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NORTH CAROLINA POETRY SOCIETY

# Pinesong

PINESONG: AWARDS 2022



VOLUME 58

*Awards 2022*

North Carolina Poetry Society

Founded 1932

# Pinesong

*Awards 2022*

Volume 58

North Carolina  
**POETRY**  
**SOCIETY**

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For detailed information about NCPS membership fees and benefits, annual contest guidelines, current Board of Directors officers and committees, meetings, sponsored events, and the mission, bylaws and history of this non-profit literary arts organization, please visit us online: [www.ncpoetrysociety.org](http://www.ncpoetrysociety.org)

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

*"The poet is the priest of the invisible." —Wallace Stevens*

Once again, I sit in awe of the journey found in these collected poems. Your words are the vehicle taking me to unknown and unimagined worlds. In this space I collect your thoughts and place them gently on the page. We spend time together, time becoming more familiar with each other, sharing the sacred space between writer and editor. I read and often re-read your words, learning something about you, the writer, in the process. Thank you for trusting your poems to my care. I am honored by the privilege of placing your poetry in *Pinesong* for the third year. Please continue to observe what others cannot see and to share what you find. What would this world be without poetry?

A special thank you to the student poets who submitted to these contests. May you continue to bravely lift your voices. Our world needs the sound of such purity.

Until next year,

Sherry Pedersen Thrasher, Editor



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## 2022 PINESONG DEDICATION

*The 2022 North Carolina Poetry Society Pinesong Dedication Committee is proud to present as the 2022 Pinesong Dedicatee: Lenard D. Moore.*

Our dedicatee for the 2022 Pinesong is Lenard D. Moore. He has been a tireless worker for poetry and an exemplary poet for decades, and it is an honor to celebrate him.

This past fall Moore's latest collection of tanka and haibun, *Long Rain*, was released by Wet Cement Press. In the introduction to this volume, Guy Davenport writes,

*Lenard Moore is a Japanese poet who lives in North Carolina, or a North Carolina poet who lives in an imaginary medieval Japan. He has been a farmer, an American soldier in Germany, a schoolteacher; his ancestors came from Africa in chains. He seems, to the world's eye, to be as representative a husband, father, and citizen as any sociologist might point to as a statistically ordinary well-behaved American. And the sociologist would be wrong, for Lenard Moore is a poet, and all good poets are extraordinary, and very good ones are unique.*

Moore's haiku have won awards nationally and internationally, including from The Haiku Society of America's Merit Book Award; Haiku Museum of Tokyo Awards in 1983, 1994, and 2003, first prize winner in traditional style haiku; Mainichi Daily News (Tokyo); and Japan Air Lines Haiku Contest, where his haiku was a finalist out of more than 40,000 entries.

Moore also contributed to the work of haiku writing and publishing and archiving by serving as Honorary Curator of the American Haiku Archives at the California State Library in 2020-2021, as President of the Haiku Society of America in 2008 and 2009, and as the longtime executive chairman of the North Carolina Haiku Society.

He's the editor of *One Window's Light: A Collection of Haiku* (Unicorn Press, 2017, reprinted by Blair in 2020) and co-editor of 7 (Jacar Press, 2016). His own collection of haiku, *The Open Eye*, was published in a 30-year anniversary edition from Mountain and Rivers Press in 2017.

But Moore's work is hardly restricted to haiku. His other book-length works include *Poems of Love & Understanding* (Carlton Press, 1982); *Forever Home* (St. Andrews College Press, 1992); *Desert Storm: A Brief History* (Los Hombres Press, 1993); *Geography of Jazz* (reprinted by Blair in 2020); and *A Temple Looming* (WordTech, 2008).

In 2020, Moore co-edited *All the Songs We Sing: Celebrating the 25th Anniversary of the Carolina African American Writers' Collective* (Carolina Wren) with North Carolina Poet Laureate Jaki Shelton Green. His literary works have been published in more than sixteen countries and translated into more than twelve languages. His poems,

essays, short stories, and book reviews have appeared in more than 400 publications. His poems have appeared in more than 100 anthologies.

As an organizer, Moore founded and is executive director of the Carolina African American Writers' Collective and co-founder of the Washington Street Writers Group.

Having graduated magna cum laude from Shaw University and with a Master of Arts from North Carolina A&T State University, Moore taught at Mount Olive College, North Carolina State University, North Carolina A&T State University, and Enloe High School in Raleigh.

An innovative collaborator, Moore has collaborated with noted musicians, a symphony orchestra, dancers, and visual artists.

Moore has been recognized with awards from numerous organizations, including the North Carolina Award for Literature, Furious Flower Laureate Ring, Margaret Walker Creative Writing Award, Raleigh Medal of the Arts, Indies Arts Award, Tar Heel of the Week Award, Sam Ragan Award in The Fine Arts, Cave Canem Fellowships, and a Soul Mountain Retreat Fellowship. He has served as Eastern North Carolina Gilbert-Chappell Distinguished Poet.

On a personal note, as someone who first met Lenard Moore nearly forty years ago, I can say that few people I have met in writing have applied themselves as passionately and so often selflessly in creating both excellent poetry and special environments that assist others in writing, editing, and publishing poetry. I agree with Guy Davenport: Lenard Moore is an original, as a poet and as a North Carolinian. Moore was as hungry for poetry and poetic companionship then as he is now. For that and for his congeniality, we have all been living better lives.

This year marks the 90th year of NCPS, and we can think of no better poet to celebrate at this historic moment in time than Lenard Moore, who perfectly exemplifies the aspirations we have as poets and as good stewards of our poetic community.



The Nominating Committee:

Paul Jones, Bill Griffin, Malaika King Albrecht

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## THE POET LAUREATE AWARD

### **Preliminary Judge:** Anne McMaster

Anne McMaster is a poet and professional playwright. A former lecturer in Theatre and English in NI and California, she designs/facilitates projects on dementia and creativity, education, community development, mental health, and creative writing and works internationally as a creative writing mentor. Her work is published in journals and anthologies in the UK, Ireland and America and she writes regularly for BBC Radio Ulster. *Walking Off the Land*, her debut collection, was published by Hedgehog Poetry Press in May 2021. *Póame*—a collection of poetry in Ulster Scots was published in late 2021, and *Unexpected Item in the Bagging Area* (Collected Poems) in 2022.

### **Final Judge:** Joseph Bathanti

Joseph Bathanti was appointed by Governor Beverly Eaves Perdue in September 2012 to a two-year term as Poet Laureate of North Carolina. He is the author of eight books of poetry, four novels, one book of short stories and a collection of essays. *East Liberty* won the 2001 Carolina Novel Award, *Coventry* won the Novello Literary Award, and *This Metal* was nominated for the National Book Award. His other awards include the Spokane Prize, the Will D. Campbell Award for Creative Nonfiction, two literature fellowships from the North Carolina Arts Council, the Samuel Talmadge Ragan Award, the Linda Flowers Prize, the Sherwood Anderson Award; the Barbara Mandigo Kelly Peace Poetry Prize; the Donald Murray Prize; the Ragan-Rubin Award; the Mary Frances Hobson Prize; the Irene Blair Honeycutt Award for Lifetime Achievement in the Literary Arts; and the Rita Dove Award in Poetry. Bathanti is Professor of Creative Writing at Appalachian State University.

**Judges' Comments:**

"Two Variations on a Theme of a Tenement (as Viewed from the Window of a Moving Train) with a Song Interposed " is a powerfully ambitious poem, even visionary. The speaker's eye, wending through the mundane to the mythic, takes in everything, and renders it through a lens that is at once documentary and movingly compassionate. The poem's linguistic intensity, its sheer percussive, sonic heft, is extraordinary. Ultimately a praise song, a litany to the unseen and unsung, it gathers torque, line by explosive line, until it seems about to detonate. It resounds long after we've stopped reading it.

*Maria Roupail*

**Two Variations on a Theme of a Tenement (as  
Viewed from the Window of a Moving Train)  
With a Song Interposed**

I

**Melancholy in a Midwestern City**

What you see from the clack-and-clattering  
el train its surge and sway high over the streets  
your city its belly of sandstone and iron

spooned up against the lake's south flank  
factories ruins of abattoirs  
ghosts of strikers and murdered immigrants

traces of the Great Migration  
under the dark tarpaulin of twilight  
one broken block following another.

Leashed to the horizon the train lurches west  
past a tenement solitary austere strange  
as a spear of prairie grass in a patch of crumbled asphalt.  
You fix on this vertical work  
pressing into your retinas  
its corniced roof shouldering a cloud.

And you hold on and on to it  
falling into the night which closes  
like an eye.

**Song of the Continent**

Where once a glacier unclamped its claw  
and the space between mountains  
birthed five small seas,



A black and white photograph of a golf course path lined with trees. The path is in the foreground, leading towards a grassy area in the background. The trees are dense and leafy, creating a canopy effect. The text "Adult Contests" is overlaid in a white box on the left side of the image.

*Adult Contests*





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THE ALICE OSBORN AWARD

*Poems written for children from 2-12 years of age*

**Judge: Kristina Erny**

Kristina Erny is a third culture poet who grew up in South Korea. Her poetry has appeared in *The Los Angeles Review*, *Tupelo Quarterly*, *Yemassee*, *Bluestem*, and elsewhere. She holds an MFA from the University of Arizona, and her work has been the recipient of the Tupelo Quarterly Inaugural Poetry Open Prize and the Ruskin Art Club Poetry Award. Her manuscript *Wax of What's Left* was a finalist for Tupelo Press's Dorset Prize, Ahsahta Sawtooth Poetry award, and the Colorado Prize for Poetry. After many years of teaching internationally, she currently teaches university creative writing and lives in Kentucky with her husband, sons, and daughter.

*JeanMarie Olivieri*

## **The Frog Prince**

What a burden it is to wear this crown,  
that sits so heavy on my warty head.  
I can hardly remember when  
I didn't hop but walked instead.

Now I make my home in a marsh  
in tall reeds with tadpoles and fishes.  
I have no castle or royal court;  
just a sticky tongue and croaking wishes.

The only fire I want to see  
comes from fireflies, so good to eat.  
Give me wet leaves and shallow pools;  
no hearth fires, or loaves of wheat.

Soon there will be no redemption for me.  
Nothing will un-web my hands and feet;  
not one or a dozen maiden's kisses.  
The Witch's revenge will be complete.

And will I be happier when at last  
this crown falls from my head?  
When I hop away, just a frog,  
ring the bell, the Prince is dead.

*Bradley Samore*

## **Pioneer**

An ant sets out

for the range  
of my toes. Up the pinky

then into the valley  
before climbing my ring toe

wedded to the earth. It descends  
the ravine

into the scree of toe-jam  
and emerges atop my middle toe—

the first summit with a thicket of hair,  
a veritable forest in alpine air—

then clammers up the penultimate slope, traverses  
a knuckle to the base camp

of Mt. Big Toe, from which it ascends  
up, up, up, out of the shadows, onto the zenith.

What glory!  
What rapture!

Does it sense it? Without pausing, it walks down  
a blade of grass, back to the world it knows so well.

Farewell!

*Maura High*

## Hard to Get

If I say, shut your eyes,  
you can open them,  
you can peek, squint, stare,  
look askance.

If I say, raise your hand,  
you can let it drop  
scratch, slap, or swing,  
flex this way and that.

If I say, listen,  
you can ramp up,  
chat, mumble, hum,  
look away, tune out and in.

You're alive: you choose.  
You do one thing or the other:  
be ornery, be curious.  
play along, call it quits.

But if I say, breathe—  
if I say, *breathe*—  
you might hold your breath,  
how long? a minute?

then every live cell of you will clamor  
for empty air,  
wanting what's here,  
what's now, and nothing else.

*Gary Phillips*

## **Nearly Winter**

Late fall, nearly winter;  
a green tree frog came to live with us,  
hidden among the cactuses and tropicals  
we saved from the first hard frost.  
Handsome, dapper in his lime-green coat with bone piping.  
Hiding in our small winter jungle during the day  
and hunting long legged cellar spiders while we sleep.  
This morning at dawn he showed himself to me  
then pulled in his legs as if in prayer.  
I offered him water in a bowl of clay  
and he took it, after I looked away.

*C. Pleasants York***Hot Dog! With All the Relish He Can Muster**

The daschund's a canine beyond compare—  
Wagging tail and legs hardly there.  
He's long and he's lean.  
He loves sausage cuisine.  
He's under fences with inches to spare.

**Judge: Jeremy Paden**

Jeremy Paden was born in Milan, Italy, and raised in Central America and the Caribbean. He received his Ph.D. in Latin American literature at Emory University and his Professor of Spanish at Transylvania University in Lexington, KY. He also teaches literary translation at Spalding University's low-residency MFA program. He is the author of three chapbooks, one of which he has translated into Spanish, and the author of two recent full-length collections of poetry: *world as sacred burning heart* (Taos Press) and *Autorretrato Como Una Iguana*, a collection of poems written in Spanish and translated into English, which co-won the 2020 Valparaíso Poeta en Nueva York prize. His illustrated and bilingual children's book, *Under the Ocelot Sun* (Shadelandhouse Modern Press) co-won a 2020 Campoy-Ada prize for Children's Literature. As a translator he has published a chapbook of translations and two full-length collections: *A Stone to the Chest* by the Argentine poet Carlos Aldazábal and *The Correspondences* by the Mexican poet Alí Calderón.



*J.S. Absher*

## **When I Lost My Wallet**

When I lost my wallet,  
it had a wad of dough.  
I lost all of it—

moolah call it,  
cash money, the nut. D'oh!  
when I lost my wallet,

the boodle was small, but  
enough to stroke my ego.  
I lost all of it—

it leaked out like a faucet.  
Who knew that shekels flow?  
When I lost the wallet

with my wherewithal, it  
left me strapped and broke.  
I lost all of it—

lettuce call it,  
call it lolly or dinero:  
when I lost my wallet,  
I lost all of it.

*Jane Shlensky*

## Everyday Aphorisms for Lazy Speakers

Put your shoulder to the wheel,  
Push through pain (or what you feel),  
Place your faith in what is real,  
blah blah such and such.

Keep your chin up, soldier on,  
Mum's the word, we're in the zone,  
Push your luck and just hold on  
might serve you in a clutch.

Face each challenge, know your stuff,  
Put your dukes up, cry *Enough!*  
Know your limit, feint, and bluff—  
slogans are a crutch.

We can turn this thing around:  
Lock and load, boots on the ground.  
What's destroyed won't make a sound  
when you're out of touch.

Platitude or axiom,  
Maxim, proverb, epigram,  
Saying, motto, apothegm—  
glib words for nothing much.

But when you don't know what to say,  
When voice is called for or you'll pay,  
When thought eludes you, try cliché—  
It bears the common touch.

*Bonnie Staiger*

## Ode to Deodorant

In our pubescent years my girlfriends  
and I were aghast at those who didn't shave,  
whose raised-arm displayed  
a tangled nest of 'too much information'  
while your brands of pit-sticks like Mum  
and Secret promise to be discrete  
and keep us fresh as a daisy  
if we only roll-on your marketing strategy;  
and guys seduced by ads with cleavage  
or boasting benefits of volcanic charcoal,  
or pine tar in a wind-up Speed Stick;  
or my dad's Old Spice which never  
quite added a hint of allspice  
to the late-afternoon aromas wafting  
from in the back shop of the printshop  
or stopped the yellow stains on his pressed  
white shirts; or Right Guard that left me  
wondering – was it you who was supposed  
to guard his left; or was it you  
who stumbled over the stubble  
during my reproductive years;  
or you who slides like a Zamboni  
on slick ice over my left armpit  
left barren by radiation's swath;  
you who must blanket the underarm  
underworld, disrupt the eco-system of flora  
occupying a humid habitat; you who  
bear the burden to block bacteria's flatulence;  
I pray you,  
do your due diligence and save us  
from this stinking world.

*Jeanne Julian*

### **Villanelle: To Sleep**

You intrude, intend to ease my cares,  
but knock my bedtime novel to the floor.  
I only want you when you are not there.

A long drive. At the wheel, I try not to scare,  
thrown off course by battling your ardor  
as you intrude, intend to ease my cares.

Dim lecture hall, the speaker drones. I'm unaware  
of what the savant says, my eyelids close, I snore.  
I only want you when you are not there.

My lover turns to me, lips moist, chest bare.  
Tenderly we kiss, and he wants more—  
but you intrude, intend—I yawn. No fair.

At three a.m., wide awake, I stare  
into dread darkness. You're what I'm waiting for:  
I only want you when you are not there.

Though dreams may fuel art, don't you dare  
sneak in, disrupt imagination's labors!  
You intrude, intend to ease...so easy  
I only...want when ah, now, here.

*Mary O'Keefe Brady*

## **A Foodie Visits Normandy**

Camembert, *ma chère*—  
*fromage*, no homage  
to lily scents  
lavender fields  
*pomme* peels.

*Crêpe*, you're in no shape  
to scarf all that butter and cream  
and sheep that graze on salty grass  
in the shadow of Mont St. Michel, alas.

*Mange*—this is the Norman conquest  
of my waistline. Waste not the call,  
*à table*,  
raise your glass to *Bon Appétit*

and dig in.

**Judge: Robert Moyer**

Robert Moyer lives in Winston-Salem, NC, where he was local host for Haiku North America 2007 and 2019 as well as for three quarterly meetings of the Haiku Society of America. He has had work published in numerous journals, such as *Frogpond*, *Modern Haiku*, *bottle rockets*, *Heron's Nest*, *Failed Haiku*, *Presence*, *acorn*, and *Sketchbook*. He was a frequent contributor to *Haiku News* and had 27 poems included in their anthology. He has been included in several anthologies, including the ten-year *Acorn* anthology, *Haiku 2021*, and *Jar of Rain*, all "best of" collections. He also served as judge for the British Haiku Society contest in 2017. He is the poet in residence at the Arts Based School, and host of the monthly Meetup session, *How To Haiku*.

*Debbie Strange*

busker's hat  
a child offers coins  
of dried lunaria

---

BLOODROOT HAIKU AWARD

*Ed Bremson*

spring graduation...  
my teacher forgets the name  
of her cancer

SECOND PLACE



*Lorraine A Padden*

exposed bedrock  
the all-white jury  
acquits

---

BLOODROOT HAIKU AWARD

*Jennifer Hambrick*

her rocking chair  
set in its grooves  
deep winter

HONORABLE MENTION

**Judge: Kerri French Nelson**

Kerri French Nelson is the author of *Every Room in the Body* (Moon City Press, 2017), winner of the 2016 Moon City Poetry Award and the North Carolina Poetry Society's 2018 Brockman-Campbell Book Award. *Instruments of Summer*, her chapbook of poems about Amy Winehouse, was published in 2013 by Dancing Girl Press. Her poetry has appeared in *Washington Square Review*, *BOAAT*, *Copper Nickel*, *The Los Angeles Review*, *The Journal*, *Mid-American Review*, *Barrow Street*, and *Nashville Review*, among others. A North Carolina native, she has lived in Georgia, Massachusetts, Tennessee, and England and holds degrees from UNC-Chapel Hill, UNC-Greensboro, and Boston University. She now lives outside of Nashville, Tennessee and teaches at the University of Memphis.

*Bonnie Staiger*

**Winter is for Wittering**

*after Natalie Diaz*

We live with struggle  
    and wind that rankles  
our ghosted breath.

The river, knit with ice  
    bends under its own weight  
in a brittle winter

the way wonder offers  
    a pledge so small  
in the wideness of loss.

Clouds, like a tangle of tissues  
    turn tears into snowflakes  
in the cashmere light.

No solace in the solstice.  
    It's only December  
and we must be brave.

*Marjorie McNamara*

## **No More Voiceovers**

She tells me I am courageous  
At nearly 70,  
To begin voice lessons,  
My voice strained from a life of singing  
From the wrong places  
And settled into easy pitches  
Like our doorbells which ring the same,  
Front and back, sending us running.  
As a child told shush and sing quiet,  
No vectors of praise for my notes,  
She catches my voice  
Down along the bottom feeders  
And eases it up into spaces  
Where silenced notes now glory  
And daily scales make me stronger;  
I find openings  
Where I sing.

*Lee Stockdale*

## **Getting to the Bottom of It**

One of the obstacles at Fort Benning's Officer Candidate School, was a long, narrow plank, above a lake, between two telephone poles. In the middle of the plank, was a step, two high, I successfully crossed over, by repeating in my mind, *Thank you, Jesus. Thank you, Jesus.*

The family loves hiking to Bradley Falls, where, every two years, a tourist falls and is killed, disregarding the *STAY BACK!* signs. I stay more well back, than anyone in the family.

We went on vacation to New York City, and stayed on the hotel's seventh floor. The two times I stood at the open window, I felt an unseen hand try to flip me out the window, down into the street below.

The next time I made hotel reservations, this time for a conference in Newark, New Jersey, I told the receptionist, *My father jumped out a window and killed himself. Can you please give me a room on the first or second floor?* I had never made this request before, and was grateful for her understanding, and mine.

*Thomas Jackson***body parts**

would i be more apt to  
 show my hands in photographs  
 had i been able to find bodily comfort  
 without the rush of a daily lunch denial  
 fifteen, sixteen, mirror tummy-pinching  
 wondering where fat is coming from  
 if they tell me i'm too skinny emaciated skeletal  
 discovering my knack for imagery early

would my smile be crooked  
 had he done what he proposed that got cops involved  
 & buried my face in exposed aggregate concrete  
 killing me as the bell for first period rang out just like he promised  
 because i mocked him for being incapable of leaving me alone  
 obsession of a lonely blonde bigot, the closest i had to a secret admirer  
 screaming into steam, midnight in the shower, scared to go to school  
 not wanting to come out as gay to save my skin in the most twisted way  
 having them all believe i got in a spat with him instead, it's what us boys do  
 banning me from social media for two weeks as punishment

would i be put away still, rotator cuffs torn to shreds from wall punches  
 had i wrapped my hands around the administrator's neck like i saw myself  
 when he said i should have danced more carefully through crossfire or  
 trimmed my sharp edges to not ruffle feathers  
 lecturing me about Mr. wonderful's life difficulty while i sat in the cold office  
 staring out at breezy trees wondering if i'd  
 depersonalize again 'n end up under one during class, seasoned symptom  
 tradition would my digestion function better  
 without a history of weathering empty stomach panic attacks pill-less  
 would there be any poetry  
 without buried memories to exhume; piecing together

a body composed of found bones rattling with invisible pain  
 the one they never go to war for  
 the one they'd stitch back together for "great needlework" compliments

*Joyce Brown*

## **My Sister Shows Me Her Childhood Bus Route**

She was fiery even then,  
standing strong against the boy  
bullies torturing her little brother  
as the bus chugged and stopped,  
chugged and stopped out there  
on old Buffalo Shoals Road,  
paused at farm houses in need of paint,  
frail tenant shacks that looked as if they'd  
collapse of their own volition.  
At each stop the boys chanted a new  
chorus, a blade in tender heart,  
*Loren Lorene, Loren Lorene,*  
each caw another wound,  
his boy-child soul already  
wearing down from the fray.

She was a pale and skinny child,  
black straight hair bowl-cut plain,  
nine years old, heart-muscled, ready  
to take on her brother's flinching fear,  
her father's slow death, her mother's  
brokenness. Her eyes were lazars,  
knowing she was not Zeus.  
There would be no Zeus to punish  
or to save. She was Hestia, keeper  
of the hearth. She was the hearth itself,  
her mother, brother, sister,  
ever hovering nearer  
for the warmth.



**Judge: Ashlee Haze**

Ashlee Haze is a poet and spoken word artist from Atlanta by way of Chicago. She is the host of *Moderne Philosophy*, an educational podcast for creatives and modern thinkers. Her work has appeared in numerous publications and media outlets, including work recently published in the May issue of *Poetry Magazine*. She holds a B.A. in Philosophy from Georgia State University and spends her time innovating ways to tell the stories not often told.

*Thomas Jackson*

## the big mistake

confined spaces scare me  
 i walk quicker down hallways when i  
 hear accompanying feet paces behind  
 whisper cursing the outfit i wore that  
 generated thirteen drunk compliments  
 too sheer too stupid! should've brought a sweatshirt  
 wondering if cheap mail-order silver sheen textiles  
 will be the big mistake that gets me on the news  
 another one lost to a man who's tolerant when girls are around  
 cede a little bit of safety & tell him "press three"  
 get off one floor below & find a stairwell  
 so much progress made  
     there's more people that will miss you & sympathize with tragedy  
     give the sun enough time to set & their brothers will kill you  
 same way they used to text "i want you" "i'm into you" yet your hesitation  
     prevailed  
 rightly so, as it was always a drunken party dare to play you like a  
     worn-out joke  
     they were well-regarded & i was just me, how could i think i'm worthy  
 battered nerves bathing in stress hormones 'n paranoia salts  
 sheer avarice, wasting prayers for my safety on being so loud  
 will the big mistake that leaves me sending symbolic cardinals to alleviate  
     loved one grief  
 be my openness's peak, a trait they laud as admirable in their favorite  
     thing to pick apart  
 will it feel like a mistake or will i die in rare, glittered splendor  
 throat between palms they all wait in line to clean as if the blood is his  
 rushing to his defense my skin probably hit on him, so he hit it back  
 they know how much i talk about sex  
 i walk as fast as i can back to my bed  
 bury clothes in the bottom of my hamper so the handymen can't tell either  
 retreating from the made statement to break the evidence-based fever

*Kelly Jones***October 4**

The first artificial satellite, Sputnik, was launched by the USSR  
on October 4th, 1957.

you were born screaming to the sky  
a child of ancient flame and embered wars  
silvered skin red blood within  
breaking through the earthly womb

all eyes stare at you like Neanderthals at first blaze  
men huddle around radios listening to your voice crackle with fire  
fingers pointed as you drink light from a charcoal sky  
and cross the horizon traveling at the speed of silence

you see all that we know below and all that we don't know above  
the world shrinks to an uneasy size, continents drift and collide  
echoes of your birth crumble mountains  
and swallows seas as you circle the flattening earth

but all dreams thrown at the heavens crash back in pieces  
the flawless autumn sky will give way to winter's sad infirmity  
you will cool, returning to fire  
your spirit, forged in the furnaces of distant stars  
will be dust and delusion once more  
But tonight you bend the firmament toward your will  
great men and ants ponder your genesis in equal wonder

tonight the world lies awake in its bed  
staring out an open window into a newborn darkness, dreaming  
of us and them  
of earth and sky, of fire and ice, of creating and destroying  
you drift across the iron curtains  
unaware of the fires now burning below  
moving faster, dropping lower  
beeping a soulless hymn that announces  
to the universe

Man is now a god.

*Cathy Sky*

## **Nude, Descending a Staircase No. 2**

*For Hillary Clinton, after the painting by Marcel Duchamp*

In photos she seems to move slowly, as against  
wind, body swaddled in beach pants and parka.  
Sunglasses conceal her eyes. Like young women  
of her time, she rode the rainbow dream: their  
parents' postwar euphoria. The mantra was

*If you see it, believe it, you can become it.*

Confident in miniskirts and Indian sandals, daughters  
walked as equals through marbled halls of learning.  
Minds open, sharp as switchblades. Until the pull  
of Important Husbands, needing fierce loyalty and  
intelligence called Wife, Helpmate. Now, Partner.

Creaking and complaining, doors opened onto vaults  
of stern gray men and frightened children who waited,  
watching. As Hillary descended the staircase in vignettes,  
parsed into still-life, into sound byte, into headline.  
Compressed, then defeated by a pig-headed status quo.

A force inviolable as a wall of rhinos at the water hole.

*Maureen Sherbondy*

## **Today the English Department Fills with Stretchers**

The English department has mutated  
to healthcare classrooms. Five instructors departed,  
downsized through attrition. Dying in this office,  
we need revival. Their ambulance waits in the parking lot  
to whisk the rest of us away. It's all about income and retention.

Bodies composed of rubber lie in wait on gurneys  
in hallways while lonely insides atrophy, harden  
from lack of empathy. In come white-coated nurses  
and paramedics. Stethoscopes, needles, and lab tables replace  
poetry, short stories, and essays on shelves.

We worry about fiction and survival.  
Years before, an English professor died.  
Ghosts wander through these corridors  
whispering *Out, Out, Brief Candle*.  
The administration announces the future  
is all about healthcare and technology.

Desperation accumulates on my curated bookshelves.  
Dying from erasure, I set Shakespeare, Dickinson,  
Eliot atop a stretcher, beg these medics: Can you save us,  
too? The sheet covers the rubber cadaver.  
When we are gone, who will recite poetry at our graves?

*Nick Sweet*

## **Decent/Descent**

I'm stuck at a bad intersection - longest red light in town  
I absently turn the radio up and roll the window down

On the curb, six feet away I try to process who I saw  
Can't help thinking "Wizard of Oz" — scarecrow minus the straw

I know who he is without looking, flash back to our Little League days  
When he was a slick-fielding shortstop, while I played a smooth second base

He'd chosen high-stakes poker as his highway to high-roller dreams  
Sadly, he lost the ranch and his soul with debts he could never redeem

A diamond flush beat his two pair, triggered his steady decline  
His bleak abstract: drugs and despair. "Will Work For Food," says his sign

Relieved he did not recognize me, I stare straight ahead and relax  
But quickly recall how he intervened in a frightening schoolyard attack

He halted a battle I would have lost, allowed me to save face and skin  
James Taylor plays on the radio reminding me You've got a friend

I hastily reach for my wallet, selecting my highest bill  
Extending my hand, averting my eyes, he takes it but stands very still

Finally, he says, "Thank you, Larry." I reply, "You're welcome, Fred"  
As I wave, raise my window, hit the gas, and run the red

**Judge: Angelo T. Geter**

Angelo T. Geter is a poet, educator, and performance artist who currently serves as the Poet Laureate of Rock Hill, SC. He is a 2020 Academy of American Poets Laureate Fellow, a 2018 National Poetry Slam champion, Rustbelt Regional Poetry Slam finalist, Southern Fried Regional Poetry Slam finalist, and has performed at venues and competitions across the country. He is the recipient of the Fall Lines 2021 Saluda River Prize for Poetry. He is also the founder of the One Word Poetry Festival, a three-day poetry festival based in Rock Hill, SC, complete with readings, workshops, and performances. His work has appeared in *All Def Poetry*, *Charleston Currents*, *Gratefulness.com*, and the Academy of American Poets "Poem a Day" series.

*Kelly Jones*

**a walk on the beach the night of our 25th anniversary**

this day once so far in front of us  
now fades behind us  
like our steps in the momentary sand  
the evening has slowed, caught in the undertow of yesterdays  
the moon, full and bold, lights our way  
past the pier where men lean over empty waters  
past the lovers hiding from dawn in the dunes  
we walk, our hands coiled in a rare embrace  
grit roughens our skin but your touch  
is gentle and firm  
like it was at my mothers funeral

our thoughts are about time, and tides and loss  
of stars, and mortgages, and deaths  
i am sure there are regrets  
but we keep them hidden behind clouds that flare in the distance

tonight we talk little, there is not much to say  
i write a message in between waves on the shifting ground  
the words between us have always been written in sand  
our dreams always in pieces, broken and smoothed at our feet  
the tide swallows them both and we start again, and again, new,  
and older each time

the clouds fast as smoke, turn to darkness in an instant  
the hooks are pulled in by the old men  
the lovers dash for higher ground  
water now comes from above and below  
but we stay still in this familiar storm  
our clothes soaked  
we are baptized by stars and salt and vows  
and we walk on  
your hand, wet and warm and infinite  
takes mine  
tighter this time.



*Mary O'Keefe Brady***A Meal to Die For***after Food of Love by Carolyn Kizer*

*I'm going to murder you with love,  
but first a slow delicious torture  
of creamy mushroom risotto,  
roast chicken with forty cloves of garlic—  
you'll go to your maker reeking  
of your last meal and the devil  
will cast your soul aside in favor  
of a lemon-glistened filet of sole.*

Before you go I'll smother you with sauce—  
rum butter on brioche bread pudding with  
raisins soaked in Grand Marnier, then  
a smooth sipping sherry for you  
a flute of Veuve Cliquot for me.

*I'm going to suffocate you with embraces,  
squeeze your ample girth, bony shoulders,  
flutter-kiss your eyelids, suction  
your last ounce of venom,  
sprinkle your lips with cinnamon sugar,  
commit you with a parting kiss  
to the sweet ever after.*

*Laura Alderson*

## Love Wild

Down by the margin of our property  
beyond the old garden in  
the dappled fringe where locust and sumac ignore us  
that hour the birds go quiet and  
the June sun cuts across the tangled  
snakeskin dangling from the grape arbor  
a coyote freezes  
just this edge of the big cedar's deep shadow  
I idle the mower at a low roar  
*Go back in the woods* I advise  
*Go on back in there where you belong*  
dun shoulders face me  
amber eyes settle  
I have an acre and a half to go  
blades darkly slice the rye grass one  
arc after another each pass nearer  
the cedar's penumbra the  
amber eyes the dun shoulders  
mechanical thunder in each approach  
each retreat a shower of dust  
a third time maybe the fourth  
I rest the roar near enough we  
study each other's hackles the  
slim body takes a sly two steps in my direction  
amber eyes aimed until  
the dun shoulders  
I break the stare kill  
the throttle abandon the field.  
She was a mother.  
Had to be.

*Lee Ann Gillen*

## Joy Prom

*"Providence Baptist Church announces the Joy Prom  
for all mentally handicapped adults. Everything provided"*

Silver elevator doors glide open.  
My four-foot-ten, twenty-year-old daughter,  
medium brown hair dancing on her shoulders,  
slides past chattering parents, wiggles  
around case workers, sidesteps

other young adults, bounces  
past the Little Lambs pre-school, peeks  
in the Helper Saints classroom,  
strides to the Soldiers of Christ meeting  
room in this born-again hotel.

Hundreds of dresses  
cling together on borrowed round racks.  
She looks through the slightly-used formal gowns  
hoping to find one to fit her oval figure and  
too short arms and legs.

She chooses a silk, a satin, a taffeta, and a chiffon  
She sheds her shorts and shirt, and slides  
her long slip over her head and hips.

The burgundy taffeta falls from shoulders to toes  
transforms my child into the woman she is.  
She emerges into the hall, and conversation stops.  
In the cheval mirror, she checks  
every angle from her bodice to the bow.

Arms upraised, she curtsies, twirls,  
She smiles at herself, whispers  
"Where do they keep the glass slippers?"

**Judge: Mary Jaimes-Serrano**

Mary Jaimes-Serrano is an author of romance novels and poetry. She has poetry published in *Heron Clan VII* and her books are available on Amazon and Kindle as well as her author website. She will be starting her MFA in writing in January of 2022. She can be found on Twitter @MaryJaimesSerr1 or on her website dedicated to her books and poetry.

*Jeanne Julian*

### **Without/With 2020/2021**

I try not to think of what I am  
without, these constrained days of dull routine:  
without museums, travel, social scenes,  
without agenda, confidence, or plan.  
Instead, what am I with? A warming hearth,  
view of a tidal cove, seagulls whose cries  
wake me at dawn, the cold, calming surprise  
of snow that overnight white-masked the earth.  
If with a mask, only my eyes can smile;  
if without, I threaten all who breathe  
my laughter, then I'll vaunt this vexing style  
and muddle through the months face semi-sheathed,  
with faith that by so doing, in a while  
without hindrance we'll share in being with.

*Nancy Young***Not Nice**

A *nice* poem rhymes,  
 It keeps the time,  
 can coax a smile  
 that lasts awhile.

A nice poem's couplets lilt and sing.  
 No stanzas disrupt anything.

A fine one scans with little effort:  
 its lines flow on without a skip.  
 Though here and there a spondee sports,  
 o'er all, the words slide off the lip.

Nice poets live in rosy places.  
 They move easy in their traces.

All words serve best that fit their scheme and mood:  
 a light and cheerful romp with hope endued.

Not nice poets mar lines kill time jar readers  
 inject  
 reams of near rhyme  
 drop  
 punctuation  
 use white space and end stop  
 to slow the sludgy flow.  
 They delight in bottling a lone  
 stark image  
 like an aborted fetus  
 with no trigger warning  
 because  
 they recognize poems *should* be dangerous  
 for who can birth a pretty verse  
 when a broken world breeds ugly?

*Jane Shlensky*

## **Writing After Seventy**

If you walked through my deepest mind,  
through loves and wonders left behind,  
perhaps you'd come to see  
that nothing cherished fades away,  
the past as vivid as today,  
preserved by memory.

Trees fall and nurture other trees,  
snows melt and run to vaster seas,  
all nature changing form.  
Our kindest thoughts, these words we write—  
migrating birds aloft in flight—  
return to keep us warm.

*Martin Settle***Marriage Twice**

The structures of love are never precise  
with marital vows that aren't conclusions.  
Why must the mind look at everything twice?

Hold onto the railings, don't slip on the ice.  
The cautions of sexual exclusions.  
The structures of love are never precise.

Swallowing emotions comes with a price—  
the stomach contains the will's intrusions.  
Why must the mind look at everything twice?

The roll of the eyes, the roll of the dice,  
the gambles that end in disillusionions.  
The structures of love are never precise.

The ties that bind can tighten like a vice.  
Our statements become full of allusions.  
Why must the mind look at everything twice?

Cuts aren't the same on each side of a slice.  
Knife blades are dulled by years of delusions.  
The structures of love are never precise—  
why the mind must look at everything twice.



*Susan Spalt*

## **Seasons Turning**

In October of this surprising year  
dahlias I'd given up for dead  
fended off a herd of deer  
and bloomed in glorious shades of red.

Before I walk on frozen ground  
covered by leaves now yellow and gold  
I breathe in the sun and look around,  
December's coming, dark, and cold

with winter nights of summer yearning.  
I forget the heat and insect stings  
and long before the season's turning  
dream of daffodils and spring.

But I will take this time, this hour  
and find the poem in this day's flower.

**Judge: Richard Smyth**

Richard Smyth has published poems in such journals as *The Southern Poetry Review*, *The Florida Review*, *Tampa Review*, *Kansas Quarterly*, and others. He is editor and publisher of the poetry journal *Albatross*, now in its 36th year. He holds a Ph.D. in English from the University of Florida and currently lives in Boston, Massachusetts, where he teaches Computer Science in a local public school district.

*Maura High*

## Copperhead

In a loose tangle on the concrete  
at the bottom of the wooden stair,

the corner where leaves, winged seeds,

and pine needles molder, where  
the rain pours down

and drains into a sump under the steps,

dark as woodpiles and stump holes,  
as sheltered and secret:

a snake, the color of stone  
overcast by shreds of dead leaves—

and it did what it was made to do:

bit me, in the foot, for stepping  
carelessly on a summer morning,

who now am no longer

quite domestic but part snake.  
part human, my cells connected

forever to its cells and those of its predators,

with a new habit of the eye  
for tree litter and stone, crawlspaces.

*Lavonne J. Adams*

## Palynology

A magnolia's seed pod forms after the flower ages,  
after each elegant petal turns from delicate cream to

buttermilk yellow. The pod seems a marriage of  
pinecones' shape and kiwis' texture: light green

with a fuzz of white, a brown lash at the tip of each  
kernel, like an antenna or the curling tail of a pig.

Its pollen microspores become airborne clouds  
of dust, that hitchhike on the legs of bees, settle

upon water like miniscule canoes. A scientist on  
a crime show I watched explained that pollen is

everywhere, practically impossible to destroy—  
survives blasts of heat, washes of acid. A sly clue

for the savvy. Flowering plants, grasses, trees,  
weeds: each species may be identified by pollen

grains alone. Unique. Think snowflakes, think  
fingerprints. Beneath a microscope's lens, spores

may look like sponge, like coral, coffee beans,  
or bits of dough. Bougainvillea spores are works

of art, resemble paper maché. Timothy grass casts  
spores that have a spot like Neptune's dark eye

or the navel on a navel orange. Every day, we stroll  
through a soup of these spores, they thicken

the sediment beneath our feet. On bad days,  
they taste like grit on the tongue, settle in the soft

ducts of eyes, catch in the cilia of the throat.

*Liza Wolff-Francis*

## **A red bird in our psyche**

In heavy downpours, I think about the cardinals,  
whether their bark-strip-and-twig-nest  
lined with vines and grass is tucked  
into dense shrubbery or under a branch.  
Inside my home, I am dry as wind pounds water  
against window glass. On these nights  
of predator dreams, when my son sleeps beside me,  
stretches his long body across the bed, whacks me  
in the face with his arm, I roost here in my room  
with shadows of clouded moon, hazy streetlights,  
wait to fall back asleep. The mother cardinal  
dreams that her red beak snatches a beetle  
from grass. As she flies it to her babies,  
beetle legs wiggle, tickle the back end  
of her throat and it escapes. She dives after it.  
Then, in her dream, her babies, pushed  
from nest by a Cooper's Hawk, fall  
into an abyss. She dives after them, wakes,  
brown eyes outlined by a tightly knit  
raised black circle, one on each side  
of her head, both open now.  
Her babies twitch beside her.  
If I found a hatchling on the ground  
fallen from its nest, I would pick it up,  
careful, with oven-mitt hands  
even though it is an old wives' tale  
that human touch will repel bird parents.  
A cardinal would not reject her babies.  
Surely, the name *wives' tales* is a misnomer.  
Many old wives are mothers  
who would not leave their babies  
but sing to them twenty-four different songs,  
lullabies, and serenading ballads,  
of crack of seed in beak, drip of rain.

*Anne Myles*

## Thicket

*~Guilford Courthouse National Military Park, Greensboro, NC*

Cutting crosswise through the battlefield  
on narrow trails I realize I'm lost, not lost  
but can't tell where I am, the smooth  
dotted and dashed lines on my folded map  
untranslatable to this hill, this stream, this woods.  
The bright moment, a leaf twirling down, the lurch  
of tiny fear and I think *then, on this very ground,*  
*they couldn't see the line that was coming,*  
*only they knew it was.* Always I'm reaching,  
looking for a path back. But it happens like this  
every time, until I wonder if disorientation  
is my true condition. I think *disoriented:*  
*unable to find the east.* Yet I found my way here,  
homed but unfamiliar, a southern campaign  
of red earth and magnolia. Meeting my own mind  
again in the vital thicket. What did those men  
watch and listen for, to steady them? What light  
do I wait for now, what drumbeat, what rising?

**Judge: Gaynor Kane**

Gaynor Kane is from Northern Ireland. She came to writing late, after finishing a degree with a creative writing module. Her full collection, *Venus in Pink Marble*, was released on her 50th birthday in 2020, published by the Hedgehog Poetry Press. She has three other publications from that press: a micro collection, *Circling the Sun* (2018), about the early aviatrixes; a chapbook, *Memory Forest* (2019), about burial rituals and last wishes; and a co-authored chapbook of pandemic poetry *Penned In* (2020). Her forthcoming chapbook of love poems *Eight Types of Love* was published in February 2022. Her poems have earned places in several competitions. She has been guest editor of the *Bangor Literary Journal* and has also performed at several festivals, including the Belfast Book Festival, Stendhal Music and Arts Festival and Cheltenham Poetry Festival.

*Katherine Crawford*

## **Litchfield Beach**

There was a storm last night.  
It flashed across ocean and sky in blinding waves,  
Circling in and out;  
With it the pounding thunder—taking no time to roll—  
Bashed through the heavens before each flash,  
Announcing the light.

And I,  
On the safety of a screened-in porch,  
Listened to wind whip the palmettos,  
Watched rain sweep in solid sheets  
Down the skinny canal.

There is something overwhelming about a lusty storm.  
It has a booming physicality  
That consumes,  
Trapping mind and body in a place of heat and madness—  
Allowing but moments of thought  
In the spaces between lightening and noise.

Suddenly I wanted to see the sea,  
I wished for the stunning impact  
Of a bolt splitting the ocean,  
Lighting just beneath the dark surface  
Like spidery fire-flashes from some submerged dragon.

I wanted to feel the pop and fizzle in the air,  
Electricity pulsing out  
Over waves and across sand,  
Enough to make the tiny hairs on my arms  
Stand on end.



But I'd seen storms before,  
And so, I let my friends leave for the beach,  
Keeping to my porch.

I have been like this lately,  
Still and quiet,  
Allowing moments to pass me by  
Like a pelican caught in an updraft,  
Ballyhoo circling out of reach in the swells.

There was a time, not long ago,  
When I would have swum out past the breakers,  
And watched the storm as I floated  
On my back.

*Maria Roupail***Abuela**

In the dream,  
my dead father speaks the same words  
as when he was in the flesh.  
Leaning into my ear, he says  
*Imaginate, hija—*  
*the nuns at the convent school*  
*taught your grandmother to write—*  
My lips part again,  
as when he told me the first time  
about the black-eyed girl  
with a birth and death date no one remembered,  
who saw visions and wrote them down.  
That was before she became the too-young mother  
abandoned by her impatient man  
who refused the burden of a tubercular wife  
and their two baby boys— *Poemas,*  
my orphaned father said.  
I turn to face him,  
as though he were  
the door to a vast room.  
But then I wake,  
and breath streams out of my body like a tide— *¡Abuela, abuelita!*  
Do you know that I see you, the poet at her desk?  
Do you see me at mine, writing you back into the world?

*Benjamin Cutler*

## **A Prayer to the Technician Who Will Upload Us to the Cloud**

When you deliver us up to this modern  
death—this latest model of immortality—  
do so with ungloved hands. Leave fingerprints

on our untethered minds so each moved memory  
will be more than a web of silicone and code,  
more than a pixelated specter haunting a cloud,

more than merely a reminiscence of skin.

With the callused edges of your thumbs, close  
our abandoned eyes—shuttered, rendered obsolete.  
But let us keep a recollection of sight—let us save

our vocabulary of vision: an outmoded language  
to signify how light bends, breaks, and mends  
against a field of rye grass in wind—how green

shadows live and die with every shimmer.

Let our formless mouths not be synthetic,  
silent, clean. Let us speak. Let us sing: salty,  
purple, fibrous, and feral—voices redolent

of what is lost and altogether ancestral  
so those who still have ears to hear will know  
something came before this brave bloodless

forever—something earthborn came before.

*Vivian I. Bikulege*

## **Lea's Wedding Gown**

Inside Faith Chapel, invisible threads even out her hem.  
French lace, intricate as a spider's weave, adorns her hands and arms,  
compels the groom to whisper, *I like your sleeves.*

Generations sewn together: her mother's chiffon swept  
into the free flow of a skirt, as aging satin  
from her godmother's gown drips a sequined trail  
on a train southbound to a Georgian altar.

Tulle resurrects  
from her grandmother's bargain basement bridal dress  
into a veil of gauze petals, blooms breezy atop her blonde curls,  
lifts in a silent swirl like smoke wisps from a genie's lamp.

Silk buttons, an invisible zipper, secure skin's sparks of joy.  
Promises tied in a white bustle's bow tether tomorrow.  
*Will the years ahead be as beautiful?*

*Alison Toney*

## **The Waters**

A naiad swims to the bottom of the ocean  
feels the great press of all that water,  
the suffocating embrace of the dark.  
At these depths, she wonders, does the giant squid  
feel a need, like childbirth, to release her ink?  
She lays her hand on the throat of beginnings;  
and Earth takes a tremendous breath,  
blows out bubbles, bubbles, bubbles--  
multitudes that almost shine like light.

A woman sinks to the nadir of life,  
where every single thing is hard.  
Not just difficult—that's brushing hair,  
teeth; saying the right thing;  
avoiding saying the wrong;  
awakening before the sun sits atop a vast blue.  
Truly hard:  
the corners of counters, cement floors,  
the slam of a door. Glass breaks  
behind her eyes every single day,  
glittering, blinding, refracting,  
reflecting failure, filling her mind's eye  
with shards of adamantite static.

A girl swims the abyss of her nightmare.  
Hears a voice—maybe her mother's—but garbled,  
muted the way a fetus hears in the womb.  
It is hard to breathe.  
Treading the water of sleep, fear, and desire  
swirl in the dark below her. She bumps the land,  
the bed, the sheets twine her legs like kelp.  
Consciousness slips around her, a gleaming eel  
she finally lays hands on. Here is morning,  
bright and smooth as a clam's mantle.



*Student Contests*



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TRAVIS TUCK JORDAN AWARD

*Students 3rd - 5th Grades — Judge: Florence Nash*

***William Weishaar***

*3rd Grade, Aldert Root Elementary School, Raleigh, NC.*

## **The Flying Sapphire**

Jelly bean eyes  
and paper-thin wing-  
Her tail like a  
birthday candle  
waiting for a wish.  
Belly full of pollen,  
she zips down  
to the emerald green  
grass stalk.

FIRST PLACE



*Iris Taylor*

*4th Grade, Swift Creek Elementary School, Raleigh, NC.*

## **Music**

How do you explain things that cannot be said?  
How can you see things not visible to the eye?  
When you talk through music it's impossible to lie.  
Because you are taken in by the music that you're playing,  
And at that moment you are saying.  
You are saying your feelings inside and out.  
No matter where you are, or what you're saying, out loud you shout!  
You're painting with color only you can see.  
You play that music until you fall to your knees.  
Music is joy, for every girl and boy.  
And as long as they play music in their own style,  
The music they play will go on for miles.  
So, when you're playing your own music,  
Don't listen to what other people say.  
'Cause you can play music in your own way.

***Emily Holcomb***

*5th Grade, Alston Ridge Elementary School, Cary, NC.*

**Ballet Class**

I open my bag  
I slip on my shoes  
I hold on to the bar  
And do as I choose

I talk to my friends  
The teacher walks in  
She goes over the warmup  
And then we begin

We split into groups  
One stays on the bar  
I practice my kicks  
I make them go far

We go to the corner  
We split into lines  
We do leaps across the floor  
Each of us glides

We go to center  
We learn a new move  
Everyone practices  
The teacher approves

We end our class  
I put on my shoes  
I drink some water  
And that's the news

***Keyanee "Miah" Turner***

*5th Grade, Joyner Elementary School, Raleigh, NC*

*Teacher: Stephanie Wilcox*

## **My Skin is a Blessing**

My skin is bright, my skin is light, my skin glows in the night

My skin is valuable like gold that you haven't seen in a million years

My skin can be featured on any movie or TV screen. My skin holds secrets that might make people cry.

My skin is valuable, my skin is delicate. My melanin is natural; you can't find it in the store.

My skin has been hated and loved. My skin has told stories about the past and present.

My skin encourages you to be yourself and to know that you are enough.  
Your skin is a blessing.

*McLain Jones*

*5th Grade, Joyner Elementary School, Raleigh, NC.*

*Teacher: Stephanie Wilcox*

## **In Raleigh at Midnight**

In Raleigh at midnight,  
There is no one in sight,  
Caterpillars, moths, bats, and nighttime animals galore  
Darkness, darkness, and darkness some more.  
The moon is a shining crescent in the sky  
Raleigh at night is so beautiful I can't lie.  
A thunderstorm in the night,  
All you can see are dewy streetlights.  
My boots go clomp, clomp  
It almost sounds like a stomp.  
It's a beat  
Except I make it with my feet.  
All I need is a melody  
And a friend to help me.  
It's an art  
A rhythm, a rhyme,  
Let's add an instrument this time  
Kazoo, trumpet, xylophone, piano  
Our sound is strong and thorough  
In the morning we share our song  
Until almost everyone sings along.

***Vihaan Potdar***

*5th Grade, Alston Ridge Elementary School, Cary, NC.*

## **One Day a Man Hiked Up a Mountain**

One day a man  
Hiked up a mountain  
On the way to the peak  
He stopped by a fountain.  
Belly full of water  
The man wanted to rest.  
He set up his camp and though  
He heard a bear, he slept, nonetheless.

In the morning, the man  
Resumed his hike.  
And on the way to the peak  
He stopped to catch some pike.  
Belly full of fish  
The man wanted to rest.  
He set up his camp and though  
He heard a wolf, he slept, nonetheless.

In the morning, the man  
Was worked into a lather,  
So, he stopped by a forest  
For some berries to gather.  
Belly full of berries  
The man wanted to rest.  
He set up his camp and though  
He heard the King, he slept, nonetheless.

In the morning he reached the peak  
Body scraped and bruised; feet sore  
The man set up his camp and found it  
More comfortable than the nights before.

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**JOAN SCOTT MEMORIAL AWARD**

*3rd through 8th Grades—Judge: Clark Holzman*

***August Gordon***

*6th Grade, Franklin School of Innovation, Asheville, NC.*

*Teacher: Ashley O'Dell*

## **Swoop, Little Bird**

Swoop, little bird  
Towards me  
Flying through the air  
A sea  
Of white, puffy clouds  
And the sun  
Unwaiting to sink  
For anyone.  
Swoop, little bird  
Down to  
Me, where I wait  
For you.

*Samantha Kawalec*

*7th Grade, Wiley Middle School, Winston-Salem, NC.*

## **Seams**

If my veins were the threads  
that hold my soul together,  
then when I fell and bled  
would I have lost my only tether?

No, for we are the ones  
who sew our own seams,  
free our hearts from pain  
and chase our greatest dreams.

***Grace Letchworth***

*5th Grade, Pleasant Grove Elementary School, Morrisville, NC.*

**If I Were**

If I were  
To unplug the lake  
Would you fill it up with a teaspoon  
Or build concrete trees  
If I were?

If I were  
To flush away a cockroach in front of your daughter  
Would you say he took a swim  
On a whim?  
If I were?

If you weren't  
To take care of earth  
We won't be alive to tell the end  
If you weren't.



*Andrew Martin*

*6th Grade, West Millbrook Magnet Middle School, Raleigh, NC.*

## Float

As I  
 Was fishing  
 I saw A bottle in  
 The water  
 Floating steadily,  
 Flowing up and down like a  
 Bobber on fishing line.  
 I followed the bottle  
 Then I saw  
 Another in its  
 Wake, then  
 Another like a  
 Trail of markers slowly  
 beckoning me to their origin.  
 Who could do this to th ocean?  
 Who could destroy this place?  
 For many creatures call this majestic  
 Place their home, and have lived there for many more years Than we can count,  
 And now we're tearing down the place they live in, like a house of cards in the wind, and  
 When a strong gust blows, the entire house comes down, and the pieces are blown into the  
 Wind. Once that gust comes there will not be ocean left  
 left.

*Caroline Campbell*

*6th Grade, West Millbrook Magnet Middle School, Raleigh, NC.*

## There is No Planet B

Crack. Snap. The pressure of the heat forces the ice open, releasing the rushing water from its home for 5 million years, adding to our already high sea levels. There is no planet B. Chuck. Another seemingly harmless plastic bottle tossed away, making its way toward the gulping, hungry mouth of a whale offshore, never to be decomposed. There is no planet B. Screech. The deafening cry of a pelican, choking on a styrofoam chunk, wailing for help.

There Is No Planet B!

*There is still hope.*

*Before it is too late*

*There is no planet B.*

*...if we ever know what we are doing*

*and make a change*

***Selah Steele-Cobb***

*5th Grade, Frank Porter Graham Bilingual, Chapel-Hill, NC.*

## **Moonshine and Stardust**

I'm falling in moonshine  
Starlight is surrounding me  
I look to the skies  
Above and beyond  
Only to realize the world is upside down

I stand steady on the sky  
Looking to the grass  
Then, I am falling in moonshine  
Through a pool of starlight

Back to reality  
To the breeze  
And the sunshine

Light slowly fades to moonshine and stardust  
To stars twinkling in the moonlight

To a different planet I go  
And there  
As the trees sway  
And the hounds bay  
I am at peace

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**MARY CHILTON AWARD**

*Students 6th through 8th Grade — Judge: Celisa Steele*

***Madison Malloy***

*9th Grade, Bethany Community School, Summerfield, NC.*

*Teacher: Diana Haig*

**Useful**

Tear the flesh from my bones  
Cut my hair to the scalp  
Use me as a puppet  
And I will speak no more  
Chop me down to pieces  
Grind the remains to pulp  
Use me as ornament  
And I will move no more  
Drain me  
Drink me  
Use me a fodder  
And I will breathe no more  
Pulverize the remains  
Reduce me to dust  
I have no uses left  
And then I will cry forever more

*Sara Berlin*

*8th Grade, Oberlin Magnet Middle School, Raleigh, NC.*

## **In Blue**

A bundle  
On the crown  
Of a woman's head

Another, in blue  
Walking swiftly

A man  
Digging  
Through the rubble

Smoky skies  
Silent cries

The woman in blue

Stops

One glance  
At his face  
Swollen eyes

She starts to dig

Her frayed garb  
The color of hope

*Claudia Petrini-Poli*

*6th Grade West Millbrook Magnet Middle School, Raleigh, NC.*

## Would We Do It

The scent of death  
 Slithers and strikes with cancer  
 Spreading and many dying what will  
 We do? There is no cure. What are doctors  
 Doing? I feel so hopeless like no one's listening  
 It's like a game where you keep on losing what  
 Will we do? But imagine a  
 World with no doubt where  
 Sadness fails to reach its goal  
 Endless possibilities science has bridged  
 The gap and light escapes the black  
 Hole we would no longer fear the prog-  
 nosis what would we do? Would we strive  
 To stretch minutes into hours with  
 Those we treasure as aggressively  
 As we do in a world still in  
 Blackness? Would we not  
 Be afraid knowing the  
 Parasite will not shorten  
 Are days could we express  
 Are devotion always and know  
 When someone leaves we lived and  
 Loved well and simply let go without the  
 Ticker inside of us time wouldn't be as fleeting  
 Could we find it with- in ourselves to nurture  
 Others hearts like we do while the black-  
 Ness still exists would we do it?

*Chance Biehn*

*8th Grade, Carolina Friends School, Durham, NC.*

*Mentor: Joan Barasovska*

## **I Speak My Wonders**

I am humble,  
a worker bee  
delighted to serve,  
dancing to communicate,  
sharing my nectar  
sharing the hive.

I am flowing water,  
curving around  
rocks and debris,  
taking the shape  
of the containers  
that hold me.

I am a plant  
with leaves unfolded,  
absorbing wisdom  
in sunlight,  
using it to grow,  
digging deep roots.

I speak my wonders,  
curiosity beyond galaxies,  
mind expanding  
like the universe,  
ideas explode like novae,  
giving birth to stars.

***Leah Silliman***

*6th Grade, Durham Academy, Durham, NC.*

*Teacher: Stephanie Wear*

## **Everything But...**

I could write about everything but

A sink

What is there to say about the

Sleek and shiny faucet

The smoothly circular basin

The elegant stream of water

I could write about anything but

A blade of grass

There isn't much to

That solitary form

The slender freshness

The tall and green stalk

I could write about everything but

A mug

What is there to write about the

Curved handle

The thin lip

The plain design

I could write about anything but

An egg

There isn't much to say about the

Brown oval

The shine of light on the surface

The possibility of life

Maybe I can write about anything

But...



***Graysen Logan****7th Grade, Mills Park Middle School, Cary, NC***Explain**

Explain to me why you're more mature  
Explain to me why you have more rights  
Explain to me why you lure  
Us into the night

Explain to me why I'm wrong  
Explain to me why you're right  
Explain to me why you're strong  
Explain to me why I cannot fight

Explain to me why you're smart  
Explain to me why I am not  
Explain to me why you are a dart  
That punctures me in my heart

Why can't children bring peace  
Instead of being a lost little puzzle piece?

We are strong

We are brave

We are the change.

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**SHERRY PRUITT AWARD**

*Students 10th Grade through Undergraduate — Judge: Allison Hutchcraft*

***Margaret Kirkpatrick***

*12th Grade, St. Thomas More Academy, Raleigh, NC.*

*Teacher: Adriana Watkins*

## **The Successful Businessman**

Some drug spurred on my son to molt  
off all but bones and fly.  
So crucified he rises from  
the plains in cooper skies

while I, blue veiled, reach my hand,  
eyes broken, dead and scared,  
past yellow rays to catch his charmed  
buzzed ecstatic stare.

Could humble joys not spark that grin?  
Could not his mother's hand?  
Goodbye my boy. Meet high that blackened  
void that looms overhead.

Your mother mourns  
by bony mounds beneath you.

*Janie Williams*

*11th Grade, Charlotte Latin School, Charlotte, NC*

*Teacher: Richard Harris*

## **Views from the Ocean**

Out in a deep, cool,  
Atlantic Ocean of chaos,  
the strong current pulls her  
far into blue water.

Trying to breathe slowly,  
she focuses on the sea oats swaying in the early morning wind  
for a second, she closes her eyes, then turns her head to the left  
staring as the surfers paddle towards the rising sun above the horizon.

As the high tide turns into low,  
she is now able to hear  
the hushing ocean waves,  
see the light shimmer of the sun.

She floats on her back gazing at the fading pink sky,  
she swims back to the shore.  
The waves call her focus  
to another world filled with oysters,  
colorful fish, not just the silver metallic ones.

*Claire Wang*

*11th Grade, Marvin Ridge High School, Waxhaw, NC.*

*Teacher: Bobbi Jo Wisocki*

### **After "After Years" by Ted Kooser**

At once when you walked by,  
I noticed something on your face that I  
hadn't seen in a long time.  
You,  
smiling into your phone,  
stepping over a dead rat on a street vent,  
were a revelation.  
Around us, the air collapsed a skyscraper into the ground  
and, as you rushed past without realizing,  
a breeze blew a lamppost into a hurricane.  
For this instant of infinity,  
God must have a heart to  
let me see you among the mills of people  
coming and going, back and forth  
between the drone of city life and the thrill of living at all.

As I lose you to the background,  
The weightlessness of your memory bombards me.  
How quietly did you leave to ensure  
I wouldn't notice your absence?  
Where did you possibly go if not  
further into the pile of things I swore to forget?

We are all bound by finality.  
To stop living in circles, you take flight  
and I watch the world wear away my stubborn grief  
until I forget why I ever had to grieve at all.

***Christina Polge****12th Grade, Cary Academy, Cary, NC.**Teacher: Kara Caccuitto***goddess**

nobody has ever worshiped me, nobody has ever begged me for redemption i am my only believer and my most outspoken heretic—despise myself fiercely enough that i should be burning alive for my sacrilege and i think loneliness is a curse i have given myself, punishment for all things i did and I did not

isolated, pacing the halls of my temple until my feet are blistered, sleeping at the foot of my altar because nobody else is here to do it—perpetually longing for someone to beg me to stay, someone to learn my legends, someone to bless, someone who is someone who bleeds, breathes, believes, belongs, i wonder

would someone toss themselves off rocky cliffs for my love? would they walk fearless through the gates of hell, murmur my name when they are alone, follow my footsteps through the sand? would they look at me like i am something sacred? will they worship me or will i still have to worship myself?

leaving death at the altar—like a prayer, granting myself acts of salvation when my feet touch sand, learning how to bleed golden instead of red, speaking with lips holy enough that people listen, a goddess who does not need a name to sit on the tongues of worshippers who would wait an eternity to see my face

see i am always stuck between praying to and cursing at myself, falling to my knees, and clenching my fists, cutting myself open and swallowing my heart. i am waiting—for the day when someone will build me a temple more than bones, from dancing laughter, golden whispers instead of ashes, my jagged words

but nobody has started praying to me yet, so i am alone on those rocky cliffs, screaming to the night and hoping something will scream back—being left with silence and wondering if i am all there is left in this wild, bloody world with my wild, bloody heart and wild, bloody hands—is it just me alone with the devil and the maker? i realize these are the same...

**Zander Hooper**

*11th Grade, Charlotte Latin School, Charlotte, NC.*

*Teacher: Richard Harris*

## **Blue Jays and Azure Skies**

For hours we have sat here,  
the dark clouds looming over us.  
A worn-down canoe,  
the only thing that separated us from the black realm under our feet.  
I could hear the blood churning inside of me.  
Everything seemed dead.  
Until the silence of the wilderness, broken  
by the call of a blue jay.  
A simple song that I had heard many times before.  
A reminder that there's life here.  
As if it was the conductor calling to the orchestra.  
Simple notes from a single song metamorphosed  
into a symphony of bird calls.  
Their music breaks through the dense forest and pierces  
my ears like the sharpest knife.  
It seems to make everything come alive.  
As if demanding to be heard  
the trees shook,  
dancing to their melody.  
The dense gloom broke to reveal a lustrous azure sky.  
The blackness below  
awoke with bubbling, the trout I had been here to find leaping,  
escaping their tomb of silence just to hear them.  
Just as quickly the song started it disappeared.  
The birds went back to their silent brooding,  
the trees returned to their slumber,  
and we sat in awe by the magic started by a single blue jay.

*Ella Smith*

*11th Grade, Charlotte Latin School, Charlotte, NC.*

*Teacher: Richard Harris*

## **An Icicle in Spring**

One drip follows another drip,  
clanging on the empty can below,  
like the beat of a bright steel drum with a solitary note

hanging above my head,  
sharp as the hand of a clock,  
clear as a diamond, dirty as the red clay.

The dripping slowly fades,  
as its neighbors disappear into nothing,  
sinking into the soil for another new vivacious life.

Seasons changing, barely anything left from above,  
but a simple seed growing below,  
blossoming into a crisp scarlet carnation.

Just as the moon circles the earth,  
they both must circle the sun.  
Two paths but connected in one way.

One needs the other, and the world needs them both.  
Following the infinite path  
of blooming flowers and a melting  
icicle in Spring.

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STUDENT CONTEST JUDGES' SHORT BIOGRAPHIES

**Celisa Steele: Mary Chilton Award**

Celisa Steele's poetry has appeared in *Southern Poetry Review*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Cave Wall*, *Tar River Poetry*, *Poetry South*, and others and has twice been nominated for a Pushcart Prize. She lives in Carrboro, NC, where she served as the town's poet laureate from 2013 to 2016. In 2011, Emrys Press published her chapbook, *How Language Is Lost*.

**Clark Holtzman: Joan Scott Environmental Award**

Clark Holtzman lives in Chapel Hill. He coordinates a weekly poetry seminar at the Robert & Pearl Seymour Center. His poetry artbook, *The Shepherd's Calendar*, will be released in Spring 2022 and is available through his website at [www.program4jazz.com](http://www.program4jazz.com). An audio version with music will be available on <https://bandcamp.com>.

**Allison Hutchcraft: Sherry Pruitt Award**

Allison Hutchcraft is the author of *Swale* (New Issues 2020). Her poems have appeared in *Boulevard*, *The Cincinnati Review*, *Crazyhorse*, *The Gettysburg Review*, *Kenyon Review*, *The Missouri Review*, and *The Southern Review*, among other journals. She teaches creative writing at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

**Florence Nash: Travis Tuck Award**

Florence Nash's poetry has been published in two collections, *Crossing Water* and *Fish Music*, and in various journals and anthologies. One of ten Emerging Poets of the New South showcased at Vanderbilt's Millennial Gathering of Writers, she directed the poetry workshop for Duke's OLLI program for 16 years.





**J.S. Absher**

J. S. Absher ([www.js-absher-poetry.com](http://www.js-absher-poetry.com)) is a poet and independent scholar. His first full-length book of poetry, *Mouth Work* (St. Andrews University Press), won the 2015 NCPS Lena Shull Book Contest. The second, *Skating Rough Ground*, will appear in 2022. Chapbooks are *Night Weather* (Cynosura, 2010) and *The Burial of Anyce Shepherd* (Main Street Rag, 2006). Absher is preparing three books focusing on North Carolina and Southern US history, two of which appeared in 2021. He lives in Raleigh, with his wife, Patti.

**Lavonne Adams**

Lavonne J. Adams is the author of a full-length poetry collection, two chapbooks and more than 150 individual poetry publications in literary journals, including *Missouri Review*, *Prairie Schooner*, and *Artful Dodge*. She is also a finalist for the James Applewhite Poetry Prize. She studied with Philip Levine, and completed residencies at the Vermont Studio Center, the Harwood Museum of Art (University of New Mexico-Taos), and The Helene Wurlitzer Foundation. She was also a Gilbert-Chappell Distinguished Poet for Eastern North Carolina.

**Vivian Bikulege**

Vivian I. Bikulege is a poet and essayist in Brevard, NC. A Pushcart Prize nominee, Vivian is published in the *Broad River Review*, *The Petigru Review*, and *Catfish Stew*. She is a 2022 Gilbert-Chappell Poet for western North Carolina. Her braided essay, "Cuttings," won the Carrie McCray Memorial Literary Award for nonfiction and will be published by Bloomsbury Academic in Reading as a Writer by Erin Pushman. She holds an MFA from Queens University of Charlotte.

**Mary O'Keefe Brady**

Mary O'Keefe Brady is the author of *Time Out* (Finishing Line Press, 2015). Her poems have appeared in *Kakalak*, *Pinesong*, *Bear River Review*, *Peregrine*, *Naugatuck River Review* and elsewhere. A member of the North Carolina Poetry Society and the Poetry Society of South Carolina, she is a foodie, Francophile, and former French teacher. She lives most of the time in New York's lower Hudson Valley, but is happiest flying down I-95 to the Carolinas.

**Ed Bremson**

Ed Bremson has been writing for sixty years, although he only discovered his love of haiku in 2007. Since then, many of his poems have appeared in journals as well as in the Japanese newspapers *Asahi Shimbun* and *Mainichi Daily*. In 2017-2018 he was selected three times as Haiku Master of the Week by NHK World, Japanese TV. In addition to his publications, Ed has won several prizes... ten in 2020, and five in 2021, including second prize in the Morioka contest, third prize in the Viewing Stone Contest, first prize in the 32nd Indian Kukai, and honorable mention in the 2020 Bloodroot Contest. Ed graduated from NCSU and lives in Raleigh, North Carolina.

**Joyce Brown**

Joyce Compton Brown is the author of two chapbooks, *Bequest* (Finishing Line) and *Singing with Jarred Edges* (Main Street Rag) as well as *Standing on the Outcrop* (RedHawk Press). She has published poetry, prose, and art. A Pushcart nominee, she wins or places in an occasional contest and has published in numerous journals. After earning degrees from Appalachian State University and the University of Southern Mississippi, she taught at Gardner-Webb University for a number of years, using summer opportunities for further study in Appalachian culture, roots music, and creative writing. She lives in Troutman, NC, with husband and cat.

**Katherine Crawford**

Katherine Scott Crawford is the award-winning author of *Keowee Valley*, an historical novel set in the Revolutionary-era Carolinas and in the Cherokee country. She holds an MFA in Writing from the Vermont College of Fine Arts. A recovering academic and former adjunct professor, her work has appeared in magazines and literary journals including *South Loop Review*, *The Santa Fe Writers Project*, *Appalachian Review*, and others. Crawford has been awarded fellowships by the North Carolina Arts Council, the Vermont Studio Center, the Montana Artists Refuge, and more, and has served as a guest lecturer and workshop leader at many writers' conferences, literary festivals, and writers' retreats, including the Southern Women Writers Conference, Carolina Mountain Literary Festival and Blue Ridge Bookfest. A 10th generation Carolinian,

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**BIOGRAPHIES: ADULT CONTEST WINNERS**

Crawford lives in a small mountain town with her family and their trail dog, Merlin.

**Benjamin Cutler**

Benjamin Cutler is an award-winning poet and author of the full-length book of poetry, *The Geese Who Might be Gods* (Main Street Rag, 2019). His poetry has been nominated for the Pushcart Prize numerous times and has appeared in *Zone 3*, *Tar River Poetry*, and *EcoTheo Review*, among many others. In addition, Benjamin is a high-school English and creative writing teacher in the Southern Appalachian Mountains of western North Carolina where he lives with his family and frequents the local rivers and trails.

**Lee Ann Gillen**

Lee Ann Gillen has written off and on for several decades and has work published in *Pinesong*, *Bay Leaf*, *Windhover* and the CWG 2019 and 2020 Anthologies. She enjoys reading and writing in many genres, and often includes nature, science, and humor in her poetry and other writing. Her love of music prompts her to search for sounds and rhythms in her words that make them sing and dance as she paints images. After living and working in Raleigh, NC for almost 38 years, she has retired to Chattanooga, TN. While in Raleigh, she designed, wrote, and taught workshops, and courses, and gave presentations and seminars locally and at many national conferences in a variety of subjects over a varied career. She lives in Lookout Valley with her husband and daughter, while her son lives and works in Korea.

**Jennifer Hambrick**

Four-time Pushcart Prize and Best of the Net nominee, Jennifer Hambrick is the author of the poetry collections *In the High Weeds*, winner of the Stevens Manuscript Award of the National Federation of State Poetry Societies; *Joyride* (Red Moon Press); and *Unscathed* (NightBallet Press). She was featured by former U.S. Poet Laureate Ted Kooser in *American Life in Poetry*; was appointed the inaugural Artist-in-Residence at historic Bryn Du Mansion, Granville, Ohio; and has received numerous awards and prizes, including First Prize in the Haiku Society of America's Haibun Award Competition (2018), the Sheila-Na-Gig Press Poetry

Prize (2020), First Prize in the 2021 Martin Lucas Haiku Award Competition (U.K.), and other honors from the Haiku Society of America, Haiku Poets of Northern California, and elsewhere. Jennifer lives in Columbus, Ohio. [jenniferhambrick.com](http://jenniferhambrick.com).

### **Maura High**

Maura High was born in Wales and now lives in Carrboro, North Carolina, where she works as a freelance copy editor. Her poems have appeared in various print and online literary magazines, among them *Tar River Poetry*, *New England Review*, *Southern Review*, *North Carolina Literary Review*, *Rhino*, *Adirondack Review*, *2RiverView*, and *Canary*. She is the author of *The Garden of Persuasions* (Jacar Press) and collaborated with the artist Lyric Kinard on *Stone, Water, Time*. Her website is at <http://maurahigh.com>.

### **Thomas Jackson**

Thomas Jackson is currently a Junior at North Carolina State University. Thomas self-published a poetry collection titled *growth* through Amazon when he was seventeen years old, and delivered a spoken-word poem at TEDx NC State titled "I am so proud of you" which was shared to the official TEDx talks Youtube channel. Most recently, his poem "afterparty" appeared in Issue 20 of *Emerge Literary Journal*. You can engage with his work further at [www.thomasjwrites.com](http://www.thomasjwrites.com) and [www.twitter.com/tommybbyboy](http://www.twitter.com/tommybbyboy).

### **Kelly Jones**

Kelly Jones is an arts education coordinator living in Columbus County, home of the great poet A.R. Ammons. A proud member of Nexus Poets, his poems have appeared in *Flying South*, *Kakalak*, *Poetry in Plain Sight*, *North Carolina Literary Review Online*, and he was a finalist for the 2021 James Applewhite Prize.

### **Jeanne Julian**

Jeanne Julian (South Portland, Maine) is author of *Like the O in Hope* and two chapbooks. Co-winner of Reed Magazine's Edwin Markham Prize (2019), she has poems in *Comstock Review*, *Bacopa Literary Review*, *Poetry Quarterly*, *Naugatuck River Review*, *Snapdragon*, and elsewhere. She regularly reviews books for *The Main Street Rag*. [Www.jeannejulian.com](http://www.jeannejulian.com)

**Marjorie Schratz McNamara**

Marjorie Schratz McNamara comes from a family of travelers. On the road, they sang. The radio was never on. She fell into poetry late in life, has smatterings of poems in journals, and a Pushcart nomination. She lives in Burlington and enjoys dramatizing English as she teaches adult ESL with Alamance Community College.

**Anne Myles**

Anne Myles's poetry has appeared or is forthcoming in the *North American Review*, *Split Rock Review*, *Whale Road Review*, *On the Seawall*, *Lavender Review*, *Early American Literature*, and numerous other journals, and she has been nominated for a Pushcart. A recent transplant to Greensboro, she is Professor Emeritus of English at the University of Northern Iowa, and received her MFA from the Vermont College of Fine Arts in 2021.

**JeanMarie Olivieri**

JeanMarie Olivieri was a business writer but now mostly writes poetry. She has been published in several online journals and anthologies including *Pinesong*. She is a co-organizer of the Living Poetry Meetup group, and an editor of the *Heron Clan Poetry Anthology* series. Follow her at <https://jeanmarieolivieri.wordpress.com>.

**Lorraine Padden**

Lorraine A Padden is a Touchstone Award-nominated poet whose work regularly appears in notable journals such as *Modern Haiku*, *The Heron's Nest*, *tinywords* and *Frogpond*, among others. She won *Tricycle Magazine's* 2021 Best of the Haiku Challenge, and one of her rengay collaborations received an Honorable Mention in the 2021 Haiku Association of America Rengay Competition. She recently received an Honorable Mention in the 2022 International Modern Kigo Competition. Lorraine is also a former professional ballet dancer, and has received awards from the Jacob K. Javits Fellowship program, the Foundation of Rotary International, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

**Gary Phillips**

Gary Phillips is the 2016-2019 poet laureate of Carrboro, North Carolina. He is a writer, naturalist and entrepreneur. He lives in a rammed earth house with his wife Ilana Dubester. A child of Appalachia, Gary avidly reads poetry and Afro-Futurism, studies amphibian activities on full moon nights and was once chair of the Chatham County Board of Commissioners. His book of poetry and occasional pieces, *The Boy The Brave Girls* was printed in 2016 by Human Error Publishing (Wendell, Mass).

**Bradley Samore**

Bradley Samore has taught English and writing in Spain and the U.S.A. and also has worked as a school service worker. The Palm Beach Poetry Festival named him a Thomas Lux Scholar in 2022. Bradley's poetry was shortlisted for *Aesthetica Magazine's* Creative Writing Award and *River Heron Review's* Poetry Prize. He likes to go for walks, meditate, learn how to reduce his carbon and plastic footprint, garden, play basketball, and listen to jazz.

**Martin Settle**

Martin Settle is a writer in Charlotte, NC. Settle has taught English for 32 years, the last 17 of which were at UNC Charlotte. Mr. Settle has published five books (a memoir, an art design book, and three books of poetry). In addition, he has been awarded The Thomas McDill Award (North Carolina Poetry Society), The Poetry of Courage Award (North Carolina Poetry Society), the Nazim Hikmet Poetry Award, and the Griffin-Farlow Haiku Award. ([www.martinsettleartist.com](http://www.martinsettleartist.com))

**Cathy Sky**

Cathy Larson Sky is the author of *Blue egg, my heart* (Finishing Line Press, 2014). Her work appears in *The Speckled Trout Review*, *The New Guard Review*, *Kakalak*, *The Great Smokies Review*, and *A Gathering of Poets* (Jacar Press). In 2019 her poem "Lemniscates" became part of a libretto for chamber quartet, composed by Dosis MacKay and performed by Asheville's Pan Harmonia.

**Susan Spalt**

Susan Willey Spalt lives in Carrboro, North Carolina. Her poems have appeared in numerous anthologies, including *Pinesong* and *Kakalak*. *Longer If It's Raining* (Red Dashboard Press, 2016) is her first chapbook. Susan is a member of the Carrboro Poets Council which organizes and manages Carrboro's West End Poetry Festival. She is the author of a memoir, *Back When We Were Italian* (Sable Books, 2019) and a collaborating author of *Finding Hope, A Practical Guide for Families Affected by Mental Illness Drawn from the Experience of Families Like Yours* (Sable Books, 2019).

**Bonnie Staiger**

Bonnie Larson Staiger, a North Dakota Associate Poet Laureate and North Dakota Humanities Scholar, is the recipient of the Poetry of the Plains and Prairies Prize (NDSU Press, 2018) and the Independent Press Award: Distinguished Favorite' (2019) for her debut collection, *Destiny Manifested*. Her second book, *In Plains Sight* (NDSU Press, 2021) was nominated for the PEN America Literary Award in Poetry. She lives in Bismarck, ND, and often writes of the poignant subtleties of life on the high plains of the New American West as well as a world view observed from and shaped by that place.

**Lee Stockdale**

Lee Stockdale graduated from the University of Washington and received his MFA from Queens University. His debut poetry collection, *Gorilla*, is forthcoming from Main Street Rag Publishing Company in the fall of 2022. Lee and his wife Gail, a potter, make their home in the Western North Carolina mountains where they daily feed thirteen wild turkeys.

**Debbie Strange**

Debbie Strange is a Canadian short-form poet, haiga artist, and photographer whose work has been widely published internationally. Her chapbook, *The Language of Loss: Haiku & Tanka Conversations*, was the winner of the 2019 Sable Books International Women's Haiku Book Contest. She is also the recipient of the 2020 Snapshot Press Book Award for her forthcoming full-length haiku collection, *Random Blue Sparks*. Please visit her publications and



awards archive at <https://debbiemstrange.blogspot.com> for further information.

### **Liza Wolff-Francis**

Liza Wolff-Francis is a poet and writer with an M.F.A. in Creative Writing from Goddard College. She was co-director for the 2014 Austin International Poetry Festival. Her writing has been widely anthologized and her work has most recently appeared in *Wild Roof Journal*, *SLAB*, *We'moon*, and *eMerge magazine*. She has a chapbook out called *Language of Crossing* (Swimming with Elephant Publications, 2015).

### **C. Pleasants York**

C. Pleasants York is a former president of the North Carolina Poetry Society, Lee County Arts Council, and San-Lee Writers. She taught for 42 years and visited 26 countries. York now is a volunteer court advocate at HAVEN in Lee County, working with domestic violence and sexual assault victims.

### **Nancy Young**

Nancy Martin-Young is an award-winning writer, with dozens of poems and short stories published in various journals and anthologies, as well as a poetry chapbook, *The Last Girl Standing*. Her novels include a three-book romantic suspense series set in Raleigh, and most recently, *Wit and Prattles*, a Regency novel based on secondary characters in Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*. Her short story collection, *Southern Edge* (Mint Hill Books/Main Street Rag) is due out in 2022. Nancy knows there's no happier place to share poetry than Weymouth and is honored to have her work appear alongside so many talented poets in *Pinesong*. For more, please see [nancymyoung.com](http://nancymyoung.com)

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**DEDICATION HISTORY OF ANTHOLOGY***Award Winning Poems AND Pinesong*

- 1987 Christine Rose Sloan  
1988 Carolyn S. Kyles  
1989 Sallie Nixon  
1990 Leon Hinton  
1991 Samuel LeRoy McKay  
1992 Gladys Owings Hughes  
1993 Margaret B. Baddour  
1994 Shelby Stephenson  
1995 Sam Ragan  
1996 Ron Bayes  
1997 Sally Buckner  
1998 Mary Belle Campbell  
1999 Elizabeth Grier Bolton  
2000 Ellen Johnston-Hale  
2001 Marie Gilbert  
2002 Ray Dotson  
2003 Ruby P. Shackelford  
2004 David Treadway Manning  
2005 Lois Riley Holt Wistrand  
2006 Marsha White Warren  
2007 Susan Laughter Meyers  
2008 Ann Deagon  
2009 Sharon Sharp  
2010 Libby Campbell  
2011 Bill Griffin  
2012 Guy & Carolyn York  
2013 Bill Blackley  
2014 Sara Claytor  
2015 Pat Riviere-Steele  
2016 Scott Owens  
2017 Kathryn Stripling Byer  
2018 Kevin Morgan Watson  
2019 Ruth Moose  
2020 M. Scott Douglass  
2021 David Manning  
2022 Lenard D. Moore



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