



# Rensselaerville Library

Preserving a historical gathering place

Promoting a life-long love of learning

Fostering personal connections

## **Celebrating National Poetry Month 2022**

### **Poem-A-Day**

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

**showcasing different voices, styles, subjects**

**1800+ pageviews & 47 comments!**

**Enjoy!**

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

**Heidi Carle, Director, Rensselaerville Library**

April 1

Tantrum in High C

*by A. C. Everson*

Jude is hitting the high C's  
Of his displeasure  
Has me thinking he's  
Got talent maybe for  
Musical theater  
Each time those notes  
Float up the stairs  
I know his twin is  
Undoubtedly there  
Who better to push  
Those buttons than family  
Looking so innocent  
Inside lurks the enemy  
Of a peaceful any day  
As this Grand does say  
Some are more than others  
It's the way of many  
Sisters and brothers

~

A. C. is a poet still poeming mostly from her Nana pod in a home she is currently sharing with her son and grandchildren.

~~~~~

April 2

(four haiku)

*by Barry Kuhar*

I'm cooking  
last year's venison  
on scavenged propane

get the tow strap  
a lot of snow  
stuck



a  
twist  
a fall  
flow to find  
a  
moment  
of  
B A L A N C E

finding flow in fluid balance

leaning  
lifting  
flying

giving and taking weight

following  
under  
and  
over  
and  
around

we are a murmuration  
relaxed and aware we spiral and twine  
guided not by thought, or intent or goal  
in movement together  
we weave

ebbing

and flowing

lifting  
and  
sinking

rolling and flying

finding a fulcrum

Our response to each other  
creates a synchrony, polyphony  
a pattern created spontaneously

an ecstasy

~

I grew up in an orchard whose fields and woods mothered me well. I studied philosophy. After a disastrous Fulbright year, I studied art and dance, read poetry and foraged mushrooms. I married and became a dancer. I divorced and became an Occupational Therapist. For 30 years I worked with autistic and trauma affected children. For almost 25 years I have lived in Rensselaerville in an 18th century farmhouse with acres of fields and forests, waterfalls and creeks. I love nature, my wood stove, solitude, good books and my two cats. I am now retired. About a year ago, I began writing poetry as discipline, practice, play that will serve as a loom for the tapestry of my final years.

~~~~~

April 4

Agitation, with Commas

*by Bruce Robinson*

It's our time  
to read,  
our five minutes  
for paperview,  
the urgent journals are threatening  
to overwhelm us, it's already  
happening,  
the signs have been sunset,  
verse confiscation or worse,  
consonantal drift,  
you remember the verb wars,  
false synecdotal terrorism,  
tyranny reigning,  
is there no god to protect us?

You needn't be some  
Charlotte Brontë  
conspiracy theorist  
to recognize  
the dangers when you see them:  
unpredicated proof of congressional  
stanza camps and the adjectival invective  
of unprincipled journals!

Congress and its library

have made preparations for your family,  
the question is, HAVE YOU?

We expose the truth

and urge you to prepare:

Get the words out!

It's on the cable, it's on the air,

forward this to your friends,

to your family,

to those for whom

you have long since

ceased to care:

the gods

must want us poets dead.

~

Recent work by Bruce Robinson appears or is forthcoming in Tar River Poetry, Spoon River, Tipton Poetry Journal, Maintenant, Pangyrus, Inscape, and Rattle. "Agitation" was developed as part of generative workshop with Ishion Hutchinson in Key West.

~~~~~

April 5

Geek Mythology:

*by Mark W. Ó'Brien*

Elvis is the driver on our bus.

He is good operatively.

He ferries us to and from Outpost Haros.

We wear headphones.

We listen to AC/DC at half speed on our Walkmans.

Even our batteries are dying.

I use duct tape to hold the cassette in.

Elvis is impressed.

He offers me his lunch box but I say:

"No, I've already had my polk salad for today."

Elvis gets all shook up.

I say: "You ain't nuthin but a Cerberus.

Whining all the time."

He stops the bus.

Tells me to take my Teddy Bear and go.

As Elvis drives away, the bus shakes, rattles, and rolls.

I don't know why he had to be cruel.

Maybe Elvis was the Devil in disguise.

I'm in the Ghetto now.  
I'm wearing blue suede hiking boots.  
And a baby cries.

~

Mark W. Ó Brien drinks NA beer and reads poetry and pizza. He is the author of books. He gets lost in unchained melodies.

~~~~~

April 6

(four haiku)

*by Tom Gilroy*

lost  
in the moon  
I step on the rake

Pushing pink baby carriages  
through mud, rubble, and corpses  
International Women's Day

emerging from the bank  
she's wrapped in fur  
and the smell of hand sanitizer

parakeets in oleander  
wake me from a nightmare  
of paramilitaries

~

Tom Gilroy is an interdisciplinary artist whose work spans still photography, theatre, writing, acting, poetry, graphics and music, with film at its center. His feature films and theatre pieces have been presented all over the world, and he has appeared in over thirty films. He has produced several haiku projects, including the books *the haiku year*, *Someone Else's Nowhere*, and *Haiku, Not Bombs*. His haiku work can be viewed on Instagram at [@justuttergarbage](#).

~~~~~

April 7

wondering ...

*by Karen Fabiane*

... if i just missed you the other night (am I

always asking this?)

woke 4 am

tried not to complicate the hour, but

began talking without you

to calm the restless quiet

like the mumbling of a storm recently past

but near-return

since i guess you're now with pretty-face

though we spoke in the non-dream

some aspect of dawn

filtering through nocturnal morning

as the glamour of midnight's panorama fades

so there are no other ballads to sing now      nothing

more typical

find light in this

trying to

or see you in the sun

~

Born in NYC in 1949, Karen Fabiane grew up on Long Island, and was part of the Manhattan downtown scene during the 1970s, making music, writing & performing poetry, and painting. Her poems have been published in small press journals since 1975, including 2, Bound, Coal, Delaware County Times, Downtown, Greenkill Gallery Broadsheet, Home Planet News, MisFit Magazine, Momoware, New Voices, Newsletter Inago, OM, Poetry Motel, RagShock, Salonika, Title I, Torture House USA, and five different anthologies released by Bright Hill Press, which also published her book, *Dancing Bears*, in 2011; a second book followed, *Seeing You Again* (Grey Book Press, 2014). Her paintings have been exhibited in Seattle, New York City, Washington, DC, and the Capital District of New York (Albany environs) since 1978.

Because people sometimes ask, it should be noted that, prior to 1998, these activities were enacted under her birth (dead) name, Mike Krischik. She had gender reassignment surgery (GRS - sex change surgery) in 2001, after 4.5 years' transition. As Karen herself might say, "These circumstances are mentioned because I've heard all kinds of accounts about my life, sexuality and gender status from people I've never met (or would seek), which are almost always never true (or even close). So, these words to clarify, and wash the shit away."

Moved from Brooklyn to Delaware County in 1989, she currently lives in Troy, NY. Aside from teaching painting for 2 years (2006-08) at the Art Center of the Capital Region, Ms. Karen Fabiane has no academic affiliations or credentials.

~~~~~

April 8

Final Thoughts

*by Avery Stempel*

We signed up

My grandmother and I

She asked about installing the app

Walked her through it

Filled out a form

Signed her up

Thought: "hell... she can't do this alone..."

I signed up too

We signed up

The app alerted us

Next steps

Where to go

What to wear

What to expect

We showed up

Next day

Stood in line

Were handed our Kalashnikovs

Taught basic safety

Practiced loading, unloading

Cleaning and care

Given ammo

Directed to shoot

We were all there

My grandmother

Zhokov

Fedko

Poroshenko

Zelenskyy

Me

So many people

More people than guns

Shooting

Missing

Hitting

My grandmother

Showed promise

Hit more times than missed

Told to avoid conflict if possible  
If enemy showed: give them hell

Our apartment

On the outskirts

Far from city center

In the night we heard them

Tanks

Trucks

Soldiers

Our Kalashnikovs

We grabbed them

Aimed

Fired

My grandmother

Hit two soldiers before I could pull the trigger

Her gun barked

Barked again

Kept screaming at the invaders

I couldn't do it

The explosion

A rocket

Maybe?

She made it

I hope?

The rubble

Buried

Can't see

Apartment

Gone

A Kalashnikov still barks

Hers?

Can't focus

Can't breathe

Can't move

We signed up

My grandmother...

~

Avery Stempel is a poet turned mushroom farmer from East Berne, NY. Living in the Capital Region since birth, his poems draw inspiration from life experiences, philosophical ponderings, and grand imaginings. His poetry has appeared on stages and in cafes in Albany, Schenectady, Troy, and Saratoga. His farm, Collar City Mushrooms, in Lansingburgh, NY hosts the regularly occurring Second Sunday Poetry and Prose reading as well as many other popup events.

~~~~~

April 9

*Life can only be understood backwards, but it must be lived forward.*

- Kierkegaard

*by Barbara Ungar*

This Life

is a novel you find hard to put down.  
Often you stay up too late at night,  
reading. Never flip  
to the back to see how it ends.  
Willing suspension of disbelief.

All this foreshadowing  
and dramatic irony—lost  
on you till it's too late.

You try to slow down, yet once  
you're half-way through, the pages  
turn themselves, whole chapters race.

Like Emma, you're blind  
to your own designs,  
can't sort the plot from your  
blunders. Some found elements  
and erasure, a bit experimental.

No thriller. No *War and Peace*  
or *Brothers K*, but who'd  
want to live in those?

In bed, weary, you let it drop  
each night. When you open your eyes,  
there it is again.

~

From *Save Our Ship*, which won the Snyder Prize from Ashland Poetry Press and was named to Kirkus Reviews' Best Books of 2019. Barbara Ungar has work forthcoming in *Scientific American*, *The Comstock Review*, *Gargoyle*, and *Limp Wrist*. Her work has been translated into Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, and Bulgarian. A professor of English at The College of Saint Rose, she lives in Saratoga Springs, New York. [[www.barbaraungar.net](http://www.barbaraungar.net)]

~~~~~

April 10

Avian Fan Club

by *Stuart Bartow*

Because I throw a bun or roll or half-  
eaten sandwich or leftover chips  
onto the roof of the house next door  
ghost house without doors or ghosts  
I am famous among crows  
and have a following among ravens  
who when I leave my house they  
from the trees and wires report on me

my doings surveillance teams  
plain sight spies and detectives on call  
tasked to see if I might toss something  
for them gourmet or otherworldly  
They do not love me only what I fling

~

Stuart Bartow teaches writing and literature at SUNY Adirondack and lives in Salem, New York where he is chair of the Battenkill Conservancy, an environmental group protecting the Battenkill watershed along the Vermont-New York border. His most recent collection of haiku and haibun, *Invisible Dictionary*, is published by Red Moon Press.

~~~~~

April 11

Small World

*by Larry Rapant*

at the front door  
you get a name tag  
and have your wings confiscated

at first your pockets bulging  
with undeserved credit  
it feels like a spree

you roam the premises  
without a goal  
examining everything

but whatever you see and touch  
leaps into your cart  
and can't be returned

it isn't long before  
you're so full of  
your bargain basement self

that you don't even  
look around anymore  
convinced you know

who you are

what you want  
and exactly where it is

then the doors lock  
automatically  
and all the lights go out

~

Larry Rapant lives and writes and coordinates a philosophy discussion group in Voorheesville, NY. His latest book of poetry is *Stunt Larry* (2019).

~~~~~

April 12

Only Two Minutes from Our House

by *Lucia Cherciu*

Some stories say Chicory refused  
to give a glass of water to a thirsty old man  
so she was turned into a flower.

Others say her fiancé died in the war  
and she was left behind  
to cry on the side of the road.

She was in love with a sailor  
who didn't return,  
so every day she waited for him.

One morning the Chicory fairy  
was bathing in dew when the sun  
saw her and fell in love.

He sent the morning star to propose  
on his behalf, but she rejected him,  
so the sun turned her into a flower.

Others say you can unlock a treasure trunk  
with a thread of chicory,  
blue petals cutting gold.

We drank it during Ceaușescu's time  
in adulterated coffee, yet now

we find out it's good for us.

Its hypnotic flowers  
hold the gaze, a spiral  
of meditation and prayer.

Luxuriant chicory was growing  
like an eye of water and sky  
that opened to the final mystery

where they found my father  
on the side of the road.

~

This poem was published in the poet's book, *Train Ride to Bucharest*.

Lucia Cherciu is the author of five books of poetry, including *Train Ride to Bucharest* (Sheep Meadow Press, 2017), a winner of the Eugene Paul Nassar Poetry Prize. She is the 2021 Dutchess County Poet Laureate, and her work was nominated three times for a Pushcart Prize and twice for Best of the Net. She teaches English at SUNY Dutchess Community College. Currently, she is working on revising her novel. Her web page is <http://luciacherciu.webs.com>.  
[@CherciuLucia]

~~~~~

April 13

Fine Print

*by Paul Amidon*

I'm at the service counter of a transmission shop,  
several beefy customers in line behind me.  
The man serves up two pages crammed  
with fine print, a dotted line at the bottom.  
What would happen if I took time to read it?  
I don't find out. I sign, no way to know  
if I've just authorized work I don't need,  
committed myself to pay a collection of levies,  
fees, surcharges, mark-ups, assessments.

At the doctor's for a routine checkup,  
I'm handed a routine dose of verbiage  
so cryptic I couldn't understand it  
even if I could read it, which I can't.

I sold my childhood microscope at a garage sale.

In the emergency room after an accident,  
I sign something on a clipboard a nurse holds  
on my stomach, no inclination to read it,  
and my glasses somewhere else.  
The thought crosses my mind I may have  
donated all my organs from the eyeballs on down  
if things don't work out.

It wouldn't surprise me, at the end of this lifetime  
of signing things I never read,  
if I arrive at some planet in a distant galaxy  
to begin an incarnation as manager of a burrito bar,  
and a strange being issues me a ten-pound book  
of regulations and says: "Read this. Sign here."

~

Paul Amidon is still in Albany, NY, with an ever-growing collection of unread fine print. His book of poems, *Relatives and other characters*, was recently published by Troy Book Makers.

~~~~~

April 14

Bees, You, and a Bird Dream

- a poem in collage

*Overtaken Truck Spills Millions of Bees on the Highway*

- *TIME Magazine* headline on hives bound for a farm in Washington State

by Susan Comminos

*Bees*

They were brought in by truck  
To taste the salt air. Witless  
Sommeliers, gunned by instinct, sip  
By stricken sip, they were bombed

Up the West coast. Ocean,  
what's

Your riven call  
To ride? A cult-like moan:  
Settle utopia, known  
For garage bands: so

Loud.

I don't like the sound, but I love the air  
Crying in from the window.

*You*

Once, in sleep, your ear was a sunken bowl,  
Filled with stones I'd never see.  
Every breath: not a drum — but silent;  
Brassy; unstrung —

A solo of small instruments.

When littleness matters, each  
Sting makes some cracked,  
Pebbled sense.

*Bird*

This morning, a cardinal  
— his dark eyes matched by his harlequin mask —  
Dropped like a beaked  
Anvil, at my feet.

*Dream*

And those bees, benighted  
Pilgrims, emptied  
As overturned bags,  
In the street. Their crawl:

Like mosaic —

A glass face, beaten

To a savage whole. Then pricked,

Like a fissured pane, still shut. Last night:  
Your absence on the water was a swept, black wing. Then

I was a bird, wanted  
Away, and pecking out.

~

Susan Comminos is a writer and teacher in New York. Her literary journalism has appeared in *The Atlantic Online*, *The Boston Globe*, *Chicago Tribune*, and more. Her individual poems have appeared in *The Harvard Review Online*, *Rattle*, *The Common*, *Prairie Schooner*, and *North American Review*, among others. She's taught writing to undergraduates at Siena College, The College of St. Rose, and most recently, SUNY Albany. Her debut book of poems, "Out of Nowhere," from the Stephen F. Austin Univ. Press/Texas A&M can be ordered at Barnes & Noble.

~~~~~

April 15

Inside Of A Minute

by *Ann Stoney*

Inside of a minute the chips will fall,  
Gently on satin,  
Remembering all,  
You lay down your armor,  
Allow for a pause.  
Within the caverns  
Where secrets lie,  
You may have failed  
In the blink of an eye,  
Or maybe succeeded,  
Anyone's guess,  
No questions asked,  
No answers needed,  
It's just...

The other day  
You saw someone  
That reminded you of something  
And something else,  
Like a chain of dandelions

Wrapped around your neck,  
Tickling you to the point of  
No turning back.  
Your face,  
A soft rain  
Wet with cries of  
How you were then,  
Who you are now,  
Longing to convince the someone that  
The longing that made you  
So full of angst  
Is now no longer there.

~

Ann Stoney is a writer based in NYC. She is the most recent winner of the Tampa Review's Danahy Fiction Prize. Her writing has appeared in *PIF Magazine*, *Duende* and *Monkeybicycle*, among others. She has been recognized in several contests, most recently as a finalist in the *Cutthroat Journal's 2021 Rick De Marinis Short Story Contest*. When she is not writing, she's busy reviewing stories for the *Bellevue Literary Review*.

~~~~~

April 16

Amtrak Reunion

by Scott Oglesby

I've crossed the Hudson  
    after being lost for a while  
But now I am settled  
    in a warm cushy seat.  
Wide, white and frozen,  
    the river's crusty surface  
    shows not a hint of its rumbling current.

The train whistle wails  
    like a forgotten child  
    as a setting sun  
    strokes between the scrub trees  
It dances improv to the gospelly chatter  
    of the church group surrounding me.  
Soulful and animated,  
    they spout God's lessons,  
    but ignore His glory

that streams like a magic video  
through the ever-changing windows.  
I am lost in nature's cinemascope  
of snow, sky and light.  
Like this river, I wash silently south  
to the great salty mothership.  
Where our union awaits with fiery impatience.

~

Fifty years after my escape, I still call myself a Southern writer living in New York City. Published works include essays in Manhattan's *West Side Spirit*, *the Villager*, *the Village Sun*, *Bellevue Literary Review*, and Restoration Row (podcast); also a story in *Gravel Magazine*; a novel, *Riding High*, and a critique of David Amram's *Upbeat*, in *American Book Review*. Currently, I keep busy as the assistant non-fiction editor for *Bellevue Literary Review*. And like every guy I know with white hair, I'm writing my memoir.

~~~~~

April 17

The Long Body of Life

by Rhonda Couillet

Once I was clothed in beauty,  
safe in the arms of time,  
Innocent, trusting, desirous,  
twirling through vines that climb,  
blooms in my hair opened early or late,  
colors from all dimensions,  
but now, Alas! I'm only gray,  
clothed in wisdom of the day.

Now I sport by seasons,  
in corduroys the color of leaves,  
I trip over traps hidden in a rug,  
fall through the door with a shrug.  
I dream of water salvation,  
a cleansing I hope will come,  
I rise like a rock from my own back yard,  
sit and listen to the hum.

Now I romp in old blue jeans,  
wear tattered tops to nowhere,  
doubts, fears of disease

mock my dreams and flair.  
I live vicarious, digitally safe,  
while others starve and thirst,  
a skeleton divorced from reality,  
no longer last or first.

Now I'm draped in elephant skin,  
drooping from my bones,  
the solid structure crumbling within,  
I dry like a desert of stones.

I leave the chaotic comfort of men,  
to let my body change,  
give up erupting volcanos,  
let the settling force arrange.

Now I am clothed in thought,  
negative, positive, choose it,  
the challenge of life, time running out,  
the moment on earth I lose it.  
Once, attached to humans,  
a husband, a father, a friend,  
a mother, grandmother, missing now,  
epiphanies to the end.

Will I live forever,  
wander in the stars,  
skipping the skeins of eternity,  
oblivious to earth and wars,  
take natural, ancient, eternal, steps  
down the Milky Way's new math,  
or will I mourn like the ole Mississippi,  
for the ground and my mortal path.

~

*Lyricist /Composer/Playwright: "Runaway Beauty Queen"*

*Production Resume: The Martha's Vineyard Playhouse, Florida Studio Theatre, (Barbra Anton Playwriting Award, Sarasota Magazine's "Most Intriguing Autobiography")*

*Lyricist/Composer: "West Heaven" (Tribute song to John Belushi , SNL), "Bigger than the Both of Us" (Jimmy Buffet Grammy nom.)*

*Actress: Broadway: Starred in "The Robber Bridegroom" (Barry Bostwick, CD) & "Pump Boys and Dinettes." Starred in LA "Hair"*

*Actress: Off Broadway: "National Lampoon's Lemmings" (4 CDs, C. Chase/Belushi/C. Guest).  
Starred in "Cowgirls"*

*TV/Film: "Mr. Mike's Mondo Video" singer with Paul Shafer, SNL Spinal Tap"*

~~~~~

April 18

Here She Stands

*by Edie Abrams*

The rhododendron's leaves  
are pencil thin, closed,  
for the sake of survival  
from the wintry cold,  
the cutting wind, the ice.

Will she transform as it does  
when the planet tilts and  
the swing of spring warms,  
and the rhody's leaves unfurl  
to unmask the dormant  
prize hidden in its bosom?

She despairs  
that knots that bind  
may not unwind  
as long as he cages love,  
touches not  
whispers not.

So, here she stands,  
like a jewel in a rhody,  
always in winter's chill,  
frigid, untouched  
waiting to bloom.

~

Edie Abrams is a nobody. If she didn't live in the Time of COVID, but instead had Love in the Time of Cholera, she'd run off with Javier Bardem when they were both in their twenties and really be somebody.

~~~~~

April 19

Pandemic Hurricane

*by Patricia Britton*

hurricane, out there,  
past the Outer Banks,  
the Eye.

here,  
miles and miles inland,  
the winds and rains blow.

lightweight  
Tibetan flags wave  
furiously  
on strings  
outside  
the Vedanta Retreat Center.

at the grocery store  
shelves bare  
of bread,  
milk and eggs.

jittery people  
distracted from the  
pandemic,  
try to kilter  
this persistent  
nag of what to worry about.

a whirling dilemma  
of unpredictable motion  
weathermen failed to counter  
this scurrying to procure, protect, secure.

back in the car  
taking the mask off  
I seek to retrieve  
wonder,  
an indistinct flighty impulse  
to feel calm in the bluster,  
this pressure of trepidation

around me.

sit in the driver's seat,  
let the gusts whip around,  
feel the car jiggle.  
watch the gulls, like kites,  
hover above the parking lot,  
wings widespread,  
floating immobile in contrary winds.  
no inland gulls these  
who long ago  
found themselves off course  
lost in a foreign land.  
grey sky of wind-ravaged rains  
over a false sea of impenetrable gravel  
far from origin.

I want the gulls to glide  
higher and higher.  
be swept back in the storm  
to where they can smell home,  
home, the salt air and briny marsh,  
the easy crab for lunch.

those Tibetan flags fury  
embeds in my memory.  
prayers they carry aloft  
for all of us, the wayward gulls  
even itinerant dreamers.

~

Patricia Britton is a native of the western Albany County Hilltowns, a graduate many years ago from Berne-Knox-Westerlo High School. She has spent decades working with non-profits in the arts, museums, and historic properties. She spent many years in the high-desert Southwest before returning to the Hilltowns on a property with a year-round creek, miles of stonewalls and deep mature woods. A love of the natural world keeps inspiring her poetry. She looks forward to when workshops can reoccur in person.

~~~~~

April 20

Eleanor's Purse (shivers & yips)

*by Mike Jurkovic*

Eleanor's purse held many things.  
Everyone's prone to the shivers and yips  
she says, curating her bag  
w/a passion few possess.  
This here's for bloating she'd puff,  
holding a change of face and coin  
one small vial, two orange pills,  
three sets of sixty, four counts of felony,  
five minor headaches, six Christmas trees,  
seven separate somethings.  
Eight triple ply, nine bold remarks,  
ten turtle doves, eleven assorted mints  
twelve novellas, and

You lose at least ninety minutes of life  
stuck in traffic each day she'd insist,  
no stranger to the truth but not quite kin.

God wields w/o partiality  
she'd note, handing you a hammer.

~

Latest collection, mooncussers, (Luchador Press) early 2022. Recent collections include American Mental, (Luchador Press 2019); Blue Fan Whirring (Nirala Press, 2018) President, Calling All Poets, Hudson Valley, NY. Reviews appear at All About Jazz and Lightwoodpress. Hosts New Jazz Excursions WIOX 91.3 FM.

He loves Emily most of all.

[www.mikejurkovic.com](http://www.mikejurkovic.com)[www.callingallpoets.net](http://www.callingallpoets.net)  
<https://www.allaboutjazz.com/php/member.php?id=142766&width=1024>  
<https://www.facebook.com/mikesjazzpoetryjournal>

~~~~~

April 21

I Dreamed I Had New Glasses

*by Dianne Sefcik*

I dreamed I had new glasses

with them I saw wonders

I hadn't seen before  
and other things

walls were mere suggestions  
there  
but void of substance

beyond them was the world

raw light turned shadows  
into gauzy veils

nothing  
was hidden

my heart broke  
and mended  
broke and mended

I took the glasses off  
but it was too late  
to unsee  
what I had seen

~

Dianne Sefcik lives in rural Albany County, NY.

~~~~~

April 22

My Mother as the Farm in Delaware

*by Judith Prest*

My mother merges with rich earth  
where she coaxed tomato seedlings,  
sprouted in the dining room window  
into a dense garden-forest  
bursting with Big Boys and Yellow Pears.

Roots grow from her feet  
tether her to the persimmon grove  
where she harvested fruit  
made sweet, softened

by first frost.  
Her hands become  
the long-handled steel spoon  
stirring pots of tomatoes,  
grapes for juice and jelly,  
apple sauce, vegetable soup.

Creek water and berry juice  
run in her veins, her voice  
fuses with wood thrush and spring peeper.  
She grows wings, bursts  
into spiral flight with the woodcock.

The land sits fallow now, a tangle  
of honeysuckle, kudzu and multiflora rose.  
My mother blooms in the daffodils  
that open in March, with no one  
this side of the veil to see them.

She flits between branches  
with cardinal, grazes with the deer  
at sundown, follows fox  
into her den as dark comes.  
The white pine whispers her name.

~

Judith Prest is a poet, photographer, mixed media artist and creativity coach. She has two publications by Finishing Line Press, *After*, (May 2019) and *Geography of Loss*, (July 2021). Her poems have been published in *Waxing and Waning*, *Misfit Magazine*, *Rockvale Review*, *Mad Poet's Review*, *Chronogram*, *Akros Review*, *The Muse - An International Journal of Poetry*, *Earth's Daughters*, *Up The River*, *Fredericksburg Literature and Art Review*, *Upstream* and in eight anthologies, including *Black Lives Matter: Poetry for a New World* from Civic Leicester in the UK. Judith lives in Duanesburg, NY with her husband and three cats. [[www.spiritwindstudio.net](http://www.spiritwindstudio.net)]

~~~~~

April 23

Stage IV

*for Rose*

*by R. A. Pavoldi*

I want a house with a little paint  
on the windows so the dividers look  
slightly wavy to passersby.

I want to feel the early summer air  
of 1941, my mother with  
one foot in the lake hesitating.

I want to see her in perfect form  
on the end of the dock the moment  
before diving into memory.

I want to wave to her across a field  
of daisies where she sits  
plucking petals one by one.

I want her cancer to find its way  
back to hell so I don't have to see her  
poised on the edge of eternity.

I want her to surface into summer  
never having to take this world this life  
one day at a time

He loves me... He loves me not...

~

First published in *Ars Medica: A Journal of Medicine, The Arts, and Humanities*, Spring 2006

R. A. Pavoldi's poems have been in *The Hudson Review*, *North American Review*, *FIELD*, *Cold Mountain Review*, *Crab Orchard Review*, *Italian Americana*, *Hanging Loose*, *Ars Medica*, *Tar River Poetry*, and elsewhere. He was twice a finalist in *Atlanta Review's* International Poetry Competition.

He credits the concise lyrical Napolitano-American dialect and the school of hard knocks for his voice.

~~~~~

April 24

Longfellow

by *Barbara Garro*

How appropriate for me  
to study Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.  
As a toddler  
I heard over and over  
his *Song of Hiawatha* and *The Village Blacksmith*  
my mother recited from memory.

How well I've come to know him  
hearing people speak his words all my life:

ships that pass in the night  
footprints in the sands of time  
into each life some rain must fall.

Portland, Maine, poet, Longfellow, born February 27, 1807, was also reared hearing and reading the greats:

Shakespeare, Milton, Pope and Irving. When still a boy, the Portland Gazette published his first poem *The Belle of Lovell's*.

Father, Stephen, a country lawyer, and mother, Zilpha Wadsworth, provided Henry, Stephen, Elizabeth, Anne, Alex, Mary, Ellen and Sam with a loving, caring home and an exciting American heritage. Paternal great, great grandfather, William, a blacksmith, came to America in 1651. Great grandfather, Henry, taught school and became a court clerk. When Maine was part of Massachusetts, Grandfather Longfellow represented Maine in the Massachusetts legislature, became a judge and sent Longfellow's father to Harvard to study law. Maternal ancestors included Pilgrims, John Alden and Priscilla Mullins, who sailed on the Mayflower. Grandfather, General Peliz Wadsworth, fought the British during the Revolutionary War, served on the Massachusetts legislature and built the first brick house in Portland, which he gave to Henry's parents. Henry's home was large, square and stately. He called Portland *The beautiful town...seated by the sea*.

Eaglet's nest is soft  
where love and luscious food come  
'til thorns force exit

Zilpha saw to it that Henry attended private school. Henry was given lessons in religion, piano, flute and dance. For family sing-alongs, Henry played the piano. College was Bowdoin and at fifteen Henry spent a year at Harvard, fourth among thirty-five students. Eventually, Longfellow learned to read and write ten languages, twice traveling to Europe for extended study. He taught French, Spanish and Italian at Bowdoin and modern European languages and their literatures at Harvard.

Longfellow both loved and hated teaching. Europe shrunk Bowdoin in his eyes so much that he claimed, *while he was in Bowdoin, he was not of it*. Fortune smiled on Longfellow when Harvard invited him to teach.

The heat of the sun  
dried out the forest for weeks  
how could it not burn?

Longfellow's sister had to smuggle his letters to his beloved Little Mary, because Mary Storer Potter's father excelled at scaring off suitors. After seven years, they married in 1831 and made their home in Cambridge, Massachusetts. After Harvard named Longfellow Smith Professor of Modern Languages in 1834, Longfellow again traveled to Europe, but Mary went reluctantly. She died in miscarriage in Rotterdam, fourteen days after his brother-in-law, George Washington Pierce, died. At this low point, alone, weary and sad, Longfellow took to crying himself to sleep in his lonely bed.

Path became jungle  
a wood of hard, knobby vines  
a mass clouding all

At 30 in 1837, Longfellow moved back to Cambridge, Massachusetts, and it became his forever home.

When Longfellow met Fanny Appleton, just 17, he said, *There was not a discordant thing in her; but a perfect harmony of figure, and face, and soul.... And he who had a soul...must of necessity love her, and, having once loved her could love no other woman forevermore.*

Two problem love quests  
that lasted seven years to marriage  
lost to early death

Henry whole-heartedly took on the roles of father and mother to his five children, the youngest just six at Fanny's death.

~

My name is Barbara Garro, a poet with a 37-year 999 poem body of work that I have been writing and periodically put through a full editing process resulting in some published in two books: *Seasons: Haiku & More* and *Love Bites*. My poems contain my thoughts on body, mind, spirit aspects of life, mine and others whose lives and activities matter to me. Currently on my 9th career as host of 5 Minutes with Jesus on Alive Radio Network, going into year two.  
[<http://www.BarbaraGarro.com>]

~~~~~

April 25

My Emotional Ghost

*by George E. Grace*

I crossed paths with you last night  
Such a shame I thought  
Why? Why did our friendship end?  
Why did we stop talking?  
We were very good friends  
I pleaded with you  
You weren't listening  
You just kept walking  
I was talking to a ghost

~

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.

~~~~~

April 26

Daily Spontaneous Poem #2613

*by Michael Czarnecki*

young woman plays piano  
one last time  
in bombed out house

young violinist  
plays Ukrainian folk song  
in basement bomb shelter

older man plays trumpet  
outside his house  
as day begins

in midst of carnage  
in midst of barbarism  
music is defiant presence

~

Michael Czarnecki wrote his first poem in 1967 in his junior year English class. He hasn't

stopped writing since. For nearly three decades he has made his living solely through the creative word. He has given readings in all of the lower 48 states and is looking forward to being able to get back on the poetic road again. Michael posts a Daily Spontaneous Poem on Facebook and has been doing so since 2014.

~~~~~

April 27

Paradise

*by Cheryl A. Rice*

You float, tethered to wings of ripstop nylon,  
orange bird of no consequence.  
You fly like a stone, shoot at paper turkeys,  
cans stolen from your mother's toxic larder.  
"Be with me," you said in the moment.  
Each moment rolled like an urban globe,  
the negative, limping space you created.  
Bird of Paradise started it all,  
promise on our first date of exotic territory  
you couldn't explore alone.  
A black feather wages war with the sky,  
human drone out of film,  
bones broken to prove your worth.  
But gravity is the only constant,  
parachutes never opening in time  
to prevent collision with dry life.  
What was it like in that moment you crossed into ether?  
Was the Holy Mother on hand to forgive you,  
offer a taste of authentic Heaven?

~

Cheryl A. Rice's poems have appeared in Home Planet News, Baltimore Review, Up The River, and Misfit Magazine, among others. Recent books include Love's Compass (Kung Fu Treachery Press), and Until the Words Came (Post Traumatic Press), coauthored with Guy Reed. Rice lives in New York's Hudson Valley. Her blog is at <http://flyingmonkeyprods.blogspot.com>.

~~~~~

April 28

Children Too

*by Nancy Klepsch*

No pain no gain  
My kid just joined the war  
Iraq has children too

No water no food  
A poor man's Vietnam  
Somalia has children too

Burned babies and ballistics  
The bombs of passion  
Iran has children too

Bloated bellies and statistics  
Can you see them  
Mexico has children too

Jump from that sudden crash  
Keep a bottle of water just in case  
Rwanda has children too

Duct tape answers to your kids' questions  
Throw away your SUV  
Afghanistan has children too

Afraid of planes trains and bridges  
Public spaces soft targets and supermarkets  
Israel has children too

Food too high and pay too low  
The Palestinians have children too

More men in red ties telling bald lies  
Haiti has children too

Clean a house you can't afford to buy  
Columbia has children too

Is the end of the world just a sound bite away  
Angola has children too

AIDS terror and drug cartels  
Rebels riots and repression  
South Africa has children too

Diarrhea whips and shrouds  
Chemical gasses and sweat shops for fashion  
Pakistan has children too

Promises warlords and starvation  
Cadavers and mutilation  
Argentina has children too

Hungry cold and homeless  
North Korea has children too

Radical rogue technological illogical  
China has children too

Bosnia Burundi India Ireland

Turkey America Russia Poland  
Italy Spain Azerbaijan

All of us have children  
All of us are children too

~

Nancy Klepsch is a poet and a teacher who was born in Brooklyn, NY and currently lives in Upstate New York. Klepsch co-hosts 2nd Sunday @ 2 open mic for poetry and prose. god must be a boogie man is her first book of poetry and is available from her website at [www.nancyklepsch.com](http://www.nancyklepsch.com).

~~~~~

April 29

Growing Leggy

*by Kate Crofton*

- i. Ten weeks of quarantine is sufficient gestation for a clump of cells to grow strawberry big. My uterus is devoid

of produce, but I know its  
potential.  
On the labor and delivery unit I support  
the numbed legs of a woman exactly  
my age. She is rooted and  
I'm not sure whether it is  
wasteful or  
brave  
to plant perennials during a pandemic.

My neighbors' front yards have erupted  
like stadiums of high school cheerleaders  
wearing short skirts over gawky legs. They  
generate electricity with floral pom poms.  
Did last decade's gardeners know  
we would need this spirit  
rally?

ii.

I hope  
marigold seeds into yogurt cup cradles  
in my barren rental basement. As they grow  
half strangle the others,  
rot  
into a state of almost  
nonexistence. It's too much  
carnage.  
I give up.  
Stop watering.

iii.

Never have I ever felt as alive  
as the time I flung my dandelion fluff heart across the country  
with one checked bag and the promise of a new start  
seated in an exit-row  
next to a woman shackled  
to a wailing baby and diaper bag anchor.

Now I fly  
only as far as  
the basement  
gnats. My mother interrupts these thoughts

iv.

in fourteen-point italic Comic Sans:  
I'm thinking about your garden.  
Your beans should have popped up;  
they are the most  
    gratifying  
of seeds. This leads me to believe that you  
rely upon sky watering.  
And your plants in the basement  
you *are*  
turning out your light at night,  
    I hope?  
Otherwise they get  
    leggy instead of  
strong.

v.

My legs  
sprout. I decide not to shave myself soft  
    instead hug my hard edges and lose  
tufts of time staring at the gravid graves  
of blooming dirt in the basement. Yesterday

just glimmers  
of zucchini stalks.  
    Today they push through the perineal surface  
carrying clots of dirt on their heads.  
Still dressed in thick white seeds  
they shed their origin stories,  
    gently.

I listen  
to the silent chant of these blooming cheerleaders  
    and reap  
their lessons.

~

Kate Crofton grew up in rural Wisconsin where the passage of time is demarcated by winter, mud season, and road construction. Now she lives and writes poetry in Albany, NY.

~~~~~  
April 30

Beyond a Winter Sunset: A Study

*by Dennis Sullivan*

In the dark of a March evening  
As a wind ransacks the rafters  
Of this house, a rain smelling  
Of anger or some other emotion  
Of discontent presents itself

Once again, as with me always,  
A silence has taken control  
Of my mind, as if some god  
Has entered the room with a message  
About the fate of loss-driven souls.

If such a condition rattled me,  
Like the rain and wind and  
Darkness of a winter night,  
I might fall on my knees  
And issue prayers of disbelief

But no, it is the silence I am left  
To grapple with, as it is with me  
Always, the silence of a desert  
That stretches beyond where  
No eye can see, making of me

A delicate play thing dying by  
The day the hour the minute  
I dare not say more lest the  
Silence no longer speak but  
A voice turned in upon itself

How treacherous is the taste  
Of the desert in tiny doses  
As the calculating mind is driven  
To seek the totality of nothingness  
When all it desires tonight,

As a wind and rain beat upon  
The darkness of this house,

Is the unspeakable silence  
That arrives when nature's  
*Mysterium tremendum* is at hand.

~

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.

Dennis has served as the Voorheesville Village Historian for 35 years and in that capacity has written a number of local history texts most prominent of which is *Voorheesville, New York: A Sketch of the Beginnings of a Nineteenth Century Railroad Town*.

His published books of poetry include *Harvesting Silence* (Benevolent Bird Press, 2009); *In the Fields of Kingdom Come: Selected Poems* (Pajarito Cantando Press, 2011); *Heaven is a Frame of Mind: New and Selected Poems* (Pajarito Cantando Press, 2015); *Sitting by the Well of Silence* (Pajarito Cantando Press, 2019); and *Thirty-Two Views of the Face of God* (Troy Bookmakers, Christmas, 2021).

In 2017 he published a 280-page book on a small Catholic high school in Newburgh, New York he taught in from 1963-1967. It's called *The Little Engine That Could, and Did: A Memoir and Brief History of The Christian Brothers in Newburgh, New York From Their Arrival in 1866 Until Their Departure in 1969*.

In 2020 his *Homeward Bound: Sixty-Two Stories from The Enterprise* was a collection of his column "Field Notes" that ran in The Altamont Enterprise from 2015 to 2021. Renaissancean in scope and thought.

In the Albany, New York regional poetry scene, he and Edie Abrams and Mike Burke hosted the popular "Sunday Four Poetry Open Mic," for years, at the Old Songs Community Arts Center in Voorheesville. It was a celebration of art by a jovial community.

Dennis also 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* - published by the Friends of the Voorheesville Public Library in 2016.

Years ago, his well-received *Handbook of Restorative Justice: A Global Perspective*, co-edited with Larry Tift, 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.

There's other things but that's all you need to know for now.

~~~~~