



# Rensselaerville Library

Preserving a historical gathering place

Promoting a life-long love of learning

Fostering personal connections

**Celebrating National Poetry Month 2024**

**Poem-A-Day**

**30 days ... 30 poets ... 30 poems**

**showcasing different voices, styles, subjects**

**2000+ pageviews**

**Enjoy!**

**Tom Corrado, Curator, Poem-A-Day**

**Patrick Wynne, Director, Rensselaerville Library**

April 1

I must have been looking for birds

*by Kennedy Coyne*

We're talking about Joy Harjo. This must have been yours, she says. We're on the phone for the seventh time today because I like to talk and she likes to listen and I tell her about our dog who she hasn't met yet but is still hers and she tells me about our cats who are my cats but not as much as this new dog. She's been writing about birds - eagles and owls and peregrines - but doesn't realize it until I say, hey you've been writing about a lot of birds lately. In capital letters she says WELL I DON'T MEAN TO. While we talk about Joy she pulls out *How We Became Human*, shuffling pages over the phone, three eagles on the cover. She insists it's mine, and I say no. I've never read her. She flips to page 100 - The Flood - where inside is a slip from Raven's Used Books. It is hers. I must have been looking for poetry, she admits. And my dog chews on *Conflict Resolution for Holy Beings*. Teeth marks in the corner of *For a Girl Becoming*.

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Kennedy Coyne (she/her) is a writer based in upstate New York. Her work can be found or is forthcoming in *Indiana Review*, *Colorado Review*, *Gulf Coast*, *Michigan Quarterly Review Online*, and elsewhere. She was a semifinalist for The Adroit Journal's 2023 Anthony Veasna So Scholars. She received her MFA in Creative Writing and certificate in Arts Leadership from Virginia Tech. She is working on her first novel. Find more of her writing at [kencoyne.com](http://kencoyne.com).

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April 2

(four haiku)

*by Barry Kuhar*

The yellow of his eyes  
Hey there Little Red Riding Hood

Howling at the moon

Hoarfrost with the sun shining  
Frozen glass of water  
The ice booming at 10 below

The slap of the tail  
The beaver house sticks and mud  
Black 5X cowboy hat

A big 10-point buck  
The velvet dripping from the horn  
The clash of antlers

-

Barry farms and writes in Rensselaerville, NY.

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April 3

The Witch's Necklace

*by Dan Wilcox*

The crackle of ice as it hits the driveway  
is like hearing you tiptoe in the attic  
not that you are there, I've looked  
you're not, but I listen until I fall asleep.

Your breath in my dreams is like what the night  
smells like ruffling your hair as dark as the sky  
with a scent like your body unwashed  
in the morning when you evaporate into the Sun.

The pages torn from your journal are cursives  
in a language we haven't learned to speak  
where your voice falters with hallucinations  
sounding like desire or lessons for daughters.

I put down my book, climb the attic stairs  
there is silence when I flick on the light  
nothing disturbed, then I see the sparkle of light  
on the floor, a necklace I've never seen

the chain tarnished, the glass beads glisten  
like pearls of ice. I bring it downstairs  
put it on, dream you come back to claim it.

-

Dan Wilcox is the host of the Third Thursday Poetry Night at the Social Justice Center in Albany, NY and is a member of the poetry performance group "3 Guys from Albany." As a photographer, he claims to have the world's largest collection of photos of unknown poets. His book "Gloucester Notes" is from FootHills Publishing. He was named one of the 2019 Literary Legends by the Albany Public Library Foundation and he is an active member of Veterans For Peace. You can read his Blog about the Albany poetry scene at [dwlcx.blogspot.com](http://dwlcx.blogspot.com).

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April 4

In the Snow Cold Night

*by Charles Rossiter*

It's past midnight, deep winter,  
snow higher than hubcaps  
covers the chopping block.

In a beach chair in the yard  
I look to the lonely moon,  
and watch my breath  
rise and disappear.

The sky is like Idaho  
it's so dark.

Spirits of the past drift in:  
Erika, Nan, my old roommate Fred.

I'm relaxed but not tired,  
in that pleasant state  
on the edge of sleep.

I open a beer,  
adjust my expectations to zero,  
lean back and look up  
at the ink black sky.

-

Charles Rossiter, National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship recipient, has been featured on NPR, the Chicago Blues Festival and at the Geraldine Dodge Poetry Festival in NJ. He has traveled the country as 1/3 of 3 Guys from Albany, performance poetry group, and his latest collection is *Green Mountain Meditations* from FootHills Publishing. He lives and writes in Bennington, VT. Find out more at [poetryspokenhere.com](http://poetryspokenhere.com).

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April 5

In the Beginning

*by Howard J Kogan*

In the beginning seems like a good way to start a poem  
it has a familiar ring, a vague profundity, an authoritative tone.  
Of course, what follows matters,  
in the beginning of the third inning lacks the gravitas of  
*in the beginning God created ...*  
which reminds me of ... *in the beginning was the word,*  
an idea poets like;  
that's the Apostle John talking  
about God's word becoming flesh.

It's a trick we keep trying to learn,  
but until we do, we're sentenced  
to use words to make sense of our lives,  
and keep us from feeling alone and unknown.  
It's difficult talking about words with words  
but what else do we have?

Anyway, it's about time someone walked into the room  
and noticed the white lotus blossom encircled  
by orange and blue koi, each koi a single brush stroke  
practiced for years so it appears effortless.

Or we can stand at the edge of a high cliff  
looking down into a painted canyon watching  
a paint stallion galloping with his harem.  
A vulture, riding a column of warm air,  
lifts above the rim and eyes us,  
its head is the color of meat.  
Or we can watch a gazelle being chased  
by an unchaste lioness with cubs to feed.

Let's ask Mother Teresa to pray for them,  
she's standing there in the shade  
fingering her rosary beads  
laughing and whispering with Princess Diana.  
They're as real as the lion cubs you see  
waiting quietly in the shade of an Acacia tree.

Each ... a word in a poem,  
in a world we're creating together.

Though this poem is not about flowers,  
horses, lions, gazelles or Mother Teresa.  
They're only words that glide in and out of the poem  
like Olympic skaters, who are poets themselves  
inscribing their poems on the ice while judges wait for them  
to execute the required double axel and follow it with a spin.  
Spinning faster and faster until they're a blur  
bent on drilling themselves into the ice,  
which they would do if this were a cartoon,

but it's all words, no pictures.  
The pictures are yours.  
You're the only one who knows  
if the skater is a man or a woman,  
how tall they are, the color of their hair,  
or whether they landed that double axel.

Eventually the skater stops spinning,  
masks their face in a practiced smile  
and skates backward around the rink  
gracefully acknowledging the applause of fans.  
Now the skater steps off the ice into the arms of  
a Russian trainer, one look and you know she's KGB.

She wears a silver fox coat, bears little resemblance  
to Mother Teresa though she might be the lioness  
and the skater the gazelle or be the gazelle  
and the party apparatchiks the lioness,  
or it's something else entirely.

That's the problem with words,  
they can deceive as easily as inform.

Truth is beauty,  
but lies are always dressed to kill.

Or perhaps the poem stems from seeing a woman  
wearing a lotus blossom kerchief with a koi border,  
like the one mother wore after chemo.  
So thin she could have been in a photograph  
of a concentration camp, a photograph  
because that's as close as the word can get to life.

That's the sort of poem we're writing,  
complex, even confusing, and one that inevitably fails.  
Because words can only carry you so far,  
the possibilities are endless, but in the end  
only one possibility can be lived.

In the beginning

was the word,  
in the end will be a silence  
that speaks with an eloquence  
words can only envy.

-

Howard J Kogan is a retired psychotherapist and former resident of the Capital District who now lives in Ashland, MA. His books of poetry, *Indian Summer*, *A Chill in the Air* and *Before I Forget* are available from the publisher, [SquareCirclePress.com](http://SquareCirclePress.com), your independent bookstore or Amazon.

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April 6

The Betrayal of Objects

*by Philomena Moriarty*

The sidewalk moves up to trip  
the peas fall from the fork

The vase shatters dangerous  
the engine refuses to turn

The screen freezes  
or grows dark and unreachable

Like Gulliver we are tied down  
by Lilliputian strings

Of closets that bulge, drawers that crowd  
surfaces of chaos

The papers rise everyday  
out of control on the desk

We yearn to rise to a mountaintop



release spirit among the trees

But what of these insults  
the liver, the lungs, the legs failing

And finally the heart, that phenomenal heart  
finally that too

betrays us

-

Philomena Moriarty is a local poet living in East Greenbush and author of *My Moon Self*. You can find her at several open mics. Her poems often have psychological and spiritual themes. She is psychotherapist in private practice in East Greenbush who specializes in trauma work.

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April 7

Jacket

*by Cheryl A. Rice*

I could wax romantic about  
how beautiful he was,  
dashing around LA on his Vespa,  
filming the planetarium, the valley,  
but truth is, after 18 he was  
mostly a mystery to me.  
Godmother to his only son,  
I have now lost my god and my brother,  
one imaginary from the start,  
born of a need for companionship,  
fully formed in beard and heart;  
the other trapped in my mind's loop,  
if anywhere, hellos, goodbyes,  
only the phone a constant.

Our sister finds tickets  
in the pocket of his heavy leather jacket  
for flights, concerts, movies  
at the Chinese theater,  
that we never heard about.  
Like me, after giving our home a go,  
he sprang across the continent,  
false hopes fueled by a high school friend.  
It's fuzzy for me from that point on,  
third-hand updates, quick calls  
from a telemarketing gig, surveys I would complete  
over and over, just to hear his voice.

I hear him now, when I cross the bridge to work,  
calls about our sister's illness,  
brief, funny, and yet,  
he is the one who dies first.  
He is the one at the edge of another beginning,  
fallen into the chasm  
we are all fated to achieve.  
He was beautiful, he was bold,  
a sort of hero for me in a family  
of fear and lost horizons.  
Off he goes into the sunset,  
silhouette of someone I used to know,  
steam rising from the canyons before him.

-

Twice a Best of the Net nominee, Cheryl A. Rice's books include *Dressing for the Unbearable* (Flying Monkey Press), *Until the Words Came* (Post Traumatic Press), and *Love's Compass* (Kung Fu Treachery Press). Rice can be reached at dorothy62@yahoo.com. For updates on the Poetry World of Cheryl A. Rice, go to: <http://flyingmonkeyprods.blogspot.com>.

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April 8

Coming to light

*by Katrinka Moore*

as if your mind were a house  
and wind blew in  
flung open windows  
winnowed  
cast away thoughts  
as if chance could clear

as if the world were a restless swarming  
always coming to light  
and disappearing  
as if it were made not of things  
but relations  
no border between you

as if lost you kept walking  
stopping to listen  
stumbling on  
as if a glimpse were enough  
as if stillness

-

Katrinka Moore is the author of five poetry books, three of which include her visual art. "Coming to light" appeared in her latest book, *Diminuendo*, and was first published in *First Literary Review-East*.

April 9

We Knew

for Jeffrey

*by Ann Lapinsky*

Your first gift to me was  
a bottle of wine  
wrapped in Christmas  
wrap, tied with a string,  
taped with white  
artist's tape.  
It was February.

On our first trip  
to the tea shop  
you asked for the  
thing in the case with  
the sesame seeds  
all over it and did not  
want to know what  
it was. When you ate  
the mochi cake, you  
told me it was way  
too sweet but that  
was OK.

During our first home-  
cooked meal you thought  
the black sesame seeds  
I placed on the roasted  
carrots looked like mouse  
turds. You ate them  
anyway.

When we wanted to connect  
on a Friday evening and  
could only think of going  
to a Dunkin Donuts,  
you told me it was one  
of your favorite dates.

And a year has gone by  
and you still give me gifts

wrapped in Christmas  
wrap all times of the year  
and we still go to that tea  
shop but get macarons instead  
of mochi and you still come  
to my house for dinner  
and we still laugh about  
Dunkin Donuts and the  
mouse turds.  
Still

-

In her retirement, Ann is facilitating a meditation group, leading meditations for lawyers, teaching yoga dance, taking lots of walks, putting in her hours as a member worker at the Honest Weight Food Coop and writing poetry.

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April 10

Poem for 9/19/22

*by Bob Sharkey*

The day she got off the train  
at Union Station,  
she was wearing carnation pink.  
Dress, hat, shoes all the same tint.  
I was only seven, but I sensed  
trouble as soon as she looked  
from my grandfather to me.  
"You will be ok," he said.

The day before I headed west,  
she asked me to take a chimp  
and a pair of parrots out to  
her parents east of Tuba City.  
She was wearing a crown of dandelions,

said the parents were worn out,  
the animals would perk them up.  
I wanted to visit the Monuments and  
come into the Grand Canyon from  
the east and best entrance. So, yes!

Now they are all gone,  
the last aunt died two years ago.  
Even the diamond crowned young Queen  
whose face in profile graced so many  
of the stamps I collected as a boy  
has departed.

-

Bob Sharkey writes prose and poems. He is a long time board member of  
the Hudson Valley Writers Guild. Bob is the editor of the annual  
international Stephen A. DiBiase Poetry Contest now in its 9th year.

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April 11

More Beautiful

*by Tom Bonville*

The forest,  
climbing the sides of mountains,  
each peak, expansive, noble, solemn,  
each tree laying its roots  
deep into the earth,  
being one with the earth,  
living in peace,  
ageing with grace,  
the passing of years, inevitable.

I see the trees,  
I speak to them, my voice soft as moss,  
I am one with the trees,

knowing, no tree stands forever,  
each tree having a life all its own,  
as well as a passing.  
I see myself among the trees,  
standing tall, waiting,  
not afraid now.

-

Tom Bonville lives in the Hudson Valley, has had poems published  
in *Chronogram* and *Up The River*, and regularly participates in  
various poetry groups and open mics.

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April 12

The End

*by Edie Abrams*

I stayed with my mother  
day and night, curled on a chair,  
my head on the bed by her feet.

I repeated her life story  
to nurses, cleaners, and  
cafeteria workers, and

held her hand, caressed  
her forehead, kissed  
her face all over,

called her "mommy,"  
whispered to stay with me  
longer or be free to go...

They say hearing's the last  
to fail so I played operas,  
Beethoven, and *Fiddler*.

Eyes closed, mouth locked open,  
breath wheezy, her face  
translucent as porcelain.

I found a Polish song  
she used to sing to me  
“Maryna! Maryna, gotuj pierogi!” \*

When young, I had laughed at “monkey”  
only now to find out it’s really “maka.” \*\*  
As the song ended, so did she...

just like that, life vanished

imperceptible and gently.  
I climbed onto her bed and  
held her in my arms, my angel.

\* “Maryna! Maryna, cook me pierogi!”

\*\* pronounced “monka” (flour)

-

My mother almost made it to 96. Her death was the first bedside death that I experienced. It was not at all how I expected it to be. Even though it was in a hospital, it was beautiful . . . and awesome. My daughter Addie commented that, after her Grandma heard the Polish song, it was as if she returned “home.” Although we are not a religious or mystical family, concepts from religion or spirituality are apropos to our experiences.

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April 13

Tree of Life

*by pmboudreaux*

i was born in a tree



in a nest on a limb  
my parents made for me  
my siblings and me  
sometimes it was rough  
sometimes tough when they left me  
one by one to venture forth  
from the limb from the tree  
the first sound i made was  
'weeee, weeee'  
whenever in trouble i sing  
'tweet tweet tweet tweet, tweet tweet tweet tweet'  
and others come to help me  
i was born in a tree  
'weeee, weeee'

-

I wrote this poem for my new great-grandson, James.

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April 14

I am, you lonely one\*

*by Christy O'Callaghan*

Didn't you see me listening to you sing  
that song you learned from your mom's van radio?  
Watching you swing from energetic static  
to a melted pit of anguish when your power got cut.  
Didn't my reaching open hand  
show you I was here?

Am I only the sister you searched for once the others burned out?  
But my hand's grown cold  
holding onto your rainbows, hearts, and green clovers.  
Objects turned into candy-coated plastic  
once bright enough to obscure our view.  
Could you ever truly see me

past the pain you needed to escape?  
And with that question suspended, I know  
someday you will tell me when we meet again  
among the stuff of stars.

\*Inspired by Rainer Maria Rilke's poem "I am, you anxious one."

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Christy O'Callaghan is a writer and developmental editor in Upstate NY. For two decades, she was a community organizer and educator. Christy loves strange stories, plants, and lore. Her work has appeared in The Los Angeles Review, Great Weather for Media, Trolley Journal, Under the Gumtree, Chestnut Review, among others. Visit [christyflutterby.com](http://christyflutterby.com) for more information.

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April 15

Red Clovers

*by Dana Jaye Cadman*

If you can remember only some parts of your life  
why can you remember those parts

why picking weeds  
in the field the sound of my dad's whistle  
to come home

but how did it go? the high pitch

cracked through the absence  
the space over the tall grass  
breaking the sky

Where are you?  
Holding red clovers

and talking to myself

the screeching snap of wheat I twist  
and pull from the stem to gather:  
a muted flute.

-

Dana Jaye Cadman is a writer and visual artist. Her work appears most recently in Southeast Review, The Glacier Journal, 2River View, and Dialogist, is forthcoming from Vassar Review. Find her on [danajaye.com](http://danajaye.com).

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April 16

Basement Aspirations

*by Rhonda Rosenheck*

My basement boasts sprays,  
saws, a lathe, brushes, and task lights  
clipped to a pegboard hung with  
hammers, chisels, screw drivers,  
drill bits, and dad's old folding ruler.

A bentwood chair with torn cane  
sags against the seeping foundation  
and hosts sticky old cobwebs  
beneath a bulb too dim to warn  
against stepping in the kitty litter.

My workbench is layered with scraps,  
shards, chips, and the flat, round,  
colorful practice doodads that I rub,  
wishing for a table, bookshelf, and my  
pregnant niece's nursing glider to appear.

-

Rhonda Rosenheck lives in New York's Capital Region. Her publications include editing *Thriving: An Anthology* (multiple genres, Exsolutas Press 2024), for which she won a NYSCA individual artists grant through Saratoga Arts. Her two poetry publications are *The Five Books of Limericks: A chapter-by-chapter re-reading of the Torah* (Ben Yehuda Press 2023) and *Looking* (Elephant Treehouse Press 2018). She also wrote *Yiddische Yoga: OYsanas for Every Generation* (humor, Ben Yehuda Press 2016) and several chapters and articles in the field of teacher education. Rhonda's poems have appeared in *Heirlock Magazine* and *Kings River Life Magazine's* e-newsletter, *The Paragon Press*, and anthologized in *A Book of Sonnets* (Poets Choice Press 2020). Her poem *MakerSpace* was theatrically performed at the Fenimore Art Museum's *Glimmer Globe Theater*, Cooperstown, NY. In July 2023, Rhonda was the resident poet at the *Fish Factory Arts Centre* in *Stöðvarfjörður*, Iceland.

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April 17

Thoughts on a Cold February Night in Lower Manhattan

*by George Grace*

The loneliness cut through my soul  
Like the unrelenting cold air  
Blistering through the canyons of lower Broadway  
Shaking off its granite restraints to lose itself  
in the whirlwind of New York harbor  
Those hollowed streets where ticker tape flew  
For reasons both pedestrian and sublime  
Our paths crisscrossing over decades  
Each person lost in their thoughts  
Their worries tailored to their particular vulnerability  
Our connection displaced by time  
If I could only tell them now that their life mattered  
That their little heroisms where not in vain  
That the river of humanity runs through each one of them  
And now I shiver, at the apex  
Like them I leave my invisible imprint on the hard, blue slate below

But I am comforted by the warmth that they shared,  
The warmth that never dissipates  
An ember of love, given  
A smile

-

George E. Grace is a commercial real estate broker and consultant by day, and an avid poet and writer by night. George is a graduate of Fordham University School of Law (JD), University of Chicago (MBA) and Cooper Union (BE). He is the son of William J. Grace, Sr., a published poet and Shakespearean and Milton scholar, where he credits his passion for words, ideas, and the art of communication.

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April 18

I Have Danced With Druids

*by Sally Rhoades*

In my slumber as my muscles twitch, strengthen,  
awaken in all of their glory. I am smitten with the

Attitude of my hometown druids who dance and spiral  
North and south, east and west as they gather the gold

Of voice spoken through others as I am engulfed in  
Joy and its lasting timber. When all is said and done,

I bequeath my knowledge so others may dance a fraction  
Of their heart. There are no words to speak when the body

Has it right, glimmers in starlight, moon light, the often firefly  
That gathers dusk. I am myself, I am when the druids dance

All of my awakening to their sweet succor and chariot to lift  
Me to the sky and back on that night when music played

In my ear and catastrophe kept its distance in the open air.  
Ah, to dance with the druids is oft compare to starlight.

-

Sally Rhoades, a poet, playwright and performer, has been putting movement to words and words to movement for the last thirty years. She has been featured at most of the area's open mics and is a frequent contributor. She was featured on Charlie Rossiter's podcast Poetry Spoken Here and interviewed by Andrea Cunliffe for the Hudson Mohawk magazine at WOOCl05.3 FM, a Sanctuary for Independent Media. She has been published in various anthologies and in on-line publications. She received her MA in Creative writing from the University of Albany. Her chapbook, Greeted by Wild Flowers, is available from Dan Wilcox's APD Press.

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April 19

The shortest days.

*by Dan Dial*

The snow lay soft upon the boughs,  
Breathtaking in its simplicity and beauty.  
The air so fresh and clean.  
Like lemon zest with scintillating touches of cinnamon.  
The swirling flakes dance and twirl in the shuttering light

As they make their slow descent,  
while the wind caressed one's cheeks.

The northern realms of this vast world,  
nearing their shortest days  
Turn a verdant and multicolored world  
into shades of green and grey.  
Yet,  
In this darkest of times a snowflake falls,  
Then another and again another.

Until the sky is glistening, reality and fantasy  
Dance in a waltz so graceful and magical  
That even the wildlife sit up and take notice.

It is always at such times, when two worlds collide,  
That we ascend to the heights and all is possible.  
That is what I wish for you this year as the darkness settles in for a  
stay.

I wish you magic and fantasy and mystery and joy and peace and  
health.

And above all, love.

-

Dan Dial was born in Anchorage Alaska, moved to Presque Isle, Maine  
when but a babe, then on to Texas and back to Presque Isle, Maine. This  
is where he started his school years and stayed through high school.  
Perhaps it was these early moves that created the wanderlust that  
remains with him. He has been writing prose and poetry for many years  
and feels he may hold the record for number of "no thanks" to his  
many submissions. He co-wrote "A Trail of Two Brothers" with his  
brother Doug, but he asks that you don't hold that against him. He  
lives in Middleburgh NY with his beloved, Laura Lee Daisy Wyman.

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April 20

Wonderland . . . or Alice's Rabbit

*by Francine Farina*

Tick Tock . . . Tick Tock  
Down the rabbit hole  
I go

Falling in darkness  
Then landing with  
a thud

I open bleary eyes  
and see him  
He wears a vest  
and is all white

He is looking  
at a watch,  
twitching his whiskers  
and keeps repeating  
"I'm late, I'm late, oh  
dear I shall be late!"

-

Francine is a local poet who has been published in Misfit Magazine and Caregiver Magazine. She has also authored a collection of poetry, Old Bones, which is available at Amazon and Barnes and Noble. She co-authored a novel with the late Shawn M Tomlinson entitled Time Book 16, Cataclysm. She lives in Amsterdam, NY, and shares her home with three adorable rescue cats.

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April 21

For Emma

*by Rachel R Baum*

The breeze whispers salty secrets into open windows  
Of this gracious house, greening in summer's warmth.

Its whitewashed walls shine with welcome  
Anticipating glorious childhood memories to be.

Then she arrives, wispy curled and beloved,  
Fragrant as laundered linen, neatly folded.

In the sturdy, perfect boat that is her home,  
She is rocked in flannel seas, leeward sailing,



Dreaming of vast oceans and wild places, safe  
In the golden beam of her lighthouse, her family.

-

Rachel R. Baum is a Best of the Net poet, and the editor of *Funeral and Memorial Service Readings Poems and Tributes* (McFarland, 1999). Her poetry has appeared in *Journal of Expressive Writing*, *OneArt*, *Poetica Review*, *New Verse News*, *The Phare* and *Raven's Perch*, among others. She is the founder of the Saratoga Peace Pod, a group of crafters who create warm items for families in crisis. For more information, visit <https://www.rachelrbaum.net>.

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April 22

January Trees, Lake George

*by Francesca J. Sidoti*

Ice reflects an amber fire  
friends in a photo  
pine next to willow  
rooted in winter

in summer  
cooling the celadon  
of each other  
filtering air and light  
of tropospheres

recall the first trees  
374 million years ago,  
wrapping around to now,  
family arms  
jacket-clad,

fronds side by side,  
savor respite in unity of leaves

forming safe shade from torching sun  
in heat waves, catch snow  
and frozen glaze to brace February

reminding that we live,  
fiber of cells,  
our folia, co-constructed  
cut down or diverging my leaves  
and yours twine  
to coax a canopy  
forest habitats unbroken

faces in a photo  
reach the January lodge  
laugh silently through cold lakes  
hands and smiles folding

terminal and lateral  
branches overtaken  
burnished with flaws  
in woodworkers' seasonal frames

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Francesca J. Sidoti is a writer in Albany, NY.

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April 23

Perpetua's Apocrypha

*by David Gonsalves*

About one god. About many. About swimming and  
the shore. About your eyes when one god sings. Bad  
luck, white lies, eight and forty gates. About the things  
a god must do. About a great unpolished tombstone.

About a thirsty horse. About the streets of Charlottesville.

About the secret celebrations of the gods. Bee hives and blood loss. Photography and failure. About a grace note lost in a cask of chaos. About greed and a gray-eyed god.

-

David Gonsalves should have been born in Nepal, but wasn't. If, by chance, he is forced into exile, he will no doubt end up in Kingstown, St. Vincent, his paternal grandfather's birthplace.

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April 24

The Stairs at Marian Lodge  
*Pyramid Lake, NY*

*by Susan Oringel*

*It could have been a hundred years that prayers went up  
and down this place. - Margie Bock*

Fifteen blue, buckled wooden steps  
up the narrow staircase named the "thin place"  
in a poem framed above the stairs that you  
could read as you trudged your way.  
Fifteen ancient painted steps that seemed  
a mountain at first glance, high and tight  
with Mother Mary at the top, arms open  
with downcast eyes beside a tarnished mirror  
that made me a wraith. What would I find  
at the top, in my little room overlooking  
the lake - where the poet claimed God  
was to be found - but no, I wanted  
God everywhere, in my room,  
in my heart, on the blank page,  
in the women I met, in the caroling  
loons, the restless trees, the gravel  
paths, even in smoke from wild-fired  
Canada. Especially in this thin place,

which is the place of struggle, creation,  
birth, which is the place we need Her most.

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I am happy to announce my full-length book of poems *Carnevale* was published December 2023 by the David Roberts Books Imprint of Wordtech Communications!

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April 25

(four haiku)

*by Tom Gilroy*

piercing the grey mist  
and the roar of the waves—  
a cell phone

between two icicles  
on the funeral parlor sill—  
a burning cigarette

2 black crows & their chick  
peck bugs in the lawn  
unbothered by the groundhog

flattened rat  
in a puddle  
in front of the courthouse

-

Tom Gilroy is an interdisciplinary artist whose work spans still photography, theatre, writing, poetry, and music, with film at its center. His feature films and theatre pieces have been presented all over the world. He has produced several haiku projects, including 5 years facilitating limited edition pieces for The Renssealerville

Haiku Project, as well as his own the books the haiku year, Someone Else's Nowhere, and Haiku, Not Bombs. His haiku work can be viewed on Instagram at @justuttergarbage and @thehaikuyear25.

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April 26

### My Father's Map

*by Beverly Osborne*

He had a briefcase full of maps,  
and on old slow days,  
the kind of days when it seems  
your history might be forgotten

he would take them out,  
unfold them gently,  
trace routes to places he'd never been,  
places he'd been a thousand times,  
places far too distant to ever drive.  
His maps were his books –  
novellas from which he could read  
knowledge long misplaced,  
memories contained on the marked  
blue and red routes –

    this is where he broke down for 27 hours  
    here where he shared coffee with a race car driver  
    this road where he backed the 18-wheeler 2 miles on ice.

The backs of his hands were mottled with age –  
purply blue veins in stark relief to paper skin.  
Wrinkles and laugh lines crisscrossed his face like tributaries.  
On his right foot the two cliff-deep scars  
from toe to heel that hurt his whole life.  
Scars I never saw until he was old & ill –  
hidden like a secret.  
Old wounds that kept him from war at 19  
but kept him missing a part of himself –

that twisted like a river from his foot to everywhere.

Those veins, lines, wrinkles and scars  
were my father's road map –  
one that I barely read when I had the chance.  
Written over 80 years and more experience  
than I can yet imagine,  
they were the path he left to his children.  
Written in his blood, his leathery skin,  
his booming voice and gap-toothed smile,  
it is a map I can no longer read.  
I re-fold it gently, properly, the way he taught me,  
and on my old slow days to come  
I'll pull it out and read my father's map.

-

Bev lives in Tribes Hill, NY. She started writing poetry in 8th grade and has continued, in fits and starts, since then. She works full time for a large federal government agency, and works even harder to retain her sense of humor and sense of justice.

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April 27

Saint Elvis Of Preseli:

*by Mark W. Ó Brien*

St. Elvis was a Saint before St. Patrick. He is venerated as one of The Four Great Saints of Ireland. St. Elvis is the patron Saint of the Archdiocese of Cashel and Emly in Co. Tipperary. Legend has it that he baptized St. David Bowie on a Whale. According to "The Life of Elvis" in the Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae, St. Elvis was named after a divine hound dog of Leinster. The story goes that Elvis' father, Vermin, ran away from a lesser tyrant King of Tararaboom-diddyay and Elvis was abandoned with his mother Saint Gladiola. Gladiola's nurse-maidens were told by the lesser King of Tararaboom-diddyay to put the infant St. Elvis to death, but couldn't bring themselves to do it. Instead,

they placed him on a rock in the wilderness where he was found and nursed by Priscilla the She-wolf, who raised him as one of her own pups. As a child, when St. Elvis was bored he rolled that rock that he was left upon a long long way all over Tipperary. Ever since St. Paddy came to Ireland, and shook his rattle till the snakes rolled away, St. Elvis felt like St. Paddy was upstaging him. Rumor has it, St. Paddy actually cribbed his famous breastplate prayer from a St. Elvis lyric. When St. Elvis sang it, it went like this: "Wella-hella Christ-a before me, Christ-a behind, Gunna rock-a you baby, till you lose-a your mind..."

The annals say:  
Elvis was a hound doggie.  
Something, is, a-myth...

-

Mark W. Ó Brien grew up in the midst of the Van Bael Patent. Today he lives and hikes in the Helderbergs west of Albany. An alumnus of the "Blackwater International Poetry Festival," he spends his days traipsing over hill and dale searching for historically significant artifacts and ephemera. Elvis is his psychopomp.

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April 28

Sanctuary in the Stable

*by Susan Kayne*

In the stable, you'll find me,  
Among the noble steeds, where I find serenity.  
Each horse, a chapter, a tale untold,  
Of sacrifice, suffering, and survival bold.

HoneyBear, gentle with a midnight glare,  
Miss Ruud, standing tall despite tempests rare.  
Ginger, embodying the freedom we all call,  
Love them one, love them all.

In this sacrosanct space, my dreams vast as the sea,  
I find solace amid lives now uplifted and free.  
The Horses of Unbridled, in majesty and might,  
In the stable, I belong, where my heart feels right.

Redemption and resilience, their spirits I behold,  
A compendium of stories, waiting to be told.  
In the stable, a special place, where I find my grace,  
Among these noble creatures, I find my sacred space.

-

Susan Kayne, a lifelong equestrian and founder of the Unbridled Sanctuary, is an equine advocate whose poetry is deeply influenced by the late Irish poet and philosopher John O'Donohue. As a literary student of Marion Roach Smith and James Lasdun at the NY Writers Institute, Kayne's work reflects her profound connection with horses and her dedication to their well-being.

Through her heartfelt poetry and her tireless efforts at Unbridled, Kayne aims to inspire a new approach to engaging ethically with equines, honoring their sentience and working to end their suffering. Her words serve as a testament to the deep bond between humans and horses, and a call to action for a more compassionate world.

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April 29

A Dozen Blue Eggs for Bernadette

*by Nancy Klepsch*

Bernadette says sonnets are stupid,  
And then she reads an old Bernadette sonnet and a new Bernadette sonnet.

Bernadette sits down at the mic and giggles, because  
The mic looks like a penis, but she doesn't say that,  
Chuckle is language.



Bernadette once asked us to write a poem about  
A tornado in our bodies.  
She liked Howard's poem better than mine because it either was better  
Or because he gave her a dozen blue eggs or both.

I wished I'd given her a dozen blue eggs.  
Here in the margins of this poem are a dozen Blue Points and  
Twelve briny Wellfleets. You can see them here and take them  
Bernadette,  
Because believe me what's stupid is cancer, cancer is about as stupid  
as stupid is.  
Heart fibrillation is stupid too, I think, getting old is stupid and  
Everybody dies, but let's not do that today.  
Right now, let's take a walk through the Poetry State Forest.  
I'll bring a knife and a fork.

-

Nancy Klepsch co-hosts 2nd Sunday @ 2 open mic for poetry and prose  
and is the author of god must be a boogie man, available from  
Riverside Community Press (Nancy's  
version): <https://store.bookbaby.com/book/god-must-be-a-boogie-man1>.

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April 30

Meditation Garden

*by Alan Catlin*

This is where  
I wrote  
my first poems

Zen poems

The insects  
recall my being here  
bearing the disease

of memory

treating all of us here  
as if we were  
an infection

One by one  
we are  
released

from sorrow

This is  
the purpose  
of open  
air shrines

of the wind bent  
pine limbs  
near Buddha's head

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Alan Catlin is the poetry and reviews editor of [misfitmagazine.net](http://misfitmagazine.net). His latest book is *Another Saturday Night in Jukebox Hell* from Roadside Press.

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