

A COMMON WEALTH OF POETRY

Newsletter of the Poetry Society of Virginia ♦ September 2020

A LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT

by Terry Cox-Joseph, President

Congratulations to Luisa Igloria, our new Poet Laureate of Virginia! A powerhouse of ideas, creativity, and productivity, Luisa hit the keyboard and the video recorder from Day 1. Pride and expectation follow her everywhere. Her upbringing in the Philippines, her experiences as a mother and university professor, her prolific publishing history, her skills as a wordsmith, and her powerful love of poetry fuel her. I look forward to her two years and am so grateful for her contribution.

As the year of COVID continues, we continue to create. So many events have moved online, particularly to Zoom. For that, I am grateful.

With the help of an overseas consultant and a student intern from Christopher Newport University, we are putting the finishing touches on our new website which will operate on WordPress. For that, I am grateful.

Our Facebook pages are active—note that I said “pages.” One of the pages is entitled Poetry Society of Virginia, and the other is The Poetry Society of Virginia. I cannot delete one without deleting the contents of the other. So, we continue to use both. Ah, the vagaries of a simple article like “the.” Yet, for Facebook and its connections, I am grateful.

PSV Vice Presidents continue to brainstorm activities. Members have stepped up to create stimulating online interactions, such as Jill Winkowski’s and Derek Kannemeyer’s Poem Sharing Group word prompts on Facebook. I encourage you to participate in that, as well as Catherine Fletcher’s event to celebrate Women in Translation Month. This is an excellent way to introduce people to foreign writers—just a one-minute reading each to whet your appetite. Through my recent, online searches (not to mention Seamus Heaney’s *Beowulf*), I have found translators to be loyal to the original, yet creative, choosing precise, exceptional words and rhythms for echoing, mimicry, and comprehension. I do not recall (yet) a single vanilla transliteration. If you’re like me, you’ll find yourself searching the original to grasp rhythms and patterns. Guidelines and info here: cafletcher@gmail.com.

I sometimes worry that we will become overwhelmed with poems and essays that repetitively echo news headlines: COVID-19, political unrest, racial tensions, global warming, #MeToo. But each time I read one, either by a member of our society or in a poetry journal, I am treated to a new perspective, turn of phrase, and so often, I experience awe and gratitude. In many ways, poetry is the antithesis of news. With tweezers, it plucks the core issue. With the eye of an artist, it paints perspective. With the snap of a shutter, it isolates word choice. We humans are individuals. Our poems reflect that while appealing to our shared humanity.

For that, I am grateful.



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LUISA IGLORIA: POET LAUREATE OF VIRGINIA!

Governor Ralph Northam has appointed Luisa A. Igloria as the 20th Poet Laureate of Virginia with a two year term from July 1, 2020, to June 30, 2022. Special guests at her inauguration included First Lady of Virginia, Pamela Northam; Outgoing Poet Laureate, Henry Hart; and Secretary of the Commonwealth, Kelly Thomasson. For an in-depth look at this renown poet, revisit Bill Gloss's article from the July PSV newsletter. Below is the note Luisa sent to the PSV Board:

Friends,

Thank you to those who were able to watch the [inauguration] program. The Secretary of the Commonwealth's office sent me this link to their recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DyW7VXMbHb0>.

I'm looking forward to doing good poetry work with you.

Luisa

CONGRATULATIONS TO
**LUISA A.
IGLORIA**
NEW
POET LAUREATE
OF VIRGINIA



NORTHERN VIRGINIA REPORT

CATHY HAILEY, VP

Hello from Northern Virginia!

Those of us in the northern region would like to congratulate **Luisa Igloria**, who was selected to follow Henry Hart as Poet Laureate of Virginia. We look forward to working with Luisa, and we're excited about her interest in a future project with youth poetry ambassadors. If you haven't seen the virtual swearing-in ceremony that took place Thursday, July 29, 2020, you can now watch it on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DyW7VXMbHb0>.

We'd also like to announce that Fairfax County has selected **Nicole Tong**, English Professor at Northern Virginia Community College, as its inaugural poet laureate. More details can be found at <https://www.nvcc.edu/news/featured-articles/fairfax-poet-laureate-2020.html>.

Mike Maggio's COVID-19 project at mikemaggio.net was a success. Mike would appreciate any increased traffic we can generate—clicks and donations are appreciated. The following PSV members were included:

Zeina Azzam	Mike McDermott
Linda Ankrah Dove	Anne Metcalf
John Dutton	Susan Notar
Katherine M. Gotthardt	Kathy Cable Smaltz
Lyman Grant	Sally Toner
Lynne Grossman	Jack Underhill
Cathy Hailey	Kim Drew Wright
Beth Simpson Huddleston	Sally Zakariya

Katherine E. Young's *Written in Arlington* anthology project continues to grow. Some of the poets—Holly Karapetkova, Aaron R., Katherine Gekker, Martha Sanchez-Lowery, Michael A. Schaffner, and Katherine E. Young—recorded their poems to present at 1455's 2nd Annual Summer Lit Fest. The reading is now available on YouTube and it is wonderful! Katherine has selected beautiful poetry to share and included other poets to read their own. Check it out:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n3C4hwD16xA&feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR2I8ZfV6W_dbz0K8y3EHiU_vKM8npAjMhYw5wtISI0ABiyxATEd6syN1iY

Written in Arlington/Spoken in Arlington is a print and digital collection of the poets and poems of Arlington, VA, edited by Katherine E. Young and published by Paycock Press (forthcoming, fall 2020). It is supported in part by Arlington County through the Arlington Cultural Affairs division of Arlington Economic Development and the Arlington Commission for the Arts. More information and a selection of poems from the anthology can be found here: <https://katherine-young-poet.com/written-in-arlington/>.

All of the 2nd Annual 1455 Festival's sessions are now available on YouTube at https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=2nD+ANNUAL+1455+summer+literary+festival.

In addition to the *Written in Arlington* segment, I watched *Tell My Story: Preserving the Memory of a Family Member*, hosted by Sean Murphy. The session description follows:

How do we honor a family member's life with our words? As writers we can keep our loved ones alive in memoir and poetry, but how do we maintain the integrity of their stories when their memories may be compromised or they are no longer with us? E. Ethelbert Miller (*Fathering Words*), Kirsten Porter (*A Family Apart*, upcoming), and Myra Sklarew (*Invitation to a Country Called Aging*) read from their books and discussed the delicate work of the writer in bringing to light issues on memory, aging, legacy, and the changing roles of family members who become care-takers. Special thanks to Sean Murphy (*Please Talk about Me When I'm Gone*) for serving as panel moderator.

Both were inspiring and got me thinking and writing immediately. And it was so great to spend time with these wonderful poets, even if it was on Zoom.

Member Individual Achievements

Congratulations to **Claudia Gary**, whose pandemic villanelle, "The Reopening" and "What's the Worst they Can Happen," written before the pandemic, are being published by editor George Simmers in *Snakeskin Poetry Webzine*.

Congratulations to **Katherine Gotthardt!** Her poems "Spring Thaw" and "Message" were selected for publication in *Under a Blushing Sky: Poems about New Beginnings* forthcoming this fall. Octo Consulting in Reston (**Katherine's** employer) donated funding to Rise Phoenix Rise, Inc., a mental health nonprofit, to provide free copies of her book *Get Happy, Dammit: Staying Inspired and Motivated in an Often-Unhappy World*. PR is here: <https://princewilliamliving.com/octo-supports-mental-health-programs-sponsors-motivational-book-written-by-employee/>. Finally, she won *InsideNova's* Best of Prince William Award in the category of Author for the second year in a row.

Congratulations to all those who were published in the *Virginia Bards Prince William Poetry Review*, including the following PSV members:

- John Dutton: "It Lurks Within," and "ABC Poem"
- Katherine Gotthardt: "The Fall," "Step," and "Statements of the Times"
- Cathy Hailey: "Elevator Pitch" and "All in a Morning's Reverie"
- Alice Mergler: "Before My Brother's Wake" and "The Candle and the Mirror"

The anthology is available at <https://www.localgemspetrypress.com/virginia-bards-prince-william-poetry-review-preorders.html>.

Congratulations to **Jacqueline Jules**, whose poem, "My Covid-19 Kitchen" on *Poetry Super Highway*: <https://www.poetrysuperhighway.com/psh/poetry-from-jacqueline-jules-and-rey-armenteros/> and whose poem "Soup in Isolation" were published in the *Gyroscope Review* summer 2020 issue. This poem is about making soup and thinking of all the lives lost to COVID-19. <https://www.gyroskopereview.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/GR-Issue-20-3-Summer-2020-Web.pdf#page=42>.

Congratulations to **JoAnn Lord Koff** whose poem, "Target On Your Back" will be published in *Gargoyle* in Issue #73, in May 2021, and whose poems "So" and "Spring Mountain" are being published by *Black Bough Poetry* in September 2020.

Congratulations to **Mike Maggio**, whose poem "Innominate" has been published in *North of Oxford*, Issue 5, The Pandemic.

Congratulations to **Katherine E. Young**, whose new collection of poetry, *Woman Drinking Absinthe*, is coming next spring from Alan Squire Publishing and whose translation of *Look at Him* by Anna Starobinets is forthcoming in September.

Upcoming (Virtual) Events

Sept. 11, 6:30 pm. **Spilled Ink East** Virtual reading hosted by John Dutton. Check Facebook at Spilled Ink (Virginia). Spilled Ink East takes place the second Friday of each month, and **Spilled Ink West** takes place the fourth Friday of each month. **Join** Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81108116410?pwd=M3Rac2JobGM5NTJwY2p0dFNGQW55Zz09>

Meeting ID: 811 0811 6410, Passcode: 187613

Lucinda Marshall provided this link for additional poetry events:

<https://diversepoetry.com/2020/06/02/dmv-summer-poetry-readings/>. Although the title includes summer, regularly scheduled events are included.

NORTH CENTRAL REGION REPORT

DAVID ANTHONY SAM, VP

PSV NC meets monthly on the third Saturday at 2 pm: business, sharing poetry, workshopping, and planning. We tentatively plan on an October festival, probably through Zoom.

EASTERN REGION REPORT

KATHLEEN DECKER, VP

Eastern Region Special Event

The PSV Eastern Region will host a special event on September 7th, 2020, ONLINE via Zoom.

- WHAT: Online LIVE poetry reading event
THEME: Labor, laborers, or if you're not inspired by that-any poem you'd like to share
WHEN: September 7th, 2020, 2-4pm
HOW? via Zoom
WHO? Eastern Region PSV members
HOW MANY? First-come, first-serve. Send Kathleen an email prior to September 7th.

Poets will read one poem (maximum length 50 lines) in order names are received by her. If time permits, a second poem may be read (so be ready with two) in the same order. I've reserved 2 hours for the meeting, but can extend it if desired.

Kathleen Decker, Eastern Region VP, is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: PSV Eastern Region Poetry Reading

Time: Sep 7, 2020 02:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

ZOOM LINK (paste into browser or click on blue link):

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86343082991?pwd=dDFSN3Z0aGFVMDh1dFpGZEVrZmM5UT09>

Meeting ID: 863 4308 2991

Passcode: 660257

CONTACT INFO: Kathleen Decker's email is: Sam.jones459@yahoo.com

CENTRAL REGION REPORT

JOANNA LEE, VP

No Central Region Society events planned at this time. Possibility of a "live" annual meeting is tenuous at this point.

Other community events happening virtually, open to all, regardless of location:

Monthly open mic (Charlottesville-based), now linked in with a global open mic network, with poets and performers all around the world participating locally, and opportunities for local poets to participate in virtual open mics based around the world.

Contact Patsy Asuncion (patasuncion@yahoo.com) for details/invite!

Weekly online critique (Richmond-based) via a closed Google group, through River City Poets, every Monday night. There is also a Monday night "social hour" to chat with fellow poets on Google Hangout (Meet). Poets are invited to attend either critique, social hour, or both! Contact joanna@rivercitypoets.com for details/invite.

River City Poets also holds a once-a-month open mic—a virtual version of their "Poetry and Jazz" on first Thursdays from 7-8:30pm on Google Meet. Details will be posted on their Facebook page ([@rivercitypoets](https://www.facebook.com/rivercitypoets)), or contact rivercitypoets@gmail.com for more info.

In-person events from the community: Poetry Grand Slam 2020, hosted by Writer's Den, will take place Monday, August 17 from 7 to 10pm at the HofGarden, 2818 West Broad St., Richmond. Tickets are \$10 and are available through Eventbrite.

Opportunities: Submission call/book giveaway from Circling Rivers Press (Richmond).

Poets are invited to submit an ekphrastic poem for publication on Circling Rivers' website as well as a free copy of Kenneth Pobo's ekphrastic work, *Loplop in a Red City*. Details at <http://circlingrivers.com/circling-rivers-news/>

News: The City of Richmond is in the early stages of creating a city Poet Laureate position. A committee has formed with literary stakeholders in the region invited to give feedback and weigh in. Nominations are expected to open late summer.

We are continuing local Richmond (River City Poets) events as online only and postponing any concrete plans for a PSV Central Region Annual Meeting.

SOUTH/WESTERN REGION REPORT

JERI ROGERS, VP

Artemis 2020 is our 27th published journal and includes poetry from 2 Virginia Poet Laureates, Ron Smith and Carolyn Kreiter-Foronda; a U.S. Poet Laureate, Nastasha Trethewey; acclaimed poet, Nikki Giovanni; and notable artists such as Betty Branch and Robert Sulkin. There are 170 contributors in this year's journal from our region, the Blue Ridge Mountains and beyond. We received over 500 submissions from as far away as Italy, Canada, and many states in the United States. The book sales have been affected by the Coronavirus, so we seek ways to further promote the journal virtually.

Our annual launch, which is held every year at the Roanoke Taubman Museum, was canceled and rescheduled for September 4. This will be a virtual live event featuring Poet Jeanne Larsen as our keynote speaker, along with video and audio readings of poetry from the 2020 journal. The event will also feature the museum show of works by Dorothy Gillespie who is also our cover artist for 2020 issue. www.artemisjournal.org Artemis. P.O. Box 505, Floyd, VA 24091.

Report of the Incident Called Festival on Little River

by Jack Callan

How did the Fifth Annual Little River Poetry Festival fit into a seam in the fabric of the nation's pandemic? Perhaps magic, and the month called June in a farm pasture. Where cold recedes and warmth intrudes, and you need two sets of clothes in the same day, and all around they're cuttin' hay and balin' for the angus beef herd. Our big white tent protected you from the sun, but you brought poems. Socially distanced chairs beckoned you to read everything you brought. Everyone came hungry. The sun shined and the rain was friendly. We fed stomachs and souls. We encouraged imagination and daring.

Magic people were Gina Woodfin, Lisa Kendrick, and Joanna Lee. New book presenters were Edith Blake with *New Beginnings*, Katherine Chantal with *Poetic Memoir Of A Nascent Senescent*, *Musings From My Sixties*, and two new books from Jack Callan, *Thunderstruck Poems* and *30 Plague*. The poet kayakers made the river rocks sing. The river was up and clear. In the end, we knew we were blessed. We had snuck one in and got out again.

So, we'll do it again next year, June 4-6, 2021, with an emphasis on our poets who travel to attend. They'll be featured on Friday and Saturday, and the local poets and musicians featured on "Floyd Poetry Sunday." As always, it costs just \$15 a day, and there are 5 open mics. We thank everyone who attended and those who weren't able to join us but still supported us financially. Our poets are great, and we're havin' fun.

From J. Scott Wilson

As the collection point for a good number of anthologies, let me say that I am pleased to see a number of Virginia poets are pulling out that poem that they wrote or always wanted to write about social justice, social conduct, political climate and the treatment of people. Many of you have always been afraid that no one wanted to hear or see that poem and I say to that fear ADDERCOP!! THRENODY!! (Tolkien reference) I sit next to a stack as tall as me of poems about trees and birdies and flowers. I could shred those and fill the furniture, stick them in the furnace and keep warm all winter, but they don't move the sluggish feet of society or government forward. I know that not everyone can stand on the street corner with a sign and a fist in the air, but I know that everyone can do SOMETHING, and one thing everyone in reach of my voice now can do is WRITE.

Observe, think on what you see, commit your thoughts and feelings to the page, share it someplace, rinse, repeat. One dear poet was concerned that maybe her submissions weren't good because she felt more like submitting political/social/edgy stuff (as opposed to pastoral). YES, you are more on target than you dreamt. Another way of looking at it: Flowers and bunnies and race relations and corrupt politics and grandmothers and confederate battle flags and favorite foods and the kindness of strangers and pandemics are all parts of this American life, and so any of it—all of it—deserves to fall out of your pens! Forward Poets! And someone hug that poet for me!



2020 Poetry Society of Virginia Student Contest Award Winners

And here is our list of winners! Because of website delays, and the COVID-19 school lockdowns, we are still working to reach them all. Contact Derek Kannemeyer: derekkannemeyer@gmail.com. Some of the winning poems will appear in the September issue of the newsletter; more will follow later.

Self-Portrait: Breath of Ghosts

Sabrina Guo, Syosset, NY

1st place, Jenkins Prize category, for students in grades 9-10

We never used our fireplace
until Hurricane Sandy
snapped the power lines.

Heavy rain and wind
whipped around
our dark house

as the night grew colder.
Our flashlights,
the steamy breath of ghosts

in the dead of winter.
My father's match
struck a stack

of miniature ebony logs
and turned them alight
like the bright orange

wings of a monarch butterfly,
the dark body of the room
made thicker.

Over the flame, we boiled water
and cooled it just long enough
to soak our feet—

calm ripples and soft circling
soothing us
as the night wind raged.

The house stayed
black, but I memorized
how many steps

the stairway held,
the exact height of each step.

Cotton in the Sky

Zoe Epstein, Newport News, VA

2nd place, Jenkins Prize category, for students in grades 9-10

Cotton in the sky—
Once white now gray,
Fills a blue basket.

Wind snakes through the trees,
Green leaves hiss,
Branches rattle.

Mother Nature conducts a song,
Trumpets echo up above,
Raindrops strum the plants below.

Lightning stabs the sky,
Colors of purple bleed out,
Cleaned by white cotton.

The Immigrant

Dana Serea, Rutherford, NJ

3rd place, Jenkins Prize category, for students in grades 9-10

He arrives to JFK, luggage and passport in hand. This is a new world, a river spiraling with millions of people, flowing into the ocean.

He sinks on the bottom of the Manhattan streets, dizzy from the blinding lights and deafening sounds. He's looking for a job, but doesn't know where to find it.

He walks into a grocery store, amazed by the hundreds of spices and brands of coffee.

He realizes he doesn't know how to ask for bread, for the bread aisle. He doesn't know

how to ask for anything. He doesn't know how to say bread. He uses his hands, trying

to communicate by pointing fingers. He feels helpless and ashamed. Where is the pain?

Bread in America is never the same as in Romania. Good bread is rare, and tastes like home

on the tongue. You can only find it in special bakeries, not in the supermarket.

But he doesn't know that yet. And after tasting good bread, you're thirsty for water,

but even the water is not the same. English is a wide river. He was thrown into it, and now he must endure the currents of language.

Each day he's drowning, gasping for air. He's alone in the most crowded body of water.

For him, Romanian is a gentle stream. In his old language, he has full control,

but not here. Not yet. I imagine him trying to navigate through this new life.

He doesn't know how to say, "How do I get home?"

He has a thick, incomprehensible accent, slowly floating in the rapids. He struggles to shape words in his mouth, rolling consonants on his tongue, choking on simple sounds, and learning how to get from pain to bread, from apato water.

At the evening school of English as a second language, he sits next to people from different continents, uttering WA-TUH, BR-EAD, like small children.

How does he start swimming? He first flings his arms, self-conscious and afraid

of being pulled under. Then, he discovers he can float, his feet rising to the surface.

He takes his first stroke, then the next, until he feels the flow of the waves carrying him.

He says slowly, "Nice to meet you."

WA-TUH. WA-TER. Water.

He's my father, swimming in the English language in the United States.

Claustrophobic

Arielle Kouyoumdjian, Herndon, VA

1st place, Poetry Society Prize category, for Virginia students in grades 6-8

I am caged beneath plaster and yellow paint.

Lungs squeezed like rain clouds,

Dry and shriveled as wool.

Stale, chained air trickles out of me and I try to yank it back.

Walls creep closer,

Darkness thrusts a hand into my ribs and removes a dripping heart.

The ceiling lowers, almost touches my pale face.

I reach for the window and grope for the sky,

Try to pull myself into the stars.

It is not enough.

How can people stand to see

The satin dome of the sky

Staked to the ground?

The sky is trapped in space,

Which is not very spacious.

What is beyond the cage?

I wonder how far I must go

To find the key and unlock each cage, jailed by a larger set of bars.

I crawl toward the window and my lungs begin to unfurl.

It seems that the first cage has opened.

Struggle

Alexandra Blake, Herndon, VA

2nd place, Poetry Society Prize category, for Virginia students in grades 6-8

Every day alone I cry

Alone and young I fear I'll die

The troubles I face every day

Are yet to finally go away

Come winter every year and then

I face my troubles once again

Struggle continued from page 10

The long night shadows stretch out long
 Wind whispering a solemn song
 The vertigo makes my head spin
 I feel the trees now closing in
 Lost in a matrix of daydreams
 Nihilism, cynicism, fantasy
 A million shattered fairytales
 Pierce bare feet fleeing on the trails
 Of desperation to be free
 From the fetters of bitter legacy.

You Will Be Ready

Alison Carballo-Medrano, Stafford, VA
3rd place, Poetry Society Prize category,
for Virginia students in grades 6-8

The future will form our present
 in the fullness of time.
 Don't hurry to blossom;
 don't worry about growing.
 Enjoy this moment;
 find out who you are.
 Wait and see,
 and when the time comes
 you will be ready.

The world won't be perfect;
 WE may not be perfect,
 but in the end
 Is there such a thing as perfect?
 When you go outside,
 obstacles will tear you down;
 remember to stand up again,
 and be proud.
 Wait and see,
 and when the time comes
 you will be ready.

It's now the time to take that step forward,
 don't be frightened,
 don't be scared,
 for you
 are now
 ready!

Cold Camouflage

Joseph Benjamin Brennan II, Richmond, VA
1st place, Virginia Student Prize,
for Virginia students in grades 11-12

The silence could be broken by the slightest movement.
 The sun slowly begins to set across the dark tree line,
 Leaving a bright orange glow above.

Alone with nature, leaves a calming feeling.
 Up in the pine-covered wooden blind amongst the trees,
 The scent reminds me of Christmas.

A clear view of the sunflower field directly in front of me.
 The once bright and lively flowers,
 Now slowly dying in the cool winter days

A piercing October wind chill flows across my body,
 But fails to penetrate my thick camouflage jacket and dark
 brown Carhartt pants.
 My hands wrapped around the frigid barrel; my fingers slowly
 begin to feel numb.

Time begins to run short as it has quickly faded.
 An 8 point buck crosses my line of sight.
 Head up, he gazes through the dying fields with a sense of confi-
 dence and pride.

I gather my thoughts and start to clear my head, delicately
 raising the barrel.
 A slow exhale calms my nerves.
 The stock rests against my shoulder.

I lock my eyes on to my target.
 Place my finger on the trigger,
 And then put the gun down.

Daydreams

Nancy Elizabeth Hopkins, Newport News, VA
2nd place, Virginia Student Prize,
for Virginia students in grades 11-12

I know that my mind does wander
 Somewhere between fantasy and reality.
 The unknown calls my mind to soar
 Into the morning's fiery glow.
 The wind whispers me warm welcome
 To rise and dance among the stars.
 My imagination swirls through cotton clouds
 Landing on the moon to gaze at sapphire skies.
 I met the river and felt its gentle mist in the dying embers of the day.
 Night fell like an obsidian curtain,
 Dotted with diamond stars lighting up the night.
 Nothing lasts forever as the constellations fade into mist
 Those stormy shadows fill my thoughts.
 Raindrops, like icy tears sting my face
 To wake me from my dreamy trance.

Erin Ferrare, Newport News, VA
3rd place, Virginia Student Prize,
for Virginia students in grades 11-12

*One day I wrote her name upon the strand,
 But came the waves and washed it away:*
 Edmund Spenser, Sonnet 75

One day I wrote her name upon the strand,
 But came the waves and washed it away;
 One day I carved her name into the oldest stone,
 But that too eroded away;
 One day I spelled her name in the snow,
 But the peaceful flurries buried it, never to be seen again;

We always said we'd last through all seasons,
 But that dream was washed away.
 We always said we'd stay strong,
 But we grew weak as time eroded.
 We always said we'd conquer all hardships,
 But our promise was buried.

And like the seasons, we both changed,
 But we will never repeat.
 We always thought we had nothing to fear,
 That we'd be together forever.
 But that woman we call Mother Nature has no mercy,
 For saints and sinners alike.

Sonnet: Rain Clouds

Cameron Barlow, Newport News, VA
2nd Honorable Mention, Virginia Student Prize,
for Virginia students in grades 11-12

*I know that I shall meet my fate
 Somewhere among the clouds above;*
 William Butler Yeats, "An Irish Airmen Foresees His Death"

I know that I shall meet my fate
 Somewhere among the clouds above;
 Seeing the glorious man above,
 But before I shall focus on my difficult task ahead,
 One that requires a lot of hard work and grief.
 The fate of time is inevitable,
 And thus shall put rain clouds over my loved ones.
 They must not fret though
 As they must make a legacy of their own,
 Making me smile down on them.
 They will meet their fate one day too
 Creating their own rain clouds,
 But until that fate is met
 They shall make the sun eliminate those rain clouds.

Again, congratulations, students!

Yellow Art

(A back to school poem)

by Mark Hudson

I take an art class with my French art professor, who went to the Royal Academy of Art in France.

He recently went to the Art Institute to see the Andy Warhol exhibit., and he was not impressed.

“I went to the Andy Warhol exhibit, and there was a bunch of Andy Warhol prints in a bin, and the paper had turned yellow from paper that was not archival.” he stated.

Sometimes he tells me to put more yellow in my painting.

Sometimes I go to vending machines, and get Doritos, and my paint-stained hands turn yellow from the Doritos.

My professor says, “Are you eating frog legs?” I look forward to the next class!



The Bell

by Emily Bilman

Geneva, Switzerland

Like tattered flags blown by a tempest
 Our link to the animal kingdom is severed
 By a greed-knife sharper than the sheath
 Meant to contain it. The virus that came
 Through bats imprisoned in iron cages
 Imprisons us, in turn. Corralled as if by water
 We have become as distant archipelagos
 Ignoring that each choking breath vanquishes us.
 Despite Donne’s warning that no man
 Is an island but part of the continent?
 We became as islands strayed on the main
 Unheeding the bell that would kill the bat
 Would kill us, too, unheeding of our reciprocal
 Breaths, unheeding that the bell tolls for us all.

Astute Study

by Jim Boucher

Queen Victoria
 Regal woman with moxie
 Century standard

Saxe-Coburg linkage
 Mother, Governess Lehzen
 Uncle Leopold

Restrained in childhood
 Mother directed her life
 Burst into Queendom

Towering monarch
 Though somewhat short in stature
 Ruled with high regard

As trusted mentor
 Lord M her early touchstone
 Her first choice of course

Wedded Prince Albert
 Yielded form simply for him
 Partner not subject

Consorted with Prince
 Their bedtime activities
 Were well rewarded

Success with children
 Princes and Princesses nine
 One to become King

The Crystal Palace
 Of the Great Exposition
 Presented progress

Tennyson, Dickens
 Hardy, Gaskell and Trollope
 Led British wordsmiths

Diamond Jubilee
 Colorful cheering reviews
 “Thanked beloved people”

Roused Britain to rise
 Prized sustainer in repose
 Poised domain to praise

POEMS

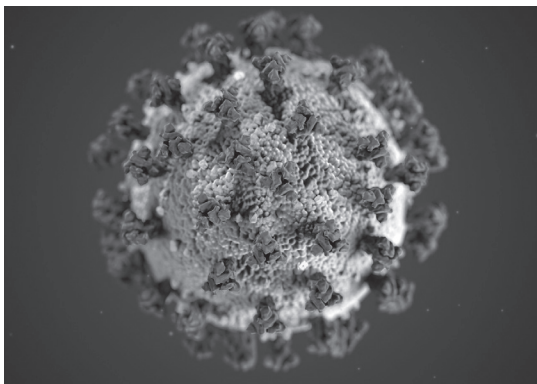
Some Days

by James Garrett

Some days he feels he is nothing more
than an average movie-goer,
finding a seat before the lights go off.
Other days the lights go off
as he opens the door.

Some days he enters as a newly blinded man,
hands not yet capable of sight,
stumbling down a narrowed path
playing connect-the-dots with the aisle lights.
Rows of seats wash across the darkness;
angry waves in an angry sea.

Some days as he sits
among the silhouetted heads,
he sips his bootleg Beaujolais
from a brown paper sack
groping for his role in this *cinema verite*.

**COVID-19**

by Vincent J. Tomeo

Fear overcame panicking residents.
There was a run on medical supplies,
hand sanitizers,
alcohol prep pads,
Lysol wipes,
antibacterial cleaners,
bleach,
N95 face masks,
surgical masks,
any masks.

The news media frightened the people.
Next,
Toilet paper, nonperishable foods/goods flew off shelves.
Everywhere, everyone, a sea of surgical masks walking down Main Street.
One man, wearing just one cup size C pink brazier
covering his face,
startling.

Unearth the Dusty Smell of Memories

by Barbara Drucker Smith

Unearth the dusty smell of
Muck, mire, sulphur, encrusted rocks
Oozing mud between my toes
Mud covered my body at the Dead Sea
Brine, eye stinging, pungent

Desert sand of Nevada
Archeological digs in Jerusalem
Mountain top towns of Portugal and Spain
Tibetan dirt road fifteen hundred feet above sea level

Hagashima volcanic eruptions
Cause cars to stay so dusty
That finger drawing shows up on the cars' surface

Dirt roads of Maui, Hawaii
En route to pineapple plantations

Mule trail going from rim of Grand Canyon
To Yellow River at the bottom
Mule hide blocks my vision going down

All of the above including
The camel walking near the Pyramid in Egypt
Unearth the dusty smell of memories

Reflections on Covid-19

by Nancy C. Allen

Passing a building with a sky view mural of the sun
and the word "hopeful" salmon-hued beneath the sun.
My thoughts quicken towards the coronavirus, the pandemic
that crossed the walls of many horizons and silently laid bare
the global land.
How shall I forget the might of this pandemic?
Yet, it taught me my place in the scheme of little things like
finding peace in the word "hopeful" and the true meaning
of everything that gathers around that hope.
When I see the sky stained with the magnificent hues of sunrise,
it brings my mind peacefully home with renewed purpose in the
presence of the Covid-19.
While life moves me forward,
may the sunrise be the province of hope
and hope be as enduring as the sunrise itself,
shining with a special glow that never fades away.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The **Saturday Poetry Series** has been cancelled through the end of this year. Organizers hope that these meetings can resume in January.

Venue on 35th Monday Night Open Mic is held on Monday nights at 7:30 Zoom. Please come in around 7pm to make sure you get in. Contact the host, Jorge Mendez, during the day to secure a slot via Facebook: Jorge Mendez. Mention Venue on 35th in your search.

Richmond's Poetry and Jazz Tasting is the 1st Thursday of each month. Contact Joanna Lee to see if they are virtual and find out how to get your spot at joanna@rivercitypoets.com

Richmond also has a poetry **writing/critique group** almost every Monday at 6:30 that is virtual until such time as their cafe homes open up... also write Joanna at joanna@rivercitypoets.com

For **Richmond's Poetry Social Hour**, contact Joanna Lee to see if they are virtual and find out how to get your spot at joanna@rivercitypoets.com.

Busboys & Poets on Instagram @busboysandpoets (ask about other formats, has been done on Zoom, too). Every Mon., Weds., and Fri. (usually \$5) www.busboysandpoets.com.

CIPHERTuesdays is held on Tuesday nights at 8/8:30. Please contact Qinton Jennings-Sherman on Facebook. He also goes by Q5 at #Q5TV May involve a \$5 donation.

Spilled Ink East (Northern Region) takes place the 2nd Friday of each month.

Spilled Ink West takes place on the 4th Friday of each month.

Charlottesville Open Mic takes place on 4th Weds. each month. Contact Patsy Asuncion for exact time and for the way in.

WHAT: **Fourth Friday Poetry**

WHEN: Fridays at 7-9 p.m.

WHERE: Jack Callan's home, 2931 Somme Avenue, Norfolk, VA 23509

WHY: Because our souls hunger for company.

EVERYONE MUST WEAR A MASK.

EVERYONE MUST WEAR A MASK (*thought that was worth repeating*).

Fifteen years ago, Fourth Friday Poetry moved from a bookstore to meet in Jack Callan's home in Norfolk. The first readings were held in his backyard around a fire. This month's gathering will return to that format to provide safe distancing from one another while still allowing everyone to gather. Attendees will enter the backyard through a side gate. To enter the house to use the bathroom, you must have a mask and GLOVES. Please bring your own refreshments, snacks, mosquito repellent, and poems. All poetry is welcome.

WELCOME NEW MEMBER Christian Pascale! Chris recently finished his second book, *The Windows of Heaven*, which should go to the editor in September. He currently puts one poem per month on his website: christianpascale.com. Chris lives in Williamsburg, Virginia, where he participates in a local writing group.

757 Perspectives Vol. IV: Our Decameron Days

- Please do not consider this strictly a volume of poetry, for it will be so much more and will be carefully stitched together to make much more of an experience. Ostensibly the deadline will be September 15, 2020, but may be extended if the possibility of a resurgence appears in the fall. These are but ideas, wheel greasers, or provocations:
- Any poetry or stories or lyrics written during this period that you think would entertain
- Comedy observations or routines about COVID-19 or life under lockdown or things seen during the time
- Poems about the disease itself, spreading the disease, steps to not spread the disease, finding a cure, being at war with the disease, being in lockdown
- Family and friend's tales of being locked down, discussion of the "new normal," any tales that might draw similarities to life during wartime being similar
- Stories written during lockdown
- What are some things you thought you'd never see or have to do?

If you write about someone who suffered from or died of COVID, please let it be the story of a family member or CLOSE association and please let it be tastefully done – this is a chance to offer the latter a kind memorial or renown over the toils and survival of the former.

To submit to this please attach what you have created to an email named Decameron to J. Scott Wilson at HRAcandWPP@outlook.com. Contributions to Our Decameron Days are seen as donations and cost donors nothing except permission to publish their work. It was suggested that ODD consider including weblinks, but it is a print book. ALL THE SAME, if artists wish to contribute brief comedy routines or songs that match the themes of this volume, they may store them on the web and provide a short link (but please include some text, like lyrics, that can stand by the link). Long links can be reduced by going to TinyURL.com. If you do provide such a link, please also assure us that it will be online and maintained for at least 4 years from submission date—the web is such a fluid place, but print on paper is intended for forever. Please consider 4 pages typed a good limit though slightly larger may be considered.

MEMBER NEWS

Janice (Jan) Hoffman announces that the Indiana Arts Commission selected three of her poems—“Pan’s Shadow,” “Night Cravings,” and “Unbound”—for its inaugural poetry archive, *INVerse*, which will be released this fall. Also, her poem “Morning Tea” was part of Mike Maggio’s COVID-19 project.

Joan Mazza’s poem “Ephemera” appears in the current print edition of *Poet Lore* and her sonnet “Omitted” in *The Literary Nest*: <https://theliterarynest.com/issues/vol-6-issue-2/joan-mazza/>. Her poem “Part of the Landscape” has been accepted for James Crews’s new anthology, *How to Love the World: Poems of Gratitude and Hope*, to be published by Storey Publishing in April 2021. She also had four recent poems published at *Beltway Poetry Quarterly*-- responding to Art In Times of Crises, 2020; her poem “Demon Sperm” is published at *New Verse News*; and *Poethead* has featured five of her poems.

Barbara Drucker Smith recently released her book, *A Brush With the Famous*, where she shares her encounters with celebrities. She met Maya Angelo on different occasions, mostly at Hampton University, along with many other people, such as Bunky the Clown, Paul Newman, Bruce Hornsby, Authur Schlessinger, Art Linkletter, Charles Thomas Cacye, Deepak Chopra, and others. Available at Barnes & Noble and Amazon.

Frederick Wilbur’s second poetry collection, *Conjugation of Perhaps*, will soon be published by Main Street Rag Publications. Please go to <http://mainstreetragbookstore.com> to purchase pre-publication copies. Fellow poets Bill Glose, Carolyn Kreiter-Foronda, and Neil Perry write testimonials.

CONTRIBUTORS

Nancy C. Allen’s poem “Reflections on Covid-19” is a response to the coronavirus pandemic and the moments of writing that uplifted her spirit during a time of adversity.

Dr. Emily Bilman is London’s Poetry Society Stanza representative in Geneva, Switzerland. Her doctoral dissertation, *The Psychodynamics of Poetry: Poetic Virtuality and Oedipal Sublimation in the Poetry of T.S. Eliot and Paul Valéry*, was published by Lambert, and her poetry books—*A Woman By A Well* (2015), *Resilience* (2015), and *The Threshold of Broken Waters* (2018)—were published by Troubador. Poems were published in *The London Magazine*, *Poetry Salzburg Review*, *San Antonio Review*, and others. She blogs on <http://www.emiliebilman.wix.com/emily-bilman>

Jim Boucher is a new member of PSV. He has a wish for an alternative life spanning the last 30 years of the 19th century and the first 30 years of the 20th century. He is an avid fan of such notables as Queen Victoria, suffragette Elizabeth Cady Stanton, President Teddy Roosevelt, and pitcher Babe Ruth, and would love to have seen his mom and dad as children. Jim resides in Burke, Virginia, and is currently a regular attendee at Spilled Ink West.

Jack Callan is an award-winning builder and artist who, in his own words, has won nothing as a poet. He co-hosts poetry in his house, poetry at the Chrysler Museum, and the Little River Poetry Festival. Jack was last seen reading from his notebook to a herd of whitetail deer.

Jim Garrett is a retired high school English teacher. He is a member of the James-York Poets and lives in Williamsburg.

Mark Hudson is a poet and artist, and like the poem indicates, he takes art classes at Evanston Art Center. This summer, he took an *en plein air* art class with his professor and painted outdoors by Lovelace Park, near where he grew up, and Lake Michigan. He thinks it is important to keep writing in stressful days such as these. Mark resides in Evanston, Illinois, outside Chicago.

Vincent J. Tomeo was born and raised in Corona, Queens, NYC, and has lived there his entire life. He is a poet, archivist, historian, and community activist. For 36 years, he taught American history at a New York City public high school, and he has volunteered at the 9/11 Tribute Center Museum at Ground Zero. “COVID-19” previously appears in *Juniper Berry Magazine*, and his book *My Cemetery Friends* (Atmosphere Press, 2020) is a celebration of life. Contact him via his blog: vincentjtomeo.com.

J. Scott Wilson serves as membership chair for PSV and edits both *Poets’ Domain* and *757 Perspectives Vol. IV: Our Decameron Days*. Contact him via HRACandWPP@outlook.com.

The **Student Winners** featured in this month’s newsletter are from our annual contest this year. The second half of the set will appear in our November issue.

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS: Please send articles, announcements, and poetry to share with your fellow PSV members. Your work may be unpublished or previously published, but if necessary, don’t forget to include an acknowledgement. Remember to include a brief bio for the Contributors’ page, and keep work apolitical and family friendly. Please send to janhoffpoetry@gmail.com. The deadline for November newsletter (which will be the next newsletter) is October 15.

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