

A COMMON WEALTH OF POETRY

Newsletter of the Poetry Society of Virginia ♦ November 2020

A LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Important announcement 1: We need a treasurer!

Important announcement 2: We need a contest chair/co-chair for our annual poetry contest! Contact me at tcoxjoseph@gmail.com if you are interested.

Important announcement 3: We have a webmaster! Josh Kookan from Poquoson.

Important announcement 4: The PSV North American Book Award is open for submissions. Check out our website at <https://poetrysocietyofvirginia.org/> or contact Sofia Starnes at Smstarnes@cox.net if interested.

Important announcement 5: American poet Louise Glück has won the Nobel Prize in Literature. Yes, I said *poet*. It can be done!

Important announcement 6: The Poetry Society of Virginia has received a \$5,000 Virginia Literary Arts Emergency Fund grant. Thank you for your suggestion and assistance, Catherine Fletcher! Much of the funding will go toward website development. Some will go toward publishing last year's contest winners. And the rest will go toward publicity and honorariums for upcoming presenters.

Like many of you fellow-poets, I scan my emails and check my Submittable account almost daily in the hopes of spotting an acceptance. We cannot be published unless we cast our work far and wide. Acceptances and awards are often few and far-between. But one place that is always welcoming, and which provides a higher statistical chance that you will place or win, is the Poetry Society of Virginia Annual Contest. I have loved reading through the categories and figuring out which were the most in line with my interests and which I should enter just to challenge myself to write a new poem.

I loved sending poems to those contests, but as president, I can no longer enter. The rules were changed this year to disallow any member of the executive board from entering. But you can! By the time this newsletter is published, the contest rules and website links should be available. Deadline, as always, is Edgar Allan Poe's birthday, January 19, 2021.

Terry Cox-Joseph



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NORTHERN VIRGINIA REPORT

CATHY HAILEY, VP

Hello from Northern Virginia!

It has already been a season of festivals--The National Book Festival has passed, but sessions are still available online. Rita Dove and Joy Harjo presented Poets Laureate on Connection, a wonderful discussion that begins when these acclaimed poets met at the Iowa Workshop. Joy Harjo also presents Fearless Women where you can hear her discuss memory and read her poem, "Running," from *An American Sunrise*. You can access more poetry sessions on the Poetry & Prose Stage.

Because of Covid-19, Poetry Out Loud has also made changes this year. Schools only need two participants to register, and students not supported by school registrations can register individually. Tell your high school friends and relatives and any teachers of high school students. It's a wonderful recitation program that helps spread the love of poetry.

On the subject of students, we are finalizing the details of the PSV student contest, and we'd like to form a committee including representatives all over the state that would help us get the word out. If you have a connection with high school and grade school students and/or teachers, please email me and help spread the word. We are still looking for a co-chairperson for the student contest, and there are other student-oriented initiatives we'd like to organize. If you know others who fit these criteria, please nominate them or email them and ask if they can help.

October Plaudits

Congratulations to **Zeina Azzam**, whose poem, "Potomac River," is part of an online exhibition titled "Speak Your Truth" at Alexandria's Athenaeum gallery. The visual art and poetry show runs from Oct. 1 to Dec. 1, 2020.

Congratulations to **Eric Forsbergh**, whose poem "On a Walk" was published in the summer 2020 issue of *Canary Literary Magazine*: <https://canarylittmag.org/>.

Congratulations to **Jacqueline Jules**, whose poem "Ice Cream Truck" was published in the New Verse News: <https://newversenews.blogspot.com/2020/09/ice-cream-truck.html>.

Congratulations to **JoAnn Lord Koff**, whose poem "Aeolus" will be published by Green Ink Poetry in *Safeguard - Part I*. Also, *Northern Virginia Poetry* will be publishing "Santorini Dreaming."

Congratulations to **Rebecca Leet**, whose poem "Tea and the Transfer of Random Energy" was published in the summer 2020 issue of *Canary Literary Magazine*: <https://canarylittmag.org/>.

Congratulations to **Mike Maggio**, whose new book of poetry, *Let's Call It Paradise*, has been accepted for publication by San Francisco Bay Press. Visit his website, www.mikemaggio.net, in the coming days for a preview.

Congratulations to **Farin Powell**, whose poetry collection of 60 poems, *Life is Good: A Book of Poetry*, was published in January: <https://www.farinpowellbooks.com/>. Her novel, *The Mother*, was also released in 2020.

Congratulations to **Katherine E. Young**, known for poetry and translation, whose translation from the Russian of Anna Starobinets' memoir, *Look at Him*, was published September 15 by Three String Books/Slavica. See <https://katherine-young-poet.com/anna-starobinets/> for details.

Events (mostly virtual)

Nov. 2, 7:30 pm. Cafe Muse online will feature poets **Michael Davis** and **Beth Konkoski** and classical guitar by Michael C. Davis set to a slideshow by Henry Crawford. For a Zoom link, use the sign-up form below. To receive the Zoom link for the event, sign up via <https://sites.google.com/view/cafe-muse-events/home>.

Nov. 6, 7:00 pm. Spilled Ink, hosted by **John Dutton**, will meet via Zoom. See <https://www.facebook.com/groups/SpilledInkVA> for details.

Nov. 7, 9:00 am-4:00 pm. Virtual Rappahannock Writers Conference presents a whole day of writing sessions, but one special poetry session features member poets: 1:15-2:15 pm. Poetry in a Plague Year Presented by **David Anthony Sam**, **Elizabeth Spencer Spragins**, and **Kathy Smaltz**. Poets David Anthony Sam, Kathy Smaltz, and Elizabeth Spencer Spragins will discuss the consolations of poetry and contours of the creative journey. The panelists will share their strategies for overcoming the challenge of a blank page and embarking on the path to publication. Submitting poetry to journals, finding a traditional book publisher, and handling rejection are key components of the poetic life.

Nov. 8, 2:00 pm-3:30 pm. A Splendid Wake is an online event to celebrate the history of poetry in the nation's capital. Miles David Moore will discuss the history of the IOTA Poetry Reading Series. Register <https://tinyurl.com/y2449vf7>. The Zoom link is <https://umd.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJUof-uorjgoHtzgLA41imoGNGZMpsnJiWG1>.

Nov. 12, 7:00 pm. Readings on the Pike features readers Naomi Raquel Enright, Shannon McLeod, Tara Isabel Zambrano, and others. Join via Zoom: See <https://www.facebook.com/groups/readingsonthepike> for details.

All the Best,

Cathy Hailey
haileycp@gmail.com

NORTH CENTRAL REGION REPORT

DAVID ANTHONY SAM, VP

The October Poetry Festival was held via Zoom on October 29.

Because there is no current VP for the Northwest Region, members of that region have been included in meetings of and communications from the North Central Region. Monthly meetings are held via Zoom on the third Saturday at 2 p.m. Use this link:

David Anthony Sam is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: PSV NC Zoom Meeting

Time: This is a recurring meeting Meet anytime

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/71115907625?pwd=b2VXbGU5emo0dHg0SHQzL3dkamdVZz09>

Meeting ID: 711 1590 7625

Passcode: 8NQLgN

NORTHWEST REGION REPORT

POSITION VACANT

Because there is no current VP for the Northwest Region, members of that region have been included in meetings of and communications from the North Central Region (see above).

If you are interested in serving poets in your region, please contact Terry Cox-Joseph at tcoxjoseph@aol.com.

EASTERN REGION REPORT

KATHLEEN DECKER, VP

The Eastern region has been maintaining contact with members in a variety of ways. Some groups have been sending email chains of poetry and critiques to each other biweekly, such as the Williamsburg a poetry Guild. Others have been utilizing Zoom meeting, such as the PSV Labor Day reading. Eastern region will sponsor another virtual poetry meeting on Monday, November 30th. Poets are invited to submit two poems on the theme of "Holidays" to Kathleen Decker, Eastern Region VP at Sam.Jones459@yahoo.com. The first 15 poets to submit work will present. To view the (2020) Labor Day reading, go to YouTube, and type: Poetry Society of Virginia Labor Day Reading.

On October 21, 2020 at 5pm, Virginia will be honored to hear a presentation by Poet Laureate Emeritus Tracy K. Smith in the "Lift Every Voice" series. Here is the Zoom link. Registration is required.

https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZltfuigqT4vGNKNOsZeM_DYsTwp8bsdPOd2

SOUTHEASTERN REGION

KINDRA MCDONALD, VP

As the weather cools and leaves begin to change, some things are still stagnant. We try to find silver linings wherever we can, and while we are still not holding in-person gatherings, there is no shortage of ways to connect virtually and share poetry. Haven't you found poetry more relevant than ever?

The Muse Writers Center in Norfolk has opened its fall class schedule for many craft poetry classes and has resumed Wednesday Happy Hours (virtually). It is also holding the following virtual events: Nov. 12th at 7:30 – The Word Online a virtual storytelling event for poets and other writers. Find more info on classes and events at www.the-muse.org

The Venue on 35th continues to provide open mic opportunities every Monday night through Zoom. Find them on social media @thevenueon35th.

Finally, we continue to collect poems honoring our late PSV president, Jeff Hewitt, for an anthology. Please send your poems and tributes for Jeff to the following email: wearevastathology@gmail.com.

Keep writing! Words connect us, and as Pablo Neruda wrote, "Poetry is an act of peace."

CENTRAL REGION REPORT

JOANNA LEE, VP

Greetings from the PSV's Central Region!

Concrete plans for an annual meeting remain elusive as COVID deterrents make live gatherings a no-go for many. Poetry is alive and well in the region; however, as local groups and communities take advantage of the cooler temps to mix open air events with their virtual activities. 4th Wednesday Zoom open mics hosted by Charlottesville-based Patricia Asuncion continue into the fall with performers from all over the country tuning in.

Richmond's River City Poets currently holds two in-person, open air, open mics monthly, as well as its virtual first Thursday Poetry & Jazz. In the spirit of the season, RCP also held a poetically inspired walk through Hollywood Cemetery mid-October. Online critiques meanwhile continue on the second and fourth Mondays of every month. Contact <http://rvapoetlaureate.org/> <http://rvapoetlaureate.org/>, or call (804) 240-4565 for more information.

Applications for Richmond's first-ever Poet Laureate will be accepted through Nov. 5 (<http://rvapoetlaureate.org/>).

Don't forget that the playlists for the Fall 2020 virtual Bridgewater International Poetry Festival (hosted by Bridgewater College, on the border of the Central and Northwest Regions) will go live on YouTube Nov. 16-17, with performances by poets from Virginia and all over the world.

All PSV members are welcome to join in any of the community events above. Get in touch and we'll connect you!

WESTERN REGION REPORT

JERI ROGERS, VP

We are pleased to announce that Jeri Rogers has accepted the position of VP for the Western Region. If you have information for your region or would like to contact her, Jeri can be reached at Artemisjournal@gmail.com.

POEMS

Mouth of Sand

by Bill Glose

Outside our tents,
wind-whipped brown
lances every sliver
of exposed skin.

Canvas walls billow
like gasping lungs as we spit
gouts of sand-flecked phlegm
and listen to a low-pitched keening

like the moaning of a bassoon.
Truth is like the scouring grit
of wind, precious lies stripped away
to leave one naked

as a newborn calf. Sand inside
our goggles, our gloves, our underwear,
the interior mechanisms of our guns,
bolts cracked open to reveal
powder as fine as regolith
scooped from the moon, a surface
without atmosphere, without sound.
Every granule loves to tell the story

of how it once belonged to a mountain,
before the pulverizing sledge of time,
before the yowl of wind eroded
every falsehood to which it clung.

A Tale for Thanksgiving

by Mark Hudson

Thanksgiving fell upon the sleepy town,
the clouds drifted above the ground.
The sun appeared between the clouds,
a family got together, quite proud.
Christopher and Jonathon opened wide
the window to look outside.
The sun shone right through the glass,
Thanksgiving week there was no class.

Home for the holidays, food on the stove,
stuffing in pans, Uncle Ed drove.
Grandpa is there in his rocking chair,
he fell asleep, snoring like a bear.
Grandma wakes him up with hot cocoa,
in the winter they're going to Acapulco.

Here comes the gravy in a giant pot,
here come the kids, a bunch of tots.
And who comes knocking on the door,
the man down the street they tend to ignore,
He always asks to shovel the snow,
now he's here with nowhere to go.

He has a sad look on his face,
he has no family, no home or a place.
Without a second thought, they let him in,
he feels the kindness, his face has a grin.

He has a place to eat, and then it turns dark,
the sun is gone, the snowstorm is stark.
All around the laughter can be heard,
as they all eat a slice of the bird.

POEMS

Soup in Isolation*by Jacqueline Jules*

I chop celery and potatoes,
 thinking of how I was sliced
 into tiny pieces five years ago
 when you became a silent presence
 in my life, someone I recall
 throughout the day in little bits
 like these vegetables
 dismembered on my cutting board.

The soup seasoned this morning
 wafts through the house all day,
 with your absence, always in my nostrils.

Garlic and bay leaf intensify my grief
 as a virus rages around the globe
 and I mourn for thousands upon thousands
 of spouses, siblings, parents, children
 who will sit down, as I do, at a table
 missing a chair no one else can fill.

Pay Your Damned PSV Dues*by James Wilson*

Speaking of reminders:

Spring will come
 flowers will bloom again

thunder clouds will continue to roll across green hills and
 choose to stab out at some town and
 skip over others -- only to
 play the vice versa game again next time.

We will have poetry events again, moreso
 we shall need them, but
 they will come.

We will play the told-you-so and the
 this-too-shall-pass games soon enough. The
 wait is hard,
 thinking
 it won't come is unthinkable.

**2020 Poetry Society of Virginia Student Contest Award Winners**

Here is our list of the rest of this year's student 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. Previous winning poems appeared in the September issue of the newsletter.

Cheddar Cheese**Kate Greene, Smithfield, Kate Greene, Smithfield, VA****1st place, S1 category, for students in grades 3-4****(see also <https://www.smithfieldtimes.com/2020/09/01/local-girls-publish-poems/>)**

It's really gooey, sometimes chewy
 Put it on anything you please
 In your mouth it goes ka-bluey
 The flavor brings you to your knees

The powerful, tangy aftertaste
 Is always just the same
 And if you bought me a thousand
 You wouldn't be to blame

On a sandwich, on some toast
 My favorite dairy I will boast
 Make it, buy it, eat it, try it
 The texture you just can't deny it

Don't make me say it again
 This poem really needs to end
 I searched the seven seas

To find my precious darling: cheddar cheese

Popcorn Clouds**Robin Denehan, Allenwood Village, County Kildare, Ireland****2nd place, S1 category, for students in grades 3-4**

Up ahead I saw popcorn in the air
 it was just like clouds
 I was with my Dad

the sky was blue
 the popcorn was in it
 we were so happy

we were in the car driving
 to my Grandad
 because he was lonely

it felt like we were with him
 because the clouds were hanging
 over his house

Accept Me**Isabella Keeling, Miami, FL****1st place, S2 category, for students in grades 5-6**

I found out who I am.
 And I'm no different from you-
 What I have done to you, for you not to love me the same?
 I'm sorry.
 I'm sorry I didn't turn out like her.
 I'm sorry you didn't get what you wanted.
 But I am not sorry for being gay.

Accept the colors that have wrapped around me,
 The spark of happiness I've gotten,
 The rush of gold that has hit me,
 The wave of gayness that has come over me,
 Don't be the blade that cuts it all into pieces,
 the poison in the apple,
 Don't ruin me!

I want to run down the rainbow street in Ocean Drive,
 Sing with the drag queens that are standing stunning in their wigs and makeup,
 Run towards the sea with the gay flag wrapped around me with the sand burning my feet.

I'm distracted by the melody and beats that make my hips sway,
 That one harmony that pulls me away,
 Away into a world where I just don't care.
 The symphony stops, snapping me back into reality.
 Leaving me wishing that I could hear that last key.

You wonder why I don't talk to you,
 I'm not as blind as you think-
 I can clearly see the hate that you have for me.

A Violinist's Evolution**Ruth Burchstead, Edgecomb, ME****1st place, S3 category, for students in grades 7-8**

I.
 As a five year old I bounce in place,
 my small violin snug
 under my chin,
 the bow gripped in my little fingers.

My feet are rooted to the copper pennies
 on the faded yellow rug—
 my reward for standing still,
 the excitement of learning to play
 hard to contain.

My teacher, Ellen, perches
 on the green cushion
 of an old wooden chair.
 Her chin-length gray hair threatens
 to leave its place, tucked behind her ears
 as she patiently helps
 guide my bow
 across the A string.

She talks me through the rhythm
 of *Stop, pony—Stop, pony*,
 then praises my screechy response.

The small violin's off key
 Stop, pony— stop, pony
 is only the beginning.

II.
 At eight years old, I stand
 in our living room
 on a faded green rug
 with coral flowers sprawled across it,
 wooden blocks scattered around
 my gold high heels.

My mom sits on our gray couch
 in front of me—tea mug in hand.
 "Remember, Ruth, Ellen wants you
 to practice part one of 'Etude' five times,"
 she directs, and I nod in response,
 slowly working through
 the part on my 3/4 size violin.
 The gold heels
 tap along to the music.
 I feel confident in what I know.

III.
 Now I stand in my room as a cold fall wind
 blows through my open window.
 My full- sized violin rests under my chin
 while I guide the bow across the strings,
 and my fingers follow
 as I play a part of "Bourrée"
 over and over
 until my fingers dance across the strings,
 and the notes float into my room—
 finally—
 with no mistakes.

I Am Not Alive**Artiana Blake, Herndon, VA****2nd place, S2 category, for students in grades 5-6**

I fly through the air,
 The wind in my hair,
 But I simply cannot feel glee.
 I can survive,
 I just can't thrive,
 Am I living sufficiently?

Sleep, work and eat,
 Then I repeat,
 Am I supposed to have fun?
 I'm not saying I'm mad,
 And I'm sure I'm not sad,
 I'm just getting this stuff done.

I don't need to feel,
 I just need what's real,
 Don't mind me I'm lifeless.
 Some call me a robot,
 I won't say that I'm not,
 At least I'm not useless.

I've never smiled, frowned, laughed or cried,
 Never freaked out, panicked or crumpled inside.
 I am not alive,
 I just survive.



The Mountains Are For Me**Jed Toews, Jamesport, MO****2nd HM, S3 category, for students in grades 7-8**

The Mountains Are For Me
 Jed Toews, Jamesport, MO
 2nd HM, S3 category, for students in grades 7-8

You say you like the city for the noise-
 the sirens, the music, the cars-
 but the mountains with noise are filled:
 elk bugle, wolves howl, panthers scream.
 The mountains are for me.

You say you like the prairie for the sky-
 the wide, beautiful sky, the bright blue sky.
 The mountains are in the sky.
 The air is free and light, so free and light.
 The mountains are for me.

You say you like the valley for the solitude,
 the only sound your footsteps.
 Real solitude is in the mountains.
 The most you hear is wind in the evergreens.
 The mountains are for me.
 finally—
 with no mistakes.

Afterlife**Sabrina Guo, Syosset, NY****1st place, S4 category, for students in grades 9-10**

On Tomb Sweeping Day,
 the one-hundred and sixth day
 of the Chinese lunar calendar,
 we sweep the tombstones of ancestors
 and line them with chrysanthemums,
 pay over two thousand Yuan
 for paper palaces, bicycles, laptops,
 iPhones, chandeliers,
 cruise ships, and Great Danes.

In Chinese, the word for filial piety
 is Xiào shùn (孝順)
 and our gifts to our ancestors
 are dutiful offerings of protection,
 like the ozone giving itself up
 to absorb the heat of the sun,
 a new cornea shielding its ancient eye
 from further wound, present sight
 and aged wisdom seeking always
 to embrace as one.

At the tombstones, we burn our joss sticks,
 our ghost money and papier-mâché
 for the dead, fire's black shadows flicking
 by our feet, a serpent's tongue hissing
 debts of the Afterlife—there,
 in the flame's yellow tendrils, billowing
 like coins spilling from broken pockets
 of Shangdi, God of Heaven and all things.

Gaia**Alexandra La Civita, Midlothian, VA****1st Honorable Mention, S4 category, for students in grades 9-10**

We owe Mother Earth our thanks
 For her patience with the plague upon her surface
 For her generosity, her willingness to allow us a life on her body
 She gives us the air in our lungs and the treats on our tongues
 She gifts to use the beauty of nature, its' bright colors and glistening
 waves and swaying forests
 The Earth gifts us herself, her body where we lay our houses and our
 factories of death and our radioactive disasters down upon

Mother Earth gifts to us everything we see, from the trees to the birds
 to the atmosphere above
 She deserves the neverending entirety of the universe and more
 for her sacrifices
 For her oceans, her mountains; her rolling hills and fresh grass;
 her morning sky and her twinkling midnight
 She gifted to us the possibility of life
 Please thank the Earth today



2020 Poetry Society of Virginia Student Contest Award Winners continued from Page 7

Home

Abigail Lyman, Kenner, LA

2nd place, S5 category, for students in grades 11-12

Overnight fresh feathers have veiled sled lanes, dirt stains, bootprints,
restored snowbanks ridging our buckled sidewalk to powder-soft Everest
(relentless impediment to driveway, herald of knifewind that freezes milk jug
in trunk,
freezes gas in tank, bone-marrow and wind-tears on eyelashes).
Our warm youth conquers this new landscape half-hour at a time
(or winter would seep through seal-puffy coats,
nestle next to skin, gift us with shivers, sniffles, frostbite).

We've sculpted a house of nooks, fashioned haphazard furniture
into which we angle ourselves, rest wedged and cozy in cold.
We've scooped out a cellar seeded with sunflower shells scraped from snow
under bird feeder.

We quest for treasure:
gutter drips knobby crystals that clink and meld to translucent pool of ice.
We pry them to sparkle in the dimness of mitten-dug cranny.

In this house hummocks trip the upright.
We clamber hands and feet, test with a boot-tip for the treacherous give
of still-loose snowflakes that will sink knee-deep under heel –
snow-cloak belies uneven layers:
surface lace-drift snugs tight like wet sand, packs to burdened shoulder of ice.

A house of inconveniences:
scarf muffles up to eyes, traps breath, pastes damp hair to cheek,
slips with every tilt of jaw until we peel the soaked fleece
and grin in stinging ecstasy of raw air bruising lips blue –
nose again then through hair and coat collar zipped to chin,
press into buffering scarf that scrapes frozen wet against numb mouth.
Chill has bruised to bone.
We tilt faces to languid touch of sun.

Mom is calling; we shuffle back.
Heater-breath melts crystal-stiff fingers, toes, clothes;
we peel mittens, snow crammed clammy between sleeve and wrist,
shake out boots, anklet of slush puddles on the laundry-room rug.
We settle back into the hot chocolate of home.



Eve Of The Opium Wars, 1838

Cynthia Lu, Belmont MA

3rd place, S5 category, for students in grades 11-12

grandfather,
last night I dreamt my country alive again, / like you: veins lit electric in recognition / yet when I awoke the smoke
remained / choking off the lungs of these aching streets. / after the clock melts into sleep I slip / the door closed with
a single cricket-click / and kiss the soil, trying to start over. / I bury my own hands next to you / instead of our flag,
not wanting / any more blood under these nails.

-
the crows are here again,
their laughter bleeds through squinted eyes / news of our city official, who drowned himself a week ago / a rock
anchoring his hands in case the body / could not be trusted to sink properly / I counted all the times / he came to
our house for dinner, / those years like loose change inside my bones: / no match for their gold, but still / enough to
buy a crate of oranges for luck.

-
did you know they make it from poppies?
I thought of the fish you used to bring home / screeching, shuddering in the pan, / perpetrated by salt and sesame
oil / don't westerners know that the intent should be / to make something beautiful out of death, / worth consuming
and being consumed by / not the other way around?

-
I want clean, peace, home.
how quickly flame leaps when you call it / to a stove, a pipe, a gun. / in this swallowing acid light, our motherland
holds the preferred emptiness / of a stomach starved for so long / it forgets to clutch food. / my brothers try to rinse
with saltwater: / once, twice, three times / but this foreign sugar, it lies ash-bitter and insistent / on the tongue.

PSV ANNUAL POETRY CONTEST

Poetry Society annual contests will be opened soon, so be sure to check the website for details.

Deadline for submissions is always on Poe's birthday, Jan. 19th.

2021 PSV NORTH AMERICAN BOOK AWARD

Dates for entering the 2021 PSV North American Book Award Contest run from Oct. 15, 2020, through Jan. 15, 2021. The book of poetry submitted must be the work of a single author, at least 64 pages long, and published in 2020 by an established press. Manuscripts, videos, CDs, chapbooks, and self-published books are not eligible, nor are books that have won awards, including a pre-publication award. See the PSV website for full details and submission form.

THE POETRY SOCIETY OF VIRGINIA STUDENT CONTESTS FOR 2021

Derek Kannemeyer

Some of the winning poems for the 2020 contests appear in this issue of the newsletter; others were printed in the previous issue in Sept. Details of how to submit in 2021, whether to the student or the adult contests, will appear shortly on our website, poetrysocietyofvirginia.org.

While the reorganization of the website will necessitate new submission procedures, the contest categories themselves have not changed. They are as follows:

- #1: poems by students in grades 3-4**
- #2: poems by students in grades 5-6**
- #3: poems by students in grades 7-8**
- #4: for students in grades 9-10**
- #5: for students in grades 11-12**
- #6: Jenkins Prize, for students in grades 9-10**
- #7: The Poetry Society Prize, for Virginia students ONLY, in grades 6-8**
- #8: The Virginia Student Prize, for Virginia students ONLY, in grades 9-12.**

Prizes in all categories except #8 are \$25, \$15, and \$10. In #8, we offer awards of \$50, \$30, and \$20.

In addition, prize winners may be published on our website—with the permission of the writers, of course, and if they are of minor age, of a legal guardian. Older students may also, at the discretion of the editor, be offered publication in our annual anthology of contest-winning poems.

The first six categories are open to students from anywhere in the country (or indeed, the world) and may be submitted by students themselves, on their own initiative, or by their writing teachers. While teachers are welcome to submit work from an entire class, we prefer that to some degree they vet such entries, and encourage students to send us their best writing.

There will also be a spoken word category for high school students. Details will be available on the website.

The last two categories are open ONLY to students from Virginia. We would especially like to increase the number of submissions we receive from Virginia lower and middle school students.

Teachers, please spread the word!

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 January newsletter (which will be the next newsletter) is December 15.

ANNOUNCEMENTS (cont.)

OPEN MICS & ZOOM MEETINGS

- Busboys and Poets on Instagram @busboysandpoets (ask about other formats, has been done on Zoom, too.) Every Mon. Weds and Fri., (usually \$5.) www.busboysandpoets.com - 8-10 PM
- Venue on 35th Monday Night Open Mic There are plans in place if we go IRL, but plan on virtual for now. Contact Jorge Mendez or James Cooper on Facebook for Zoom info. 7:30
- CIPHER Tuesdays Tuesday nights at 8/8:30 Please contact Quinton Jennings-Sherman on Facebook. He also goes by Q5 at #Q5TV May involve a \$5 donation 8pm
- 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, Typically Monday afternoons...
- Richmond's Jazz and Wine Tasting may go virtual+IRL depending on the situation and the host restaurant (C'est la Vin, 17 th St.) contact the hostess with the mostest joanna@rivercitypoets.com The next one will be Nov.5
- 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 that information.
- 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 at 6:30 pm.

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81108116410?pwd=M3Rac2JobGM5NTJwY2p0dFNGQW55Zz09>

Meeting ID: 811 0811 6410, Passcode: 87613

- Charlottesville Open Mic (Over the Bridge?) takes place on the 4th Weds. each month. Contact Patsy Asuncion for exact time and for the way in.

Dear Poetry Person or Other Creative Creature,

James Wilson

I am writing to encourage you to share your recent works through journal and anthology type publishing opportunities. Both may involve some details, but as a WPP author or member of the PSV, I want you to understand you have a leg up, just MIND YOUR DEADLINES.

1. *Streetlight Mag*: /submissions/ from Central Virginia & northwards is known to be accepting and free from hateful hearts. The Editor-in-Chief runs porches, a retreat for writers in Norwoods, VA, for those who really, really want to get their Decameron on.
2. Peruse www.sequestrum.org. They are not located in Virginia, per se, but have been kind to Virginia poets and story tellers. Though one should subscribe to submit, the rates are "what you can afford" and are therefore flexible.
3. RVA-based litmag *Feels Blind Literary*. For their sixth issue, they are (partially) instituting a small fee-based policy for submissions (only \$3), with all proceeds going to organizations actively working for justice locally and across the country. For \$10, Feels Blind will guarantee your work a turnaround of two weeks or less. Look into www.facebook.com/FeelsBlindLiterary/ or <https://www.feelsblindliterary.com/>
4. From Norfolk comes *Blue Collar Review*, which specializes in working-class poetry ranging between the everyday life serving capitalist world to the struggle for right and recognition of justice. They take submissions of up to 5 poems on paper at Partisan Press, P.O.Box 11417, Norfolk, Virginia 23517. Check partisanpress.org.
5. *757 Perspectives Vol.IV: Our Decameron Days*
Please do not consider this strictly a volume of poetry, it will be so much more and will be carefully stitched together to make much more of an experience. The new deadline will be extended to Nov. 15. These are but ideas, wheel greasers or provocations:

- Any poetry or stories or lyrics written during this period that you think would entertain, esp. during poetry month (April)
- 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 not to spread the disease, finding a cure, being at war with the disease, being in lockdown
- Family and friends' 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 project, please attach what you have created to an email named Decameron to HRACandWPP@outlook.com. Contributions to *Our Decameron Days* are seen as donations and cost the donor 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 an artist wishes to contribute a brief comedy routine or song that matches the themes of this volume, they may store it on the web and provide a short link to it (but please include some text, like lyrics, that

ANNOUNCEMENTS (cont.)

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.

The title owes its origins to the 1300s outbreak of the Bubonic Plague in Europe. By this, the 3rd eruption of the plague, each round of which killed about 1/3 of the total population of Europe, many had figured out that living in close proximity in cities had something to do with the spread of the plague. SO those with means decided to get out of Dodge in little clusters of friends and accomplices, go to the countryside, move into old, abandoned villas, churches, abbeys, or castles, and generally hole-up for a while. Some left for days, some for months: Separating themselves together. Similarly, we have been advised to separate ourselves, more completely in the physical sense, but with our technology to keep us aware of each other. One or a few of these 1300s pods of humanity wrote and told each other tales on un-busied nights to keep their sanity and their spirits up. These were recorded by Boccaccio into a book called *The Decameron*. Let's do that!!!

MEMBER NEWS

Patsy Bickerstaff's new book of Christmas poetry, *Images at Christmas*, has recently been released by Wider Perspectives (2020). Patsy is a Life Member of PSV, has been a member since 1963, and has served in various capacities, including four terms as President of the Society. Her poetry has won numerous awards, including the Robert Penn Warren Poetry Prize (1985) and has appeared in nearly 200 publications, including two previous books, *City Rain* (Librado) and *Mrs. Noah's Journal* (San Francisco Bay Press). Contact Patsy at granypatsy@yahoo.com to purchase this timely and uplifting volume directly from the author.

Jim Gaines recently published the following poems: "I Almost Missed the Dogwoods," *Weekly Avocet*, no. 389; "The Backyard Firefly," *Avocet*, 2020 summer printed issue; "Cold Wars 2020," "Saddam in Brief, Baghdad 2003," and "Yellow Vests, Dijon 2019," all in *Voices on the Wind*, Vol. 82.

Linda Hoagland's latest additions to her writing resume are as follows: July/August 2020, *Star Poets*, a poem, "Always Alone," 1st Place; July/August 2020, *Northern Stars*, a poem, "Rejection," 1st Place; Summer 2020, Chautauqua Festival Creative Writing Awards, short story, "Living Like a Pig," 1st Place, essay, "Shameful Gyration," 1st Place, poetry, "The Cup," 1st Place; May/June 2020, *Star Poets*, a poem, "Mowing the Grass," 1st Honorable Mention; and May/June 2020, *Northern Stars*, a poem, "The Toolbox," 1st Honorable Mention.

Janice Hoffman's fairy stories continue as the release of the Spanish version of her book, *Cuatro Amigas Hadas*, comes out this month, accompanied by a bilingual coloring book. Just in time for the holidays is *Four Fairy Friends Celebrate Christmas*. In addition, she's produced a writing aid, *How to Write with COLOR!* All are released by High Tide Publications, 2020, and will be available on Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and Indie Books on or around Thanksgiving.

Jacqueline Jules had poems published in *The New Verse News*, *Poetry Super Highway*, *Poetica*, *Dove Tales*, *The Elevation Review*, *Ponder Savant*, and *OPEN: Journal of Arts & Letters* during July, Aug., and Sept. See additional information under Northern Region Report.

Rebecca Leet's poem "Tea and the Transfer of Random Energy" was published in the summer issue of *Canary Literary Magazine*. Rebecca is a PSV member who resides in Arlington.

Mike Maggio's newest poetry collection, a mixture of composed, collage, and visual poems called *Let's Call It Paradise* has been accepted for publication by *San Francisco Bay Press*. The book focuses on the current stage of our existence on a planet that is now in jeopardy and tries to bring light to the dire consequences of our way of living (the political, social, and environmental consequences) through the lens of consumerism. Some of the poems have been described as post-apocalyptic; however, there are some light hearted poems, as well.

Elizabeth Spencer Spragins has two poems in volume 6, issue 3 of *The Literary Nest*: <https://theliterarynest.org/issues/vol-6-issue-3/>. Additional work appears in the fall issues of *Red Coyote*, the *MacGuffin*, and *Borrowed Solace*.

CONTRIBUTORS

Bill Glose's "Mouth of Sand" appears in his upcoming book, *Postscript to War*, which comes out in Nov. The book won the Main Street Rag Poetry Book Contest: <http://mainstreetragbookstore.com/product/postscript-to-war-bill-glose/>

Mark Hudson is a member of PSV and likes to write for the newsletter. He wrote this Thanksgiving poem last year in a creative writing group around Thanksgiving. Mark wonders how Thanksgiving will be this year with COVID. Will we all have to social distance? He hopes he will remain grateful.

Jacqueline Jules is the author of three chapbooks including *Itzhak Perlman's Broken String*, winner of the 2016 Helen Kay Chapbook Prize from Evening Street Press. Her poetry has appeared in over 100 publications including *Paterson Literary Review*, *The Broome Review*, *Sow's Ear Poetry Review*, *Hospital Drive*, and *Imitation Fruit*. She is also the author of 40 books for young readers including a poetry collection, *Tag Your Dreams: Poems of Play and Persistence*. Visit www.jacquelinejules.com. Her poem, "Soup in Isolation," previously appeared in *Gyroscope Review*, Summer 2020.

Derek Kannemeyer is the President pro tempore of the society. His writing has appeared in scores of publications from *Fiction International* to *Rolling Stone*. He won the inaugural Blue Nib chapbook contest, and his full-length collection, *Mutt Spirituals*, is forthcoming from San Francisco Bay Press.

James Wilson or TEECH!, is a frequent performer at open mics and events around Hampton Roads and other parts of Virginia. He is editor-in-chief of Wider Perspectives Publishing and would love to discuss your book project with you. He looks forward to this whole COVID thing blowing away like a miracle, so he can get back to them there open mics. Check out his own latest book *J. Scott Wilson Gets Carried Away* (HRACandWPP@outlook.com or on Amazon).

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