

Cover photograph by Jeanne Meinke: On the Train to Neuchatel 2016

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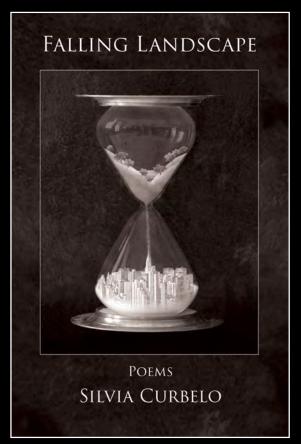
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# Silvia Curbelo's Newest Release

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# Florida State Poets Association

An affiliate of the National Federation of State Poetry Societies



# FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

# **Dear Poets:**

I hope this note finds you well, and if otherwise afflicted or affected by our common challenge, that you and yours may heal quickly. Since I have written to each of you recently, I'll leave you with what we at FSPA intend to be a collection of uplifting images and lines, and my own comments for this issue at this:

Al Rocheleau



# RECONSIDERATION

The azure satin bower bird of New Guinea mixes charcoal and berry juice, and with a piece of bark for a brush paints the inside of its nest, blue.

So don't say we can't handle this.

Not true.

~ Al Rocheleau

# **The Contracted World**

February when leaves sift down like phosphorous behind a sparking comet's dying thrust above the cloudy gardens of our town: azalea season Puffs of pink and white illuminate the shade of limbs that twist out fifty feet and link Brobdingnagian branches where handmade children's tree-homes hover: abandoned stations above already fading constellations

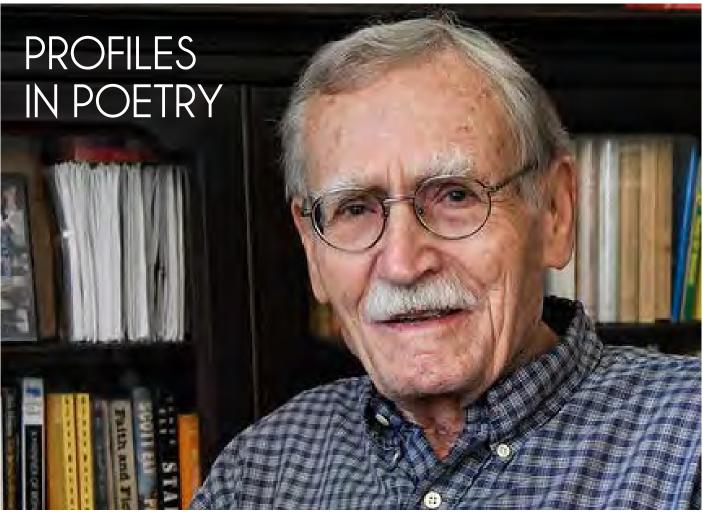
Nearby a smokestack spits its bit of sulfur on the breeze affirming flowers will be gone but pollution stays: nothing sticks like shit Leaves for example: How they toil not though on their descent they spin adding rich acid to the sandy soil decomposing even as Solomon did helping to shape death's hypnotic wick: part of nature's wisdom or nature's trick

Our vision's Lilliputian Like falling rain there's always one hundred per cent of pain available but its distribution's random if not perverse In San Francisco de Nentón the troops descended like a plague of dogs and ran merciless from hut to hut Here soft loops of Spanish moss slip from the oaks They tangle in the blooms That's what we see: that's our angle

How much of happiness should be earned? How much joy in every accidental breath alloys our just thoughts and natural sympathy until we can't connect with lives unfairly far away in all respects? Next door our neighbor's seven hives buzz like engines as he bends behind his veil The end result: azalea-scented honey It takes time It takes love And it takes money

### ~ Peter Meinke,

from The Contracted World (U of Pittsburgh Press)

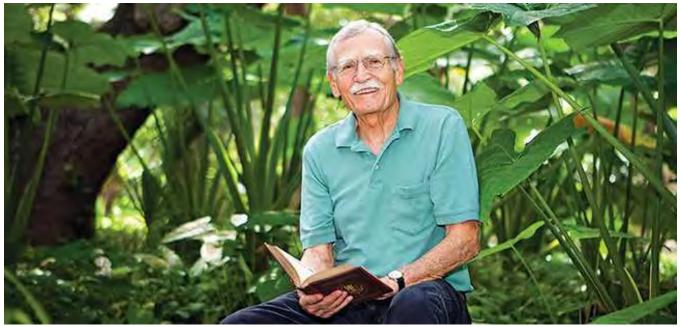


Photography by Tom Kramer

# **Florida State Poet Laureate** Peter Meinke Q&A WITH AL ROCHELEAU

Peter Meinke, recent recipiant of Florida Humanities Lifetime Literary Award for Writing, has been both Poet Laureate of St. Petersburg and Poet Laureate of Florida. His latest collection of poems is Tasting Like Gravity (U. of Tampa Press, 2018). His book of essays, To Start With, Feel Fortunate, illustrated by his wife Jeanne, received the 2017 William Meredith Award. Other books include The Expert Witness (2016), a collection of stories, a children's book in verse, The Elf Poem (2015), and Lucky Bones (2014), his eighth collection in the prestigious Pitt Poetry Series. His work has appeared in The New Republic, The New Yorker, The Atlantic, Poetry, and dozens of other magazines. He has published over 20 books of poetry, fiction, and nonfiction. Truth and Affection, published by the University of Tampa Press (2013), is a collection of his Poet's Notebook columns with his wife Jeanne's drawings, from Tampa Bay's alternative newspaper, Creative Loafing. His poetry has received numerous awards, including two NEA Fellowships and three prizes from the Poetry Society of America. His book of short fiction, The Piano Tuner, won the 1986 Flannery O'Connor Award. Mr. Meinke directed the Writing Workshop at Eckerd College for many years and has often been writer-in-residence at other colleges and universities, including a Fulbright Professorship at the University of Warsaw in Poland (when it was still under communist control, but with revolution rumbling in the universities). www.petermeinke.com

(Continued on next page)



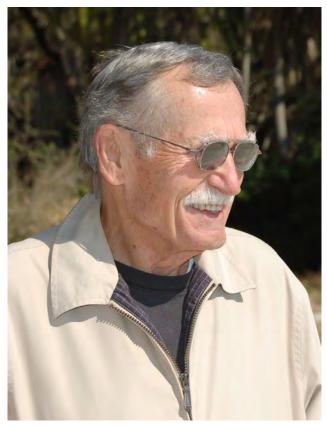
Photograph taken by Mark Wemple for Trend Magazine., September 2015 issue, to accompany an ICON interview by Art Levy.

What follows is a conversation between FSPA President Al Rocheleau and Peter Meinke:

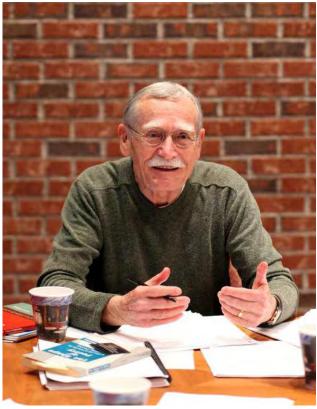
**Rocheleau:** Any thoughts on our current situation, and how poets in particular may be affected or effective? **Meinke:** My joke about the current situation is that poets don't have to worry, their readings don't attract big enough crowds. Not so oddly, I seem busier in this locked-In period of the pandemic saga. In America, where poetry generally languishes in dusty corners of independent bookstores, it steps out like a First Responder to offer aid and empathy to the afflicted. So, as Poet Laureate, I'm approached from many directions, poems flow in from all over, with requests for poems that heal. So I'm less lonely than one might think, and I answer as many as I can.

**Rocheleau:** Your role as Laureate, which while officially over has been practically extended as caretaker until the new Laureate is named, has involved many events and much travel. How would you sum up that experience? Any special memories of these years? **Meinke:** Because I believe in the healing value of poetry (elusive as it is to pin down), my experience as Laureate has been intense, fun, and—I hope—useful. I was impressed by how many people wanted to hear it and write it. My most moving event was when I read poems with the Parkland students about a week after the shootings; extremely difficult to handle the emotions there. (I also read "One Year Later," my poem about the Pulse massacre, on NPR and elsewhere.) I think this Laureateship is an important position, and I'm disappointed that somehow the passing it on to a new poet has been muddled. It should be a well-publicized and dignified event, and it's already 10 months behind schedule.

**Rocheleau:** You and the late Lee Bennett Hopkins were the first FSPA chancellors installed. Along with Lola Haskins, installed the very next year, you have all taken part in many FSPA events. In fact, the reliability of all of our otherwise busy chancellors has astounded us throughout their tenure. How do you see FSPA's role, now and in future as part of the arts community of Florida, and your own role as a chancellor? **Meinke:** I've done everything the FSPA has asked me to do, but nothing specifically as chancellor, except the title gets mentioned sometimes during introductions. I think it would be a good idea to have readings scheduled with chancellors of other states. I represented poetry as something that holds value for everyone, for Florida and for America: I suppose that's what I was supposed to do as chancellor.



Photography by Jeanne Meinke



Photograph taken by UT photographer, winter 2012

**Rocheleau:** Going back in a many-decade career as a teacher of writers, and author of an exceptional poetry writing manual, is there one overarching paragraph of good advice you might offer the new or working poet? **Meinke:** My advice: Read as much as you can (prose as well as poetry); write regularly (don't wait for inspiration); rewrite a lot (don't be too easily satisfied); and finally, say Yes to everything (whatever comes up: keep the windows open: [a little common sense is necessary here]).

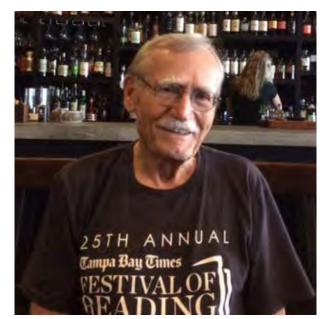
**Rocheleau:** Your slim book on Howard Nemerov many years ago was one of the best critical examinations of that grandmaster. While he was largely a formalist, that seems not to have been your area of exploration until more recently. What drew you to Nemerov originally, and what did you learn from him? Meinke: Choosing a subject for my Ph.D. thesis at the U. of Minnesota, my young advisor said "Let's do something original. Pick a living poet you believe will become important, and write your thesis about him, making that point." I chose Howard Nemerov, and that was a very important event for me. Although I was writing poems, I'd never taken a poetry workshop in my life, but reading his poems closely over and over I think—I hope—I learned how to write poetry. I finished my Ph.D. in 1965. Later, around 1970, teaching at Florida Presbyterian College (now Eckerd College), I invited Howard (whom I had never met) to read at FPC. During dinner at our house before the reading, my wife Jeanne said to him, "You have the bluest eyes I've ever seen!" Howard Nemerov seemed very pleased.

**Rocheleau:** You have been both an award-wining poet as well as an award-winning story writer and noted essayist. What moves you to go one way or another in framing a particular feeling or idea?

**Meinke:** While writing poetry, I seldom have an idea in the beginning. For me, a poem almost always starts with a line, or a fragment of a line (something I saw, or heard, or just popped into my head). I pursue that image as long as possible. I have notebooks full of abandoned images, occasionally going back to them and beginning again. I always hope to surprise myself: Robert Frost wrote, "No surprise in the writer, no surprise in the reader."

**Rocheleau:** Your wife Jeannie is a very fine visual artist; what are the advantages of having a partner who works in an allied art? **Meinke:** It's been a delight to have an artist (Jeanne) as my wife, with shared interest in the arts in general. But Jeanne doesn't help with my writing (except as an occasional inspiration) and I don't help with her drawings (except as an occasional subject). As Jeanne says, "We collaborate in separate rooms." Of course, there's a built-in recognition of the need for some quiet concentration.

(Continued on next page)





Photography by Jeanne Meinke

**Rocheleau:** In what ways did your sojourn in France, and absorbing the French lifestyle and culture affect your writing? **Meinke:** Most writers enjoy travel, for the experience of new places, people, and food; but travel naturally turns one's mind to language, and this is a useful study. We lived for at least a year (always with students, on Fulbrights or Overseas Study courses) in London, Paris, Neuchâtel, and Warsaw, and these naturally became "settings" for stories or poems; but even more valuable was our meetings with Polish, Swiss, & British writers, and the focus on speaking and reading in a foreign language. I think specifically that travel has helped me to be more careful in my word choice, and perhaps even making changes in a poem's "music." I think Emily Dickinson would have gone to Paris in a flash if her dominating father had given her a chance.

**Rocheleau:** What are your simple guilty pleasures, those that have to do with you and not your writing? **Meinke:** My semi-guilty time-consuming pleasures for most of my life were playing the piano (not well, but adequately so we could sing along at parties, Christmas carols, etc.), and tennis, which we played "religiously" every Sunday morning for 60 years. Moving into my 80s brought along a damaged hand and bad knees that ended both activities, but I'm not despondent; I had decades of enjoyment. Let's see how long Tom Brady and Roger Federer can play. A minor guilty pleasure still going strong is the cocktail hour that sometimes features a martini; obviously our locked-in situation can only encourage this.

**Rocheleau:** In your eighty-seven years, you may have changed many times and answered or re-answered many questions about yourself, the art of poetry, and the world at large. What questions have you yet to answer? **Meinke:** When I received, a month ago, the Florida Humanities' "Lifetime Achievement Award for Writing," I was honored, of course, but also thought, "Uh-oh, somehow that sounds like the end." And maybe it is. But a question I haven't been asked is what I would like to do, literarily speaking, with my remaining years. I'm grateful to have had this extra-normal time to get some more writing published. I'll try to hang around writing some more poetry that could wind up in a book called "Collected Poems." That (Continued on next page) wouldn't be necessary, but it would be satisfactory.

## **The First Marriage**

Imagine the very first marriage a girl and boy trembling with some inchoate need for ceremony a desire for witness: inventing formality like a wheel or a hoe

In a lost language in a clearing too far from here a prophet or prophetess intoned to these lovers who knelt with their hearts cresting like the unnamed ocean thinking This is true

thinking they will never be alone again though planets slip their tracks and fish desert the sea repeating those magic sounds meaning I do on this stone below this tree before these friends yes in body and word my darkdream my sunsong yes I do I do

> ~ Peter Meinke (from Scars, U. of Pittsburgh Press)

# The Gun Lobby Makes Its Sales Pitch

'What d'you say?' the NRA chief panjandrum began to bray 'What d'you say when a drug-crazed crook hammers your door and breaks the lock and shoots your children while they pray?

We need good guys with guns or they will damn well shoot you first—Each day it's them or us So Write your checkl What d'you say?'

... Dayton ... Aurora ... Mandalay Fort Hood ... Columbine ... Pulse ... LA DeKalb ... Omaha ... Sandy Hook Nickle Mines ... Red Lake ... Virginia Tech El Paso ... Parkland ... Santa Fe

That's what I say

-~ Peter Meinke in "Tasting Like Gravity," U. of Tampa Press

# POEMS BY PETER MEINKE

# POEMS BY PETER MEINKE

# **Zinc Fingers**

Though scientists inform us that criminals have insufficient zinc l've always believed it's insufficient gold and silver that gets them going The man who slipped his hand into my front pocket on the jammed Paris Métro wasn't trying to make friends His overcoat smelled greasy and it was unpleasant holding hands above my wallet pressed in on all sides like stacked baguettes There was no way to move or take a swing Still some action on my part seemed to be called for: we stood nose to nose I tried to look in his eyes but he stared at my chin shy on our first date so after a while as we rattled along toward the Champs-Élysées

I lost concentration and began to think

of our scholarly daughter working at Yale on a project called Zinc Fingers scanning a protein with pseudopods each with a trace of zinc that latch on to our DNA and help determine what we become This brought me back to mon ami the pickpocket: I wondered how he chose his hard line of work and if as a boy he was good at cards for example or sewing and for that matter what choice did I have either so when we reached our stop and he looked up from my chin at last I smiled at him and his eyes flashed in fear or surprise and I called It's OK as he scuttled away Tout va bien! though I held tight to my wallet

- Peter Meinke

from *Zinc Fingers*, (2000) U. of Pittsburgh Press; first published in America, 1998.

# POEMS BY PETER MEINKE

# Learning Italian

for Kiara

The man is walking with his red dog How blue the sky is! I am studying Italian so I can talk to you my teapot Ia mia bella nipotina

Would you like an iced tea? The bus is very crowded We shall visit Parma in the summer and I shall say We eat in the kitchen not in the dining room

O that my tongue were younger and I could sing A granddaughter is a wren in an old man's tree but instead I shall hold your perfect hand mispronouncing Will you write many letters? Here is the spoon The doctor cannot swim

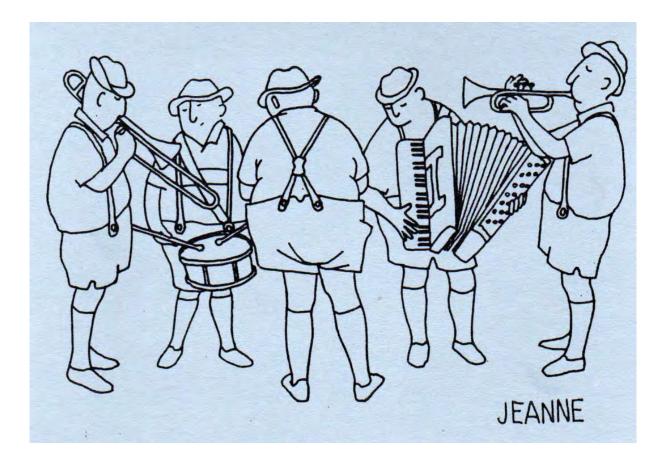
~ Peter Meinke in Scars, U. of Pittsburgh Press (1996)

# Let's open our windows and let in the air.





Drawing by Jeanne Clark Meinke



# Trucking

We love the rascally young because they're poets (that girl on skates that boy diving)

Poetry's the rhythmical re-creation of pizzazz nothing to do with true except whereas youth is true

a question of energy & drive: most young = most alive

Youth & poetry close to song just truckin' along just truckin' along

~ Peter Meinke

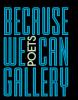




Poetry by Peter Meinke, Drawings by Jeanne Clark Meinke

holy woter Sacramental Soltude Clerim's walk time collapses, Lissolver with centuries of reashells Nfb 2020

haven for the pea -boustiste oke havenorics beyond language, past words, fears foarming renewal mfb - 2020



Visual Poetry by FSPA Member Nikki Fragala Barnes



They jet beyond the call they heed and take a risk that's amplified to bring supplies for those in need, a selfless act exemplified.

~ Anonymous, (from all of us)

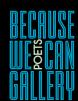
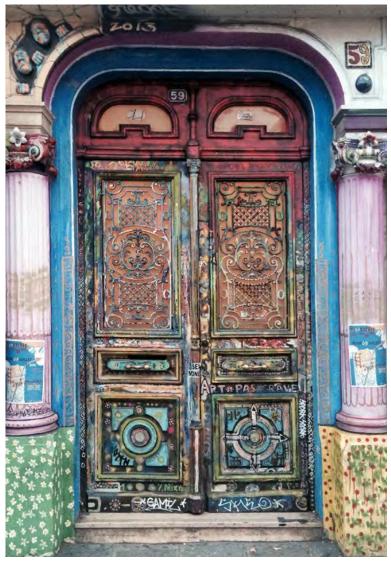


Image by an unknown flight attendant



Pas Grave, Parisian Doors, Photograph

# No Big Deal

Is that you, Pride, that's pounding on my door? A leafless tree has grown where last we lay. I scraped our gin-stuck photos off the floor, me as bull with you as matador, and pinned them where they'd not be swept away.

That day you conned me from my decent self to live within the shadows you infect, I gave you porcelain of Royal Delft, you placed uncaringly on a dusty shelf, and nonchalantly raped my self-respect, ... and now

you come to be finality, to end this endless dolor, life to steal. Your light is blazing my mortality — illumination's throw inviting me to move beyond this darkness; buy your speil: "Ce n'est pas grave, mon Dieu. No big deal."



Poetry and photography by FSPA Member Mark Andrew James Terry

# **Cool Cat Scat**

Now here's tha money, I needs my axe. I needs my axe wid strings attached, so here's tha money 'n *alllll* tha tax.

I handed him that D-18. His umber eyes became serene. He smiled a wink, began to play acoustic jazz, scat overlay.

 $\mathsf{Ooo} \dots \mathsf{yeah} \dots$ 

| de leep de lilly de leep de loo |
|---------------------------------|
| a wa Bee lay so wa Bee do       |
| n dool ya do n dwee Bee ay      |
| n dool ya do de3 Wee 3ee ay     |
| de leep de lilly de leep de loo |
| a wa zee lay so wa zee do.      |

And all New Orleans leaned to hear those buoyant strains they all revere.

I turned, then watched him disappear . . .

Poetry by FSPA Member Mark Andrew James Terry





Mockingbird looking out to the dunes at Smyrna Dunes Park in New Smyrna Beach





Peninsula Cooter sunning on a log, Lake Woodruff Wildlife Refuge in Deland

Nature Photography by FSPA Member Nina Heiser



Sun spill on the jetty between Smyrna Dunes Park and New Smyrna Beach



# emberspotligh

# **Floridian Love Song**

I will sing you a song of our love

relentless as the sea unyielding as the tide

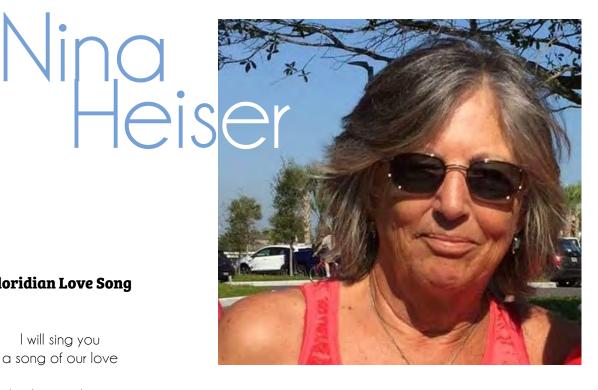
surging salty sunburned skies the crunch of shells beneath our feet

we fled the mountain shadows for the coastal plain those sandy dreams and sheets of rain

> the sweet scented tangerine and carolina iessamine succulent and clinging vine

> > we celebrate in measured time

~ Nina Heiser



Nina Heiser is a writer and amateur photographer living in Central Florida. She wrote poetry and did theater in her 20s then turned to journalism, working as a local reporter for newspapers in western Massachusetts and southern Maine.

She started writing fiction and turned back to poetry when she retired. When she moved to the coast of Florida from the hills of New Hampshire she joined the Poets Workshop in New Smyrna Beach and was active in the writers group at the Hub on Canal. Nina has always enjoyed taking photographs and brings her camera on her morning walk at the Smyrna Dunes.

She has published poems online in Tuck Magazine and, locally, by the Flagler County Art League. She was awarded an honorable mention in the FCAL's 2018 Spring Poetry Competition. Her work has also appeared in *Cadence*, the Florida State Poets Association anthology and won a first place Live Poets Award in the 2018 FSPA annual contest.

Most recently she has had poems included in the Vociferous Press anthology, Screaming from the Silence. The first chapter of her novel Tin's Bended was published online in the tenth edition of *Embark* Literary Journal.

# NINA HEISER POEMS

# **Corona come softly**

look me right in the eye your power will fail you as our courage does rise

this we shall weather together we share in the storm breathe through your heart love

this world we are part of may ravage us now but this isn't the norm

I'll dress in deep scarlet dance like wild orchids in may to the songs you will sing me

we'll salvage our treasures and take our small pleasures today

we'll measure the distance Corona keeps us at bay we shall not be broken

our force is our token like the sun we shall rise in radiance true harmony

Corona go softly your time has drawn nigh close your watery eyes

\*

# Epiphany

She walks like a whisper under the wishing moon full to birthing she is and glowing golden.

The crickets quit their chirping as she casts a shadow passing by. In that silence,

she raises her face to set her eyes on the globe of moon and stars attendant.

She fixes her thoughts, stands poised and true, and makes her wish ascendant.

# Agitato

Come about! My grandfather shouts. I swoop beneath the boom that swings And, braced for strength, I pull the lines That tauten sails to speed us through.

Adelante Adelante

Salt spray splashes sun-stung faces. We catch the breeze. We race the storm. We are the prowess. We are the bow.

Skimming forward Now now now



Mary Rogers-Grantham, FSPA Contest Chair

# Please see the contest page on the FSPA website for rules and restrictions. Here is a link

# 2020 FSPA Contests List

# **# 1 FSPA FREE VERSE AWARD**

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

# **# 2 FSPA FORMAL VERSE AWARD**

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

## **# 3 LISTENING AWARD**

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

## **#4 TOMOKA POETS AWARD**

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

### **#5 WILLARD B. FOSTER MEMORIAL AWARD**

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

### **#6 ORLANDO AREA POETS AWARD**

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

### **#7 JUNE OWENS MEMORIAL AWARD**

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

### **# 8 THE POET'S VISION AWARD**

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

### **#9 NEW RIVER POETS AWARD**

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

### **#10 VILLANELLE AWARD**

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

### **#11 HUMOR AWARD**

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

### **#12 THE LIVE POETS SOCIETY AWARD**

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

### **#13 MIAMI POETS AWARD**

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

# **#14 KATE KENNEDY MEMORIAL AWARD**

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

### **#15 WEINBAUM/GLIDDEN AWARD**

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

### **#16 HENRIETTA & MARK KROAH** FOUNDERS AWARD

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

### **#17 PAST PRESIDENTS AWARD**

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

### **#18 FRANK YANNI AWARD**

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

# **#19 JANET BINKLEY ERWIN MEMORIAL AWARD**

Subject: Any. Form: Any. 40 Line Limit. 1st PL \$25. 2nd PL \$15. 3rd PL \$10. 3HM Sponsored by Poetry for the Love of It (PLOI) "Most working poets are maybe 5% to 10% away from their ultimate potential: able to write uniformly fine work and to get published everywhere they deserve, and often. That's what the Twelve Chairs course is for." ~ Al Rocheleau

Free Month Trial of **FSPA's** Twelve Chairs Short Course We are offering our Twelve Chairs Short Course on a free, one-moth trial period, so you can experience the benefits of this powerful poetry course at your leisure.

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

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

WE ACQUIRE THEM IN SEQUENCE; EACH SUPPORTS EACH

OBJECTS AND THEIR MOVEMENTS DRIVE YOUR POEM

A PERFECT OBJECT IS DEFINED BY THE CLEAREST WORD

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

MORE THAN ANYTHING, POETS AND POEMS SAY SOMETHING

SENSE AND 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



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

# **IT IS TIME FOR OUR ELECTIONS**

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

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

~ Alice R. Friedman, Chair

# 2020 - 2022 Executive Board

# **Election Ballot** – Deadline to mail: September 15, 2020

.....CUT HERE

|                   |                  | Check<br>Current Name | Write-in<br>Another Name |
|-------------------|------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| President:        | Mary Marcelle    |                       |                          |
| Vice-President:   | Mark Terry       |                       |                          |
| Secretary:        | Sonja Jean Craig |                       |                          |
| Treasurer:        | Robyn Weinbaum   |                       |                          |
| Member Signature: |                  |                       | Date:                    |
| Print Your Name:  |                  |                       |                          |

# **PLEASE MAIL TO:**

Ms. Alice Friedman, FSPA Nominating Committee Chair 603 Woodridge Drive • Fern Park, FL 32730

# FSPA CHAPTER NEWS & UPDATES

# CHAPTER PRESIDENTS

**Big Bend Poets & Writers** Gordon Magill tallyman01@comcast.net

Live Poets Society of Daytona Beach Robert Blenheim rblenheim@aol.com

Miami Poets Tere Starr terestarr@mindspring.com North Florida Poetry Hub Steffani Fletcher steffani@hopeathand.org

**Orlando Area Poets** Diane Neff, president d.i.neff@gmail.com

**Osceola Poetry Society** Mackenzie Riley

**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 Janet Watson JMPWAT@aol.com



Tere Starr

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

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



Liam Lawlor, Rita Morrissey, Ricki Dorn

# Miami Poets

Miami Poets welcome National Poetry Month virtually. Our monthly Miami Poets Soirées moderated by Tere Starr are placed on hold while we practice social distancing in the new reality caused by the coranavirus.

We share poems on social media, video meetings, email, phone calls and text messages. Our February soiree was filled with poetry and inspiration as we celebrated our eleventh anniversary and planned a group reading for April's South Florida Writers Association's meeting. We also met with Group 10, the critique group facilitated by **Steven Liebowitz**. All future events are postponed, but poetry's healing powers continue. We welcome our new member, **Swati Bagga**. Her poetry and insight add an exciting dimension to our group.

Achievements: **Patsy Asuncion** was invited to be the guest speaker at the Charlottesville Chapter of Creative Mornings, an international podcast on monthly topics based on a global theme. Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk is proud of her new poetry book, I Am Still Alive. Steven Liebowitz led a writing workshop at South Florida Writer's February meeting. **Connie** Goodman-Milone's letters to the editor, "Life Today" and "Beyond Sorrow" were published in the Miami Herald. She was honored to be a Performing Arts Judge at the Miami Veterans Creative Arts Competition. Tere Starr led a Poetry Soirée for the Brandeis Women's South Miami Chapter. Tere's poem, To Touch, was published in The Author's Voice along with Connie's poem, "Joyful Poppies Haiku," Ricki Dorn's poem, "Stay safe," and Jo Christiane Ledakis's poems, "Of Changing Rectangles" and "Fading Winter." Pat Bonner Milone's poem, "CoViD 19 Savages and Saints," appears in 45 Magazine Women's Literary Journal. Zorina Frey edits the online magazine and welcomes submissions at https://45magazineiwa. com. Pat's One Gold Earring was awarded a third place prize for memoir in the South Florida Writers Association's monthly writing contests. Connie won first place in poetry for "Whippet on Whim" and third place for "Koyaanisquatsi." Swati Bagga received two second place poetry awards for her poems "Life" and "Treasure."

Poetry is our priority.

~ Tere Starr, President



Rosa Douglass, Pat Bonner Milone, Steve Liebowitz, Swati Bagga, Mark Kraus



Sampson Mathis, Meruyn Solomon, Mary Keating, Madeleine Goldman, Marina Stevens



Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, Norma Chew



Robert E. Blenheim

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

# The Live Poets Society of Daytona Beach

The Live Poets Society of Daytona Beach used to hold its workshop meetings on the third Wednesday of each month at the Daytona Beach Regional Library at City Island. Meetings went from 4:00 to 6:30 pm, and the group welcomed all poets, and anybody interested in poetry, to attend. Now, of course, the chapter is 'meeting' on the computer, and actually relatively active.

The last thing before the virus came, they held a workshop on writing Shakespearean and Petrarchan sonnets, and an intriguing group analysis on Wallace Stevens's famous poem, "The Emperor of Ice Cream." They also had challenges on writing poems on the subjects of "Wolves" and "Hometown Heroes," some members writing sonnets on those subjects.

Since the virus, The Live Poets Society members have been participating in weekly challenges via emails on the computer. To date some of the challenges have been on the following subjects: "Isolation," "Fear" and "What We See Out the Window."

All members are managing to while away the time, not only writing poetry but also reading, listening to music, and watching movies. (Also eating and sleeping; too much of the former and not enough of the latter.)

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

~ Robert E. Blenheim, President



Charles Hazelip

# Poetry For the Love Of It

This quarter has proven to be one of progress and challenges for the chapter. In January the opportunity arose for PLOI to address collaboration with Big Bend Poets on several levels planned for the new year. Up for discussion was dual participation in a poetry workshop. PLOI has continued its practice of using a portion of each meeting to read and discuss notable poets. Each month a famous poet is selected from a predetermined list for discussion. A recent challenge has been presented to members. Each meeting an agenda is provided before meeting dates. Inourlast meeting, we called on members to write and bring to the meeting their efforts to create poems in Japanese form. Thus far they have had opportunities to write Mondo, Dodoitsu, and Gogyohka poems.

March has been a very challenging month. Our faithful secretary, **Linda Whitefeather**, has been hospitalized as a result of a fall and is now undergoing rehabilitation therapy at Heritage Healthcare Center — rehab side. 3101 Ginger Dr., Tallahassee, FL 32308 — possibly for 90 days. Unfortunately the poetry workshop to be held in May has been scuttled due to the COVID-19 crisis. Also, due to CDC recommendations, all PLOI meetings have been canceled until such time as deemed appropriate and safe to resume.

~ Charles Hazelip, President



Diane Neff

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



Alice R. Friedman



Elaine Person

# **Orlando Area Poets**

Although our March meeting was canceled because of COVID-19, we are planning online meetings beginning in April and continuing as needed. In addition, **Carlton Johnson** set up and is hosting Sunday afternoon critiques online through Zoom.com.

We are disappointed that the Gwendolyn Brooks Writers Association of Florida Thomas Burnett Swann Poetry Prize Competition Revelry reception was canceled, especially because our own **Carlton Johnson** won for his poem "The Swallow."

In the same contest, **Alice R. Friedman** earned an honorable mention for her poem, "May 29, 2015," and members who reported that they received invitations to read included **Diane Neff**, for "The Bond," and **Elaine Person**, for "Death Watch." The winning poem and honorable mentions will be published in *Revelry 2020*.



Carlton Johnson

*Florilegium: Library Voices* anthology was published by the Seminole County Library Writing Groups in March, with an April 17 reception and book launch planned. Co-edited by **Diane Neff**, Lisa Acuña, and Amy Cantley, contributors include **Alice R. Friedman, Leslie Halpern, Diane Neff**, and **Cheryl West**.

**Peter Gordon**'s poem "Tune In" will be published in the Fall/Winter 2020 edition of *The Poeming Pigeon*. Peter also served as Slam Master for a poetry slam to promote the Blackberry Peach Spoken Word Contest, with **Joe Cavanaugh** and some of our East Coast friends in attendance, including **BJ Alligood** reading her winning poem from last year's contest and serving as one of the judges.

**Carlton Johnson**'s poem "The Indifference of Space" will appear in the upcoming edition of *The Sandhill Review*.

**Elaine Person**'s Valentine's Day haiku was published on Haikuniverse.com (#7 for 2/14/2020). Two of her photos, "Belonging on Church" and "My New Jersey Hometown" will be published in the upcoming edition of *The Sandhill Review*.

**Mark Andrew James Terry** did not allow the cancellation of the Winter Park Paint Out to stop his international poetry competition sponsored by The Albin Polasek Museum and Sculpture Gardens and The Kerouac Project. Aided by Guest Judge **Carol Frost**, his AllPoetry team of judges are currently reviewing (by the time of this publication) the many poems submitted for the "virtual" version of the contest this year.

~ Diane Neff, President



Janet Watson

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



Gary Ketchum

# **New River Poets**

New River members were saddened when the pandemic no one saw coming forced the cancellation of the FSPA Spring Fling in Zephyrhills. It seems like every other scheduled event in the country followed suit shortly after the Executive Board made that decision. As the host organization, we have offered to try again in 2021. We planned such a great meeting at the Old Richland Schoolhouse, and we can do it again! Hopefully, FSPA members will come out in greater numbers for our convention in the fall. We can't go too long without seeing each other!

We've just received news that **Gary Ketchum** won first place in this year's NFSPS Blackberry Peach competition. We are bursting with pride. Of course we never doubted that Gary's voice and poetry were sure to impress the judges.

Since we haven't been meeting, there's not much news to tell. Members were encouraged to share poetry during National Poetry Month, and **Ken Clanton** has been sending out his humorous poems to all his e-mail contacts. When times are stressful, we all need a good laugh.

Every two years our chapter holds an April election. As of this writing, ballots are going out to all members, and new NRP officers are usually installed in May. Obviously, we don't know if that will be possible this year, but sooner or later, it will happen.

Meanwhile, some of us have more time on our hands than usual, so we can prepare submissions for the annual FSPA contests. And we can keep writing poetry!!

~ Janet Watson, President



Cheri Herald

# When we meet:

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

# **Sunshine Poets**

By popular request, Sunshine Poets has begun meeting on a new day. Meetings will now be held at 10 am on the SECOND THURSDAY of the month. We still meet at the Central Ridge Library in Beverly Hills. Member, **Joyce Shiver**, judged contests for PA and Utah. We've been studying the Cinquain, Villanelle, and are currently working on entries for FSPA's annual contest. Sunshine Poets has a Facebook page. Contact: sunshinepoets@gmail.com

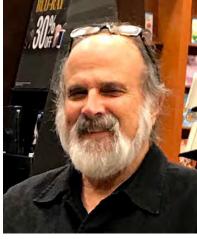
~ Cheri Herald, President



Gordon Magill

# When we meet:

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



Michael Rothenberg



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# **Big Bend Poets & Writers**

The Covid-19 quarantine forced the cancelation of our previously planned gatherings in March and April, but that did not stop us from finding new ways to celebrate the reading and writing of poetry.

For the convergence of the National Poetry Month and the 50th Anniversary of Earth Day, <u>Big Bend Poets & Writers</u> in collaboration with <u>100 Thousand</u> <u>Poets for Change</u> launched an online event, "We Who Speak for the Earth: An Earth Day Poetry Infusion."

We put out a call for poets and writers everywhere to submit poems or short stories about the Earth to be submitted to our Facebook page with #SpeakForTheEarth. Beginning April 1, poems posted have included an array of original work as well as personal favorites.

The event will culminate in a Zoom.com gathering on Earth Day, April 22, 2020. The Tallahassee-Leon County Council on Culture & Arts sponsored a new program during April, "Poems To Go," to deliver poems with take-out food from area restaurants and food service organizations. Among the poets chosen for this program were members **Cynthia Portalatin**, **Jan Godown Annino**, **Katya Taylor**, **Penny Young**, **Anne Meisenzahl**, **Michelle Acker**, **Carol Lynne Knight**, **Terri Carrion**, **Katie Clark**, **Linda Marie Cossa**, **Gordon Magill**, **Michael Rothenberg**, and **Jo Anne Richardson**.

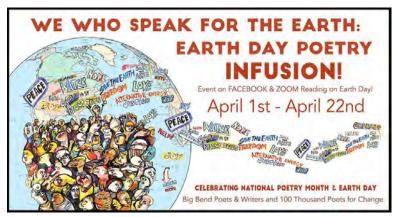
~ Linda Wright, Secretary for Gordon Magill, President



Avis Veronica Simmonds



Teresa Carrion



Click on this ad to view vimeo by Adreian Fogelin and Craig Reeder of Hot Tamale



Rith Van Alstine

North Florida Poetry Hub Poets meets the first and third Thursdays of each month from 6:30 to 8 pm at Hope at Hand, 3886 Atlantic Blvd. in Jacksonville.



# 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.

Each year to celebrate National Poetry Month, Hope at Hand sponsors JaxPoetryFest.org. Jax Poetry Fest offers free poetry programming with poetry workshops, lectures, and live performances by some of Florida's leading spoken word poets. This year, due to the COVID-19 crisis all live events were canceled, and at the time of this submission the Hope at Hand team is scrambling to create content for an online festival.

Along with our two meetings per month, NFPH partners with a beloved local used bookstore, Chamblin's Uptown at 215 N. Laura St., Jacksonville for a monthly Open Mic night and also a Black-out poetry workshop the first Saturday afternoon, which will resume once COVID-19 restrictions are lifted.

North Florida Poetry Hub recently created http://www.northfloridapoetryhub.org to improve communication and chapter awareness. The website highlights the valuable benefits of the FSPA membership, both local and state. There's even a fast-link to our Jacksonville Poetry Meetup RSVP to encourage others to attend so... stop by, check it out, and send us a comment. We would love to have some input.

So that's the news in Jacksonville! Things are buzzing and warming up in Northeast Florida...

~ Ruth Van Alstine, NFPH Member

# Poetry Challenge

# **Riffs on Home**

Home is (of course) where the heart is. There's no place like home (of course not!) "Home is where they have to take you in." There's no place like home for the holidays. Every shelter dog and cat deserves a home. Every child deserves a loving home. O give me a home where the buffalo roam. A house is not a home. Any place I hang my hat IS home. Sang Cher the Diva: Take me home, take me home. Home springs eternal in our souls. Most accidents happen at home--beware. Who wouldn't rather die at home? Me? I would rather die in Rome.

~ Dennis Rhodes

# There's No Place...

The place I run to with good news or bad; To there I'm escorted by the happy or sad.

My hideaway, haven, place of escape; Pacing room-to-room when bent out of shape.

Solace lies within, in those times found alone; Quiet, introverted, this my comfort zone.

Out and about, to it I always return; My private oasis, no care or concern.

It is here that I strengthen with the Truth; Arm myself against evil nail and tooth.

To face the world what 'ere it may bring; Viruses, flus, stock market downswing.

Outside its walls there is no peace or calm; Inside find family, emotional balm.

~ Suzanne S. Austin-Hill

# Poetry Challenge

# Betelgeuse

Three stars in the belt - there. Winter is now here. And right in the shoulder – there; You'll find the big, red sphere. Betelgeuse, its name. The door straight through to hell. That's this star's acclaim, To signal a death knell. For time is now run short, As the nova soon will be. For the red star does contort, To set its remnant free. Six hundred light years, distant; But once it's seen, its here. Then earth receives its shipment, Upon its atmosphere. Then hell will visit man, As the pit dislodges all. Across that massive span, All will hear the call.

~ Craig Dyer

# **DURING SELF-ISOLATION**

There's a small hole in one of our fence posts, where chickadees slip in and out, busy building a safe home for their children.

Our home is safe, but only for us. Isolated, we stay busy with tasks, and quite cozy with food and books, movies and music. Our family can't come. They keep in touch with cell-phone calls and Facetime visits that don't replace the quick hugs, the smell of their hair, the completeness of them.

Yet, when this crisis is over, I think I'll emerge from our sheltering home like Lazarus from the safety of his tomb, blinking in the sunlight and a little afraid to re-enter the land of the living.

~ Janet Watson

# Next Issue: Editor's Choice Poetry Challenge

**Prompt:** Any **Form**: Sonnet **Submit by:** June 1, 2020, to Mark@TKOrlando.com July/August issue Of Poets & Poetry is published six times per year: January, March, May, July, September & November.

# FOR SUBMISSIONS

**Due Dates:** 

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

Submittal Specifications:

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

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

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

Email submissions to: mark@TKOrlando.com



<u>Click here</u> to purchase the 2019 FSPA Anthology, *Cadence*.



Gary Ketchum, photo by Dina Tanner

# In the News:

# CONGRATULATIONS GARY KETCHUM — 2020 WINNER BLACKBERRY PEACH AWARD!

For the second consecutive year a Florida poet has captured the coveted Blackberry Peach Award given by the National Federation of State Poetry Societies. First place went to **Gary Ketchum** of Florida, second place to Jessica Hassel of New Jersey, third place to Amanda Bailey of Minnesota. Honorable Mentions to Josh Conklin of New Hampshire, Taelen Thomas of California, S Fixler of Ohio, and Melissa Huff of Illinois. Last year's winner was **B.J. Alligood** from Port Orange.

# Blake High School Senior Wins Florida Finals for Poetry Out Loud

St. Petersburg, Florida (March 3, 2020)–Zhaedyn Hodge Sigars, a Senior at Blake High School in Tampa, successfully defended his title as State Champion for Florida's Poetry Out Loud competition, earning the title for the second year in a row.

# Win \$50 For Your Aquatic-Themed Poem!

What do you love about lakes, rivers, oceans, water? The Lake Cane Restoration Society wants to know what water means to you. Write it, submit it and **win \$50** if you're selected as our poetry contest winner. Contests take place five times a year - enter before 5:00pm on the second Thursday of February, April, May, September, and November. The only requirements are that you keep your toe in the water (try to make a connection with something aquatic) and keep it the length of a calendar page (something between a Haiku and a Sonnet). While we are Orlando-based, we encourage all entries! Submit: <u>lakecane.com/poetry-sharing</u>

# 2021 Burrow Press Poetry Anthology Submissions

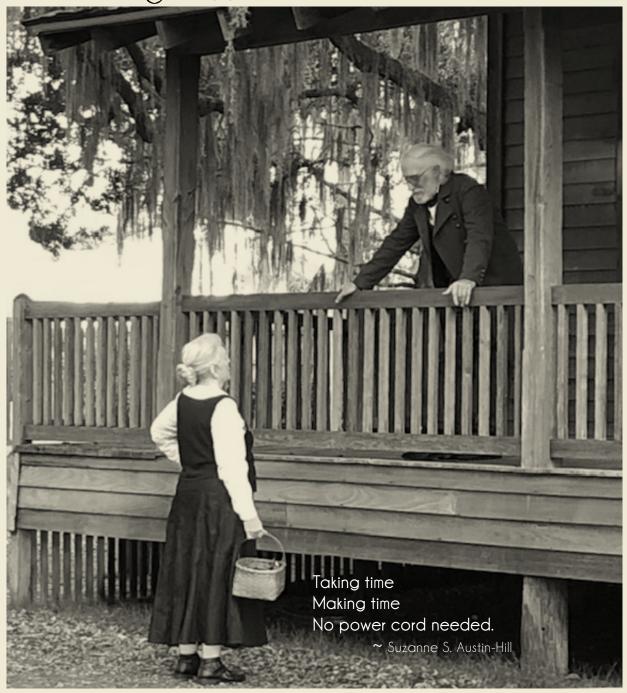
Poets often respond to the day's news, and Florida does the news best (or worst, depending on your stance). The 2021 Burrow Press anthology seeks poetry submissions inspired by News from Florida. For this submission, news is loosely defined as important events, topics, politics, or people, and ranges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

For more information: Here is the <u>link</u>

We hope you enjoyed this issue of FSPA's Of Poets & Poetry. ~ Mark Andrew James Terry, editor



A Líttle Lagníappe:



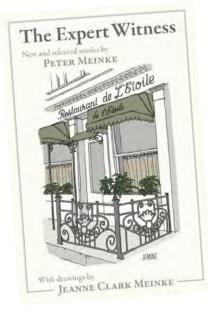
Taking Time, Cracker Country - FL State Fairgrounds; February 2019, Photograph, Suzanne Austin-Hill

# Do you have A Little Lagniappe?

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



# 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.



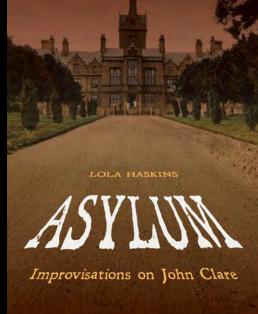
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# Lola Haskins



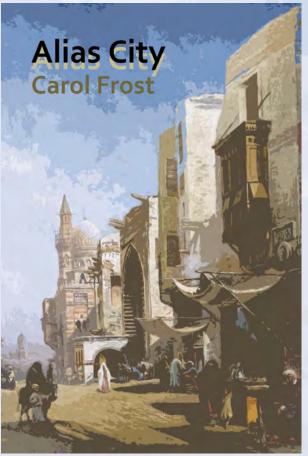
Published by University of Pittsburgh Press

# askins 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.

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# Alias City by Carol Frost

Now available from MADHAT PRESS



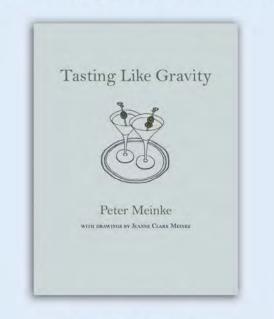
Welcome to Carol Frost's *Alias City*, which is, in the best sense of both words, the city of music.... But it is also a great city of the mind.... The hero of this book is a refugee, a survivor of World War II. She is now losing her memory, trying to recount what happened, giving us brief glimpses into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

—ILYA KAMINSKY, author of *Deaf Republic* 

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

# Tasting Like Gravity by Peter Meinke

with drawings by Jeanne Clark Meinke



# Available from the University of Tampa Press tinyurl.com/TastingLikeGravity

For more Tampa Press titles by Peter Meinke visit: tinyurl.com/UTPMeinke

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# Of Poets & Poetry

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