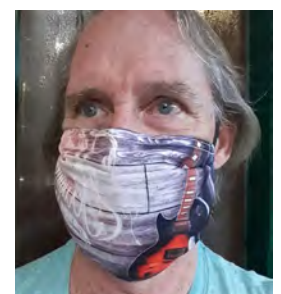
Vicki Iorio



Marc Davidson — a nuisance from the Tomoka Poets — is always invading the Live Poets Society meetings, even online, and challenging them to poetic duels. But they have yet to succumb to his blandishments.



Justine Mathis



Bruce Woodworth



Diane Neff

Orlando Area Poets

Nikki Barnes was accepted into UCF's doctoral program in Texts and Technology with areas of research in geo/eco-poetics and land-based texts, public histories, and language access/justice. She will teach an intermediate Poetry Writing Workshop at UCF this fall, and in late summer, will be leading a series of free online studio sessions via Art of Collaboration in Eatonville, FL (artofcollab.org). The first is a visual journal workshop called Ancestors including a guided collage and series of creative writing prompts, and the second is a DIY Poetry Reading where participants will gather via Zoom to write new poems and also share favorites along with some tips and best practices on performance and presentation using digital formats.

Carlton Johnson's haiku was featured on Haikuniverse.com on June 12, 2020. He also hosts a weekly critique session on Sundays via Zoom.



Carlton Johnson

Frank Masi's short story, "Gray Rider," was accepted for publication in *Create an Illusion*, Florida Writers Association's (FWA) Collection 12.

Elaine Person conducted a writing workshop for the Maitland Public Library via Zoom to prepare for the library's quarterly coffeehouse on July 24. The theme was "Say Yes." At the coffeehouse, the new theme was announced: "Just Before Waking." Elaine will conduct more Zoom workshops for this theme in preparation for the next coffeehouse on September 25, 7:00 p.m. She had a short story, "Getting Trained," accepted for online publication on *Reedsy*, earned an honorable mention for a limerick on Mad Kane Limerick-Off, and her short story "Don't Refuse Your Muse" was accepted into the FWA Collection 12, *Create an Illusion*. Elaine won two second place awards in the NFSPS contests. Both "Senior Citizens Online Dating Profile" and "Gala" are also published in the NFSPS anthology, *Encore*. She earned an honorable mention in Lake County for an acrostic poem. Elaine continues to teach "Inspired Words, Writing to Art" at the Crealde school (Crealde.org). The next classes are September 26 and December 12.



Elaine Person

Lynn Schiffhorst's piece, "Soothing the Dark" was accepted to the FWA annual Collection 12, *Create an Illusion*. Her novelette, *One Special Night and the Days That Came Next*, and her middle grade children's novel, *Light in the Clouds*, are both in the semi-finals in the Royal Palm Literary Awards competition.

Cheryl West has published two books. *Castle's Capers: The Adventures of a Naughty Puppy* follows Castle through his first four years of canine adventures. *Remember Me, When This You See* is a boy's view of life and love in the early twentieth century from rural Tennessee, comprised of nineteen poems of adolescent love written by a 13-year-old boy to an unnamed sweetheart, along with commentary for context by Cheryl.



Nikki Barnes

Orlando Area Poets chapter continues to meet via Zoom for poetry critiques and camaraderie.

~ Diane Neff, President



Janet Watson

New River Poets

Things are pretty quiet right now, but New River poets have managed to exchange poetry online, in response to several challenges. We are also experimenting with Zoom, since we have missed the opportunity to critique our work. Meanwhile, some of the members have sent in their poems to the FSPA annual contests and are hoping to see some New River wins.

John Foster continues to foster (!) an interest in poetry at Freedom Plaza. Residents have been submitting their work to his “Poet-Tree” bulletin board and seem eager to express their concerns, observations, and hopefulness about the pandemic. Janet Watson completed Al Rocheleau’s 12-Chairs Short Course that was made available to FSPA members, and highly recommends it to others who wish to improve their poetic skills. Al’s conversations with students in “live” classes invigorate the lectures on a broad scope of topics. Janet recognized the voices of several FSPA friends and realized how much she has missed them. Hopefully we’ll all be together again soon.

Keep writing, poets!

~ Janet Watson, President



Cheri Herald

Sunshine Poets

Sunshine Poets met at the Beverly Hills library for the first time since March 2020. Of course we had pandemic poetry, but we read others, too. President, **Cheri Herald**, presented the bio and poetry of **Sam Walter Foss**. Member **Joyce Shiver** had wins which included three 1sts and a 3rd in OK, and a 1st, 3rd and several HMs in National. We meet on the second Thursday of each month at 10 a.m. in the Central Ridge Library in Beverly Hills.

~ Cheri Herald, President



Mary-Ann Westbrook

Tomoka Poets

Tomoka Poets are enjoying a respite from regular meetings. Some of us are writing and sharing online. Some of us have entered available contests and placed. Results will be announced at a later date. Some of us have served as judges, and have enjoyed that challenge. Everyone is writing whether it be poetry, plays, short stories or just letters to our unseen grandchildren. We are looking forward to the FSPA Fall Convention if it happens to happen and the publishing of *Cadence*. We hope to be back into a regular meeting mode before the next newsletter. We all miss you all. Hope to see you soon.

~ Mary-Ann Westbrook, President



Ruth Van Alstine



NORTH FLORIDA POETRY HUB

North Florida Poetry Hub (NFPH) was launched by Hope at Hand, a non-profit organization which provides poetry sessions for at-risk youth populations in Duval, Alachua and St. Johns Counties.

North Florida Poetry Hub members had the opportunity to act as judges for the JAX Poetry Fest High School Poetry Contest for North Florida Students, grades 9 – 12, which was a part of the JAXPoetryFest.org which has gone virtual on YouTube this past April through May, hosted and sponsored by Hope at Hand.

July 25th was our first virtual Saturday Monthly NFPH Chapter Meeting, which is open to members and the community. We held a brief business meeting followed by a poetry share of all attendees, then moving into the meeting highlight; Featured Speaker, poet **John Dorsey** of Missouri, author of over 20 poetry books, nominee for the Pushcart prize and winner of the 2019 Terri Award. He gave a poetry reading, shared his experiences in making of handmade limited edition books and his experiences publishing through his press, River Dog. It was a special afternoon well-attended by both NFPH members and guests on a beautiful July weekend afternoon in a virtual Zoom Room.

We are excited to introduce two new members, **Pat Krause**, formerly of Pennsylvania and now resident of Ponte Vedra, who lives with her husband of 50+ years, a member of the Del Webb Writer's Club and has been published in *Riverwood Writes*. She is an avid photographer and poet. Her faith, love of nature and personal relationships inspire her poetry. **Sue Jones** is a retired special education teacher. She has been married for 54 years and has two sons. She lived in Illinois many years, and then in Southwest Florida before moving to Ponte Vedra. She loves walking the beach and hiking the beautiful Florida nature trails. She enjoys reading all genres and writing stories and poems. Welcome, Pat and Sue, to FSPA and your new friends at North Florida Poetry Hub. We look forward to sharing words of poetry, fellowship and a long, mutually beneficial relationship with you both.



Pat Krause

Early summer our members were busy preparing their submissions for the FSPA 2020 anthology, *Cadence*, along with finishing up in timely fashion final entries to the annual FSPA poetry contests. I end on the happy note that NFPH has been able to resume free writing and poetry workshops and new, exciting program offerings via the virtual platform of Zoom to bring the art and conversation of poetry to our members, the communities of Northeast Florida and beyond.

~ Ruth Van Alstine - President



Sue Jones



Gordon Magill

Big Bend Poets & Writers

The Big Bend Poets & Writers chapter has been pretty quiet since our last report. Most of our members, like Florida poets everywhere, have been writing from home, and posting poetry on our Facebook page. During this quiet time we have expanded our small web site, with the addition of a poetry and writing blog page which **Linda Wright** manages, and posts poems with accompanying photography or other art as they come in. [Here is the link](#)

~ Linda Wright, Secretary
for Gordon Magill, President



Charles Hazelip

Poetry For the Love Of It

During July PLOI conducted Zoom meetings since the Tallahassee Senior Center remains closed due to COVID-19. Also in July the chapter successfully published its third anthology, *Variegated Verses in a Millennial Age*, now available on Amazon. **Pat Stanford** has been elected President of "Florida Authors & Publishers Association and is in the process of publishing a new poetry book. During the month the chapter studied Nikki Giovanni's life and works. We also are considering methods of having actual meetings, in accordance with CDC recommendations, in August.

~ Charles Hazelip, President



Evelyn Ann Romano

Members at Large

Evelyn Ann Romano has had two poems published in the Yellow Jacket Press anthology, *Chasing Light*. The anthology features poems inspired by Burgert Brothers historic photographs. *Chasing Light* is a collaboration between Yellow Jacket Press and the Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library. Photos and poems appear side-by-side in this unique publication.

Poetry Challenge

The Corona-cation Chronicles Day Fifteen

A dream that in heaven I'll have nothing to do,
earth-bound jobs completely through.
He's called me home with a "Job well done!"
I've run my race and I have won!

You're reading this, so I'm still here;
vision on hold, my missions clear.
Do unto others as you'd have them do unto you;
fix six feet 'tween before you do what you do.

~ Suzanne S. Austin-Hill

Daydream Reality

In the wild wood,
more buzz than the city,
yet peace is understood,
essentiality,
nature is no falsehood,
birds a welcoming committee,
Singing songs of truth,
melodies at sunrise,
Birds offer clues as I sleuth,
looking up to the skies,
a reminder of my youth,
trees hypnotize,
Lost in a daydream,
running over pine needles,
water trickles in a stream,
my journey is gleeful,
adjusting a life theme,
colors like rainbow beetles,
Rescue me from darkness,
Shine a light down on me,
Restore with vivid boldness,
Life like nature, stress-free,
I'll breathe in wholeness,
renewed and celebratory,
Back on my block,
my dream just a crock,
this city, my life, is insanity.

~ Robert Stanhope

Gems

in my celestial dictionary
a million letters
fell from the sky,
enough to nourish
a thousand poets.
I struggled, with immense joy
to put them into words
to truly be a man of letters.
I wrote my heart out,
raised my eyes heavenward
to thank God
so humbly
for his bounty:
each word was a prayer
for more and more and more

~ Dennis Rhodes

Next Issue:

Editor's Choice Poetry Challenge

Prompt: Holidays

Form: Free Verse

Submit by: October 1, 2020

to Mark@TKOrlando.com

November/December 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.

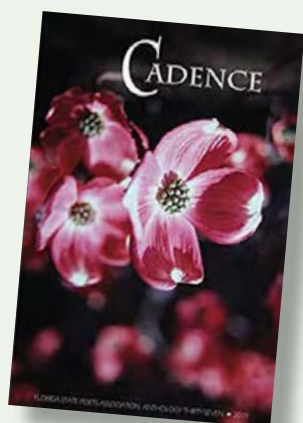
Please do not embed your submission in an email.

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.

IN THE NEWS

Anthology Magazine Poetry Prize: Entries are now invited for the Anthology Magazine Poetry Prize. Established to recognise and encourage excellence in the craft of poetry writing and to provide a platform for publication, it is open to original and previously unpublished poems in the English language. Entries are invited from poets of all nationalities, living anywhere in the world. Poems submitted must be on the theme of 'Expectations' and should not exceed 40 lines. There is no limit to entries per person—€500 cash prize. Here is the [link](#).

Winter Park — Billy Collins interviewed FSPA Chancellor Carol Frost



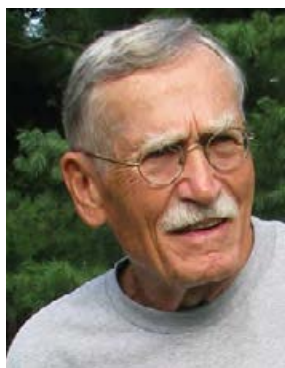
on Friday, July 31, 2020, as part of a launch for her latest collection of poetry, *Alias City*. Carol Frost read six poems from the upcoming collection. Among the poems, Ms. Frost read was the title poem, *Alias City*. Her writing evokes darker sensual naturalistic visions, as in the following excerpt from *Alias City*. "Skies burned. Dust covered the palms and minarets as they arrived by the incandescent shore of our city, each with his own little dreams and disasters. Some remained, never to be heard of again." There is a sense that this poet knows something of the world of lost

and forgotten objects with a veracity, freshness. This is a poet who should be read widely especially during these uncertain times.

~ Carlton Johnson, FSPA member

Deland — The Deland Museum of Art 2020 Poetic Visions

Exhibit will include poems by several FSPA members including **Elaine Person, Sonja Jean Craig, Robyn Weinbaum, Howard Moon and Mark Andrew James Terry**. The 34 pieces in the exhibit were used as ekphrastic devices. The selected poems will be displayed with their inspiring piece, and the public will be invited to vote on their favorite. All poems will be published in an anthology commemorating the exhibit. The exhibit opened on August 21, 2020. moartdeland.org



Florida Humanities, a statewide affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, announced their Lifetime Achievement Award for Writing was awarded to Florida State Poet Laureate and FSPA Chancellor, Peter Meinke. Florida Humanities also announced the Florida Book Awards 2019. The winners were: Gold, Maureen Seaton for *Sweet World*. Silver, Campbell McGrath for *Nouns & Verbs: New and Selected Poems*. Bronze, Tanya Grae for *Undoll* — Alice Friedman, FSPA member

~ Mark Andrew James Terry, editor
Of Poets & Poetry



A Little Lagniappe:

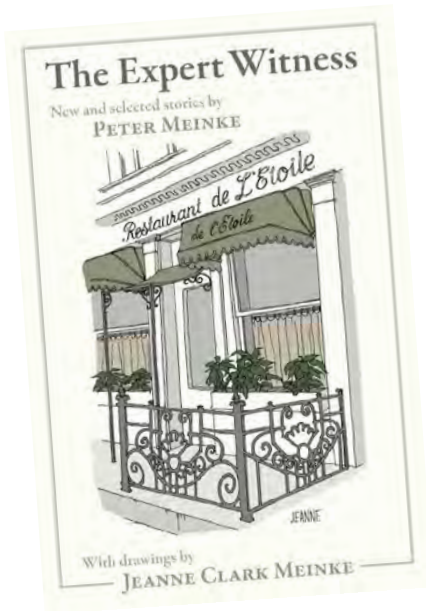


Ambrosia
her hands stilled
yet still food of the gods

~ Suzanne S. 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.

The Expert Witness



New and selected stories by
PETER MEINKE

With drawings by
JEANNE CLARK MEINKE

This new collection of twenty-six stories includes eighteen hard-to-find gems and eight new tales from Flannery O'Connor Award Winner and Florida Poet Laureate Peter Meinke. Jeanne Clark Meinke has added two dozen new and selected drawings to form a collection sure to become a favorite.

PETER MEINKE is an author whose work has been published in *The Atlantic*, *The New Yorker*, *The New Republic*, *Poetry*, *Tampa Review*, eight books of the Pitt Poetry Series, and in two collections of fiction. He is Poet Laureate of Florida. **JEANNE CLARK MEINKE** is an artist whose drawings have appeared in *The New Yorker*, *Gourmet*, *Yankee*, and numerous other periodicals. Together they have collaborated on a previous children's book and many other publications, including *Lines from Neuchatel*, *Truth and Affection*, *The Shape of Poetry*, and *Lines from Wildwood Lane* (a collection of her own drawings), all published by the University of Tampa Press.



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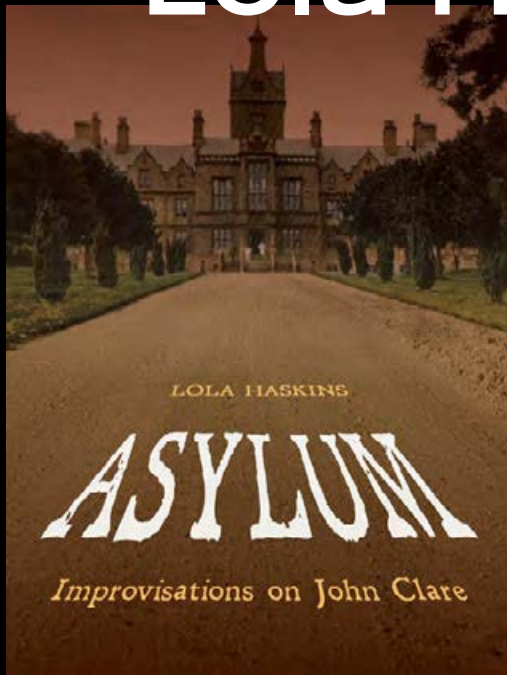
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Lola Haskins Poetry

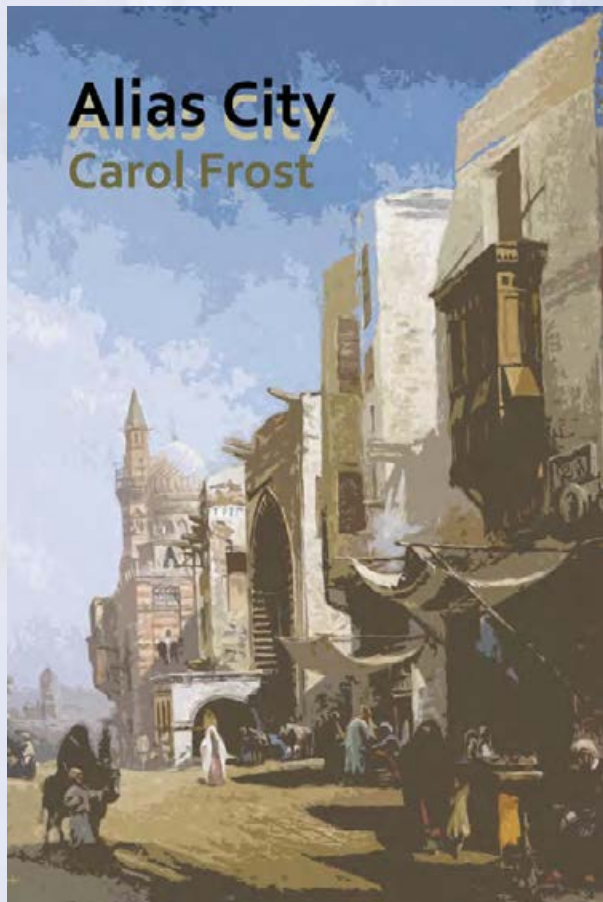


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Asylum presents the journey John Clare might have taken in 1841 if, when he escaped the madhouse, he'd been traveling in his head rather than on his feet. Ms. Haskins starts out with as little sense of direction as Clare had yet, after wandering all 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.](#)

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Alias City by Carol Frost

Now available from MADHAT PRESS



Welcome to Carol Frost's *Alias City*, which is, in the best sense of both words, the city of music.... But it is also a great city of the mind.... The hero of this book is a refugee, a survivor of World War II. She is now losing her memory, trying to recount what happened, giving us brief glimpses into the darkness known as history ... and the healing known as the natural world, of pigeons, doves, and the comic, ridiculous humans. Herein, she remembers the flight, the terror, and the cities torn in two....

—ILYA KAMINSKY, author of *Deaf Republic*

Order at:

madhat-press.com/products/alias-city-by-carol-frost

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