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FALLING LANDSCAPE POEMS SILVIA CURBELO

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Florida State Poets Association

An affiliate of the National Federation of State Poetry Societies



Mary Marcelle, President, Florida State Poets Association

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Florida Spring is here, and I am loving the heat without the unbearable humidity that comes in summer. I've been a Florida resident all my life: born in Orlando, I got to watch the moon shots from my front yard while Walt Disney was building his park in my backyard. I remember my family living in a trailer without air conditioning, making bologna sandwiches, and then walking to the local springs for swimming on a blistering day.

I identify strongly with this state, with the flora and fauna, and I have seen what was once a sleepy Orlando become a metropolitan area brimming with more people than I ever imagined. I know that my life experiences in Florida will make up a part of what I write, whether it's poetry or fiction or non-fiction. Sometimes I choose to write about subjects that are particularly Florida, like tourism or citrus, or the vast variety of insects we have.

This organization is based in Florida and has a majority of Florida residents as members. But Florida residents have always come from everywhere. Not all FSPA members are from, or even in, the Sunshine State. Our organization is connected, through the National Federation of State Poetry Societies, to other state poetry organizations throughout the country.

Contest season is starting nationwide, and other state organizations, as well as the national organization, have dozens if not hundreds of poetry contests in addition to the ones we hold every year. The internet has made finding and entering those distant contests easy for us, so explore the state or states you know best for a contest that speaks to your experience in the wide world. And don't forget to enter our own poetry contests: the list starts on page 50.

This month, our resident Renaissance man, Mark Terry, has gathered together another astonishing issue of Of Poets and Poetry, with poet profiles like our cover story on M.B. McLatchey with Al Rocheleau, a nice historical piece on Dylan Thomas written by Marc Davidson, and a collection of poems "Near the Sea." Enjoy those, along with our member news, profiles, poetry and more. Read it all in one go or peruse particular pieces at your pleasure.

Take care,

Mary Marcelle





Julie Cummings President. National Federation of State Poetry Societies

Dear Florida Poetry Family,

I am honored to begin a series of articles in your newsletter highlighting the connection between state member societies and the national federation. I am going to let you know my personal journey and why I chose to become an active member of nationals.

My name is Julie Cummings and I am the current President of NFSPS, National Federation of State Poetry Societies. I have always been a member of groups that interest me. I was active in high school and in college, serving in a leadership capacity in several organizations. I like being part of something bigger than me and seeing how I can contribute to the greater good and supporting others along the way.

I have also written and read poetry since I was nine. I read and write something every day. I say "something," because it may not be a poem that results from this daily practice. During high school and college I entered several poetry contests and even won some of them. After graduation, as is

often the case with poets, I started a career, mine happened to be in education, and continued to write and read every day. It almost became a secretive practice. Rarely did anyone see what I wrote.

About 20 years ago, I was in a coffee shop when I noticed their shelves had poetry books for sale. Intrigued, I asked if they had any poetry groups that met there. Indeed! They did! The woman told me a small group met on Sunday nights. I showed up the next Sunday. The leader of the group told me about Columbine Poets of Colorado and invited me to a meeting. I was hooked. The Columbine group met every Saturday, and conducted workshops and critiques. After I became a member of Columbine, I made the decision to make poetry a priority, second only to my family. It was a bonus that as a state member I was automatically a member of the National Federation of State Poetry Societies. I was extremely proud. I was elected to many leadership positions in the state society. I felt of service to my local community of poets and used my spare time to plan events in the surrounding areas. I attended any event I could and talked up the local chapter and the state society. The members quickly became like family, my poetry family.

At Columbine meetings, there were members who talked about the national convention fondly. Because my school year went late into summer, I could never attend. But then, the school board changed the end of year date and I have attended every convention since the one held in 2009 in Duluth, Minnesota. I have written about my first convention in Strophes, so I will not go into detail here. When I recognized the fellowship and friendship amongst attendees, that there is something for everyone from late night or early morning open mics, workshops, contests, presenters, keynote addresses, and a bookstore, I was hooked on nationals as well. I asked the president at the time if there was anything I could do to volunteer on the national level. When I was appointed Judges Chair I was so excited. I didn't know anyone in other states, but I used the expertise of others before me and was able to get the list of judges to the Contest Chair before the deadline. From there, I was elected Secretary, First Vice President, and now President. I am currently in my second term.

There are openings on the Appointed Board ready for you to fill if you are interested. There are easy jobs and more difficult jobs. As you know, Florida's very own, Joe Cavanaugh, is Second Vice President and BlackBerry Peach Chair. It all starts with a simple query to help.

There is also a need for contest sponsors. Florida Poetry Society sponsors one contest. but if any chapters would like to sponsor a contest, please let me know before May 15.

~ Julie Cummings

The beginner's mind faces life much like a child,

full of curiosity and wonder and amazement.

MB McLatchey



~ Photos by Mark Andrew James Terry

AL ROCHELEAU INTERVIEWS M.B. McLATCHEY ON HER NEW BOOK, A REMARKABLE MEMOIR FOR TEACHERS, STUDENTS, PARENTS, AND POETS

AR: For a hardcore poet, returning to prose is a walk back. Of course, prose lends itself both to teaching and to narrative, as in this new book, Beginner's Mind. And yet, however framed in prose it may be, the offering is somehow poetry throughout. Do you think the strain of what is truly poetic winds through our early lives regardless, and that while we may be taught in prose, we yet immerse and arrange our young lives in poetry, the *living* of it? How did Miss D, your fourth-grade teacher, guide for a lifetime, and the focus of this book, understand that?

MB: So why would I, a hardcore poet as you describe, choose to write prose? A great question, and one that took me a long while to appreciate. Robert Frost often viewed it as a matter of choosing your canvas - either the open field that prose permits - or the fencing in that poetry requires. I knew that Beginner's Mind needed that open field. I also knew that it had to be a memoir, although embarking upon the book, I was not sure why. I came to discover, while writing the book, that memoir is really about honing perspective.

The 19th-century novelist, George Meredith, who was a favorite of Oscar Wilde for his experiments in narrative perspective, once stated that "Memoirs are the backstairs of history." The backstairs were, of course, the stairs that the children and the servants used – they were the lookout post from which uttered truths were overheard and from which authentic human dramas were observed.



Memoir has also historically been recognized as closest to a poet's sensibility. In memoir, as in poetry, the writer remains very much the *witness*. In Carolyn Forché's memoir of her trips to El Salvador, *What You Have Heard Is True*, she leans on a quote from the 18th-century Spanish painter Francisco Goya, "Yo lo vi" (I saw it). This becomes her refrain: "I saw it," Forché writes, "and I saw this, and also this." In this posture of writer-as-witness,

"The poet is very much a cousin to the writer of memoir."

The witness in Beginner's Mind is a 10-year-old in the fourth grade in a shipyard town south of Boston, who reports to the reader, in classroom scene after classroom scene, the liberating impact of a brilliant and loving fourth-grade teacher named Miss D. This was a teacher who understood how to unleash what the book's title points to: namely, the beginner's mind.

So, what is *beginner's mind?* Steve Jobs, when speaking of the creative mind that so strongly influenced him, is quoted as saying, "There's a

phrase in Buddhism called *Beginner's Mind*. It's wonderful to have a beginner's mind." As co-founder of Apple Computer and one of the most creative giants ever known, Jobs championed the concept of beginner's mind as the pioneering force behind his ability to imagine the revolutionary technologies that the Apple brand is known for. Jobs embodied this Zen practice in action, where the mind is left innocent of preconceptions, judgments, and prejudices – where the mind faces life much like a child, full of curiosity and wonder and amazement.

It is a mind that has not been seduced by a call to conformity. And, in the world of ideas, it is the imagination undeterred by the naysayers and the "experts." Put succinctly, the Buddhist monk, Shunryū Suzuki, wisely observed:

"In the beginner's mind, there are many possibilities, but in the expert's mind there are few."

AR: Teaching on the secondary level (and beyond) often involves expanding the scope of things, of learning off a line of many details, of practice, and of gaining one's own perspective eventually by arriving at one's own concepts of the instruction gained. Have you found that your own teaching over the years has tended toward unwinding the complexities of not only writing, but of creation and perception in general, back to the child's easy simplicity, so that you often mirror in your teaching what we find in the accounting of Miss D's lessons in the book?

MB: Did Miss D impact my teaching? Absolutely. And more and more as I grow older. More than a teaching degree from Brown University, more than years of training in workshops and seminars. Miss D was able to inspire her students to re-imagine the directions their lives were taking – in effect, to see the possibilities that open up for us when we ignite our imaginations and when we trust the *rightness* of our convictions – especially when these convictions run counter to the orthodox ideas of the day. A friend of mine, currently an Emeritus in Physics, recalls Einstein stating how he loved talking to young children *because they hadn't yet been brainwashed by education*. And, how Pasteur, so earnest in his desire to see progress in his field, warned fellow scientists to not surrender to the *tyranny of preconceived ideas*. Many of the great stories in history show us that advances in civilization depend upon the maverick, the one who rebels against the gods of conformity.



The teacher at the center of Beginner's Mind shepherded her students, and even urged them to shed their attachments to the status quo and to their somewhat preordained destinies. Virtually every child in her fourth-grade class had fathers and grandfathers who worked at the shipyard. Virtually every one of them naturally imagined a similar future for themselves – if not specifically working at the shipyard, then certainly living a life in step with the shipyard's world view. Work, family, alcohol, and God.

There is no question that I mirror in my teaching what Miss D left as lessons for me. Her lessons are precisely the lessons that I shine light on in my book. Lesson #1: To cultivate a classroom for the beginner's mind – a classroom where students are inspired to let the left brain lean on the right brain, to be ready to take risks if needed, and to think outside the box.

AR: Our backgrounds are similar; working class (mine, a cotton mill town, Fall River, 47 miles from your own North Weymouth) and heavily multi-cultural. Do you think such conditions we grew up in made for a kind of equalizer, a common potential of life's ineffable (and simple) aesthetic side, so that writers could indeed have readers everywhere, and so that those who left their towns and made it up the steps of academia and a greater literary world would yet have someone to appreciate them and their work back home?

MB: My earliest mentors in writing, and in some ways my most impactful teachers – in timing and rhythm, and in the power of the pause – were the elders in my family, and the elders in my neighborhood who loved little more than the art of storytelling. They were first-generation Portuguese, Irish, and Italian. Gatherings around my mother's kitchen table and pot-lucks that turned into late-night parties were my first engagement with the performing arts. As I have shared in other conversations, ours was an oral tradition where books found their rightful place in the local library. The symposium occurred around a kitchen table, or at a grandmother's elbow.

Shakespeare's Hamlet famously observed, The play's the thing wherein we'll learn the conscience of the king. The play – or the artistic performance – is a great leveler of social classes and differences. The best art tells us all the truths we need to know, regardless of our economic or social status. I learned this as a very young girl.



AR: Fourth grade was the same for me, M.B. Sticking with your experience, do you think the grade itself acts as some kind of a fulcrum of inflow and outflow, dictating the future creative balance of the student? Is it that the basics taught earlier may, at that particular time, expand the student's vision, each individually, *providing* that the fulcrum point includes, as a catalyst, a great, natural teacher?

MB: Perhaps the fourth-grade is, as you say, a kind of "fulcrum" point. Miss D called it an "in between time." A pre-pubescent age where we have come up from the previous three grades with our established identities as "good student" and "bad student" – labels like overtures that we bring with us as we graduate from grade to grade. Miss D inspired us to shed these labels and begin the work of fashioning a new self.

Graham Greene, regarded by many as one of the leading English novelists of the 20th century, stated that "There is always one moment in childhood when the door opens and lets the future in." For me, this door opened in the fourth grade under the wing of a remarkable teacher. Now that I reflect on it, undoubtedly this kind of "door opening" has been experienced by many people – but they have simply forgotten it. I say this because, often when I have done public readings of chapters from *Beginner's Mind*, people approach me afterwards to share their own vivid fourth-grade memories.

AR: The trajectory of your career (which obviously has a long way to go, thank goodness, and with even higher orbits to achieve) is so far remarkable in terms of degrees, publications, teaching credits, and the willing assistance of diverse grandmasters (Seamus Heaney, Richard Wilbur, Michael Harper). With this book, did you feel it was time to encompass what you had learned, alloyed with what you daily instruct to adults, in the form of this unique channeling of teacher/student, returning to the foundations of how you, and we, learn?

MB: Each one of the teachers whom you named exhibited a sense of humility and grace under pressure that continues to instruct me. *The wise man is the one who knows what he does not know,* Socrates famously stated. As a teacher, I attach to the call to self-reflection implicit in that statement. Miss D modeled for me a compassion for students that reminds me to look through a classroom of students to find each student's unique and individual story. Although she died in 1992, Miss D continues to inspire me to whisper Socrates's adage to myself before I enter the classroom.

AR: You were mentored over an extended period at Harvard by one of our greatest modern grandmasters, Seamus Heaney. What did he add to this book, considering his own wonderful focus on the magic of the local, of home, and childhood?

MB: Seamus taught us that as writers we should "trust our own experiences" and in return, the reader will trust us. "There is no sense in writing someone else's poem," he frequently reminded us, nor should we put "window dressing" on our true experiences. I suppose Seamus also added to my forthcoming book, indirectly, as a frequent reminder of the writer's necessary posture: self-forgetfulness and an interest in making our art a work of service

somehow. As it happened, the teacher at the center of my book, Miss D, prized exactly this same posture as Seamus did, so I was shepherded through the book by their good spirits.

AR: I am always amazed how quick children are to pick up on anything. Games, rhymes, instantaneous images with which to string. They can respond to their surroundings at a snap, invent all sorts of mechanics, simple or elaborate, on the spot. Most adults, even "educated" ones (or perhaps especially those) are dolts by comparison. Miss D seemed to understand this, and so doled out empowerings of creation as if they were lollipops.

MB: Doling out gifts of creation like lollipops. I think you captured it. In writing *Beginner's Mind*, scenes re-emerged where ancient ideas appeared in Miss D's classroom like sign-posts. These were posters that Miss D had taped to the classroom walls: "Know Thyself" or "No Man is an Island" – and these axioms hung in the air in the classroom where a collective of thirty-two 10-year-old girls and boys in a shipyard town south of Boston struggled to make sense of their lives.



For a large part of the book, the narrator is a 10-year old girl whose impulse is to embrace this teacher's dreams for her students – and yet, this is a town where dreams are quietly displaced for the virtues of work and whiskey. And so, there is the question: Will we chase our dreams? Dreams that a teacher affirms in young lives as worthy and noble. Or, will we fall in line, loyal to what our parents and a culture of limited means has designed for us?

"Education is not the filling of a pot, but the lighting of a fire," the poet Yeats maintained. Miss D was Yeats's fire starter. She ignited her students' imaginations. Her classroom was a stage that she had set – and then invited all of her students onto, like actors to whom she would feed very encoded scripts. It was up to us to decode our roles in her classroom. Who we were. What our dreams were. What our fears were. She seemed to meet us for the very first time every single day.

AR: As if in a story, the teacher seems to hold the key. They can water to blossom or they can poison and ruin. And the system? It seems to me that in past decades the teacher was free to teach if they knew they could and so wanted to, rather than be fettered almost automatically by those who administrate, who demand compliance, who check boxes. Now, today, how can teachers teach somehow under the barbed wire of rote scrutiny, and make not only artists, but people who can appreciate such creations? Would Miss D have survived under the constricted definition of "educator" she would have to adhere to today?

MB: Miss D was part of a generation of single, professional women who LIFE magazine labeled, "The Golden Age of Spinsters." This was a period in the United States between the two world wars when women were becoming self-supporting, were remaining unmarried, and were moving into professional careers. They were frequently college graduates and extremely talented. *Beginner's Mind* opens with the dedication: "For Miss D and for that generation of Misses in our schools that prized immeasurable goals in a place of measured outcomes." In that era, teachers seemed to have had more freedom to be who they wanted to be, as long as the results were seen in the children. In Miss D's case, her pushback did not come from administrators – it came from other teachers, and yes, it also came from her fourth-grade students. As her students, we were products of the orthodox way of thinking in the shipyard town she taught in. Her call for us to "look up" to the stars for our inspiration, rather than "look around" for guideposts in a shipyard town – this was a call to arms.

AR: To your credit, you do not make wrong other methods of teaching, whether in your own elementary school, in its other classes, and the regimens and motivations of mostly good teachers along your way. In your book, they remain as figures left alone in these dioramas of observation and reflection. Intentional?

MB: The poet Yevtushenko observed, "He who is conceived in a cage yearns for the cage." Miss D rightly perceived that her challenge was not other teachers and not the administrators. It was her students: a collection of 10-year-olds who yearned to return to the simplicity of the world we came from. We were not ready for her brand of enlightenment, her handing over the keys to reimagine ourselves. As 10-year-olds, we were seasoned veterans in the customs and habits that our parents and previous teachers called "learning." Like the church fathers who threatened Copernicus with death, we were not ready to have our universe opened up. We were not ready for the truth.

And yet, the choice gradually became obvious to us in how we should live our lives. We became apprentices to a remarkable guide that we could not imagine being gone. When we graduated to the fifth and sixth grades, we saw that our teachers loved us best when we were quiet and obedient. One fifthgrade teacher's favorite gesture was to hold her finger to her lips to *shush* rows of students quiet. She found her students most charming when they were good subjects to a sovereign.

But even here, to this fifth-grade teacher's credit, the *sovereign* was not the fifth-grade teacher herself. The sovereign was the ingrained and required obedience to rote ways of learning; it was a resignation by all of us to be taught as a collective of thirty-two students, and not as Miss D taught us – as individuals whose wonder and potential were impossible to even guess at.

AR: The lessons throughout this book are a succession of inlaid gems, generously offered by one brilliant person and shined by another. It would take too long to comment on each truism, and I will leave all that reflection to what I hope is a legion

of readers. The book has such broad applications to whom that legion may hold in its ranks. For me, it would include students of every stripe, every order and age, and beyond them, every parent who would shepherd their children's education, certainly every parent with the courage to home-school them (as I did with my youngest son for seven years, from sixth to twelfth grade), to every professional teacher, and to every single poet I know, who could learn from Miss D and, from the beauty of your writing, from you. The book seems to work on so many levels. Was this your intent, or did you find all that coming true as you wrote?

MB: I like Emily Dickinson's response to the question, "Why do I write?" Her answer: *To know what time it is*. As isolated as she was, Dickinson recognized that writers are inevitably witnesses *to* their time, as well as voices *for* their time. In writing *Beginner's Mind*, I had a compelling sense of what time it was. One of our most compelling questions today for parents, homeschooling parents, and for teachers-in-training is "How do we want teachers to teach our children?"

Miss D has the answer: To foster and nurture the *beginner's mind*. She was someone who instinctively

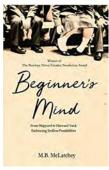
trusted the power of fewer directives and more leaning on one's imagination. In a sense, I think her teaching methods paved the way for how I had to craft scenes in the book – to show, rather than tell the reader, what the beginner's mind is. My hope is that parents, teachers in training, and homeschooling parents will take up the book and be inspired by her model of compassion for the whole child.

Miss D liked to give us a wink as we left her classroom at the end of the day, an assurance that she would be there when we returned. My hope is that this book will be a wink back at her – gratitude for her everlasting imprint on the lives of so many of us that, over the decades, passed through her classroom.

M.B. McLatchey holds a degree in Comparative Literature from Harvard University, a Masters in Teaching from Brown University, the M.F.A. in writing from Goddard College, and a B.A. from Williams College. She has over thirty years of teaching college students and has been recognized by her university as Distinguished Teacher of the Year and as Distinguished Scholar. She was awarded Harvard University's coveted Danforth Prize in Teaching as well as the Harvard/Radcliffe Prize for Literary Scholarship, and she received the Elmer Smith Award for Excellence in Teaching from Brown University. M.B. has authored numerous literary reviews, compiled several textbooks for Humanities courses, and has contributed to many books on teaching. She has received national and international literary awards including the May Swenson Poetry Award for her debut poetry collection The Lame God published by Utah State University Press and the FLP National Women's Voices Competition Award for her book, Advantages of Believing. Her recent awards include the American Poet Prize from the American Poetry Journal, the Editor's Prizes in Poetry from FOLIO Literary Journal and the Spoon River Poetry Review, the Annie Finch Prize for Poetry, the Robert Frost Award in Poetry, the Penelope Niven Creative Nonfiction Award, the New South Writing Award from Georgia State University, the 46'er Prize from the Adirondack Review, and the Vachel Lindsay Poetry Award. She has been featured in Verse Daily and as a "Writer in the Spotlight" by AWP. A tenured Professor of Humanities at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, she also serves as Florida's Poet Laureate for Volusia County and as Arts & Wellness Ambassador for the Atlantic Center for the Arts. Visit her at: www.mbmclatchev.com



M.B. sitting at Dylan Thomas's desk at his childhood home in Wales



Link to book



SELECTED POEMS

Smiling at the Executioner

As if the open barrel were a lotus; its roots anchored in mud.

How undeterred by murky water, it submerges

and reblooms: petals like crystal glazed and without residue.

As if you never felt something move: no welcome and prescient ache,

no sudden flexing, no cycle taking shape. No memory. No calendar. No yield -

because you are the bullet's shield. As if you have nothing to lose. As if all that you have

learned to love: the beating heart; the mythic glove of a palm blooming in the womb; the scent that follows

touch - is suddenly dust. Just the open-grinned, white-toothed stare down this time;

the stayed and steady practice on your knees of mastering someone else's pleas.

Originally published: Sky Island Journal, Pushcart Prize Nomination, 2020

M.B. MCLATCHEY

SELECTED POEMS

Learning the Scriptures

Molusco ... Aqui... Aqui. Bucket in hand, I follow

his lead. His silhouette in the early light strikes

a perfect toe point - not ballet but the liturgy's greeting

in a sun-steamed fandango. The hard, muddy floor of low tide,

his stage. I see a clam spit where he taps his toe. Plunging

my fingers into the cold, black muck, I wriggle it out:

meal and sacrifice. A ritual-like rhythm that the dance ignites.

When we steam the clams, the smell of vinegar

and hops bubbling in the broth overtakes us. A purifying incense.

Pabst Blue Ribbon for him and since I am ten, Porto with Ginger Ale.

In the pot the clams flower and pop. Pelican-like, he tips his head back to let

the fat belly slide down whole. Delicioso. Body, blood, soul, divinity. Clean-shaven

for Mass. Brown. Azorean. Vovô, to me. A welcome substitute to the homily: Tap.

Plunge. Smell. Dance. Taste. But not in a faith, not in a language I knew yet.

Bad Apology

As if in an endless rehearsal, I packed and unpacked. The challenge, you said, was to take no more than I'd need. Tenderly, you followed the track of a storm moving in from the east.

In bed, a wrinkled map across our laps; you circled a town and highlighted a road. A yellow, satiny, path. When we slept, you tried the path, left markers you had kept for days like these.

And the markers were keys. Clues in a moonscape of dust-covered things a pair of gloves with suede tips; a scarf; a ring. Ruins like proof of a marriage, a story's skeletal sheen, small deaths, small

victories. Maestro, my mourning dove, another chance? Put me back in that place with its signals and gestures and promise of more mistakes. And I'll show you the hurtful lessons lovers make.

Originally published: SWWIM Journal, 2017

Originally published: Naugatuck River Review, 2018

SELECTED POEMS

Ode for an Ode on a Grecian Urn

Ode.

let your sorrows go. Let brides be ravished, trees forsake their leaves, let lovers kiss and fade, daughters age. Let loss be the elixir that induces a new legend, new urn-dream: Forests that seed, mature, starve, and reseed without our overtures. Let wanting, waiting, pacing be the rings in carbon dating. A new museum piece. Imagine yearning bigger than an urn, bigger than god; desire out of bounds, desire crowned. Paint it fulfilled, the turning back of hounds. What good is song if not the end of one man's wish, what-ifs? I died at twenty-five. So many do. Urn, make your story new: Beauty is truth when sung to a priest's staccato voice and tone near a young marine's too-heavy, too mature, burial stone; when love betrayed makes lovers stutter phrases - sweet clichés - that they used to say alone. Put it in stone: Beauty is truth when sung to the beat of a child's quiet feet leaving home; when aging lovers sing to one another: Remember when we used to rock in one another's arms and we knew god and the devil's charms?

Originally published: FOLIIO Journal, Editor's Prize, 2019

SELECTED POEMS

Urban Helicon

It starts like this: the clamps around my wrists. The little Saturn ring around my head, The wooden chair, the arms still warm, though dead; Then the electric thrill, the arch, the twist;

The expiation just before the twist, The quick reform of madame in her bed, The spasm, the welcome-wagon for something newly wed; Or the ambulance, the sirens, the sudden lisp.

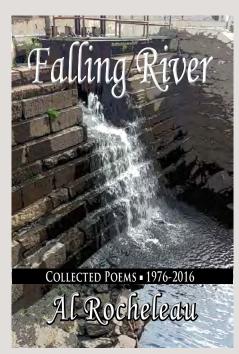
It makes me so serene. It ties me to a rock And sends me swimming.

It causes quite a scene To feel the wood and stone become a dock To hear the pastoral in stillness singing.

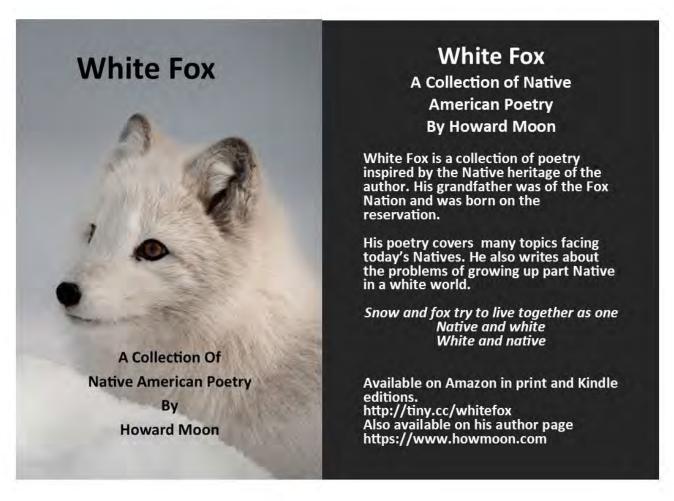
Originally published: Cold Mountain Review, 2016

Falling River–Forty Years of Collected Poems by Al Rocheleau

In Falling River, FSPA's past president, poet Al Rocheleau, offers a comprehensive collection of his work, spanning five decades beginning in 1976. Al's verse has appeared in more than eighty magazines in six countries. It can be found at websites as diverse as the Surratt House Museum in Washington, DC and the Saint Bernadette Institute of Sacred Art in New Mexico, and earned honors such as the Thomas Burnett Swann Award from the Gwendolyn Brooks Writers Association, and a nomination for the Forward Poetry Prize in the U.K. Falling River offers all kinds of poems of various forms, intents, and levels of ambition, poems heavy and light, sacred and profane. Renowned poet Lola Haskins says of Al's poetry, "These poems, so full of love and seriousness, have a good chance of lasting."



To purchase your copy, click this link:



SEA

The heart of man is very much like the sea, it has its storms, it has its tides and in its depths it has its pearls too.

— Vincent van Gogh

Photo: Allen C. Butt
The southwest coast (Pacific side) of Costa Rica
just north of "Whales Tail National Park"

THE DEATH OF THE PILOT WHALES

Every few years down at the Florida Keys where bones chew the water like mad dogs and spit it bubbling out on yellow sand the sea darkens and we crane toward the skies toward the airplanes casting their shadows but there are no planes and those dark shadows aren't shadows but mark the silent forms of pilot whales charging the shore like wild buffalo charging a train driving toward reef and sand till the foam sprays red below the rainbow stretching from sea to land

The fierceness of it all unstoppable those broad flukes churning the water that buried brain and heart set inflexibly on their last pulsing the energy and beauty of all that flesh turning away from its cold fathomless world like the negative of some huge lemming following god knows whose orders in a last ordered chaos of frantic obedience stronger than love With what joy and trembling they hunch up the beach shred themselves on shoals what sexual shudders convulse them at that sweet moment when they reach—at last!—what they have burned to meet

And we who may be reminded of thoughts we wish not to think we tow them back to sea cut them open and they sink

~ Peter Meinke. Poet Laureate of Florida **FSPA** Chancellor



Previously published in "Trying to Surprise God" (U. of Pittsburgh Press, 1981)

CARIBE

All colors pale in its waters, white becomes bone, the rock that sinks you,

what chances, fateful nights for those who succumb to this allure of water, as it calls you out

to swim away into its currents this restlessness of days, teeth chatter, a clatter

of broken promises behind, the Siboney knew a thousand words for the essence of water,

mud eyes, clay mouths, fatal hours when the spirit leaves the body to join a starless

night, when all you have are questions, look to the beach for the flickering answers.

Virgil Suárez, FSPA Chancellor
 Professor of English,
 The Florida State Universitý

Previously published in Virgil Suárez' new collection: THE PAINTED BUNTING'S LAST MOLT, published by the University of Pittsburgh Press, 2020.

Photo: Allen C. Butt, Costa Rica

THE SUN SHINES 23 HOURS A DAY In summer

i

I saw a whale once my family all nine of us piled in to the limousine my dad bought because he hated station wagons thought them unsafe

on the Icelandic shore we tumbled out of the limo ran over a rise toward black beach little and last I struggled to the top of the hill saw a whale magnificent black sand blue ocean white foam trying to lift her to sea failing

she was magnificent and dead

ii.

I am stranded on the beach lifting my head so I can breathe more tired each minute generations come and go with the tide I swim the same path navigate using land forms and lighthouses. The lighthouses disappear in favor of newer technologies. I get lost.

sometimes a family gets lost forgets how to communicate forgets how to breathe through the mouth how to stay afloat when the sea gets rough they swim toward the shore beach themselves and an older brother takes out the army knife

taking pieces of blubber with him

he got from Santa

and cuts in to skin

iv.

later that year my kindergarten class went on a field trip to the fish factoru I saw a whale once I watched my brother cut her I looked into her dead eye I could smell her at night refused to go in refused to eat fish

V. in Iceland the sun shines 23 hours a day in summer

the day I saw the whale it didn't shine it burned

~ Julie Cummings, President **National Federation** of State Poetry Societies

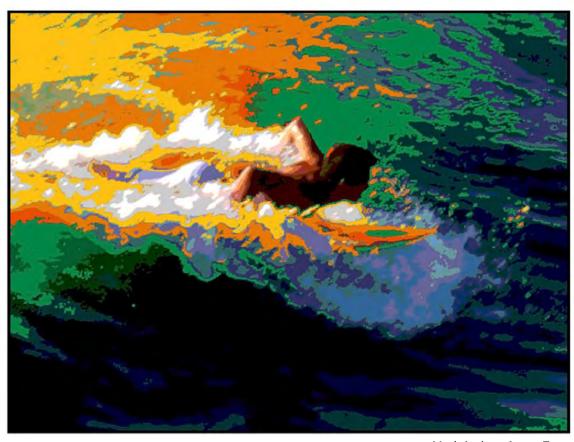


Photo by Sara Reis Dziekonski

STORM

Gathering in a sea-glass sky attended by a surly sun are the intermittent clouds bringing darkness into the inlet. The peace and calm of this evening will collapse under their weight. Their gray advance closes the day against the sun's protests. The water mirrors the golden bright orb while giggling random waves.

~ Mary Marcelle, President, Florida State Poets Association



Mark Andrew James Terry Cocoa Beach Surf #27 digital image

SURFING NEUTRONIC WAVES

I surf the neutronic waves Our mighty brother sun rises Sending powerful invisible energy From the eastern sky to warm us Creating the wonder of a new day From 93 million miles away.

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

GHOST SHIP

From Largo we hailed. The Red Witch set sail, as daytime turned to night.

We remember where we had been. We were at sea again, and I was at the helm at twilight.

"Captain," the mate cried. "Look abeam, port side.
The slaver ghost ship 'West Wind' up from the briny."

Next to the fresh air hood a skeleton stood, his fiery eyes shiny.

One hand on the wheel. It looked surreal. A line on the capstan, one bight.

From the ocean they rose. Slowly we closed. Their ship was a frightful sight.

There were specters in their sheets, drifting up to meet, their brothers unfurling sails.

Across the deck of this burned out wreck, drifted chained slaves, very pale.

From Port Royal they hailed. From Cape Town they sailed. Their ship did come a slinking.

Their sails were tattered and torn, their ratlines were worn and their open holds were a stinking.

From the yardarm hung the crew, dead. Empty eyes sky looking straight ahead.

The screams from the hold, we could hear.

We listened to their cries. My gorge it did rise, as the wind drew us near.

A ghost ship for sure. A slaver true and pure. They sailed off into the sky

We stood, watched, and mourned, those lost souls, African born. Their medium had changed as they went by.

We had never dealt in slaves, or the money they gave. We were corsairs on a mission.

To steal Spain's silver and gold, and have the stories told That our dreams were coming to fruition.

They drifted out of sight, off into the night Ship, captain, cargo and crew.

We slipped slowly into the deep where this night we would sleep. For the Red Witch was a ghost ship too.

[~] Travallion (Fred Booth, FSPA Poet recently deceased)



WHISPERING WAVES

Matthew Cornell Rolling Sea oil on panel

We gently slipped your ashes into the water where you so loved to surf and paddle-board and jet-ski and fish.

We felt this was your second home where you would most want to be.

Since then I've listened to your voice within the waves, peeping among the sandpipers, invisibly carried along the sea wind and cast upon my feet with the incoming tide.

The receding water feels like your fingers pulling, imploring me to slip into the watery world and join you.

The ocean currents rise and fall like the breathing of your chest, beckoning me to lie upon such softness.

To let my hair spread out along the eddies.

To let my Sargasso tendrils give anchor to tiny seahorses and jellies.

To provide shelter to colorful baitfish so they may hide among my shadows and folds.

To let the glistening dolphins glide by with their Mona Lisa smiles echoing your words.

I dare not go more than ankle-deep for fear I'll never turn back.

~ BJ Alligood, Florida

ISLAND HOME

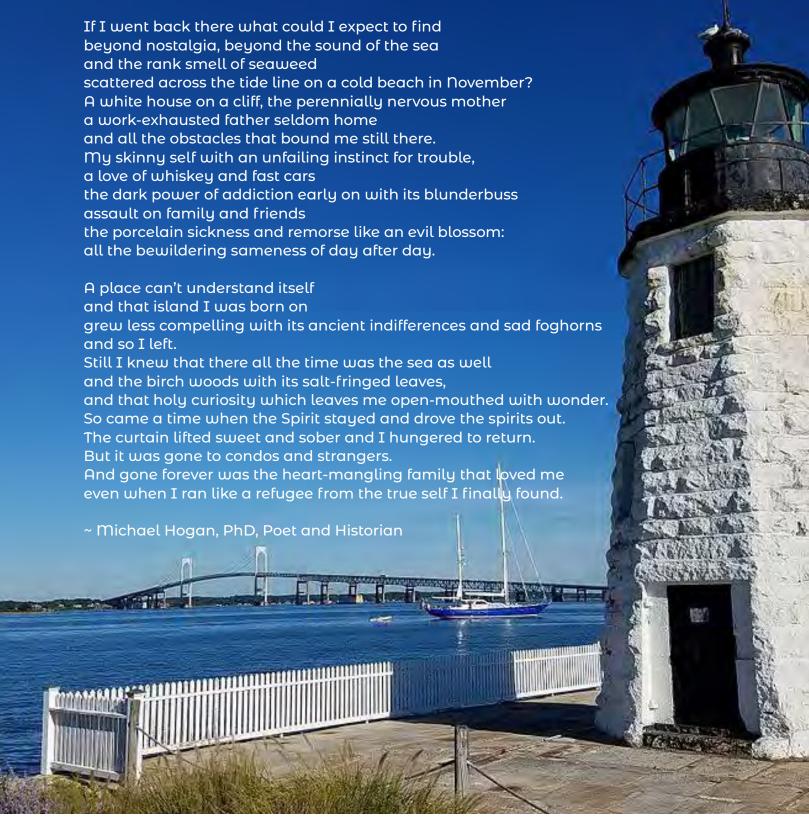


Photo: Lucinda Mayo, Lighthouse, Newport, RI.

BEACH MUSINGS AND WEDDING RINGS UNDER A TANGERINE SKY

A damp curtain of fog draped our shoulders. Waves washed away our footprints among swirling sand grains that gray beach day you first reached for my hand.

I had planned to sail the Florida Keys, bartend, write my grand opus. The stroke of your palm on the small of my back changed all that.

Under moss-draped Oaks we pledged our oaths, grew hair gray as the beach on a rainy day, shouldered a child's death, cancer no sunset sailing into dreamcicle waters.

But as twilight's tangerine streaks the evening sky, Your hand brushes mine, and I know joy, and I know why.

~ Katherine Nelson-Born Poet Laureate of Northwest Florida

Visual Poetry: Nikki Fragala Barnes



THE MOON THAT COMBS THE SEA

Brightens to a knob turned of knuckles in the night, peels itself across a month of mourning, raises starfish to that stone of periwinkle height, only to be let down.

On Surrey streets
the howlers turn their bocks,
their bottles, up
to a dark heaven illumined by fright
and wipe their eyes
in its mirror, the mad and mortifying
deliverance.

The moon that combs the sea appoints the sextant and its sailors, each Phoenician, Basque, or Barbary black that rolls off centuries in the spray, the gondoliers on glass canals, the shrimping souls who tie their nets unto the wake in knots assured and tight worship in its grave a dollop of hope, the coin that shines a shill upon black felt to flip and disappear within its own magnetic sleight and pull upon the rope a blue veil of dawn, obscuring in unfettered sight the blindness of everything, a writhe of eels, the apology of eartha bound and spinning slave of its own satellite.

~ Al Rocheleau, Immediate Past President Florida State Poets Association

Photo: Nina Heiser

SEA FEVER

I must go down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky, And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by, And the wheel's kick and the wind's song and the white sails shaking, And a gray mist on the sea's face and a gray dawn's breaking. — John Masefield (from Salt-Water Ballads, 1902)

I must go down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky, Where the morning mist on the ocean drifts and the blue's, like the blue of an eye. I sense immense as I scan the scene and still my spirit is moved By the salt in the air, that serves to remind, how all that is kind has been proved. And the call of the gulls, like freedom's call, will be my rallying cry -I must go down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky,

And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by Or maybe just a small one with a single sail I can fly; Then anchors aweigh as I journey on — Out and away from the shore Watch all my past days of worry sink, into that ocean's trap door. I'll watch the wind, move me along, as she breathes from the clouds on high, And all I ask is a small ship and a star to steer her by.

And the wheel's kick and the wind's song and the white sail's shaking Will help recall the thrill of it all and my skill for decision making. Morning will fade into afternoon calm as evening prepares her starlight The moonshine bright on following seas will fill me with utter delight. There's so much to like about the sea and all is free for the taking, Like the wheel's kick and the wind's song and the white sail's shaking.

And a gray mist on the sea's face and a gray dawn breaking Still serve as a constant reminder for this sailor's heart that's aching. For gone are the days of the tall ships and a star to steer her by; I'm here on the beach, lost in the dream, of those days of you and I. While the rest of the world passes by, this vision's mine for the taking – And a gray mist on the sea's face and a gray dawn breaking!

~ Joy A. Burki-Watson, Florida



secrets of memories buried and hidden found by the tentative clasp of a hand sun of the southern coast gently breathes "Eden"

Photo: Myra Lochner, Herold's Bay, Southern Cape, South Africa

songs of swift dolphins ascending, unwritten, sending tide's message to hillside and land swirls of white seagulls 'gainst freedom's blue ribbon

plaintive the voice of a faraway siren mesmerized souls, unaware and unplanned sun of the southern coast lowly breathes "Eden"

waves, overjoyed, swell to mountains of motion sprays of furled foam drift on emerald band swirls of white seagulls 'gainst freedom's blue ribbon

driftwood discovered and shells whole and broken patterns of sunken gifts lifted and fanned sun of the southern coast smoothly breathes "Eden" swirls of white seagulls 'gainst freedom's blue ribbon

~ Myra Lochner, South Africa

There is an untold whisper at the break of day Echoing Sandy je suis enchanté

The softness of her skin lingers on my fingertips Palpitating Sandy je suis enchanté

I look out my window to the dancing river where Tall Wheat Grass shines like her long blonde hair

She is a summer sigh sirenically swimming Serenely Sandy je suis enchanté

In the middle of August the song birds are singing So sweetly Sandy come fly with me

Sequestration November crustation entrées Virgin Island surrender je suis enchanté

~ gk Terry, Colorado

DEAR WONDROUS BLUE,

You're one of the most fascinating elements on earth.

You are refreshing and humbling. Surfers, divers and voyagers, scientists, biologists and mariners delight in and conserve your existence.

While millions of species live in your world, you, like loving parents and loving grandparents, welcome and embrace humanity with open arms to sit with you or dive into your wondrous blue waters.

Devoted disciples, enthusiasts and stewards walk along your sandy beaches collecting trash.

Clean-up operations search ways to help liberate you from smothering in rotating gyres, whirlpools

creating garbage patches that impact our ecosystem and threaten aquatic life, that interrupt happy and create effects of climate change, that affect our health and abbreviate life, that influence our economy.

You're one of the most beautiful elements on earth.

~ Mary Rogers-Grantham, Florida



Photo: The poet on Kapiti Beach, New Zealand, Cat Clickerama

Clumsy shadows, always falling Down twilight lanes along the sea colours weaken 'til light is gone. Dark shadows leap from Kapiti to blend together and fly on.

Colours weaken 'til light is gone, seagulls swirl in their fluid streams to blend together and fly on, daylight fading behind their screams.

Seagulls swirl in their fluid streams, airbrushed aura of golden light, daylight fading behind their screams where is the sun in dark of night?

Airbrushed aura of golden light, the wave contingent whispers thus; where is the sun in dark of night? Making their sure way back to us

the wave contingent whispers, thus dark shadows leap from Kapiti, making their sure way back to us down twilight lanes along the sea.

~ Mercedes Webb-Pullman, New Zealand

A SHELL'S MUSIC TO INNER EAR

songs of the soul an oceanic sounding salt watery air breathing in and out always everchanging and everlasting long after fin footprints are gone

secrets of the sea hold ancestral mysteries earthlings we came ashore millions years before eurythmics vibrate our aquatic creatures' memory imagining what might have been will be again

this vastness makes me small but of same source cosmic matters satiate desire's thirst for birth like a particle craves a wave seeds co-create amniotic motherly contained from where we came

water origins stir me shake me soothe me guide me to remember webbing of life's precious relatedness misty miles timelessness of notes flow endlessly briny deep diversity insistence unfolds a harmony

earth and we are water mostly cadence manifesting an eternal ode to renewal hums primordial lullaby maternal womb of resounding overture overhears our first love story a shell's music to inner ear

~ Linda Marie Cossa, Florida



Gordon Magill and Linda Marie Cossaon the beach at North Shore of Oahu. Hawai'i

SEA REVERIE

When a boy, the sea swept into my dreams and carried me adrift; I took to the sea with characters that kidnapped me: with Captain Nemo, Jim Hawkins, Hornblower and all the Royal Navy, I sailed off into oceans vast; and with Ishmael, Billy Budd, Captain Bligh, and many other tales of high adventure, disaster, and mutiny I lived and died a hundred sea-faring lives; then there were Heyerdahl, Cousteau, and other maritime heroes I admired. In youth I learned to sail and read the wind and wave; I learned to dive deep and stay down like a merman; I worked as a hand aboard a salmon seiner in Alaska's coves and bays: yet somehow I did not take to the sea to earn my keep or become an ocean scientist and live afloat and study the deep; like most with sea callings I found it safe to meet the ocean at its shore, keeping in the shoals and shallows avoided whatever unknown fate might have been meted out for me; yet there always it is beneath my little craft: whether in dreams or in reverie upon the beach I now understand the sea my whole life long has been surging, roaring, sounding deep beneath my feet.

~ Gordon Magill, President Big Bend Poets & Writers



STRANGER **POSSIBILITIES**

Trip of a lifetime hotel, a beast squeezed between two beauties run-down, a little scary; from its back, in shorts and a flouncy-sleeved shirt, bare-footed, she stepped out, a tyro about sand.

Unaccustomed to sounds and pains of shells crushed underfoot, she sat, eyes fixed on a tiny dot, a boy perhaps, defying the expanse, riding waves close. to. her.

Opportunities afloatpeople over poetry boyfriends over biographies. From water's end she could see, something differenta tiny whisper of the future adrift on this pungent, salty, persistent dream-maker.

~ Suzanne Austin-Hill, Florida



MIDSUMMER DAYDREAMS

restless and brief as a woodland fairy, summer flits to the cliffs and bays of Donegal, wavelets of the deep whisper midsummer dreams across the flaxen strands of Bundoran,

and gilded shafts pierce the woolen grey of an Achill sky where the bones of the mountains clasp at the tumult of the white-capped blue, and the breath of the mountain tumbles down green-bowing slopes to tangle with the laughter of children, trousers-hiked in the glistening shallows of Silver Strand,

and the young folk wrestle, skin to goose-pimpled skin, their near horizons a liquid balm for the August heat that will soon give way to the gales of September, but now is a moment, flitting and restless, for sand-castled dreams and bare-footed flurries, for ice cream cones and a fair hike home in the waning length of a midsummer day.

~ **Neal L. Beightol, Ireland** (but now residing in Florida)



Tom Sadler High Tide oil on panel

An EVENING AT THE OCEAN

To the west the sun slowly sinks in sky-blues and pinks, and little sandpipers rush to the sea.

A cloud forms a whale, floating free, and surfers are happy the waves are high. There's only the sound of a seagull's cry.

What could surpass this ocean night? God's magical potion, it feels so right.

~ Kay Stanton, South Daytona Historian

GARDEN BY THE SEA

It's never held the crowds of Super Bowls or bloodied sand where gladiators died.

It wouldn't make a list of monuments, or grace a travel agent's Must Do Guide,

but to my heart there is no grander ground than standing on this peaceful realty

that nature's hands in timeless, purposed work have formed into a garden by the sea,

where bursts of yellow daisies cling to dunes and purple morning glories bloom at dawn;

where monarchs flit to sit and sip and rest before the winds of instinct draw them on;

where I can come to ponder, pause my clock, and wonder as its mysteries unlock.

~ Mark Andrew James Terry, Editor, Of Poets and Poetry

> · I hope you have enjoyed these pages of Poems Near the Sea. I am grateful for all the poets, artists and photographers willing to share their expressions with us.



Hulton Archive/Getty

Rage against the dying of the light

By Marc Davidson

How little I knew of Dylan Thomas. My only awareness of him was his better known works, such as "Do not go gentle into that good night" and "Under Milk Wood." And I knew, from recordings, the rich golden blanket of his voice – comforting and disturbing at the same time, like pepper, which satisfies and yet burns. I knew there were tales that he was a drunk. And that's the total of my knowledge until now.

Yet research is a golden thing bringing shining light into ignorant darkness, and now I know a great deal more than I did, and like the rest of the world, still less than nothing about this mysterious man, whose work still engenders bitter argument in the world of poets and admiration from those outside that world.

Dylan Thomas was born October 27, 1914, in Swansea, Wales. He was the son of David Thomas, an English teacher who refused to speak Welsh with his family (although he gave Welsh lessons to others). Thus young Dylan never learned to speak or read Welsh. But he heard it, and from that hearing learned the rhythms of Welsh speech and life, which are reflected in his work.

Continued on the next page



Dylan Thomas and Caitlin at the shore with his mother.

WE LYING BY SEASAND

We lying by seasand, watching yellow And the grave sea, mock who deride

Who follow the red rivers, hollow

Alcove of words out of cicada shade. For in this yellow grave of sand and sea A calling for colour calls with the wind That's grave and gay as grave and sea Sleeping on either hand. The lunar silences, the silent tide Lapping the still canals, the dry tide-master Ribbed between desert and water storm, Should cure our ills of the water With a one-coloured calm; The heavenly music over the sand Sounds with the grains as they hurry Hiding the golden mountains and mansions Of the grave, gay, seaside land. Bound by a sovereign strip, we lie, Watch yellow, wish for wind to blow away The strata of the shore and drown red rock; But wishes breed not, neither Can we fend off rock arrival, Lie watching yellow until the golden weather Breaks, O my heart's blood, like a heart and hill.

~ Dylan Thomas

He spent some time on his mother's family's farms at Fernhill, which inspired his later work "Fern Hill." He attended various schools but abandoned school at sixteen to become a reporter. All the while he wrote down his poems in his notebooks. During this period (the early 1930s) he joined likeminded poetic and writing friends at the Kardomah Café on Castle Street. They called themselves the "Kardomah Gang." Likewise he joined the Swansea's Little Theater, beginning his lifelong association with the stage and cinema.



Dylan Thomas with wife Caitlin

It is true that Dylan Thomas drank, sometimes heavily. His wife, Caitlin (nee MacNamara), claimed that the night they were introduced he laid his head in her lap and drunkenly proposed, although they didn't marry until a year later in 1937.

Thomas had little luck earning a living. Poetry doesn't pay well until you are already well established and sometimes not even then. He supported his family by writing scripts for the Ministry of Information's film projects and other similar writing tasks. But all the while he wrote poetry.

His published poetry at age 19 took the poetry world aback at this strange young man's facility with and use of words. Subsequent publications added to that image. Early on in his life he commented about his love of words: "I fell in love, that is the only expression I can think of, at once, and am still at the mercy of words, though sometimes now, knowing a little of their behaviour very well, I think I can influence them slightly and have even learned to beat them now and then, which they appear to enjoy. I tumbled for words at once. And, when I began to read the nursery rhymes for myself, and, later, to read other verses and ballads, I knew that I had discovered the most important things, to me, that could be ever."

Many tried to claim an influence on his writing style or discover what had formed it. He denied all such claims and refused to subscribe to any movement or stylistic fad of the moment. This attitude was so ingrained that it even cost him some friends, who he derided as too bound up in their styles. Thomas disliked being regarded as a provincial poet and decried any notion of 'Welshness' in his poetry. His poetry is full of well-ordered images and creative use of rhymes and puns (i.e. words which sound alike but have no other connection). He generally eschewed formal poetry in favor of just expressing his thoughts. His work is considered romantic, or neo-romantic by some, but others try to fit his poems in different categories, into which he stubbornly refuses to conform. There is no doubt he was a master of words and forms, as his ode to his dying father, "Do not go gentle into that good night" proves. It is in the form of a villanelle, one of the most notoriously difficult and strict forms, and is (at least in my opinion) one of the greatest poems of the English language both for its compactness and its meaning.

Continued on the next page



Dylan Thomas with son Llewelyn, daughter Aeronwy, Mrs. Florence Thomas, his mother, his son Colm and his wife Caitlin at Laugharne, 1953

Dylan (which was pronounced Dull-an in Welsh) became a frequent voice on the BBC, which often sought him out for comment on poetry-related matters. It was his association with the BBC which prompted him to insist on the more English pronunciation of Dill-an for his name. He participated as a voice actor in radio plays and read his works. He became very popular with the public for his talented readings and his resonant delivery. He even was commissioned to write some plays for them. His last work "Under Milk Wood" is a unique radio play without plot merely describing the average day of the decidedly odd citizens of the imaginary little town of Llareggub. (and if you want to see Thomas thumbing his nose at his own life and his detractors, spell it backwards). It was published posthumously in 1954.

The Thomas family, now grown to include three children, followed Dylan: to London, to Wales, to London again, to Wales again. He retreated to Wales when life became difficult. But he produced much of his best poetry there in a little building he called his "Writing Shed." When financial difficulties became too great around 1950, he accepted the offer of a visit to New York for a speaking tour. This was very successful and was repeated three times. On that fourth visit, in 1953, he was already noticeably ill when he arrived. After celebrating his 39th birthday and starting rehearsals for Under Milk Wood, he became much sicker, and dropped into a coma. He died in the hospital on November 7, 1953. The official cause of his death was pneumonia, fatty liver and a brain swelling. Of course, being who he was, people suspected other causes of death: his drinking, undiagnosed diabetes, inaccurate dosing of morphine, you name it. Conspiracy theories abound.

Continued on the next page



Statue of Dylan Thomas in Swansea, Wales

Dylan Thomas is remembered and memorialized. There is a statue of him outside the former little theater, now the Dylan Thomas Theater, in Swansea. There's a plague in Poet's Corner in Westminster Abbey in London. Several of the homes he lived in in Wales are preserved, along with the Writing Shed. In 2004, the Dylan Thomas Prize was created in his honor, awarded to the best published writer in English under the age of 30. In 2005, the Dylan Thomas Screenplay Award was established. The prize, administered by the Dylan Thomas Centre (which is housed in the former Guildhall in Swansea), is awarded at the annual Swansea Bay Film Festival.

Academics criticize Thomas's work because it's impossible to fit into the neat boxes academics love so, but despite criticism by sections of academia, Thomas's work has been embraced by readers more so than many of his contemporaries and is one of the few modern poets whose name is recognized by the general public.

In 2009, over 18,000 votes were cast in a BBC poll to find the UK's favorite poet; Thomas was placed 10th. And 50 respondents listed a recording of Dylan Thomas as what they would like with them on a desert island.

As a man, he had his flaws. He drank and drank excessively toward the end of his life. He was an unfaithful husband. But he produced beauty in abundance, and by the most important measure, he left the world a richer place for his having been in it. If you are not familiar with his work, it's easily available on the internet and in print. And his marvelous honeyed voice is waiting for you on YouTube

On two of his monuments there appear the last lines of "Fern Hill" and they are a fitting close:

"Oh as I was young and easy in the mercy of his means Time held me green and dying Though I sang in my chains like the sea"

Some samples of Dylan Thomas Reading:

Do not go gentle into that good night (1:41):https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1mRec3VbH3w

Fern Hill (4:01):

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rNWBVlIBjQ8

A Child's Christmas in Wales (19:52):

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zFSs2IdDmuU

Poem in October & In My Craft or Sullen Art (4:59): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3XMaJanGuWI



Maitland Public Library Workshops, led by FSPA Poet Elaine Person.

Writing workshops to improve your poetry and prose.

May 2	Sunday at 3:30pm	Contest theme workshop	<u>link</u>
May 16	Sunday at 3:30pm	Contest theme workshop	<u>link</u>
June 20	Sunday at 3:30pm	Contest theme workshop	<u>link</u>

North Florida Poetry Hub Poetry Workshops

May 6	Thursday at 6:30-8 pm	Open Forum	RSVP
May 18	Tuesday at 6:30-8 pm	Poetry Hub	RSVP
June 3	Thursday at 6:30-8 pm	Open Forum	RSVP
June 15	Tuesday at 6:30-8 pm	Poetry Hub	RSVP
June 22	Tuesday at 7-8 pm	Protest Workshop	
		with Howard Moon	RSVP

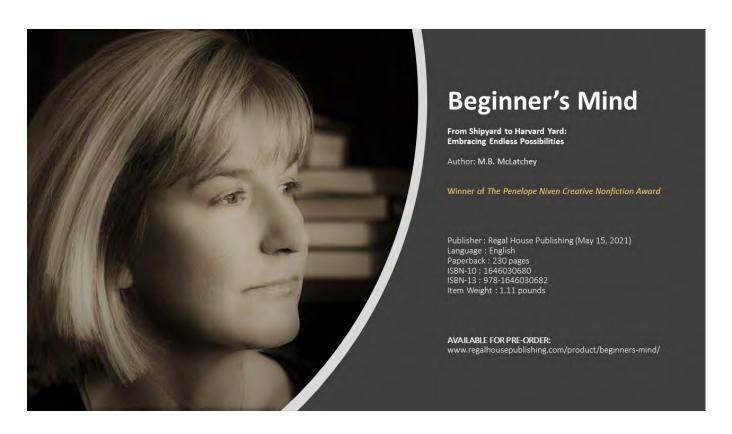
RSVP required. Please email Ruth Van Alstine at ruth@northfloridapoetryhub.org to receive an invitation and the Zoom.com meeting link.

Plese notate: (ATT: name of event/date in subject line)

Sundays' Poetry Critique led by FSPA Poet **Carlton Johnson**

Bring a poem to share, but only if you want critique. Sundays at 2:00 pm LInk Please contact Carlton Johnson at ctj.32803@gmail.com

If you have a Zoomie you'd like posted here please send the information to the **Zany Zultan of Zoomieness** at mark@TKOrlando.com. You know you want to.





We celebrated National Poetry Month by launching a statewide virtual Open Mic for members on April 6 at 7:30 PM Eastern time.

"We received many positive comments from members about the virtual open mic we hosted after this year's officer induction ceremony," said President Mary Marcelle. "We thought it would be great if we could offer this opportunity every month for members, to give everyone a chance to connect and share their work."

Peter M. Gordon, a member of Orlando Area Poets, a chapter of FSPA, will host each month. Peter hosted poetry slams and other events at some of our recent conventions. "All members are welcome." Peter said. "We'll start at 7:30 PM Eastern and end by 9:30 PM. Everyone will have five minutes to read their work."

FSPA will not record the sessions or censor the poems. We do expect all readers to be respectful and understand our audience will be from different parts of the state.



Hosted by Peter M. Gordon

"April 6 was our first open mic," said FSPA Vice President Mark Terry. "We plan to continue open mics on the First Tuesday of every month for the rest of the year." The next Open Mics will be May 4th and June 1.

The link and password are as follows: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85105752694?pwd=cHBERVl4U1B4NidFek55S0Zx-OllnUT09

Meeting ID: 851 0575 2694

Passcode: 815518

Poetry - Memoirs - Fiction - Nonfiction - Children's Books

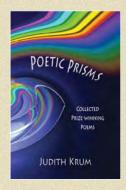
Designer and Editor of Cadence the Anthology of the **Florida State Poets** Association

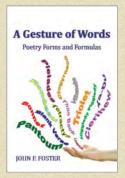


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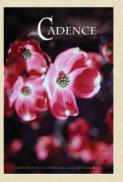
Book Publisher. **Designer and Editor** for Many of Florida's **Best Loved Poets. Poets Helping Poets.**











POETS: ■JANET WATSON ■ JOHN FOSTER ■ PETER M GORDON ■ TERRY MICHAEL HAGANS ■ KATIE O'MALLEY AL ROCHELEAU ■ SOPHIA DUROSE ■ NIKI BYRAM ■ JUDITH KRUM ■ NATALIE WARRICK ■ MARY ROGERS-GRANTHAM DR. IRVIN MILOWE • ELIZABETH PLATER-ZYBERK • JOAN CLARK • AND MORE

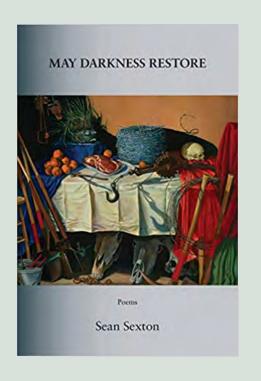
PUBLISHING • MARKETING ASSISTANCE • PROFESSIONAL WORK • FRIENDLY PRICES GARY BROUGHMAN, PUBLISHER & EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Florida's preeminent artist and cowboy poet Sean Sexton reveals the poetry in ranching

Indian River Poet Laureate Sean Sexton's May Darkness Restore (published by Press53) "is a glorious book—Sexton's generous, unerring artist's eye finds extraordinary beauty in the often difficult everyday facts in the life of a third-generation Florida cattle rancher. He glories in the magic and alchemy of language and turns words and phrases like 'Rhizobium leguminosarum' and 'raggedy-assed tractor' into pure poetry. This book celebrates the beauties of generation, death, rebirth and love, and offers us all a share of truly redemptive grace."

—Sidney Wade, author of Bird Book: Poems

To purchase your copy, click this link:



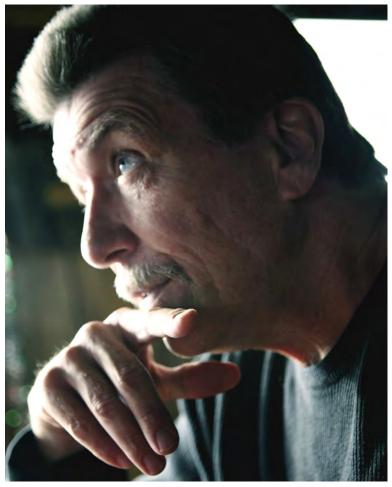
mberspo

He says he's "not mainstream" but to call Gary Broughman an outsider misses the mark. He says he's not averse to "joining" and enjoys working within organizations to accomplish his goals. Rather than a rebel, he sees himself as one who initiates new perspectives.

"It's not so much about going against the grain as adjusting the grain to fit the direction I want to go," he said. "And often I find there are others who are ready to go that way too."

Gary has been a member of the Florida State Poets Association for 10 years, and for the past seven years has volunteered with a select team of editors to design, edit, and publish Cadence, FSPA's annual anthology. The entire process of publishing the anthology has changed since his involvement. "Because my company CHB Media has the tools to design, print, and publish books, we were able to make big improvements while at the same time cutting costs, streamlining the process and making the book available for purchase from the major online book sellers," he said.

CHB Media began with the publication of Gary's first novel and since that time has published close to 80 books. His involvement in the poetry community began as an offshoot when a number of poets came to read at the book launch for his novel. "A friend said, 'we should publish a collection of local poets,' so I started making the rounds from Volusia County, where I live, to Orlando open mics like the one hosted by Russ Golata and Robyn Weinbaum. I read my poems and talked up the books I was planning.



For some reason they all trusted me and submitted their work. The Poets of Central Florida series was born and a bridge was built between the coastal poets and the Orlando area poets."

The next step for Gary was to join FSPA, and he has been an integral part of the group ever since. In addition to Cadence, his company has published many of FSPA's prominent poets like John Foster, Peter Gordon, and Janet Watson

In addition to being a publisher, poet, and novelist, Gary is a theatrical producer, an actor, and a spiritual teacher—which he says is his true calling. He has frequently led sessions of Julia Cameron's program *The Artist's Way:* A Spiritual Path to Higher Creativity.

BROUGHMANPOEMS

A Rare Flower

A rare flower in a quiet corner of the meadow steals the gaze of those few souls who happen by, surprising curious eyes with blossoms adorned in petals like night and day, an unmatched summer snowflake, unique to itself in all of nature.

Some unfold as if made of light. fragile as fine alabaster, delicate as the mouth of a finely thrown vessel, and yet inviting in all things, gathering, restoring all things, living the eternal assurance of mother sun.

And within this peerless flower, lush petals deep and dark arise, standing side by side with translucent sisters a vision to startle heart and mind, as if an artistic God willed the world to learn the art of contrast, fear and beauty woven together in paradox, a veil pulled back on the hope born in the first moment of creation oneness out of diversity in each and among all, revealing in living form the pattern of God's intentions for a universe made from love.

Shark Fest

It's become a shark fest, A full blown feeding fest, Let's face it. Blood in the water. Thoughtless Shredding and tearing.

None of us have any Claim to innocence— Chum throwers everywhere Laughing fool heartedly, Shaking clenched fists Across the boiling sea.

It's become a shark fest, A blood bath, let's admit it. A storm that Can't be calmed. That threatens to Shred more than sharks Ever dreamed of.

BROUGHMANPOEMS Meditation on the Seasons

Winter, spring, summer, fall. The words roll through My mind, over and again, Silencing the moment Like the seasons rolling up The years quiet the din Of life's daily chatter.

Winter, spring, summer, fall. A parade in memory, Pictures behind closed eyes Of changing trees And a changing me.

Winter, spring, summer, fall. The slideshow repeats Over and again. Bare limbs capped in white, And winter coats capped By furry hoods, soon Overtaken by pale green Unfolding on every branch, And me below Runnina free, renewed Like the trees, dripping Energy, ready and able In a light spring jacket.

Now summer takes its turn. My tree is draped in lush Deep green and the sun gilds Bare young limbs hanging free From short cotton sleeves. And then too soon the leaves Are orange and red and Falling day by day Above a boy In a hooded sweatshirt.

Winter, spring, summer, fall. Breathe in, breathe out. Yes. Still, and almost smiling. Happy to remember. Happy to be.

When the Guides Betray You

The path isn't always clear. The woods are deep. The vines tangled and unruly. Trust in your own eyes, Let your heart show the way.

When the path fails, Faith falters, and Learnéd guides desert you, Trust in your own eyes, Let your heart light the way.

Would wise ones of old Choose such a path To cross the dark woods Into freedom's light? Fresh guides, unproven guides Say step boldly, keep the pace, But thickets close in, and Thorns tear at your ankles. Then where do you turn? To whom do you look? Trust in your own eyes, Let your own heart speak. You alone can find the way, When the path pinches in, and The guides have betrayed you.

Mayday, Mayday, Mayday...

 \mathbb{W} e're creeping ever closer to **May 1st**, so, I encourage you, take quill and ink. Think poet thoughts, prepare to do your worst (By which I mean your best, of course, I think). Our FSPA contests soon begin And all your verse input is much desired For some, there will be money there to win For others, to be read has them inspired You, only, now your own felt wants know best This is the time to seek to flesh them out Put your desires on paper unsuppressed, Then, winning fame, there'll be no need to pout. We here await receipt of stanzas new To represent the very best of you! ~ Marc Davidson

Ready your wits for a **Poetry Extravaganza**

Daytona Beach, FL — This spring the Florida State Poets Association is offering a grand chance to take your mind off of the world's troubles and win some nice prizes.

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. Your poems can be serious or silly. Many categories accept any subject. Others demand a certain content or a certain form. 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 Office's 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. (Include form name at top of page.) 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.

#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

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

Subject: U.S. Politics 2020-2021. 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 Orlando Area Poets

#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

#25 MIAMI POETS AWARD

Subject: Friendship. Form: Any. 50 Line Limit. 1st PL \$25. 2nd PL \$15. 3rd PL \$10. 3 HM 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, if any. 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 15 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.

Carlton Johnson wins The 2020 Thomas Burnett Swann Poetry Prize

He won with his poem, The Swallow, featured in Revelry 2020—the voice of The Gwendolyn Brooks Writers Association of Florida.

Here is the winning poem reproduced with permission of the poet:



THE SWALLOW

In fluoroscopy, after a sip of barium, he sees his little birdlike swallow falter in flashes of an eye, sip from lip to come-hither tip of tongue the gulp erupts like a brick tossed into a well of mumbles.

Down, down the throat the cool metal sloshes around his epiglottis. Eddies in a small catch basin form. Water, once a friend, now interlopes in this space of air, drops down like flint to an unarmed pipe.

A cough of dried leaves spasms, rasping. A frantic pause to catch a breath or two.

He listens for his old voice. That voice, now hidden in the underbrush, where the wood thrush once sang long, love tunes to his feathered beloved.

So he trudges on, his now guttural tones find a home in this choke of winter.

~ Carlton Johnson

Linda Eve Diamond Wins REELpoetry Film Festival Award

Linda Eve Diamond's poem, "A Moving Portrait," paired with the video artwork that inspired it by Matvey Rezanov, won the "Film and Video Prompt Award" at the REELpoetry International Poetry Film & Video Festival. This category was comprised of poems written in response to a Public Poetry ekphrastic contest. Poets whose works were selected to enter the festival were invited to record the poem and make musical and audio timing selections to create the finished video poem. Her winning poem A Moving Portrait is offered below with permission. Here is a <u>link to the video</u>.

Linda Eve's other recent publications include a "Bluebird of Happiness" photograph on the cover of the April issue of Pithead Chapel (Vol. 10, Issue 4) and her poem, "Morning with Time," included in *Catch the Moon*, a special anniversary anthology by Grey Sparrow Press.



A MOVING PORTRAIT

I dream of a new scene—a wash, a fresh start. sky-lighted buildings, softly falling shadows, lines, lines, more lines—that's city life, right?

Windows, windows—what's behind the panes of all the many windows of this creative, quirky, lonely, quickly growing city's soul?

I figure myself in a room—a featureless feature, a blank slate, taking shape as I paint my eyes, my lips, and add some new dimensions to my quiet character...

Growing wild in the city, blending into the city, disappearing in the city, all alone in the city, burnt out—I find a letter from my old self:

"Hi. Remember me? Are you still painting? Still painting yourself into corners? Hope you're not disappearing again, all alone, forever lost in your art..."

~ Linda Eve Diamond

FSPA CHAPTER NEWS & UPDATES

CHAPTER PRESIDENTS

Big Bend Poets & Writers

Gordon Magill tallyman01@comcast.net

Live Poets Society of Daytona Beach

Marc Davidson flueln@hotmail.com

Miami Poets

Tere Starr terestarr36@gmail.com

North Florida Poetry Hub

Ruth Van Alstine ruth@northfloridapoetryhub.org

Orlando Area Poets

Diane Neff d.i.neff@gmail.com

Poetry for the Love of It

Charles Hazelip dochazelip@comcast.net

Space Coast Poets

Jim Peterson outdabox@aol.com

Sunshine Poets

Cheri Herald c_herald@hotmail.com

Tomoka Poets

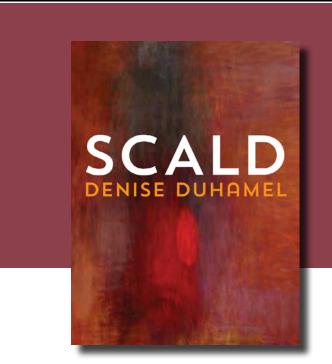
Mary-Ann Westbrook 1poetry.3@gmail.com

New River Poets

Gary Ketchum ketchxxii1@hotmail.com

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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*





Tere Starr

Miami Poets

Miami Poets welcomed National Poetry Month virtually for the second year. We continue to meet by Zoom.com each first Wednesday at 1 to 3 pm for the Virtual Miami Poets Soirées, facilitated by Tere Starr and on second Mondays as we join **Steve Liebowitz**'s virtual poetry critiques. Special thanks go to Lisa Jeffery for setting up recent Zoom. com sessions. Her poetry and insight add an exciting dimension to our group.

Achievements: **Connie Goodman-Milone**'s poem "Loves Giant Piano," was published in South Florida Writers Association's publication, The Author's Voice. Her letter, "Against Hate," appeared in the Miami Herald. Pat Bonner Milone's letter, "Corruption Costs," was also published in the Herald's editorial page. Zorina Frey was featured in February's Shout Out Miami. She presented, "Treating Our Beautiful and Battered Wounds," during Broward College's annual festival. Zorina's essay, "Businesses Need Poets and They Don't Even Know It," appeared in South85Journal. Patricia Asuncion continues to join us from Charlottesville, Virginia. She hosts the monthly Virtual Global Open Mics. Patsy's poetry events can be found at this link. Tere Starr was featured during South Florida Writers Association's April meeting. She invited the Miami Poets to share their poems at the Zoom.com event. Tere continues to host virtual Poetry Soirées for the Brandeis Women's South Miami Chapter. We believe that poetry resonates best when it's shared.

~ Tere Starr, President





Zorina Frey Connie Goodman-Milone Pat Bonner-Milone





Cheri Herald

Sunshine Poets

Sunshine Poets meets on the last 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, judged for Utah state poetry contest. Member, Angie Mayo, had a short story published in Florida Writer (Florida Writers Assoc.). She was also invited to be a judge for the Royal Palm Literary Award contest.

~ Cheri Neuman Herald, President

Marc Davidson

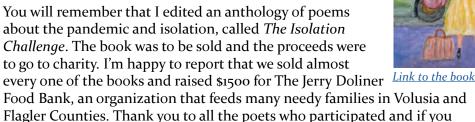


Vicki Iorio

The Live Poets Society of Daytona Beach

In April, the Daytona Live Poets will resume meeting, after being out for a year because of the pandemic. We will meet via Zoom.com on April 21 at 2 p.m. All are welcome, and if anyone would like to join us, contact me at flueln@hotmail.com for the link.

Several of our members have reported recent success in the poetry world. Vicki Iorio has published a new book, a poetry collection, *Not Sorry*, published by Alien Buddha Press. It is available on Amazon. Llewellyn McKernan reports that she just got a poem called "Facing the Tree" accepted by *Artemis Journal* for their 2021 issue. This poem won second prize in the 2020 FSPA Competition in the Category: Trees. Also, her most recently published book is a chapbook called Getting Ready To Travel from Finishing Line Press. The poems are all in rhyme and meter. George Ella Lyon, Kentucky Poet Laureate, said: "Imagine a book co-authored by Mother Goose and William Blake and you'll get an idea of the kind of poems in GRTT." Getting Ready To Travel is also available on Amazon.



didn't get in this one, I'll get you in the next one!

~ Marc Davidson, President



Charles Hazelip

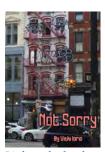
Poetry For the Love Of It

Poetry for the Love of It (PLOI) members renewed their commitment to National Poetry Month for 2021, accepting the challenge to write or read 30 poems in 30 days. Members also renewed their focus on poetry formats. The sestain is the primary focus for April.

Members continue to share their original poems, and to examine the life and works of a notable poet each month. Southern poet and writer James Dickey was the April selection. Adrienne Rich and Gwendolyn Brooks are the notable poets for May and June.

PLOI continues to meet via Zoom on the 2nd and 4th Mondays of each month. The new PLOI website is http://ploipoetry.com.

~ Linda Whitefeather, **PLOI Chapter Recording Secretary** on behalf of Charles Hazelip, **PLOI Chapter President**



Link to the book



Diane Neff



Carolynn Scully



Carlton Johnson



Elaine Person



Andrew Jarvis

Orlando Area Poets

The Orlando Area Poets' latest in-house contest featured the triolet poetic form. Placing third was **Elaine Person**, for "Life is a Triolet," second was Mark Andrew James Terry, for "And Yet There's More," and the first place winning poem was "Triolet" by Lynn Schiffhorst. Our latest challenge was to write a haiku or micro-poem with the word "hibiscus" included.

The Maitland Public Library National Poetry Month Contest judging is now underway, with poems on the theme "Float Away." All entries will be shared at the quarterly Poetry Coffeehouse on April 30, 7-9 pm (link), and winners will be announced after all submitted poems have been read. A new theme will be announced at that time.

Nikki Fragala Barnes hosted online workshops on experimental poetry for the North Florida Poetry Hub and on prose poems and poets for Orlando World Lab.

Christina Flocken's piece, "Me, Myself, and I" was accepted into Sandhill Review.



Christina Flocken

Our newest Orlando Area Poets member, Linda Goddard, was the winner of the Orlando Words and Wonders Winter Poem contest, with "To Watch These Skies."

Peter Gordon's poem, "Pinwheel" was accepted into Sandhill Review.

Wayfarer Books is publishing **Andrew Jarvis**' new poetry collection, *Sojourners*, this fall. It is Andrew's fourth full-length collection.

Carlton Johnson's poem "Wishful Profile" was accepted into Sandhill Review. He also won The 2020 Thomas Burnett Swann Poetry Prize with his poem The Swallow (see page 30).

Diane Neff's poem, "Time," was accepted into the inaugural edition of Community Building Art Works Anthology. Her poem, "My Life Time" was accepted into Sandhill Review.

Elaine Person's poem was featured on Haikuniverse.com during their Valentine's Day hourly special event (see #19). Her poem, "A Struggle Within," was accepted into Sandhill Review. Elaine continues to facilitate writing workshops through the Maitland Public Library at 3:30-5:30 pm on the third Sunday of each month, focusing on the assigned theme given by the library, and at the Crealde School several times per year.

Carolynn Scully published her second article, "Grand Rules," in GrandKids Matter magazine and on their blog, and has been asked to be a regular contributor to their publications! Here is her latest article online: link

Cheryl Lynn West's haiku was the featured poem on Haikuniverse on February 7, 2021.

~ Diane Neff, President

Mary-Ann Westbrook



G. Kyra Von Brokoph

Tamoka Poets

Since the Volusia County Library, due to COVID-19 issues, will not let us or anyone hold meetings there we will be searching for a place that is open and safe for us to get together.

As you read this Creative Happiness Institute along with Tomoka Poets will have sponsored two open poetry mic events. The first was held April 17th at The Rockefeller Gardens outdoor stage in Ormond Beach. The second was held April 124th at Thin Man Amphitheater in Deland. We hope that some of you were able to be at one or both of them.

G. Kyra Von Brokoph has published through Taylor and Seales Publishers *Everything is Made to Sing*. It is available on Amazon.com. **David Axelrod** has published *Mother Tongue*: available on eBay. **Marc Davidson** has published *The Isolation Challenge*, a collection of poems from local poets. The proceeds are being donated to a local food bank. The book is available through Marc. Shoot him an email or call.

Now the sad news. We have lost a long time very active member. **Freddy Booth**, who went by **Travallion** and was known as The Man in Black, was the creator and emcee of our "Poetry in the Park" events. He took us to many beautiful and interesting places that were not only a joy to read but also inspired us. He advocated for and was on the committee to create and name the first Volusia County Poet Laureate. He was a man who will not soon be forgotten.

~ Mary-Ann Westbrook, President





Freddy Booth



Gary Ketchum

New River Poets

New River Poets continue to meet virtually utilizing Zoom.com. With the progress being made in COVID-19 vaccinations, we are hopeful that the time is not too far in the distant future for us all to be able to meet in person. Until CDC recommendations and everyone in our group is comfortable with meeting face to face, Zoom.com is a blessing for executing sharing sessions.

To celebrate National Poetry Month, **John Foster** of our group is giving a PowerPoint program entitled, "The Funny Bone in Poetry – or – Probing for the Humerus," to residents of Freedom Plaza, the community where he lives. Additionally, I will be donating two copies of the FSPA anthology, *Cadence* to two different libraries in Pasco County. We want to expose as many local people as possible not only to the poetic works of people in our state but also to provide them with information about Florida State Poets Association and encourage recruiting some new poets into the organization.

~ Gary Ketchum, President



Gordon Magill

Big Bend Poets & Writers

Big Bend Poets & Writers continues to attract new members, who are posting poetry on the BBP&W Facebook page, including poets from Tallahassee area, from Austin and San Antonio, Texas, and from France and Italy.

Our erstwhile, hard-working webmeister, Linda Wright, has relocated to a new home in Tallahassee but continues to find time to post new poetry on our blog site at: Link

BBP&W member Avis Veronica Simmonds has published her seventh collection of poetry, entitled *Love Verses* in time for Valentine's Day, 2021.

BBP&W member **Cynthia Rose** gave a live poetry reading on February 20, 2021, at LeMoyne Arts Center in Tallahassee as part of the Center's Civil Rights Project exhibit.

BBP&W member **Keith Keboi Rodgers** continues to host a monthly virtual event called "Black on Black Rhyme Virtual Show" on ZOOM.com linked to Facebook. Examples of the show can be viewed at: Link

BBP&W member **Jude Mar**r has published a new collection of poetry, *We* Know Each Other By Our Wounds, Animal Heart Press, November, 2020.

BBP&W member Rebekka (Bek) Brooks Istrail has published a set of poems "inspired by 2020" and entitled Simple Verse. Link

~ Gordon Magill, President

Ruth Van Alstine

When we meet:

The North Florida Poetry Hub Monthly Chapter Meeting is the last Saturday of each month 2-3:30 pm. Open Forum Workshop is the 1st Thursday and Poetry Hub the 3rd Tuesday of each month 6:30-8:00 pm. On Zoom. RSVP/get link on NFPH Facebook Events page. Facebook Events



Nikki Fragala Barnes

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.

NFPH was excited to welcome another new member this past winter, **Shutta Crum**, (Link to her website) an award-winning poet and children's book writer and, also, an oft-requested speaker and presenter at writing conferences, libraries and schools. She is the author of a well-reviewed chapbook titled: WHEN YOU GET HERE (Link to the book) (Kelsay Books, 2020). Her poems for adults



Shutta Crum

have appeared in numerous small press publications and literary journals since the 1970s to Ann Arbor (W)rites, The Wayne Literary Review, The Huron River Review, Writers Reading at Sweetwaters and many more. She is also the author of thirteen picture books and three novels for young readers, all published by major publishers: Alfred A. Knopf, Clarion/Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, Albert Whitman, and Fitzhenry & Whiteside. We look forward to sharing words of poetry, fellowship, and a long, mutually beneficial relationship with Shutta.

In November 2020 Ruth Van Alstine had two ekphrastic poems "Wings" and "In A Bloom's Reflection," inspired by her own artwork, published in (a) River Rising ~ Anthology of Women's Voices. In April she released her third book A While Away, a numbered, limited edition run of ekphrastic poetry and full color artwork to coincide with National Poetry Month.



North Florida Poetry Hub was involved in the April JAX Poetry Fest, hosted by Hope At Hand, with member poems included in the downtown Poetry Walk. Chapter members also participated in various community poetry projects and hosted a National Poetry Month Open Mic April 24th on Zoom.com. Poetry scrolls were donated to local Jacksonville Nursing homes for their elderly residents to enjoy.

> On March 12th FSPA member, Nikki Fragala Barnes from Orlando Zoomed in and facilitated an Experimental Poetry Workshop for our Chapter. An exciting program that inspired new ideas in creative poetry styles. There were 25 attendees, in part due to advertising from the new FSPA Zoomies promotional program. Awesome!

> On June 22nd at 7 p.m. NFPH member **Howard Moon** will lead us in a Protest Poetry Workshop on Zoom, which is a unique opportunity to learn how to write this genre. July 23rd at 7 p.m., Michael Henry Lee, a well-known haiku poet, will facilitate an advanced haiku Zoom workshop. RSVP (required) and get link for these and other NFPH free virtual events on our NFPH Facebook Events page.

~ Ruth Van Alstine, President

Editor's Choice Poetry Challenge

Subway Station 5 AM

His path to work stretched across the subway platform

Packed with dark suits and torn blue jeans,

Polished wingtips and ripped sneakers,

Leather briefcases.

Denim laundry bags stuffed with belongings.

He averted his eyes from a junkie

Shooting up behind a concrete pillar.

He coughed against the scent of last night's perfume,

The stink of old urine in cement corners.

The subway's yellow lights silhouetted the lighting of a cigarette

Against the contoured face of a woman

With stringy bleached hair,

Her birdcage earrings twinkling in time

To her blinking false eyelashes.

He sensed a Kodak moment in the making,

And, texting madly, aimed his phone camera

Toward the mass of moving humanity.

The transit cops were on top of it,

Their perimeter saving the crime scene

From destruction.

Wing tips and false eyelashes disappeared into the subway tunnel.

His lungs gasped the noxious air

As the guy next to him collapsed onto his feet.

The cops confiscated his phone.

~ Judith Krum

The Monster - Acts I-III

Like a weed, the monster's seed lay dormant;

containing all it needs to bide its time.

in the July/August issue

When you left, temperature optimized full growth.

Relinquishing its grip, glancing upward, sunshine dries skimpy...delicate...lacy...panties.

The Monster's simmering rage suddenly turns to a boil.

~ Suzanne Austin-Hill

Sleep noir

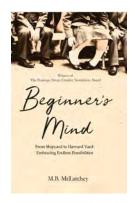
When night fell, my head landed with a thud on my sweet, well-worn pillow.

~ Dennis Rhodes

lam my evil twin when I let the worst of me get the best of me

~ John F. Foster

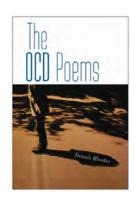
NEWS, BOOK RELEASES & REVIEWS



Beginner's Mind — M.B. McLatchey Winner of the Penelope Niven Award in Creative Nonfiction

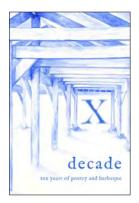
Release date: May 15, 2021 — Told through the eyes of a ten-year-old, *Begin*ner's Mind asks the question, "How do we want teachers to teach, inspire, and guide our children?" The answer is provided through a series of fourth-grade classroom scenes that take us back to a shipyard town in New England, where a loving teacher opens her students' eyes to all-but-unimaginable dreams and opportunities. This is a book that reminds us of what teaching can look like: daily lessons where standardized and measurable curriculum goals are less prized than the immeasurable blossoming of our children, and a classroom that puts on display the possibilities before us when a teacher's love is com-

bined with the beginner's mind. As the author shares in these classroom stories, a beginner's mind knows that art is not just for artists and music is not just for musicians. *Preorder link*



The OCD Poems — Dennis Rhodes

FSPA member Dennis Rhodes is the author of *The Letter I* (Chelsea Station Editions, 2014), Entering Dennis (Xlibris, 2005) and Spiritus Pizza & Other *Poems* (Vital Links, 2000). His poems and essays have appeared in *BLOOM*, Chelsea Station, Lambda Literary Review, The Cape Cod Times, New York Newsday, and other journals. Rhodes served as literary editor of Body Positive magazine and later as poetry editor of Provincetown Magazine. He co-founded the Provincetown Poetry Festival in 1999. For a number of years, Rhodes hosted a weekly radio show on WOMR in Provincetown, featuring interviews with local poets. He currently lives in Florida. Order link



Decade: Ten Years of Poetry and Barbeque

Laura (Riding) Jackson Foundation

Releases in early April — *Decade: Ten Years of Poetry and Barbeque* is a celebratory publication of the Laura (Riding) Jackson Foundation. For ten years under the guidance of **Sean Sexton**, Indian River County Poet Laureate, the Foundation has hosted a poetry event that draws nationally recognized poets from around the country to read their work and offer workshops. The Foundation is proud to have hosted important names in poetry like Naomi Shihab Nye, Tony Hoagland, Brian Turner, and many others. Every poet who has come through the Foundation's doors in the last decade to participate in events and programs has happily contributed to this anthology. The Foundation is proud to showcase its hard work and commitment to poetry in this

beautiful volume. Decade is the inaugural publication from The Seizin Press Vero, a new imprint of the Laura (Riding) Jackson Foundation. Link for preorder



First Flight — Lori Zavada

Join Northwest Florida in celebrating and congratulating Lori Zavada for her debut poetry chapbook, First Flight. Zavada's debut poetry chapbook was the 2020 Chapbook Challenge winner selected by Katherine Nelson-Born, Northwest Florida Poet Laureate, for spring 2021 publishing by CLMP member West Florida Literary Federation. Lori's chapbook is now available on Amazon! Order Link

Way to go Lori! Yours in Poetry, Katherine Nelson-Born, Northwest Florida Poet Laureate

Blackberry Peach Prizes Announced

The Blackberry Peach Prizes (BBP3) for written and spoken word poetry, a major national competition sponsored by the National Federation of State Poetry Societies (NFSPS) have been chosen for 2021. The winners are first place **Edward Mabrey** of California, second place **Jennifer Hambrick** of Ohio, and third place **Julie Shaven** of Colorado. The two honorable mention winners are **Susann Moeller** of Ohio. and Paula J. Lambert of Ohio.

The winners were chosen from entries originating in 13 states, with Florida and Ohio leading the number of poets who submitted written and spoken versions of four poems electronically through Submittable. com. Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer, Poet Laureate of the western slope of Colorado, and former winner of the Blackberry Peach Contest judged this year's contest. This is the fifth year of the competition. A video with presentations by the the winners will be available on YouTube (2021 BlackBerryPeach Contest Winners) in June.

The tradition of spoken word or performance poetry goes back deep into pre-history. Poetry was performed on stage long before it was captured on the page. Competitive performance poetry was an important part of the Ancient Greek Olympics. With the advent of printing, poetry moved increasingly to the pages of books and into the classroom. Since the 1970's, there has been a resurgence in interest in spoken word and performance poetry, including hiphop (or rap) and slam (which reintroduced competition). Today it is an important cultural mainstay and a favorite among young poets.

In 2016 NFSPS, primarily a literary organization, established the Blackberry Peach Competition, a major national contest with significant cash prizes to acknowledge and support the value of spoken word poetry.

Please consider entering the competition in 2022. Contest guidelines are available at this link.

~ Joe Cavanaugh

sandhill review this is me

Link to the book

Sandhill Review — Crack the Spine Event

Sandhill Review's Crack the Spine reading for its newest anthology, this is me, Volume 22, occurred on Zoom.com on Wednesday, April 7. A large number of FSPA members are represented in the publication and many were in attendance including, Elaine Person, Carlton Johnson, Diane Neff, Christina Flocken and Peter Gordon.

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, andwe may choose to edit your submission.

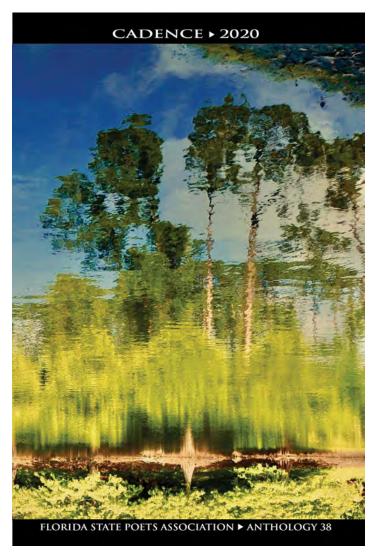
Email submissions to: mark@TKOrlando.com

I sure do hope you enjoy this issue as much as I have enjoyed putting it together.





Do you have your 2020 Cadence?



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



Photo by Elaine Person

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.



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

OBIECTS 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 OBERVATION 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.

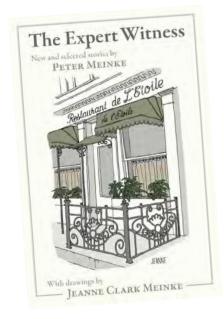
To obtain your free trial month, simply email Robyn Weinbaum at FSPATreasurer@Aol.com

or mail your request to:

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



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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Lola Haskins Poetry

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.

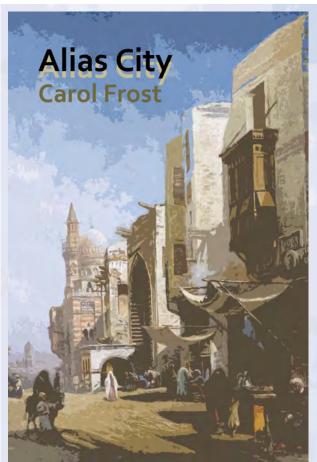
Published by University of Pittsburgh Press

Improvisations on John Clare

LOLA HASKINS

Now available on Amazon — Click here.

Learn more at lolahaskins.com



Alias City by Carol Frost

Now available from MADHAT PRESS

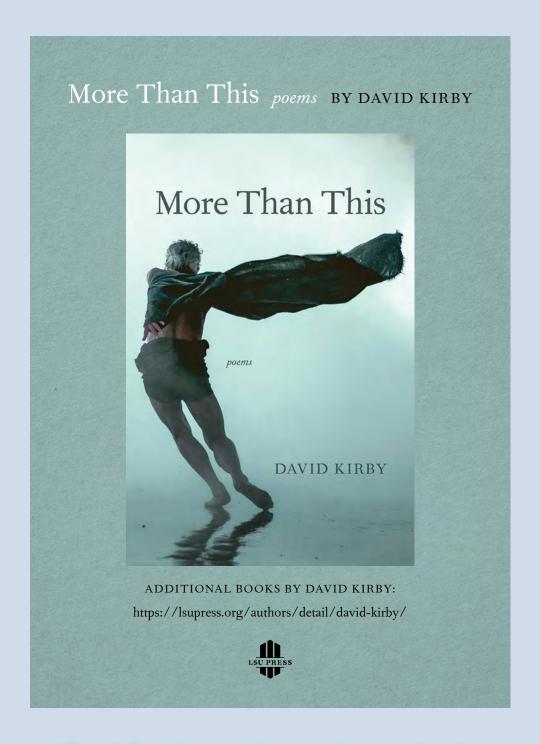


Welcome to Carol Frost's *Alias City*, which is, in the best sense of both words, the city of music.... But it is also a great city of the mind.... The hero of this book is a refugee, a survivor of World War II. She is now losing her memory, trying to recount what happened, giving us brief glimpses into 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



Florida State Poets Association An affiliate of the National Federation of State Poetry Societies

Of Poets & Poetry

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