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Welcome!

NEW MEMBERS

Andrew Analore, Madison
Ryan Anauo, Appleton
Kippi Bednar, Mayville
Jordan Brown, Oshkosh
Mary Burton, Hartland
Annette Clark, Reeseville
Esteban Colon, Kenosha
Paul Corbeil, Edgerton
Lesley Dame, River Falls
Thomas Dunne, Fort Atkinson
Nick Engbregtsen, North Fond
du Lac
Peter Engen, West Salem
Aaron Fai, Madison
Michael Gadzik, Appleton
Christine Hartjes, Appleton
Robert Kokan, Palmyra
Scott Lowery, Wauwatosa
Elizabeth Lutz, Wausau
Sr. Helen Mertes, St. Francis
Danielle Montgomery, Minocqua
Dawn Mozgawa, Madison
Chelsea Murphy, Appleton
Lee J. Patzer, Waukesha
MaryBeth Petesch, Oshkosh
Melissa Rendlen, Woodruff
Mary Schuff, Middleton
Sarellen Schuh, Madison
Pat Severin, Appleton
Kent Shifferd, Trego
Chuck Stebleton, Milwaukee
Bruce Stewart, Baraboo
Jessica Szitta, Rothschild
Phil Tabakow, Glendale
Kenyatta Turner, Kenosha
Agnes Welsch, Menomonie

President's Message

When you read this I'll hopefully be in Florida. I'll bring my computer and will be able to keep up with WFOP business, except printing. So don't hesitate to contact me if need be.

It's reassuring to know that while I'm gone the poetry wheels continue to turn, thanks to many folks who are busy working on publications, projects, contests and more. The editors of the 2021 *Wisconsin Poets' Calendar* (Gillian Nevers, Nancy Jesse, and Keesia Hyzer) are beginning to read and discuss close to 400 poems received for their issue. Muse contest coordinator **Fred Kreutz** and clerk **Jerome Jagielski**, along with chapbook contest coordinator **Annette Grunseth**, have processed entries and sent them to the judges. We'll learn the winners of both these contests at the spring conference. And the editors of *Bramble* continue to produce high-quality issues that we can all be proud of.

Speaking of the spring conference, **Ed Werstein** has worked hard to plan an exceptional event. We will be in a new venue definitely worth checking out! Complete details and registration information are included in this *Museletter*. The dates are one weekend later this year to avoid a conflict with the Untitled Town festivities taking place in Green Bay April 23-26. Hopefully just the word "May" will keep the snow at bay!

I'd like to extend a big thank-you and warm welcome to two new WFOP volunteers. **Jeff Anderson** will be the student contest coordinator beginning in September 2020, but is already planning ahead for the next contest. Serving as interim contest coordinator this year, I know first-hand what is involved and appreciate **Lewis Bosworth's** years of serving in this position. To better represent and serve younger members of the fellowship, **Nathan Reid** has accepted a voting board position and begins immediately as the "under 40" representative. We look forward to the ideas and contributions of these two energetic members.

I am also serving as *Calendar* business manager until someone can be found to take over. Many thanks to **Carol Pemrich Hauser**, who stepped down in December. I inherited some boxes of the spined 2020 *Calendars* and am offering a copy or two to anyone who can take them to their local libraries and get them catalogued and on the shelf. Please email me if you are willing to do this and I'll mail them while supplies last.

Every issue I urge members to "like" the official WFOP Facebook page. We are almost up to 700 followers! I try to update the page and post poetry news and events from around the state. For National Poetry Month in April, I will once again post a prompt and/or no-fee submission opportunity every day of the month. This sometimes becomes a challenge, but I find it encourages me to submit as well. Hopefully I'll get a lot of writing done in Florida!

I look forward to seeing you in Sheboygan—and seeing ground that isn't white!

Yours,
—Jan

What's Happening in Your Region?

All events free & open to the public unless stated otherwise.

CENTRAL-FOX VALLEY

VPs: Cathryn Cofell, ccofell@gmail.com &

Christina Kubasta, ckkubasta60@marianuniversity.edu

Your regional VP wishes to share your news! Please send. Email her to be added to the area events list. Regular readings are at Thelma, Fond du Lac (thelmararts.org), Evergreen Manor, Oshkosh, and The Draw, Appleton.

EAST

VP: Ed Werstein, wersted@gmail.com

Poets Monday at Linneman's, 1001 E Locust St, Milwaukee, features readers and open mikes every Monday. Check Events email for upcoming features. Doors open 7:30; open mike 8 PM; feature 9 PM. \$3 cover.

The Waukesha Open Poetry group meets on second Sundays, 3 PM, at Martha Merrell's bookstore, 231 W Main St, Waukesha. Bring poems to share. No fees.

MID-CENTRAL

VP: Kathleen Serley, kserley@dwave.net

Karyn Powers, Patricia Williams, Joan Giusto and **Victoria Lindsay** read at a special poetry reading for the Wausau Bird Club on January 6 at the Universalist Unitarian Church in Wausau.

Vlasta Karol Blaha also participated in the poetry reading at the Wausau Bird Club. She read "Backyard Bird Watching in an April Snowstorm" from the 2017 *Calendar* plus two other favorite bird poems.

Linda Aschbrenner has two poems in *Poetry Hall*, a poem in *Ariel Anthology* and participated in the book release reading in Washburn on November 10.

Patricia Williams had "Dark of Dawn—Dark of Midnight" published in *Carmina Literary Magazine*, "Futile Struggle" in *Your Daily Poem*, "The Midwinter Night is Long" in *Avocet*, and "Talk of the Day" in *Weekly Avocet*. She read at Poetry in a Hat at 22 Lakes in Waupaca.

Sue Twiggs has two poems, "Cherry blossoms fall" and "Leonardo Ponders the Mona Lisa" in *Poetry Hall*.

Michael Kriesel has a poem "Old Flame" and a review of Karl Elder's *Phobophobia* in *Stoneboat*, and his poetry collection *Zen Amen* was reviewed by Erica Goss in *Pedestal Magazine*.

NORTHEAST

VP: Tori Grant Welhouse, torigw@twc.com

Carol Lee Saffioti-Hughes read in the poetry marathon at Woodland Pattern on January 25, along with other Root River Poets. She read at Big Easel Bistro and Gallery,

Wabeno, in August and December. She performed as a guest poet with the Choral Arts Society of Southeast Wisconsin October 19 at the First Presbyterian Church in Racine.

NORTHWEST

VP: Nancy Austin, austin10929@gmail.com

Elizabeth Tornes had "The Elders" published in *A Walk with Nature: Poetic Encounters that Nourish the Soul*, ed. Michael Moats, and "Winter Moon Ceremony" and "Earth's Weather," in *Page & Spine*. In the "Up North: Telling the Story" ekphrastic art exhibit at the Howard Young Medical Center Gallery, Minocqua, she won Writers' Best of Show for "Last Day of the Year in the Northwoods" and Award of Excellence for a collaboration, "Lake Superior Falls," with photographer Bill Radant. In November, she read poetry and prose at the Rhinelander District Library.

Diana Randolph, Drummond, hosted a *Calendar* reading at the Drummond Public Library in October and read a poem in the open mike. Poets from Northwest Wisconsin in the *Calendar* included **Jan Chronister**, **Naomi Cochran**, **Nancy Larson**, and **Peggy Trojan**. Diana had a poem and drawing published in the October *Water Column* and had a poem in *Ariel* and read at the November publication reading at Washburn Public Library. She had one poem accepted to the 10th Annual WritersRead, which she presented at the January reading at Northland College, taped by Wisconsin Public Radio.

Jan Chronister taught a workshop of writing poems of peace on January 25 at the Superior Public Library. Two of Jan's poems appear in the recent *Contours: A Literary Landscape* (Driftless Writing Center).

Naomi Cochran's poem "Waiting in Line for Eternity" was featured on *The Writer's Almanac* with Garrison Keillor on December 8.

Lucy Tyrrell has been appointed as Bayfield's Poet Laureate for 2020–2021 by the Bayfield Carnegie Library. She hosted a Poetry Evening for social justice on Martin Luther King Day, January 20, and read her poems and those of others, including one by Wisconsin Poet Laureate **Peggy Rozga**. Recent poems are "I fly with feathered forelimbs" in *Alaska Women Speak*, "Red Dresses" [plus five photos] in *Cirque Journal*, "Leave-taking" and four haiku in *Weekly Avocet*, and "Before They Track" in *Avocet*. Lucy's poems, including "How to Be a Sled Dog," "How to Be an Olive Baboon," "How to Be a Williwaw," and "How to Be a Shadow" appeared in the anthology *How to Be: A Collection of Poems*, 2020. (The style of "How to Be" poems was initiated by Jeet Thayil in *Collected Poems*, 2015).

SOUTH CENTRAL

VP: James P. Roberts, jrob52162@aol.com

Robin Chapman read at Mystery To Me, Madison, on October 24.

Lou Roach held a reading and poetry book release party at the Poynette Public Library on November 2.

Over 40 poets read from the 2020 *Wis. Poets' Calendar* at A Room Of One's Own, Madison, on November 4.

Nathan J. Reid read as part of the Poetry in Portage series at Suzy's Steakhouse in Portage on November 5.

June Paul and **James P. Roberts** held a Poems for Peace workshop at DeForest Public Library November 7.

Several Madison-area poets read poems in memory of **Richard Roe** at the Sequoya Branch Library, Madison, December 12, followed by a well-attended

June Paul gave a Poems of Peace workshop at the DeForest Public Library on January 23, followed by a reading of her poems and an open mic.

Sandy Stark read at the Author's Slam II at Mystery To Me on January 23.

Among the South Central poets who read at the Woodland Pattern Poetry Marathon in Milwaukee on January 25 were **Ronnie Hess**, **Angela Trudell Vasquez**, **Marilyn L. Taylor**, **Nathan J. Reid**, **Jodi Vander Molen** and **Martha Kaplan**.

Marilyn L. Taylor, **James P. Roberts**, **Ronnie Hess**, **Steve & Jeanie Tomasko**, **Richard Merelman** and **Nathan J. Reid** were among the readers at A Wintry Night To Recite at Mystery To Me on January 30.

James P. Roberts had poems published in *Rosebud*, *Poetry Hall*, *Solitary Plover*, and *Cacti Fur*.

F. J. Bergmann had poems "A Didactic Letter to Another Poet Regarding Vocabulary" and "What's Wrong Here" in *5th Wall Press*, "Invincible" in *100 Words*, "Eye" and "The Historian" in *The Collidescope*, <cold red sand> and "Orville & Wilbur Wright" in *Silver Blade*, "Death and the Maiden" in *The Sirens Call*, "Mounted," "Terrible" and "Dominion" in *Unlikely Stories*, "This is just to say" in *Dreams and Nightmares*, "Lesser Eternity," "The Apostrophe Thief" and "In the Can" in *Survision Magazine*, "The Forest of Questions" in the *Ekphrastic Review*, "The Dark Millennia" in *Alcyone*, "Selected Paragraphs from an Unwritten Memoir" in *Space & Time Magazine*, "Dispersion" (contest finalist) in *Enough* (Public Poetry, 2019), and "Resurfacing" as January Poem of the Month in *Subsynchronous Press*. So far, "Afterlife," "Maculation" and "Ten-Card Tarot, Pentacles Wild" have been nominated for the SFPA Rhyshing Award.

WEST CENTRAL

VPs: Sandra Lindow, lindowleaf@gmail.com

The Writers' Group at the Library, in its 31st year, meets

first Thursdays, usually in the Chippewa room on the lower level at the Philips Memorial Library, 400 Eau Claire St. Winter hours 2–4 PM; April 2 we return to 7–9 PM. The Congo Writers' Group is at 9:30 AM on third Tuesdays at First Congregational, 401 Wilson St, Menomonie. Hosted by Eau Claire Writer-in-Residence **Karen Loeb**, Writers Read at the Library is usually at the Eau Claire Library second Thursdays, 6 PM. See library website for more info.

White Pine celebrations of words and music are held quarterly around the time of solstice and equinox. The Winter Solstice White Pine celebration was held at Simply Dunn octagonal schoolhouse, Downsville, January 13; **Sandra Lindow**, **Yvette Flaten** and **Ellen Ochs** participated. The Spring Equinox White Pine will be Thursday, March 19, 6 PM, at Raw Deal, 603 Broadway St. S, downtown Menomonie. This is White Pine's 30th year.

David Blackey's "Crow on a Fence" appears in *Avocet*.

Pete Engen placed 2nd in this winter's "Mark My Words" competition at The Pump House Regional Art Gallery, LaCrosse. His haiku "you," "boys and shame," "long winter," "cold moon," and "the scent of memory" appear in *Ronin Express*, "winning the lotto" in the *Driftless Writing Center 10th Anniversary Anthology*, "lunar eclipse" in *Avocet*, "lunar eclipse" in *La Piccioletta Barca*, "uncoupled" and "less than june" in *Wild Roof Journal*, and "warm wind" in *Halfway Down the Stairs*.

Contributions from Our Members

Thanks to: Bob St. Louis for a donation to WFOP in memory of Nadine St. Louis.

Barbara Roe for a donation to WFOP in memory of Richard Roe.

Thomas Murtha for a \$100 donation to WFOP.

June Paul for a \$40 donation for the Poetry of Peace project.

In House: for sharing information on members in transition. Please contact Michael Belongie at poetpow@gmail.com if you have news of a significant move, such as to another city or state, or care facility, by a WFOP member.

Museletter submissions: Send news to your regional VP or to wfopmuseletter@gmail.com (include region!), in body of e-mail. Please format as in *Museletter*; no .pdfs or press releases.

Poetry news only; send only poetry publications, *not* acceptances; don't bother including WFOP awards or *Museletter*, *Bramble* or *Calendar* appearances. **Please** don't double-space after periods.

Publications by Our Members

Bird Religion, a chapbook by Jan Chronister, 2019. 32 pp. \$10 w/shipping; book arrives in its own fully lined bag made from repurposed/vintage fabric. Available from Jan at whispertreepress@gmail.com

The Island of Amazonned Women: A Woman Warrior's Poetic Guide to Breast Cancer and Recovery by Sandra J. Lindow, Cyberwit Press, \$15, available on Amazon.com and from lindowleaf@gmail.com

No Fish in the Sea by June Paul. \$12.50. Available from June at junepaul@gmail.com

Stick Figure with Skirt (Main Street Rag 2019, winner of the Poetry Book Award) by Cathy Cofell. 74 pages, \$14. mainstreetragbookstore.com/product/stick-figure-with-skirt-cathryn-cofell/ or ccofell@gmail.com

The Truth About Everything—in 3500 Words or Less by Naomi Cochran, Just A Thought Press, \$8. Available at Amazon or contact naomicochran@outlook.com

NOTE TO MEMBERS WITH NEW BOOKS

Surely the point of publishing your book is for others to be able to read it? There is little point in listing books here without making it possible to buy them. When you announce a new book, send title, publisher, date, # of pages, price, and a place to buy the book, or your email, to wfopmuseletter@gmail.com

WFOP's Literary Journal

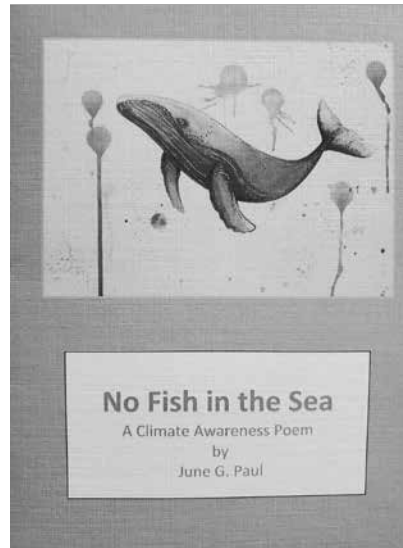
Bramble, WFOP's literary magazine, is open for submissions for the Summer issue **April 1–May 15**.

Quarterly issues are guest-edited by WFOP members and open to all Wisconsin poets. For queries about artwork, guest editing, etc., email bramble@wfop.org. *Bramble* is now web and print. Full guidelines at:

wfop.org/bramble-lit-mag/how-to-submit

Postal submissions (*only* if unable to email) to:

C. Kubasta
Bramble submission
2312 Oregon St
Oshkosh WI 54902



World Whale Day is February 15
World Water Day is March 22.

“We, and the whales, need clean water every day of the year.”

June Paul has self-published a small book, *No Fish in the Sea*, with artwork by her grandchildren and a nurse in

California, a collaborative effort to help raise funds for clean water and saving whales. **\$12.50**.

Portions of sales will be donated to non-profit orgs. such as Clean Water for Haiti. For every six books purchased one person in Haiti will have clean water for one year.

Contact June at junepaul@gmail.com to invite her to your event or order books.

Triad Contest DEADLINE

August 15



Info in summer issue, or
wfop.org/annual-contests/

A Note from the Membership Chair

We welcome questions and suggestions regarding membership!

Contact Naomi Cochran, wfopmembership@gmail.com, or mail to W1598 Lee Rd, Hayward WI 54843

Leaves of Peace Anthology

(a WFOP project)

Deadline March 30, 2020

31-line limit; previously published is okay

Submit as attachment (Word doc/docx or rtf: no pdfs or google docs please) in 12 pt Times New Roman with 30-word bio in body of email; include hometown.

Submission grants right to publish on cardstock leaf regardless of anthology acceptance (and this is considered publication). The plan is for leaves to be displayed at poetry events around Wisconsin.

Copies of anthology will be offered to contributors at a reduced price.

Publication scheduled for late summer.

Email submissions to peaceanthology@gmail.com

Spring Conference Theme:
Water Ecology and Eco-Justice

Presenter: Melissa Tuckey

WFOP Spring Conference May 1–2, 2020

Blue Harbor Resort
725 Blue Harbor Dr
Sheboygan, WI 53081

866-701-2583

blueharborresort.com

Room reservations must be made directly with hotel by **April 3** for discount. Use group code **7B036T**.

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Spring Conference Schedule

FRIDAY, MAY 1, 2020

3:00 PM Executive Board Meeting
4:00–7:00 PM Registration open / Book Fair
7:00–? PM Traditional WFOP Open Mike with two presentations: a reading from *The Water Poems* by The Grand Avenue Collective, and a spoken-word poetry presentation by new Board member, Nathan Reid

SATURDAY, MAY 2, 2020

7:00–8:30 AM Breakfast, Registration, Book Fair
8:30–8:45 AM Announcements & Presentation of new Sheboygan Poet Laureate
8:45–9:30 AM General Business Meeting
9:30–9:45 AM Break / Book Fair
9:45–10:45 AM Roll Call Poems (under 20 lines)
10:45–11:45 AM Reading by various Poets Laureate of the East Region
11:45–12:30 PM Lunch
12:30–1:10 PM Muse Prize/Chapbook Prize
1:10–1:30 PM The Tar Creek Story (Maryann Hurtt)
1:30–1:45 PM Break/Book Fair
1:45–3:15 PM Feature Presentation (Melissa Tuckey)
3:15–3:30 PM Break/Book Fair
3:30–? PM Roll Call Poems

Presenter: Melissa Tuckey

Poet, educator and literary activist, Melissa Tuckey is author of *Tenuous Chapel*, a book of poems selected by Charles Simic for the ABZ First Book Award. She edited *Ghost Fishing: An Eco-Justice Poetry Anthology*, (University of Georgia Press, 2018). Her poems are widely published in literary journals and anthologies including *Fire and Ink: An Anthology of Social Action Writing*, *Ecopoetry Anthology*, *Read Water: An Anthology*, and *DC Poets Against the War Anthology*. Tuckey is a co-founder of Split This Rock, a national literary organization dedicated to socially engaged poetry, and an Emerita Fellow at Black Earth Institute. Other honors include a winter fellowship at Fine Arts Center in Provincetown and fellowships from DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities, Ohio Arts Council, and Blue Mountain Center. She is currently serving as Tompkins County Poet Laureate and lives in Ithaca, New York, where she teaches community based writing workshops and lives on a 170 acre eco-village.

About Your Membership

All memberships are CALENDAR YEAR—January through December. Only new memberships October–December are automatically extended through the following year. **Renewal payments** are due by **December 31** each year. Your membership expires at the end of the year on your *Museletter* mailing label. Contact **wfopmembership@gmail.com** with any questions. To receive reminders and official news, make sure we have a current email address.

NB: *If you lapse, then renew, you will be entered as a new member. Continuous membership is required for service awards.*

If you vacation elsewhere, mail must be sent first class in order to forward. We are charged for returned bulk mail. Signing up for e-mail-only *Museletter* (.pdf online) saves WFOP \$ and arrives 2 weeks before the print *Museletter*. Notify **wfopmuseletter@gmail.com** to opt out of print delivery.

The Events weekly e-mailing is a separate opt-in list; to receive it, notify **wfopmuseletter@gmail.com**. Send all address changes or *Museletter* delivery inquiries to **wfopmuseletter@gmail.com**.

WFOP SPRING CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FORM
Friday–Saturday, May 1–2, 2020

All inquiries should be directed to: Ed Werstein at wersted@gmail.com or 262-617-0860

Visit wfop.org/conference-registration/ to register and pay registration fee online, or mail to the address below.

No refunds except in the case of personal or family emergency.

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____ E-mail _____

Member? _____ Region _____

Members \$60.00 (if postmarked by **April 3**; \$70.00 at the door) Number _____ \$ _____
(includes Saturday breakfast and lunch)

Non-members: \$90.00 (if postmarked by **April 3**; \$100.00 at the door) Number _____ \$ _____
(includes meals and WFOP membership, if desired)

Lunch-only requests will be handled at the event.

Vegetarian meals preferred? _____ First time at a WFOP conference? _____

Would you like to share your room if another member is willing to share the cost? _____

If table space needed to sell books, please provide author name _____

Payment: Online at wfop.org/store or by check payable to WFOP. TOTAL \$ _____

Room reservations must be made directly with hotel.

If paying by check, please mail registration form to: **Colleen Frentzel, WFOP Treasurer**
1410 N Wuthering Hills Dr
Janesville WI 53546

Membership Renewal Form **KEEP YOUR MEMBERSHIP CURRENT.**

All renewals are due by December 31. Expiration year follows your name on the mailing label. Dues **MUST** be current to enter WFOP contests, be in the *Museletter*, receive mailings, and to have a page on wfop.org. Contact wfopmembership@gmail.com if you are not sure when your membership expires.

SAVE POSTAGE and renew or join online at wfop.org
*or mail to: **Colleen Frentzel, 1410 N Wuthering Hills Dr, Janesville WI 53546***
*Please make checks payable to: **WFOP***

Active \$30.00

Student \$15.00

***** 5 for 4 Deal *****

\$120 paid now will give

5 years of membership

for the price of 4! Save \$30!

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip+4 _____

E-mail address _____

Check to get weekly Events e-mail.

Willing to help WFOP save \$?
 Check to get *Museletter* via e-mail.

Poems BY Our Membership

—ELMAE PASSINEAU, EDITOR

Choose a widely recognizable fictional character and submit a poem written from that character's point of view. Maximum 18 lines.

MELVILLE'S DOPPELGANGER

I was Ishmael, too, entering that whale of a book
swallowing the summer afternoons.

Lying on my boat-like bed, avidly sailing along
on the vast and ominous quest, my heart a harpoon
cleaving the days of storms and brilliant-lit calms;
close to my mates on deck, Starbuck and Queequeg—
Learning the whale lore, the chase, harvesting sperm oil
and ambergris. In awe of Ahab and his whalebone leg,
his White Whale adversary, their “unquenchable feud.”

And the final encounter—the Pequod upended,
Ahab roped to Moby Dick's side, borne down under;
my mates dead, myself alone, floating among the splinters,
clinging to Queequeg's empty coffin over the whirlpool
of childhood's passing—aimless, waiting for rescue.

—*Mary Lux, Milwaukee*

PITY DATE

I am Death now, have you cleared the room?
Have you fled on a circular path that only brings you back?
Have you anticipated our meeting; perhaps hastened the moment?

Drugs or drinking; a noteworthy suicide?

Perhaps simple gluttony, obesity; obviously,

So many steps if you choose the dance; knowing that ultimately, to me you are partnered.

Patiently, I will follow your lead; just pick a tempo then stage your moment.

I am Death; knowing all opinions, avoidance obvious.

Think on that not; I am neither vindictive nor am I calculating.

You were correct, I lack the emotion necessary to maintain a relationship.

Nothing but a one-night stand; a meeting, a tryst, then a lay.

For us, there are no second chances.

Do not worry, go to your appointment, only a delay.

I may meet you there; or I will be along shortly D.

—*Jeff Anderson, Gleason*

RUTH

Husband, do you hear me? It's me, Ruth!
I sit here by the river and I can see the
color of your cloak in the moving pale water
feel light warm the edge where sun catches
hear almost a voice in muddy bank ripples
but still, what you did- marrying me
and then just dying...

I know, I have to take care of your mother,
that seems only right,
but who will be there to care for my mother,
and then who is going to take care of me?
(It's not like there are any children)
it can get lonely, you know,
strange land, strange people,
your mother still grieves,
well, I have to go glean in the fields.

—*Karen Haley*

THOSE CHILDREN!

I've lived in my clearing forever;
They've only just newly moved in.
It used to be pleasantly quiet—
now there's a neighborhood din.

I'm old and I'm probably grumpy
but I like my home colored and sweet—
Those kids have discovered my secret
and think it's delicious to eat.

At first it was just sugared rosebuds,
and then it was pinwheels of mint,
and then they ate shingles of chocolate,
and windows with colorful tints.

By then I had lost my own temper,
I had scolded and told them it is sin
but still they continued their munching,
so I opened the stove, tossed them in!

—Lorelee Sienkowski, *Packwaukee*

FINDING MY LIFE BY JO MARCH

My journey of discovery begins
as father goes off to war,
mother takes over,
and four "Little Women"
learn to function in an ever changing world.

My sisters and I are enclosed
in a bubble of poverty, heartaches, and withdrawal
as we strive to use our creative personalities well within reason.
I'm the one poking large holes in the bubble
with my stubborn and brutally honest behavior.

My life begins to change when I give up tomboy ways,
stop writing scandalous stories, and become
the author of my own story and function in it.

If I was a time traveler to the 21st century,
I'd be a leader in the #MeToo movement!

—Susan Anderson, *Baraboo*

A NEW LIFE

When he treated me like that, I was determined
to do something about it. Instead of useless
weeping and pleading, I redirected my energies
into other, more effective activities. I accomplished
all the things that needed to be done and finished
everything that needed to be finished. I got rid of
everything of his; *everything*, do you hear me?
Cleanliness is having nothing left to remind me.

The chambers of my heart are stripped bare
to the gleaming walls, which reflect only myself
Each empty day is filled with polishing mirrored
steel; I am nothing if not a perfectionist. No one else
lives here any longer; there can be no voices, but
no matter how softly I walk my footsteps whisper.

"Mommy, I love you."

"Mommy, hold me."

"Medea, my dear."

—F. J. Bergmann, *Madison*

first appeared in *Niteblade*

EUROPA

I smell him before
I see him—the rank
effluvia turning my
bowels to water.

Then he appears in dazzling
whiteness with horns polished
as jewels. His muscles ripple

but I do not flinch
as he licks my hands.

I feed him flowers
and mount his broad back

before he plunges
toward the open sea
and I reach back to shore
with trembling hand.

—Nancy Jesse, *Madison*

A HOLIDAY TALE

My heart is pumping near out of my chest.
For as old as I am, I'm doing my best.
Slowed down a bit near retirement age
but then, too, Whoville has changed.

Those early years what a bozo I was
stealing those gifts oh, just because.
Lucky the cops didn't arrest me for theft
then I'd surely have had nothing left.
How lucky to live for in this fabulous town
where folks lift you up and don't push you down!

Oh, how I've changed.... I'm carving the beast
to celebrate Whoville's stupendous feast.

—*Patricia Smith, Knapp*

SNAKE CHARMER

My tresses terrorized millions,
Enduring shame through the ages.
Defamed by the men who would rule,
Uttering lies about my glorious coiffure,
Savaging everywoman's power story.
Anyone who fears me, misunderstands me.

—*Kris Rued-Clark, Arpin*

IT'S BEEN A WONDERFUL LIFE

Chronic colds have tailed me forever, gracing me
with a bright red nose. When I was young, the other reindeer
laughed, jokingly said that I should guide your sleigh.
You thought about that, and perhaps felt a bit sorry
for me. You said, "Yes, Rudolph. You *should* guide my sleigh."
Then, I had to confess I had no sense of direction.
You sent me to flight school. Thanks to you, Santa,
I have glorious memories. All through each autumn,
I'd practice take-offs and landings, work on endurance.
Then, the big night, the sky bright with stars—
Mrs. Santa and the elves cheering as we took flight.
All the magic. Thank you for encouraging me
when I was just a timid little reindeer with a bright red nose.

—*Linda Aschbrenner, Marshfield*

TREE OF HEAVEN

Poverty is our lifestyle in
Williamsburg, Brooklyn, New York.
I'm very fond of my father, Johnny,
an alcoholic singing waiter.
Katie, my mother, works hard for our family,
cares for us all, but especially brother Neeley.
A realist, some might say cold emotionally,
she cleans our tenement to keep us together.
I relate more to my father and his romantic views.
I'm his tree of heaven.

I want to be a writer,
break out of poverty,
break out of Williamsburg.
My father's too-early death, though sad,
also brings hope for a better life for me.
His tree of heaven is
romantic and tenacious.

—*Anne Bales, Milwaukee*

*Note
that we are
far more likely
to find room
for shorter
poems!*

EAVESDROPPING DEADLINE APRIL 15

Take a phrase, sentence, or snippet of
conversation you overhear in a restaurant,
supermarket, theater, anywhere ... and
build a poem around it. Let the reader
know (italics, quotation marks) which were
the overheard words. Maximum 18 lines.

Send to etp1024@gmail.com

or mail to **Elmae Passineau**
7007 Weston Ridge Dr #14
Weston WI 54476

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Next Issue Deadline MAY 1, 2020

NANCY DREW: GIRL SLEUTH

I can bake a prize-winning chocolate cake
grow purple delphiniums
and maybe dance the Charleston.
Can you imagine?

My greatest super-power is the vote.
I can't wait to deploy it and am preparing my mind.
My mother wept tears of joy
I can barely remember.

This girl sleuth can outwit gangsters
and pry open lost secrets.
And have I told you about my blue roadster?
I maneuver rain-washed rutted roads
to chase down truth and justice.
Change my own tires.

—*Sylvia Cavanaugh*

BO PEEP TELLS THE REAL STORY

When I got home Mom and Dad started yelling
Where are your sheep? Where are your sheep?
And how did your beautiful dress get ripped?

Well, what was I to say: *those sheep are no damn good?*

We were hardly out of sight of the farmhouse
when their hairy ears popped up and
they were twirling their mustaches
and leering. Then the pawing began.
I ran and ran. I didn't want them following me home.
Next thing you know we'd have been in bed.

Believe me—*believe me:*
they were no lambs.
Just ask Little Red.

—*Phyllis Wax, Milwaukee*

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