



Rensselaerville Library

Preserving a historical gathering place

Promoting a life-long love of learning

Fostering personal connections

Celebrating National Poetry Month 2017

Poem-A-Day

(ctrl-F to search)

In celebration of National Poetry Month 2017, the Library invited 30 local and not-so-local poets to submit a poem for use in its annual Poem-A-Day Project. Each day for the 30 days of April, one poem along with a comment about the poem by the poet, and a brief bio of the poet was featured.

The poems evidenced a variety of styles, techniques, themes, and subjects, and netted over 1700 pageviews and 28 visitor comments.

We are happy to showcase the poems of the 30 poets who graciously agreed to share their creativity.

Enjoy!

Tom Corrado
Coordinator of the Library's Poetry Group

Kimberly Graff
Director, Rensselaerville Library

April 1

Tadic

by Therese L. Broderick

In the revival of Tadic's show I'm playing a nobody
lying on the stage shoulder-to-shoulder with him,
my sleeveless arm heating his black tattoo.

We must stay in close touch, whisperless,
so he can cue me with an elbow - when to begin
the silent exodus: when to tilt my chin, raise my head.

And then I'll slowly stand up to face the front row
of VIP's come out tonight just to say
they've seen his bare Serbian feet knead the floor

gingerly as a funambulist crosses circus wire.
I'm hotter under these track lights than I ever was
that summer afternoon marching the mall,

herded tight, protesting raids and vetting; but Tadic's arm
stays attic-chilly, like the air-conditioned room
where our ensemble stows backpacks and bottled water.
The only sound he makes is one raw swallow -
off the record - never letting a single ticket-holder
catch him in that fatal mistake, acting too much alive.

About this poem:

I wrote this poem after volunteering as a "pedestrian" performer in a professionally-staged show. Based loosely on a Polish wartime novel, and featuring an Eastern European dancer, the show opened during the early weeks of the Trump presidency. The governing metaphor of my poem is: close touch - people of different nationalities in confrontation, touching one another with either harmless or harmful intents: providing a helping hand, rescuing, raising from doom, communicating with body language; or, elbowing out, spying on, silencing, torturing. The format of the poem's stanzas is also metaphorical - the other volunteers and I were instructed to pack ourselves into a "body-carpet," a zig-zagging array on the floor. "Tadic" is an invented name.

About the poet:

A free-wheeling poet, Therese L. Broderick lives in Albany, New York, USA. Her favorite poet is the esteemed Gregory Orr who once lived in Rensselaerville. Therese can be found on Facebook, Twitter, Goodreads, LinkedIn, MeetUp.com, and Wordpress blogs. Email her at brdrck@gmail.com.

April 2

A Poetry Group Dropout

by Gail Haines

I am a Poetry Group dropout. I am not particularly happy about this. I left because I just couldn't find my words. In my rushing busyness, I misplaced them, didn't even realize it until I began to reach for them. In my searching, I discovered other things I had put away without remembering when or where I put them.

I love listening to poetry . . . it makes my heart soften and my eyes well up. Hearing poetry holds me in stillness, allowing me to expand out into the world and at the same time pull in towards my soul. I have come to call this experience, "being fully present." It is such a gift. It seems so simple and easy, but for me, it is neither simple nor easy. Instead of getting there by pushing and working harder, I have to surrender and just let it be.

I asked myself, "What makes a poem?" For me, it had always been a crafting of words to capture the essence of precious moments. Like the magic of a misty morning when the sunlight slants through the trees, and birdsong greets the day; not just how it looks, but how it feels . . . the aliveness and wholeness. Where everything comes together and I stand witness in sacred space, the space from which poems are born.

When I stopped struggling to get my words to lay down on the paper and be presentable, and just surrendered, allowing more ease to come into my life, I found new forms of poetry. This year, I truly felt the long awaited final leap into spring. It was as if the Queen herself had arrived, bringing her buds and sprouts, water and seeds. I swear, one day, on my knees in the garden, digging irises, I heard the earth say, "Put shit right here and I will return it to you, as beautiful flowers . . . they are both just different forms of the same love."

I believe the earth was trying to tell me, "Just take what life has given you, in whatever form it comes, and use it to create and celebrate what you have." Poetry is a form of creation and celebration. The farmer's poetry is his offering of fresh fruits and vegetables. The cook's poetry is the pleasure in the food shared at the table of family and friends. The lover's poetry is in their smiles, touch, laughter and tears, in their greetings and goodbye's.

Every act of creation that is done as celebration, carries the kernel of a poem. Building a house, or a piece of furniture, restoring an old car, planting a tree, painting a picture, sewing a quilt, singing a song, teaching a child, loving your neighbor . . . they are all poems in the making, all opportunities to "be fully present." I believe that we are living a poem here, this month of April. Coming together, creating community in our annual celebration of the poetic word.

About the poet:

As a psychotherapist, I worked with people and families to help them identify their feelings and communicate them with others. For me, a poem reaches inside, connects us to the 'oneness' in the world, and gives us words to express that connection. I NEED poetry in my life, and I found it in Rensselaerville.

April 3

I Know This Day

by Mary Ann Ronconi

I know this day.
It cannot be trusted.

Sun hot, ground clear of snow
Save for a few crusty patches that remind me it is still winter.

It comes almost every year.
Not last year when the mid-March snow was still high against the house.
But this year certainly, this year of practically no snow at all.

It draws me out of the house where I have been a bear in her den
With a breeze as warm as June's and light that lasts late in the day.
Air resonant with bees out for a cleansing flight
Flower beds around the house wide open

Daffodils, hyacinths, tulips pushing up green leaves and eager buds.

Inebriated by this balmy potion of thirst-quenching warmth,
I want to find a rake, a hoe, whatever tool will let me
Clear away winter: the flattened maple leaves, the brown mats of grass,
The unsightly debris that only asks to be left undisturbed.

Therein lies the treachery, the temptation to take a big bite of The Apple.
Oh, the daffodil and tulip and hyacinth shoots are safe -
Their fat bulbs smug underground,
Their ambitious tops able to withstand meddling in their midst.

It is the perennial with ordinary roots this sly day begs me to betray.
The delphiniums, the shasta daisies, the brave dianthus.
Exposed, some will succumb to the return,
The absolutely predictable return, of murderously cold, root-freezing winter.

I confess. I have done it before -
cleared away, too soon, protective mounds of mulch.
I know better now.
For forty and more Marches I have been around these cold clad hills
With their sweet-talking, spring promising days.
This year only one unsuspecting grape hyacinth
paid the price of my impatience - before I put away the complicit rake.

About this poem:

The first hints of spring in the stubborn winters of the Helderbergs beg for a response from me, by mid-March wildly impatient to get into the garden. This poem is one of them.

About the poet:

Mary Ann Ronconi, a Kentuckian long ago transplanted to "Upper Berne, Outer Rensselaerville," is a founding member of the Library Writing Group.

April 4

Last Words

for KW

by Alan Catlin

His obit following
sudden, unexpected
death, was a master
class in misinformation
replete with unintended
irony for a career educator
dedicated to getting
stuff right. His life
summary included
how he traveled to
India on a Full Brite
scholarship, a misnomer
so egregious, I knew
he would have loved it.
Oh, how I wanted to share
the joke. I laughed until
I cried.

About this poem:

I worked lunches for about fifteen years at a tavern in Albany. I inherited a regular crew of men we called "The Old Guys" who stopped in pretty much every day for the company. Some of them even ate lunch. It was great fun until they started dying off. I can see this poem a part of a tribute series for the Old Guys. Now I'm one of the Old Guys.

About the poet:

Alan Catlin has been publishing for parts of five decades. Two recent full-length books of poetry are *Walking Among Tombstones in the Fog* (forthcoming from Presa Press) and *American Odyssey* (from Future Cycle Press).

April 5

Junk Drawer

by Thomas Bonville

A cassette. No case. Warren Zevon. *Excitable Boy*. Last played in a Chevy Caprice that I owned. 155,000 miles, when I sold it. Had an AM-FM radio/cassette player. Send lawyers, guns and money. A utility knife. Remember using it to cut sheet rock, cut thumb, instead. Bled like a geyser, required stitches. Did not stitch myself. Bag of rubber bands, all sizes. The bag says, "Guaranteed to last a lifetime." Money-back guarantee. I'm sure that's why I bought it. Batteries. Sizes AA, C and D, don't know if any of them work. Just yesterday, I needed four Triple As. None in junk drawer. Pencils. All with worn away erasers. Must be a poet in the house. Two flat-head screwdrivers, identical. Never need them. Always seem to need a Phillips-head screwdriver. None in junk drawer. A manual for a George Foreman grill. Haven't seen that grill in years. Wonder if George Foreman is still alive? He took a lot of hard punches. Box of Diamond-brand wood matches. Quaint. Used to be a match factory in Hudson. It burned down. Piece of electrical tape, wrapped around a Sharpie. Both black. Must be a leaky Sharpie. Or, is it love? Canadian pennies. Read that Canadians don't use pennies anymore. Too bad. Have plenty. Another knife. Looks unusual. Hook-shaped blade, ominous in that Medieval kind of way. Might have been used to gut fish, might have been bought at a rummage sale. I like rummage sales. A meat thermometer, used once a year at Thanksgiving. Gets jammed into the breast of the turkey. Nobody looks at it while the turkey is cooking. But it still gets stuck into the turkey every year. Chopsticks. Packaged, unopened, from the chop suey days. Some clothespins. Leftover from when we had a clothesline. That was years ago, before the residential zoning law was amended, but I still recall the smell of clean clothes, dried outside. *Make America Great Again*. Bring back clotheslines. Cherry pitter. Back when cherry-picking was a seasonal thing to do, when the kids were small, my parents still alive. Always picked too many cherries. Ever pit fifty pounds of cherries? Builds character. Christmas cookie cutter, looks like a snowflake, might be a star. Can't tell. Buttons. Lots of them, no two the same. Have a White Owl cigar box full of buttons, someplace. A thimble. My kids have no idea what it is. They are 27 and 25. Nails. Some of them bent. Have hung pictures using a nail from the junk drawer, if there is a hammer to be found. No hammer in junk drawer. Recall hitting thumb with hammer, hanging a Rockwell print. Lost nail. The wrong kind. Sugar packets. One is never enough. A map of Michigan. Never been there. A bottle opener. Says *Ballantine XXX Ale* on it. Belonged to my father. A marble. Don't know why I keep it. I'll never be young again. A pocket-sized book of *The Gospels*. I read *The Beatitudes* from time to time. *Matthew, 5: 3-10*. The only reason, really, to believe in Jesus. A mouse trap, hate killing them that way. Wife insists. A 29 cent USA stamp. Porgy & Bess. Uncancelled but glued on an envelope. I had a stamp collection when I was a kid. I was passionate about stamps. A hearing aid. Beltone. It's almost bigger than my ear. An envelope from Publishers Clearing House. Unopened. But, someday, someday. You never know.

About the poet:

I am a regular member of the Rensselaerville Poets. I also sit, read, and write with the Poesy Café Group.

April 6

Red Ochre

by Dianne Sefcik

long before there were jets
there was wind like that
carving canyons
of sound
in the realms
of ancient birds
dusting themselves
with red ochre
(so as to be invisible)
soaring
cobalt blue
vermilion
and copper
stars exploding in their black eyes
as they tuck their camouflaged nests
into the walls
of the mineral
veil

red ochre, red ochre
gold
was still in the ground
no robes glittered
in the sun
no boots scoured
the earth

soft animal skins
shod some
disguising themselves

with ochres
of all colors
with bones, teeth, feathers
scaling
the faces of rock
or entering
the pores of rock
to sanctuary
in vascular hallows
painting
their stories
in pigment
and scratch

About this poem:

Ochre is a family of mineral pigment used by ancient and modern humans and before that by Neanderthals 200,000 to 250,000 years ago.

About the poet:

Dianne Sefcik lives in Westerlo, NY

April 7

Pillow Talk

by Carolee Bennett

Honesty as antonym
to nature & animal as
verb. Laughter

as the still mysterious
helix & flesh as unlikely
theology. We mourn the lost

alphabets & ask the razor
what apologies it would like
to make. After

the rubble of so many
almosts, abrasions
read like Braille. Touch –

& abandon all other
meaning. Here, my lovely
opposition, precious army,

uncover with me
the etymology of abracadabra
& other useless amulets.

We've only the kind of time
the fences keep: the white
horse in the pasture,

the clock's trotting
now-hand.

About this poem:

Pillow talk is one of my favorite kinds of intimacy, in part because it is effortlessly deep and strange. I've tried to capture it in this poem with some word play, which ultimately led me to the poem's fitting conclusion: about how these face-to-face quiet - and delightful! - conversations exist in their own space (fenced in by the bed and the lovers' bodies) and time (which is always the present moment . . . while time beyond the bedroom trots along).

About the poet:

Carolee is an artist and poet living in Upstate New York, where she likes to say she has been the “almost” poet laureate of Smitty’s Tavern (placing as first runner-up in an annual contest). Her poems have been published in a number of print and online journals, and in 2015 her poem “On not shielding young minds from the dark” placed as a semi-finalist for the Tupelo Quarterly Poetry Prize. She has an MFA in creative writing (poetry) from Ashland University in Ohio and works full-time as a writer in social media marketing.

April 8

Automata

by Howard J Kogan

Sometimes we talk about the cat,
her sidelong glances - full of sadness.
The way her paws tremble and her lip quivers
as she sleeps and dreams of Rene Descartes,
dead for 360 years.
Still she wonders,
if he's changed his mind about her.
She knows his mother's early death
must have been the issue, but by now
he's had a long time to think about it.

Did he learn anything from the worms?
Did he know their pleasure could not be contained?

About this poem:

I think about what the cat thinks about quite often. I think of Descartes rarely, but on this occasion, the thoughts collided, a happy accident.

About the poet:

Howard J Kogan is a psychotherapist and poet who lives with his wife, Libby, in the Taconic Mountains. His third and most recent book of poems is *A Chill in the Air* (available from the publisher, Square Circle Press, and Amazon).

April 9

I-Man

by Bob Sharkey

In line at the gate,
people start beeping and chirping.
I'm one of those now, device in hand.

Device in hand, I feel part of something.
More than connected, whole.

Philippe, who sold me the phone,
had asked, "what kind of name is Sharkey?"
I answered, "Irish."
"I'm Canadian," he said.

The Great Innocence,
that's what I'm part of.
Not the child's innocence evoked
by the sign outside the Firehouse:
"HAVE BRUNCH WITH THE EASTER BUNNY."
Rather the innocence that keeps us going
despite
well, everything.

An incomplete child,
that's what I was.
Now I'm closer to whole
and suddenly,
in the context of everything,
in light of an extraordinary radiating
of innocence,
I think I'm American.
I ask Siri for confirmation.
She prefers not to answer.

About this poem:

Part of my ongoing exploration of identity and meaning.

About the poet:

Bob Sharkey is a local poet and writer. He is the editor of the annual Stephen A DiBiase Poetry Contest.

April 10

What Makes America Great #12

by Dan Wilcox

5 people walk into a tavern

there are 4 seats together
that they claim at the bar
1 vacancy 6 seats down
the others at the bar
each move down one.

About the poet:

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 available from FootHills Publishing. He is an active member of Veterans For Peace.

April 11

Tears of Lake George

by Brian Dorn

Cruising the shoreline on a clear autumn day
Viewing the foliage in all its majestic display

But on the second of October in 2005
Several Trenton Travelers wouldn't survive

Aboard the Ethan Allen, south of Cramer Point
A forty-foot vessel overloading its joints

Unable to navigate its unstable state
Forty-seven passengers met a perilous fate
As twenty lay sleeping in the bed of the lake
All of Lake George drowned in heartache

And tears fell one by one by one by one
As the leaves fell one by one by one by one
And tears fell one by one by one by one
As the leaves fell one by one by one by one
And tears fell one by one by one by one

About this poem:

Tears of Lake George is a poem about the capsizing of the Ethan Allen tour boat on October 2, 2005 which resulted in the deaths of twenty people. Note that in the final stanza of the poem, the word "one" repeats twenty times in honor of the twenty lives lost.

About the port:

Brian Dorn is a man of his word (which happens to rhyme most of the time). He attends lots of local poetry readings and open mics and is the author of *From My Poems To Yours (The Live Versions)*.

April 12

Luna Lura

by Katrinka Moore

Drawn by this wanderer
where light falls softly, flows
over its rough face, swells,
dissolves, begins again.

We circle, flutter, romp,
sleep in crevices, bask
in radiance. Come.

About this poem:

I'm writing from the point of view of a moth, who with other moths has flown to the moon. She's writing a postcard back to a friend, inviting her to join them.

About the poet:

Katrinka Moore is the author of *Numa*, *Thief*, and *This is Not a Story*. Her next book, *Wayfarers*, will be published by Pelekinesis in 2018. "Luna Lura" was first published in *MungBeing* Issue #51.

April 13

Chengdu

by Catherine Norr

We walk long paths
threading gentle hills
in misty rain &
bamboo forest shade

Until we reach
the Giant Pandas
sitting on platforms
or lying flat
black & white Buddhas
each with a bundle of bamboo

One on his back
holds stalks with his
stubby hind legs
front paws leisurely guiding
leaves & stems to his mouth

Young twin pandas straddle
branches of a bare tree
lolling, stretching
gazing at each other
gazing back at us

Who can't stop grinning,
can't resist snapping
selfies

About this poem:

As part of a heritage tour in China with my brother's family a few years ago, we were able to visit a number of memorable places, the images from which are still vibrant.

About the poet:

Catherine Norr enjoys painting and gardening as well as endless time editing poems and writing personal essays. She hosts the Poetry Open-Mic & Featured Poet at Arthur's Market in Schenectady on the second Wednesday of each month.

April 14

"Because God's grace has spilled over into our lives . . ."

by Mark W. Ó Brien

I dreamed I found the Seanchaithe's buried treasure and hoarded bequests in my mind brimming with the light of great stories. Inside my head I stood beside Ononta'kahrhon as nightfall arose from an expanding afternoon. Suddenly, I knew I must pour this light out like a bucket of sunset upon the heads of my children's children. The light, of memories of a future far-away place in June. The light of an unexpected fire that I drew on a chalkboard, as an apprehensive child, when I looked out the window 'til the window disappeared . . .

It was a good dream,
I saw my dark haired grandchild
climbing up your hill!

About the poet:

Mark W. Ó Brien is an alumnus of the Fermoy International Poetry Festival, County Cork, Ireland, and has published three poetry collections. He is currently editing and publishing the anthology "36 Views of Ononta'kahrhon," an online collection of poems by poets using his photographs as prompts.

April 15

Holy Week

by R. A. Pavoldi

In the trees a breeze of old kitchens,
linoleum sunrise, Formica dawn
tapping cup and saucer, then it's all

underwater, the women in house dresses
fish slipping between their ankles,
the men dozing in seaweed, cigar

smoke rising a tide of green plastic
wall clocks, brown AM radios, flowered
wallpaper the women doing dishes

shifting rhythmically reaching into
cupboards, pies flake apart, bait fish circle,
a tin coffee pot drifting along

the bottom collecting sand, snags and
remains, old anchor, studded crown
of how long we believed in mermaids.

About this poem:

First published in *North American Review*, Volume 297 Number 2, Spring 2012.

It was late March 2008, during Holy Week. A week of stark and beautiful contradictions and customs in the Italian American community. A week mourning the days leading to the crucifixion of Christ and the anticipation of his resurrection. A week cooking, baking, wine, and visiting, in preparation for Easter Sunday. The high point of the Roman Catholic year.

A strong breeze caught itself in the tall white pines that line the back of my yard and a familiar aroma from someone's kitchen somewhere, came through the open windows. It might have been from my kitchen.

This poem is a simple reminiscence of what was. Much like the crucifixion and resurrection, never to be repeated. I suspect, given the editorial palate of *North American Review*, it struck a chord, and perhaps evoked a deeper, more contemporary meaning, which perhaps, was an intentional layer, like the rustic layered pies baked during Holy Week.

I am humbled, and forever grateful they chose to publish this piece in their venerable publication.

About the poet:

R. A. Pavoldi is a local poet who makes his living as the Procurement Director for Excelsior College in Albany. For over a decade, his poetry has appeared in many of

the top tier literary journals under pen name, R. A. Pavoldi. Most recently, in The Hudson Review. He has twice been a finalist in Atlanta Review's International Poetry Competition, 2005 and 2015.

April 16

Consider It

by Linda Sonia Miller

I.
light
like on the trees
this morning
between the storm to come
and now:
you, your grown-up
boy and his boy
looking up
at that gleam
between limbs
evanescent
weightless
that lift inside
as though you
recognized it
and then
you didn't

or threads
woven
beneath
between
the layers
sinews, muscles
tissues, stuff
of x-rays
or
of history
or self-created
irascible

changeable
like the weather

II.
or consider it
ineffable
perhaps like
but not
a bird
aloft, distant
migrated
only faded nest
lost feather
shattered shell
remain
or
on good days
perched
securely
on/above
your heart
close, perfect

or a flame
warming
burning
brieflybriefly
now and then
until
it flickers out
or better yet
a star
its light
traveling
across space
and time
long after
its demise

About this poem:

I wrote this poem many months ago (before my husband's sudden death), and

cling both to the poem's allusion to "it" warming me and lingering here with me
"long after its demise."

About the poet:

I am a poet, teacher, mother, grandmother (not always in that order), lover of the natural world, my family, music, books, and of my husband Tim who shared the world with me, and whom I miss daily, in ways that words cannot yet describe.

April 17

Amaranth

by Karen Schoemer

Leaves outside
the window alternate
yellow and green.

Loss is always
imperfect. It needs
a chamber.

Be new for me
every day. Be bare
all year long.

About this poem:

In this poem I was striving for simplicity - to use as few words as possible and allow them to resonate. Amaranth is a plant that appears in mythology and poetry as a symbol for immortality.

About the poet:

Karen Schoemer is a poet, author, and spoken word performer living in Columbia County. Her poem "November Sun" won first prize in the 2015 Hudson Valley Writers Guild poetry contest. She was poet-in-residence at Instarlodge in Germantown, NY in the fall of 2016. She is vocalist for the bands Sky Furrows, the Schoemer Formation, and Jaded Azurites, and appears on the forthcoming album Street of Mirrors by the Woodstock band Venture Lift.

April 18

Still Life

by Dawn Marar

In the picturesque garden of Mapplethorpe, there is evidence of his hand in prints of flourishing chrysanthemums, orchids, tulips, irises, poppies, baby's breath; in busts of angelic Burroughs, saintly Warhol, and Nevelson possessed. Statuary of silver print princes Ken and Tyler, man to man, in black and white surround Thomas on a pedestal. Consider his field of vision: the tiger lily in the lifochrome hands of Mr. Moody; the platinum calla lily virtually indestructible, in no man's hand. Robert is buried yet lives, in a flash, bare-chested, grinning in lipstick and eyeliner, with coiffed hair, arm outstretched in leather, clutching a gun, in a blur, in the end passing the specter of death as he recedes, out of focus. A dye transfer print Jack-in-the-pulpit burns brightly against a purple vista: an electric-green beacon. The unseen made visible. The vine of the artist grows right in these words: clinging, trailing, entwining, winding into shapes, then sounds. The voiceless speak.

About this poem:

Robert Mapplethorpe's artwork, often controversial, continues to inspire me with the courage of his convictions and honesty. The word lifochrome is commonly known as Cibachrome.

About the poet:

Dawn Marar won the 2016 Stephen A. DiBiase Poetry Prize, and was a finalist in both the Chautauqua Literary Journal and the Orison Anthology Fiction and Poetry contests. Her poetry has appeared in *Up the River*, *Tribute to Orpheus 2*, and elsewhere. Dawn has lived in Jordan and travels extensively. Much of her subject matter has to do with the political from a personal perspective, particularly what is commonly referred to in the "West" as the "Middle East."

April 19

Adventures In Aging Continues

by A. C. Everson

With taking tests
To find reasons why
Fading intelligence
Much less eloquence
Loss falls like bread crumbs
Turned to hair
 Teeth
 Hearing
 Sight

One could hope
That was all
No siree
But wait there's more
Hard years maybe come
Back to even the score
Or, I take tests
In hopes that
Maybe some pill
Some diet
Some other reason
For it

About this poem:

I've been working on a body of work called Adventures In Aging intending to put together a multi-media show of the same name with my fellow poets, musicians, and artists by my 60th birthday (just 5 years away lol).

About the poet:

A. C. Everson is a home grown poet, sculptor, and performance artist who has performed and shown in the Albany area and abroad since 1994. In 1995 A. C. started Breaking My Art where her poetry and piñatas are combined in what has been described as “awesome” performances. She has four self published chapbooks of poetry. A. C. also has two self-produced CDs of her poetry backed up by some of the Albany area's most talented musicians. You can contact A. C. at breakingmyart@gmail.com .

April 20

The Mathematician's Daughter

by Tom Corrado

But what of the cul-de-sac of her childhood?
The slow circling of bases on the dusty diamond,
calculator in hand?
The unraveling of ribbons on warm Saturday afternoons?
Her knack, yes, for movie theaters
and the sheer pagination of her intellect.
Her ability to plumb the depths of bodies in motion
to retrieve artifacts long forgotten
pinning onlookers to the mast with her proofs
as she practiced higher-order equations
on the sweet-smelling turf
under autumn's orange sky.
Forget as well that she knew by heart
the names of Leibniz's monads
the mass appeal of transits
the high rise of sorts with the stop sign in front
the vase of freshly-cut delphiniums.
I once found her calibrating the pulsating, scratchy music
of stoops, wearing a smile filled with late hours -
hours spent spread-eagled over reams of graph paper
lined with doodles and obscure footnotes
from the sixteenth century -
her first four words as illuminating as ever.
She tried hard to find happiness in coefficients
in the beauty of imaginary numbers
staying the required course despite the odds
instead of shortcutting to the breakfast nook without a word -
an unmade bed, some fast food bristling in the wastebasket
the canned soups in her cupboard
arranged as they were in powers of ten.
In the end, she returned to the lecture hall
where, amid furious note-taking, she had once plotted our future
filling the whiteboard and the air
with intricate drawings of the Interstate at dawn
calculating the logarithmic distance from x to y to z.

About this poem:

I am intrigued by mathematics and mathematicians. "Proof," one of my favorite movies, starring Anthony Hopkins and Gwyneth Paltrow, triggered this riff on a female mathematician.

About the poet:

Tom Corrado coordinates the Library's poetry group, and blogs at scriptsfortoday.blogspot.com.

April 21

Le Bateau de Beuh

for Lesa Clark

by Dennis Sullivan

The boat has arrived
I have a room on the second floor
I'm on my way there now

I travel light
All I have is the camera of my soul
And consciousness

I already feel my limbs going
Eternity has arrived
I'm on a carpet ride

It's free
It doesn't cost a cent
You get battered now and then
But the ride is free

I call it heaven
The boat of eternity
Why do idiots savage Eden?

Look! we're leaving the shore

The crew has released the ropes
The captain doesn't have the engine on
We're traveling on our own!

My cabin is nice it's so simple
All I have is a lamp and a book
I'm working on the idea of mercy

You won't believe the silence
I'm sitting where words are born
Everything is still
Lighted like a dim café

I feel affirmed here
They call me faithful servant
They say I answered the call
And never sold out

I wouldn't say I love myself
It's more that I'm a steward
Assigned to a large estate
To make the trees grow straight
And ensure the sky's for everyone

Look how we shine here
Radiant like a winter moon,
The children of Jesus,
Is that your mot préféré?

Even pain is released
The infirmed are treated
Like victims of despair
Taught to sing with joy

No king is here
There is no royalty
No high or low
No you or me
There is no shagging
The woodmen are gone

If shagging startles you
Tell me who your woodmen are

Give them a name
Then find a way to dismiss them
I was given a baby at birth
To keep from the thief of night
The thief who comes
When souls consign their worth
To the world at large
Never thinking some fool
Will come along and kill them

But tonight the fool
Who slays the meat of paradise
Is gone, it's just me and you
Sitting by the font of silence
Before time
Where up is down
Here there
This that
The first last
Every distinction dissolved
Like a fog burned off by the sun

You once told me you were God
I said I see you, God
I did not drag you to a nuthouse
I said, howdy God
How's your highness today?
But you acknowledged nothing

Tell me what you see
Tell me what you know
Tell me about the lady who comes
To clean the shit off the toilet bowl
After you leave the hotel
Ask her about paradise

Which is where I came in
At Le Bateau de Beuh
The ark of stability

You can see how far
It sets the door ajar
And soothes the saddened chin

Reaffirming that madness
Is worth the price of sanity
I'm not an apologist
I do not sow discord
I was just sent to say

Life is short, pilgrim,
Blame, ignorance, and hierarchy
Push your face in the mud
They make fun as you drown
Alongside the boat of beuh.

About this poem:

This poem's origin is Ginsberg's "Lysergic Acid," Williams' "Gi' me a reefer, Lawd," and Arthur Rimbaud's "Le Bateau Ivre."

About the poet:

Dennis Sullivan is a poet who lives in Voorheesville, NY with his wife Georgia Gray and their feline family: Clare, Catherine (aka Slinky), Stephanie, Fiddler, and Juniper and our now RIP, Taco.

April 22

Forefathers

by Tim Verhaegen

My father left for work before dawn.
He drove bulldozers, pay loaders, dynahoes.
Dirty and disheveled even after his bath.
Cursing, laughing, drinking beer, playing poker.
He made pancakes on Sunday mornings.

Grandfather Verhaegen was a merchant marine.
Grandpa Hoyt owned the general store in Amagansett.
Who they were, their voices, their movements,
shrouded in wrinkled photos protected in smudged glass frames.
Glimpses of their lives echoed over and over

by different people giving different versions of the same few stories.
Uncle Charlie was a potato farmer.
Those Osborns have been farming the land here since 1640.
Uncle Bill was a truck driver. Uncle Dick an electrician.
My other Uncle Bill, far away and distant,
a career man in the military.

They were white,
blue collar and came from blue collar.
Lived in proud houses. With proud wives.
Money in the bank.
They wore white collars at weddings, baptisms and funerals.

Attacked, insulted, blamed.
An assemblage of altruists, activists, and experts
just slung mud
on their sacred graves.

Their bodies exhumed, beheaded, quartered.
Strewn
torn to pieces,
their mangled hearts,
hung on the steps of telephone poles
swinging to and fro
over passing civil rights parades.

Rainbow flags, and
flags waving yellow, white and purple.
Signs written with blood.

The educated
Chanting

The broad-minded
Chanting

A miscellany of race, religion and numerous genders
Shouting

Vengeance
Kill their sons

April 24

November Light

by Claire North

Ephemeral availability
it suffuses me with rampant longing
and rapture
Teasing the end of the beginning
through the sheen of new pathways
twixt newly naked tree branches
A powdery softness in the sky
flirting blue through the filter of next
the sky closer to impart portents through the veil

The hour staggering back
the light a rare gambit
giving way to a subterranean pearl

It bathes me in frosty glissando
holds me suspended
then plunges me into the bittersweet starkness

Eyes wide open
not to miss a refraction
in my darkest corridors

About this poem:

Winter has always been my favorite season. It's why I moved to Vermont, so I could at last have the Winters of my dreams. On the first day of my first November in Vermont, I woke up to a dusting of snow and could see for miles through the bare trees. I never expected November's light to astonish me so, what it would awaken in me during the "days of grace," the time after foliage and before the first heavy snows when we have the peace and space to finish up the preparations for Winter and marry up with it - for better or for worse.

About the poet:

Claire North is a member of the Gossamer Stone Poets, a poetry writing and reading group in Manchester, VT. Her poems appear in the poetry collection *Border Lines*. She is active in planning poetry events as well as taking part in them, both in VT and in Rensselaerville, NY. Claire holds an MFA in Creative Writing from Goddard College, where she never missed an opportunity to commune with poets and poetry when she could play hooky from long fiction. She is a Mentor for Young Writers Day/MindsOn, and believes poetry is the universal language we all share.

April 25

Flower of Day

by Alan Casline

every form of nature
describes a flow of energy

what is the lesson of a flower?

entire forested world
contained in an acorn

rose of the world
breathes out smell

shelter under
summergreen canopy

gift of outside
either harsh or kind or some of each
pampered garden flower
grows shallow roots

desert spring gives
a moist pocket of time

dry country plant
with immense spreading roots

a few rare flowers

with energy to grow

hardy seeds wait
as traveler has no choice but to pass

exotic flowers cover landscape
with nomadic restlessness

native flower counts numbers
invisible to a gardener's hand
this is for the poet's fancy, the artist's frame

About the poet:

Alan Casline is the editor of *Rootdrinker*, a long-standing magazine of watershed poetics, art, and nonfiction. As Director of Rootdrinker Institute, his efforts include running open mics and special gatherings for poets, producing the RD Newsletter and using Benevolent Bird Press to publish the work of fellow writers and artists. He is co-founder and on-going chronicler of The Cloudburst Council, an annual poetics gathering held in the Finger Lakes watershed. He lives with his wife, Jennifer Pearce, in a suburban neighborhood outside of Albany, NY.

April 26

Split Stone

by Robert A. Miller

Picking my way through the woods

I saw a large stone that was bisected
By a shadow

At the height of the sun

And I took a picture that hangs on my wall to this day,

Later that afternoon, I

Stopped in a shelter

With my pack and watched a stream rushing over a flat bed of rocks

And enjoyed the feeling of complete solitude

In that forest,

Still later

On the side of a high hill

Looking across the valley at the carpet of pines

I made a pencil drawing of a single

Stunted spruce against the sky

That is propped now on a bookshelf

Here in my office

Where I am looking out the window

At the mist

About this poem:

This is one of a series of poems I began three years ago that emerge from my daily experience of waking up in the mountains.

About the poet:

Robert A. Miller is a journalist, poet, and short story writer. Since he retired from New York City's public television station, WNET, as director of educational publishing, he has lived in the northern Catskills.

April 27

No Chance

The cradle rocks above an abyss, and common sense tells us that our existence is but a brief crack of light between two eternities of darkness.

- Vladimir Nabokov, *Speak, Memory*

by Mike Burke

That morning
you didn't get a chance
to make your bed
change your dirty shirt
put your dishes in the sink
or kiss your mama goodbye.
You had to get to the hardware store
pick up your check
and get to the bank before noon.

You hit that telephone pole
straight on, 65 in a 35.

Joe on the rescue squad
said you were wedged
in the back window ledge
crying, swearing, screaming
that you didn't want to die.

By the time they cut you out
you were gone.

30 years later
The pole still leans at an angle.
Your mother moved so she
wouldn't have to pass it everyday.
Your twin brother who was 16
is now a raging alcoholic
car accidents, wife beatings, jail.

Once you slid into the driver's seat
turned on the ignition
hit the gas hell-bent
toward the abyss
you didn't stand a chance.

Neither did the people that loved you.

About the poet:

Mike Burke is a blue-collar poet who winters in the nation's oldest city and summers on a compound in the Helderbergs.

April 28

A Sad Parting

by Tony Fallon

We stood beside the fence and I held you oh so tight
The next day I'd be in New York this was our final night
I felt your body shaking as the tears rolled down your face
I never felt as uncomfortable as I stared out into space.
I never will forget the day your family moved in next door
I was a little over five and you were a few months past four
You had all come home from England this was to be your base
Your parents spent every penny buying your grandfather's place
All the neighbors had said that the old house was always haunted
But my mother used the holy water and made you all feel wanted
If there was a ghost there the holy water certainly did the trick
And your family was never haunted and was very rarely sick
I was your guardian angel when you started to walk to school
I punched many noses that made fun of your accent from Blackpool
Even though you were small for your age you were very strong
And you never took shit from anyone who ever did you wrong
I often saw you lose a fight or lose a game but I would be lying
If I was to say that before that night anybody ever saw you crying
I knew as I held you weeping that night your love for me was true
But with no education or money, I was not worthy of you
We were always together I thought we were the perfect pair
If you went with all who wanted you I wouldn't have a prayer
I said I would go to America and from College would graduate
And I would come back a better man if you would agree to wait.
My heart was surely breaking as I walked towards that big plane
I almost turned back once or twice to be with you Elaine
On the ride over to America, I made a promise to give up the beer
Later I went over to St. John's in Queens and I became a Pioneer*
All the letters and clippings you sent me for the soul they were food
Many nights I came home exhausted and they'd pick up my mood

For years on nights and weekends, I went to many, many schools
I know how to work computers and I can also fix them with tools
People may say for a farmer I may be into spelling corrections
I certainly will not be like that but I'll be able to talk about elections
I hope that all those long and lonely years that we've had to sacrifice
Will bring us closer together and be well worth the price
I told you that night I would be true even from far across the sea
Well I'm coming home tomorrow, and I hope you'll marry me.

* The Pioneer Total Abstinence Association is an organization of Irish Catholic non-drinkers.

About the poet:

Tony Fallon was born in Athlone, Ireland. His columns, short stories, news items, and poems have appeared on both sides of the Atlantic in newspapers, journals, weeklies, monthlies, and annuals for the past 55 years. For over 25 years he was a mobile DJ in the New York City area. He has won many awards in his 40-year career in radio in Ireland and America. Presently he can be heard on WGXC 90.7 FM in Columbia/Greene Counties and on www.wgxc.org, Sunday 8 PM Irish and Friday 9 AM Rock and Dance, and on WLPP 102.9FM in Palenville.

April 29

Babka

by Ann Lapinski

When the eggs and butter
were on the kitchen counter
before I left for school,
the day tasted different.

The chemistry assignments
seemed more like
a bowl of oatmeal than
a serving of collard greens.
The late bus offered moments
to picture her hands kneading dough
and mounding it into the large round pan
where it would rise to

just over the top.
When I open the front door
yeast, sugar and butter
carry me to the kitchen
where my mother
and the warm loaf

sit.

About the poet:

Ann Lapinski has loved reading poetry since high school. She never imagined herself writing poetry until she sat down to write a short story which came out as a poem. There was no going back from that experience about eight years ago. She is grateful for all the support and encouragement she has received from other poets.

April 30

Love as Empty Bottle of Whiskey or: Mary Magdalene Breaks Her Silence

by Jill Crammond

When he sleeps his sentences are whiskey.
She dreams she no longer believes the lie,

sleepwalks to the kitchen, mouths cashews
until the salt burns her lips. It is impossible

to tell the story of a woman turned to stone
without mentioning how the man marinated

her first. Not serenaded, but marinated.
Not singing, but simmering in an acrid bath

of untruth and ecstasy, brine and ballyhoo.
There is an art to softening what is hard.

Not melting, but coaxing into a gentle boil.
Seduction as kitchen science. The toughest shell

cracked just below the surface, exposed
by slightest touch, more glance than stroke.

Back in the bed, the makings of a baptism:
a man, a woman, some salt, some whiskey.

Beneath a lolling head, hands.
After submersion, submission, shortness

of breath, of belief, of back into belly.
A prayer before spooning, then grace.

Before the bed, the kitchen, an itch
scratched raw. Remember the lips?
Raise them to the glass, already full,
already staining the corners of her lips

into his clown-red smile. This is the blood
that will save you before it crucifies.

Back in the bed, he rolls away, a stone turned.
She breathes deep, pulls the lie up under her chin.

About the poet:

Jill Crammond is a poet, artist, and teacher funding her poetry passion by teaching children's art and writing classes throughout New York's Capital Region. Her work has appeared in Crab Creek Review, Fire on Her Tongue, Peer Glass, Many Waters, and elsewhere.
