

A COMMON WEALTH OF POETRY

Newsletter of the Poetry Society of Virginia

OCTOBER 2015

A LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT _____

Andrew Jarvis, our newsletter maven (trusted expert who passes knowledge on to others), should have his ears burning; such is the praise he's receiving for his masterfully put together September newsletter. Here's what they're saying:

Hi there! This is the best newsletter ever! Chock full of all kinds of stuff. And I'm not saying that because I'm mentioned! This is how it should always be. Keep up the good work over there! ~ Joshua Poteat

Heady stuff. There's much to be excited about at PSV. Trilla Ramage and Lauvonda Lynn Meade Young have given us snappy-looking, yet practical (grammatically pure), Poetry Contest brochures for the young and not-so-young poets among us.

Thanks to organizer Barbara Smith, we had a blue-ribbon bunch of poets on hand at the Peninsula Fine Arts Center this past month. Carolyn Kreiter-Foronda and Nancy Powell were featured, and a bluegrass band provided musical interludes. You can view all of this on the Virginia Poetry Online YouTube channel. Also carried by YouTube, as filmed by Bill Glose, were readers at the recent Norge series: Ann Shalaski, Bob Kelly, Mary Haines, Steven Pody, and Bill Glose.

PSV is making a dent. Of unusual importance, June Forte is the VIP in bringing us In the Company of Laureates from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. on October 11th at the Hylton Center for the Performing Arts on George Mason University's Science and Technology Campus in Manassas, VA. The symposium will be a perfect place to meet and mingle with over 20 current Poet Laureates and other regional poets and enthusiasts. Workshops, panel discussions, open mics, and more. Free.

The event carries a freight of prestige for the Poetry Society of Virginia, in cooperation with Write by the Rails, a chapter of the Virginia Writer's Club. It's not something to miss. On hand will be our four recent poet laureates of Virginia, Sofia Starnes, Carolyn Kreiter-Foronda, Ron Smith, and Kelly Cherry, as well as regional poet laureates and Daily Press Poet Laureate, Bill Glose.

Also exciting for the Poetry Society is the appointment of a committee for the planning of the first Poetry Society of Virginia Book Award. Submission deadline will probably be February 1, 2016. The book will have to be a published book by a member of the Poetry Society of Virginia of at least 48 pages. More details to come!

It's October, at last, and it seems we've shrugged off the heated drowsiness of summer. Here's just a smattering of recent events and events to come:

Readings by Mike Maggio, Patsy Anne Bickerstaff, and Derek Kannemeyer were given September 26th at Book People in Richmond, VA. Bickerstaff has been nominated for Poet Laureate of Virginia four times and should have won at least a couple of times by now. Poems by myself, with Q&A and an open mic, were heard on September 25th at the Venue on 35th Street in Norfolk, VA.

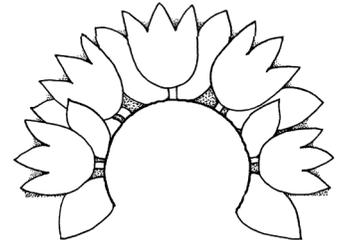
The Venue on 35th Street is owned by Patti Wray and run by PSV official Jeff Hewitt. The Venue and Eastern Shire Rime are special PSV projects, in effect, affiliates. Both the Venue and the Crab Shack (Eastern Shore Rime, run by Ken Sutton) are commercial establishments selling food and drink, as well as offering PSV a place for readings.

Let's hope the arrangements work. If so, the concept could spread statewide. The first poetry reading at the Crab Shack (Nassawadox, VA) is October 15th (7 p.m.).

Lastly, Friends of the Cape Charles Memorial Library will present readings from my book of poetry, *Hymn to the Chesapeake*, October 19th (7 p.m. at the Cape Charles Civic Center, 500 Tazewell, Cape Charles, VA). Also on the program will be Aphrodite Anagnos reading from her novel, *Death Angel*.

September and October. Fruitful months. Let's keep it going.

Best,
Bob



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POETRY FOR 2016

In no time at all, our long calendar days will flip again into 2016. I'm already worried that my poetry has not advanced enough this year. I'm like a general that keeps training his army to get ready for battle but never orders his troops of poems over the hill. I don't submit enough because my poems are just not good enough I keep telling myself. So I worry them to death with revisions. I'm replacing myself as leader of my poems and putting another general in charge. They must try to take one of the many hills that literary journals hold. Why am I waiting? I did not even submit a single poem to our own contest last year.

I am suggesting the same thing to you and you and you. The great thing about writing (poetry, fiction, non-fiction) is that as long as we have breath we get to do all again. I'm already writing toasts for the acceptances of 2016. Here's to poems that will land in journals so that more than just my workshop buddies can read them. Here's to the long efforts and the end of the long marches of revisions. I'm not telling myself that just because I wrote it that it's ready to go out. But some of my poetry has got to be good enough now. How long does it take to bake a loaf of bread? Currently, I am Penelope weaving a funeral shroud; and as soon as it's done, I will send out my poems.

Here's to the non-submitters. Here's to the worriers. Here's to the hearth-sitters. Make 2016 a submissions year. Encourage yourself first, then others. Like the instructions from flight attendants when the air masks deploy—put on your own mask first before helping someone else.

Let others read your poems and embrace their suggestions—they mean well. Someone who recently got a book finished received guidance from Claudia Emerson before she passed away. Claudia took her poems, recommended how they should be ordered saying to her, "I am ambitious for you." We need to be ambitious for ourselves and others, too. Submit to our contest. It starts November 1! Be brave. Like a 21st century Willy Loman, screw on your poetry fists and fight for the right words in the right order. I'm going to surprise myself next year. But I want to encourage you to pick up your last poems and revise them and send them out. We shame our poems saying they are not as good as someone else's. These are your precious children. Let them fly up out of the nest. Imagine a bus going down the road carrying all the poems we will submit in 2016—so many in fact they are flying out the windows because the bus is overloaded. Fly, fly, fly all our precious poems so someone else can be as surprised as we are.

~ Guy Terrell

POEMS

Blood Moon

By Carolyn Kreiter-Foronda

To see the full moon turn copper,
drive to the end of a country road
to a broad-mouthed bay

where darkness scatters stars
like lit-tin
across fields.

Wait until night dips
like a tango, the steady hum
of porch lamps forgotten

in the wailing of hounds.
When the nip of chill
mimics *tierra-lirra*,

pull umbral shadows
closer until
Cherokee Harvest

comes to you—Choctaw Blackberry,
Hunter's, Blood Moon:
brick-red.

Let celestial wines fill you
with the power of tides
swelling in channels,

inlets, coves, the rust-red
of a fox, ardent as she laps
a stream's lifeblood.

Be the terra-cotta disk fading
to orange, orange
to reclaimed white.

Dangle your feet over a dock's edge
as the lingering trace
of roan disappears,

Moon still visible in an unspoiled
glow—and you in no hurry,
no hurry at all.

"Blood Moon" was presented in the dramatic production, "The Haunting," compiled by Robert P. Arthur and Hollis Pruitt. The performance was held at 40th Street Stage in Norfolk, VA in October and November of 2007. The poem was initially published in *Bay Splash* and appears in the author's book, *River Country*, published by San Francisco Bay Press in 2008.

POEMS (continued)**Inside Looking Outside**

By R.L. O'Kelly

This is it, then.
We must be as we are.

We have been given
what other options?
We are all of us known
by an easy predictability
of square cut corners.
Our smooth flowing planes
align at social intersection.
We dream beyond cube,
but our thoughts are box,
and so, we are the box.
We must be as we are.

Looking at her; at him,
their geometry is revealed.
Follow them through rooms—
right turn, left; straight then.
One thing ends; another begins.
Auto doors close on radius,
straight shift, notch right,
run to corner; stop.
Our lives slip fast, entangled
in straight lines; right angles,
and we must think as we are.

Searching, we might find
a door in those walls
restraining our belief;
then stride through unleashed
with unbound mind, afloat,
to see and to know, but
the Lords of Order are watchful
and very tight fisted,
to hold this time, this space;
our expectations immutable.
We must be as we are.

This is it, then.



How odd when a vegetable and person merge
Becoming one in your mind and mouth.
My grandmother loved those little roots
Their stealthy sting hit your tongue
Like an angry truth.
Put all the butter and sugar you want—
Their heat cannot be denied.
No wonder they're shaped like tears.

The Scent of Memory 14

By Joan Mazza

You spend two hours deciding what to wear,
though next day you can't wash smells from your hair:
wood floors soaked in beer, smoky, perfumed air,
din of drumbeat deafens while you swear.
You stand and wait to be asked to dance,
hope some guy will converse with you, though wish
none will. You want to go home, be alone,
say you hate to search for a man, to fish
a disco, singles scene, as if by chance
you'd meet your kind of man—a homebody,
guy who reads and cooks, who, like you, is ready
to stop the quest for a Perfect One. Not old,
not young, skin not decorated in ink,
who doesn't smoke or lie or stink of drink.

—published in *Mezzo Cammin*

Deceased de Resistance

By Barbara Blanks

Underneath the whiffle tree Eulalie Bee would
make her soup—a special honey-pollen soup.
She made it for her big galoot—a worker bee
who wore a black and yellow suit. Clyde buzzed all day
from flower to flower, then brought his work back home
to wow her with a wide selection of nectar confections.

One fateful day Clyde met with Sam, a flimflam bee,
who with his wife set up the sting. A fling on film caught
Clyde with Ella. They thought to blackmail him but failed.
Clyde died—his life abbreviated. The FBI believe he ate
some honey-pollen soup—soup filled with salmonella.
How Sam and Ella wound up in the soup is anybody's guess...
not even FBI interrogation could make Eulalie Bee confess.

—published in *I've Heard Verse: awfully good poetry*

Turnips on the Table

By Rita Quillen

They owned a little grocery store
Could eat anything they wanted
But hardscrabble childhood hangs on you,
A bell that can't be unring.
Turnips on the table
A reminder of a hard battle won
A daily bitter tear on the tongue.

—published in *STILL: THE JOURNAL*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Andrew Jarvis has recently published poems in *Appalachian Heritage*, *Evansville Review*, and *Ginosko Literary Journal*.

Joan Mazza has three poems published at *Offcourse Literary Journal's* newest issue, September 2015. http://www.albany.edu/offcourse/issue61/joan_mazza.html Joan's poem "Writers' Guidelines" is published in the September 2015 issue of *Verse-Virtual*. <http://www.verse-virtual.com/joan-mazza-2015-september.html>

Joshua Poteat's new book *The Regret Histories*, winner of the 2014 National Poetry Series, is officially out from HarperPerennial! <http://www.amazon.com/The-Regret-Histories-Joshua-Poteat/dp/006241223X>

Sequestrum, a literary journal of new prose and poetry, is holding a contest through October 15th for new writers (anyone yet to publish a book-length manuscript). The contest is open to short fiction, nonfiction, and poetry, with winners for both prose and poetry. Full contest details here: www.sequestrum.org/contests.

Beecher Smith came in First Place in this year's Ohio Poetry Society's 2015 Contest No. 4, Crème de la Crème, with his poem "Michelangelo's Revenge." The contestants each had to have won a First Place in another state or regional contest with a prize of \$25 or more.

Karen Sparrow's poem "My Autumn Poem" will appear in the October issue of the Poquoson Historical Commission's newsletter. It is Karen's first published poem.

Pia Taavila-Borsheim's *Notes to David* was selected as a semi-finalist for the Louise Bogan Poetry Prize, sponsored by Trio House Press. Kimiko Hahn made the selection. This manuscript was completed during a 2014 workshop at the Sewanee Writers Conference led by B.H. Fairchild and the late Claudia Emerson.

Newsletter Deadline:

The deadline for our next newsletter is October 24, 2015.

CONTRIBUTORS

Barbara Blanks is president/editor of *A Galaxy of Verse*. (www.barbara-blanks.com). She is the author of two books, co-author of one. While Barb doesn't submit to literary journals, she has been published in *Ilya's Honey*, *Writers' Digest 5th Annual Poetry Awards Collection*, *Reader's Digest rd.com*, *Writers Journal*, *ByLine*, *Forces Literary Journal*, *The Earth Still Turns*, *A Texas Garden of Verses*, *NFSPS Encore*, and several state anthologies. She has no preference for the kind of poetry she writes—she just likes the fun and the challenge.

Carolyn Kreiter-Foronda served as Poet Laureate of Virginia from 2006–2008. She holds a M.Ed., M.A., and a Ph.D. from George Mason University, where she received the university's first doctorate and an Outstanding Academic Achievement and Service Award. In 2007, both universities gave her the Alumna of the Year Award. She has co-edited three anthologies and published seven books of poetry, including *The Embrace: Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo*, winner of the 2014 Art in Literature: Mary Lynn Kotz Award. Her poems appear in numerous magazines, including *Nimrod*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Mid-American Review*, *Best of Literary Journals*, *Poet Lore* and *An Endless Skyway*, an anthology of poems by U.S. State Poets Laureate.

Joan Mazza started writing as a young teen and has never stopped. It has been a way for her to sort out her thoughts and feelings, to examine her strong emotions in reaction to new information and events. She wrote self-help psychology books, fiction, and essays before she started writing poetry at 50. It's her daily practice and best method of self-soothing. www.JoanMazza.com

R.L. O'Kelly is a retired Federal Manager who considers poetry an important expressive means. He prefers to write about issues "close to home" as they are lived personally and by others, and to probe the mysteries of consciousness and existence.

Rita Quillen's novel *Hiding Ezra*, just released by Little Creek Books, was a finalist for the 2005 DANA Awards. She also published a new poetry chapbook from Finishing Line Press in 2014 titled *Something Solid To Anchor To*. Her most recent full-length collection, *Her Secret Dream*, is available from WIND Press in Kentucky and was named the Outstanding Poetry Book of the Year by the Appalachian Writers Association in 2008. You can learn much more about her, her work, and the beautiful Appalachian Mountains at her Web site: www.ritasimquillen.com.

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