United Poetry Service: Poetry of the People
West End Poetry Festival 2021

This was supposed to be the year when everything returned to normal, including the Festival. The Poets Council began to plan in-person events and secure locations and then the Delta Variant appeared. And the scrambling began. And the zoom meetings increased. And with extraordinary assistance from Charles Harrington the Festival took shape as a combination outdoor, weather permitting, and online event. And of course it did rain but we were sheltered by the Town Commons, Jackie Helvey was able to communicate the contingencies effectively and helped us with our online events—the Poetry of the People became a reality. You can check out much of the proceedings on http://www.westendpoetryfestival.org.

Highlights

Crystal Simone Smith, opened the festival with a wonderful zoom workshop, Constraint and Freedom, which explored how to write in form.

Gary Phillips led our Poetry in the Round, as new and veteran participants shared their own and others' poetry.

Abigail Browning read the Community Poem which she had edited just that morning!

And

A reading featuring 7 past and current Poet Laureates from Carrboro and Hillsborough concluded the festival. Poets who read were: Will Davis, former Poet Laureate of Hillsborough, CJ Sutit, Poet Laureate of Chapel Hill, Fred Joiner, Poet Laureate of Carrboro, and Celisa Steele, Gary Phillips and Patrick Herron, former Poet Laureates of Carrboro.
AFTER A BIRTHDAY

Lithe, young man and woman
waltz across my TV screen
Watching, I feel uneasy
Regretting, perhaps, that I
no longer move so easily
nor bound down steps
nor run foot races

But that girl who did
lives within my body.
A girl who danced for hours
dreamed of immortal love
and had such passion for
making a better world

As memories flood my mind
quiet music fills my heart.
It’s true, I dance less smoothly.
But I want not to surrender
Wisdom gained for verve lost.
I’ll be content to watch the young
Struggle to become wise
Passed through the window
to the back seat.
Overcast and day’s rain
dampened again
the bronze engraved box
in Mother’s hands so tenderly.
She held him again
but not against her breast.
Together, they laid him to rest
in a carefully chosen spot.
A baby’s lot for it was their baby’s lot.
And the silent scar shall never leave
the memory, the hope of youth.
the how, the why will pass them by.
Mother and Father move on—but silent scars,
baby flashes, their life blood for the moment
is Monday’s ashes...

The Four Seasons

A child runs through a gauntlet of rose petals tossed
By Bulgarians in traditional garb. His matching
Nine-year-old girl is first with him, then trapped
Having fallen halfway through a rotted footbridge.
He has to decide to make a long jump to save her,
Risking his life, or to turn his back. He jumps, we
Never see the conclusion in the Balchick mist, but
Are supposed to gain the courage to beat back life’s
Most difficult challenges, learn to be happy with
Human connectedness over a beach house, learn
To consume healthy food, meditate, all from the
Movie director who finalizes our dreams. Steep steps
Switchback up the cliff. Nine then seventeen artists
Huffing, puffing, laughing, drinking, latter-day Neroes
As we burn, succumb, perish in a nightmare-come-red
With Melania baked nod-to-the-devil theme. Such panache!
Athletes in Stefan’s film clear adversity the way he implores
Us to. If idle, stamina and strength fade, if unloved, the rot
Of life floods over, drowns, extinguishes a soul completely.
Jean Jones

Jonah's Prayer

This really happened to me - I was hospitalized at the end of January this year for Covid for 5 days at New Hanover Memorial Hospital in Wilmington, NC - I was treated w a steroid and oxygen -

I was brought into the Covid Unit at the hospital in respiratory duress,
I was in such acute respiratory distress they had to pump 45 liters of oxygen into my lungs, and as my doctor told me, when they start to have to put 45 liters of oxygen in a minute into your lungs, people just don't recover from that, but I did.
After the doctor asked me if I wanted to be kept alive or have a respirator keep me alive,
I said, "Yes, I have a 14 year old son, and a 20 year old daughter," I want to be kept alive."
I left a message for my Pastor to pray for me, and when she heard I was in the hospital with Covid, she felt she had to pray right away for me because my life was in danger.
I went from needing 45 liters of oxygen in a minute down to 3 liters of oxygen in a minute within 24 hours.
My doctor could not believe it.
"Most people don't recover that quickly," he said;
He had more tact than to say what he was really thinking - "Most people in that kind of distress don't recover."
I did recover. I got better.
Was it coincidence?
The next day I remembered the prayer of Jonah to God after he was spit out by the big fish on to the land:
Prior to that, Jonah was drowning - "I called out to the Lord, out of my distress, and he answered me; out of the belly of Sheol I cried, and you heard my voice."
A Girl and Her Dog

My great-niece and her dog are the best of friends.
After a hard day of work in the first grade,
Reagan has fun with her dog, Henry,
playing catch ball in the yard,
skipping stones on the lake,
and singing Merry Christmas!
There's nothing to worry about, homework is all done,
just running and jumping with a girl's best friend.
Joy and anticipation of Santa Claus,
catching the snowflakes twirling like feathers to the ground.
Little Reagan and Henry are two of the best buddies:
a girl and her dog looking forward to the holidays!

Smile Poem

Once there was an unseemly boy who sat before me.
Thanks to the pandemic, he was only half ugly
Each day I sat watching his furtive glances
Imagining crooked teeth in weird dances
Behind lips of crusty flesh and bad odor.
Perhaps he suffered from some new disorder,
But I never wanted to get close to him.
I was certain he was beauty’s antonym.
Alas, he took a sip of a tasty beverage
Revealing a smile considerably above average.
The heat of shame did singe my higher faculties
Acknowledging my own grotesqueries.
FOOTBALL, 1966

Like death and birth, timely or not,
Football happens, freezing or hot.
In spite of damp and dreary weather,
They kick and drive the football leather.
Mud may make and rain may fall
But still they catch and carry the ball.
Ticket takers, punching passes,
Dripping fingers, steamed up glasses.
Lines of students with their dates,
Carrying umbrellas, approach the gates.
Graying alumni, considerably sedater.
Are here to cheer their alma mater.
They come in cars, in buses bold
To watch them block and punt and hold.
Dressed in slickers, galoshes, fur coats—
If it keeps on raining they’ll come in boats.
Hopeful, excited they yell and cheer
If their team loses they shed a tear
The rain may fall, the snow may lay.
But nothing stops the football play.
The mail goes through, come rain or shine
The men go through the football line
Bemired and wet, they crouch and charge
Soon they’ll be able to float a barge.
Bluebird and Squirrel
share our backyard paradise.
Both “own” an unusual
demeanor to one another.

Squirrel with “squirrelly
smirk”, tantalizes Bluebird
to play a game
“catch me if you can”.
Also a most exquisite bluebird private residence
features an imaginary sign,
“authorized, bluebird families only”!
Squirrel, deemed, “scattered” “homeless”,
“animal gypsy” aimlessly
roams seeking food,
usually never returning to its home of birth.
Both Squirrel and Bluebird coexist with predator
neighbor, Brother Hawk,
who hunts Squirrel as well as colorful song birds diminishing from our back yard.

Squirrel climbs a boxelder tree,
a jump away from Bluebird’s domain.
Bluebird babies still under watch,
Squirrel should never try,
knowing Momma and Dad Bluebirds are close by.

Bluebird, wings flapping, attacks Squirrel
from above, warning not to bother Bluebirds
or this private residence, which they devotedly
guard with grit, defiance and love.

Is this the same Squirrel
who climbs again and again
bouncing off a bird feeder.
only interested agitating
his neighbor friends?

a whimsical bit of verse
Being Wise Thirty-Six

Finally the rain came. Now the onions will have their first satisfying drink. The flowers will bloom, bees swarm in. Winter holds back, hesitates. I sleep a few more hours, inhabit a quiet house, a relieved natural world. Across from me a dusty road in a Russian village.

Sorting books, we found it. I was there twenty-nine years ago, and lonely. So much has changed. I live from day to day, glad I’m still alive, but knowing I’ll die. I’m finishing my work in this world. Friends accompany me. Photos of children live everywhere. Books overwhelm this room. Most of them I’ll give away. I only need my favorites now, my old friends: Austen, Trollope, Eliot, Penny, Spencer Fleming, Cary, my Russian dictionaries. It’s time to publish my last book. The diaries are for me. Other people may enjoy the books I don’t need. The paintings and photos will keep me company, my children and friends. I don’t think I’ll ever be completely lonely again.
Rising With the Moon on Advent Eve

This full moon on Advent’s Eve,
God’s eye for those who believe
that light seen over the eaves
is too pure a true bereave-
ment, that torn dark can’t deceive,
but leads us from fallen leaves,
to fires and unperceived
flares in the cold air, reprieve
and punishment for naïve
stumbles, missteps, those years we’ve
--till now--held close but must leave
to find their fate reconceived
as something sinless, achieved
in lunar reflection, grieved,
gathered like harvest, received
and tossed, heaven hung in sheaves.
For did not Christ hang with thieves,
hang like the moon--lights retrieved,
both at one and apart, cleaved
in both senses, unaggrieved?
When such goodness is received,
light refracts and love relieves.
NORTH CAROLINA POETRY SOCIETY
2022 PINE SONG AWARDS

DEADLINE: January 12, 2022

The NC Poetry Society invites submissions to its 2022 adult poetry contests. Entrants do not have to be residents of North Carolina.

Prizes (per category): 1st Place: $60; 2nd Place: $30; up to Three Honorable Mentions.

POET LAUREATE AWARD: a serious poem, any subject, any style, max of 110 lines.*
Sponsored by Kevin Watson/Press 53. Open to poets currently residing in NC. The winning poem will be selected by the North Carolina Poet Laureate. Single prize of $150.

ALICE OSBORN AWARD: poems in any form, written by adults for children 2 to 12 years of age, max of 36 lines.*
Sponsored by Alice Osborn

CAROL BESSENT HAYMAN POETRY OF LOVE AWARD: any form, any style, on the theme of love, max of 36 lines.*
Sponsored by Dave Manning

KATHERINE KENNEDY McINTYRE LIGHT VERSE AWARD: any form, any style, including limericks, max of 36 lines.*
Sponsored by Diana Pinckney

MARY RUFFIN POOLE AMERICAN HERITAGE AWARD: any form, any style, on the theme of American heritage, siblinghood or nature, max of 36 lines.*
Endowed by Pepper Worthington

POETRY OF COURAGE AWARD: any form, any style, on the theme of courage or crisis, max of 36 lines.*
Endowed by Ann Campanella

BRUCE LADER POETRY OF WITNESS AWARD: any form, any style, addressing contemporary events or issues, max of 36 lines.*
Sponsored by Doug Stuber

Poems with different line requirements

BLOOD-HAIKU AWARD: contemporary English language haiku (untitled)
Sponsored by Bill Griffin

JOANNA CATHERINE SCOTT AWARD: Sonnet or other traditional form, max of 50 lines.*
Sponsored by anonymous Friends of Joanna C. Scott

THOMAS H. McDILL AWARD: any form, any style, max of 70 lines.*
Sponsored by the Board of the NC Poetry Society

* * * *

*Please note: Line limits include lines of text and title, blank lines, and any epigraph.

ENTRY GUIDELINES & OTHER INFO: www.ncpoetrysociety.org/adultcontests
NORTH CAROLINA POETRY SOCIETY
2022 STUDENT POETRY CONTESTS

Postmarked by: February 1, 2022

The NC Poetry Society is currently accepting submissions for its 2022 student poetry contests, open to student poets from 3rd grade to university undergraduates attending schools in North Carolina.

PRIZES:
Each winning student poem will be published in the NC Poetry Society’s annual Pinesong anthology, which features all of the contest winners and their poems.

1st Place winners will receive a trophy, a $60 check, an NCPS award certificate, & a free copy of Pinesong.

2nd Place winners receive $40, an NCPS award certificate, & a free copy of Pinesong.

3rd Place winners receive $25, an NCPS award certificate, & a free copy of Pinesong.

Honorable Mention winners (up to three per contest) are also chosen. These winners receive an NCPS award certificate & a free copy of Pinesong.

THE TRAVIS TUCK JORDAN AWARD for students in Grades 3 - 5
Endowed by Dorothy and Oscar Pederson

THE JOAN SCOTT MEMORIAL AWARD for poems about the environment
Endowed by contributions in memory of Joan Scott and by the Board of the NC Poetry Society

THE MARY CHILTON AWARD for students in Grades 6 - 9
Sponsored by Tori Reynolds

THE SHERRY PRUITT AWARD for students in Grades 10 - Undergraduate
Endowed by Gail Peck

All poems may be in any form, but may not exceed 32 lines per poem, including line breaks within the poem.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES & OTHER INFO: www.ncpoetrysociety.org/studentcontests/
Celebrate Poetry Virtually

POETRY ON YOUR PLATE

A MENU of LOCAL POETS
reading from their works. There will be time for discussion and questions.
Enjoy your water, wine, coffee & dessert as you feast on poetry!

Monday, December 13 2021
6:00PM - 8:00PM
VIRTUAL - ZOOM

2021 Featured Poets Included

Chris Abbaté          Bartholomew Barker
Glenn Cassidy         Marrow Dowdle
Maura High            Joyce Kltoze
JeanMarie Olivieri    Gary Phillips
Lisa Tomey            Amber Watson
Anna Weaver           Liza Wolff-Francis

Join Zoom Meeting

https://townofcarrboro.zoom.us/j/84220074148?
pwd=SlZsenYyemtaZTdoditOU1FMcmVFZz09

Meeting ID: 842 2007 4148
Passcode: 458905
http://carrbororec.org

919.918.7372
Recurring Events:

**Carrboro Recreation, Parks & Cultural Resources Department Presents:**
**Poet’s Open Mic Night (ZOOM)**  
First Tuesday of Each Month listed, 7:00-8:00pm

Join Carrboro Recreation, Parks & Cultural Resources Department the first Tuesday of each month listed for this great event! This is a night where poets can engage with others and share the power and diversity of poetry. The event is staged to provide a venue for people to celebrate, to share, and to encourage the writing, reading and listening to poetry.  
*See page 16 for listings.*

**Dec 7, 7:00pm**  
[Zoom Link](https://townofcarrboro.zoom.us/j/82970327528?pwd=UnNSWWJiOFIoSVZOSnBIV3dma1B2Zz09)

**No Poets Open Mic in January**

**Feb 1, 7:00pm**  
[Zoom Link](https://townofcarrboro.zoom.us/j/84755821998?pwd=Z2NBWU5rcVNBOStmbl2ZGh2ZGRUQT09)

**Free the Mic**  
Second & Fourth Monday of Each Month, 7:00-10:00pm

Lucky Tree  
3801 Hillsborough St., Suite 137, Raleigh

For people who are not afraid to believe in themselves, for people who are thinking of believing in themselves, and also for people who like supporting people who believe in themselves. Just bring good energy & support for local artists. Artists and spectators welcome!!! We ask that you respect the space & audience! Sign up: by email or by Instagram message.


**City Soul Café Open Mic**  
**WILL BE BACK SOON**  
Second Wednesday of each month, 8:00pm

**STAY TUNED!**  
$7 (No cash accepted at the door)

21 & over

Open to #poets, #singers, #lyricists, #comedians and #performers.  
DJ Supreme will be spinning. Your hosts Krystal Da Muse and Church Da Poet will be guiding you through the night. The team will be there to help provide the best experience possible.

*Masks are required  
*Temperature check at the door  
*Seating is socially distanced  
*Mics will be cleaned between performances

The City Soul Cafe Team will be taking all the necessary precautions.

*For more info and to purchase tickets: [https://citysoulcafe.splashthat.com/](https://citysoulcafe.splashthat.com/)*
Poetry Readings & Events Continued...

More Recurring Events:

**Passionate Poets**
Unity Center of Peace
8800 Seawell School Rd., Chapel Hill

Passionate Poets invites all to this evening of creative expressions where performers are encouraged to share their gifts of music, poetry, dance or comedy. Performance times will be 3-5 minutes each depending on the number of participants. A piano is available if required. Arrive early at 6:30pm to sign up. MC: Vanessa Vendola.

For more info, contact Vanessa Vendola at 919-810-3548.

**Friday Noon Poets**
Amity United Methodist Church
Corner of Estes Dr. & Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. (Historic Airport Road)
Chapel Hill

Informal meetings every Friday. Read original poem or prose or a selection written by someone else. Writings should be no longer than 1½ pages. Free parking, side entrance. All are welcome!

For details, call Dave Manning at 919-462-3695.

**Tongue & Groove Open Mic Redux**
VAE Raleigh
Old Creamery Building
410 Glenwood Ave South #170, Raleigh

This is an open mic hosted by Anna Weaver, Sarah Egan Warren, and Andrew Warren. We welcome poetry, music, storytelling and the occasional interpretive dance. Anything but comedy (which is not say you can't be funny). List open at 7:00. Show at 7:30. 7-minute slots.

For event updates and to get/stay in touch: http://tongueandgroove-openmic.com
Winter 2022 Reading & Writing Poetry Course taught by Judy Hogan by Skype

January 10 - March 14, 2022 Mondays 7:00pm
Snowday: March 21
Total Cost: $180 (for class and postage for mailing work back)
To hold your place: Send $20 to Judy Hogan, PO box 253, Moncure, NC 27559
For More Info: Call 919-545-9932 or judyhogan@mindspring.com.
Location: Skype

We'll be reading Selected Poems by Gabriela Mistral, Chilean poet who won the Nobel Prize in 1945. It's translated by Ursula LeGuin into English. Students will also write poetry.

Judy Hogan has been teaching, publishing, and critiquing poetry since the 1970s.

Jambalya Soul Slam Academy Writing & Performance Workshop - ZOOM

Every 2nd Monday 6:30-8:30pm
Hayti Heritage Center
804 Old Fayetteville St
Durham, NC

Facilitated by Dasan Ahanu
Poetry Websites

http://www.ncPoetrySociety.org
Home of The North Carolina Poetry Society, an all-volunteer organization especially for poets and friends of poetry. There are approx. 370 members.

http://www.poets.org
Award-winning website of the Academy of American Poets. Find thousands of poems as well as hundreds of poet biographies, essays, interviews, and poetry recordings. Also available are resources such as the National Poetry Map, a national events calendar, and poetry lesson plans for teachers.

http://www.ncwriters.org/
Home of the North Carolina Writers' Network. The Network strives to lead, promote, educate, and—most importantly—connect writers, at all levels of skill and experience, from across the state and beyond.

http://www.poemhunter.com
Poetry Search Engine with thousands of poems and poets.

http://poems.com
“Poetry Daily” is an anthology of contemporary poetry. Each day, we bring you a new poem from new books, magazines, and journals.

http://livingpoetry.net
Fascinated by the power of poetry, members of Living Poetry are dedicated to keeping the pulse of poetry alive in the North Carolina Triangle area.

https://www.meetup.com/find/?keywords=poetry
Join a Poetry Meet-Up in your area.

http://griffinpoetry.com/
Bill Griffin created this website to showcase vivid poetic imagery, from established as well as emerging poets. He hopes you’ll read a line that reaches out and grabs you by the throat - the image that is so vivid, novel, sensual, emotionally imperative - so satisfying you find yourself saying, Damn, I wish I'd written that!

http://theoriginalvangoghsearanthology.com
Seeking submissions of poetry, short stories, and art. Submission guidelines are on the site.

https://writenaked.net/
Here you will find vignettes from the freelance writing life, behind-the-pen scoop on articles, tips for working with editors, overviews of conferences, interviews with publishers, guest bloggers in the publishing industry, and a few miscellaneous blogs with a writerly twist.

www.maurahigh.com
Maura High will be posting poems (recorded and on the page), photos, comments, information about her work as an editor, and anything else that seems from time to time interesting and relevant.
For the newsletter, we welcome:

- Poetry News
- Upcoming Poetry Events
- Articles
- Contest Information
- Festival and Event Recaps
- ...and of course, Poetry

Please email your information to Karen Kessler at KKessler@townofcarrboro.org

Information about the 2022 West End Poetry Festival
Can be found closer to the event at:
www.westendpoetryfestival.org

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