



Rensselaerville Library

Preserving a historical gathering place

Promoting a life-long love of learning

Fostering personal connections

Celebrating National Poetry Month 2021

Poem-A-Day

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

showcasing different voices, styles, subjects

2000+ pageviews

Enjoy!

Tom Corrado, Curator, Poem-A-Day

Heidi Carle, Director, Rensselaerville Library

April 1

A Sudden Urge to Do Pushups

by Charlie Rossiter

A sudden urge to do pushups
has come over me, and so I do.
I'm disheartened to find
I can barely knock off a dozen
and I can't do even those
with great form.

The pandemic continues
to ravage the world and
I have friends with cancer.
I'm sure that's why mortality
is on my mind.

The cosmos is speaking to me;
the message is simple.
It says, Carpe Diem.
Carpe the damn Diem, Charlie
while you still can.

Charlie Rossiter hosts a twice-monthly podcast through which he produces The Open Mic of the Air. For guidelines to submit your poem, go to www.poetryspokenhere.com. To access the archive of 150+ podcasts go to <https://soundcloud.com/poetry-spoken-here>. He lives and writes in Bennington, VT and his recent books are available at www.foothillspublishing.com.

April 2

Winter Light

by Dan Wilcox

The white light at my window blinds me
I go to pull the shades & can't see the string
This is supposed to be inspiring:
"Shedding light on the subject"
uplifting: "I am the ... Light"
a guide: "lighting the way."

But I can't see, can't feel whatever
it is the light wants me to feel
I'd rather pull the shade, step into the closet
pull the blanket over my head

become a smelly hermit in the back of the cave
tell the mail carrier "he's gone to Afghanistan"
or Brazil, anywhere but here

trying to find the quiet buried
in the darkness underneath the light.

Although Dan Wilcox once worked as a dishwasher & as a short-order cook, he has never driven a cab, or played professional baseball. For most of his career he worked as a bureaucrat & wrote poetry. He was named one of the 2019 Literary Legends by the Albany Public Library Foundation. He claims to have "the World's largest collection of photos of unknown poets." Currently he organizes poetry events in Albany, NY & is an active member of Veterans For Peace.

April 3

On Sitting Unnoticed in a Room

by Barbara Vink

When I was a young woman
I led with my breasts
straight-backed, with cleavage,
I was confident
on legs impossibly long
and slim, men
looked at me with shining eyes,
at my companions
with envy; I preened,
my hair swung
in the colors of the week
scenting the air with
flowers and musk,
my eyes, black-rimmed
and sultry, commanded a room;
with shirts cut low and skirts
cut high, I was full
of pride and who
I thought I was.

Who am I now?

Barbara Vink is retired, still tired, struggling to answer the question, Who am I now?

April 4

I'm Looking for the Viewfinder

by Marge Merrill

I only research soft things
these days

the back story
in black and white photographs
looking for poetry that leans in
to paint by number

I'm looking for the viewfinder—
it was summer
grass is patchy

venetian blinds keep out light
and the community
of the long porch

poor man's
faux brick siding
beneath the porch—
I think there is a sheet of that
in the garage

old woman
in cobbler apron
looking severe—
but her hands are the story,
was she pulled away from
punching bread dough or
boiling starch
on the stove or
tending to her vegetable patch
out back

an Italian hen
brood gathered at her hips

the tavern across the street
cigarette and
liquor smells
a quick burst of laughter
balding bartender in the window
grinning

Mr. Axel
in his orderly candy store
presiding over children
who cannot decide how to
fill tiny brown bags

a black and white pony
white blaze
white nose
posed
the small girl
in gingham print dress
workman's bandana
cowboy hat pushed back
hands on the pommel

Monty and Mose
Mrs. Gabe and
the policeman's wife
just outside the frame

the photographer
tells the pony to smile.

This poem looks outside the frame of a "pony photo" circa 1953.

Marge Merrill is a life-long resident of western New York and is retired from the health care field. She has read at local venues and is a former host of the Screening Room Wednesday Series. Her work has appeared in Beyond Bones Vol 1 and the anthology A Celebration of WNY Poets. Her chapbook There Is Music in the Rattle of The Chains was published by Foothills Press in August 2020.

April 5

Web

by Marilyn McCabe

Lately everything is

astounding me,
miles of phone lines,

garage door openers,

spatulas,
my shoes.

What is the way

to pay tribute to glory?

The aspen knows:

applause with every breeze.

How best to enflame
the holy fire?

Light
is on my face

filtered through glowing leaves.
Around my feet

a tumble of extraordinary
rocks pocked, striated

pink, gold. A frenzy

of riverdrops,
riot of current.

One spider is rapidly

tying me here,
its lines like spokes

to a spinning wheel.

We are silver,
quivering.

This poem first appeared in Stone Canoe, 2020.

Marilyn McCabe's poetry and videopoems have appeared in a variety of literary magazines, festivals, and galleries. She has two books of poems, *Perpetual Motion* and *Glass Factory*, and two chapbooks, *Rugged Means of Grace* and *Being Many Seeds*. She blogs about writing and reading at MarilynOnaRollwordpress.com.

April 6

Weightless

by Philomena Moriarty

My mother cut a hole
In fake wood paneling
put in a picture
the Sacred Heart of Jesus
heart exposed, crowned with thorns

On the red carpet beneath
my brothers held me down
I couldn't breathe
slapped my face
with my own hand

At five
my own tender organ
shrank
the skin around it
thinner

The other day
I recognized
anyone could wound me
even a toddler pointing
a grocery isle away

Shame half a step away
it doesn't take
a gunman to shoot me down
the bullets are already loaded

deep inside

Sometimes I am a canary
in a cage singing
looking only at the bars
while across the way
the hatch is wide open

Sometimes the weight of their bodies
makes me feel imprisoned
but Jesus commands you
to get up and walk

I came to realize
I love those boys

The air of love
flows freely inside and outside
the cage
I taste the sweetness of this freedom

Free myself from
the weight of the past
fly into the uncertainty of this
present moment

The door is open

Philomena Moriarty is a local poet living in East Greenbush and author of *My Moon Self*. When we were able to do open mics she shared her words and hopes to do so again. Her poems often have psychological and spiritual themes. She is also a psychotherapist in private practice in East Greenbush.

April 7

Imagining Companion

by Bob Sharkey

East Latham 6/16/2033

Beatrice without buttons
dreams in cinnamon
and cardamom

revolts
regards only
the soul's home
suffused
unquenched

walks gingerly
under a second raging sun
peppers me
with original then ribald
questions
a pure turmeric pelican
turns
revolves

Bob Sharkey is a big time Zoom open mic reader, is active on the board of the Hudson Valley Writers Guild, and is editor of the annual Stephen A. DiBiase international poetry contest.

April 8

If She Were Gone

by Frank S. Robinson

"I am so very sorry,"
I imagine the doctor saying,
"We did everything we could."
And it would fully hit me,
Her being gone.

We're told, by way of consolation,
That death's eternal nothingness
Merely reprises
The time before one's birth,
Which didn't hurt.

I'd try to apply that logic now,
As though just returning
To my life before her.
But looking ahead
Is not like looking back.
There is no symmetry.
All those years I'd spent

Hopefully visualizing
What she might be like,
The future love I'd craved.
Revisiting that hunger
Only heightening the loss.

But could there be a reprise?
Once again that piquant envisioning
Of she who might arrive,
Looking with newly keen eyes
At women all around me,
And imagining yet others still
A pretty picture of renewal,
Of resurrection even.
But it would be impossible,
All other females in the world
Defined and immured
By their quintessential essence
Of not being her.

A not-her-ness indeed
Infusing now my whole existence.
I'd always spent much time alone,
But solitude and solitariness
Are not the same.
And during all those hours
When I am by myself,
Or so it seems,
She is there.
My every thought and action
Playing out upon a platform,
My operating system underneath,
All built of her-ness.

And now I'd know there's nothing
I can ever think or do again,
Nothing I can ever touch,
No hour of the day, no moment,
That won't be permeated
By the absence.

But all this is hypothetical
It hasn't happened yet,
And maybe never will for me.

And when I am no more,
How will it be
For her?

Frank S. Robinson is a graduate of NYU Law School, and was an administrative law judge (1977-97) at the New York Public Service Commission. He is the author of eight books including Albany's O'Connell Machine (1973), Children of the Dragon (a novel), and The Case for Rational Optimism (2009). Robinson is a professional coin dealer; married to the poet Therese Broderick; and was the first man to walk on the moon. His blog is www.rationaloptimist.wordpress.com.

April 9

At the Cancer Clinic

for M. M.

by Howard J Kogan

He was waiting for his chemo
she, an infusion of platelets.
They'd seen each other there before
and when he waved,
she came to sit with him.
They didn't know how much time they'd have,
she felt an urgency to tell him who she was.
I was a hidden child in Poland,
do you know what that means?
I was six or seven when the war ended,
the only survivor in my family.
The people who hid me didn't want me,
I was too nervous, too needy,
the Joint* took me to Israel with other orphans,
we grew up on a kibbutz.
When I was old enough, I went to Spain,
Barcelona, to be a flamenco dancer,
I thought of myself as a Gypsy,
I don't know why; they were hated too.
Sometimes you just want to be somebody else.
I married three times, the first, the best
died young, the second I left, the third left me.
After Barcelona, I went back to Israel
toured with a flamenco troupe,
we went to the United States,

Argentina, Spain then Israel again.
I moved to Big Sur with my third husband,
that was some place!
Now I'm here with my daughter,
though I'm not always sure where here is.
I have three children -
his name was being called -
please wait for me after,
I haven't even begun to tell you.

* Joint refers to the Jewish Joint Distribution Committee

Howard J Kogan is a retired psychotherapist and poet/writer. His poetry books, *A Chill in the Air* and *Indian Summer* are available from the publisher, Square Circle Press or Amazon. His novel, *No View*, is available from Amazon in kindle.

April 10

Red Light, Green Light

by Paul Horton Amidon

A solitary figure at a place
where cars must stop,
old clothes and a cardboard sign
that says "Homeless" or "Need Help,"
he waits like an angler by a stream
with his appeal to sympathy, generosity,
guilt, whatever emotion it can conjure.

His appearance dredges up
a thicket of thoughts about skinflints,
bleeding heart pleas, biblical admonitions,
solicitations that flood my mailbox.

Skinflints aside, all who see him wonder:
"Should I give him something?"
but there is no way to know
if he is deserving, desperate,
down on his luck, or a parasite,
a junkie collecting for his next fix.

The line of cars contracts
as the red light grows old,

bringing me closer, yet I never know,
until the green light brings down
the curtain on this drama,
if I will hand out some money,
or leave the window up and drive on.

Paul Horton Amidon lives in Albany, has assembled a group of poems for a book,
pondered its prospects for widespread acceptance, and done nothing with it.

April 11

Faith

by Tom Bonville

I believe in believing,
like a child, believing
in Christmas, presents under the tree
for being good all year.
I believe in God, in a church full with believers
at Christmas Eve and Easter church services,
singing and praying to the baby Jesus, the risen Jesus,
for His very being, for the life He lived,
for the life to come that He so promised.

I also believe in doubt,
I have lived in doubt,
I know a voiceless God, as quiet
as an empty church
of which there are many.
I believe there is not
enough good in the world,
but whose fault is that?
I cannot blame God for everything.

Even with faith,
I can still believe in reason
when faith is defied with honest doubt.
And when faith comes back,
against all reason,
fresher than the first day of spring,
faith speaks louder
than doubt. I believe faith makes
an orphan of reason.

You see, I only want to understand.

Belief will follow,
it must,

there cannot be doubt in dying.
It is too lonely a place to go.

Tom Bonville lives in the Hudson Valley, has had poems published in Up The River,
and regularly participates in Rensselaerville poetry groups.

April 12

Science Student

by Mimi Moriarty

The month we moved to the country
a ragged coyote limped across the field

into the woods, squinted at me before
he blended into the hemlock.

I wondered - omen? Could this be
a warning or just a natural occurrence

in the woods, a diseased animal
in pursuit of something to kill

or drawn, as I am, into the deep
psyche of wilderness.

My lack of knowledge is appalling,
the difference between a groundhog

and a hedgehog, the alarm of squirrels
vs. birdsong. It's as if I'm tone deaf

or blindfolded. I must ask the simplest
questions, the gray bird with the white

breast? the leaning tree with the white
bark? I yawned through botany with
its useless Latin vines, skipped biology

taught by a nun in a habit, now I thumb

through pages of wild weeds,
poisonous or safe to tramp through?

The jumping insects, the ones boring
holes in the house, the palm-shaped

leaves growing under the steps,
I must have a name! Unrestrained,

I have become a detective, I daydream
the discovery of a new species

which I name Americanus Moriarti,
a modest recognition of my curiosity.

Conclusion: there is a god
and this god names all new things.

Mimi Moriarty lives in the Town of New Scotland, and continues to dabble in
poetry, even though her main interest at the moment is finding a mask that fits
properly.

April 13

How Will I Know?

by Edie Abrams

Hoodlums prowled and pounced
unsparingly and without penalty.
The scar on my father's face
a daily reminder.

He slaved on a farm, and for
the rest of his life
he eschewed tomatoes
because of the slew of crop one summer.

He ate tomato sandwiches,
ketchup sandwiches, tomato soup,
tomatoes and more tomatoes,
enough tomatoes for

the rest of his life.

And it was a daily reminder
when my mother served tossed salad.

I never asked
my family
when they knew
it was time
to escape.

Was it Kristallnacht, the breaking of glass windows?
Was it the good Aryans barking "Judenfrei,"
"Jews will not replace us!" through the streets?
Was it the public saluting of the golden Fuehrer?

Or, was it Congress abetting the thugs?

How will I know when to pack my bags?

In her young life, Edie Abrams worked as a researcher for the NYS Legislature's
Assembly. Now she tutors 3rd and 4th graders at the Hebrew Academy and works in
her garden during the summer.

April 14

Ode to My Love Charm

- the philtrum between upper lip and nose

by Therese L. Broderick

I've named my own, Madonna Filumena
after the patron saint of infants
painted on chapel walls with a martyr's throat

slit—this soft dip of flesh between my lip and nose,
funnel for the pilgrimage of sweat and tears.

A hammock for drowsy snot.

Rhyming with crumb, thumb, yum—luring the tongue
out of my mouth and up over the lip to flick
a lick of the Greek φίλτρον

meaning love charm.

And yet the holy books call it the seal
placed by an angel's fingertip
upon a newborn's creaseless skin,

erasing the child's heavenly omniscience.
Did you know
that today we can take our daughters
to the piercing parlor for a tiny diamond

speared through the little girl's flesh
like a butterfly's body tuft
pinned?

Praise the lemur that still has one,
siphoning the odor of a mate in heat—
gill on a snout.

Once I smeared mine on purpose with a lipstick
branded Envy. Unmasked, it's
my one erogenous zone with no privacy.

COVID-era porn charming all those clinics'
fresh, extra long Q-tips.

Therese L. Broderick is a poet living in Albany, New York (USA). Her favorite
definition of poetry is, "language in orbit" (Seamus Heaney).

April 15

Somewhere

by A. C. Everson

The messiah lives in the city
Where anointed feet
Trode concrete
Maybe giving blessings
To masked faces
They pass by

Someone lives on
Another Way in a town

That may give
Such direction without
Much help to find it
It's not an easy street
After all

You wonder if it's true
For all those who do
Live in Cockeysville
Are they really
Cocky

A. C. Everson is a homegrown poet who once upon better days was a performance artist doing a thing she calls Breaking My Art. Where her poetry came together with her piñatas (that she made) stuffed with more things she made that she wanted whomever was there to have to remember her by. She continues to write and create but at present is not breaking anything on purpose or throwing things at anyone.

April 16

Suzie, the Good Dog

by Mike Burke

He dug the grave in the fall
before the ground froze
she wouldn't last thru winter.

As she got worse
he would pull her up by the hips
so she could walk down the ramp.
He hid her daily pain pill
in a slice of baloney.

Long gone were the days
she used to follow him when he walked
throughout the grove after supper,
sit beneath him when he read
at the picnic table,
lay above him in the grass when he relaxed
in the evening on the rocks at water's edge.
He couldn't bring himself
to ask the neighbor

who shot his own dog
to do the same to Suzie.

He took her to the vet.
His wife sat in the back seat
with Suzie's head in her lap
stroking her calling her the good dog.
The vet came out to the car
in her raincoat with the needle
Suzie didn't see it coming.
His wife closed Suzie's eyes
and they headed back home to the grave
Suzie's head still resting on her lap.
Suzie the good dog.

A native Vermonter, Mike resides in the nation's oldest city, St Augustine, Florida,
where he feels right at home.

April 17

Anchoress: 2020

by Pam Clements

Alone in my anchorhold
people bring me food,
slip it onto the porch
so we need not face
each other in life.

We talk through
my one small window,
keeping our distance,
wimpled and veiled.

I sit in my chair,
look out that window
birds are feeding on the ground.

Alone with my simple goods,
food, books,
my little dog
I wear the same few garments
over and over.

Lessons of abnegation
and patience,
waiting to be seen
waiting in silence
for silence
for acceptance
for revelation
that may or may not come.

Pam Clements retired from teaching medieval literature at Siena College just in time to weather the COVID pandemic along with a few personal catastrophes. In social isolation with her dog Milo, she is coping by cooking, baking, and writing. She has published poems and essays in a variety of journals.

April 18

Bear Swamp Herons in Quarantine

by Patricia Britton

a pandemic,
the humans shutter in their quarantined homes
while the herons say "Let's give it a Go!"
"Oh, Home Sweet Home, how lovely!"
a year ago, males repaired nests, offered the females
grasses and mosses to weave ovoid shapes in the high hemlocks
of the rookery, readying at the end of March.
three days later all left suddenly not to return.
a dystopian mystery.

through spring and early summer, no clattering of beaks,
no Mother and Father vigilant sentinels above the nest,
no chicks with open mouths
craning their long necks,
no chicks standing on the rim,
long shaky legs to lift forth with
untried wings to glide through barren trees.
the swamp held emptiness, shrouded after their long decades.
in the storms of early summer, frogs murmured
gloriously in the full moon, glad not to be food.
a rising moon sadder, canopy of hemlock reflections
without the halos of heron's grey elegance
shimmering in the waters.

homing, an instinct.
Oh how they want to be home for their chicks.
Bald Eagle hiding his residency, no glory symbol
predator, waiting for their succulent eggs.

inherent wisdom sent them onward from danger.
here they come again, another spring, yearning
"Home Sweet Home, so Sweet!"
while the humans hover in their homes quaking
pining for normalcy, certain continuity.
the herons call to each other, form their hierarchies of order
within the trees, start the way towards brooding
and the Bald Eagle at the pond a mile farther.

Patricia Britton is a native of the western Albany County Hilltowns. She has spent decades working with non-profits in the arts, museums, and historic properties. She joined the Rensselaerville Poetry Workshop in the summer of 2019, looks forward to when open mics can recur safely, and continues to hone her craft.

April 19

The Wind Steals Thunder

by Dianne Sefcik

thunder
was a long way west
well out of earshot

they say a tornado
sounds like
an oncoming train

wind
grew talons
snatched thunder's sound

my instinct
to dive down the stairs
hunker in a cave

raced ahead
clutching that fireball
igniting the air
just above the trees

never kicked in
entirely mesmerized
by the sudden presence
of that strange dragon wind

thunder
right behind
hurled bolts
bomb after bomb

by leaves catapulting eastward
flying trees
sideways rain
slamming the kitchen wall

Dianne Sefcik lives in rural Albany County, NY. The Derecho, a widespread, long-lived windstorm, that moved through New York and New England on October 7, 2020, inspired this poem.

April 20

Off To America

by Tony Fallon

I had saved and borrowed money and in a week would sail
I said goodbye to my parents now both old and frail
The farm we were living on was way too small to split
I was the eldest I didn't want to cause family conflict
They had raised and nurtured me like all of the others
Now I was leaving them and my sister and my brothers
Belying my doubts and fears I put on some bravado
Knowing I might never come back from Colorado
My uncle never returned he was a cattle baron
A man who had made it big many miles from Aran
The uncle being a kind man sent many an envelope
The American dollars inside helped my parents cope
It was he who lent me the passage and money for trains
To get me from New York to his ranch way out on the plains
I had said farewell to all my friends in the parish
Mates I might see no more but memories to cherish
My father brought me in the curragh as far as Oranmore
By the Limerick Cork border my feet were feeling sore
A kindly farmer let me sleep ten hours in his shed
With breakfast in the morning and four slices of bread
With my sore feet daily I was not making great progress
And each day on the road I found myself walking less and less
The weather was rainy and I was walking in wet shoes
On my right foot I had corns on the left an ugly bruise
But I kept pressing on by day and at night I strove
And anyone I'd meet I'd ask how far more to Cobh (Cove)
The ticket said at one on Thursday the boat would depart
But when I finally got to the quay my world fell apart
The liner stayed in the bay and did not come in to dock
And the last tender with passengers left at twelve o'clock
I saw the last passenger board and wave us all goodbye
Someone said the next boat to New York was not until July
My boat had left on its first trip across the wild Atlantic
And I had missed the maiden voyage of the great Titanic.

Tony Fallon was born in Athlone Ireland. Grew up in rural Rahara, Roscommon three miles from school. At the age of 14 in a national competition he tied for first place as Ireland's Top Mathematician, two years later went working full time. Came to America in 1965 at which time he had written one poem.

His columns, poems, short stories and songs have appeared in numerous publications, here and in Ireland. He has been a radio host for the past 43 years on both sides of the Atlantic, presently on WGXC in Acra, NY and RosFM in Ireland.

The Irish show at Hofstra University, founded by Tony in 1978, is still on the air. He owned a DJ business in Long Island for 25 years. He is on Facebook and YouTube and has a blog with over 700 poems, ten of which have been recorded as songs in Ireland. He is the Youngest ever Roscommon Man of the Year in America, and Poet Laureate of Cairo NY.

April 21

YOU WANT TO KNOW

by Nancy Dyer

YOU want to know WHAT I saw today?

Today, I saw a woman in a wheel chair lift her right hand and arm using two fingers that worked from the other hand.
Today, I heard a nurse quote from the Bible, "Make sounds of JOY"....

"How beautiful," I thought to myself....

Today, I saw the Chinese woman on the Northwest corner at the 66th Street subway exit,
again asking for money while singing a song.

I have seen her there many times over the last few years.

And, when, I had seen enough and heard enough: the impatient horn-honking drivers,
sidewalk washers,
guards at the neighborhood bank, bakery workers advising us to buy cakes for tomorrow's birthday tomorrow,
the piercing sirens of ambulance runners hawking business....

And when I'd seen enough, judged, and lost my peace,
I LIFTED MY EYES and LOOKED AS FAR AND WIDE AS I COULD,

seeing and hearing everything
without having to attend to anything
and returned myself from judgement to non-recognition of the walkers,
the screamers,
the pre-pandemic panhandlers,
cabbies,
the honkers,
and everything else that kept me in my mind instead of my HEART....

Nancy Dyer worked in sales and marketing at American Express followed by a decade teaching yoga at Integral yoga NYC in the tradition of Swami Satchidananda. She spends most of her time in upstate New York near where her father grew up in East Berne.

April 22

Spontaneous Sonnet #53

by Mark W. Ó Brien

Your memory
and its recovery of
some dead world
that looks so new.
The prickly beards
of tribal kings
and a peeled moon
dreaming profoundly.
Are you eligible for
the COVID vaccine?
You have a Zoom
meeting in 90 minutes.
These might be the last
thoughts that you think.

Mark W. Ó Brien is an alumnus of the Fermoy International Poetry Festival 2014 and the Blackwater International Poetry Festival 2019. He lives in the Helder Hills of upstate New York. Mark retired in 2020 and blogs at <https://spontaneousonnets.blogspot.com>. His published works include but are not limited to the following: *My Childhood Appropriated* (2019, Foothills Publishing), *Lenticular Memories* (2014, Benevolent Bird Press), *Telluric Voices* (2013, Foothills Publishing), and *Neo-Lethean Dreams* (2009, Benevolent Bird Press).

April 23

Song of an Eventful Retreat

by Alan Casline

cannot get myself to start what I cannot release
an altar open and scattered by thunderous winds
raised structure where sacrifices are burned
center of ritual rises with sweet-smelling smoke
alternating sun and rain which may now change places
how quick the change I am drawn to?
paper fragments a few words and letters left
path to any corner is never flat
most downhill a reflection of misery
find one by separate branches
climbed upward between tree limbs
step off onto your treehouse's deck
move with care to a protected corner
here the rain has washed things clean
sit protected and light her father's pipe

Poet Alan Casline is the director of Rootdrinker Institute and uses Benevolent Bird Press to publish the work of fellow writers and artists. He has planted over a thousand trees on property he owns in the northern foothills of the Adirondacks in St. Lawrence County. He serves on the Board of Pine Hollow Arboretum and has an interest in learning about tree species, permaculture, and healthy natural habitats. He lives with his wife, Jennifer Pearce, in a suburban neighborhood outside of Albany, New York.

April 24

Cat and Mouse

by Tim Verhaegen

They've mowed a row through the field
The grass is taller than you
Green-green, soft, lush
like Nan Hamilton's living room rug

You can hide there, unseen
Under a big sky
You can twirl, skip

Do whatever you want
You can sing too
You start with a whisper
then let it go

A man sees you
You try to walk away
But you're walking farther into the field
It gets dark

You think about turning around
But then you'd have to walk toward the man
He'd like that
You'd have to walk past him
You'd have to walk near him
He'd like that
All the while looking funny at you
Men always seem to be looking funny at you

You stop, act like you've seen a bug
Not looking at the man
He walks by, nonchalant

You like men and men like you

You go to your alone place
Somebody comes
You're not alone

You leave your alone place
They follow you
You like when they follow you
You're scared but you like when they follow you

Excitement, suspense, fear - it's all there
It's like a game
Cat and Mouse

Don't let them get too close
Don't let them slip too far back
Nobody has taught you this game
How do you know it?

You know but you don't know
You feel that way about everything

You run away to be alone
You run away to know the feeling
You're fumbling and numb otherwise
It all seems vague

They always know how to find you

They want you
You feel wanted
You feel good to feel wanted
You ache to grow up

You know this when you look at them
When you hear certain songs
When you feel sparks flying back and forth across the field

Tim Verhaegen has lived in upstate New York for 42 years. He writes poetry and prose. He was raised in a large, overcrowded, traffic-congested town on Long Island. He attended a small college in a tiny town in upstate New York surrounded by lush green hills and dairy farms. He said "Screw Long Island, I want to live up here." And he does.

April 25

Loss and Beauty

by Sue Oringel

It's about the ring of opals, milky moon jewels
and garnets dark as blood,
a ring encircling twelve rich years
that one night after supper dishes no longer sat
atop the TV set or on the bedroom dresser
and couldn't be found,

It's about June's blue lupine,
church spires in the early garden,
stalks of tiny blue balloons that almost overnight
turn furred seed purses,

It's about the friend
with whom you shared your art and heart
who's turned her ear to another—she hears you
but for her, you've lost your song—and about the man

you once longed for gone back over the sea,
goodbye, and not a glance behind,

It's about a city of memory,
the art installation where you and that man
saw a hospital ward where lost childhoods
were narrated, projected onto screens and the two of you
sat in the bare, eerie rooms of strangers' lives,

It's about the hand
reaching out of the bombing wreckage,
the voice, female, moaning, and the rescuer, male
grabbing hold—I'm afraid I'm drowning, there's so much water,
but it wasn't water, it was blood and he felt her pulse
until it stopped,

It's about the patch of evening primroses
in Black Mountain, that people visit every warm night at dusk—
some snapping pictures
on their phones—to see the rolled yellow flowers pop open,
one by one, like trick cigars, to be pollinated by night-flying moths,
the blossoms that look like moths and last only one night,
to drop, spent, in the morning,
leaving their scent to linger in the summer air

Sue Oringel is a poet and writer, a teacher of creative writing, and a psychologist in private practice in New York's Capital District. Her chapbook *My Coney Island* was published by Finishing Line Press in June 2019. A graduate of the Warren Wilson M.F.A. program, she is published in various journals, such as *BlueLine*, *The Maryland Poetry Review*, and the *National Council of Teachers of English English Journal*. She also served as co-translator for a collection of Latin American poetry: *Messengers of Rain*, published by Groundwoods Press in 2002 and 2011. Fellowships and awards include Individual Artist award from the Albany-Schenectady League of Arts, a fellowship from the Vermont Studio Center, and an SOS award sponsored by NYSCA. She taught creative writing at Hudson Valley Community College from 2004-2017.

April 26

Light Lessons (Taking a Tubby)

by *Ella Prince*

I don't believe in baptism or the waters of Jordan

or anything like that but I guess I feel about a hot bath
the way those religious people feel about holy water.

Which water, then, will be good and wholesome?
Well-water, no doubt, agitated by repeated drawing.
And when boiled.

Kneel before the tile, in between the grout of years of webbed feet.
The drain will be sheathed in hair going now gray. Take hold of the silver
tap and twist it counter clockwise, releasing a stream, one element inside
all things. Shut up the mouth, plugging the container and its contents.

Beyond the wall, a porcelain cup, and down under, lies a tank.
It burns gas to heat, pulls cold through a dip tube. Air is drawn
below, fused with fuel. The burner ignites, and fumes rise
through the flue, exhausted. Behold,
A bath. Emerge from every turtleneck, long john
and sock (who puppet as mittens this winter).
Find your fur just not enough. Inspect,

For anything unnoticed: lumps. Slice the breasts and smear
on palms, a breakfast platter. Amen, omelets, egghead! Place
hands on hips, cock and titter, Well, aren't you just ravishing, darling!
Boobs look usual, size and shape. No dimples or puckering or bulging of skin.
The nips are in the same place. No rouging, soreness, rash or swelling, just two
peepers solidified, hard enough to cut through glass. Wipe your face tucked
in the haze and smooch it plainly.

Introduce your toes to the tub. They'll scream wanting out.
Grip the rim and stoop by bending at the elbows. Subside
into the spring. Wince and hover above a red-hot hell, the journey's
end. By keeping cold water in the mouth, a person may render proof
against the heat of the bath.

To blow a large, regular, and durable soap-bubble, face your palms one last time.
Bind the heart lines: braided folds designed to crease without bunching, to hold
without letting go. Align the little fingers to form the truest, bestest mirror.
Smell the baby's breath hidden at center. Internally rotate the wrists, two thumbs
to suck.

Here is the church a bird call or whistle with a blade of grass. Soak the hands,
the mind, in fat that renders circles and spectrums the most beautiful, in
simplicity

and succinct neatness, in the whole science of optics—the prism. Look back on mom
who taught you kneeling, the knight who sung: Tongues in trees—books in the
running brooks—Sermons in stones—and good in every thing.

Ella Prince lives in Rensselaerville. She works as a photographer and printer.

April 27

Elegy in D Minor

for Drew

by Mike Maggio

If I had one word to describe you,
it would be: fortissimo.
Or, perhaps: prestissimo.
It would not be largo, or moderato, or adagio.

And certainly not pianissimo.
Your life was thundrous.
No Hayden for you.
No Vivaldi, No Corelli.

No Handel,
unless, of course, it were the Hallelujah Chorus.
For you, it had to be Wagner and his Valkyries
Bach – not any – but his Toccata and Fugue.

The organ was all stops pulled.
It was as if some silent sorrow
trapped inside
were channeled through those tempestuous pipes.

Your life was a fugue:
a contrapunto of contradiction –
Organ at the Episcopal Church.
Mass at the Catholic –

rushing along the green
from the Cathedral to the Basilica
regaling the congregation with your music,
your devotion and your quirky personality.

Now, the music has stopped –
a sudden caesura
an abrupt staccato
a discordant echo

resounding through our hollowed lives.
A poignant climax
as in Verdi or Puccini
to a life finely tuned.

As Spring arrives
and God continues His wondrous symphony.

*St. Mark's Episcopal Cathedral
Minneapolis, Minnesota
April 17, 2020
For Andrew Maggio*

Mike Maggio has published fiction, poetry, travel, and reviews in many local, national, and international publications including Potomac Review, The L.A. Weekly, The Washington City Paper, The Washington Independent Review of Books, and others. His poetry publications include *Your Secret Is Safe With Me* (Black Bear Publications, 1988), *Oranges From Palestine* (Mardi Gras Press, 1996), *deMOCKracy* (Plain View Press, 2007), and *Garden of Rain* (Aldrich Press, 2015). His newest collection, *Let's Call It Paradise*, is forthcoming from San Francisco Press. He is a graduate of George Mason University's MFA program in Poetry and the Northern Regional Vice-President of the Poetry Society of Virginia. His web site is www.mikemaggio.net.

April 28

Survival

by Ann Lapinski

He sits with us
in conversation
tubing connecting him
to the tank
that keeps him alive,
his lungs too overtaken
by tumors
to provide adequate oxygen.

Taking off from Tinian
In a B-29,
the sole navigator,
he knew that limited fuel
made his navigation skills

life or death for the crew.
The cigarettes
kept him going,
helped fight off sleep.

He won the war—
did not survive
his final battle.

Ann Lapinski is retired from a career in state service and is thankful that she has a little more time in her life to write poems. She only started writing poetry as an older adult and is happy that she found so much joy in this form of writing.

April 29

February 7th, 2021

by Leah S. Brickley

She's been gone for two years now—
my daughter.
Listening to Keith Jarrett's Köln Concert
and it hits me—
what living with this
grief is like: I have to play a
broken piano
that also needs
a tune.
I could walk away
or stay
and use the keys I have left
to make something
Beautiful.

Leah S. Brickley is an Ohio transplant to the Hudson Valley (now her forever home). She's worked with and written about all things food for 20+ years—most notably for the past 12 years at Food Network. She lives with her young son, partner and dog, Murray (named after Bill). There's lots of board games, LEGO sets, books, hikes and trips to the dog park in her non-working hours. She's the author of the weekly Chips on a Sandwich Newsletter (released by Butttdown) and founder of the non-profit Suzie Q Foundation and has aspirations to enrich the lives of children in need through small acts of kindness.

April 30

The Night I Met Irma

for Christian Matthew Albert Sullivan on his confirmation

by Dennis Sullivan

On the boulevard
Where the rich folks live
The dogs wear coats of silk and satin
And bark with a whine

You have to say what you see
When you look in the mirror
There's no saying no way.

I look at you
And ask to sit in your midst
But you share a code of silence

When you measure the world
Do you use a slide rule
Or the flesh of an open heart?
I have a heart that bleeds
And no way out of town.

The lady at the bar just
Flicked her nose with her thumb
Then gave a look of mild sincerity
I brought her home
I washed her back
I treated her like a lady
I asked her why
She keeps an ace up her sleeve
She said life's good
But not worth living.

When the heart kicks in
Nothingness is a flame that will not die
But no god is worth the price of reason—
Don't write, I'm in Massachusetts.

I saw a light burning
In the eyes of the lady at the bar
Behind glasses of big black globes

She said: my name is Irma
It's Valentine's Day
What can you do for Irma?
I'm a librarian
You like to read?

I'm in a hotel
Faithful to all that's assigned me
I'm el poeta
El rey de nada
I'm away from my love
And on assignment
I'm el poeta el rey de nada
In the library reading with Irma.

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

As the official historian of the Village of Voorheesville he once wrote a book called Voorheesville, New York: A Sketch of the Beginnings of a Nineteenth Century Railroad Town.

He has four books of poems in print and for a long time was involved in the Albany-region poetry scene. He, Mike Burke, and Edie Abrams ran the "Sunday Four Poetry Open Mic" sessions at the Old Songs Community Arts Center in Voorheesville for years. It was a celebration.

Dennis also began The Third Saturday Poesy Café and created the POETS' CORNER in Smith's Tavern where yearly he, Abrams, and Burke conducted the esteemed Smith's Tavern Poet Laureate Contest. Poets came from far and wide to compete before a panel of judges who followed well-delineated rules; there was an intermission for lunch when poets and friends enjoyed a beer serenaded by music from local troubadours and first-rate musicians like Ernie Horvath. It was a fête to celebrate Poetry in April. All free—not the drinks—big cash prizes for the winners.

For years Dennis taught a course at the Voorheesville Public Library called "Writing Personal History for Family, Friends, and Posterity." He edited the group's Tangled Roots: A Collection of Stories which was published by the Friends of the Voorheesville Public Library in 2016.

And for years he's written a monthly column for the award-winning weekly The Altamont Enterprise called "Field Notes." They were published in Homeward Bound: Sixty-Two Stories from The Enterprise in December.

A long time ago his well-received Handbook of Restorative Justice: A Global Perspective (edited with Larry Tifft) was voted Outstanding Book of 2007 by Choice. His The Punishment of Crime in Colonial New York: The Dutch Experience in Albany During the Seventeenth Century (Peter Lang) received the Hendricks Manuscript Award in 1997.

That's all you need to know for now.

