

A COMMON WEALTH OF POETRY

Newsletter of the Poetry Society of Virginia ♦ December 2019

A LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT

It's that time of year again, when poets flung far and wide across the state gather to try their hand at winning one of our annual awards.

Founded in 1923 at the College of William and Mary, the PSoV (Poetry Society of Virginia) is the second oldest state poetry society in the nation. The Society has long sponsored annual contests for students and adults, and while we do not know the exact year that the Society began its annual contests, there are indications through archival material that the founders discussed plans to begin offering prizes at their very first meeting. There is strong evidence that our competition is one of the oldest of its kind running today.

Last year marked the completion of a two-year transition from what was a completely analog process to a fully digital submission system. Over thirteen-hundred poems were entered throughout twenty-eight categories on the adult side. Nearly five-hundred kids competed in the student contests. The winning body of work has been collected into a volume of our annual journal -- entitled *Poetry Virginia*. After some delays, this will finally be made available to the public by the end of this month. It may already be on Amazon by the time you're reading this.

There's an old saying amongst us slam poets: "The points aren't the point. The poem is the point." In the end, winning or losing is not the sum total of writing a poem. The point is in undertaking a journey to search for truth. By submitting to the contest, you have proven yourself to be one of the brave, the few, and the proud. Ultimately, the cause of Virginian poetry is the true champion of our endeavors here, and each and every one of you have a hand in that win.

Jeff Hewitt, President
Poetry Society of Virginia



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

ARTICLES	2-3
----------	-----

POEMS	3-4
-------	-----

ANNOUNCEMENTS	5-7
---------------	-----

CONTRIBUTORS	7
--------------	---

INSERT:
♦ PSV CONTEST

VIRGINIA
COMMISSION
FOR THE Arts

ART WORKS.
arts.gov

THE DIVINE CALL TO ART – WHY POETRY?

Sharon Canfield Dorsey

Poetry is the music of language. It soothes our frustrations. It comforts us in sadness. It is the voice of celebration and the expression of love. I write poetry for the same reason I breathe. Because it is life-sustaining.

At nineteen, my brand-new soldier husband was transferred to Korea. I sobbed through countless pages of soggy, badly-written poetry. It didn't shorten his duty year, but the venting eased my loneliness.

By the time I was in my mid-thirties, I had filled multiple journals, and the poetry was getting better. As a single parent of two, my pen flew, chronicling the end of a marriage, recovery, and the joys of motherhood. Editors appreciated my humorous approach to single-parenting. Checks appeared in our meager bank account.

When my grandparents celebrated their golden wedding anniversary, I honored them with a poem. When my father died, a poem brought comfort. When a second-time-around love blossomed, my heart overflowed with verses.

A few years ago, I retrieved the poetry journals from their hiding places and read them. My life was all there: the good, the bad, and the slightly soggy—my own unique story complete with insights gained at eighteen, thirty-six, sixty, and every age in between. Those poems filled my first book, titled *Tapestry* and published in 2016. Later that year, the stories behind the poems became a memoir, *Daughter of the Mountains*.

So why poetry? It is a gift we give ourselves and others that helps us live our lives.

Poetry is more than the music of language. Poetry is the language of the soul.

TIME'S SECRETS

Where does it go, the priceless time we squander...

Where do they go, the precious children we cuddled...

Where do we go, when they have flown to lives of their own...

Where is it written that aging is graceful and serene...

Where is it hidden, the truth about living and loving and dying...

Why don't they tell us...we create our own happily-ever-afters.

PSV NORTHERN REGION REPORT

Mike Maggio, Northern Regional Vice President

As always, individuals in our region have been very busy: from publications to honors, we continue to reach up and to deliver, so congratulations to everyone who strives and to all who make PSV an organization of amazing individuals.

First, this is my fourth and final year as regional VP. It has been an honor and a pleasure to work with you, to meet you, and to correspond with you. As all PSV positions are term-limited, I will be passing on the torch next year to our next VP who has yet to be identified. I plan, however, to remain involved in some capacity on the executive committee after my term has completed. I hope that those of you who have reached out to me over the past couple of years will continue to do so. A little early for this, perhaps, as I will serve out my term until next year's annual festival in May, but I wanted to bring it up.

Second, I will soon be gathering our planning committee to start thinking about what we want to do for our annual regional festival/meeting in March 2020. Over the past couple of years, we have brought some of the most distinguished poets to read and present workshops including E., Ethelbert Miller, and Grace Cavalieri. We've had interactive activities and open mics, and we've held these events on college campuses (NOVA-Loudoun and NOVA-Annandale) to open our events to faculty and students. I am asking for input regarding increasing attendance to the latter events. Please email me about what you would like to see for our 2020 event. How can we make this the most successful and most attended event of the past few years? I plan to gather the committee by the middle of October so please email me with suggestions before then, and if you would like to be part of the planning committee, please let me know. To get the most out of your PSV membership, I urge you to be active and involved.

Here are recent events in the Northern Region: October 4 was the first in this year's series at Arts Herndon (formerly ArtSpace Herndon). It featured our new president, **Jeff Hewitt**, and the spectacular **Stan Galloway**. October 13, was In the Company of Laureates and included, among others, **Carolyn-Kreiter-Foronda**, **Grace Cavalieri**, **Bill Glose**, and **Katherine E. Young**. October 24 featured Virginia Poet Laureate and Executive Committee member **Henry Hart** and poet **Laura Bylenok** at Germanna Community College. Additional member achievements will follow this letter among other PSV announcements.

Call for Submissions: Arlington, VA, A Portrait in Poetry—Submit your work to a new anthology of Arlington poetry curated by Arlington Poet Laureate Emerita Katherine E. Young! The anthology will be both a physical book of poetry and a digital archive of spoken word and performance poetry about Arlington, Virginia. Anyone who lives, works, studies in, or has a significant connection (current or previous) to Arlington is eligible to contribute. You don't need to be a current Arlington resident, but your work must in some way speak to Arlington's distinctive identity or your personal experience of Arlington. For details on how to submit, see <https://katherine-young-poet.com/arlington-anthology/> **Submissions deadline: Dec. 15, 2019**

Please continue to send me your announcements and accomplishments at mmaggio@poetryvirginia.org, so I can disseminate them to our members, and thanks to all those who help make our region active and successful, and to **Sally Zakariya** for gathering each month's readings.

CELEBRATING PETE FREAS

by Jack Callan

Early in November, many on the Southside gathered in the Russell Memorial Library to honor our friend and mentor, Pete Freas.

After an honorable career defending our country, and later teaching our children, Pete turned his attention to poetry in the community. All of us gathered that afternoon took great pride in acknowledging that our shared friendships all traced back to Pete.

The idea for this celebration came from Sean Bowers and Nathan Richardson, who ably co-hosted and made it fun. Pete's wife, Ann, joined him to help read some of his poems. Ever the old warrior, Pete bravely read in spite of the difficulties from dementia. We were all deeply moved.

Over and over, we heard people share how their first poems ever published were in *Skipping Stones*, Pete's yearly anthology of the local poets' work. Pete's children listened to our stories about their dad and how much we love him. He's "one of a kind," and the Poetry Society today can look back at the efforts of this wonderful man and say, "That's how you do it!"

In the end, Pete took the mic one last time to tell us how humbled he felt by our love. And that's where we left it. Thanks to Sean and Nathan and all who attended.

POEMS

UFO IN DISMAL SWAMP WOODS

by Daniel Pearlman

Along the state line, a dirt road dissects tobacco farms.

Keith and I squeeze between fence posts, walk past opaque puddles, fallen feathers and a torn deer blind.

Safe in the trees, we trek around crushed car parts

and pieces of railroad track leading to nowhere.

Deeper and darker. Quiet crunching steps. Stark cardinal chirps a warning. Crossing the border into the Refuge, a metal curve peeks through pines. On slow approach,

the capsule climbs to twenty feet by ten wide. Faded but not rusted, a corrugated cylinder with a cone top leans against a tree.

In silent fascination we feel the pollen-dusted surface, slide along its length, search for a door.

Through thick needles and leaves, a gashed-open entrance. Flashlight shining in, we see its emptiness, its abandonment, its identity: a pushed-over and rolled silo, a shelter of bullethole surrealism, an object unidentified by the forest.

WAITING FOR THE RICHMOND TIMES-DISPATCH, 5/6/01 2:23 AM

by Shari Berk

The price of gas glows in the moonlight as I reach for pen and paper. We wait at the Crossroads for the paper drop at 2:00 am.

You mumble something about my laying out the route - Thinking about work,

even as you try to sleep, chair cranked back in the car, which smells of newspapers, coffee, sweat, rubber bands and being awake at 4:00 am:

I tell you, "No; I'm writing a poem."

You see poetry in the task.

You saw beauty in the moonlight,

in the sunrise mornings driving through the county countryside before you even applied for the job.

I first saw it at my exhausted wit's end when three cows gazed inquisitively at me, sideways, Gently

I slid a paper into the tube by their farm:

Bovine watchful, curious, patiently taking in my motions.

I look forward to greeting the soft cow eyes again tonight, glistening in the dark, waiting for me.

I count my breaths, your snores,

and wait until the truck pulls in.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

POETRY SOCIETY OF VIRGINIA'S ANNUAL POETRY CONTEST FOR 2020

The Poetry Society of Virginia is proud to announce its Annual Poetry Contest for 2020. Submission are accepted only via PSV's website submission system. We are no longer accepting entries via the post office. DEADLINE: Entries must be submitted by Jan. 19, 2020, Edgar Allan Poe's birthday. To enter, submit your poems by visiting the PSV website at poetrysocietyofvirginia.org/contests. For more details, please see attached/enclosed flier.

POETS SUPPORTING FELLOW POETS: As you read through our newsletter each even month, please take note of those who have new works being published, and then take a moment to find them online. In most cases, your electronic click will support them not only with their publishers, but also with online sites like Amazon, Barnes and Noble, and independent booksellers. Take a moment and click these books to support each other's endeavors. That's what community is all about—support.

VIRGINIA BARDS has recently published an anthology which includes work from some of our Poetry Society of Virginia members. It accepted one poem from Jim Gaines, two from Ron Smith, and two from Mike Maggio.

WIDER PERSPECTIVES PUBLISHING is proud to specialize in bringing Virginia poets to print. Let's sit down together and start forging your dreams into very real form. The mission is your book in 1/3 the time and around 1/3 the cost of the big publishing houses. HRACandWPP@outlook.com. Wider Perspectives is proud to have helped the following poets into print, so please investigate their books: Raymond Simmons, Terra Leigh, Bobby K. The Poor Man's Poet, Lisa Kendrick, Taz Waysweete', Crickyt J. Expression, Stephanie Diana, S.A. Borders-Shoemaker, Sarah Eileen Williams, Kenneth Sutton, Jason Brown, and Charles Wilson. Crickyt J. Expression's debut book *Dear Broken Woman - Trials to Triumph* will be formally released at the Venue on 35th Street on Jan.31, 2020 (631 W. 35th St. Norfolk).

James Wilson, Director of Innovation
Hampton Roads Artistic Collective
and Wider Perspectives Publishing

OPEN MIC AT WILLIAMSBURG LIBRARY: The Williamsburg Library and the Chesapeake Bay Writers are sponsoring an Open Mic on the third Sunday of every month, beginning Sept. 15, from 1 - 3:00. Bring your poetry, prose, fiction, or non-fiction and share your writing. For more information, contact Susan Williamson at susanwilliamsonnc@gmail.com.

POETRY VENUE INFORMATION PROVIDED BY TALYA CHAPMAN

12-01-19
Poetry Workshop/Open Mic
Mobjack Coffee Roasters
411 Main St., Yorktown VA
10:30a - 12:30p
Host: Poetry on the Square

12-03-19
Words on Fire:
Poetry Happy Hour at Firehouse
Firehouse Theatre
1609 W Broad St., Richmond, VA 23220
6:00 - 8:00
Host: River City Poets

12-04-19
December Slam
The Venue on 35th
631 W 35th St., Norfolk VA
Doors Open 6:30, Slam Start at 7:30
\$5 at the door
Host: Verb Benders

12-05-19
Open-Mic Poetry
Poetry & Jazz Tasting, C'est Le Vin
15 N 17th St - Richmond VA
Starts at 7:00 (1st Thurs)
804-649-9463
Host: Joanna Lee

12-07-19
Ashley Grant Book
Launch & Reading
The Muse Writers Center
2200 Colonial Ave Ste 3, Norfolk VA
4:00p-6:00p
Host: The Muse Writers Center

12-10-19
Word4Word Poetry Open Mic
Aromas, City Center
706 Town Center Dr., Suite 104
Newport News 6:30-8pm
757-240-4650
Hosts Ann, James, Tanya

12-10-19
25 Mics
Spoken Word Poetry Series
Downing-Gross Cultural Arts Ctr
2410 Wickham Dr., Newport News
7:00 - 9:00 (2nd Tues)
Host: Nina Brewton

01-12-20
Fairmount Five Poetry Reading
2931 Somme Ave., Norfolk VA
1:00 - 3:00
(Every Other Month, 2nd Sun)
757-622-8721
Featuring: TBD
Host: Jack and Judith

Events can change or be cancelled with little or no notice. When in doubt, please contact venue before attending.

(FF) Family Friendly Venue (i.e., no vulgar, obscene, crude or cuss words) If you're new to a venue, always check with the host for house rules.

ANNOUNCEMENTS (CONT.)

Patsy Bickerstaff, life member of PSV, has served as Recording Secretary, NE Region VP, Central VP, and President for 4 one-year terms. Her work has appeared in about 200 publications, including a poetry book, *Mrs. Noah's Journal* (San Francisco Bay Press, 2007) and has won numerous awards, including the Robert Penn Warren Poetry Prize. She was nominated 3 times for Poet Laureate of Virginia. Patsy is a graduate of the University of Richmond (Westhampton, BA, Law, JD) and has taught poetry classes at the U of R's Osher Institute.

David Black won the Blue Nib poetry contest sponsored by the Blue Ridge Writers Club and subsequently won the statewide Golden Nib contest sponsored by the Virginia Writers Club. His poem "As We Study an Old Photograph" just appeared in *Journal of the Blue Ridge Writers*, as did his essay "The One Perfect Church." He also published several short meditative essays in *The Central Virginian* newspaper.

Sharon Canfield Dorsey's poem "Summer Leaves the Hills" was accepted for publication in the fall issue of *THE PEN WOMAN*, her sestina "Let There Be Light" was awarded First Place in the Chesapeake Bay Writers' Golden Nib Contest, and her nonfiction article "A Cautionary Tale" received a Second Place Award. Sharon's new prose/poetry/pictorial travel memoir, *ROAD TRIP*, was released by High Tide Publications on Amazon in November.

Eric Forsbergh's work has been published by the Arlington County bus system, and will be appearing in the *Journal of Neurology*. His poems have appeared in several literary journals, including the *Northern Virginia Review*, which awarded him a Pushcart Nomination in 2016. A winner of the PSV Poe Memorial prize in 2013 and 2014, he practices dentistry in Reston, VA, and is a Vietnam veteran.

Jim Gaines writes poetry and fiction in Fredericksburg. His work has recently appeared in *The Poet's Domain*, *The Piedmont Journal of Poetry and Fiction*, *Poetry Quarterly*, and *Avocet*. With his son, John, he also produces the *Forlani Saga* science fiction novel series, and Gainesscifi.blogspot.com.

Dr. Stanley A. Galloway, Professor of English, has been chosen for the anthology *The Sixty-Four: Best Poets of 2018*, by editors of *The Halcyone* and published by Black Mountain Press. Galloway has two poems in the collection: "Mink," a poem that looks at ennobling qualities of the animal, and "Bogland Elegy," a poem honoring the Irish poet Seamus Heaney (1939-2013), winner of the Nobel Prize. The book can be purchased for a limited time at <http://www.ebay.com/itm/352790347452>.

Jim Grines' fiction thriller, *Life Sentence*, is out on Audible. You can read it for free if you have an Audible subscription; if not, try a free 30-day trial. <https://www.audible.com/pd/Life-Sentence-Audiobook/B07X2ZTDLJ?asin=B07X2ZTDLJ>

Jan Hoffman's children's book/poem *Four Fairy Friends* (High Tide Publications) will launch officially at the Iris Arts & Framing Studio in Poquoson on Dec. 21, 14:00 p.m., but it will be available before then in time for the holidays via Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and from Jan herself by contacting janhoffpoetry@gmail.com. She also had 5 poems place in contests by the poetry societies of IN, TN, and AK: "Daughter of the Wind," "Honeysuckle Summers," "A Life Punctuated," "Intentional Tourist," and "Kindness." Two will appear in *Indiana's Ink to Paper*.

Ruth Holzer, longtime PSV member, has just published her fifth chapbook, *Why We're Here*, a collection of narrative and lyric poems about London. It is available from Presa Press.com or directly from the author (holzerruth@yahoo.com) for \$8.00.

Jacqueline Jules is the author of three chapbooks, *Field Trip to the Museum* (Finishing Line Press), *Stronger Than Cleopatra* (ELJ Publications), and *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 *The Broome Review*, *Sow's Ear Poetry Review*, *Hospital Drive*, and *Imitation Fruit*. She is also the author of 40 books for young readers. Visit www.jacquelinejules.com.

JoAnn Lord Koff's *Sand, Pebbles, Fossils and Rocks* will be featured Jan. 15- Feb. 5, 2020, at The Center for the Arts in Manassas at an exhibition entitled "Camera Eyes: On Poetry." The 30 pieces of poetry and photography will elucidate a visceral connection between two distinct artistic forms of expression, words, and images. The book was nominated for the Library of Virginia's Literary Award in Poetry for 2019. The Opening Reception/Meet the Poet-Photographer is on Sat., Jan. 18, 6-9:00 p.m. For more information, see www.joannlordkoff.com.

Mike Maggio had two poems, "Neoplasm" and "Poem for Joe," published in *Bourgeon*. In addition, his short story collection, *Letters From Inside*, was released on Oct. 1 and was reviewed in Oct. *DC Trending*. It is available at Vine Leaves Press, from Amazon or directly from the author. Mike also appeared on Radio Hotline with Dennis Price on Fairfax Public and read from his work at the Martha Washington Library in Alexandria.

ANNOUNCEMENTS (CONT.)

Daniel Pearlman's book *Normal They Napalm the Cottonfields* is the 2019 winner of the Dogfish Head Prize and is published by Broadkill River Press this month. (See additional information under Contributors.)

Ron Smith, former Poet Laureate of Virginia, is the author of *The Humility of the Brutes* and other volumes from LSU Press. More than 100 of his poems have been reprinted in anthologies and journals in the 21st century. He has taught poetry at three universities. Currently, he is poetry editor for *Aethlon: The Journal of Sport Literature* and Writer-in-Residence at St. Christopher's School in Richmond.

Beth Spragins' poem, "Light in the Dark Night," was published in *Ancient Paths Literary Magazine*. In addition, the August/September 2019 issue of *Ethos Literary Journal* featured two of her tanka which can be read here: <http://ethosliterary.org/september-2019/poetry/poems-by-elizabeth-spencer-spragins>.

Sofia Starnes has new poems forthcoming in *Crosswinds*, *The Christian Century*, *First Things*, *The Bellevue Literary Review*, and *Image*. Two previously published poems, "Baptism of Desire" (from *The Consequence of Moonlight*, Paraclete Press) and "Nightlife" (*Fully Into Ashes*, Wings Press), have been selected for inclusion in the anthology *The World I Leave You: Asian American Poets on Faith and Spirit*.

Sally Zakariya's new chapbook, *Muslim Wife*, is one of three published in a single volume by Blue Lyra Press (<https://bluelyrapress.com/shop/delphi-volume-seven/>) - also available from Amazon.

CONTRIBUTORS

Shari Berk is a poet, writer, violinist, and mental health advocate. First published at the age of ten, she's proud to be a lifetime member of the Poetry Society of Virginia. She currently resides in rural Eastern North Carolina where her neighbors have granted her permanent "Damn Yankee" status in spite of her accent, which persists after living in the South for over three decades. She believes in the adage by poet Theodore Roethke: "What we need is more people who specialize in the impossible." Her poem "Waiting for the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 5/6/01 2:23 am" previously appeared in *Blue Collar Review*.

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.

Sharon Canfield Dorsey has published fiction, non-fiction, juvenile fiction, and poetry in magazines, newspapers, journals, and anthologies. She is author of four children's books: *Herman*, *the Hermit Crab and the Mystery of the Big, Black, Shiny Thing*; *Revolt of the Teacups*; *Buddy and Ballerina Save the Library*; and *Buddy the Bookworm Rescues the Doomed Books*; a book of poetry, *Tapestry*; a memoir, *Daughter of the Mountains*, and a new travel memoir, *Road Trip*. Her poems are also included in an anthology, *Captured Moments*.

Ed Lull began writing poetry at age 65 and has published six books of his poetry including an historical novel and a "How To" book on writing form poetry. He is a life member of the Poetry Society of Virginia where he served four terms as its president and many years as an Executive Director. He formed the James City Poets in 2008, a poetry workshop that remains active today, and recently began a program of sharing its poetry with Senior Living establishments.

D.L. Pearlman is a Norfolk native who earned his MFA at George Mason University. He is the winner of PSV's 2019 Edgar Allen Poe Memorial Award as well as three other categories. His poems have recently appeared in *Poetry Quarterly*, *The Meadow*, *Light*, *Poetry Breakfast* and *North Dakota Quarterly*. He teaches at Tidewater Community College in Chesapeake.

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. Issues are sent out on even months, so please send to janhoffpoetry@gmail.com by the 15th of odd months.

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