

# *A Common Wealth of Poetry*

## The Newsletter of the Poetry Society of Virginia

[www.PoetrySocietyOfVirginia.org](http://www.PoetrySocietyOfVirginia.org)

Send info to: [shannp@gmail.com](mailto:shannp@gmail.com)

July 2011

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*Deadline for  
next Newsletter  
is  
August 12*

*Send poems about  
"late summer" for  
consideration in the  
next issue-  
30 line limit*



### **From our President**

Dear Members,

Thank you so very much for choosing me as your president. The confidence you have placed in me is a great honor, and I promise to do all in my power to show my appreciation. There is a lot of excitement, and a little trepidation, in anticipating the year ahead. Little did I expect, on my first visit to a poetry reading, that I would fall in love with poetry and the companionship of poets. In a few years, that is exactly what has happened.

I wish to thank my predecessor, Nancy Powell, for her leadership in the past year, for the progress she brought into being, and for her good information and advice during the transition of administrations.

My hope is to support a strong organization on a statewide basis, with good communication, participation and understanding among the regions. A couple of changes will need attention:

In order to maximize member participation, the Ellen Anderson reader will be chosen by mail ballot, as opposed to in-person voting during the Festival. The ballot will be found inside this issue of the newsletter, and should be mailed by August 30, 2011 to the Northern Regional Vice-President, Barry Amis. Please submit one, two or three names of Virginia poets for the honor. Selection is to be based solely on the quality of the individual's poetry. The reading will be held in the Northern Region in March.

Executive Committee members, especially regional vice-presidents, are encouraged to attend all regional meetings, or at least as many as possible. I understand that this participation was expected several years ago, but has been followed less frequently in recent years. I hope we can increase our cohesiveness, and learn from the creative ideas of others.

Many thanks, again, for the honor of electing me to serve you in this capacity. Please feel free to discuss with me, or with your regional vice-president, any suggestions or questions you may have.

My very best,  
Judith K. Bragg

## Obituary

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**Virginia O'Keefe**, educator, poet, and consultant, lost her seven year battle with cancer on June 24, 2011. She is well-known by PSV members, not only for serving as Vice President, Southeast Region, but also for her many wins her poetry gained for her in the Annual PSV Poetry Contest. She also won awards at the Christopher Newport University Annual Writer's Conference.

Virginia received her Ph.D. in English Education from New York University. After a career of teaching English to hundreds of students, she became a consultant for poetry writing to Virginia Beach Public Schools. Her two non-fiction books *Speaking to Think/Thinking to Speak* and *Developing Critical Thinking* contain activities to teach poetry in the classroom. Her poetry has been published in *Virginia Adversaria*, *The Powhatan Review*, *Visions Magazine*, *The Poets Domain*, *Wee Ones*, and *Regina Weese Magazine*.

Even when ill, Virginia made her annual trek to Williamsburg to delight audiences with her lyrical poetry at the Saturday Poetry Series and at the open readings at the poetry festival. She will be missed.

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## Member News & Publications

**Mary J. Haines** celebrates the publication of her book *Beads of an Abacus* by San Francisco Bay Press.

Four of **Ron Smith's** poems recently appeared in \*Poets for Pound at Sala Capizucchi\*, edited by Riccardi, Gery, and Bacigalupo (published in New Orleans by University of New Orleans Press and in Rimini, Italy, by Raffaelli Editore, 2011. These poems appear in Italian translations, as well as in English.

New member **Laura Shovan** announces her inclusion in *Life in Me Like Grass on Fire: Love Poems* published for National Poetry Month. This is her first book as editor. It features poems by 50 Maryland poets. She is the winner of the 2010 Harriss Poetry Prize and was recently named editor of the art and literary journal, *Little Patuxent Review*. Her poem "Honor Roll," won an Honorable Mention in the Allen Ginsberg Poetry Awards.

[Jack Trammell, Randolph-Macon College professor and PSV member, and his wife Audrie who is a high school teacher, visited the Terra Centre Elementary School in Burke, Virginia on May 9th, to read poetry and guide nearly 50 students in writing their own poetry. He read Jesse Stuart's THE OLD ARE VALIANT, and then had students write a descriptive poem about the events in the story, amongst other activities, which also included reading children's poetry written by Jack and his wife.](#)

[Daniel Pravda was the featured poet on altdaily.com for June 2011](#)

[Shann Palmer was published in Short, Fast, and Deadly and Redheaded Stepchild. She has work forthcoming in Scissors and Spackle.](#)

## CHAMPION READER PROGRAM

The **CHAMPION READER** sheets are double sided and in color, with a bio and photo of the Winning Poet, the poem, and category information on each side. At the bottom of the sheet is information in the footer area for LOG keeping and reporting. No two sheets are the same. The Student Poetry Contest has received word of over 30 times a Winning POET/Poem has been read at a public venue, and we suspect there are more that have not yet been reported. This is so exciting.

The committee is trying to find ways to get sheets out to all our members all around the state who would like some. Please help to distribute **CHAMPION READER** individual sheets. These sheets can be used in classrooms, writing workshops, and as part of a window display in addition to being read out loud. The SPC committee thanks you for your support of our Winning Poets and the **CHAMPION READER** program.

Check the PSV web page for more information.

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## BOOK REVIEW

*Animals Usher Us to Grace*

,**Roselyn Elliot** Finishing Line Press 2011

If someone asked you to recommend a short book of poetry that could both astonish and teach someone what poetry should be, it would be Roselyn Elliott's newest chapbook.

There are twenty-seven poems in this work—each one like a beautiful butterfly pinned to paper. They are both accessible and astonishing. For example, from "After Drought" she describes "...the wilting impatiens that rise/from an old memory of how to live..." They are full of wonder, too.

A poem, "Without the Cows" recalls memories of milking cows as a girl and "their dignity beneath our fingers." These poems are equal to Ellen Bryant Voight's poems about farms. It's not too much of a stretch to say that there is more here than

meets the eye. Too often poems drag the reader through some event in the poet's life that has no relation to the reader's life.

These poems transcend the natural connection to the animal to open up the world behind the world we inhabit.

"Hawk Waiting"

There is no wind. The flap of wings  
traveling through the trees has stopped.  
A red-tailed hawk, perched  
on a tilting oak, casts her shadow.

.....

She who can see past the earth's edge,  
hear the planetary whir,  
she can have anything she wants.

The hawk is not just in an oak tree but a "tilting" oak. And the last three lines of the poem on the surface describe the hawk, but underneath describe what a poet in control of the language and moment can do. By writing poems, poets "can have anything" [they want], "can see past the earth's edge." She has done what Annam Manthiram describes as the writer's directive [paraphrased]: to take out your heart, examine it, then write what you see.

After reading these poems, I couldn't help but feel gratitude for every encounter, every sadness that is ours to experience. To read these accessible poems is an act of grace itself.

*Guy Terrell*

*For members who want information on where to publish poems try these resources:*

In print: Poets & Writers Magazine and Poet's Market 2011 by Robert Lee Brewer

Online: **Creative Writing Opportunities List** run by Allison Joseph at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale to sign up go to [Crwropps-B-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:Crwropps-B-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)

**Duotrope Digest**- a free writers resource <http://duotrope.com>

**New Pages**- reviews literary magazines and lists deadlines <http://www.newpages.com>

To submit poems to the newsletter: email [shannp@gmail.com](mailto:shannp@gmail.com) for guidelines and themes.

## POEMS

### **Song of the Diarist's Wife**

**PSV member Claudia Gary**

There is no need to padlock your poor journal.  
I've little to no interest in your cursed  
obsession with past lovers: though infernal,  
it's no less tedious. Why should I thirst  
for some purported juicy inside story  
when all of my desire is for you?  
If murky rivers wind through purgatory,  
why should I clamber for a better view?  
And even if you'd mapped out paradise  
and found the keys to heighten your immersion  
in that celestial realm, I'd say, "That's nice,"  
and find my own, not buy into your version.  
However, if it's me you write about,  
then, hang it all, that *is* worth finding out.

(first published in *The Formalist*; in *Humor Me* [David Robert Books, 2006])

**April 17, 2010**

**PSV member Helen Eano**

Faint pink line streaking the horizon  
never the same on any other dawn ---  
restless Virginia sweet gums, indolent  
fans in lazy breezes.  
No yearning today for Canadian maples,  
giant prairie skies, cherished, lost,  
no ruminating on the history of this marriage, or the two  
that came before.  
Only this twenty-four hours,  
these wafting branches, this  
streak of pink  
dissolving  
into pearl sky.

### **Morning: Two Dogs on a Winter Field**

**PSV member Ron Smith**  
from *Rnning Again in Hollywood Cemetary*

Soundless,  
breaths floating together  
before the sun, black  
labs tumbled slowly  
in their own  
corona,

beyond male and female, wheeling  
over the frozen earth,  
dark bodies  
burning.

# Ellen Anderson Reading and Award

The Third Ellen Anderson Reading will be held at the Northern Virginia regional meeting, in March, 2012. This reading is held in honor of Ellen Anderson, a former president of the Poetry Society of Virginia, and the award is funded by the Poetry Society of Virginia and by a bequest from Ellen Anderson's estate. The reader/prize winner is a Virginia poet, selected by vote of the membership of the Poetry Society of Virginia, based on the quality of his/her poetry.

This year, in hopes of obtaining maximum participation, the vote will be taken by mail-in ballot, or by email, to Barry Amis, the Northern regional vice-president, at 1100 Quaker Hill Drive, Apt. 109, Alexandria, VA 22314

On the ballot below, give the name or names of one, two or three poets you would like to see considered for the honor.

To submit your vote by electronic mail, send to [bdamis@comcast.net](mailto:bdamis@comcast.net)  
Use "Ellen Anderson Reader" on the Subject line.

Deadline for ballots **August 30<sup>th</sup>**

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## BALLOT Ellen Anderson Reading

I wish to have the following poet(s) considered for the 2012 Ellen Anderson Reading and Award.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

## Executive Committee Officers 2010-2011

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## Executive Directors

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Carolyn Foronda  
Nancy Powell  
Shirley Sellers

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Margaret Ward  
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Ron Smith  
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July 2011

First Class

Mail

Newsletter of the Poetry Society of Virginia

<http://poetrysocietyofvirginia.org/>