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Campbell McGrath

Cover photograph: self portrait of the poet

FloridaStatePoetsAssociation.org



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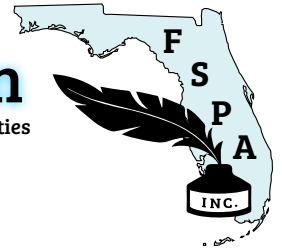
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Mary Marcelle, President,
Florida State Poets Association

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

I've always had a bit of a love-hate relationship with poetry. The first poet I read thoroughly was Edgar Allan Poe, from my thick, green vinyl-covered book, *The Complete Stories and Poems of Edgar Allan Poe*. I thrilled at the gruesome tales in the book, but I struggled with the tightly metered poems of love, loss, and woe. Still, I read them anyway, again and again.

Knowing I wanted to become a writer, I became a reading snob early on, reading voraciously but limiting myself to recognized masters: Poe, Twain, Steinbeck, Hemingway, etc. I knew less about masters of poetry, and in general, found poetry to be like Forrest Gump's box of chocolates.

I would, over the years, find myself reading poetry I didn't really understand or like. Fellow writers would praise poets and poems I couldn't grasp. Only Marianne Moore had the guts to express the dislike of poetry I had.

I once chose a current poet and read everything he had written, only to find, in my opinion, that a bit of it was excellent, a bit of it was really bad, but most of it was somewhere in between: the Bell Curve of one mediocre poet's poetry. Because he was such a well-known poet, it took the pressure off me to write something amazing every time I put pen to paper.

As it turns out, all my favorite poets are people I have actually met in person, at least once. The power of hearing a poet read their own work in real time outweighs my reading the work any day. I enjoy hearing the poems from the writer whenever possible, as I've always believed that poetry is better out loud. In FSPA, readings are generally a part of any gathering we have.

In that vein, I've always supported the inclusion of spoken-word poetry, performance poetry and Slam competitions at our FSPA conventions. We plan a spoken-word competition for Spring Fling in conjunction with the Blackberry Peach Poetry Prize from the National Federation of State Poetry Societies. The national competition happens next October in Daytona Beach.

While we work on that, enjoy the newest *Of Poets and Poetry* from our industrious editor Mark Andrew James Terry. This month's cover poet is Florida favorite Campbell McGrath in a story written by FSPA chancellor Denise Duhamel. Sonja Jean Craig writes about 17th-Century bad boy aristocrat/poet John Wilmot and Shutta Crum offers a lesson in personification and what it can do for your work. Have a happy new year!

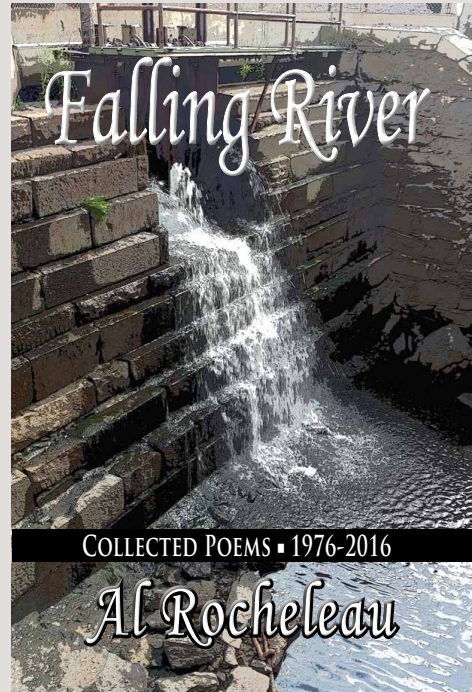
Take Care,

Mary Marcelle

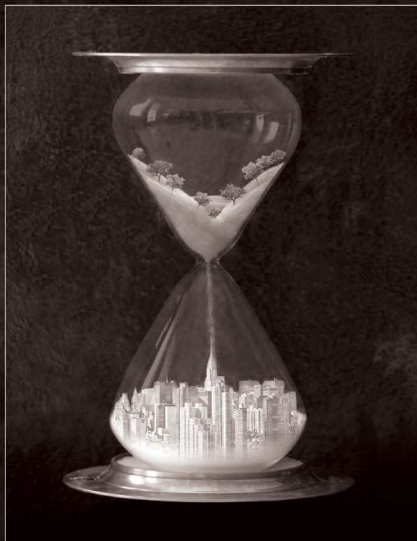
Falling River—Forty Years of Collected Poems by Al Rocheleau

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."

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~ Campbell McGrath

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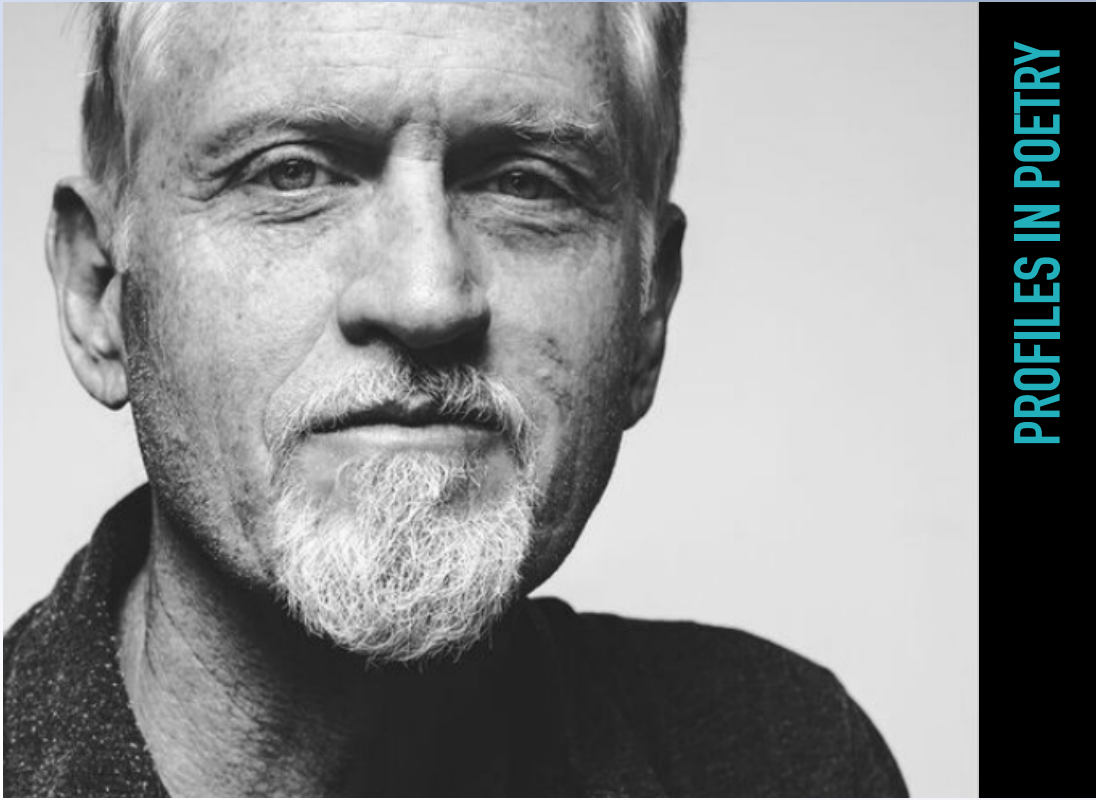
BY CAMPBELL McGRATH

POETRY

THE ZEBRA LONGWING

Forty years I've waited,
uncomprehending,
for these winter nights
when the butterflies
fold themselves like paper cranes
to sleep in the dangling
roots of the orchids
boxed and hung
from the live oak tree.
How many there are.
Six. Eight. Eleven.
When I mist the spikes
and blossoms by moonlight
they stir but do not wake,
antennaed and dreaming
of passionflower
nectar. Never before
have they gifted us
in like manner, never before
have they stilled their flight
in our garden. Wings
have borne them away
from the silk
of the past as surely
as some merciful wind
has delivered us
to an anchorage of such
abundant grace,
Elizabeth. All my life
I have searched, without knowing it,
for this moment.

~ Campbell McGrath



That Florida Feeling: An Interview with
Campbell McGrath

By FSPA Chancellor Denise Duhamel

Duhamel: As you are soon to be 60—I just turned 60—are you embracing your status? In other words, do you feel as though you “have arrived,” given all your awards and accomplishments?

McGrath: Getting old, what a strange thing. Or, not strange at all—the most natural thing in the world! I certainly remember being a twenty-five year old poet, with all the enthusiastic ignorance of that time. But I think I enjoy the present mode even more. I am smarter now, understand the world and myself better, and, most obviously to me, I am so much better as a craftsperson—so much more able to assemble, disassemble, revise and reimagine my poems on the page. I’ve always wanted to write poems, that’s the end game for me, not anything external that those poems might “win” for me. So, receiving awards, recognition, all that, does not mean very much, except of course that it is those awards that have enabled me to stay on the path of poetry, rather than having to go to work as a carpenter or a plumber. Or a literature professor.

(Continued on next page)

Duhamel: Indeed! This is a “what if” question...but have you ever made a backup plan just in case? Did you ever think, if this poetry thing doesn’t work out, I’ll try _____? Didn’t you, for example, once work on a boat?

McGrath: I did work on a freighter, for a summer after high school. While I was in graduate school I worked as a dockmaster/carpenter at the 79th Street Boat Basin, which was a crazy job in a very weird corner of New York City. I don’t know that would have been a realistic long-term thing, but I enjoyed the experience. Teaching high school, or something equally unglamorous, would probably have been it.

Duhamel: As a maestro of poetic form and political/social/personal insight, can you tell us which comes first? Do you have a subject in mind and pick a form? Or as you try a form, does the subject introduce itself?

McGrath: You, Denise, are a much more formally inventive poet than I am. You have a playfulness and imagination with form that I rarely exhibit. But the question you are asking, really, is how a poem finds its own form on the page, how it identifies a line, a stanza, a syntactical and auditory spatiality. First, I think this is the essential drama or struggle of writing a poem, of a poem coming into being: the poem’s agon is the best way to put it. A thought pops into my head—oh, this tea cup I’m drinking from, it’s like a container holding all this steeped tea-water in it, just as each of us contains all the cultural resin and flavor of the time we have been alive and steeping in our society’s boiling cauldron—well, that’s the kind of thought that pops into my head, but is probably a bad example for most poets. Anyway, I have this thought—partly an idea, partly an image—and I sense that it wants to be a poem, but now: what kind of poem is it? A haiku—just that flash, steam rising from a cup of tea? Or a long meditation on history and cultural influence, in which I can embed all kinds of thoughts about American culture, which I love to do? Or—and this is where the poem ended up: a sonnet. So, yes, this is an actual example from my recent past. And this poem ended up as a sonnet because I just happened, as I was writing it in my notebook, to hear a few little rhymes—which drew the poem’s attention toward them. The process for me is organic. Poems are like little seedlings you need to nurture and encourage. Every poem has an “ideal” form, and my job is to discover it.

Duhamel: This is a brilliant way to explain your process, Campbell. Thank you. Though you have stuck to poetry as your primary genre (without much dabbling in fiction or nonfiction) you did contribute a libretto to “*Una Marea Creciente*,” one of the most amazing performances I have ever been to! Dance, music, and video overtook

(Continued on next page)

Faena Forum on Miami Beach for one night only in 2018. This was, of course, in the pre-pandemic days which seem far away now. Can you talk about that ephemeral experience and your willingness to jump into it? I remember you also contributed visual art to the piece.

McGrath: That was actually the second “experimental video opera” I have been part of, in conjunction with some colleagues at FIU: composer Orlando Garcia, architect/video artist John Stuart, and visual artist Jacek Kolasinski. For the 2018 event we were joined by choreographer Augusto Soledade and his Brazz Dance troupe. These are really multi-genre, multi-media artworks, and highly performative—language is peripheral compared to the music, visuals and dance. So it’s a challenge to create a libretto, to find words that will meld with those other media. What I’ve ended up writing, both times, are highly experimental poems, basically, with concrete poems, constructed and deconstructed fragments, syllables repeated in echoing sequences—finding musicality in language to match Orlando’s musical form. Fun. Liberating. And useful in pushing me out of my comfort zone. In fact, Orlando has another opera in the works, and I’ve signed on to write the libretto for a third time.

Duhamel: That is fantastic, Campbell. I have long admired not only your poems but your book-building strategies. I am thinking of *XX: Poems for the 20th Century*, in which there are one hundred poems, one for each year or *Shannon: A Poem of the Lewis and Clark Expedition* or even a book like *Road Atlas* in which the poems all unfold through travel near and far. I guess this is another chicken/egg question. Do you conceive of the idea first and follow through? Or, in the course of writing poems, do you see a pattern and expand upon it?

McGrath: Book building is in some ways analogous to poem-making: as the lines to the entire poem, so the poems to the book. Except that I do often “impose” a formal plan on a book, or conceive one in advance, which I almost never do with an individual poem. I like both kinds of books: those that are more organically formed from the poems one has been writing over a period of years; and a “master-planned” book that is a project in its own right. In fact I have tended to alternate between those two types of books over the course of my career, although that was not itself a master-plan, just something that evolved. Ideally, I like to have one of each type of book in process, since there is a kind of symbiosis between them. My projects tend to be large and can take me up to a decade to write—as was the case with *XX*—but not every poem I write is part of that larger project. So the non-project poems become a work of their own, and sometimes have a freedom and energy that can get drained by being too project-driven. Right now I have an “organic” book finished up, and a

big “project” book in the works, that will probably take me three or four more years to write.

Duhamel: Ooh! Now I am intrigued. Do you feel comfortable telling us a little about those projects? Is one of the books the sea level rising book? I remember you reading a gorgeous poem about Miami underwater, somehow even putting our wet apocalypse in perspective.

McGrath: The “project” book is about the North Atlantic Ocean. Living in Miami Beach, sea-level rise is not an abstract concern, it’s an everyday problem. Most of the country is way behind Florida in recognizing the immediacy and difficulty of the situation. And when I am not in Miami Beach, I am at the Jersey shore, in another house located on a barrier island. Not smart! So there is an elegiac level to the book, and an ecological level. Thinking historically, the book examines trans-Atlantic trade and migration, which is how the country came to be, of course, and is personally immediate to me as the grand-child of Irish immigrants. So it’s a big topic and the poems are incredibly diverse and I can’t say I have a handle on exactly what it will be when completed, but I have many finished pieces of the puzzle. The other book is called *The Radiance Archive*, lyric poems of various kinds, with mortality, death and loss at the heart of it. The book has an epigram I love, taken from a Rilke poem, that suggests the overall tone: “If it catches fire it’s real.”

Duhamel: I am looking forward to both of these, Campbell! Rilke is obviously a touchstone poet for you. Who are the others—and why?

McGrath: Whitman. Rilke. Basho. Those three are very inspiring to me in terms of their “vision,” their way of suggesting ways for poetry to engage with the world. In terms of language and voice, Elizabeth Bishop and Sylvia Plath have both been huge influences on me. Frank O’Hara helped me understand that I should be writing about ordinary American culture and everyday life. Tranströmer reminds me to include mystery in the poem, as does Anne Carson. Robert Hass has always been a touchstone in regards to how the mind and the body can (and should) work together in the poem. Coleridge’s “*Frost at Midnight*” is a poem I read over and over. Seamus Heaney. Louise Gluck. Of my own contemporaries (present company excluded), I get a lot of nourishment from Li-Young Lee, Vijay Seshadri, Kevin Young, Laura Kasischke, Tracy K. Smith. Right here in Florida we’ve got a bunch of inspiring poets, including David Kirby and Barbara Hamby, Richard Blanco, too many to mention really—although I will say that Heather Sellers’ forthcoming book, *Field Notes from the Flood Zone*, feels like an essential book of Florida poems. I’m not sure that a list this broad is very helpful. Basically, I have a lot of poets walking around the corridors of my brain, and these are some of those I’ve spoken with recently.

Duhamel: This is actually quite helpful indeed because poets are always looking for recommendations. Since this interview is for the Florida State Poets Association, can you talk a little about how Florida has informed your work? There is, of course, the obvious—your book *Florida Poems* comes first to mind. But as we are both transplants from northern states, did you ever as a young man imagine yourself living in Florida? And what have been its surprises?

McGrath: I grew up primarily in Washington, DC. And I knew nothing about anything south of DC until I got to Florida. For some reason, I went to Florida a good bit as a kid. To Disney World, to Cocoa Beach, and for a number of years we went to Key West for a week over Christmas. Not sure why, my parents just liked the feel of the place—and Key West was pretty wild in the 1970s. So, I liked Florida, it seemed mysterious and alluring, but I never imagined myself living here, and moving to Miami from Chicago was like landing on Mars. Everything was different. Not just the people and the architecture, not just the seasons and the trees and the flowers, but the light, the clouds, the air. And I love that Florida feeling, it has made me a happier person within my own skin. And I believe that's why people keep coming here, from Ohio and New York and Russia and Colombia and Haiti, even though it is all going underwater. Because Florida feels great.

Campbell at home...



Campbell holding Magnolia, his grandpuppy



Campbell holding fennel from his garden



Campbell and Elizabeth McGrath at home

Link to a Podcast: <https://www.newyorker.com/podcast/poetry/campbell-mcgrath-reads-czeslaw-milosz>

Link to New York Times review: <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/06/11/books/review/nouns-and-verbs-new-and-selected-poems-campbell-mcgrath.html>

BY CAMPBELL McGRATH

POETRY

THE ORANGE

Gone to swim after walking the boys to school.
Overcast morning, mid-week, off-season,
few souls to brave the warm, storm-tossed waves,
not wild but rough for this tranquil coast.

Swimming now. In rhythm, arm over arm,
let the ocean buoy the body and the legs work little,
wave overhead, crash and roll with it, breathe,
stretch and build, windmill, climb the foam. Breathe,

breathe. Traveling downwind I make good time
and spot the marker by which I know to halt
and forge my way ashore. Who am I
to question the current? Surely this is peace abiding.

Walking back along the beach I mark the signs of erosion,
bide the usual flotsam of seagrass and fan coral,
a float from somebody's fishing boat,
crusted with sponge and barnacles, and then I find

the orange. Single irradiant sphere on the sand,
tide-washed, glistening as if new born,
golden orb, miraculous ur-fruit,
in all that sweep of horizon the only point of color.

Cross-legged on my towel I let the juice course
and mingle with the film of salt on my lips
and the sand in my beard as I steadily peel and eat it.
Considering the ancient lineage of this fruit,

the long history of its dispersal around the globe
on currents of animal and human migration,
and in light of the importance of the citrus industry
to the state of Florida, I will not claim

it was the best and sweetest orange in the world,
though it was, o great salt water
of eternity,
o strange and bountiful orchard.

~ Campbell McGrath

BY CAMPBELL McGRATH

POETRY

A GREETING ON THE TRAIL

Turning fifty, at last I come to understand,
belatedly, unexpectedly, and quite suddenly,
that poetry is not going to save anybody's life,
least of all my own. Nonetheless I choose to believe
the journey is not a descent but a climb,
as when, in a forest of golden-green morning sunlight,
one sees another hiker on the trail, who calls out,
where are you bound, friend, to the valley or the mountaintop?
Many things—seaweed, pollen, attention—drift.
News of the universe's origin infiltrates atom by atom
the oxygenated envelope of the atmosphere.
My sense of purpose vectors away on rash currents
like the buoys I find tossed on the beach after a storm,
cork bobbers torn from old crab traps.
And what befalls the woebegotten crabs,
caged and forgotten at the bottom of the sea?
Are the labors to which we are summoned by dreams
so different from the tasks to which sunlight
enslaves us? One tires of niceties. We sleep now
surrounded by books, books piled in heaps
by the bedside, stacked along the walls of the room.
Let dust accrue on their spines and colophons.
Let their ragged towers rise and wobble.
Of course the Chinese poets were familiar with all this,
T'ao Ch'ien, Hsieh Ling-yün, Po Chü-i,
masterful sophisticates adopting common accents
for their nostalgic drinking songs, their laments
to age and temple ruins and imperial avarice,
autumn leaves caught in a tumbling stream.
As the river flows at the urging of gravity, as a flower
blooms after April rain, we are implements
of the unseen, always working for someone else.
The boss is a tall woman in a sky-blue shirt
or a man with one thumb lost to a cross-cut saw
or science or art or the Emperor, what matter?
We scrabble within the skin of time
like mice in the belly of a boa constrictor,
Jonah within Leviathan, pacing the keel, rib to rib,
surrounded by the pulse of that enormous, compassionate heart.
Later we dance in orchards of guava and lychee nuts
to the shifting registers of distant music,

BY CAMPBELL McGRATH

POETRY

a clattering of plates as great fish are lifted from the grill,
seared black with bitter orange and lemongrass.
Orchid trees bloom here, Tulip trees and Flame trees,
but no Idea trees, no trees of Mercy,
for these are human capacities, human occasions.
Because it has about it something of the old village magic,
the crop made to rise by seed of words,
by spell or incantation—
because it frightens and humbles us to recall
our submission to such protocols—
for this do we fear poetry, for the unresolved darkness
of the past. Where are you bound, friend,
on this bright and fruitful morning—to the valley
or the mountaintop? To the mountaintop.

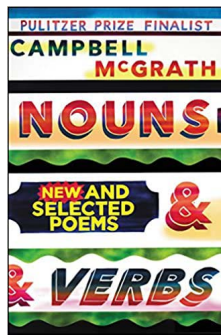
~ Campbell McGrath

THE KEY LIME

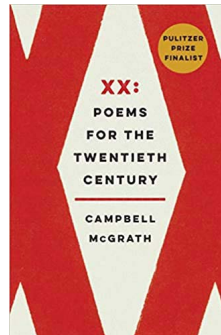
Curiously yellow hand-grenade
of flavor; Molotov cocktail
for a revolution against the bland.

~ Campbell McGrath

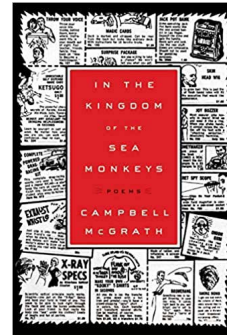
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ABOUT CAMPBELL McGRATH

Born in Chicago and raised in Washington, DC, poet **Campbell McGrath** earned a BA from the University of Chicago and an MFA from Columbia University. McGrath writes predominantly free verse, documentary poems deeply engaged with American popular culture and commerce. Garrett Hongo has labeled his work as “ironic romanticism.” McGrath has written stellar long poems such as “The Bob Hope Poem,” a 70-page opus. He also has produced prose poems, haiku, and shorter lyrics. A poet of great intellect, McGrath’s subject matter ranges from history to the deeply personal, from Americana to globalism. In an interview in *Burrow*, he says, “So, you throw your mind out there toward a lot of experiences and voices and ideas, and some of them your poetry brain will be able to turn on and make sense out of and some it won’t. That’s just a larger thought about the multitudinous of it.”

McGrath’s many volumes include *Capitalism* (Wesleyan University Press, 1990), *American Noise* (Ecco Press, 1993), *Spring Comes to Chicago* (Ecco Press, 1996), *Road Atlas* (Ecco Press, 1999), *Florida Poems* (Ecco Press, 2002), *Pax Atomica* (Ecco Press, 2004), *Seven Notebooks* (Ecco Press, 2008), *Shannon: A Poem of the Lewis and Clark Expedition* (Ecco Press, 2009), *In the Kingdom of the Sea Monkeys* (Ecco Press, 2012), *XX: Poems For The Twentieth Century* (Harper Collins, 2016), and, most recently, *Nouns & Verbs: New and Selected Poems* (Ecco Press, 2019). His work has appeared in many publications including *The New Yorker*.

McGrath’s honors are many—a MacArthur Foundation “Genius” Grant, a Guggenheim Fellowship, a Witter Bynner Fellowship from the Library of Congress, the Academy of American Poets Prize, the Kingsley Tufts Poetry Award, and a Pushcart Prize. In 2011 he was named a Fellow of United States Artists. In 2017 he was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in Poetry. He is a Philip and Patricia Frost Professor of Creative Writing and Distinguished University Professor in the MFA program at Florida International University in Miami. A father of two sons, he lives on Miami Beach with his wife Elizabeth Lichtenstein.

ABOUT DENISE DUHAMEL

Raised in Woonsocket, Rhode Island, FSPA Chancellor **Denise Duhamel** earned a BFA at Emerson College and an MFA at Sarah Lawrence College. Citing Dylan Thomas and Kathleen Spivack as early influences, Duhamel writes both free verse and fixed-form poems that fearlessly combine the political, sexual, and ephemeral. Introducing Duhamel for *Smartish Pace*, poet Karla Huston observed, “Her poems speak with a wild irreverence. [...] Duhamel experiments with form and subject, creating poetry that challenges the reader’s notion of what poetry should be. She presents what poetry could be as she fully engages pop culture, the joys and horrors of it, while maintaining the ability to poke fun at our foibles—and make us think.” In an interview for *Pif* magazine with Derek Alger, Duhamel stated, “At some point in my development as a writer, I became interested in putting it all in, trusting my leaps, embracing vulnerability in imagery.” Duhamel has published numerous collections of poetry, including *Kinky* (Orchis Press, 1997), *Queen for a Day: Selected and New Poems* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2001), *Two and Two* (Pittsburgh, 2005), *Ka-Ching!* (Pittsburgh, 2009), and *Blowout* (Pittsburgh, 2013), which was a finalist for a National Books Critics Circle Award. Her most recent volumes are *Second Story* (Pittsburgh, 2021) and *Scald* (Pittsburgh, 2017). Duhamel has also collaborated with Maureen Seaton on four collections, including *CAPRICE (Collaborations: Collected, Uncollected, and New)* (Sibling Rivalry Press, 2015). With Julie Wade, Duhamel co-authored *The Unrhymables: Collaborations in Prose* (Noctuary Press, 2019). With Maureen Seaton and David Trinidad, she edited *Saints of Hysteria: A Half-Century of Collaborative American Poetry* (2007). Duhamel served as the guest editor of *The Best American Poetry 2013*. Duhamel’s honors include fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts. Her work has featured on *National Public Radio*’s *All Things Considered* and Bill Moyers’s PBS poetry special *Fooling with Words*. She is a Distinguished University Professor in the MFA program at Florida International University in Miami. She lives in Hollywood.



FSPA First Tuesdays Monthly Open Mic Jan. 4th & Feb. 1st

Peter M. Gordon, the president of Orlando Area Poets, a chapter of FSPA, hosts each month. Peter hosted poetry slams and other events at some of our recent conventions. All members are welcome. We start at 7:30 pm EST 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.

[The link](#) and password are as follows:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87185894087?pwd=dIQ1NlNlJd-nNZRnFXQjB1T3lJRGk1QT09>

Meeting ID: 871 8589 4087

Passcode: 265288



Hosted by Peter M. Gordon



Cadence 2021:

Florida State Poets Association Anthology 39 includes more than 90 select member poems, winning poems in 26 categories of FSPA's national contest, and poems from the association's poetry chancellors. This year's *Cadence* will be available from most online book sellers beginning Saturday, October 16 for \$12. Use the full title/subtitle to enhance your search. The name of lead editor Gary Broughman is also helpful.

Or, if you like, you may order your copies directly from Gary Broughman for \$12 plus \$4 shipping. Your check or money order should be made out to FSPA, and sent to:
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| | | | |
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| January 16 | Sunday at 3:30 pm | Writing workshop | link |
| January 28 | Friday at 7:00 pm | Coffeehouse (Theme: Frozen in Time) | |
| January 30 | Sunday at 3:30 pm | Writing workshop | link |
| February 20 | Sunday at 3:30 pm. | Writing workshop | link |

North Florida Poetry Hub Poetry Workshops

| | | | |
|-------------|--------------------------|------------|------|
| January 6 | Thursday, 6:30 – 8:00 pm | Open Forum | RSVP |
| January 18 | Tuesday, 6:30 – 8:00 pm | Poetry Hub | RSVP |
| February 3 | Thursday, 6:30 – 8:00 pm | Open Forum | RSVP |
| February 15 | Tuesday, 6:30 – 8:00 pm | Poetry Hub | RSVP |

RSVP required. Please email Ruth Van Alstine at ruth@northfloridapoetryhub.org to receive an invitation with a Zoom meeting link. Please notate: (ATT: name of event/date in subject line) or RSVP on the North Florida Poetry Hub Facebook events page here: <https://www.facebook.com/northfloridapoetry/events>

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.



Beginner's Mind

From Shipyard to Harvard Yard:
Embracing Endless Possibilities

Author: M.B. McLatchey

Winner of The Penelope Niven Creative Nonfiction Award

Publisher : Regal House Publishing (May 15, 2021)
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Item Weight : 1.11 pounds

For more information visit:
<https://www.mbmclatchey.com/books>

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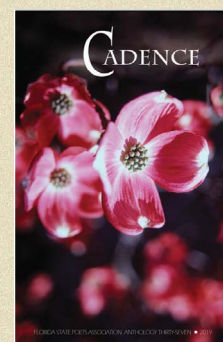
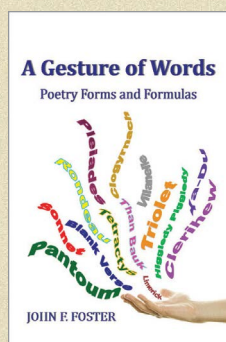
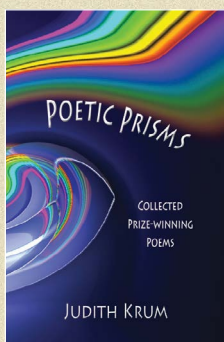
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Anthology of the
Florida State Poets
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DR. IRVIN MILOWE ■ ELIZABETH PLATER-ZYBERK ■ JOAN CLARK ■ AND MORE

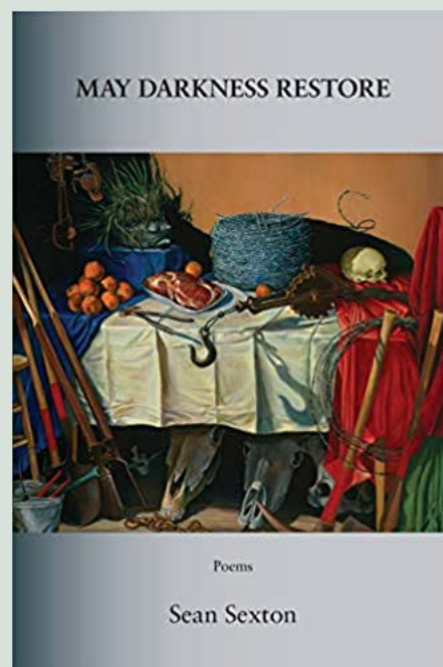
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GARY BROUGHMAN, PUBLISHER & EXECUTIVE EDITOR

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](#):





The Florida State Poets Association recently launched an exhibit of poetry by some of the poets who reside in Orange County, displayed throughout the month of December in the Orange County Administration Building in Downtown Orlando. The exhibit featured sixteen poets and forty poems. The list of poets include the newly named City of Orlando Poet Laureate Shawn Welcome, Andrew Jarvis, Carlton Johnson, Chris Flocken, Diane Neff, Elaine Person, Emily Sujka, Holly Mandelkern, Lynn Schiffhorst, Mark Andrew James Terry, Mary Marcelle, Nikki Fragala Barnes, Peter Gordon, Stan Sujka, Teresa TL Bruce and Tom Kelly. What follows is a selection of those poems.

*"We are grateful to The Orange County Arts
& Cultural Affairs Office for their assistance
bringing this exhibit to life,"*
~ Mary Marcelle, President,
Florida State Poets Association.

Bloom

I've beaten you about your trunk
with a shovel handle, like the
old nurseryman taught me to do,
grunting to get what I want.

You're scabbed with lichen
and craving the sweet coquina from
the now-paved road
that dusted lime at your roots.

But a week later
I take a deep breath of
the lemon-velvet air of February.

Fireworks.

~ Mary Marcelle
President
Florida State Poets Association

Daughter of the King

Sandcastles made of sand and saltwater don't mix well
in the path of a man running backwards to catch a football,
cuz after all... accidents happen.

It's a small world and often when little girl's dreams
of being a princess in her own little kingdom gets stepped on...
saltwater runs down her face... at a pace that would cause her to taste
bitter memories of the beach... with every blink.
Some never return... to that place.

This is to rebuild hope for daughters... whose stories
far outnumber the writers to publish.
Pregnant at thirteen, teenaged mother of two,
bad girl's school, alcoholic insomniac,
who... sleepwalks into the lustful hands of a
pastor who claims... Jesus will save you.

It's a miracle my wife trusts anything... anyone says anymore.
So daughter... when did you lose your fascination for snow globes?
Replaced them for headphones: ear to the ocean
floor, searching for something deeper.

Excerpt from *H2O: Immersed in Verse*, Available on Amazon

~ Shawn Welcome
City of Orlando
Poet Laureate

I think of home

as thickets of palmetto fronds,
cicadas' song in cypress bays,
of tannin streams that form dark ponds
where alligator turtle lays
her clutch of eggs in sandy soil.

I think of family, fiercely loyal,
my mother's soothing, calming tone,
my father's words, "How much you've grown."

I see horizons lined by creeks,
with mountainous, cumulous peaks,
the quarter horse's silhouette,
a saddle blanket wet with sweat.

I read its aromatic tome
of citrus blossoms, fresh-cut brome,
of catfish-fries and honeydew,
of charring meat for barbeque,

and feel its burlap Croker Sack,
its Andalusian razorback,
its sticky sap on yellow pine,
its slight-wet slip of fishing line.

I hear the rutting antler's clack,
the rattle of a diamondback,
the screeching of a red-tailed hawk,
the prattle of a cowbird flock,

and as I work in neon light
in steel and glass, in soaring height,
within my heart's full honeycomb,
I think of home. I think of home.

~ Mark Andrew James Terry
Vice President
Florida State Poets Association
Magnolia's Bloom, 2018

Wicked Pool

Mom detested swimming
so we dug her a pool
with a deep end, to dive
for her, to her chagrin.

Cannonball, bellyflop,
unfathomable flip,
we synchronized mistakes
to become her stubborn.

And she shouted at us
and our unruly acts
of unsafe, uncertain
death, our wet defiance.

Louder with every leap,
she made untamable
monsters, boisterous, bound
to wreak mother's havoc.

We loved her for this:
time of her attention
on the untamed, wild,
as we were the wicked.

~ Andrew Jarvis
Member
Florida State Poets Association

Living Will

I don't want to go
peacefully
like a perp, handcuffed
to a morphine drip.

I want to go out
fighting
like an old middleweight
taking his puncher's chance.

After I go down for the count,
sever my head;
freeze it under Epcot
like Walt Disney's

for scientists to revive
in far futures.
Clone me a body, move
memories to fresh, new

brain. Live again
and again, and again,
until
I get it right.

~ Peter M. Gordon
Member
Florida State Poets Association

Reflected Glory

Lakeside sunrise,
the essence of tranquility,
dawn's reflected light,
tripled in intensity.

Misty clouds float
above nearby meadows,
where egrets poke about
walking on stilettos.

A red-tailed hawk
screeches out a warning
soaring majestically
savoring the morning.

A burly barred owl
sat watch through the night.
He hoots "who-cooks-for-you,"
and swoops off on one more flight.

~ Chris Flocken
Member
Florida State Poets Association

Ocean Song

There's something about the ocean.
The blue so blue it's not blue,
the white whiter than white,
the crystalline sparkle,
the shadows not shadows, but glimmers of gold.

There's something about the ocean
that takes a precise reality
and washes it into fantasy
yet somehow makes the opaque
more clear.

I could lie on the beach a long time
or drift on the waves.
If it were to grab me by force
and swallow me whole,
I'd still consider it a lover's embrace.
I'd sink to its depths,
knowing I'm home.

~ Tom Kelly
Member
Florida State Poets Association

The Bear

Stocky legs lumbered through the scrub,
dark eyes peering into the silent street,
now bordered with cans of incredible scents –
rotted beef, leftover salads composting,
cellophane wrappers crinkled with crumbs.
The youngster stood tall, wary of open spaces,
but hungry and tired. His empty belly
prodded him to brave this challenge.
Moving more gracefully than his size would suggest,
he tugged at the first bin, wresting the lid
from its tabs, scattering the top debris
in a small circle around him. Nothing there
of interest. The paws reached farther inside.
Claws ripped the bag and an explosion of smells
welcomed him to their rewards. He rummaged
and ate, sitting amid the garbage, forgetting
his fears. He tipped the can, creating a
muffled crash of plastic and glass on the lawn.
A dog barked. A bright light came on.
He was gone before his belly was full.
If he was lucky, they'd blame it on raccoons
and delay those bear-proof cans
until he found a forest where he could survive
without the need for irresponsible humans.

~ Diane Neff
Member
Florida State Poets Association

As a Duck at Lake Lily

As a duck at Lake Lily
I act oh, so silly
When human beings come around.
I skitter, I prance,
I shudder, I dance.
I fly up, then land on the ground.

I need the attention
For what I can't mention.
I'm often a showman at heart.
When people walk by
They often say "hi"
So I think it's then that I start.

I put on a show
And so they will know
I'm talented and handsome, too.
I fly with my friends;
The fun never ends.
I lead "V" formation, it's true.

We swoop and we fly
All over the sky.
The humans say "Ah" and say "Oh."
And when on the ground
I've often found
They respect us much more than we know.

I practice each day;
it's not always play.
I have a performer's perspective
I want the bright spotlight
to be more than just hot light.
In college, dance was an elective.

"Okay," so you ask,
"Why take up this task
of impressing the passersby daily?"
I want to be hired
(before I grow tired)
by the dance troupe of Alvin Ailey.

~ Elaine Person
Member
Florida State Poets Association

Soon They'll be Sayin'

Why are you moving to Florida?
Some say gators and Gator games,
fishing holes and Seminoles,
oranges and limes sublime,
turf and surf,
flaming flamingos and roseate spoonbills,
morning mangoes and late night tangos.

But some will be saying
for poetic inspiration and the poets here—
songs they sing of bounty and county
and places where they grew up—
scents of Cuba and little towns with cheap movies,
the laureates and local points of light—
a Frost of our own,
a friendly Orlando bard named "Welcome,"
professors who push poetry.
It's a pen and pencil peninsula
scented with inspiration from Hemingway,
Zora, and Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings,
Billy Collins and Peter Meinke—
keyboards and brain waves buzzing.
Even my rabbi recites Whitman's "Crossing the Ferry"
at the eulogy for his mother,
and UCF's only Rhodes scholar
is a musician and a poet
who translates Lorca.

Here the printed and spoken word
lives and breathes the old and new Florida.
It's our little secret now, OK?
or soon we'll be saying our paradise is too laden with literati
and there's a poet on every corner.
Man your posts, poets,
and keep writing and rhyming.

~ Holly Mandelkern
Member
Florida State Poets Association

Plain to Patterned: Backyard Evolution

Shy, finger-width tree-gators hid in view,
wizards of magic-quick-change, acrobats.
Deep-earth twiggy backs turned, leaped, flashed, matched Spring's
brightest greens, mud-rich hues already shed.
Generations older, bolder, broader—
speedsters in muted, diamond-dotted stripes—
dash through years and yards, flee chasing children,
trade genes of old brilliance for traits of haste.

"Plain to Patterned: Backyard Evolution" was first published online by the
City of Orlando's "Words and Wonders Nature Edition" contest, August 24, 2021

Tracking Time (Before Apps and Beyond) in Orange County, Florida

Orange blossoms whisper, promise sweet enchantment.
Scarlet amaryllises trumpet spring's return.
Mulberry morsels fall, raining purple hail-stains.
Oaks spray pollen paint, Midas-touching all with fluff.

Rose-green bush tomatoes tease anticipation.
White star jasmine fireworks light their vines' incense.
Coal-and-crimson lovebugs flaunt another display.
See-through dandelion helicopters take flight.

An earlier version was first published as "Coming Attractions"
in *Cadence 2020: Florida State Poets Association Anthology 38*.

~ Teresa TL Bruce
Member
Florida State Poets Association

Dance Class

Many years ago, we took dance classes
at the old Winter Park Farmers Market

Thursday nights, we'd sidle in, nervous
Did I look ok? Would I remember the steps?

The smartly dressed instructress invariably
would count in my ear "1 2 3 1 2 3"

Was my necktie straight? Had I scuffed my shoes?
Who was Bonnie dancing with now? What time is it?

"Remember the box," she said. For the Foxtrot
1 2 3 4 she'd call out the numbers as we danced

the steps the steps I cannot recall now
the gentle flowing music I cannot recall now

After practicing the ballroom moves, the students of ballroom
would form lines of men and women and I wondered

Who would I dance with next? But I always came home
with Bonnie in hand. Now I don't dance that much

as at times it is a bit like walking on a tightrope,
my balance is not cut out for waltzes and rhumbas

Sometimes I will put a tune on like Fly Me to the Moon
and we will have a slow step-dance around our living room.

Then, we were off.

~ Carlton Johnson
Member
Florida State Poets Association

Coming!

When I was ten,
I could touch the sky.
Why didn't I then
take down some stars
and keep them
to light up my pockets?

Instead, the sky
took up some pieces of me
and kept them.

Now, night after night,
I hear myself call myself
among the stars,
and from my pocket
a voice cries,
"Coming!"

~ Lynn Schiffhorst
Member
Florida State Poets Association

IF

Like the
Luna moth,
Born without a mouth,
If I would live only days,
Love you only once
And die my
Life
Would be complete.

~ Stan Sujka
Member
Florida State Poets Association
Man Behind the Mask,
Balboa Press 2020

Traveling Light

there is a copy of a book, a young-adult-pop-fiction-page-turner with a hashtag, it's called *The Fault in Our Stars*, and I resisted reading it,

though I loved the title right off (I'm looking at you, Brutus) and eventually I read it, fell in rushed adolescent love with no sense or awareness at all of electronic bill pay and overdue oil changes, fell in all at once -- a world that bled past any edges and recognized the variations of my self and how I came to love outside of books and then I placed the book on a high shelf. I don't remember how the conversation began, my dad already living in my house, counting his days, moving from bed to chair to porch to chair -- somehow either I (or my son) brought the book to him

and he read it.

...

three years and two months after

he died, I didn't bring anything with me but five days of clothes when I evacuated the living members of my family ahead of a late summer hurricane

because I must have lent that book to someone and have never got it back -- leaving wedding albums, prints of small hands, rocks and metal of all kinds

because there's nothing

else

in my house I care to save.

~ Nikki Fragala Barnes
Member
Florida State Poets Association

The Welcome

Whether you call Orlando home,
Or are just visiting,

Welcome.

The APM greeting
Is a familiar sound,
The ding-dong before you enter
The moment
Before things,
No matter who you are,
Get festively
Familiarly
Loud.

Lake Eola's Bloom

A bite,
its crunch,
begins spring.
It's almost like fall,
it's sunny and sweet,
except you look out
and see the fountain,
which is now a floral disc.

Previously published in *Beautiful Ends*,
a book by Emily M. Sujka

~ Emily M. Sujka
Member
Florida State Poets Association



The preceding exhibit was fairly easy to put together and has been received very well by the exhibiting poets and those who have viewed it. Most large cities and counties have an arts administration and many of them will be looking for ideas for public art by constituents. Once I had organized and created the panels digitally, the County had them produced at their expense. So the cost of the exhibit was nominal. Why not reach out to someone in your area and see if an exhibit like this one is possible? Placing poetry in the public eye is a good thing, me thinks. I would love to then allow space for a selection from your exhibit here in Of Poets & Poetry.

~ Mark Andrew James Terry, Editor



MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Happy Holidays to all our Members! As your new Membership Chair since last June, it's been a busy six months of "getting into the rhythm" of the position. This past year we saw an increase in membership growth, a small loss of member renewals, but all things considered in the world, it wasn't a bad year for Membership. The New Year comes with promises of creative ideas on how to attract new members, ideas on how to increase membership retention including perhaps enhanced benefits of Membership. These can only help grow our chapters and strengthen our numbers overall. As things develop, we can make announcements and ask for volunteers for participation/idea when the time comes. This is a work in progress. I'm excited about 2022 and I know you will be too as things develop!

If you have any questions or concerns about your membership or are a Chapter President and have some ideas or concerns you would like to share regarding Membership, please don't hesitate to contact me, I will be happy to help in any way I can.

Have a great year everyone!

Ruth Van Alstine
FSPA Membership Chair



John Wilmot, 2nd Earl of Rochester (1647-1680) by Peter Lely

John Wilmot, The Second Earl of Rochester

Bad Boy Brilliance

By Sonja-Jean Craig

In London England, the Restoration Period (1660-1666) marked the end of Puritan severity. King Charles II had been crowned in a triumphant return to royalty. The people were hungry for fun, opulence, dancing, theater, and sexual promiscuity. This was the world of John Wilmot, Second Earl of Rochester. He embodied this environment with the fascination of “too-far.”

*“Natural freedoms are but just,
there is something generous in mere lust.”*

~ A Ramble in St. James Park

John was born on April 1, 1647 to Anne and Henry Wilcot in Oxfordshire. Due to his father’s campaign to restore royalty, he was not an active part of John’s life. His father died when he was eleven. John inherited his father’s Earldom, a title with little resources.

Charles II credited Henry Wilcot for saving him during his defeat by Cromwell. King Charles II took care of young John as a reward for his father’s loyalty.

Their relationship was complicated. Rochester had a way of pushing the King’s buttons. He insulted His Majesty on a number of occasions. Charles II would always forgive him and try to encourage his talent. Rochester was given the distinction of being the King’s Royal Dresser.

The Earl was educated at Wadham College in Oxford, a new school without much financial support. It was, in modern terms, a “party school.”

Rochester enjoyed traveling throughout the Continent. He learned and assimilated from different cultures. He also did two tours in the military. Sent to do battle with the Dutch, he returned a hero.

*The Elephant is never won with Anger,
Nor must that man, who would reclaim a Lion,
Take him by the teeth.*

~ Valentinian, act I, scene III

Rochester married Elizabeth Malet. Her family did not want her to marry him as he did not have much money. So, he kidnapped her. In dramatic fashion Rochester intercepted her coach and whisked her away. The incident landed him in the Tower. After a short time, King Charles II released him, gave him a handsome stipend, and a position in the House of Lords. The heiress was fascinated by him and agreed to marry



King Charles II in coronation robes by John Michael Wright

him. They had three children and a comfortable home in the country. But he was not content to stay home. The Earl lived a very different life in London.

*“The clog of all pleasure, the luggage of life,
Is the best can be said for a very good wife.”*

~ On a Wife

In the court of King Charles II, aka “the Merry Monarch,” Rochester was known for drunkenness and debauchery. He was a member of the Merry Gang, a group of friends that lived out the roles of Restoration Rakes. Rochester stood out with his witty satire and outrageous charm juxtaposed by a dark, smokey mist of animosity.

*“Whilst the misguided follower climb with pain
Mountains of whimsies heapt in his own brain
Stumbling from thought to thought falls
headlong down Into doubts boundless sea.*

Where like to drown

*Books bear him up a-while and make him try
To swim with bladders of philosophy.”*

~ A Satire Against Mankind

He had bi-sexual encounters with other members of the court of King Charles II. Over time, through his ability to bring powerful and influential people to a place of vulnerability, he developed a candlelit vision of cynicism. Disillusioned and adventurous, he spent a good deal of time and money on the theater and prostitutes. He took the actress Elizabeth Berry as a mistress, and they had a child.

He seemed to delight in sloshing through the muddiest streets of London wearing his finery and elaborate wigs.

*“Huddled in dirt the reasoning engine lies,
Who was so proud, so witty and so wise.”*
~ A Satire Against Mankind

After an altercation where a man was killed, Rochester went into hiding. He disguised himself as Dr. Bento and sold “medicine” to help with infertility. He did manage to impregnate his patients. But not with his tincture. The King found him and this time he told him to stay away. He had enough.

Through his drunken, debauched life, he was often heard demanding that his man-servant bring him wine and ink. Rochester was an accomplished poet, well known for his eloquence. He wrote about his sexual encounters with erotic accuracy. He was the first to write with frankness. His work revealed his biting satire towards life. Rochester’s poetry has been coined the *libertine wit of Restoration style*. He often did not publish in his name.

The Earl commissioned a painting as an example of how he satirized himself as a poet, showing him crowning a monkey that is handing him a poem.

The poem “A Song (Absent from Thee)” is an example of his work. A satirical look at traditional love, it is written in ABAB rhyme scheme in quatrains.

He uses iambic pentameter.

A Song (Absent from Thee)

Absent from thee I languish still;
Then ask me not, when I return?
The straying fool ’twill plainly kill
To wish all day, all night to mourn.

Dear! from thine arms then let me fly,
That my fantastick mind may prove
The torments it deserves to try
That tears my fixed heart from my love.

When, wearied with a world of Woe,
To thy safe bosom I retire
where Love and Peace and Truth does flow,
May I content there expire.

Lest, once more wandering from that heaven,
I fall on some base heart unblest,
Faithless to thee, false, unforgiven,
And lose my everlasting rest.

Let’s analyze this poem. The title suggests the self-indulgence of the time, overtones from the metaphysical poets. In the first stanza, the writer is conflicted by his love and his desire to wander. The word “languish” suggests an unpleasant feeling, brings attention to himself. “Ask me not” says that he will stray, so don’t ask. The last line tells his lover that she will be waiting. By using the spelling of mourn, it is clear that it will be her suffering.

The second stanza, the word “dear” drips with superficiality, a romantic cliché. “Let me fly” shows he is being held back. The spelling of the word “fantastick” is again self-indulgent, suggesting a wise, yet moody feeling. He is saying that love is pain. The torment and the violent separation releases him from control, a common theme for metaphysical poets. Through the poem he uses many “I”s and “my”s to enhance selfishness.

The third stanza starts with an alliteration of “w”s that heighten the lack of satisfaction from others. Again, no control. He returns to her where love, peace and truth are. While he is going to wander, he longs for the safety of her bosom. Through capitalization, he contrasts fidelity with infidelity. The last word “expire” is ambiguous. What will expire? It is up to the reader’s interpretation.

In the last stanza “Lest” means just-in-case. “Heaven” being a metaphor for perfect love, yet, he will “fall on some base heart unblest” anyway. The repetition of “f” sounds is harsh. Leaves us with the writer’s self-loathing. The last line is powerful in that the author understands not only does he lose true love but also his place in Heaven. This was a great concern for his audience of Restoration England.

Link to John Wilmot’s erotic poem, [*The Imperfect Enjoyment*](#)

Like many bad boys, he lived fast and died young. It is said he succumbed to complications from syphilis at age 33 on July 26, 1680.

*“E’er time and place were, time and place were not,
When Primitive Nothing something straight begot,
Then all proceeded from the great united — What.”
~ Upon Nothing*



The Tavern Scene, oil on canvas, William Hogarth, 1732-33

John Wilmot, The Earl of Rochester left a legacy that inspired other creatives through the years.

Rochester was admired and abominable, charming and nasty—traits that aroused his play-writer peers. The play *Man of Mode or Sir Flopping Flutter* was written about Rochester by his friend George Etherege, part of the Merry Gang. He was the role of Don John in Thomas Shadwell's *The Libertine*.

Andrew Marvell sited him saying, “The Earle of Rochester was the only man in England that had the true veine of Satyre.”

Voltaire called him a man of genius, a great poet. He admired his satire for its energy and fire.

He got a number of bad reviews from others. He was called obscene, worthless and a dissolute rake. His work was completely banned during the Victorian Era.

Rochester's poetry was re-discovered by Ezra Pound in the 1920s. Pound compared him to Alexander Pope and John Milton.

A movie was made in 2004, *The Libertine*, starring Johnny Depp, who considers his role of John Wilmot among his best work.

He is #6 on London's *Time Out* top thirty chart of the most erotic writers.

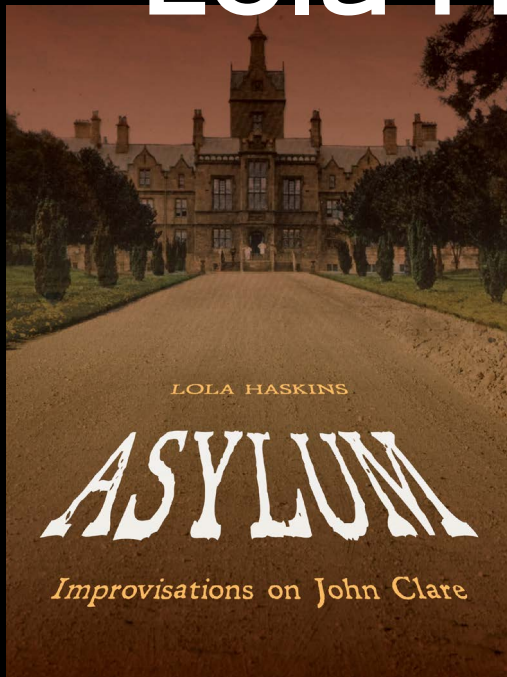
John Wilmot, The Earl of Rochester was an aristocratic bad boy tormented and amused by his brilliance. Wishing to release his need to reason, he self-medicated with wine and womanizing. He became obsessed with putting his world vision in verse. He did so with confidence and skill, documenting a time in history that speaks of dedicated decadence, royal promiscuity and privileged rakedom.

*“Thou treacherous, base deserter of my flame,
False to my passion, fatal to my fame,
Through what mistaken magic dost thou prove
So true to lewdness, so untrue to love?”*

~ The Imperfect Enjoyment



Lola Haskins Poetry

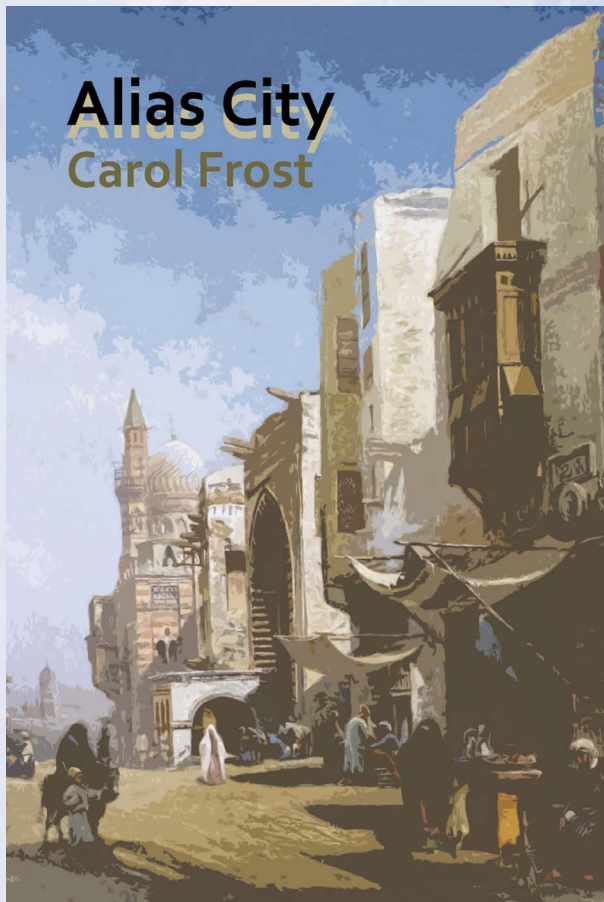


Published by University of Pittsburgh Press

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

Now available on Amazon — [Click here.](#)

[Learn more at lolahaskins.com](http://lolahaskins.com)



Alias City by Carol Frost

Now available from MADHAT PRESS

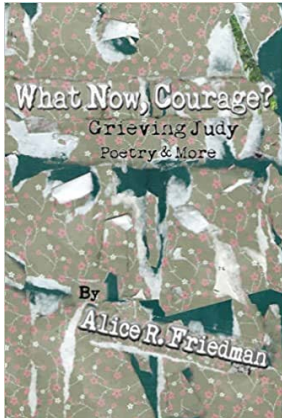


Welcome to Carol Frost's *Alias City*, which is, in the best sense of both words, the city of music.... But it is also a great city of the mind.... The hero of this book is a refugee, a survivor of World War II. She is now losing her memory, trying to recount what happened, giving us brief glimpses into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



[Link to book](#)

Book Review

What Now, Courage?: Grieving Judy Poetry and More

by FSPA Member Alice R. Friedman

In this book of 'poetry and more' by Alice R. Friedman, there is plenty to fall in love with in spite of, or perhaps, because of, the grieving elements in the poems and short stories about the loss of her sister, Judy. Alice, whom I have known for years when she lived in Florida before moving to Michigan, has a voice that echoes from long years growing up in Brooklyn and much of it is very heart warming as Alice writes in "Faith":

*My faith is renewed as deep in the woods I
Worship in a cathedral
Surrounded by dark green trees,
Weeds, birds, bugs and breezes.
Even vultures and bats herald good luck.
All confirmed by rainbows.
Yes, rainbows.
I have faith in all that.*

We all have difficulties in life but Alice's poems tell us to get up, dust off your shoes and get walking, get enjoying life, get dancing with life. Her observations are clear, relatable and energized by a life of 80 years that still looks at life with young-swept eyes. I heartily endorse this book. There are poems in this collection which are guaranteed to touch your heart, to help you with accepting life on life's terms, to nourish your soul driven perhaps crazy with the time in pandemic-induced isolation. In this collection, you will find hope, love and the courage to go on just one more day. There are ample lessons to be learned by reading *What Now, Courage?*

"Play with the angels in the sky/ Dance and sing now you can fly/ Eat ripe olives all day long/ you're in a place where you belong"

~ Carlton Johnson

“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-month trial period, so you can experience the benefits of this powerful poetry course at your leisure.

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

THE POET’S TRIANGLE CONSISTS OF: CRAFT, SCOPE, AND VOICE
WE ACQUIRE THEM IN SEQUENCE; EACH SUPPORTS EACH
OBJECTS AND THEIR MOVEMENTS DRIVE YOUR POEM
A PERFECT OBJECT IS DEFINED BY THE CLEAREST WORD
THE OBJECT ITSELF CAN BE FOUND AT THE ROOT OF ITS WORD
MORE THAN ANYTHING, POETS AND POEMS SAY SOMETHING
SENSE AND 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

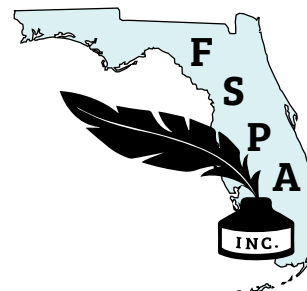
That’s just a taste of the Short Course; but are you intrigued? Now you can try the course out at home, free. FSPA is offering a one-month trial of the accredited Twelve Chairs Course on a flash-drive, compatible with any computer system.

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





Photography by Mark Andrew James Terry

Sonja Jean Craig

Sonja Jean Craig embodies the frequency of colors. As a poet, she evokes the tints and shades of words. She finds inspiration and healing by listening and observing her world. Sonja Jean extracts the deep meaning behind the appearances as part of her spiritual practice. Since she was a child, Sonja Jean had a creative side. She loved to play in the woods in her Indiana home, where her imagination could run free as the creek. She had a comfortable childhood filled with wonder and creative outlets. Her grandparents' home, where she spent most of her time growing up, had art supplies, old records and books. This is where Sonja Jean found her love of history, culture, and fashion.

Sonja Jean built up her performance art skills in the art scene of San Francisco. She enjoyed dance, costuming and spoken word.

After moving to Florida, she continued to create. Her work has been shown at Atlantic Center for the Arts Community Events. Sonja Jean also holds a Creative Medicine event for Arts and Wellness, a safe space for people to connect through poetry, prose and percussion.

Her creative journey speaks to the art of life itself—to love life is to exude vitality of body, heart, mind, and spirit. Sonja Jean uses art to navigate society, her feelings, and ideas by expressing the tones of

these things through painting, pastels, fashion, photography, percussion and poetry.

Sonja Jean lives in beautiful New Smyrna Beach Florida with her beloved cat, Lorenzo, her headquarters and home where she works, meditates and enhances her environment with the poetry of color.

Sonja Jean's unique observations are celebrated world wide through various online communities like *Down the Rabbit Hole* and *Explorers of Consciousness*, as well as with local organizations. She is an active member of Florida State Poets Association as Secretary and Board Member, Florida Writers Association, National Federation of State Poets Society and Poets Corner. She is published in various anthologies including a top ten selection in FWA's *Footprints Collection*, *Poetic Visions*, *Cadence* and *em.bod.i.ment magazine*. She often collaborates with other artists, adding her poetry to create videos, sound art and performance art. *A Love Affair with Life*, her deck of guidance cards incorporates her photography and images of her collage art with her poetic musings. Sonja Jean brings into form the aesthetic of her poetic insights enhancing a life filled with beauty and magic.

"It is my desire and joy to feed the soul with all that I am." ~ Sonja Jean Craig

SONJA JEAN CRAIG

POEMS BY

Flower Mart

The bloom of unfolding existence
opens her intimate trusting heart
to the rays of the Sun.

The bliss of their kiss
resonates like an endless
sound wave.

Heralding in the flowering
of all life,
all creation

ever fancied.

Improvising the steps
of a momentary dance

Enchanted by its fragrant beauty.

~ Sonja Jean Craig
From Cadence 2019

SONJA JEAN CRAIG

POEMS BY

Airy Fairy

Closed eyes completely feel
the tactile joy of the wind
Tickling the soft hairs
of my face

Hands open to receive
the knowledge, the love
from the air stream
flowing by

Listen to leaves dance
without a care
Nature's playful confetti
sprinkle around

With loving intention
of praise and gratitude
carry the invisible
Cone with the wind

~ Sonja Jean Craig
Honorable mention,
The Poet's Vision Award 2020

Primed

Young bride holds a candle
to light her way
through world views.

Seagulls with hidden base motives
soar over linear time
lost in a mirror of itself.

World financial systems built on lucky coins.
Belief systems tied together—
Haphazardly,
as the purity of innocence lifts her veil.

~ Sonja Jean Craig

SONJA JEAN CRAIG

POEMS BY

Splash of Springtime Force

Pollen soaked flowers
wildly reach out—
tickles the nostrils.

Layers of colorful movement
blow in the birds'
flight of vitality.

Black and white owl—
harbinger of the night,
boldly stares down order.

Song birds warble
flower petals into chaotic passion—
where the mastery of berries and leaves
weave magical connections.

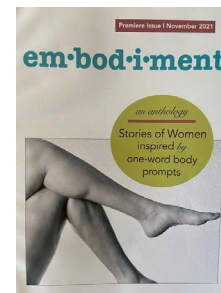
Father Flamingo pops in his head
honks at disciplined wilderness.
Adds his long necked song
that wraps around with pleasure.

~ Sonja Jean Craig
From *Poetic Visions*.

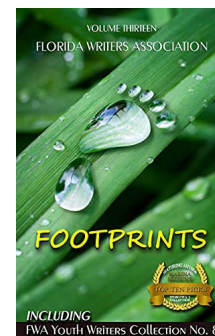
COOL STUFF



Deck of Guidance Cards
available from Sonja Jean only.
Email: sonjajeancraig@icloud.com



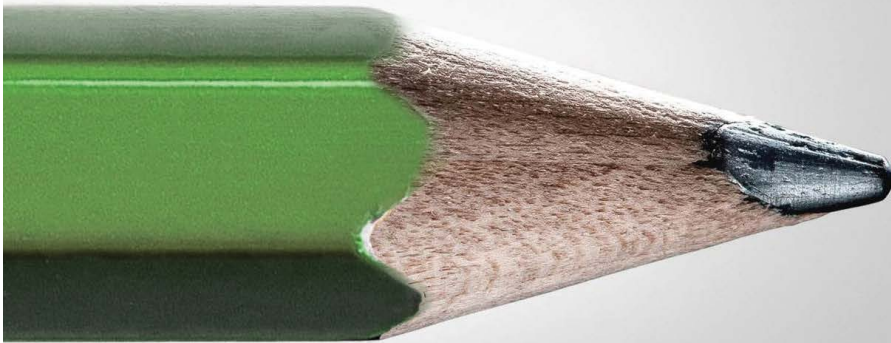
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BEYOND WORDS

The journey

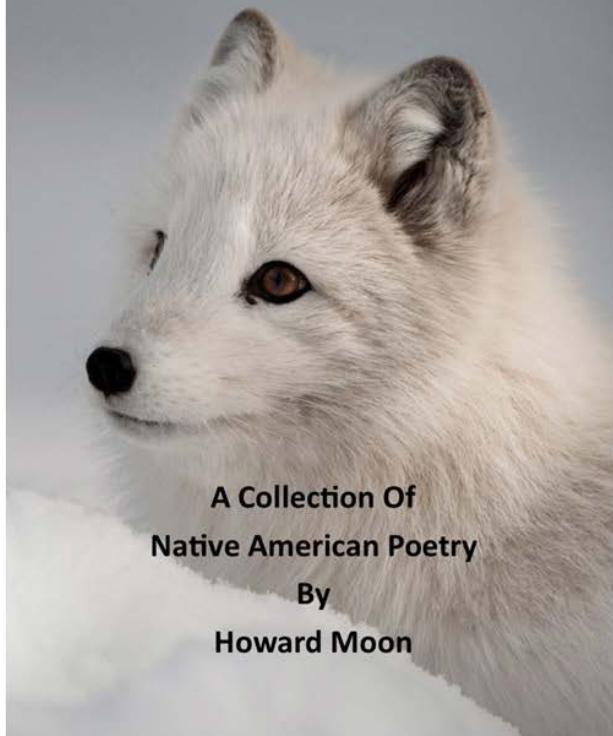


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White Fox

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American Poetry
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His poetry covers many topics facing today's Natives. He also writes about the problems of growing up part Native in a white world.

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Native and white
White and native*

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The **Power** of Personification

by Shutta Crum

Sometimes the secret to good writing is simply a matter of remembering what you learned in 3rd or 4th grade—those basic literary techniques. And one of them, personification, is a power-wielding giant. It's an imposing and oft-times elegant figure of speech to be admired. That's because it can carry a great deal of weight, perform several functions, and still stay light on its toes. (Did you catch that? I personified the term *personification*.) Personification punches up all kinds of writing—prose and poetry.

Personification is the giving of personal or human qualities/traits/thoughts and feelings to non-human entities/objects/abstractions/gods/forces of nature. In some dictionaries anthropomorphism is similarly defined, though we tend to think of anthropomorphism as giving human qualities/traits/thoughts and feelings to animals.

What can this behemoth of a technique do?

— It can make the setting come alive by helping the reader identify with the story or poem's world. A kind of, *oh yeah, this feels familiar* feeling. It can speed up slow moving sections or slow the reader down to ponder a while.

— It can foreshadow by creating mood (anxiety, fear, hopelessness, joy, etc.). This is especially important in emotionally heavy writing like horror, romance, etc. It can create humor, as well as tragedy. It can let the reader get an inkling of what's to come and what kind of book/collection/poem it is that s/he is reading.

— It can be a very powerful recurring symbol for the most important ideas of a work. By choosing what is personified and how often it is woven through a narrative/poem/collection. This works especially well in longer works or collections. And if you assign a gender to that symbol, there can be more depth to the personification. What you are personifying can become a character/the persona of your poem. Here is the last stanza of a poem in which I've personified the moon and now it's become my father who suffered from Alzheimer's at the end of his life. From *Our Luminous Patient* (See more of this poem on page 59 in this issue.):

. . . Yes, we will catch him up in our arms.
A sickle-shaped sliver of his old self—
pale, tested. And for a moment we will
steady the old soldier in his waning
course through our sky.

Here is T. E. Hulme. From his poem *Autumn*.

. . . And saw the ruddy moon lean over a hedge
Like a red-faced farmer.
I did not stop to speak . . .

And here's a bit by that great personifier Emily Dickinson. From her poem #479.

Because I could not stop for Death—
He kindly stopped for me—
The Carriage held but just Ourselves—
And Immortality.

We slowly drove—He knew no haste
And I had put away
My labor and my leisure too,
For His Civility—

Examples from prose: In the novel *A Monster Calls* by Patrick Ness, anger literally comes to life, becoming a monster and taking on human qualities. I love the first two sentences—so much told in just a few words: “The monster showed up just after midnight. As they do.” We know, right away, this will be one of the main characters. And it is punctual, maybe even concerned that it shouldn't be late. Also, the setting is personified. In the first pages of the novel, curtains *shush* each other. And we hear wood groaning, “. . . like the hungry stomach of the world, growling for a meal.” What foreshadowing! What mood setting! For many reasons, this book is one of my favorites.

In addition, the monster is a symbol—a symbol of Connor’s anger at his mother’s cancer. Personification at its most powerful.

Take a look at Marcus Zusak’s *The Book Thief*. Like anger in the Patrick Ness book, death has become a character, the narrator. And since this story takes place during WWII, Death is exhausted. This is from Death’s diary: “*It was a year for the ages, like 79, like 1346, to name just a few. Forget the scythe, Goddamn it, I needed a broom or a mop. And I needed a vacation.*” Also, there are wonderful bits of personification sprinkled throughout. “*The bomb took a bite out of the street.*” Great writing!

Here’s some fun examples: “*Is love a tender thing? It is too rough, too rude, too boisterous, and it pricks like thorn.*” William Shakespeare, *Romeo And Juliet*. Uh-oh, love is not going to go smoothly here. “*Pink is what red looks like when it kicks off its shoes and lets its hair down.*” Tom Robbins in *Wild Ducks Flying Backward*. Uh-oh, you’re in for a wild ride!

Just because personification invades our everyday life so much (See. Did it again.), in terms of common usages such as *duty calls*, *the budget demands*, *the nation is on alert*, and on and on, doesn’t mean that you should belittle this figure of speech. More than anything, the very commonness of it is an indication of how it resonates with us. Just think of the popularity of that wonderful children’s book *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom* by Bill Martin. Those zany letters are the epitome of all little kids—of us.

If used wisely, placed early to foreshadow, and thoughtfully deepened into symbols, personification is one of the hardest-hitting tools you’ve got in your writer’s toolbox.

Just for fun, try this little exercise: Take some object from your desk, or something that has always meant a lot to you, and give it a human background. List what kinds of friends it might have, phrases it might say, attitude toward its job/function, and memories or desires it might have. Once you have several lists, play with the ideas to make a poem. (And when you’ve got one that is polished, consider sending to Mark Terry for OPAP.)

Now, I’ve gotta skedaddle! The day is languorous and lazily beckoning me outside . . .

~ Shutta

FSPA CHAPTER NEWS & UPDATES

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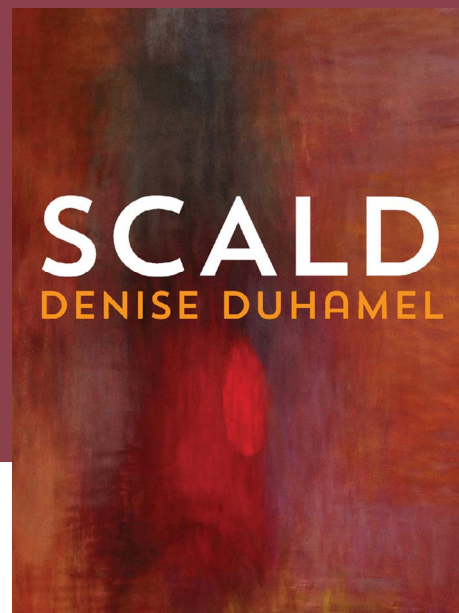
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“Denise Duhamel’s *Scald* deploys that casual-Friday Duhamel diction so effortlessly a reader might think heck, I could write like that, but then the dazzling leaps and forms begin. . . Duhamel’s sentences don’t even break a sweat, sailing on with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

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Peter Gordon

Orlando Area Poets

We are proud to say that 14 of our Orlando Area Poets members had poems displayed in the lobby of the Orange County Office Building as part of the exhibit From Within, Wit and Wonder, an exhibit of poetry by some of the poets who live in Orange County. Members whose poems were displayed include **Andrew Jarvis, Carlton Johnson, Chris Flocken, Diane Neff, Elaine Person, Emily Sujka, Holly Mandelkern, Lynn Schiffhorst, Mark Andrew James Terry, Mary Marcelle, Nikki Fragala Barnes, Peter Gordon, Stan Sujka,** and **Teresa TL Bruce.**

Orlando Area Poets members contributed 28 poems to the most recent edition of *Cadence*. Our members earned a total of 35 awards in last year's FSPA contests. **Mark Andrew James Terry** led the way with 8 awards, followed by **Diane Neff** and **Elaine Person** with five, **Holly Mandelkern** and **Peter Gordon** with four, **Lynn Schiffhorst** and **Robyn Weinbaum** earned three, **Carolynn Scully** earned two, both first place winners, and our newest member, **Nancy MacInness**, earned one.

Chapter Members **Stan Sujka, Emily Sujka, Mark Andrew James Terry, Elaine Person,** and **Peter Gordon** read poems before painting demonstrations as this year's Winter Park Paint Out welcomed art lovers and patrons to the grounds of the Polasek Museum in October, after a pandemic hiatus.

Andrew Jarvis placed second in the most recent Orlando Words of Wonder contest with his poem "Playground Science."

Diane Neff's Seminole County Library Writers' Block writing group published their second anthology, *Florilegium: Library Voices, volume 2*. **Cheryl West** provided the cover photo and other art as well as formatting and designing the book.

Peter Gordon's poem "Ready to Go" was Poem of the Week on the *5-2 Crime Poetry* site (poemsoncrime.blogspot.com) the week of October 25.

Carolynn Scully won a 3rd place award for her *Remembering Grandparents* blog at the FL-NLAPW (National League of American Pen Women) conference.

Lynn Schiffhorst published a new book of poetry titled *Under English Skies*. If you'd like to order a copy please send a check for \$12 to Lynn at 2444 Forfarshire Drive, Winter Park, FL 32792. , email her at: schiffhorst@yahoo.com.

Elaine Person teaches writing classes through Crealde at Home, for the Crealde School of Art, where she was recently named Adjunct Instructor. she She also taught an Ekphrastic writing workshop for Crealde in December called Writing to Art. That's in addition to the writing workshops she continues to teach at the Maitland and Winter Park libraries. Her story, "Admitting D-feet," was published in the Florida Writers Association book, *Footprints*.

Our chapter welcomed new officers since the last edition of OPAP. **Peter Gordon** is our new President, and **Nikki Fragala Barnes** is Vice President. Thanks to **Diane Neff** and **Cheryl West** for their leadership during the past two years.

~ Peter Gordon, President



Tere Starr

Miami Poets

Miami Poets will celebrate the thirteenth anniversary of the Miami Poets Soirée in January. After meeting virtually during the pandemic, we'll be back to meeting at the Pinecrest Branch Library. **Tere Starr** moderates the monthly gatherings each first Wednesday from 1 to 3 pm. On second Mondays we will continue to meet virtually from 1 to 3 pm with Group 10, the critique group facilitated **Steven Liebowitz**. In November we shared poems by featured Miami International Book Fair poets. Especially exciting were readings by **Joy Harjo**, our current United States Poet Laureate and **Rita Dove**, a past recipient of the honor.



Patsy Asuncion

We welcome our new member, **Celia Lisset Alvarez**. Her poetry and insight are certain to add an exciting dimension to our group. Her book, *Multiverses*, was a finalist for the American Book Fest's 2021 Best Book Awards in narrative poetry. Celia is editor of *Prospectus: A Literary Offering*, prospectusliterary.com. She can be reached at her website, celialissetalvarez.com.



Zorina Frey

Achievements: **Zorina Frey** was selected to be part of Friday night's opening for the 2022 National Association for Poetry Therapy Conference, <https://poetrytherapy.org/Annual-Conference>, in April. **Sampson Mathis's** poem, "So Be I," was published in *45 Magazine Women's Literary Journal*. **Patricia Asuncion** continues to host the monthly Virtual Global Open Mics from Charlottesville, Virginia. They can be viewed on Patsy's YouTube channel. **Tere Starr** continues to host virtual Poetry Soirées for the Brandeis Women's South Miami Chapter. **Connie Goodman-Milone's** Community Relations column and **Ricki Dorn's** President's Message appear each month in the *Author's Voice*, South Florida Writers Association's publication. **Pat Bonner Milone** was awarded Second Place in FSPA's Poet's Vision Award for her tanka poem "Vultures" and an honorable mention in the Miami Poets Award for "The Order of Friendship."

The Miami Poets continue to spread our love of the written word as we share poetry throughout Miami and beyond.

~ Tere Starr, 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 the link on [NFPH Facebook Events Page](#) or email ruth@North-FloridaPoetryHub.org.

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. [Link](#)



Shutta Crum

NORTH FLORIDA POETRY HUB

Shutta Crum had her poem, “How Poetry Re-frames the Moment,” accepted by *Acumen*, a prestigious UK publication. It will appear in 2022. And she celebrates the first birthday of her writer’s newsletter *The Wordsmith’s Playground*, You can subscribe to it at: <https://shutta.com/wordsmiths-playground-sign-up>

North Florida Poetry Hub has a unique program exclusively for Chapter Members called “The Poet’s Pen.” This is where a poet can publish a small collection of poems with the help of one of our experienced previously self-published poets. The poet is tutored through the steps of selecting a style for publishing their collection of poems, be it a simple zine or a regular small volume chapbook. The design, layout and editing are done collaboratively so the poet can learn the publishing process. They are then educated on the print-shop process and end up with print-ready documents of title page and interior book (or zine) with knowledge of how to approach a printer or print shop. They pay for print costs, but have had their books designed, edited, receive print-ready documents, and walk away with the knowledge of how to create and print their own books as an added member-benefit for free from experienced previously published authors and desk-top publishers. North Florida Poetry Hub provides free workshops for all poets to work the craft of their poetry, and then gets them published! Every poet’s dream come true!

In April of 2022 our Chapter will host a “Poet’s Pen Showcase.” Our Poet’s Pen authors will be featured speakers, with selected readings from their Poet’s Pens. Thus far eight of our members have either published their own Poet’s Pen, or are working on one in order to participate in the upcoming Showcase.



Sally Wahl-Constain

Sally Wahl-Constain is proud to have finished a Poet’s Pen Volume Five, a Limited-Edition collection of poems titled *Autumn Again*. “I express many thanks to Ruth Van Alstine for help, guidance and encouragement. I was able to share this project with her Del Webb Writers group.”

Tune into our **Facebook Events** page to keep up to date with all the news and participate in our exciting events at **North Florida Poetry Hub** this fall. Watch for our listings on the FSPA **Zoomies** events page!

Happy New Year from the North Florida Poetry Hub members to everyone!

~ Ruth Van Alstine - President



Charles Hazelip

Poetry For the Love Of It

PLOI continues to meet the 2nd and 4th Mondays of each month to discuss a notable poet and share members' poetic efforts, as well as any interesting poems we've come across. Meetings continue to be mostly via Zoom. As a result, the chapter has invested in its own Zoom account. Tasks related to chapter business are now shared by all.

December's notable poet was sound poet Tracie Morris. The 2022 list of notable poets continues to evolve and Bob Dylan was just added...hey, we're all seniors reminiscing about our high school English classes in the 60s when popular folk music was presented as poetry.

May all have joyous holidays!

~ Linda Whitefeather, PLOI Chapter Recording Secretary & Acting Meeting Monitor on behalf of Charles Hazelip, PLOI Chapter President



Mary-Ann Westbrook

Tomoka Poets

Until the Ormond Beach Library reopens to group gatherings Tomoka Poets are meeting at the home of Volusia County **Poet Laureate David Axelrod**. Along with Live Poets of Daytona Beach and Creative Happiness Institute we are co-sponsored our annual December event, Chriskwanzakah, a multicultural festival that includes music, theater, a winter solstice ceremony by **Annie Finch, Poetry Witch**, and, of course, poetry. The celebration was held on December 19 at The Casements in Ormond Beach.

BJ Alligood, Linda Eve Diamond, MarcDavidson and **Mary-Ann Westbrook** had poems featured with artwork at Daytona Beach Art Guild's celebration of artist **Jean Banas's** 90th birthday. Marc and Mary-Ann were filmed reading their poems at the opening of the show. The film will be distributed to colleges and universities to encourage the combining of different forms of art.

~ Mary-Ann Westbrook, President



Marc Davidson

The Live Poets Society of Daytona Beach

The Live Poets Society of Daytona Beach held its December meeting on Wed. 12/15 at the Panera on Dunlawton Ave. in Port Orange. Five members attended in person and there were two online guests who attended via Zoom. Because of the noise factor, we'll be looking for a new place to meet soon. Any suggestions are welcome.

Our members remain active. **John McKernan** reported he had a poem published in *Rock and Sling* magazine this past month. I participated in "Chriskwanzakah" celebration at the Casements in Ormond Beach, Sunday 12/19. The principal guest was Annie Finch, The Poetry Witch, who did a solstice related program. There was an open mic toward the end of the program.

All are invited to take part in our regular monthly meetings on the third Wednesday at 2 p.m. If you are interested, please email me at flueln@hotmail.com for details on location and Zoom attendance.

~ Marc Davidson, President



Cheri Herald

Sunshine Poets

Sunshine Poets meets the last Thursday of each month at the Central Ridge Library in Beverly Hills, FL. Members **Joyce Shiver** and **Cheri Herald** attended the first Zoom convention held by Florida State Poets Association in October. Joyce won four prizes in FSPA's State Contest: a 1st, two 2nds and an HM. She also took a 1st and two 3rds in an Ohio contest. We have been studying modern and traditional Haiku and the Sestina.

~ Cheri Herald, President



Gary Ketchum

New River Poets

In the final quarter of 2021, our members experienced some things that engendered enrichment, pride and accomplishment. Several New River Poets virtually attended the FSPA Annual Conference via Zoom and were treated to some great speakers and workshops. We also learned of our impressive results in the Association's 2021 contests. Seven of our members were honored with winning entries in 23 competitions, most enjoying multiple recognitions: **Cheryl Van Beek** (8); **Janet Watson** (5); **Susan Stahr** (3); **Suzanne Austin-Hill** (2); **Beverly Joyce** (2); **Betty Ann Whitney** (2) and **Gary Ketchum** (1).

Our **John Foster** was invited to perform a selection of his humorous poetry after dinner at the 65th reunion of his Yale University class. It represented a great honor by his fellow alumni and he was to be on the same program as the storied Whiffenpoofs of the song ("... poor little lambs who have lost their way"). Unfortunately, a family emergency prevented his attendance. John indicates it's a postponement rather than cancelation since he certainly hopes to perform his verses at a future reunion.

Speaking of humorous poetry, **Ken Clanton** is pleased to announce the publication of his book of funny poems for which Ken is famous. His poetry consistently tickles readers with hilarious situations and often entails surprising turns that compel us to laugh out loud. His book is appropriately entitled *Laff Time*. Ken is working out the distribution details and I can't wait to get a copy of it.

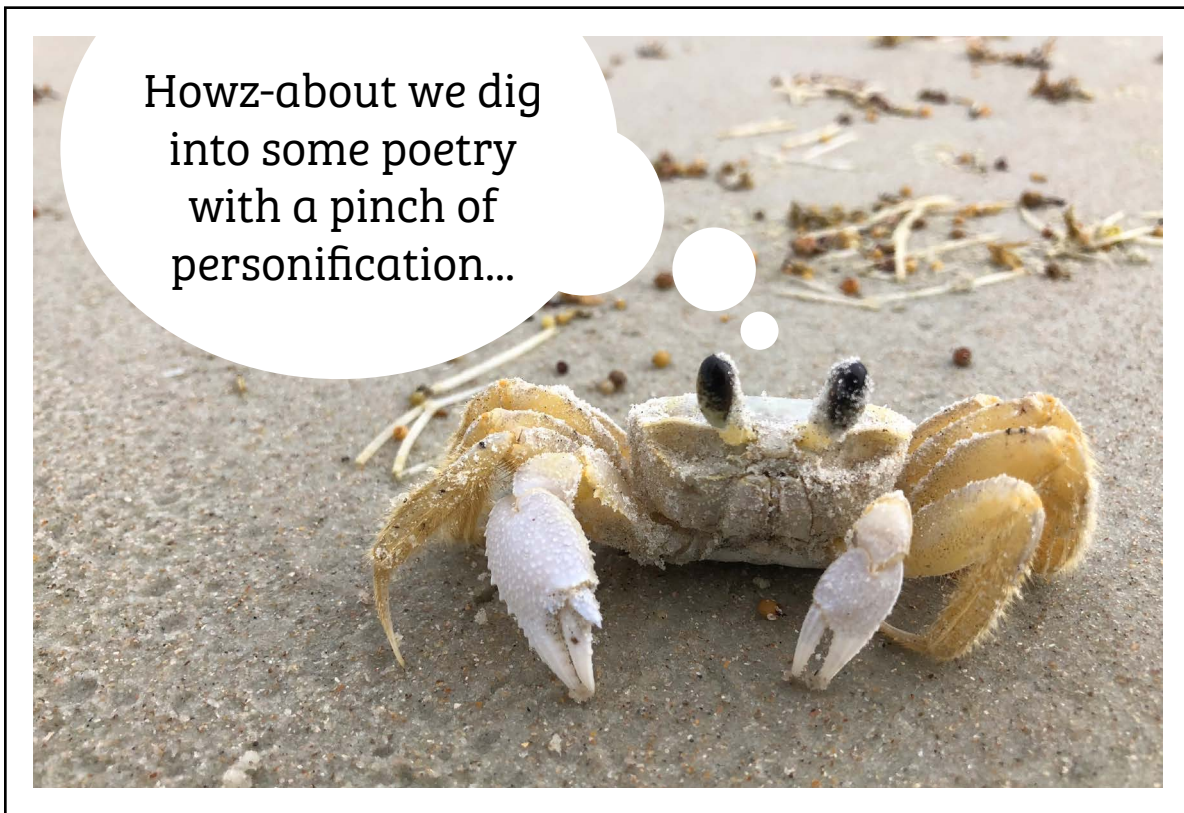
Janet Watson is pleased to announce that the book on which she has labored for almost ten years has finally made it into print. Targeted for the nine to fifteen age group, *Sons of the People* is a novel about two brothers who lived in prehistoric Florida some 7,000 years ago. It was inspired by an actual archeological discovery just a few miles from Cape Canaveral that has now been set aside and protected as a Natural Historic Landmark. Of course, it's to be expected that a poet of Janet's stature would include some original poetry in the telling of the old legends. The book was published by CBH Media and is now available on Amazon.

Here's a link: https://www.amazon.com/dp/B09K26J1HZ/ref=cm_sw_em_r_mt_dp_SN9XY059MCZFE1ZHNBFM

Happy New Year and best wishes to all from Pasco County.

~ Gary Ketchum, President

Editor's Choice Challenge:



Howz-about we dig
into some poetry
with a pinch of
personification...

Photography by Mark Andrew James Terry

Personification

A figure of speech in which the poet describes an abstraction, a thing, or a nonhuman form as if it were a person

Our Luminous Patient

All night we listened to the lunatic
fray—to the flailing skirmishes of
ragged words and ravaged limbs.
When we thought morning had finally
come, we threw open the door and the
moon staggered into our arms.

What was there to do but brace
ourselves against the good wood
of this house and shore-up the
ramparts in our father's room?
For we are bound by blood and the
glorious burnish of his long lustrous years.

And now—oh, how many nights
we barely sleep fearing our luminous
patient will rise to rage the length
of the house, will push aside our
ministering hands, will lift his fervid
face toward battle.

Oh, how many nights we barely sleep
knowing that we who love our father
will be re-marshaled to strip the
singed sheets from his bed, to bar the
door, and man the barricades.

So we lie awake, aquiver to the fading
champion next door—to any
benighted din heralding a new
campaign, another turn of the siege,
another tremulous surrender.

Yes, we will catch him up in our arms.
A sickle-shaped sliver of his old self—
pale, tested. And for a moment we will
steady the old soldier in his waning
course through our sky.

~ From: *When You Get Here* by Shutta Crum

Don't Bother Us

Don't bother me, the Past complained.
I'll never be your way again.
Look for me and all you'll find
is the Present I left behind.
Unwrap it quickly if you dare
or ignore it – I don't care.
What you search for isn't me
or the Future. What will be
is fleeting as it marches fast.
Soon it joins you at the last.

Don't wait for me, the Future whined.
Don't hold your breath. I'll be on time.
You'll know me by my open face
that changes when you choose your place
along my path that hurries by
beyond the Present, into the night.
I'm here a second that splits and falls.
I won't hear you when you call
from deep within your memory's tunnel
or underneath your final pall.

Open me, the Present said.
I make no guarantees. Instead,
I give and take, surprise, dismay.
Nothing's given, just today.
For now, until you stop your quest
I'll do for you what I do best:
deflect your deep regrets and fears,
mirror your hopeful steps and steer
you through days you might rue,
but don't last long, I promise you.

Don't bother us to tell you more.
Don't bother us, we implore.

~ Mary Orvis

The Main Ingredient

dented,
label torn,
lip, a mild case of oxidation
sale date imminent

punished by the vendor
ostracized from the shelf
relegated to a bargain bin
looked upon with suspicion

no fault of your own

but for someone
your price is right

at the assigned time
your top surrenders, gladly revealing

tomatoes
swimming in their own juices
escaping the confinement of their skins

mangled chunks of pulp, suffering silently

seeds afloat
celebrate what was
relish in what is
contemplate what more can be done

their sacrifices satiate

~ Suzanne S. Austin-Hill

Pollywogs in the Stream of Politics

Just you wait little pollywogs. You impoverished,
who gather on the border in the shallows beneath
the rise of Hope's Bridge. A menace is mounting,
manning horsewhips, wearing unsoiled Stetsons.
Oh yes, they'll tromp you in the mud . . . right there

at the DO NOT ENTER sign on Freedom's Gate.

Just you wait little pollywogs. Even if you
wriggle through that barbed-wire mire,
there are monstrous mouths in dank depths,
ravenous, and pollywogs are what they seek—
millions of morsels, krill for a whale, swill in their ale.

Just you wait little pollywogs, just you wait.

I know you'll feel it . . . that ill will pulling you down,
your hopes sinking into nothingness; drawing you
to the indifferent lair of hidden agendas lurking
in our political abyss. Oh, and did they tell you,
when they exclaimed, "Come! Come, one and all!" . . . ?

Everything's free in the land of the free, (just not for us.)

~ Mark Andrew James Terry

Next Issue:
Editor's Choice Challenge
Prompt: Any
Form: Sonnet
Submit by: February 1, 2022
to Mark@TKOrlando.com
For the March | April issue

A Little Lagniappe:



Sunrise trumpets her arrival,
Opens her bloodshot eyes,
Flutters her cloudy lids above all,
Then beckons: Arise! Arise!

~ Mary Ellen Orvis

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.

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

IN THE NEWS

2022 PALM BEACH POETRY FESTIVAL— The 18th Annual Palm Beach Poetry Festival will take place **January 10-15, 2022** and includes poets: Kim Addonizio, Laure-Anne Bosselaar, Chard deNiord, Mark Doty, Yona Harvey, John Murillo, Matthew Olzmann, and Diane Seuss. Our Special Guest Poet is Yusef Komunyakaa. Poet-at-Large is Aimee Nezhukumatathil. Individual conference faculty poets are: Lorna Knowles Blake, Sally Blumis-Dunn, Nickole Brown, Jessica Jacobs, and Angela Narciso Torres.



Events include: workshops, readings, craft talks, one-on-one conferences, a Special Guest Interview, and the Beloved Poem Panel featuring all the faculty poets. [Event Website](#)

Atlantic Center for the Arts's Poetry Month Workshops

April 6, 13, 20, 27 led by M.B. McLatchey — Celebrate National Poetry Month in 2022 with Atlantic Center for the Arts! M.B. will host poetry sessions every Wednesday at 3pm throughout the month of April at ACA Harris House in New Smyrna Beach. Admission is free, but seating is limited. Sign up here.

WORKSHOP: Creative Medicine — Emphasis on Poetry and Prose with a Rhythmic Twist, *facilitated by Sonja Jean Craig* — February 17, 2022, 4pm- 5:30pm at Harris House, 214 South Riverside Drive, New Smyrna Beach, FL 32168. Please RSVP. You will be emailed the link for Zoom. Please note: This is safe space for you to express. Bring your own water bottle, your writing, empathy and compassion. Please [RSPV](#)

#bummer...

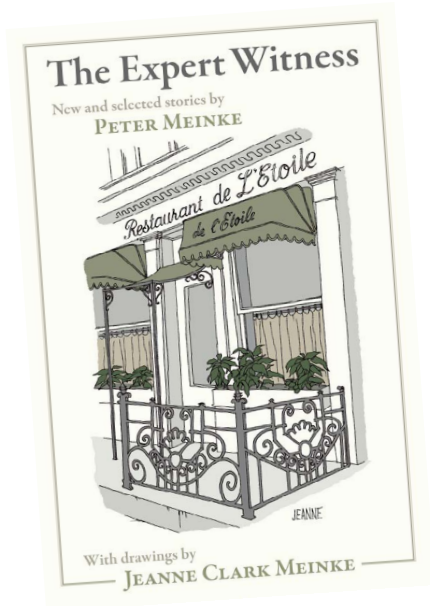
The 38th National Cowboy Poetry Gathering Called Off

The front page of the website reads: "We're all disappointed, but the board has made a wise decision. It's like finding the road's washed out when you're headed to the yearly dance. You've got a date and you're on the wrong side and there's nothing you can do about it. It's no one's fault. You just have to say, 'Shucks. We'll try it again next year.'" —Waddie Mitchell

#crickets...

When will the Governor's Office announce who will be Florida's next Poet Laureate . . . (crickets — just sayin') . . . we love Peter Meinke, but it's well past time. Hey Gov'na, is it soup yet?

The Expert Witness



New and selected stories by
PETER MEINKE

With drawings by
JEANNE CLARK MEINKE

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

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



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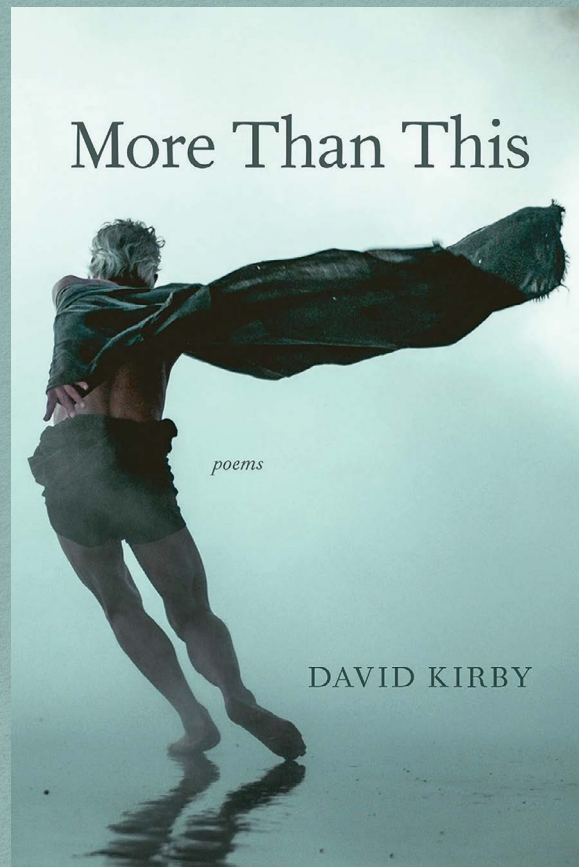
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