



Rensselaerville Library

Preserving a historical gathering place

Promoting a life-long love of learning

Fostering personal connections

Celebrating National Poetry Month 2019

Poem-A-Day

(ctrl-F to search)

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

showcasing different voices, styles, techniques, subjects

1875 pageviews

Enjoy!

Tom Corrado

Coordinator of the Library's Poetry Group

Kimberly Graff

Director, Rensselaerville Library

April 1

Walls and Ladders

by Frank S. Robinson

Something there is that loves a wall.
A wall for keeping people out;
People who are not like us.
Of course they're not like us;
They wouldn't build a wall.
But wall lovers don't conceive of ladders,
For raising people up, transcending barriers.
I lift my ladder up against your wall;
I lift my lamp beside the golden door.

About the poet:

Frank S. Robinson is a graduate of NYU Law School (1970), and served at the New York Public Service Commission as staff counsel and then administrative law judge (1977-97). He is the author of eight books including Albany's O'Connell Machine (1973), Children of the Dragon (a novel), The Case for Rational Optimism (2009), and Love Poems. Robinson is a professional coin dealer. He is married to the poet Therese Broderick and has a daughter, Elizabeth. Robinson was appointed to the U.S. Assay Commission by President Nixon in 1972. In 1969, he was the first man to walk on the moon.

~~~~~

April 2

The Psychic Says

*by Jackie Craven*

In your 394th life, you were a pond. You wanted to be a lake  
and cried yourself to the brim, but the sun -

You came back an estuary. Not fresh, not salt. Not land, not sea.

Crabs tunneled through the mushy parts of you. Always the threat  
of evaporation. You dabbled in many incarnations - Life 1,052,  
a fall (always falling). Life 6,893, a canal (it was those locks that did you in).  
In Life 14,659 you managed to become an ocean. You curled your lips  
at the sun and swallowed Atlantis whole. No one guessed  
how you dogged the moon or how you suffered  
the sickening swirl of your perpetual motion. Now  
you throw yourself up at my shore, thirsty  
for answers. Seriously? I think you already know  
why you weep, why you bleed, and why, as you drift  
to sleep, you hear a steady hiss of steam.

About the poem:

My mother painted weird scenes, like the image of a young girl tumbling into a whirlpool. "The Psychic Says" grew out of that painting, which snowballed into a book of poems about my mother's paintings, which morphed into a search for messages hidden in the paintings. Every time I look, I see something new.

About the poet:

Jackie Craven's collection, *Secret Formulas & Techniques of the Masters*, is available from Brick Road Poetry Press, Amazon, and other vendors. She lives in Schenectady and online at [JackieCraven.com](http://JackieCraven.com).

~~~~~

April 3

Praesepe, The Beehive

by Mary Kathryn Jablonski

It was a liquid world: viscous, mutable,

at times even joyous, a world of florals,
open/closed. I distilled your every word
to nectar. In repetition of James Gould's
experiment at Princeton: you moved
the sugar and I found it, you moved
the sugar and I found it, you moved
the sugar and I found it, you got out
of the car with the jar, and I was
already there. But now the hive is dead.
Desperately, I beat this union down
like Virgil's bullock, still no bees emerge.
Instead, like truths, they escape my mouth
in wild dreams as I ascend darkening hillsides,
combing open graves for the lost queen.

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published in Beloit Poetry Journal.

About the poet:

Saratoga Springs, NY artist and poet, Mary Kathryn Jablonski, has been a contributor at Numéro Cinq magazine and is the author of the chapbook "To the Husband I Have Not Yet Met" and the book-length poetry collection "Sugar Maker Moon" (Dos Madres Press, 2019). The recipient of several awards, grants and fellowships, her work has appeared in numerous print and online journals including the Atticus Review, Poetry Film Live (UK), Poetry Ireland Review, Quarterly West, Salmagundi, and Tupelo Quarterly. Jablonski has run poetry programs in her region, frequently lecturing on visual poetry. Her video/poem collaborations with filmmaker Laura Frare have been featured internationally in journals, film festivals, and exhibitions, and her artworks, exhibited throughout the Northeast, are held in private and public collections. Join Mary Kathryn and Laura April 13th at 1 pm at the Saratoga Springs Public Library for a presentation of poems and video/poem collaborations!

~~~~~

April 4

## Alien Skin

*by Rachael Ikins*

Rhubarb unfurls.  
Fantastical, frilled like giant rose petals.  
Shoves clods of earth and worms,  
striving toward sun.

Chlorophyll streams, skin thins.  
In the wrinkly fontanelle  
stuck between magenta thighs,  
Life insists.

Graupel chips bounce off.  
Rhubarb shivers,  
unable to retreat.  
Hangs its head while frigid  
scalpels puncture, its weapon,  
poison hearts-blood, impotent.

I touch one leaf.

Clammy. My mother's skin,  
an hour after her death,  
*a handful of warmth fisted*  
*over her heart* when

I touched her hand.

Out-of-focus Mom  
bleared yellow-purple,

alien skin,  
November rhubarb  
refusing to relinquish  
the blood that  
Winter takes.

About the poem:

My garden has turned out to be a vehicle to process many life events that become poems. In this poem I revisit my mother's death. She loved her garden.

About the poet:

Rachael Ikins is a 2016/18 Pushcart, 2013/18 CNY Book Award, 2018 Independent Book Award winner prize winning poet/novelist/artist. She featured at Tyler Gallery 2016, Rivers End Bookstore 2017, ArtRage Gallery 2018, Caff e Lena, Saratoga Springs, Aaduna fundraiser 2017 Auburn, NY, Syracuse Poster Project 2015, and Palace Poetry, Syracuse. Her work is included in the 2019 anthologies *Gone Dogs* and *We Will Not Be Silenced* the latter Book Authority's #2 pick for the top 100 Best New Poetry Books for 2019. She has 7 chapbooks, a full length poetry collection and a novel, with 3 publishers. She is a graduate of Syracuse University, member of the CNY branch of NLAPW, and Associate Editor of Clare Songbirds Publishing House, Auburn, NY. She lives in a small house with her animal family surrounded by nature and is never without a book in hand. Her newest book, *Eating the Sun* releasing 4/19 is a memoir and love story, narrative punctuated with poetry and garden recipes. It is available for pre-order at <https://www.claresongbirdspub.com/shop/featured-authors/rachael-ikins/>

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April 5

For Jennifer: March 23, 2011

by Catherine Connolly (1969-2012)

Your mother called me.

She said February 18, 2011 you fell
and hit your head and have been in
a coma in Albany Med.

She said

"everyone, all the doctors, said to take Jennifer off of life support,
she has a severe traumatic brain injury,

they had to remove half of her skull.
Jennifer had three operations. But I got a fourth opinion for her
and kept her alive. And today,
she started breathing on her own,
but that is all Jennifer is doing.”

I read in your chart
“42 y/o female. Fell on ice.”
And I thought,
how precious,
a gift,
life.
How it slips,
black ice, the telephone.

About the poet:

Catherine Connolly was a world traveler, an accomplished sailor, a published poet,
and a treasured member of the Voorheesville Library Poetry Group.

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April 6

Summer Haibun

*by Carol H. Jewell*

The colours of the garden are impossible. The bee on the coneflower, yellow, pink,  
and orange, a scream. Summer Gayfeather in the background, and fantasy of  
milkweed now gone to fluff. Monarchs light and leave. Continual harvest: berries,  
bramble. A humid breeze of Morning Glory, blue on the white picket fence; West  
to the setting sun, East to the rising. A silence that’s never been said. A sentence  
that’s never been read.

A bee knows one thing:  
gather pollen for honey.  
Honey for the young.

About the poem:

This poem, influenced by a photograph taken by Mark O'Brien, was previously published in The Ekphrastic Review.

About the poet:

In my early fifties, I went back to school for an MFA (I already have an MS Ed and MLS). Since then I have participated in open mics and readings, and, currently, I am editing an anthology of pantoums. I am a musician, teacher, librarian, and poet. My first book of poems, *Hits and Missives*, was published by Clare Songbirds Publishing House (Auburn, New York, 2017).

~~~~~

April 7

Sestina

by Sharon Stenson

Somewhere, out on San Francisco Bay,
perhaps, you're sailing
your small
boat. Out there amid the heavier, weightier
craft, blue and gold
Sunfish, sail tipped slightly to the left

When you left
they cut down all the trees. From the bay
window of the house we used to live in you can see
for miles and miles. We sailed
in smaller and smaller circles,
you and I, trailing eddies of gold
in our wake. We were waiting

for the Clipper Ships to come back. Waiting
for those sun-licked, phantom-rigged, wild upon the sea ships left
lingering in some golden

extinction, obeying each ill wind that came along, each small
tide that pulled them farther out to sea. The house
went up for sale

last week. I'm sailing
out of here. While I was wading
in the shallows, our two small
sons grew up and left.
I'm planting a bay
tree at the corner of my mind. For remembrance. Gold

is the color I've chosen for myself. On a golden
beach last summer in New Hampshire, I saw a sail
far out at sea. The bay
was calm, the water heavy on my feet as I waded
out. On the beach, I left
a brown paper bag with my coconut tanning oil lotion and two
oranges, a small

loss, after all. I walked along the old boardwalk near the bay
falling through the spaces in my life, my left
foot slightly ahead of my right. But I sailed
on impressed with the power of my own weight.
In a gift shop I bought a bottle with a model ship inside. Its small

sail was cast in gold. I took it with me to the bay,
waited until the tide went out, and left it floating westward out to sea.

About the poet:

Sharon was born in Terre Haute, Indiana but has lived in New York most of her
life. She retired several years ago from teaching writing and English at
Schenectady County Community College. Sharon was also a piano teacher and has
performed locally with various jazz groups.

~~~~~

April 8

## Shadow-Poet: Arrival

*by Jim Williams (1949-2013)*

Arriving like the waterless flood,  
having fewer neurons than he'd like,  
shadow-poet knows the secret of the universe.

He is only one of many  
who inhabit my subconscious,  
a feisty group of complexes

Who try to run my life.  
My dogged efforts to tame this lot  
are legion, fruitless.

I've chuffed and wheedled,  
begged and pleaded.  
When that didn't work,

Actually argued with the most  
reluctant members which  
serves to make them more intent.

Besides, they have my number:  
When I'm with my therapist,  
they're next door . . . working out.

Except shadow-poet, who sits in the corner,  
wringing his hands in commiseration  
shaking his head and clucking softly.

While the others are gathering evidence,  
handing out assignments,  
I can hear the papers shuffling.

About the poet:

Jim Williams aka "Math Guy" was a highly respected math teacher, an outstanding classical guitarist, a published poet, and a valued member of the Voorheesville Library Poetry Group.

~~~~~

April 9

Last Train

by Paul Horton Amidon

He worked in soot and grime
at rail yards, knew all the crews,
the bump and rattle of moving cars,
ring of steel against steel.

Time moved him up the line to the lair
of dragons steeped in fire and steam
before each rumbled down the rails
on a last run and vanished.

Every neighborhood family
knew him as a friend,
faithful as a fireman stoking a boiler
to keep the timetable.

If you needed help on a cold night,
a shed a hobo could sleep in,
a story to send the blues packing,
he was your man.

The night he died,
a train of mist and shadow
pulled up to my house in a dream.
Some of the faces at the windows
seemed familiar, but it wasn't a local.

There was no bell,

no steam shrieking from the whistle,
only the slow click-clack
of the wheels as it started forward,

and on the platform of the last car
before everything faded away,
a smile, a wave, as he stepped inside.

About the poet:

P. H. Amidon is retired and lives in Albany, NY. He spends part of his time in search of ideas for poems. As a fictitious purveyor of wisdom once said: "No muses, the poet snoozes."

~~~~~

April 10

Before the Rain Starts

*by Joan Gran*

Before the rain starts -

I have to walk these bills  
I just wrote checks for  
To the mailbox - at the end of the driveway.  
The sky has turned the color of ink  
And just delivered  
The first heavy roll of thunder.

Before the rain starts -

I must close the windows down tight  
Pulling the fans from them all  
As I move along.  
Three sets of stairs to deal with.  
Front and back will get hit the worst  
Though for now - the absence of wind  
Makes the job less demanding.

Before the rain starts -

The umbrella that shades the outside table  
Should be lowered just in case  
A gale force blast should occur.  
The hanging plants will need to be moved  
To indoor shelter for the duration  
And the lawn chairs rearranged  
Closer to the house -  
Keep them from visiting  
The neighbor's back yard.

Before the rain starts -

I'll unplug the unnecessary electrical conveniences,  
And due to the TV signal being lost -  
The familiar voices of my daytime shows  
Will be picked up and heard  
Only in cyberspace today.  
My computer too, will be taking a rest,  
Which leaves me solely  
To devices of my own creation.

Today I will pick up the pen,  
Pull out the paper,  
Inscribe my work  
Who knows - I may even write into the night,  
Which reminds me -  
I best look for the flashlights  
And dig out the candles -

Before the rain starts.

About the poet:

Joan resides in Latham and facilitates a poetry group called The Armchair Poets.  
She is retired from the Troy Sage Campus Library after working 25 years as a  
library and archival assistant.

~~~~~

April 11

The Dumb Sense of Things

by Art Willis (1936-2010)

What of the magnifying glass
That brings up the false to true?
When thee is glimpsed beyond the grass
Of act, beyond the thought of blue?

When thee is seen even beyond
The cosmic tiger, eyes yellow,
As thee drinks at the forest pond,
See a cache of meat and marrow -

The glass then shows the truth inside,
The blank of glory of the sages
That comprises thee in full stride -
Dumb sense of things in all ages.

About the poet:

Art Willis was an inspirational teacher and mentor, a noted local historian, a published poet, and an esteemed member of the Voorheesville Library Poetry Group.

~~~~~

April 12

Spring Canvas

*by Mike Conner*

The prior months of viewing nature  
through winter's monochrome hues  
of gray branches and gray roads and gray skies  
have me wondering if God

just sometimes needs a rest  
from sustaining Earth's verdant flora and fauna.  
Perhaps he feels the need to break out  
a newly stretched white canvas  
on which to paint the world anew one more time  
and he calls this spring.  
Of course it seems to be almost  
the same painting each year.  
Only subtle changes are made  
to account for new growth  
or to illustrate winter's damage  
to his prior year's artful world canvas.  
Sitting wistfully and patiently  
watching the time-lapsed painting  
being created before me during  
that week or two of bloom and blossom  
has my mind's eye picturing each day's new bud . . .  
each afternoon's newly unfurled leaf,  
and each hillside's change of tint  
from dull brownish green  
to a deep cool sumptuous emerald,  
as if that two week long painting  
is being tweaked each day with more detail,  
and more depth, and more color.  
It seems as if the painting is done  
before we know it,  
and I find myself picturing God  
sitting back and admiring his work  
as he cleans his brushes and removes  
the errant paint daubs from his fingers  
and long white beard.  
Instead of mere mortals  
gazing up at his likeness  
on an old world chapel ceiling,  
maybe he is gazing down at us,  
within his own masterpiece  
that he calls . . . spring.

About the poet:

Retired Tel Com technician who never shared, or read aloud, any of his work collected over the years, until finding the time in retirement to become that “renaissance man” who could now pursue writing, open mic venues, art, and photography and a much more sedentary and peaceful lifestyle in his little house on a hill. A few of his pieces have made publication: one in an edition of Albany Poets “Other” chapbook, and another piece made it into the anthology of works from Troy's “Second Sunday At Two” chapbook. One self-published chapbook is comprised of his collected pieces on nature, and weather, and seasons and is titled “Seasonal Musings.”

~~~~~

April 13

The Love Dance of the Loon

by Anthony Bernini

We rise up for the love dance of the loon.
It happens when the world is just awake
at dawn beneath the waxing moon
that stillness carries clear across the lake.

The lake like a word of one letter lies,
thin and clear and everywhere. The loons rise
through the wavering plain, dark and intent.
Each stands remote, fixed in the firmament.
Apart they float, their gravitation grows,
then each to each they close.
With pendant wings they gather in their offerings.

About the poet:

Anthony Bernini was born and raised on Manhattan's Lower East Side. He is the author of two volumes of poetry, *Distant Kinships* and *Immediate Worlds*. He now works in Brunswick, NY, where he lives with his wife, Mary Ann Cleaves.


~~~~~  
April 14

Cruel April

*by Jan Marin Tramontano*

If spring is youth and  
love is April in Paris  
wouldn't a woman, but  
particularly a woman  
in her autumn years

want to rush through  
the intractable ides of March  
to get there,  
to feel once more

the flood of dreams  
that overpower her reason  
driving her to pluck the crocus  
not caring that the tender  
stem pushed through  
a frozen tunnel?

She desperately reaches  
to feel the embrace of the warm  
breeze, failing to remember  
the harsh sting of wind  
that will blow the perfect  
day right out of her hand  
causing a squall that blinds  
and confuses,  
only to mysteriously vanish  
in a sun-drenched melt.

It is the cruelest time  
this month of heartbreak

because she's forgotten that April  
is a harbinger, not the deliverer  
of promises rarely kept.

About the poem:

This poem was a winner in a Poets Writers contest. The guidelines were to use the words April is the Cruellest Month from T. S. Eliot's The Wasteland.

About the poet:

Jan Marin Tramontano, is a poet and novelist. She wrote three poetry chapbooks, *Woman Sitting in a Café* and other poems of Paris, *Floating Islands: New and Collected Poems*, and *Paternal Nocturne* and has poems in her poetry collective's anthology, *Java Wednesdays*. and *Peer Glass Review*. Her poems, stories, and book reviews appear in numerous literary journals. She's published two novels: *What Love Becomes* and *Standing on the Corner of Lost and Found*.

~~~~~

April 15

September Spiders

by Marilyn Paarlberg

They slipped in without our notice.
During the last chapter maybe, Molly
all yes and yes and yes. Or Pavarotti -
Nessun Dorma the third time through.
Windows open since June
and you had meant to patch that screen.
Instead, pale green wine in everyday glasses,
walking dusk home for the night,
low-toned talk about the crossword, then
together on the sheets we took in from the line.
I can't say where they've been before now,
but I notice their nests along the ceiling
at first light. Plump, cottony mounds

like the pillow you breathe into
inches from my ear.

About the poet:

Marilyn Paarlberg lives in an old farmhouse outside of Albany, along with spiders, spirits, and her spouse. When she isn't writing grant proposals for the not-for-profit organization she directs, she returns to poetry, her first love.

~~~~~

April 16

Poem I Didn't Write

*by Kendall Hoeft*

I. Eyes to See

Don't write a poem about me  
and when, with walking stick in hand and your hand in the other,  
I carried your brother on my back -  
his dark curls collecting sunlight, as it broke  
through tree tops and mixed with my breath  
thick from climbing.

We threaded the mountain, making paths our own.  
Flaky sheets of mica flashed translucent -  
refracting beams of light like white-lipped oyster bellies.

Pyrite protruded from boulders. Its deceptive metallic luster  
convinced children of faith. We believed  
we could be gold miners. We believed  
there were still nuggets in those Colorado hills.

II. Mountain Woman

You are a lumberjack.

You taught us to yell  
“timber,” while pushing dead trees.  
You built a fort with a rope swing.  
You carried a picture book that warned  
which plants are poison.  
You sang hymns. We nibbled wild raspberries and honeysuckle.  
You showed us how to survive  
on the mountain.

### III. Stuck

Don't write a poem about me  
and how in winter, when pipes froze,  
we would drink  
snow melted on the wood stove,  
how blizzard kept our family together  
inside, reading Proverbs  
and the Iliad and practicing Latin  
amo, amas, amat,  
and pretending  
we were Little House on the Prairie  
as we collected  
logs to burn.

### IV. Detachment

Don't write a poem about me  
and those slow evenings we snuggled  
in your rocking chair.

I remember  
the smell of leather and earth.  
On your lap, I could tell you anything -  
connected to you,  
like I was when I floated inside you.

I depended on you to provide

answers. Until I began to answer my own questions.  
I wonder if it felt like rebirth or fracture -  
like I was breaking off, out of you again.

I wonder now, if you can be happy with me,  
apart from you.

About the poem:

I had just finished writing a long poem, "Bathing my Father," about how I want to care for my Dad when he's old. After reading it, my Mom nervously quipped, "Oh, don't write a poem about me" (which of course became the title of this poem). Though she dislikes being the center of attention, she ended up with a poet daughter who finds her, and our memories together, too marvelous not to write about.

About the poet:

Kendall graduated from the University of Tampa's Creative Writing M.F.A. program and currently teaches writing online for Florida International University. Her recent poetry can be viewed in Bad Pony Magazine, Patient Sounds, Occulum, Anti-Heroin Chic, Leveler, Zin Daily, Z Publishing House's "Best Emerging Poets," Driftwood Press and on her Facebook page:  
[www.facebook.com/kendallhoeftpoet](http://www.facebook.com/kendallhoeftpoet).

~~~~~

April 17

A Gift

by Joyce Schreiber

A poem comes as a surprise.
It is the issue of a withdrawal
From the noise which surrounds us.
It comes at the slightest provocation,
A smell, a sound,

A spider web spanning leaves of grass,
A wild turkey crossing the back yard,
An image that bursts
Through the silence of forgotten memories.

It takes its own form,
But is amenable to retooling and scrutiny.
“Is that what I really meant to say?
And is this the best way to say it?”
It is an emotion lined up
And worked like clay,
So that fully shaped
It reveals itself,
Even to its messenger.

About the poet:

Joyce Schreiber, a retired French and Spanish teacher, whose goal is to spend as much time as possible with her two grandchildren and to practice the four P's: poetry, pottery, piano and painting, lives in Voorheesville with her husband and two cats.

~~~~~

April 18

Still in November, Trout

*by Darby Penney*

Brightness and a touch of chill hone  
all the edges, trees jump  
against deep sky.  
You cast down into a shiver of stars,  
wind and sunlight on the water.

Beneath my feet, riverstones magnified  
past clarity, shapes on the creekbed  
more secret than silted water.

Tangled moss on the bank whispers  
the way to old marshes, sighs  
of damp growing things fading.  
In the shallows, cattails  
chant to music not yet written, fast-  
moving water hums one strong note,  
I hear your call  
rolling. I slide back  
into the cool river, arc  
with the current, swimming  
in the deep of your voice.

About the poet:

Darby Penney, a senior research associate at Advocates for Human Potential, Inc., is a social justice activist living in Albany, NY, who serves on the boards of the National Association for Rights Protection and Advocacy and the New York Climate Advocacy Project. With her late husband, Ken Denberg, she founded and edited a literary journal, *The Snail's Pace Review*, and a small press, *The Snail's Pace Press*, from 1991-2004. Her poetry has appeared in *The Emrys Journal*, *Blueline*, *Negative Capability*, *Groundswell*, and other journals. With Peter Stastny, she authored *The Lives They Left Behind: Suitcases from a State Hospital Attic* (Bellevue Literary Press).

~~~~~

April 19

Not To Fade Away

by R. M. Engelhardt

The universe
Isn't made up
Of light verse
It's dark like
Poetry

Is

In the day
We work
We strive
In the night
We become
Animals
Eyes searching
For ourselves
Remnants of
Stars unending
Under the vast
Nothingness but
Words

Like the
Poem the
Sky a mystery
Demanding
Thought

Not to
Fade away
But to
Burn like an
Ancient
Fire

Lost

In
Translation

About the poet:

R. M. Engelhardt is a poet, writer, minister, and author who over the last 20 years has been published in such journals as Thunder Sandwich, Rusty Truck, Writers' Resist, Dry Land Lit, Hobo Camp Review, and many others. He currently lives and writes in Upstate New York where he runs the Troy Poetry Mission.


~~~~~  
April 20

Full Moon Saturday

*by Phillip X Levine*

It's Saturday night  
And the moon has her high-beams on.

And down on the flats all the young slicks  
have their motors running tight and their hair combed sharp.

While up on the mountain it's rutting season  
And all the new dudes have their boots on high.

But I can no longer see in that kind of light.  
And I have no howl left.

And the shine is so close it's hot in your nose.  
And everyone stops to contemplate their next move.

But it's the moon's move,  
And with her one wide eye, she presses hard on everyone's pedal.

And I'm gone.

About the poem:

Nearly every full moon in Woodstock, NY a rather liberated crowd gathers near the top of Mead's Mountain Road around a campfire at the "Magic Meadow". You can imagine the rest.

About the poet:

Phillip X Levine juggles being dad to his delightful 14yr old daughter Piper, poetry editor for Chronogram magazine, president of the Woodstock Poetry Society, actor, stand-up comedian, computer consultant, tutor/teacher (math, writing, chess,

...), general contractor, and a number of other balls and boulders. His prose poem "Soon" appears in Firewheel Editions' anthology *An Introduction to the Prose Poem*. Phillip hosts the WPS's monthly meeting on the second Saturday of every month - 2pm upstairs at the Golden Notebook Bookstore in Woodstock, NY.

~~~~~

April 21

Dear Addiction

by Hana Sheedy-Corrado

you sweet-talked my sister with your sugar-coated words
you took her away to your secret place
you seduced her
you hooked her
again and again and again and again . . . and again

you ripped out her life . . . tore out her pages
ruined her
ruined me
ruined people I love

she was never the same after that

she will never be the same

13 years have passed

13 years of detours
13 years of dead ends
13 years of false hopes
13 years of empty promises
13 years of lies
of regrets
of cruelty
of sadness
of bullshit

of loss
of manipulation
of humiliation

13 years have passed

everything has changed

nothing has changed

Addiction:

you stole my sister
you stole my role model
you stole my best friend

Addiction:

I hate you

Addiction:

I will never forgive you

Addiction:

I want you dead

About the poet:

Hana Sheedy-Corrado will be moving to New York City to pursue a career in design.

~~~~~

April 22

After Chagall's Painting "Lovers Under Lilies"

*by Susan Joy Riback*

A man, grows lilies out of his open skull-pot,  
a woman's breasts shimmer like the sun  
and their embrace flourishes green over pink lips.

I see the faces of children running in from a field,  
eyes glassy shining golden  
smiles spinning with ghost pods,  
end of season.

A man, at the end of the path  
with disbelief, asks love to hold his dream  
while he blooms over,  
lilies falling

not just lilies,  
star dust  
rising in a sky of possibilities  
in a house watched over by the moon.

About the poet:

Susan Joy Riback received her BA from Antioch University, RN from Hahnaman University and studied with the National Association of Poetry Therapy. She continues to work as a poetry teaching artist and is a member of the Evergreen Poetry group.

~~~~~

April 23

An Apology to All the Critters I Have Consumed in This Life

by Debora Bump

. . . and in my next life
I will likely come back
as a cow

likely not a cow from India
to be held holier than thou
worshipped and autonomously
parading through
poverty stricken streets
past the starving homeless
nor will my droppings be crafted
and revered like
Kingsford summertime coals
to sear the flesh of the much
less sacred goat or lamb

I will probably end up
between a roll
with cheese and ketchup
via the drive through window
and a pimply faced
minimum wage teenager
passed on to some poor bitch like me
with mercuric blood pressure
and a guilty as all hell conscience
thinking about the marinated tofu in the fridge
rotting away next to the organic spinach and beets
the brown basmati rice from last week
barely touched in its container

I will be on the opposite end of the food chain
as he/she outstretches an arm to take their change
and grabs the white bag with
mass-produced pseudo food
to feed that mercuric beast even more

this would be my karmic backlash butt-kicking
of cosmic design

so I guess this would be an apology
or at least the best I can offer
at this particular time

About the poet:

Debora Bump struggles daily with the fact that she still eats meat. She shares her life with three spoiled felines, and a sexy death metal bassist, who somehow tolerates her undying love for the late and forever great, David Cassidy.

~~~~~

April 24

The Bronx River

*by Brian Kennedy*

we follow the dark water  
through the zoo  
looking for its mouth

stuffing leaks out  
of an abandoned red couch  
over by the pelican roost

along the bank  
below West Farms Square  
I break a stalk of milkweed

shooter peas hang  
from disappointed limbs  
while white liquid drips

this is the exact spot  
where a reformed Bobby White  
broke through the ice

and left the cops standing  
alone in the centerfold  
of the *Daily Mirror*

About the poet:

Brian Kennedy is a writer and musician in upstate New York.

~~~~~

April 25

My Father's Clothes

by John Rankin (1936-2006)

When I was young
I wore my father's clothes.
The sleeves that held his arms held mine
a comforting embrace
protection in a world
that held my youth in veiled contempt.

I wore the clothes
of country, school and trade,
costumes for those masques
that drive this mortal drama.
Did I conform to them or they to me?
Who knows?
In time these too were laid aside.

And now I wear my father's clothes again.
The wrinkled crepe of age
that somehow lacks
the comfort that I found
when I was young
and wore my father's clothes.

About the poet:

John Rankin was an environmental scientist, a painter, a potter, a poet - as he liked to say, *all with varying degrees of success* - and a respected member of the Voorheesville Library Poetry Group.

~~~~~  
April 26

“rapture”

*by Joel Best*

in ocean’s parlor our servants, their names forgotten, serve brushroot  
tea, turn their heads and swim into quick sandhours, to the great mother  
of the sea, her veil a doddering film, her prayers poorly defined circuits.

numbered.

numb.

as we rest on the shore, casting shadows in acute angles. a process  
of geometry. a soft science beyond judgment to obscure the insubstantial bits,  
the dilly dots of weary eyes out of focus against wharf and wave.

of last days.

in last lost.

brought to a skamble run in chase of closet truth, the gospel’s latent

coffers opened left and right, brimmed to the beyond with

haunted threads pulled from orr-knots and spun into better twine than

our sorry souls deserve.

we be.

in seclusion.



succored.

patients of affliction. known by names forged from a more involved logic.

an impertinence of activity, counter-intuitive to regret. because we are tired

of watching tides. because we would rather pursue the metronome's steady

hum. because we are in love with twilight.

which fills our hands with + signs.

and when the hands are used up.

elbows.

About the poet:

Joel Best has published in venues such as Atticus Online, Common Ground Review, Crack the Spine and Apeiron Review. He lives in upstate New York with his wife and son.

~~~~~

April 27

Racetrack on Birthday

by Cheryl A. Rice

Happy Birthday call, made in daylight,
I catch him handicapping the first race.
Probably he stands near the paddock, or
done there, is settled into grandstand bleachers,
comparing stats, trainers, last times out.

“Happy Birthday!” I chirp, assume he’ll know

from the number on his phone who it is.
“Ah, thank you very much,” he says, hesitant,
lets my voice sink in to confirm his hunch.
“Are you doing anything special for you there?”
“Yeah, they let me in!” he laughs.

It is too early I hope, not five o'clock yet,
but in Tampa, time does stand still.
“We're having dinner with the Little Rice family.”
He means my nephew and his wife, and their son,
still impossible to me.

When I was born, my father nineteen.
I had a great-grandmother of my own.
My father's seventy-six today,
and falling behind on the far turn.

“I could've been somebody,” he says in his best,
unconvincing Brando voice.
“I could have been a contendah.”
“You are somebody,” I remind him,
“just not a movie star.”
I stopped waiting for Pulitzer to call
a long time ago myself, but
still leave the light on.

We say our goodbyes. I leave him to
the racing form, the tropical silks,
sunlight flashing on the starting gate.
I leave him to guess at how the first race will go.
I return to the dishes, the unmade bed,
a blank computer screen, our dreams
rebounding off the soggy turf.

About the poet:

Cheryl A. Rice is founder/host of the now-defunct “Sylvia Plath Bake-Off.”
Chapbooks include *Moses Parts the Tulips* (2013: APD Press), and the upcoming
Until The Words Came (2019: Post Traumatic Press), co-authored with Guy Reed.

Rice took First Prize in the 2016 Stephen A. DiBiase Poetry Prize. She blogs at www.flyingmonkeyprods.blogspot.com.

~~~~~

April 28

1923, Albert Einstein Invents Birds

*by Ken Denberg (1951-2018)*

Something to enter air, call this bunting,  
equal to fish but opposite they dart  
as acrobatic when changing motion.  
Feathered, airy, beaks for browsing, hunting.  
To brew this pure magic: his mind plus heart,  
no fur, teeth or arm this contemplation.  
Yardbirds and salty gulls, even herons sail:  
similar in random sizes and scale.

Wildfire color took our inventor,  
delight; worms to jay, mayflies to swallow.  
What shrill notes to match them he must have heard,  
every one distinct in nest and splendor.  
Second best, a surer batch won't follow  
this speed of light. His favored, bluebird.  
It is not known if Birds is what he meant,  
what matters now is result not intent.

About the poet:

Ken Denberg was a well-published poet, winemaker, blueberry farmer, and retired English instructor who lived in Albany and Cambridge, NY. Originally from South Carolina, he received a Doctor of Arts from the State University of New York at Albany and an MFA from the University of Oregon. With his wife Darby Penney, Ken founded and edited a literary journal, *The Snail's Pace Review*, and a literary small press, the *Snail's Pace Press*, from 1991-2004. His poems appeared in *Shenandoah*, *Tri-Quarterly*, *OffCourse*, *Southern Poetry Review*, *The Agni Review*, and many other journals.

~~~~~  
April 29

Red Hand and Mammoth:
If This Is a Man
Chauvet Cave

in memory of Primo Levi

by Alifair Skebe

Outside the cave,
honeybees dip in clover.
Their tiny bodies ravage
sweet nectar. Flower seeds
cast from dying husks
germinate in dirt,
a rich mess of stalks and skin,
of time decomposed,
the *quintessence of dust*.

Inside, images daubed
in natural pigment dance across
an undulating stone wall,
revering the herd,
both predator and prey.
One hand appears inside
the hand-drawn herd,
its fingers haloed
in blood red ochre.

A portrait of the artist
before he raised a hand
against himself. *If this is a man*,
whose finger-bones articulate
the golden mean, the same
as yours and mine, whose hand
captured the herd, drew its wilds

into civilization, then, perhaps,
he lived with a difference.

Never seeing the mirror nor entering
its convoluted incest of self,
he gave unto the world a sign;
of man, woman, child; whose solid
forms fade in soundless time. We, then,
are seeds cast of that source, bequeathed
a notion, distant, faint. Hear it.
Gratitude is the greatest gift.
Beautiful as the honeybee, as the dirt.

About the poem:

This ekphrastic poem is inspired by Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and Primo Levi's *If This Is a Man*, translated into English as *Survival in Auschwitz*. Having grown up with the Catholic faith and its strict prohibition against suicide, I was looking to find a way to reconcile the humanity of suicide through dealing with the historical mark that artists and writers leave for the future. I was particularly interested in writing from a panoramic viewpoint, and then zooming in like a visual lens.

About the poet:

Alifair Skebe is a poet and visual artist living in Rhode Island. She is author of four books of poetry and holds a PhD in literature.

~~~~~

April 30

Fate

by *Diana Edwards*

I once stood here, before I ever stood here

Images trigger what was . . . but never was

I sit cross-legged on the floor as the snow falls quietly

You flood the backdrop with soft echoes of music and poetry

Do you remember me?

Amber locks . . . long clumsy legs . . .  
gum stuck to the electric outlet

Bubbling eggplant plays against flickering candles

Sarcastic blue-green eyes mirror derisive Crocs

Arm punch rebuttals in play . . . then

without warning, facades fade  
but, I can keep a secret

Do you remember me?

I have always been here.

About the poet:

Diana Edwards is a sometimes blogger and memoir writer.