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Of Poets & Poetry
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WHAT ABOUT hope

Photography by Linda Eve Diamond

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It might be overly optimistic to think we’re out of the woods, but we may be able just to detect a clearing somewhere ahead.
After this past year, we’ve squeezed all the happiness we could from the holidays. Attempting to celebrate as we did before has proven frustrating. I think everyone has faced that frustration as they make their way through this current pandemic world.

A year ago, our hopes for the new year were very different. As this new year breaks, the traditional wish for a happy one comes with an extra measure of hope. That’s why we have focused on hope in this issue of Of Poets and Poetry.

Hope is what moves us from the sadness that envelops us to the determination to proceed. Hope is an engine of change. When all the world’s evils were released, hope was the only thing left in the bottom of Pandora’s Box. Hope as a concept fits all the clichés we’ve heard: hope springs eternal, we can only hope, hope for the best, when all hope is lost, last hope, etc.

Some are hoping for a return to the happiness of social activities; some are hoping for a new job to replace one that was lost, while someone else may be hoping they don’t lose their family’s home. Some still hope for a return to health for themselves or for a loved one. Some, sadly, hope for the return of someone who will not.

Right now, the world is looking forward to a common hope: that we can keep people from getting sick through measures of containing the contagion and through the shield of a safe, effective vaccine. That’s the collective hope that has kept everyone’s focus.

It might be overly optimistic to think we’re out of the woods, but we may be able just to detect a clearing somewhere ahead. I really hope so.

Take care,

Mary
AS FIRST LIGHT BREAKS ACROSS THE FACE OF 2021, WHAT DOES IT BRING WITH IT? WILL IT BE YET ANOTHER YEAR MIRED IN THE MIST OF ISOLATION, MASKED BY AN ODIOUS PANDEMIC, OR WILL THAT NEW LIGHT BRING WITH IT THE INFINITE HUES OF HOPE TO BATH E OUR HOURS, TO LIFT OUR HEARTS AND SOOTHE THE STILL-THROBBING WELTS OF 2020?

WE ASKED A FEW OF OUR MEMBER POETS AND FRIENDS,

WHAT ABOUT HOPE

The photo on the preceding page is by FSPA poet Linda Eve Diamond
The Wave

I was at the ninth line of my final poem, the one about “the liquid trilling of the nightingales” when it began: in the cheap seats Bukowski and Hollo high-fived and flung their wine-soaked shirts to the feminists in the seventh row. Romantics with rosy lips made swallow imitations. Modernists hid their eyes so they could concentrate purely & the post-moderns stuffed their ears so the words wouldn’t confuse them. The critics decided to be generous relaxing their hunched shoulders in the sun. Ginsberg rang his little bells. Bly was hugging uncertain young men in fatherly ways when the New Formalists loosened their ties and stood up.

So they all stood up section after section throwing their cramped arms in the air a wheatfield of poets on a free afternoon baseball on strike the NEA nowhere to be seen O and didn’t we have a time!

No fans are crazy like mad-dog poetry fans: One more line! they chanted. One . . more . . line! I hesitated only a moment and then wild with love for all of us I threw the whole damn book into the ink-stained stands.

~Peter Meinke, Poet Laureate of Florida (2015-2021)
Chancellor, Florida State Poets Association
Zinc Fingers (U. of Pittsburgh Press, 2000)
Voices

Another sleepless night passes as I sit writing in the cool air of the porch, exiled again to unsettling thoughts of disease, family and money, disruptions to our lives as the dream of Spring is held fast in a grip of unbroken drought, depleted pastures and no promise of weather for weeks. This should be May instead of March.

Somehow a lone frog voice issues softly from the quiet, into the dark and as if waiting for their cantor, a unison of congregants in trees, amid leaf and bracken beside the dry pond answers in creaking antiphony. The sound rises, spreads its solace upon the land apprehending the gloom and in this moment it is easy once again to believe in things to come.

~ Sean Sexton, Indian River Poet Laureate
Artist and Rancher

HOPE RISES

When a storm walks the waves, gusty wind flipping oak leaves heavenward, breezy ballerinas twirling over whitecaps, free from gravity, falling up;

When mockingbirds sing and crickets cheer the sun’s descent into the bay, swallowing the cherry globe with promise of a new day not yet born;

When a thunderbolt splits the sky, close, blinding white light blasting a dead pear tree into burning life, a new dark edged with sparks exploding into red-tipped wings taking flight;

When lightning feathers the distant heavens while we dance on the faded porch floorboards despite the buzz of gnats around us in the damp, black rain greening black earth, sprouting new geometry.

~ Katherine Nelson-Born
Northwest Florida Poet Laureate
HIMALAYAN

Call for stars and atoms, abyss and rime.
Call avalanche to cover up the climbers left behind.
Let no one any longer see how cold they are.
Sweep off empty cannisters and Mallory’s torso,
preserve no more misgivings. Bear these heights alone.
Mind sundown wrestling on the shoulders.
Mind the death zone—air, air, air—and go back down,
then tomorrow like shoeless sheep
leave earth behind with its examples of falling,
what’s right and what’s wrong
no more than dispersing and building clouds
on the mountain. Make yourself no elegy
but the stone snows swallow then exhume.

~ Carol Frost, Alford Professor of English, Rollins College
Chancellor, Florida State Poets Association

WASH YOUR HANDS

gather the poems
you’ve always wanted
to read

reread as if
your life depended
on words

to lift you
beyond the here
now

shower often
sing, meditate
see how your

hands turn
to swans
about to embrace

~ Virgil Suárez, Professor of English,
Florida State University and Chancellor,
Florida State Poets Association

What Hope Is

Think of the weight of tenderness
or faith. What is willed, what
is opened. The way someone
whispers someone’s name

into a glass, then empties it,
swallowing that small word.

~ Silvia Curbello, Chancellor
Florida State Poets Association
From Falling Landscape, Anhinga Press
Not a Prayer

The amaryllis waits, wintering over since you brought it home to bloom last Easter. It fulfilled its promise—a trinity of red flowers, three months before you bloomed so much blood after surgery they couldn’t save you. So many years, I’ve tried—keeping a bulb dark and dry, replanting it, hoping for resurrection. No more than a long spear has ever rewarded me. Next spring it will be only me, burying the bulb half above ground in well-drained soil. I’m told it could have helped if I believed in the efficacy of prayer.

~ Dr. David B. Axelrod
Volusia County Poet Laureate

Ode to the Heart

In Memory of Fallen Eagle, Zachary Capra, ERAU 2018

Heart, do what you do at times like this when all that Daedalus had warned comes true and Icarus goes tumbling to the sea. Plump up your strong defenses against parallels with myths and let a waxed wing disappear, and let his angels sing.

~ M.B. McLatchey, Volusia County Poet Laureate
Professor of Classics at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Daytona Beach

*Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University (ERAU) trains hundreds of student pilots each year. A “Fallen Eagle” refers to one who tragically dies in an aircraft accident.
THE THINGS THAT NEVER CAN COME BACK

As Dickinson writes Childhood—some forms of Hope—the Dead. So religion, science, and comic books do their best to close the loop, to see the seasons as proof of something circular, that spring will follow whatever obstacles religion, science, and comic books find in their path. We tell ourselves fairy tales as proof of something, that spring will follow—a poisoned comb and coffin can’t stop Snow White from returning. We tell ourselves tales of immortality. The cross didn’t stop Jesus. A poisoned comb and coffin didn’t stop Snow White. Walt Disney was actually cremated, despite rumors of immortality. The cross didn’t stop Jesus, according to some. According to the Cryonics Institute, Walt Disney was cremated, despite rumors that he was frozen. But almost 300 others, according to their families and the Cryonics Institute, have undergone cryopreservation, their brains resting, “dead” and frozen. These 300 others believe that one day resuscitation will be possible.

Having undergone accidental cryopreservation, dead Captain America returned from the Arctic years later and readers believed his resuscitation possible. Alaskan wood frogs, Eastern box turtles, and Captain America came alive after cold winters. Florida iguanas freeze at just 40 degrees, and, like Alaskan wood frogs and Eastern box turtles, they come back to life when it warms up. Florida iguanas freeze at just 40 degrees, and, like children falling out of bed, they fall out of trees, startled, coming back to life when it warms up. Benjamin Franklin wanted to come back to life—like a child waking in bed, like a new tree leaf—to see what his country would be like 100 years later. Benjamin Franklin wanted to come back to life though he thought men wicked, even with religion.

He worried what his country would be in 1890—all wars, follies. He thought it better to cast dice than fight. He wrote If Men are so wicked as we now see them with Religion what would they be if without it?

All wars are follies. It is better to cast dice than fight—but what about religious wars, the promise of glory? What would soldiers be without it?
The dead are replaced with medals, headstones, parades of an almost religious nature, the promise of glory. Hope is a slogan, one we’ll not soon fall for again.
The dead are replaced with medals, headstones, and we look for our childhoods on eBay and YouTube.

Hope is a slogan, one we’ll not soon fall for again. The Millennium Seed Bank gathers up what is not yet extinct as we look for our childhoods on eBay and YouTube. Gone forever is the Golden Toad, Javan Tiger, Pyrenean Ibex.

The Millennium Seed Bank gathers up what is not yet extinct, though we’ve already lost over 400 kinds of lettuce, the Golden Toad and Javan Tiger. A Pyrenean Ibex clone died from complications, despite “de-extinction” efforts.

Though we’ve already lost over 400 kinds of lettuce, the Judean date palm came back after 2000 years. Clones die from complications, despite “de-extinction” efforts, but moss piglets seem to survive no matter what.

When the Judean date palm came back after 2000 years, we wondered if death was just an ambulance to the future. Moss piglets will survive no matter what—environmental toxins, drought, and radiation.

What if death is an ambulance to the future? We do our best to see the seasons, but the future may be environmental toxins, drought, and radiation. Some forms hold onto childhood, hold onto hope.

~ Denise Duhamel, Chancellor, Florida State Poets Association

From Scald (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2017)
Fakahatchee Strand

by morning the water has turned such silver i want to put it on i know it would only flutter off my skin like a bird too quick to follow but i don’t care i want it anyway and i want that tangle of cattail and black rush too the way i want to be perpetually waking to yet another gift like the single gator stretched out on the muck where pond has begun to thicken to swamp like happiness it materialized so gradually that i never even for a moment saw it coming

~ Lola Haskins, Chancellor, Florida State Poets Association
From How Small, Confronting Morning (Jacar Press, 2016)

Not the Eve of Saint Agnes

At that time when the day dabs black into its brightnesses, the tweed of noises unravels into disparate threads that tie up nothing and lose, each to silence, and you decide whether to love me like a failed angel some hours hence, and the children find the places in the cubes of their own memory that will forget, in end, most of all of us, I hope you will say yes.

And we genuflect. Or I genuflect and you bestow what have you on the limber cork of our floating bed, that has floated several centuries of seas it seems, or seems in one flecked opal instant new as a Florida honeymoon, the currants sweet, the palms green replete with those who saw us off, relatives and guests now lost, whispered into gray or dead, yet found within its welcome circle faces of these self-same boys, or girl who earn their sleep in a fine house of flowers, ringed with night-lights and the unused trumpet of morning, its sound a kingdom come among the company we keep, among the brilliant blacknesses, the dawning.

~ Al Rocheleau, Immediate Past President, Florida State Poets Association
Hope

Hope is the squirrel that busily gathers nuts to carry him through winter blizzards.
Hope is the crocus that lies dormant under snow silently awaiting spring thaw.
Hope is the flickering ember that bursts into flame to provide warmth to the cold.
Hope is the mew of a kitten that waits to become the roar of a lion.
Hope is the tightly wound bud awaiting the full bloom of flower.
Hope is the tiny spark that becomes the explosion of majestic fireworks.
Hope is the look on a young veteran’s face as he takes his first step on a prosthetic leg.
Hope is a robin that sits upon her eggs awaiting the crack of life within.
Hope is the newborn’s first intake of air that produces a loud lusty cry instantly changing one’s life forever.
Hope surrounds us daily becoming the miracle of which we bravely cling before the seed of life quickens the soul.

~ BJ Alligood
Member, Florida State Poets Association

Ode to the New Year

Dust settles in patterns
On the clean surface
Of the tilted mirror

Sand filters down
Through the narrow
Opening of the hourglass

In the gathering twilight
Of another magic hour
Gravity pulls us down

Into the receptive earth
Our point of view
Floats upward

We are stardust rising
A living speck of dust
To settle and be born again

~ Joe Cavanaugh, Vice President
National Federation of State Poetry Societies
Past President, Florida State Poets Association
Arpeggio

*Hope is the thing with feathers.*
--Emily Dickinson

I’d almost forgotten
how good anticipation feels,
but then a blackbird came
and sang to me. He ruffled
his feathers, threw his head
back and he sang. Another
blackbird joined him, and then
another. The trio of grackles
created a cacophony.

Other species joined them --
mourning doves and blue jays,
mocking birds and cardinals –
otherwise drawn to water and food,
but now each one sang along,
and somewhere in the myriad
of separate voices,
a symphony was formed.

The birds sang simple truths
of touch and hope, the joys of sharing.
Their song, a gift that’s left by ancients.
And now, with time beside us as we spiral,
the harmony resounds. Arpeggio…
Anticipation signals the essential.
If I follow, it might even lead to love.

~ Tere Starr, President
Miami Poets chapter

*Previously published in Second Monday Muse,
an Anthology of South Florida Poets*

Changelings

Residents finish their lunch
in the dining hall.
Those on walkers or folded
into wheelchairs approach
a table where a milkweed branch
leans inside a large glass jar.

A snuggle of silk
attached to the branch
conceals any struggle inside.
But now there is movement
and a glimpse of color.
Gnarled fingers grasp the table’s edge
as a monarch butterfly begins
to emerge from its chrysalis.
And then, suddenly freed,
church-window wings swing open.

The old ones know struggle,
for the swiftness of aging
and the process of change
took them by surprise.
Yet, something new and wonderful
could happen, for sometimes,
inside them, they feel
the hopeful flutter of wings.

~ Janet Watson, NRP President Emeritus
Member, Florida State Poets Association
There is perhaps no greater symbol of the American West than the American buffalo, or more correctly, bison. The largest land animal in North America, it has endured as an icon of our heritage, spirit and culture. Its very existence has been an instrumental link to our past—both good and bad—and efforts to restore these magnificent animals are also representative of an optimistic future. Once threatened to the brink of extinction, bison are doing quite well today. Thanks to private-government partnerships, herds can now be seen in many states and number in the tens of thousands.

~ Excerpt from the Texas Parks and Wildlife website
Native Hope

The headlines read
An epic journey from
Near extinction to celebration
A rare bison returns
DNA proves it

Many see it as a sign of hope
Hope for a species
Some think - hope for a people

Bison coming from the verge of extinction
Should inspire Native hope

Despite opinions
Natives never lost hope

For over 500 years
We have endured
We have survived

Our DNA is strong
Our heritage is strong
Our culture is strong

Yes we celebrate
The survival of a species

Our hope is not
In the bison
Our hope is
In ourselves

In who we are
Our hope is part of our DNA

~ Howard Moon, Fox Tribe Heritage
Member, Florida State Poets Association

The images on these two pages were taken in a place called Caprock in the panhandle of Texas. They are by fifth generation Floridian Allen Butt.
There for You

Within uncounted galaxies
that swirl inside your mind,
within those folds and vortices
that stir imagination’s breeze,
there’s hope of every kind.

It’s there for you to find.

~ Mark Andrew James Terry
Editor, Of Poets & Poetry, and
Vice President, Florida State Poets Association

The Tourist

Steel blue eyes with a look
from beyond the veil
announces an angelic adventure.
The softness of her fur cushions fear.

Her heart knows only beauty
of the journey.
Tastes the music of diversity.
Delights in its artistry.

Secure in the benevolence of life,
with the wisdom of sweetness
smoothly sighs
you can relax now.

Pack your well worn suitcase
painted in vibrancy and wonder.
Smell the colors of a new day.
Surrender to the gushing fountain of joy
that awaits you along the way.

~ Sonja Jean Craig, Secretary,
Florida State Poets Association

Coveting Hope

May the echoes of hope
that travel the pews of humanity
lift you above the face of uncertainty.
May you catch the storm
and then release it,
certain that it will not return.
May you open your eyes
to peace coveting forever
and may you in your passage
turn to somewhere you can go
beyond the language of dragons.

~ Mary Rogers-Grantham
Member, Florida State Poets Association
Many Voices, One World

after the bombing is silent
and people, ordinary people
begin to fit the shattered shards
of their lives together again
a song is heard in the rubble-filled
streets
the song of a little child warbling
like a sparrow in the spring
perhaps she found
a flower blooming in the ruins

wherever there is tumult, anger, pain
and death
humanity lifts its many voices once again
from every land
even from those where each dawn is not certain
and evening is a lying down to defeat
but all hope is not gone
where there are songs

songs of hope, songs of peace
songs of joy, songs of beauty
songs to farm with, songs to dance by
songs to give birth, songs to die
songs of passion, songs of longing
songs of blessings, songs of prayer
songs of thanksgiving, songs of gratitude
songs of compassion, love and lullabies

songs are humanities’ hymn to life
songs are our love letters to ourselves
and to the world
each voice alone is not alone
if joined by one more and then one more
becoming
many voices, one world

~ Gordon L Magill, President
Big Bend Poets & Writers

every hour has an angel

sign of love language
every hour has an angel
with a sound message
hour hand holding
vespers sounding the silence
as eternity
each hour a season
or maybe a stage or station
hours of the day
morning glory
first response to a heart ache
day breaks into dawn
right now sojourn
through the hours of the mom
evening whispers
a pathway witness
breath of air prayer in wisdom
enlightens the lamp
circle gathering
like music never ending
quietly tuning
spirit travelers
the intermediaries
earthlings heavenly
deep purple with wings
da day curves back on itself
endarkenment shines
hourglass fades time
the passing of everything
we are not alone
in life’s impermanence
night watcher changes the light
in quest of questions
something permanent
knits back that which was broken
the now of no time
renewed by new view
a primordial freshness
the gift of existence

~ Linda Marie Cossa
Big Bend Poets & Writers
There in the wide sky, I hold
you in a split of time, it was when
you held me by my hands, and there
in the wild bare fields you stood
with hope. No one else.

You keep it so close to my heart,
hope for the each of us, even when
hope has lost its air, like a round red ball.

All we have is now,
here and now on this small patch of earth
lit by the smile of the moon.

So soon, we catch ourselves in a well of light,
mending as we step to the next way
with eyes wide and full of hope.

~ Carlton Johnson
Member, Florida State Poets Association

Hope
(a nonent)

The enemy descends, stalks the earth.
Unseen it hovers, bringing death.
It mocks foolish dismissal,
Snatches the old and sick,
Reaps next healthy youths.
We pray to God,
Seek a cure.
He hears.
Hope.

~ Cheryl Lynn West
Member, Florida State Poets Association

Be the Hope

The morning light brings a certain dread
Thoughts go racing through my head
I toss and turn from side to side
I want to stay in bed and hide.

I can’t see where the day will go
Visions of darkness drape my soul
I stand alone, silently
What will my day bring to me?

But there’s a spark within the dark
Life could bring good things
Be the hope when you can’t cope
The pendulum always swings.

With the glimmer of the evening light
I feel things will be all right
I walk a tightrope every day
I have found a better way.

Hope is bright, hope is dim.
Hope is all you have in the end,
aids the desperate, calms the brave
The pendulum swings — it never stays.

There’s a spark within the dark
Life could bring good things
Be the hope when you can’t cope
The songbird always sings.

Go left or right, up or down?
Turn your attitude around
and you will see
the pendulum will swing
for you and me.

~ Elaine Person, Member
Florida State Poets Association,
with Wilson Wingo and Leo Preziosi Jr.
Pandora’s Paradox

She opened mythical box
releasing all human ills
Only one thing remained encased
Why was hope in box at all?
It was sole positive notion
housed with world’s foul afflictions
Was cynical Nietze right
calling hope worst of evils,
for it prolongs the torment of men?
No, Nietze was wrong!
Most great things derive from our
best wishes, beliefs, desires
Even when outcomes dash them,
our hopes carried us through
tumult, tough times, tragedies
It is truly utile, not futile
Let loose the boxed prisoner, Pandora
It’s not treasure to be hoarded or hidden
It belongs in the world so let it spring forth eternal,
that which we call HOPE
~ Gary Ketchum, President,
New River Poets

Russia and Argentina

Yevgeny Yevtushenko!
I read your “Night of Poetry” and I am awed
I sleep with pens and a yellow legal pad beside my bed
Yet nothing so wonderful day or night pops into my head
As the poetry you and your friends read around the campfire
On the banks of the pure blue river running deep in the
woods of Siberia In the dark night under stars hanging
down big as lanterns
Over Bratsk, where you have built the great power plant.
For the first time in my life I long to be a Russian!
It’s more than the way you describe your beautiful country
It’s your love of life that I admire
The intensity of your feeling
Your poetry, your music, your animated conversation.
Each person reading his or her own verse
While the thick soup cooks in the kettle over the open fire
While vodka disappears down burning throats
While the showoffs dance kicking up their boots
While women offer their delicious mouths in the woods
And Serenka, your accordion player, squeezes out a tango
From the distant Argentine. Ah, the Argentine!
Can it be as beautiful as your Bratst? In a few hours
The Argentine will be under its own starry sky, yes,
Under this same fat, yellow moon Climbing up the horizon
like a giant wall clock Honoring the hours of the night
Is someone there, in Cordoba, on the pampas Picking up a
Spanish guitar and softly, sweetly Playing “Moscow Nights”
in answer to your tango On the other side of the world, in
the Argentine? Do I hear Juan Gelman reading his poetry
Reading from “Unthinkable Tenderness”?
Yes, and it is the same Juan Gelman whose family Fled
Russia during the Revolution to find sanctuary In
Argentina, only years later to have Argentine Generals in
their Dirty War against the people Arrest Gelman’s young
son and wife
And murder them both, just as Stalin arbitrarily
Sent both of Yevtushenko’s grandfathers to the Gulag.
Explain it to me! Tell me! Tell me! I do not understand.
Is there no government that will let its people live in
peace? Listen, friends! Pick up your ears! Listen to the
wind rising! For the wind carries the voices of the poets forever
Around the curve of the Earth in oratorical orbit
Hear the two poetic voices calling out across the oceans
From Russia!
From Argentina as with one voice:
“Love one another! Only love one another”

~ Sherwood Ross, Miami Poet
The last poem Sherwood read in public
Published postumously

~ Gary Ketchum, President,
New River Poets
Evening News

We’ll be closing today, once again, with some astronomically good news.

Imperceptibly small particles and molecules continue to change the whole atmosphere day after day, with each setting sun, without even knowing their impact scattering the blues away, out of sight bringing warm colors of comfort to light.

We’ll be back tomorrow, with a new day, a new sunrise, a new chorus of birdsongs.

Until then, we leave you to enjoy an evening with the stars

and, overnight, any world of wonders you can dream…

~ Linda Eve Diamond
Member, Florida State Poets Association

Park Bench Canticle

Where is hope?
Can I pluck it from a tree?
Hope is seeing my mother hold me though my father means me harm.

Where is peace?
Need I chase it through the streets?
Peace is sitting squarely in the middle of the storm.

Where is faith?
In clinging tightly to a steeple?
Faith is knowing I have wings because there is a breeze.

Where is joy?
Must I walk each step a cripple?
Joy is hearing music every time you speak.

~ Tom Kelly, Member
Florida State Poets Association
- Nikki Fragala Barnes
  Member, Florida State Poets Association

- Inhale
  Consuming
  this small
  but powerful
  light,
  with air's
  permeating
  force.
  Consuming
  cold, the
  fire
  between
  your
  nearly
  winning
  hands.
  Consuming
  cold, the
  fire
  between
  your
  nearly
  winning
  hands.
An enthusiastic group of poets attended a reception at the Art Museum DeLand on November 20. Each poet had their work chosen to accompany a work of art from the museum’s permanent collection. The poetry was displayed next to the work of art. Guests were encouraged to vote for their favorite over a period of time that the show was displayed.

Curator (and FSPA member) Kevin Campbell was styling that night in his traditional West African dashiki as he emceed the event. One by one, each poet stood by the artwork and read. Every poem was as unique as the poets themselves. It was incredible to hear the creative poems that the artwork inspired. Robyn Weinbaum, Darlene J. Stewart, Mary Rogers-Grantham, Sonja Jean Craig, Elaine Person, Marc Davidson, Dawn Gonzalez, Mark Andrew James Terry, and Shanequa Bernard were there.

Nancy Belle Anderson was awarded 1st place for her work Pantaloon Moon; Debo rah Jean McShane was awarded 2nd place for her work State of Mine; and Timothy S. Deary was awarded 3rd place for his work Those Three Chairs. The winner of the video contest was Aleathia Dupree for her work That Blue Black Love. The videos can be viewed on The Art Museum DeLand YouTube channel:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCcLXgmMjsMehPfGY1yCFqmw

The esteemed judges that chose the finalists were Dr. David B. Axelrod, Joe Cavanaugh, Al Rocheleau, Dr. Ranji Shankar-Brown, Mary Ann Westbrook and consultant Donna Gray-Banks. They, as well as Kevin Campbell, wrote poems to the art work, their poems are found in the companion book along with the 34 finalists, Poetic Visions Poetry Competition and Exhibition 2020 Anthology.

(Continued on the next page)
The idea for the competition, the events, and the form the competition took was a collaborative effort by Pam Coffman (Museum of Art-DeLand), Judy Thompson (Museum of Art-DeLand and MainStreet Art and Culture Slam of DeLand), and Kevin Campbell (MainStreet Art and Culture Slam of DeLand and Creative Happiness Institute). The contest was sponsored by the Museum of Art-DeLand, MainStreet Art and Culture Slam of DeLand, and Creative Happiness Institute. The competition was curated by Kevin Campbell (MainStreet Art and Culture Slam of DeLand). Vivian Campbell, in her capacity as Event Manager of MainStreet Art and Culture Slam of DeLand and as a board member of The African-American Museum of the Arts DeLand (AAMA), helped with the planning and coordinating of SUMMER SLAM.

SUMMER SLAM, which occurred September 26th, was organized by Vivian Campbell, Mary Allen (of the AAMA), Dr. David Axelrod, Pam Coffman (Museum of Art-DeLand), and Kevin Campbell. SUMMER SLAM was sponsored by MainStreet Art and Culture Slam of DeLand, The African-American Museum of The Arts DeLand, Creative Happiness Institute, and Orlando Poetry Slam. The Poetic Visions poets were showcased there at the Thin Man Watts Amphitheater, named after Noble “Thin Man” Watts, a jazz legend native to DeLand, as a part of the slam poetry competition. The Poetic Visions winner was Aleathia Dupree (pictured above) for her poem, That Blue Black Love. Joe Cavanaugh (FSPA) emceed the Poetic Visions segment of SUMMER SLAM. Ray Jimenez (Orlando Poetry Slam) emceed the poetry slam segment. Dr. David Axelrod emceed the Open Mic.

On October 17th there was another event organized by Dr. David Axelrod and sponsored by Creative Happiness institute, Ormond Beach Main Street, Ormond Beach Arts District, and Tomoka Poets. It was a lovely afternoon looking over the river and sharing our connection through poetry. Several Poetic Visions poets read. The winner was Sonja Jean Craig for her poem Splash of Springtime Force.

The Art Museum DeLand was so impressed by the success of the show, they are planning to hold it yearly. The collaboration of poetry and art has found a welcoming home: 600 N. Woodland Boulevard, DeLand, FL.

Left to right, top to bottom:
Sonja Jean Craig, Marc Davidson, Mary Rogers Grantham, Mary-Ann Westbrook, Mark Andrew James Terry, Robyn Weinbaum, and Kevin Campbell
After years of freelancing as a writer while teaching herself how to publish and design book covers, Zorina Frey decided to pursue an MFA in creative writing at Converse College. She said that the endeavor took faith to pursue such a profession since poetry and creative writing in general doesn’t appear to be one of the top paying career choices—that is unless you get lucky and Hollywood calls.

Before Zorina enrolled in an MFA program, she set out to accomplish everything she thought one might get out of the degree. She published her own books, founded a literary magazine and even performed at colleges. Still, Zorina knew that she was missing something.

“As my losing streak in poetry slams grew more humiliating, it became clear that what I was missing was depth,” she said.

Zorina admits that she is quite skilled in writing poetic rants, proclamations and even testimonies, but claims her messages always resonated above the surface—never, as she says “scraping the scab to bleed my truth. That after all, was too hard!” Zorina went on to say that it’s much easier to insinuate, which is fine with poetry, but for depth, she knew the story within her poetry needed to include her.

“Apparently, I need a team of writers to pull the ‘me’ out and onto paper!” she joked.

Zorina chose to get her master’s degree in creative writing because she wants to teach at a collegiate level, and knew she needed the letters behind her name to ensure eligibility. She has enjoyed many accolades, but also has experienced rejection. This has taught her that her poetry can always be better.

Zorina is an active member of FSPA’s Miami Poets Chapter.

How rich do you have to be to eat fruit from a tree?

Rocky alleys serve as shortcuts toward the black side of my neighborhood.
Red-lined.
Quiet. We were respectful.
Our neighbor’s Doberman was not.
His white owners loved their black dog they kept in their back yard.
Another white neighbor had a green apple tree that hung over the alley providing us a bitter offering
I tasted as the Doberman’s warning barked.

~ Zorina Frey
Celebrity Status

Promising beginnings of a new year
always start off hopeful.
Phone calls. Bookings.
Schools events, community organizations
finally notice me with pay.
Flyers, promos, bios, photos.
Correlate dates. Figure out vacation days.
Request time off.
Buy a new outfit to show off.
Event Coordinator meets me in the lobby
treating me like red carpet royalty.
Be our guests!

Green Room Butler offers bottled water with Cheez-its.
Welcoming Couch Cushions folds me in, wrinkling my button-up.
Let Me Take Your Coat asks if I need anything else.

Urban Arts wants a recording of my voice.
An African American Inner-City Anthology.
A beast on the mic, my tongue pricks the last stanza.

The clock strikes twelve,
I bit the apple.
It’s time to sleep.
Like God said to Eve,
it’s time to leave.

I thought it was because I had talent.
Turned out I have dark melanin.
Public television. Lights, camera, BI-action!

It’s February. Who’s Black?
Book that! Forget that!
It’s time to March. Madness!

Dreaming I’m a celebrity in February.
All I had to do was show up. Be Black.
So, some organizations can affirm they’re going to heaven
or awarded another grant.

~ Zorina Frey
I Remember When This Used to Be Fun

When South Bend’s Main Street was paved with bricks and 
buses cost a quarter,

We skipped down the street to Dainty Maids for Long John Donuts 
Stuffing bus transfers in our pockets,

we strolled toward the new 1st Source Bank building made of glass 
where we rode the see-through elevators

crouching as the transparent box rose to the glass ceiling 
enjoying a carnival-like ride.

“This is not permitted,” the attorney in the elevator tells us.

The bell rings on my floor
I let passers-by exit ahead 
me, following behind pushing my shiny mail cart 
wanting to get off this ride.

~ Zorina Frey

Published poetry collection by 
Zorina Frey

Link to the book
Laurel and Wreath

And how do we write of the air that’s undone, of down-turning roses; diminishing sun; of breeze-sifted willows where heartaches attest, of heavenly pillows where poets now rest?

And how will this vacancy portion itself? Invading the cobwebs of library shelf, or in between pixels as hours go by, re-reading your passages, eyes shunning sky?

There is no assemblage of pictures of you replacing the laughter and conscience we knew. There is no retracing your smiling-eye lines, or honest critiques that a friendship defines.

There is no soft whisper, the sound of your voice, to offer assurance or choice to rejoice. There’s only remembrance of moments we shared when we were together, our poetry paired.

We’re marking this passage of all that we knew, your confidant penning in full-flavoured roux; your patience to listen without being judge, to offer advice with those edits you’d nudge.

We’re marking your time and your verse mastery, to find you once more, you souls that are free. To relive the landscapes that made up your life, your joy of belief and your stance against strife.

You’re there in those poems, what now you bequeath, a treasure we measure with laurel and wreath.

~ Photo and poem by Mark Andrew James Terry
Leslie Halpern, author, journalist, teacher, poet and leader of Orlando and Florida State Poets died suddenly on December 19, 2019. A graduate of the University of Kentucky and the Rollins College Masters of Liberal Studies program, she wrote for The Hollywood Reporter, Daily Variety, Orlando Sentinel, and more. Her books include Reel Romance: The Lovers’ Guide to the 100 Best Date Movies and Dreams on Film: The Cinematic Struggle Between Art and Science. In addition she wrote a Silly Childrens’ Poem series. Her latest book, Poodles & Doodles, Poems about Dogs told of her travails raising her newly-adopted puppy, Snickerdoodle.

Leslie won numerous awards for her writing from Florida State Poets. At State conventions her name was announced over and over for her winning poems, and beads jangled around her neck. She also won the Editor’s Award for Poetry from the Gwendolyn Brooks Writer’s Association of Florida, but her greatest award was her son, Alexander, of whom she was extremely proud.

“Leslie Halpern was one of us,” said Al Rocheleau, former president of Florida State Poets Association. “She was first well-known as a prose writer in Florida, a writer of stories, memoirs, travelogues, reviews of the arts, especially of film, and also of works for children. All these genres in which she was expert somehow left enough threads of gold rime for ventures into the ‘undiscovered country’ of poetry,” he said.

“Leslie was deeply thoughtful, poignant at times, funny, yet always a person of order and decorum,” Mr. Rocheleau said. “Leslie Halpern was competent at anything she did,” he continued: “I can say that Leslie loved her son, and was hopeful for his future, as well as for her own. I think she was hopeful for all of us.”

~ Alice R. Friedman FSPA Member
Robert E. Blenheim, Robert E. Blenheim, age 73, national award-winning poet, writer, singer and film scholar of Daytona Beach, Florida, died from COVID-19 pneumonia. He was born in Boston, Massachusetts and in 1959 moved to Daytona Beach, Florida. Before graduating from Mainland Senior High School in 1965, he had written, directed and produced several student films, including “The Fangs of Dracula”. In 1999, he graduated with an Associate in Arts Degree from Daytona Beach Community College, where he also taught film appreciation seminars for over 5 years. Robert won more than 130 national and state poetry awards and was the founder and president of the poetry group The Live Poets Society of Daytona Beach in 1992. He was a mentor to many poets and served as a past president for the Florida State Poets Association and was an active member of other poetry organizations. Through the years Robert performed in several theater productions, with his most memorable performance as Koko in Gilbert & Sullivan’s “The Mikado” at the Sands Theatre in 2008. He worked for over 26 years as Special Publications Editor and Typesetter for the Daytona Beach Pennysaver and News-Journal, until retiring around 2012 and was an active member and volunteer for the Volusia Democratic Party and the ACLU.

Madelyn Eastlund Hickey, a Brooklyn, New York native, was born July 13, 1928 and passed away on September 5, 2020 in Inverness, Florida. She was preceded in death by her devoted second husband Joseph V. Hickey Sr. and stepson Joseph V. Hickey Jr. (Donna), Madelyn is survived by her daughter Deborah Louise Halstead and son Daniel John Halstead Sr. (Susan), and stepson Thomas Hickey and stepdaughter Kathleen Latia (Richard), grandchildren Daniel John Halstead Jr., Nichole Halstead (Alex), Shannon Hickey Staunch, Judith Simons, Daniel Simons (Mary), Richard Simons and many great-grandchildren.

Upon arriving from California in 1980, Madelyn and Joe were instrumental in starting the local Boy Scout Troop. Madelyn was a devout Lutheran and enjoyed membership in Good Shepherd Lutheran Church where she taught Sunday School and sang in the choir. From early childhood, Madelyn was a gifted writer of poetry and prose, many of her poems and stories have been published and received various writing awards. She was included in the 1975 Women’s Book of Who’s Who. For many years she was owner/editor of Twigs and Verdure poetry publications.
Sherwood Ross, Sherwood was a loyal and giving friend, a loving and doting father and grandfather, and a champion for human rights. He was a prolific and talented writer which served him well as a journalist, activist, song-writer and poet. A man full of vitality and spark, he passed away at the age of 85 from injuries resulting from a traumatic fall that happened while he was walking to his gym in Little Havana. Shortly before his fall, Sherwood published his last collection of poems, *The Sailor and The Lady in Red, And 25 Other Poems*, including the verse play *Baron Jiro*. Sherwood won 1st place prizes from the Florida State Poet’s Association for “Bon Voyage,” a poem about the death of a former lover, followed by “The Egret,” “O, Guitar!” and “The Astronomers.”

Sherwood was a beloved and renowned figure in the Miami poetry scene. Whether at the Miami Poets’ Soiree, The Famous Last Fridays poetry reads at Books and Books, University of Miami’s U-Speak, or O-Miami Poetry events, the room always got quiet when he would read his poetry; all would be transfixed by his stories and experiences brought to life with his purposeful, gravelly, melodious voice.

Sherwood Ross’ works traversed the subjects of life, justice, love, and humor. He began writing poetry in high school and in 1955, while a senior at University of Miami, wrote 15-minute poetry scripts for *The Vagabond* TV show. In the 1980s Sherwood began writing songs for the *Fast Folk Musical Magazine*. Several of his songs, including his “hit” song “I Sliced Pastrami for the CIA,” are captured in the Smithsonian’s Fast Folk archives.

A civil rights activist, Sherwood was News Director for the National Urban League and served as Press Coordinator for James Meredith on his March Against Fear in Mississippi in June, 1966. When Meredith was shot down next to him, Ross helped get Meredith to a hospital and his eye-witness report made headlines around the world. It is this dramatic incident that was the subject of one of Sherwood’s most memorable epic poems, “Jesus in Mississippi.” The Rev. Martin Luther King personally acknowledged Sherwood for the “wonderful things” he had done for the Civil Rights movement.

Many of Sherwood’s poems were strong statements denouncing violence and tyranny. The night before his tragic accident, Sherwood recited “Russia and Argentina” on *The New American Dream* radio show. His anti-war poems such as “War No More” and “America, The Imperial” can be found on the U.S. Peace Memorial Registry. Sherwood’s poem “Hiroshima” was widely republished on the internet to commemorate the anniversary of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945.

Over his lifetime Sherwood wrote heartfelt and powerful poems that could make the reader laugh, cry and sometimes blush. His six published collections of poetry leave us a lasting legacy of a truly astounding human being whose life was an epic poem in itself.

~ Sheena Powell Szuri
Poetry Extravaganza in the Making

Daytona Beach, FL — All you poets who are fed up with isolation and staying in with nothing to do but rewatch reruns repeatedly will no doubt rejoice at the feast of poetry creation we’ve got lined up for you this coming year.

For 2021 we have lined up 26 Categories in which you may compete. Your skills will be tested, your wits will be challenged and hopefully a lot of masterpieces will emerge victorious. The poetry contest will kick off May 1 when submissions start to be accepted. The submission period runs through July 15. And we urge you to get your submissions in timely. This past year we had one set of submissions which arrived months late due to the Post Offices’ delays, although it had been postmarked on time, and we had a heck of a fuss over accepting it or not. It’s right there in the rules: “FSPA will not be responsible for errors of delivery by the Post Office. We will acknowledge receipt of your entries as we receive them. If you do not receive a timely acknowledgment, contact us immediately at flueln@hotmail.com.” We wouldn’t want you to miss out on your chance to win a nice prize and some notice.

After July 15, the judging will commence, and the winners will be announced (and prizes distributed) at our annual fall convention in October. Naturally, we hope you’ll be there to collect your prize and read your winning poem to the assembled multitudes.

Below you’ll find the list of categories, and the rules and schedule for the contest. If there are any further questions, you can always email me at flueln@hotmail.com for answers. I hope to see entries from everyone!

~ Marc Davidson, Contest Chairman for 2021

LIST OF FSPA 2021 CONTESTS’ CATEGORIES

# 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.) Entry fee $3 per poem for FSPA members,
$4 for non-members. Limit 2 poems.
Sponsored by FSPA, Inc.

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

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

# 5 WILLARD B. FOSTER MEMORIAL AWARD
Subject: Food. Form: Nonet, Haiku, Tanka, Etheree, Whitney, Ninette, Septolet, etc.
Line Limit according to form.
1st PL $25. 2nd PL $15. 3rd PL $10. 3 HM
Sponsored by John F. Foster

# 6 THE RONDEAU AWARD
Subject: Kindness. Form: Rondeau.
Formal rhyme scheme, 3 stanzas, 15 Lines.
1st PL $25. 2nd PL $15. 3rd PL $10. 3 HM
Sponsored by Judith and Randy Krum

(continued on the next page)
7) JUNE OWENS MEMORIAL AWARD
   Subject: Dancers. Form: Any. 40 Line Limit.
   1st PL $25. 2nd PL $15. 3rd PL $10. 3 HM
   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. 3 HM
   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. 3 HM
   Sponsored by New River Poets

10) ALFRED VON BROKOPH AWARD
    Subject: Love, the good, the bad and the sad.
    Form: Any lyrical. 30 Line Limit.
    1st PL $40. 2nd PL $20. 3rd PL $10. 3 HM
    Sponsored by G. Kyra Von Brokoph

11) HOWARD & SANDY GORDON MEMORIAL AWARD
    Subject: Parents and/or Grandparents.
    Form: Any. 50 Line Limit.
    1st PL $35. 2nd PL $25. 3rd PL $15. 3 HM
    Sponsored by Peter and David Gordon

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

13) NOAH WEBSTER AWARD
    Subject: Select any word of 6 or more syllables and
    make a poem on it.
    Form: Any rhyming. 46 Line Limit.
    1st PL $25. 2nd PL $15. 3rd PL $10. 3 HM
    Sponsored by Marc Davidson

14) KATE KENNEDY MEMORIAL AWARD
    Subject: Chocolate. Form: Any. 40 Line Limit.
    1st PL $25. 2nd PL $15. 3rd PL $10. 3 HM
    Sponsored by B.J. Alligood

15) 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. 3 HM
    Sponsored by FSPA, Inc.

16) PAST PRESIDENTS AWARD
    Subject: Any. Form: Any fixed form between 9 and 30
    lines including section breaks. 30 Line Limit.
    1st PL $25. 2nd PL $15. 3rd PL $10. 3 HM
    Sponsored by Past Presidents of FSPA

17) CURRENT ISSUES AWARD
    Form: Blank Verse. 14 Line Limit
    1st PL $25. 2nd PL $15. 3rd PL $10. 3 HM
    Sponsored by Frank Yanni

18) ORLANDO AREA POETS AWARD
    Subject: Behind the Façade.
    Form: Any. 40 Line Limit.
    1st PL $25. 2nd PL $15. 3rd PL $10. 3 HM
    Sponsored by Orlando Area Poets

19) LESLIE HALPERN MEMORIAL AWARD
    Subject: Dreams.
    Form: Any. 40 Line Limit.
    1st PL $25. 2nd PL $15. 3rd PL $10. 3 HM
    Sponsored by Robyn Weinbaum

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

21) DORSIMBRA AWARD
    Subject: Any. Form: Dorsimbra. 12 Line Limit.
    1st PL $25. 2nd PL $15. 3rd PL $10. 3 HM
    Sponsored by Joyce Shiver

22) CHILDHOOD AWARD
    Subject: Children, reading, writing or both
    Form: Any. 40 Line Limit.
    1st PL $40. 2nd PL $20. 3rd PL $15. 3 HM
    Sponsored by Bookseedstudio

23) WEINBAUM/GLIDDEN AWARD
    Subject: Issues and concerns faced by LGBTQ
    Community and those who love them.
    Form: Any. 40 Line Limit.
    1st PL $25. 2nd PL $15. 3rd PL $10. 3 HM
    Sponsored by Robyn Weinbaum

24) THE ENCHANTMENT AWARD
    Subject: Paranormal, Fantasy, SciFi.
    Form: Any. 40 Line Limit.
    1st PL $25. 2nd PL $15. 3rd PL $10. 3 HM
    Sponsored by Sonja Jean Craig

(continued on the next page)
#25 MIAMI POETS AWARD
Subject: Friendship. Form: Any. 50 Line Limit.
1st PL $25. 2nd PL $15. 3rd PL $10. 3HM
Sponsored by Miami Poets

#26 EKPHRASTIC POEM – Writing inspired by art
Subject: An Ekphrastic Poem inspired by a painting, photograph, sculpture or other piece of visual art. Include name of piece. Form: Any. 50 line limit.
1st Prize: $25. 2nd Prize: $15. 3rd Prize: $10. 3 HM
Sponsored by Elaine Person

CONTEST RULES:
Please read carefully and follow all directions. Any violations will disqualify submission.

1. ALL POEMS MUST:
   • be the original work of the poet
   • be unpublished in any form
   • not have won more than $10 in any contest
   • be written in English
   • be titled unless a sijo or haiku
   • have a 40 lines limit unless stated otherwise
   • not be simultaneously entered in any other contest

2. CATEGORY SPECIFICS:
   • The same poem must not be entered in more than one category.
   • Categories 1 & 2 are limited to 2 entries per category per poet.
   • Categories 3 through 19 are limited to one entry per category per poet.

3. FORMAT:
   • Typed, single-spaced on one side of 8.5” x 11” white paper. No illustrations.
   • Submit 2 copies – both with category name and number on upper left.
   • Poet’s name, address, phone and email on duplicate copy only on upper right.
   • Mail all entries together in one envelope with check or money order payable to FSPA, Inc. using regular first class mail.

4. FEES:
   • Categories 1 & 2 are $3 per poem for FSPA members, $4 for non-members (2 poem limit per category).
   • Category 16 is free to FSPA members only – non-members pay $3.00.
   • Remaining categories are $2 each per contest for FSPA members and $3 each per contest for non-members. Please do not send cash. Make checks or money orders payable to FSPA, Inc.

5. PUBLISHING RIGHTS:
   • Poets give FSPA, Inc. exclusive first printing rights to all 1st place winning poems awarded in the FSPA, Inc. Annual Contest.
   • 1st Place winning poems will be printed in the FSPA anthology.
   • The Editor reserves the right to alter line breaks of more than 50 characters per line, including spaces.
   • Printing rights revert to the poet after the anthology is published (October 2021)

SUBMISSION PERIOD:
• May 1 to July 15, 2021
• July 15, 2021 is the “Postmarked By” deadline. FSPA will not be responsible for errors of delivery by the Post Office. We will acknowledge receipt of your entries as we receive them. If you do not receive a timely acknowledgement, contact us immediately at flueln@hotmail.com.

MAIL ENTRIES TO:
Marc Davidson
PO Box 730838
Ormond Beach, FL 32173

Winners’ names will be posted October 2021 on the FSPA website.
Spread Our Joy!

If you are like me, you LOVE being a member of FSPA. There are a lot of poets in our state that do NOT know about our Association! We need to increase awareness, and ENCOURAGE others to join. Doing this LOCALLY is the best way to increase our membership.

♥ Make a flier about your local chapter and post it in the library, coffee shops and other places around your community
♥ Plan an event with your local library of a poetry reading by your chapter. Be SURE to have information on how people can attend your meetings at the event.
♥ Send a flier to your local University (or high school) literary arts program, and ask that information be included on your local chapter in their packet of information.
♥ TALK about it and INVITE your friends to attend!

We are currently designing a uniform flier for FSPA chapters to utilize to help you get the information out in your local community. Email me with the information you would like on it: date, time, place of your meetings and contact person, OR if you would rather interview prospective members first, just send the name of your chapter, when (not where) and who they should contact, with the contact information. I will send a file back to you. It is up to you to print it and distribute it. Email me at: FSPA_MemberChair@icloud.com

~ Constantina (Dina) Tanner, Membership Chair

Seeking Zoomies

An initiative your FSPA leadership would like to pursue is to encourage and support more interaction between members. The State of Florida is a big place, but technology, encouraged by this awful pandemic, is making these connections possible. We know many of you are out there zooming away with small groups of friends and chapter meetings. We are looking for poet-members who are interested in hosting monthly Zoomies on (but not limited to) the following subjects:

• Form Poetry  • Concrete Poetry  • Haiku, Senryu, Haibun
• Free Verse Poetry  • Slam Poetry  • Advanced poetry critique
• Ecphrasitic Poetry  • Flash Prose  • Beginner poetry critique
• Poets under 45  • Modernists discussion group  • Readings only
• Poets under 45  • Poets under 45

You get the idea. Oh yeah, and make it fun (as if you wouldn’t.)

If you are interested in being a Zoomie host (no, not Zombie — that would be weird), your responsibilities would be to schedule and moderate each Zoomie session, and create a report for OPAP of your activities. Note: Poets joining in your Zoomie would not be required to be a member of FSPA, but we believe, through the interaction, they will see the value of joining. We will promote your Zoomies in OPAP and through FSPA emails. Please send me your Zoomie concept if you are feeling the Zoomieness. Send to mark@TKOrlando.com...thanks!

Zoomza!

~ Mark Andrew James Terry
Zany Zultan of Zoomieness

www.FloridaStatePoetsAssociation.org
“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*
Miami Poets

Miami Poets believe that poetry resonates best when it’s shared. We gather by Zoom.com each first Wednesday for the Virtual Miami Poets Soirées, facilitated by Tere Starr, where we share poetry, friendship and inspiration.

In November we shared poems by featured Miami International Book Fair poets. During December’s gathering, we welcomed the holiday season. On second Mondays, we join Steve Liebowitz for virtual poetry critiques. Zoom's share screen function offers real time editing suggestions.

Achievements: Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk’s poem, “Do I have the Rights to Kill a Cockroach?” was awarded the second place prize in Eber & Wein’s 2019 Contest. Connie Goodman-Milone’s letter, “Election Day,” appeared in the Miami Herald. Her poem, “Florida Panther Cats” won First Place in Poetry in September’s South Florida Writers Association Writing Contest. Pat Bonner Milone was awarded Second Place for her memoir, “A Chill in Rural Redland.” October’s First Place in Poetry went to Jo Christiane Ledakis for “Rowan Feud.” Her poem, “Night Light,” appears in South Florida Writers Association’s Author’s Voice. Patricia Asuncion continues to host the monthly Virtual Global Open Mics from Charlottesville, Virginia. They can be viewed on Patsy’s YouTube channel. Her poem “Finding My Way in Words-Twenty Years with My Husband’s Parkinson’s” appears in Challenges Into Change, The Women’s Initiative 2019-2020. Zorina Frey, Ricki Dorn, Steve Liebowitz and Lori Swick each have video presentations promoting their books in the the South Florida Writer Association’s section of the Miami Book Fair Virtual Marketplace. Tere Starr was selected to take part on a panel for the virtual show, Literary Luminaries, presenting writers from four different genre. Tere continues to host virtual Poetry Soirées for the Brandeis Women’s South Miami Chapter. Poetry remains our priority.

~ Tere Starr, President

Sunshine Poets

Sunshine Poets meets on the second Thursday of each month at 10 am in the Central Ridge Library in Beverly Hills. We study a new form each month and gently critique each other’s poems. Member, Joyce Shiver, lost her husband, Jim, and President, Cheri Herald, was out of town, so we did not meet in October.

~ Cheri Neuman Herald, President

37 www.FloridaStatePoetsAssociation.org
The Live Poets Society of Daytona Beach

Mary-Ann Westbrook, BJ Alligood (both of Tomoka Poets) Kay Stanton and Marc Davidson have had their work accepted for publication in the SAQA (Studio Art Quilt Association) book on undersea life. Their poems will be paired with quilt work and the book will be available on Amazon.

Marc Davidson's anthology, The Isolation Challenge, containing works from 29 poets, most of whom are FSPA members from Central Florida, should be available in about two weeks. Money from sales of the first printing will go entirely to the Jerry Doliner Food Bank, which feeds needy families in Volusia County. This book is dedicated to Robert Blenheim, the late president of the Daytona Live Poets.

Llewellyn McKernan had three poems accepted in Studio Journal, an Australian magazine: “Their Song,” “Evening” and “All Too Human.”

John McKernan has had poems published in the following publications: Stickman Review, Phoebe, Collidescope, Visions International, and Aji Review.

~ Vicki Iorio on behalf of the late Robert E. Blenheim, President

Poetry For the Love Of It

Poetry for The Love Of It (PLOI) continues to conduct virtual meetings. The group welcomed Regina Lewis as a new member. We completed our study of Rudyard Kipling and Woody Guthrie; Gary Snyder remains our notable poet for study in December. Pat Stanford is finalizing our website, (https://wordhacker8.wixsite.com/mysite). When complete, the site will contain published books for sale by members, contact numbers, and links to FSPA generally and OPAP specifically. PLOI’s third anthology, Variegated Verses in a Millennial Age is for sale on Amazon. The group applauded Jan Godown Annino for her poem, “Surfing,” Second Honorable Mention in the FSPA contest. Linda Whitefeather’s poem, “Contact” will be included in a website related to the “Poems on Postcards” exhibit in Wisconsin. Linda also brought to our attention an Artificial Intelligence program (GPT-3) that apparently can write poetry.

~ Charles Hazelip, President
Orlando Area Poets

The Orlando Area Poets winners in the in-house contest of dark poetry sponsored by Mark Andrew James Terry were Andrew Jarvis, with “Redrum,” third place; Lynn Schiffhorst, with “The Cat’s Halloween,” second place; and in first place was Barbara Hart with “The Colors of Butterfly Wings.” The judge was the poet Becki Friend of North Carolina.

We celebrated the results of the FSPA contests with a special meeting on November 5th, reading our recognized poetry in the same manner as would have been done in the convention, with poets reading their work in order from the last to first category and from the third honorable mention to first place. Those Orlando Area Poets members who were recognized in the contests included Lela Buis, Peter Gordon, Carlton Johnson, Diane Neff, Elaine Person, Lynn Schiffhorst, Carolynn Scully, and Mark Terry, for a total of 22 poems in 14 of the 19 categories. Well done, Orlando Area Poets!

Our chapter is currently awaiting results from “The 2020 Official Orlando Area Poets In-House ‘Looking Forward’ Contest.” The winners were announced at our December meeting on Thursday, December 17 at 6:30 p.m. on Zoom.

Our chapter president, Diane Neff, was a guest speaker at the Florida Authors and Publishers Association board meeting on November 11, and Pat Stanford of the FAPA Board of Directors, as well as a member of FSPA in both Poetry For the Love of It and Big Bend Poets, spoke at our monthly meeting on November 19, to explore areas of common interest in writing and publishing.

The Maitland Public Library continues to host writing workshops facilitated by Elaine Person, usually on the third Sunday each month, with a few bonus sessions. The Zoom.com links can be found on the library website calendar. Writing during the workshops is focused on the theme provided by the library for the next Poetry Coffeehouse, scheduled for January 29, 7-9 p.m. The current theme is “Coming of Age.”

Teresa Bruce taught those of us at the November meeting how to create an interrobang. It’s the symbol that combines a question mark and exclamation point into one symbol, like this: ¿ This is why you don’t want to miss our meetings – not only do we have constructive critiques, we learn cool stuff!

Lela Buis published her book-length fantasy work in June titled Case Files of a Spirit Talker. This is available through bookstores and also online. She also won the Halloween Challenge at Tales from the Moonlit Path online magazine this October with a short story titled “Haunted Halloween.”

Peter Gordon’s poem, “Mouthpiece,” was the featured poem for the week of November 1 on the 5-2 Crime Poetry website.

Andrew Jarvis won first place in the Words and Wonders Fall Poetry Contest, sponsored by the City of Orlando, for his poem “Ladybugs.” Link

Carlton Johnson’s poem, “Mountains of Pluto,” was read on Poets Respond on Rattle.com.
Tomoka Poets

Diane Neff read her poem, “Performance,” during her participation at the induction ceremony of the Northwest Florida Poet Laureate, Katherine Nelson-Born. Diane also hosted an informal Thanksgiving Day Zoom Gathering for anyone who simply wanted to chat, but everyone, of course, shared a poem.

Elaine Person’s photo, “Christmas in Orlando, Florida” was in the finals of this year’s London Photo Festival. Participating in Winter Park Paint Out, her poem, “Moonlighting,” appears on www.AllPoetry.com. Her ekphrastic poem, “Motorcycle Man” was displayed and published in the Museum of Art-Deland’s Poetic Visions Poetry Competition and Exhibition 2020 Anthology. Four of her poems were accepted in The Isolation Challenge, including a haiku, a micro-poem, “Just When You Thought You Had It Bad,” and “Is It Just Me? How to Handle Months of Isolation in the Nation.” A haiku will be published in the upcoming book by Studio Arts Quilt Association. Her play, Miss Perception, was read at an Orlando Fringe Festival workshop, and a new play will be read at the CFC Arts Workshop in December. She also performed in Erma’s Got Talent online at the Erma Bombeck conference. She continues to lead workshops at the Maitland Library and the Crealde School.

~ Diane Neff, President

Elaine Person

Tomoka poets continue writing on their own and sharing via Email. We all will be happy when we can be together again.

Marc Davidson, BJ Alligood and Sonja Jean Craig all placed in the Deland Art Museum Poetic Visions poetry contest. David Axelrod and Mary-Ann Westbrook served as judges and also got to write a poem to a painting. All are published in the Poetic Visions anthology.

BJ, Marc and Mary-Ann have all been accepted for publication by SAQA Studio Art Quilt Association’s upcoming book who’s theme is “Under the Sea.” Marc also has been collecting poems from all area poets and has compiled an anthology The Isolation Challenge. This is a collection of poems dealing with COVID-19. It is at the printer now and will be available soon. The proceeds collected from the sale of the book will be donated to the Jerry Doliner Food Bank in the Daytona area which is distributing food to those in need.

We have been fortunate enough to not have had any member deaths in the past year. However, a shirt-tail non-official member, Cliff Gold passed away a short time ago. Cliff was 92 years old. He chaired a poetry group along with other activities at his assisted living facility. He came to and performed at all of our open mics. His poetry consisted of comedy, making fun of all of us and a poignancy that brought tears to everyone’s eyes. He will be greatly missed by all of us.

~ Mary-Ann Westbrook, President
New River Poets

Our chapter continues to meet monthly to share and critique our poetry via Zoom.com sessions. It’s a poor substitute for meeting in person but it’s still a blessing to see and hear one another virtually. We will continue the practice until the vaccinations and with them, the eradication of the COVID-19 threat are in our rear-view mirror.

I’m happy to share that three of our members who had previously been honored with having their poems put on postcards as a part of the Poetry Jumps Off the Shelf program have received further recognition by having those verses published on the website as well. Bravo and brava to John Foster, Janet Watson and Cheryl Van Beek.

Our Ken Clanton shared a poem via email with the group on December 7th about how he spent the same date 79 years ago. What a treasure it is to have an elder statesman like Ken in our group because he could artistically report how he witnessed history on the actual Pearl Harbor Day. Thank you, Ken.

That’s all our news from Pasco County. Please, everyone out there, stay safe and well.

~ Gary Ketchum, President

Big Bend Poets & Writers

The Big Bend Poets & Writers chapter continues to be fairly quiet during this pandemic. Most of our members, like Florida poets everywhere, have been writing from home, and posting poetry on our blog. Many poems are posted. Check out our expanded web site, which Linda Wright manages. Here is the link.

Big Bend Poets & Writers is looking forward to the eventual resumption of our three “live” poetry venues as the pandemic winds down. We hope!

~ Linda Wright, Secretary

for Gordon Magill, President
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.

October saw the launch of our Chapter’s first publication, The Poet’s Pen, a numbered, limited edition volume of poetry. Volume 1 was authored and designed by Ruth Van Alstine. We look forward to 2021 as each of our chapter members will have the opportunity to author and design their own volume of The Poet’s Pen; yet another added-value feature of our membership at North Florida Poetry Hub.org.

November 11th Chapter member Pat Krause led a free Zoom “Limericks” Poetry Workshop for the benefit of our members and the community, a fun evening where we learned to bring out our most humorous selves. It was the second in a series of poetry workshops planned to be held going forward into 2021, the next workshop being “Ekphrastic” Poetry in January.

Also, during the month of November, the Chapter members collaborated with Hope-At-Hand for our first Holiday Card Project. Through this collaborative effort, 300 originally designed cards were donated to local nursing homes in the Jacksonville area to brighten and cheer the residents with holiday poetry and festive greetings. The cards, designed by Hope-At-Hand and NFPH, were filled with poetry written by Chapter members and Hope-At-Hand poetry therapy students. The project was funded through the generosity of Hope-At-Hand.

On November 28th, a well-attended virtual Zoom NFPH Monthly Chapter meeting included our chapter business segment followed with a performance by Chris Kastle, a professional musician and storyteller, songsmith, poet, author, artist, and educator from St Augustine. Chris entertained us with song and storytelling, a captivating performance. It was a special afternoon and enjoyed by all.

2020 was a year fraught with the challenges of COVID-19 and the pandemic. We were faced with the dilemma of finding alternative ways to hold meetings and workshops safely, had to find the courage to change gears and take advantage of new ways of doing things and turn all that into new growth for our Chapter. We look forward to the New Year of 2021 and have hope for healing of our country, excited about the possibilities of a new year to bring the art of poetry to our members and community with innovative technology and creative programming and look forward to a brighter future for the art of poetry in our local communities and outreach to the world.

Happy New Year 2021 ~ from your friends at North Florida Poetry Hub!

~ Ruth Van Alstine, President
TRIumphant Reconciliation

This is the story that is me
of what I used to be,
of what I can become,
as I pass through who I am.

Then.
Me, myself and I,
always a battle,
ever allies.

Me has had some issues,
I thought of herself.
Myself always stayed home,
cleaning off a shelf.

Now.
I knows me much better,
strangers nevermore,
Myself goes more often,
sure we’re not a bore.

Me, myself and I,
never a battle,
always allies.

~ Suzanne S. Austin-Hill

Rebirth

White crystalline flakes,
Unique in fragility,
A union of ones,
Drift in silence,
Merge anew,
Alight
As
1

~ Ruth Van Alstine

Next Issue:
Editor’s Choice Poetry Challenge
Prompt: Image to the left
Form: Petrarchan Sonnet — Link
Submit by: February 1, 2021
to Mark@TKOrlando.com
March/April issue

Image: Dance About the Fire, Tatiana McKinney, 1984, india ink and cut canvas imprint
THE NEW FLORIDA STATE POET LAUREATE STILL YET TO BE ANNOUNCED
Five Florida poets have been named finalists, but as of this publication’s date the selection has not been announced. The finalist are (in alpha order): Carol Frost, David Kirby, Stanley Richardson, Sean Sexton and Virgil Suárez. One of these poets will fill the spot that will be vacated by Poet and FSPA Chancellor Peter Meinke. Peter has served in that role since 2015.

BOOK REVIEW: Whale Day — By Billy Collins

Review by FSPA Member Carl Johnson
Billy Collins’ latest collection of poetry (his 12th) is entitled Whale Day. Former US Poet Laureate and now resident of Winter Park, Collins has made a career of writing poetry which is both witty and thought-provoking as well as accessible to the general public. His twists on what he observes in nature make some of the more amusing and welcoming bits of poetry. In his poem, “Life Expectancy,” Collins writes, “On the morning of a birthday that ended in a zero, I was looking out at the garden when it occurred to me that the robin on her worm-hunt in the dewy grass had a good chance of outliving me.” This statement as well as many others sprinkled through this collection like a gently falling rain, is both amusing and poignant—that we will all perish someday. Until then we have Billy Collins and a refreshing look at poetry in Whale Day. Link to book

NEW RELEASE: Everything Is Made To Sing — Kyra von Brokoph
FSPA Member Kyra von Brokoph announces the publication of a collection of poetry. The publisher is Taylor and Seals and it should be available on Amazon.com by the end of December. Jesse Sam Owens and BJ Alligood each have offered a review on the back cover.

NEW RELEASE: The Poet and the Wondersmith — Joseph Cavanaugh
FSPA Member Joseph Cavanaugh announces the publication of his new children’s book. Now available on Amazon.com. It is just in time to be a great gift for your grandchildren or any young person on your holiday gift list. Link to book

NEW RELEASE: A Thimble of Time — Carlton Johnson
In this debut collection of verse, Florida poet, Carlton Johnson, who is living with the challenges of Progressive Supranuclear Palsy, invites the reader to share his journey in five chapters—from growing up in Baltimore, to living in Florida, to pondering the ending of everything. These poems are sometimes humorous, sometimes lucid, always provoking and inspiring. It is a collection accessible to all who love poetry and those who just want to get reacquainted. A portion of the proceeds from the sale of this book will be going to the PSP Foundation and Parkinson’s Voice Project. Link to book

Happy New Year Poets ~ Mark Andrew James Terry, editor
THE THIRTY-EIGHTH ANNUAL EDITION

of the Florida State Poets Association anthology is now the fourth to wear the name, Cadence. This year’s volume of Cadence is published in a difficult time. Cadence is usually introduced as a highlight of FSPA’s annual convention in October, but because of the pandemic the 2020 gathering was cancelled. Yet, the quality of the poetry in this latest volume speaks to the health of the word-based arts in Florida. While whirlwinds swirl in the culture, poets are keeping the creative spirit alive, and in so doing are proving that reconciliation remains possible if we will only think with the heart. This truth is more important now than ever.

Readers will notice the front cover has an impressionistic quality caused by the irregular surface of the water on which the scene is reflected. It seemed appropriate for these times in which life in general appears to be not quite in focus.

Find it on Amazon at this link

It should also appear on Barnes and Noble and Books a Million as part of Amazon’s expanded marketplace.

To order directly from FSPA, send a check for $15 to:

Gary Broughman
725 Laurel Bay Circle
New Smyrna Beach, FL 32169

Or, use paypal to pay FSPA Treasurer Robyn Weinbaum at FSPAtreasurer@aol.com
A Little Lagniappe:

Amidst the bougainvillea,
Atop the golfing greens,
Under the spreading Spanish moss,
Forget those wintry scenes!

~ Mary Ellen Orvis
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

www.FloridaStatePoetsAssociation.org
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.
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*

*Alias City* by Carol Frost

*Now available from MadHat Press*

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