

# Nassau County Voices in Verse

2020

Edited by James P. Wagner (Ishwa)

Nassau County Voices in Verse

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# Foreword

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# Lloyd Abrams

## **where the tunnel ends**

when we lived in brooklyn in the early 1950s  
when i was four or five  
and my big brother was five years older or so  
he sometimes took me for a walk  
to lincoln terrace park  
but only once in a while  
for it was five or six long long long blocks away

up the hill  
in the furthest corner of the park  
the new lots avenue subway line  
emerged from its tunnel under eastern parkway  
and rumbled up onto the elevated tracks

... and it was so exciting  
waiting for the trains  
and then ...  
it's coming ... it's coming ...  
the squeal of metal against metal  
the cacophonous clickety-clacking  
the blinding headlights and the lit-up windows  
the burnt-air smell of arcing electricity  
the trains so massive so powerful

looking back almost seven decades  
i might chuckle salaciously  
about a freudian interpretation  
for our exaltation  
but it was more  
– and perhaps we sensed it  
in our nascent awareness –  
that the exit and entry point  
was a liminal space ...  
an oh-so-special threshold  
between what was  
and what is  
going to come

---

Lloyd Abrams is a retired high school teacher and administrator and is an avid recumbent bicycle rider and long-distance walker. Lloyd has been writing short stories for over thirty years and poems for almost a dozen years. His works have been published in more than three dozen anthologies and publications. [www.lbavha.com/write](http://www.lbavha.com/write)

## Babette Albin

### **The Gift of Your Life**

In a truncated world, how do you show you care?  
Pledge and provide what is of the greatest need.

Your eyes, you brain, your private part.  
An alarm clock that rings in tune with your heart.

A tear from a man who never cried;  
a locked door, suddenly opened wide.

The truth, that's priceless hard to find.  
A testament that clearly states: be kind.

Something you would surely, willingly give  
if only you had been chosen to live.

---

Babette Albin, has found that being is not as difficult as it seems. And the alternative, much less intoxicating, offers cold comfort. Former high school English teacher, Mother and Nanna to a world-wide brood of lovelies, from Toronto to Melbourne, Los Angeles to Douglas-ton.

Sharon Anderson

**A Matter of Judgment**

He had a chance a short while back  
to make a lot of dough.

'Twas not quite on the up and up,  
but then, who had to know?

He laid his plans, he laid the bait,  
and then began to trawl.

He knew it wasn't honest, but  
he made a judgment call.

He lined up suckers, one by one,  
and fed them lies and dreams.

It's not his fault they couldn't tell  
he was the king of schemes.

There's always those who'll take a chance  
on anything at all,

and if they lost, he took no blame.  
They made a judgment call.

So, he was feeling pretty smug,  
and raking in the cash,

when one bad bit of business  
caused his pyramid to crash.

They sent down an indictment,

said he had to take the fall.  
Without any hesitation  
the law made a judgment call.

When the jury read the verdict  
he knew he had lost the day.  
He had gambled with his honor  
and now it was time to pay.  
He has thirty years to ponder  
there behind the prison wall,  
thirty years to wish that he had made  
a different judgment call.

---

Sharon Anderson has been published in many international and local anthologies, has been nominated for a Pushcart prize, and has four publications of her own poetry. She serves on the advisory board of the NCPLS, the advisory board for Bards Initiative, and is a PPA host at Oceanside Library.

Louisa Calio

**Celebration - New York City's Grand Central Station**  
(for M.)

It was under that starry blue dome of sky  
mock sky, with painted constellations  
in Grand Central Station

I saw her.

She danced around those long wooden benches  
old or indigent people sometimes slept in.

In a pair of black and white leotards and tights  
she danced, amid people  
standing about or moving to destinations.

I thought it a lucky sign  
to see the beauty of her  
making her way  
in curves and straight lines,  
plies

when I saw the Crab wink its eye  
at the two little Fishes

The wonder of it twinned  
when you walked in, *shimmering*.

I no longer touched earth  
when we emerged  
sidewalks turned to yellow brick road



all words expanded in meaning  
a deep silence of mind  
combined  
with a night of crescent moon and stars  
to create what seemed  
an ancient rite, initiation.

I Know, I came forth never to be the same.

---

Louisa Calio is an internationally published, award winning author whose work has been translated into Korean, Russian, Italian and Sicilian. Winner 1<sup>st</sup> Prize “Bhari” City of Messina, Sicily (2013) “Signifyin Woman” Il Parnasso” Canicatti, Sicily (2017), finalist for Poet Laureate, Nassau County etc. Director of Poet’s Piazza at Hofstra University for 12 years, and founding member & Executive Director of City Spirit Artists, Inc. New Haven, CT. her latest book, *Journey to the Heart Waters* was published by Legas Press(2014). See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louisa\\_Calio](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louisa_Calio)

Debbie De Louise

### **Window Cats**

They sit behind the glass  
their paws outstretched  
hoping to catch a bug, bee, or bird  
or sight of their human returning home.  
Indoor cats... Window cats  
safe from the world outside

Whiskers twitch  
bodies shake  
when the mailman or other visitor lands  
on their doorstep.  
Sometimes they growl, sometimes they chirp  
sometimes they run away.  
Indoor cats... Window cats  
safe from the world outside

When it's quiet and warm,  
they find a sunny spot to sleep  
curled in a ball  
a cocoon of fur  
happy and content  
Indoor cats... Window cats  
safe from the world outside

You see them in bookstores, homes, and other places  
kings and queens of windowsill spaces  
taking in the sights and sounds  
one eye closed, one ear flap down  
listening... watching... waiting  
Indoor cats... Window cats  
safe from the world outside

---

Debbie De Louise is a reference librarian at the Hicksville Public Library. She is the author of seven novels including the four books of her Cobble Cove cozy mystery series. Her latest release, [Sea Scope](#), is a psychological mystery. She lives on Long Island with her husband, daughter, and three cats. Check out her website at

<https://debbiedelouise.com> and follow her on Facebook  
<https://www.facebook.com/debbie.delouise.author>  
and twitter @deblibrarian.

M. A. Dennis

### **Stolen Moments**

Beware of the Wal-Mart  
rookie cashier on duty, employee #  
RedLightGreenLight-skin 1-2-3;  
she's torn—between needing to make  
a good impression and just wanting  
to mind her business (because \$10/hr  
isn't enough pay for paying attention  
to your register *and* self-checkout too).

Two scenarios present themselves—  
one is of forgiveness, but the other is  
a prosecution to the fullest extent:

I.

A young child, attached to mother's  
back pocket, pockets a hot candy bar;  
employee # RedLightGreenLight-skin  
1-2-3 decides to let it slide—  
Wal-Mart cashiers do have hearts and  
will show tender mercies (but they're  
judgmental too: This kid's chunky  
enough, she thinks; he don't need to be  
eating a Chunky bar—better to steal  
a Payday, which has twice the protein).

## II.

A woman and a man, who have a child  
in tow, go too far—and get overly  
reckless—exhibiting extreme greed  
in the self-checkout area:

Each and every one of their items  
goes from cart to plastic bag, all of them  
bypassing the purchase scanner  
like an illegal cable hook-up—connected  
to a gas company’s pipeline (no restraint;  
no copying off someone’s perfect test,  
but purposely getting a few wrong  
to avoid suspicion; no, maybe scan every  
third or fourth item to make it look good  
and at least provide plausible shoplifting  
deniability).

Employee # RedLightGreenLight-skin  
1-2-3 cannot let this one go—her carpal  
tunnel syndrome-afflicted hands are tied  
tighter than a double fisherman’s  
Gordian Knot—because these parents  
lack the skills to teach their daughter  
that Wal-Mart’s self-bagging area is  
an electronic pressurized scale;  
it can *sense* unscanned items  
to the *sixth* degree, and so it goes  
without saying: The rookie cashier  
has no choice but to say, “Security,

please report to the self-checkout area;  
we have a One-55-25 in progress.”  
The matter is now no longer  
under the purview of employee #  
RedLightGreenLight-skin 1-2-3; she  
will hand it over to the woman in blue  
and go back to minding her business.  
Flash-forward to flashing overhead light  
A cry for assistance—Clean up! needed  
For heart-breakage at Register #4:  
Someone (a mean adult) took a toy  
Away from a child (*Ooh child*)  
Things are gonna get uneasy  
The outpouring of customer sympathy  
Spills over, creating hazardous  
Conditions—yellow CAUTION cone—  
Tragedy is a wet floor; a poor little girl  
Weeping, like a tree (cursed by Jesus).

Behold a Bronze-skinned, wooly-haired  
Woman wearing authoritarian blue, her  
Windbreaker jacket (Made in Thailand,  
100% synthetic & water-resistant) with  
Large yellow capital letters on the back:  
SECURITY has taken over—this dark  
Cloud called Loss Prevention, caring  
Only about Stopping Shrinkage—Her  
Heart ain’t got time to bleed; it’s *all*  
Business—Not one to play around,  
She stoops down

To four-year-old eye level  
And tells the toyless child,  
"No, you cannot have the doll back.  
It's stolen."

---

M. A. Dennis, author of *The Many Attitudes of Dennis: Spoken Word Poems*, is a writer in search of simplicity, creativity and haiku. His quest has led him to open mics at coffee shops, public libraries and Jewish community centers across Nassau County. Dennis' work is featured in many notable online and print publications. ([m.a.dennis575@gmail.com](mailto:m.a.dennis575@gmail.com))

## Arlene Diaz

### **Bus Stop Bodega**

Momma combed my hair into two perfect ponytails and sent me out to play.

Skipped on down to the corner bodega known as Bus Stop on Dekalb Avenue (My daddy's by the way)

To get bags full of candy (Fun Dip, Swedish fish, Mary Janes, Peanut Chew to name a few.)

Stopped on the way there to scream up into the air hoping my voice reached my friends windows so they could come down and play.

“Kelly! Enid! Come down let's go get some candy”

I would say.

How simple, those were the days.

Red, light, green, light 123

Tag! You're it.

I will race you!

Laughter filled the streets day and night.

Mommamas looking out the window checking on us and we played the day away.

Summer days with la pompa as we used to call it, otherwise known as the fire hydrant.

The boys scraping the cans on the floor to hollow it out. We would jump in front of it and get blasted with the ice cold water and how everyone joined in and had fun.

Those were the days.



Down comes the sun and that's when we knew...  
Street lights - yep, those were our clocks.  
Time to get home.  
Exhausted and filthy, ponytails a mess but still skipping home.  
Time to shower and fill my belly with ma's chuletas, rice  
and beans.  
Street lights, shining in my room.  
Sound of the train passing us by.  
Curious to see what would happen at night - climb out to my fire  
escape and watch the world as the older kids and adults played.  
Those were the days.

---

Arlene Diaz is a poet and writer who has been working on her craft for the past seven years. She was recently encouraged by her three children to start sharing her raw poetry on social media after becoming widowed in 2013, as they believed her healing process would inspire and resonate with many. She is currently working on her first book, *Pen to Paper*. Find her work on social media: @pentopaper381

# Yamilet Dighero

## **Christmas Time**

It is here !  
One of the best times of the year  
Best year for giving a thing or two  
Drinking hot cocoa by the gentle warming fire  
Opening our presents with our loved ones nearby  
Having a wonderful giving time  
Our christmas filled with joy and laughter  
Christmas is to spend time with family  
Gathering around the Christmas tree  
Singing our favorite holiday songs  
Everyone starts to sing along.  
With the joy and laughter every Christmas has  
I hope this tradition always lasts!

---

Yamilet Dighero is one of six siblings. She lives in Freeport, New York. She loves writing poetry. She wants to be a professional sketcher when she grows up. She's very funny and she has many best friends.

## Mike Duff

### **A Fool**

Life is foolish;  
love remains  
awaited and better sought ripe,  
better than the fruit that has fallen,  
sweet and blemished  
soft and fermenting,  
gobbled, rent, succulent, bitter,  
shriveling, swilled until, swing and stumble,  
tossed and tumbled,  
impatience delivers pain,  
still rife with occupation  
of the flesh,  
grasping, triumphant, fey, hoping  
that luck will turn up something  
preserved, fulfilling.  
Forgiveness. Patience.  
Resignation. Awareness.  
Wonder.  
Revelation. Complication. Acceptance.  
Repeat.

What do I contribute,  
obscuring saggy jowls,  
straddling decades past,

appraising melting eyes,  
bemused, repentant,  
happy,  
embraced,  
impassioned,  
grateful,  
alive?

Not clinging to agitation,  
but enlivened.

All the complications,  
that swing us through the day,  
difficulties,  
choices,  
decisions,  
excuses.

Then the peace of a bed and conversation.

The melding in each other's embrace.

The wonder of the world without.

The wonder of its slipping away  
to a room,

to quiet,

to breath,

to sleep.

To awaken in the glory  
of unearnable love.

Life is foolish in its passion for love.

Only fools devour life.

---

Mike Duff was born in New York and grew up in the Bronx and Queens. He attended Michigan State University and has worked as a writer, editor and photographer. He currently resides in Freeport, NY.

# Sasha Ettinger

## **Inventory**

one who feared being alone  
one who feared small challenges  
one who envied those whose bodies were strong and muscular  
one who stumbled head-long into the future  
unlocked the doors, opened the windows of her life  
and never looked back  
one whose wings fanned outward as she traveled  
to parts unknown and embraced the road when it told her  
*everywhere leads to everywhere*  
one who convinced others in her life that her voice  
was as important as theirs  
one who turned the ghosts in her closet into golden seams  
one who learned that illness can disfigure the body  
but cannot disfigure the heart  
one who learned that physical wounds heal with time  
and emotional scars heal with love  
one whose memories hold onto the youthful gentle man  
whose arms wrapped her securely in his heart  
one who wishes his voice could call out to her  
his hand reach out for hers  
his footsteps catch up with hers

---

Sasha Ettinger, founding member of The Three Poets, advisory board member of The Nassau County Poet Laureate Society. Publishing credits include: *Oberon, Persimmon Tree, Off The Coast, Toward Forgiveness, Long Island Sounds, Whispers and Shouts, Mobius, Avocet, Long Island Quarterly*. Sasha recently published her book of Zuihitsu poetry, *Echoes of Light and Dark*.

# Chantelle Farquharson

## **Christmas**

I see a star on top of the Christmas tree  
Smelling cookies in the oven baking  
Hearing the music playing  
I taste sweet and sour candies  
Unwrapping my presents  
This is Christmas

---

Chantelle Farquharson attends school in Freeport, New York. She plays the violin in the orchestra and in her spare time. She loves writing short stories and making artwork. Her favorite colors are purple and blue.



Melissa Felson

**I Am from Sidewalk and Lawn**

From city block to lush green yard  
I am from sidewalk and lawn,  
somewhere amidst bright eager eyes  
and a teen's disinterested yawn.

I am from Kraft's Mac & Cheese,  
from good friends and juice boxes;  
Bred from thrilled September joy  
of bookbags and lunchboxes.

Yet I am from another time:  
pubescence and young tyrants  
who stormed the castle walls with taunts  
and chased me toward the hills.

I am from those sloping hills,  
Clay, shaping and molding;  
Love and pain, the urgency of grades,  
And the urgency of friends, all smoldering.

And I am from this morning's sun  
Which tells a newer story:  
A future built of joy and hurt  
Filled with love, purpose and glory.

I am from the heartache  
Of a lover's torn forever;  
From the pain and tears and torment  
Of piecing him together.

Yet I am from the knowledge  
That I have fought these battles,  
And the knowledge that I've had these joys  
And will have them hereafter.

---

Melissa Felson is a Special Education teacher in North Bellmore by day. By night, she is a poet and singer/songwriter who is just beginning to share her work with others. She has performed at various open mic nights and features her poetry on Instagram as @intotheminefields.

## Grace Freedman

### **Alone**

Oh, I miss you, my darling  
the embers burn low on the hearth  
and still is the air of the household  
and hushed is the voice of its mirth.  
The rain splashes fast on the terrace  
the winds past the lattices moan  
the midnight hour chimes from the steeple  
and I am alone.

Oh, I want you, my darling  
I'm tired with care and with fret  
I would nestle in silence beside you  
and all but your presence forget.  
In the hush of the happiness given  
to those who in trusting have grown  
to the fulfillment of love and contentment  
but I am alone.

I call to you, my darling  
my voice echoes back on my heart  
I stretch my arms to you in longing  
but they fall to my side  
empty – apart.

I whisper the sweet words you taught me  
the words that only we have known  
'til the blank of the silent air is bitter

for I am alone.  
I miss you, my darling  
oh – I miss you.

---

Grace Freedman is 97 years old; this is her third poetry publication. She is the mother of three sons, grandmother of seven, and great-grandmother of one. Her husband, Walter, passed in 2019 at 99; he served in the US Army and was in the 2<sup>nd</sup> wave at Normandy. They had been happily married for 76 years.

## Donna Gagliardo

### **The Gift**

I asked where I could meet you  
So, I'd know you by heart  
Called out to the soft pink snow draped Rockies

Did you hear my sweet child echo?  
Is it familiar?  
It's me: two braids, one song  
Yes, you smiled back as you do  
Glistening in the last of dusk

Floating carelessly in that battered kayak  
Lost into the mystical Caribbean twilight  
Mesmerized by the moon's dancing Halo visiting the sea  
Brief warm favors of spice rum swaying me into wonder  
I asked you to show yourself

I called out to you in chaos and crowds  
In solitude and living platitudes  
On holidays, Over shrouds  
And sometimes  
I hear you whispering to me in my sleep  
But mostly I'll walk right past you in the street

Yet, you gave me a gift so I'd never forget  
You gave me a gift  
The gift  
Thank you  
Thank you  
No greater could love beget

Big angel eyes looking up at me  
Four braids, one song  
Now I see  
you were there all along

---

Donna Gagliardo has been writing poetry before she even knew what poetry was exactly. She believes she is never as close to her creator as well as humanity then when she is engaged in creating a poem. Her hope is that she grows as a writer so that her work one day will leave the reader different from when they came.

# Jessica Goody

## **Beachcombing**

“Every time we walk along a beach, some ancient urge disturbs us so that we find ourselves shedding shoes and garments, or scavenging among seaweed and whitened timbers like the home sick refugees of a long war.”

*-Loren Eiseley, The Unexpected Universe*

The water is bitter and refreshing. Its white froth flashes and flows about damp ankles like swirling dancers' skirts. Shells bedded in glittering silt are washed awake by a breaking wave. A cold handful,

like unearthing Aztec ruins: a clod of coral, rough and fascinating against sensitive fingertips, beach glass like shards of broken pottery. Cockles, cones, olive shells cold and porcelain-smooth in the hand;

the architecture of turrets and tunnels, spiral stairs and crenellations, gothic spires boring into the sky. The dermatology of seashells: specimens stippled gold or streaked with sunrise, freckled as freshly

caught trout; their undersides stained with the violet of dawn and dusk, strewn among tangled tumbleweeds of algae. Satisfied, the beachcomber trudges, stumbling back up the dunes, bearing a pocketful of marble-cool seashells weeping sand.

---

Jessica Goody is the award-winning author of *Defense Mechanisms* (Phosphene Publishing, 2016) and *Phoenix: Transformation Poems* (CW Books, 2019). Her writing has appeared in over four dozen publications, including *The Wallace Stevens Journal*, *Reader's Digest*, *Event Horizon*, *The Seventh Wave*, *Third Wednesday*, *The MacGuffin*, *Harbinger Asylum* and *The Maine Review*. Jessica is the winner of the 2016 *Magnets and Ladders* Poetry Prize.



## Angel Gomez

### **If Wishing Could Make It Be...**

If wishing could make it be,  
Would it be the end of me?  
Father wishes to finally be proud of – he.  
Mom wishes more normal, less me.  
Sister wishes silence from my horror movie.  
Brother wishes me not even be.  
And I...I wish I could be free.  
If wishing could make it be,  
What would be of me?

---

Angel Gomez is a member of various writing groups like the Farmingdale Creative Writing Group and the LIWG. This is his first publication and owes it all to their support and kindness. When he is not writing, he is fighting to be free.

## Daryel Groom

### **Phantoms**

Who's your demon? Does he make you dance begging for a last chance?

Do the specters in your mind help you glamorize the crime?

Can you crawl from your crypt for one last grip?

When the smoke clears can you see the mist through the cypress trees?

Do you own your disease?

When you swallow your dreams do you choke on vaporized steam?

Can you chase the monsters to the depths of your abyss?

Or have they devoured your bliss?

When your eyes are open are you blinded by the truth?

Or do you hide in your lies like a tortoise in its shell?

Not good enough for heaven too comfortable in hell.

Break the chains the circle of the mundane seize the moment

Which we all take for granted except in its final breath.

Let the ghouls of the past fade into the closets of yesterday.

Be aware no one is guaranteed even the duration of the day

We live on borrowed time so embrace each second like a runner

Marks his time.

Live through each gesture, each tear, each smile, each victory, and walk through every fear.

---

Daryel Groom is a long time resident of Long Beach, New York. She Enjoys writing short stories, poetry, essays and is currently working on her first novel. She is a member of the Long Beach Writer’s Circle as well as the Long Island Performance Poets Association. She has been published in The Odyssey, “My Roots My Heritage” grant writing project, and has had several short stories and poems published at Molloy College and Nassau Community College.

Robert L. Harrison

**Letting Go**

May I not dwell in your mind forever,  
not a flash of memory do I want to be.  
For I want to be invisible to you  
just something in the shadows of the night  
where your eyes cannot see.  
Once, it was possible to be friends,  
just a handshake would forgive all  
but it was once and once was enough.  
So I have traveled on to avoid the past  
and seek not revenge but calmness in my life.  
May you wander on to others and cling  
to their thoughts, their deeds, their lives.  
Just let me be a forgotten thought  
something that was played out long ago  
and like a leaf I tumble to new grass  
with my feet going in a new direction.

---

Harrison has been published as a cartoonist, photographer, playwright, poet and historic researcher. His many ventures result in new artistic expressions that are gathered from the world around him.

Eileen Melia Hession

**Stopping by Woods at Leaf-Peeping Time**

Whose woods these are I think I know  
He has more trees than God, and so  
I've come here every late September  
For as many years as I can remember  
To witness the beauty of the natural world:  
a pointillist painting stippled and swirled.

Yellow and red, orange and brown  
Like confetti, the leaves come tumbling down,  
How swiftly they fall, they do not hover  
Already my boot-shod feet are covered  
The wind blows harder, it's no longer a breeze  
The leaves land faster. I'm up to my knees.

I'm trudging along, the pathway's not clear  
By now I am covered right up to my rear.  
I wonder perhaps do these leaves mean me harm  
I've not got the strength now to move either arm  
I want to turn home toward the sun in the west  
But nothing can move with leaves up to my chest.

What if they cover my mouth and my nose?  
Suffocation and death, I suppose, I suppose.

Desperate, I try to think as a child  
When my dad raked the leaves into a huge pile  
I'd dive deep down under then jump with a shout  
I knew that this was my only way out.

I found strength it seems in my desperation  
Which vastly increased my acceleration  
I dove deep and then arose like a shot  
Did I save myself? Sadly, no, I did not.  
Buried in leaves I breathed my last breath  
I never expected a deciduous death.

If I had my choice this is not how I'd go  
My demise was surrounded by beauty though  
I got what I came for, such splendor I saw!  
Now I'll lie here in wait until the Spring thaw.  
The woods are lovely, dark and deep  
I'd prefer to go miles, but alas, I sleep.

---

Eileen Melia Hession is a former teacher and publisher's rep whose poetry and essays have appeared in many publications (Chicken Soup for the Soul, NY Times, Newsday, Family Circle, Saturday Evening Post, Family Circle and others...including the National Enquirer.) She is a member of the Long Beach Writers Circle and the Long Island Writers' Guild. Her first book of poetry, Vittles in Verse, has not yet appeared on the New York Times best seller list. She loves running, yoga and spending time with her daughter in Maine.

Wendy Jackson

### **Encourage Our Youth**

Beautiful people, you shout, you praise  
How committed have you been, over the years?  
How's your home? Where does your time go?  
What's your mission? Why do your tears flow?

Each day we wake, we push, we pace  
We pray for strength to win the race  
To earn, to spend, to shine, to win  
The grace of God while our homes cave in

It matters not the time of day  
We need to show our youth the way  
With urgency, our hearts and eyes must see  
That family is our first ministry

So, let's urgently race with our youth; help them rise  
Above slander, sleaze and sugary highs  
Guide them with firm action and positive thought  
They need a vision that cannot be bought  
From Nike or Coach, nail shop or Game Stop  
The future needs our children to rise to the top.



Let's consistently model and fervently pray  
That stability, respect, and excellence every day  
Influence the ears and the tongues of our youth so they could  
Exemplify and restore the good in our 'hood.

---

Wendy Walker Jackson is a poet, storyteller, mentor, and educator. She volunteers on the Roosevelt-Freeport EOC Advisory Board, Black Educators Committee, Inc., and Northeast Freeport Civic Association. She believes that living your best life requires sacrifice, humility, kindness, perseverance, and prayer.

# Evelyn Kandel

## **Yellow Leaf**

To be the last,  
lonely and unprotected  
    from cold wind's cruelty,  
knowing it is final, the end  
    of lush life's  
warm tickle of summer breezes  
    along your fragile stem.

To be the last  
    holding delicately  
to cold and bare mother tree,  
    now herself shivering  
as winter walks close by.

---

Evelyn Kandel is the current Nassau County Poet Laureate. Author of four books of poetry with poems in journals and anthologies. She teaches two adult classes in Great Neck and Glen Cove Library and will teach at Hutton House in February and a teen class in Port Washington library in March. Proud Marine Corps Veteran.

David T. Krokowski

### **A Bugler's Honor**

A bugler's farewell to a fallen American hero  
is an honor far beyond description.

When the call of Taps is sounded,  
it reaches out to every man, woman, and child  
as a thank you for their service  
or ultimate sacrifice from a grateful nation.

This honor, to pay homage to our departed heroes  
is both a gratifying and humbling privilege.

A bugler's duty is for comfort of family,  
respect of country, and to bid farewell  
to an American patriot.

This is a bugler's honor.

---

David T. Krokowski is a second-generation owner of a construction/maintenance company. He enjoys classic cars, classic music, and good food. The music aspect of David's life is what led to "A Bugler's Honor." He is a member of the US Coast Guard Auxiliary Band. After playing Taps at his first military funeral, these words were a perfect expression of his emotions. This is his first poetry publication.

John Lange

**The Stones of Mycenae**

Clearly the hill was fortified.  
It commands the fields below,  
    and routes to the Isthmus of Corinth.  
The citadel and palaces housed kings.  
This was the center of a world.  
The stones of the wall weigh tens of tons.  
How could they be moved by men?  
It would be a tough job,  
    even for the one-eyed giants  
    who managed it.  
The two stone lions are still on guard,  
    though the gate is gone.  
Agamemnon may have passed through the gate,  
    when it was there.  
And perhaps Clytemnestra and Aegisthus.  
And perhaps Menelaus and Helen,  
    and a handsome stranger from Troy.  
The two stone lions recall the glory,  
    but now the gate is gone.

---

John Lange has been a radio writer and announcer, a sergeant, AUS; a film writer, University of Nebraska; a story analyst, Warner Brothers Motion Pictures; an editor and writer, Rocketdyne, a Division of North American Aviation; and a teacher of philosophy, primarily at Queens College, of the City University of New York.

## Linda Leff

### Grief

Sliced is the edge of my black cloth  
Holes ragging my fine threads,  
    punishing the weave of my days.

I walk, my balance askew.  
    Slamming into rounded corners,  
    staggering over flat surfaces,  
    slanted in my movement forward.

My will cannot fight you unseen spirit,  
    Invisible powers slay me  
    Bright sunlight doesn't melt your destructive hand.

There is no escape from your wanting.  
Father time can't destroy you.  
How will I not succumb?

---

Linda Leff A recently retired energetic individual, highly motivated to pursue her inner callings. She is loyal and emotionally generous, a seasonal outdoorsy woman who likes hiking in the woods, a rising archer and fly fisherwoman, one who bicycles on secluded paths. Her love of the sea, sand and sounds of the beach is her quiet joy.

# Anthony LoPrimo

## **Art**

### **Part 1**

...

...

...

...

...

...

## Part 2

Can you see?  
I guess you couldn't.  
But you experienced it.  
That you did.

Ask a poet. They might say that wasn't a poem  
But who cares?

A performance is art  
Yes it is  
And you experienced it.  
That you did.

They might say it isn't real – a fake, a farce!  
But who cares?

Art is anything you want!  
Art is anything I want!  
Look, listen, laugh!  
Experience, we did.

What is art? A question to all, but an answer for none.  
Who *frigging* cares?

I didn't even need duct tape for this one.

\$100,000, please. :)



John Lysaght

**Conversation?**

...as I was saying  
Before being interrupted---  
Now, where was I---  
Do you know where  
I left off?  
Oh well, no matter,  
I'll start over again,  
It's worth repeating...

*Excuse me, sir,  
Over here.  
Do I know you?  
Have we met?  
Do we have someone  
Or something in common?  
What you're speaking  
I have endured  
Many times before---  
Words floating through  
The air by themselves  
Without connection.*

Who said that?  
Where are you?

What did you say?  
You should listen---  
(swiveling from side  
to side to seek out the  
unappreciative one)  
Instead of talking.  
You should follow  
My advice unequivocally---  
You could learn something...

*Are you addressing a friend,  
A relative---perhaps an acquaintance,  
Or anyone you have yet to meet?  
I'm over here.*

Who keeps interrupting me?  
No respect---  
That's what's wrong with everyone.  
As I was saying...

*I sit in thoughtful silence---fulfilled.*

---

John Lysaght is a poet and writer of fiction who began honing his craft while a student at the University of Scranton, graduating in 1968 with a B.A. in English and Classics. He went on to achieve a Masters in Social Work from Adelphi University. John seeks to invite the reader to experience the word in real time.

Amora Mack

**Dusty Storms**

Dusty storms begin  
by sweeping up the gentle sand  
                  laying on the Mexican floor

It flows  
over every building and street  
The Southwest is  
`                  where most dust storms occur

Dust gets picked up  
while the wind glides  
Swiftly, but slowly  
                  it moves through the deserts quickly

---

Amora Mack is a 10 year old girl living in Freeport, New York. She enjoys poetry, drawing, and decorating cakes. Amora goes to Atkinson School. She lives with her family and her pet, Hay Hay.

## Francislane Magalhães

### **Words from the soul.**

I was there when you looked in the mirror and wiped your tears.  
I was there when it seemed like everyone was putting obstacles in front of you, I saw you trying to climb.  
I was there when you didn't think you could, and even without any money, decided to change your day.  
I have seen all your hopes become frustrated many times and some precious friends abandon you ...  
I was there when you prayed softly, only to end up screaming it out later! You asked for peace, asked for love and asked not to get lost after so much disenchantment ...  
I heard you say thank you for a day you thought you couldn't finish, you thanked just for surviving ...  
I saw you achieve simple things and also great things! You always had a hard time taking no for an answer.  
I saw you slaying your lions and facing your giants more than once!  
It's funny how all this way you never lost faith, in the eyes of others you always seemed radiant ...  
I saw your saddest and darkest days, and the happiest and sunniest!  
I know all your dreams, girl, I walk with you on your journeys ... thank you for never giving up on me!  
I am that mirror reflection, I am your soul ...”

## Brooklyn McKenzie

### **Happiness**

Happiness

Is a joyful rabbit

Hopping around in the forest

Leafy trees and green grass make its home

Innocent and delicate, the animal wanders the forest.

---

Brooklyn McKenzie is an athlete who loves to write. She attends school in Freeport, New York. She's in 5th grade and loves to play basketball.

Janet McLaren

### **Poetry And Me**

There was emptiness in my heart, begging to be refilled  
Emotionally drained, demanding more than sympathy could  
ever give  
Simple thoughts were elusive, begging to be nurtured and caressed  
Expressive sighs and wonders needed a threshold to progress

So out birthed "Poetry" that fill that massive gap  
Left in my heart by life's uncanny trap  
Poetry showed up unannounced and guided me through  
The days and nights when I was down and blue

Poetry helped me to laugh at my silly mistakes  
Saved me from myself and my growing heartaches  
Never criticized, nor point fingers at the weaknesses found  
But lifted me up and find an escape to solid ground

In poetry I found a friend who is very loving and kind  
One I can share my inner thoughts with and don't mind me on  
rewind  
I remembered when each love left me, how I wanted to lose  
my mind  
Poetry took over, with pen and papers my heart it realigned

Now we two are no strangers connected and true  
We celebrate each other with poems anew  
Listening more intensively when someone else's pen so talk  
Applauding each poem birthed knowing Poetry is a comforting  
walk

---

Janet McLaren-Wade lives in Nassau County, she joined the PPA in 2016 and has been attending various locations and participating in their open mike sessions throughout. McLaren-Wade poetry is wide based and has been written to inspire and motivate individuals from a spiritual point of views. Each of her poems expresses her devotion to God and show how He has used the challenges in her life to shape and refine her way of thinking.

Ria Meade

**The Heart's Call**

The object of my thoughts,  
this sun-drenched September Sunday,  
had slipped through my reluctant fingers  
three months ago.

Whenever is it a good time  
for the heart to release its grip,  
for breaths to cease carrying that name?  
Do excuses given to the sympathetic world  
protect this pitiful space I'm dwelling, bear truth, still?

Locked doors safeguard inner territory with its revelations  
until time designates me tough enough to turn that key.  
And, when will that time be?

My brain views this question in a survivor's stance,  
*It's imperative to move on!*

The heart ignores everything  
but what makes me happiest!

It is the free-fall I fear;  
where letting-go will drop me,  
worlds of raw questions I'm unable to hear,  
or worse, answers with their realities.

I've never felt easy with the idea



of letting go of anything,  
holding my mind and heart with such ferocity.  
Yet, time might argue that this is *exactly* when  
to unlock my door.

There is tension that lies here worrying these decisions.  
I will stop listening to that clock.  
Time is not the measure of importance framed here,  
rather, I must listen for the heart's call!

Lisa Meyer

**Tara's Garden**

“They used to be in her garden  
Now they’re in mine  
Do you approve dear friend  
How will you let me know

There is always Tara’s garden  
Full of spring and summer wildflowers  
Where the red rose bushes are prized  
She never thought about it much  
How her hands worked botanical magic  
Fingers kissed by God  
The sun loved her as well  
She glowed a brilliant bronze

I would come to see her  
There was laughter and children  
I couldn’t tell you one conversation  
But I can place myself there  
We were young and it was wonderful  
How was I to know that then

The metal fireplace I repaint every year  
An ornate birdbath that belonged to her grandmother

Butterfly stakes and the Virgin Mary  
They all were hers  
Now they are mine  
Bequeathed to me on a winter's day

I think you do approve dear Tara  
So if you choose to sit with me on sunny afternoons  
Know that you are always welcome  
To sit. And smile. And remember.  
Because they once were our memories  
Now they're just mine.”

---

The poem TARA'S GARDEN is self-published by independent author Lisa Diaz Meyer for her book ALL ROADS HOME. Her current works of dark fiction short stories, poems and one act plays use several controversial topics and awarenesses. She has received 5 Star Awards from Readers Favorite and Literary Titan, Distinguished Favorite Awards from Independent Press, New Apple's Official Selection in Poetry 2017, as well as their Solo Medalist Winner Award in Short Story Fiction 2018. She proudly hails from the south shore of Nassau County.

Susan Meyer

### **Remembering Frank**

Last night in the living room of my Dream  
there was a visit from my dear Uncle Frank,  
with a heartfelt hug that launched these lines.

Frankly, he's a presence since my childhood in  
Bethpage, a mystic Being, a puzzlement, confirmed  
Bachelor, all about the music, playing tennis, nice  
Girlfriends too-Eileen, Barbara, Velia dear each one  
we felt would surely make the perfect Aunt.

Recalling his flute interludes, I appreciate him more  
Now, playing scales incessantly like the birds do, in  
spontaneous expressions from the yard.  
Earlier he'd wielded a clarinet, yet changed,  
did as he pleased, our Dad noted with disdain.  
Yet, I felt secretly impressed that he  
Answered to his own inscrutable call.

And when Dad was gone, he and Mom enjoyed  
Pizza Pies, red wine, long Senior Center lunches,  
Emily Eisen's chair exercise class. They side stepped  
Winter at our Florida condo sometimes, attended Ruth Ginsberg's  
Washington inauguration, he was a New York City court  
mediator.

And just did life his way, playing flute with Puerto Rican bands  
And at family weddings, out for tennis most days... Then  
Watching over Mom when Alzheimer's gave an unexpected  
twist to the dry martini of suburban life. While we tip toed  
Carefully around her temper, he stayed, took her to  
Visit friends, gave her time to make amends.

No one's perfect, as it's said, so aptly it's 'imperfections'  
we recall that endear us mostly, each to each.  
Handsome Son of a World Champion Boxer, he sparred  
with an evolving world at odds with itself, keeping the  
peace mostly  
a Korean War Vet. Uncle Frank entertained our family with  
endless  
flights of music, drank Cabernet, saluted Life, in vino veritas.

---

Susan Michele Meyer grew up in Bethpage, attended Hunter College, and graduated from SUNY Stony Brook with a Masters degree in Social Welfare. Susan feels that poetry and writing are ways to make sense of the changing world, to experience the present as connected to the distant and recent past, and find a grounding that brings one home to oneself.

## CR Montoya

### **Inspiring Shadows**

Shadows grow, moving as if alive  
telling a story, a story of change  
oft dismissed as trivial  
yet, when I tilt my head  
view with a fresh mind  
I see shapes and shades  
color hidden in what seemed bland  
bursting with rays, glistening off subjects

Shifting my head, I see a figure  
is it real?  
is it living, or just a desire to create?  
a wish to find new meaning?

Movement obliterates the image  
bringing the birth of another  
then the source hides  
my mind disregards the change  
discovery blossoms  
closed eyes perceive newness  
synapses fire  
images morph, a story begins to rise

This from the lowly shadow  
once thought to be trivial  
now recognized as - genesis

---

CR Montoya has written a series of children's stories, hoping to publish in 2020. He has an inquisitive mind and is a student of nature. Being out running, especially on trails, is a source for inspiration. He an avid reader and enjoys challenges.

Marsha M. Nelson

**Dance of the Birds**

Sumer fades  
like a gossamer of flowers.  
Her warm caress now crisp  
like cool fingers on my face.  
Lush green morphs into colors  
of ripe lemons, primrose, burgundy  
and crimson. An exotic tapestry;  
now dry and splayed beneath my feet.

It crackles like hot grease  
in an iron skillet,  
dry moss in a fire.  
My dogs sniff the air  
as though smelling change.

The doves keep vigil on my tool shed  
waiting for scatterings  
of cracked corn and millet  
to fall to the ground.  
The birds flutter in mid air  
as they retrieve sunflower seeds,  
flax and thistle.



Three finches rest on a flimsy  
branch that see-saws with the wind.  
A blue jay whistles a melodious tune.  
Startled by my presence  
She swoops away  
to a nearby tree.  
The patterns on her wings,  
like a Spanish Colonial rooftop.

A black bird belts out a raucous cry  
and in the twinkling of an eye  
the mass of birds shapeshifts  
into a nearby bush.

---

Marsha M Nelson is a playwright, screenwriter, and an award-winning poet. She loves to travel and has a passion for taking care of a menagerie of animals.

Barbara Novack

### **Morning Road**

The water along the roadside  
is fissured, glistening, frozen  
—so soon? Just yesterday it was summer,  
heat melting roads, tar oozing stickiness.  
December came so quickly.  
Were there really months between?  
I travel along this same road  
every morning  
the sun rising earlier, then later,  
the clocks doing their biannual two-step shuffle  
of reality.  
I drive this morning in sun glare, blinding,  
wiping the shimmer from the crackled ice,  
from the placid lake, unmoving,  
geese frozen in place.  
Do they squint, too, in this morning's sun?  
Something here to remember, I'm sure,  
when I haven't remembered  
the months just past,  
though I must remember.  
I was there, after all,  
and here, too,  
doing . . . something,  
the business of busy

that blurs all into a gray wash  
of combined colors, water bleeding  
off the edge of this paper world,  
dripping to the next circle of—  
Dante had it wrong and  
Cervantes had it right:  
We tilt at windmills  
more than take the spiral staircase down.  
It's all the force of imagination  
not the farce of memory  
or impaling remorse.  
The not done is simply not done  
and rain can seep through the roof shingles  
but it won't. (Not this time!)  
The done simply was.  
What's left simply is.  
And the sun glare may blind  
in this moment, but  
the sun shifts  
the world turns  
the months, the seasons pass  
tar solidifies  
ice melts  
the geese will fly  
and I  
will drive this morning road.

---

Barbara Novack, Writer-in-Residence at Molloy College and member of the English Department, founded and hosts Poetry Events readings on campus and, off campus, conducts highly regarded creative writing workshops and programs. Recent books: poetry collections *Something Like Life, Do Houses Dream?*, *A Certain Slant of Light*, *Dancing on the Rim of Light*, and novel *J.W. Valentine*.

## Lejla Omeragic

### **Thankful for You!**

My 10th Thanksgiving with you  
And you have been stuck with me like paper and glue  
I love you; You're the BEST!  
You're as valuable as a treasure chest.

You're as sweet as me  
Just Kidding you're like the honey from a bumblebee  
I love you mom  
'Cause you're the bomb  
You make us turkey for Thanksgiving dinner  
That makes you a winner.

I'm thankful for you  
And I love you!

---

Lejla Omeragic is 10 years old and a resident of Freeport, NY. She is in 5th grade. Her three favorite things to do are playing volleyball, writing, and math.

Mary C. M. Phillips

**Love Come Down**

We lay upon the grass under the stars,  
above us the evening sky was dark and clear.  
Behold! A shooting star!  
Its bright golden tail  
scribbled our names across the sky.

It was then that we were lifted up  
into the rhapsody of a cobalt space  
where stars uncoiled like illuminated threads,  
encircling us in the celestial love that God had set into motion  
before the foundation of the universe.

Love come down.

The stars watched on, some dimming,  
some flickering, some exploding, sprinkling  
resplendent flakes of light as  
sweet music played;  
familiar in some way, yet ancient in another.

Within the mist and moonlight,  
we spun under Nature's protection  
with no walls; just the roof of a watchful sky  
and we sensed that we were loved –

in an infinite way.

Love come down.

We step back into the world  
where time is not our own and forced  
to contend with slick green moss under our feet  
– that sometimes causes us to slip –  
reminding us that we are never in complete control.

Within the worst of times,  
when all seems bleak,  
and all words fail, and  
greatness is cut down like a grand old oak,  
God is in the midst.

When we find ourselves alone on a deserted beach  
with only the raging sea before us,  
He is there.  
He is with me.  
My family and friends are with me.

Like the sun that spreads its rays  
across the surface of the earth  
awakening all life and penetrating all that lies beneath  
with the promise of eternity and the promise of love.

There.

There, in the light of who I am,

and the ashes of who I was,  
I can still see us all together;  
floating, floating like weightless flurries in the air  
that sometimes -- from certain angles --  
glisten like diamonds in the sun.

As love comes down.

---

Mary C. M. Phillips is a caffeinated wife, mother, and writer. Her work has appeared in numerous national bestselling anthologies. She blogs at [CaffeineEpiphanies.com](http://CaffeineEpiphanies.com).



## Phyllis C. Quiles

### **Purple Hat**

When my gray hair spills from my purple hat;  
my face is furrowed by rows of plowed life,  
my head wobbles like Katherine Hepburn's,  
yet will I meet you on the outskirts  
of Memory's county.  
My eyes might be glazed, sight dimmed  
yet I will recognize your face.  
I might very well be nearly deaf  
but still, shall I hear your voice.  
My limbs might be arthritic, lame  
yet your soothing caress I'll feel.  
My heart might have all waxed cold  
save one unseen chamber  
where the embers of abandoned love will ever blaze

---

Phyllis C. Quiles is a poetess endeavoring to express our shared human experiences through her words. She hopes others can relate to, enjoy, and find solace in her efforts. She is currently a part-time substitute teacher for pre-kindergarteners. She embraces the innocence, love, and kindness these children possess.

## Stuart Radowitz

### **Northern Hotel**

Wind  
clatters against the side  
of the house.

In the hills behind  
the noise of the wind,  
crickets and grasshopper

float in the air.  
Doors close, lights flicker  
even as you,

or someone like you,  
shuts every exit.  
Car doors slam.

Everyone fights to get  
into the Northern Hotel.  
Doors open. Guests

pile out back to look  
at the Northern Lights arranged.  
Across the horizon, against the wind

your arms cross  
as if to say, *stop here*  
*wait until all this passes.*

---

Stuart P. Radowitz is an instructor in the English Department at Molloy College, teaching creative writing and critical reading classes. He has been published in various literary journals including *Bard's Annual* 2018 and 2019; *Nassau County Poet Laureate Society* Volumes III, V, and VII; *Poets to Come: A Poetry Anthology in Celebration of Walt Whitman's Bicentennial*; and *The Sixty-Four Best Poets of 2018*, Black Mountain Press.

## Octavius Ramos

### **How**

How did we come to be?

Was it the Earth that was filled with glee?

Or the Milky Way that made the Solar System of thee?

Sometimes I wonder about Space.

And how advanced is the human race?

---

Octavius Ramos is an author, entrepreneur, astronomer, and a student at Freeport, New York. His interests are looking at the stars, having fun, wearing his favorite clothes, and doing what he loves best—dancing. He was born in North Carolina and raised in New York. He loves New York City. His interest in being a company owner has grown a lot since he was 6.

Lauren Reiss

**The Importance of Doing Nothing**

I visited with a grackle  
    who didn't know that I was there,  
Looking out my living room window  
    like a child without a care.

Closing windows against the summer's heat  
    I had spied him on the fence  
Sitting in an awkward position  
    His behavior not making too much sense.

His body somewhat twisted,  
    his head turning to and fro,  
It seemed he'd been there quite a while  
    and I wondered when he would go.

A cool breeze made me linger  
    as my to-do list faded away.  
I nestled my head against my arms  
    and drifted to thoughts of an earlier day.

I remembered the childhood feeling  
    of doing nothing, no thing at all,  
As I relished this time by my window

refusing to heed responsibility's call.

The bird, the breeze, the soft couch back  
beckoned me to stay,  
But then the grackle cocked his head  
and suddenly flew away!

---

Lauren Reiss is a poet, writer, artist, and retired educator of the blind and visually impaired. Her writing has been published in the Bards Annual 2018, Bards Annual 2019, and in several periodicals. She is currently writing a book on healing, and is certified in several forms of Energy Medicine.

Greg Resnick

**Desert Rose**

How much time has past  
since we looked to each other?  
Through the glass you  
are perfect to my eyes.

When I am alone  
you are always there.  
It feels like forever  
that you haunted my dreams.  
Your face I wish to see.

At first I hid  
but now I stand.  
Have I betrayed you  
that you now hide.

Are you even real?  
Do you see me  
in your dreams  
as I see you?

Am I so flawed  
that you hide?  
I will journey

thousand years just  
perfect for you.

Heal our wounds  
from past we must.  
My desert rose  
how do you survive  
without change?

I met you in a wasteland  
now only in a flowered land.  
How are you here?  
You seem just everywhere.

How much is real?  
That is my question  
but I expect an easy answer  
when something like our souls  
become tangled up in love.  
This paradise is forming here  
our meeting much be near.

Just listen to my voice  
let it guide you  
here to me.



---

Greg has been a poet since he was 15. Greg has been a strong believer in balance of energy and utilizes poetry as an outlet to maintain balance within. Most of his poetry is inspired by pieces of art work seen at art exhibitions.

# Gabriel Rosalia

## **Weirdest Dream**

Let me tell you a story that even I can't believe...

Last night, soon after I jumped into my bed  
TV Channels were zipping through my head  
Channel 1 was not fun  
Channel 2 was old news  
Channel 3 was just a donkey saying, "Hehehe!"  
Channel 4 was a bore  
Channel 5 was alive  
Channel 6 was just about Minecraft bricks  
Channel 7 had retired, so it skipped to eleven  
Channel 8 showed "Loud House" really late  
Channel 9 was advertising clementines  
Channel 10 - I hope this won't happen again

My snack of bagels and sour cream  
Must have given me this crazy dream!

---

Gabriel Rosalia wants to be a journalist when he grows up. He is in 6th grade. He loves dogs and math. His interests are the ocean, math, and writing. He started writing short stories when he was 7 years old.

## Vivian Rose

### **Conformity**

Conformity is a sickening, struggling  
screech that chokes the life  
out of creativity.

Is it the death unwanted?

When words are  
no longer tangible,  
no longer heard,  
no longer real.

It is the feeling of  
utter detriment,  
when creativity  
and true art  
cannot flow  
as fast as  
your blood.

Conformity is the  
act of being brainless,  
being told what to do.

It is the time  
when you are a  
soldier, never allowed  
to think for yourself,  
never ducking for cover, never  
being allowed to live

as mortars find their victims,  
and bullets fly.  
Conformity is the  
surrender, where  
few souls survive.

---

Vivian is a sophomore at Oceanside High School, and is a member of her school's literary magazine. She has been published in three works, *Leaves of Me*, *Accomplished*, and *Eloquence*. She met her poetry mentor, Judy (JR) Turek as part of the mentoring program started by Peter V. Dugan and Gladys Henderson.

A.A. Rubin

**To Mark The Spot Where We First Met**

To mark the spot where we first met,  
We carved our names into a tree--  
And even though our love did fade,  
That mark lives on eternally.

And every day when I walk by,  
That tree by me is surely seen--  
My eyes are drawn unto that mark,  
Reminding me what could have been.

Though years have passed and time goes on,  
And much I've learned of love and art--  
I can't re-find that innocence,  
The pure passion that filled my heart.

But as that tree does age and grow,  
Our names will rise as they live on--  
A monument to first true love,  
When both of us are dead and gone.

---

A. A. Rubin's poetry has appeared in Bards Annual (2019); Rhyme and PUNishment, Long Island Edition, and the Organic Ink (vol1) poetry anthology. A 2019 Writers Digest Award Winner in the "Rhyming Poetry" category, he can be reached on social media @thesurrealari or through his wesite

[aarubin.wordpress.com](http://aarubin.wordpress.com).

## Lady Samantha

### **Anticipation: The Storm**

waiting for the Nor'easter  
a light breeze  
blows leaves to the ground  
the sun is in and out  
and shadowy waves appear on the sidewalks  
silvery clouds begin to ride in  
on the backs of invisible horses  
a grey falls over the town  
not of sadness  
but an impending sense of ...

anticipation,  
of breezes becoming winds that sweep  
people off of their feet  
attempting to take off like rockets  
if they get enough of a push  
they can circle Uranus  
and make it back by dawn.

anticipation,  
of small puddles becoming  
olympic sized pools  
somehow inland squid  
will emerge from the impacted

sewers and do laps  
while eating unsuspecting morons  
who tried to drive through 8-foot deep puddles.

anticipation,  
of snow (well, if it isn't rain...)  
and abominable snow people  
emerging from the drifts  
throwing snowballs  
at unsuspecting people who  
are skiing down the backs of their relatives.

anticipation,  
of power outages where lightning  
will bounce off any reflective surface  
and illuminate all the ghostly relatives  
you didn't even know you had.  
(who's that sitting next to you?)

anticipation,  
of clouds rotating so fast  
that they produce tornadoes  
of hiding in your bath tub with your dog  
while the storm's giant hands reach out  
and grab your house and juggles it with a few apples  
and puts it down where it was before,  
only slightly to the left.



the storm is eight days away  
if you don't know it's coming  
you aren't paying attention.

---

Lady Samantha is a poet and writer from Long Island. She writes in many genres, including humor, fantasy and mystery. When she isn't writing she is crocheting, reading, and educating people about various animals, especially bears.

# Andrea Schiralli

## To Grandma Annie

a smile of sunshine ever on your face, a  
vibrant flower in your hair  
you spread your love throughout the world, every action  
doused with care  
i remember when we were just little girls  
your hair so soft, with silver curls  
we'd play on the keyboard in the back room  
and walk in the garden, springflowers abloom

you'd make us made pastina with "the secret ingredient of love"  
i hope you can make that again up above  
every day you would read at the neighborhood church  
at home constantly cook the needy lasagnas for lunch  
your heart was so big, the biggest i've known  
and i've noticed it more, the more that i've grown  
and it became apparent, so painstakingly clear  
that you were an angel among us, guiding us here

you taught us to live without needing to judge  
when caught in a dilemma, there comes a nudge  
from above, or my conscious, God only knows  
but it speaks to me when i am alone  
how would you handle this situation? what would you do?  
and answers come to me, out of the blue

dilemmas become undone til they simply dissolve  
for i learned from the best, how to live with resolve

for you saw through the nonsense and constructed conventions  
of bias and prejudice, man's twisted inventions  
rather, you lived only in light -and boy, you shone bright  
radiating like Sirius on a hot summer's night

you saw every human as a "child of god"  
no matter status or race or if sloppily shod  
your aura touched and inspired everyone that you reached  
innumerable beings, grains of sand on a beach

but your family is luckiest of all the rest  
to have had you so many years, we were spoiledly blessed...

the last time i saw you, as you lay dying  
i couldn't stop crying, though somehow you kept smiling

you asked me if i had a boyfriend, said he'd better be good to me  
i replied that i did, that it was pure ecstasy  
i told you of school and my plans to travel  
the conversation flowed, effortlessly unraveled

you were invigorated and lucid, so present, so there  
energetic and excited, completely aware  
i showed you pictures of us with papa mikey, so long ago  
and you gazed on and commented, simply aglow  
those times seem like a daydream, magically enchanted  
in my heart and soul memories are forever branded

i massaged your hand as my heart slowly started to break  
but i couldn't fathom how much it would ache  
for i bid you farwell with a sick feeling inside  
knowing that soon you'd be walking aside

our heavenly Father, who gave us eternal life  
so now you can again be with papa mikey, his sweetheart  
and wife  
i thought of you last night, and alan (remember him?) did too  
it was a feeling so strong, i knew my premonitions were true

but this time on earth is short, so worryeth not  
every waking moment you shan't be forgot  
soon we will all be together, pains turned into ease  
in that mystical realm of unlimited peace  
so may the angels lead you up toward our Father  
Saint Peter will open the gates for my beloved grandmother  
i know you are okay, will keep you in my prayers  
dream of that smile, a flower in your hair

---

Andrea is a college admissions coach from Long Island. She loves the color pink, Hello Kitty, and anything that sparkles. Her favorite writers are Maugham, Fitzgerald, and Remarque.

Kate E. Schwartz

### **Carman's Pond**

There's a pond on the street where your grandmother used to live,  
and the wet lip of it butts up against the red-brick bank of your  
mother's high school—

the nicer part of the street, where the townhouses squat  
in the shadows.

It's a fair clip from their house, where you'd spent warmer nights  
on the tandem swing in the backyard, with your cousin.

You never did get old enough to walk this far alone together,  
but by the time the house was sold you'd walked meaner,  
pondless roads,  
hand-in-hand, weeping.

Some other family lives there now.

They painted the deep brown siding some cover-up crème,  
painted the brave, red shutters pacifist blue.

Every time you drive by, just to try and remember anything  
from the time before pipes

and bottles, you miss it at first pass. You turn and loop around  
again to see it, but every time you find it,  
you know you will never really see it again.

So you come to this lake.

In the night, the

flood lights from the school your mother rarely attended  
hit the black glass of the water and

paint the clean surface with stage-flame pyrotechnics.  
Fabricated, funeral-pyre orange and not-white. Pale,  
pale. You can't see the ducks,  
but you know they're still out there.  
They call her name out into the ice-box air:  
"Pat! Pat!"  
She never answers: it's too loud here now,  
and the cars roar like den-lions.  
You wonder if ever she walked here, up this part of the street,  
by the ripple-pulsing water.  
You try to pick the bench she might have sat on  
with a stale bread heel—  
but the ink freezes in your pen just as soon as you touch ass  
to metal.  
The geese laugh, like it's a prank.

---

Kate E. Schwartz is a freelance editor from North Bellmore. A graduate of SUNY Oneonta, Kate studied English and minored in Professional Writing. Her favorite pastimes include wandering aimlessly and scribbling nice-sounding lines onto any available paper.

V. Patricia da Silva

### **My First Love**

Maybe I will feel, again.

That's what I tell myself.

As I go through mundane days  
with so much pain beating in my  
chest.

Jumping each time I get a text.

Will that ever go away?

I cross days off my calendar, weeks, months...

Standing out in the rain, the heat, the sun, the cold, go for a walk, start  
a hobby, join a group... get OUT!

trying to numb that part, in my heart,

of my brain, that refuses to forget

the little details of his skin, his hands, his smell, his eyes.

His lips on my forehead, on my neck.

I close my eyes, I feel him here.

I will learn...Adjust... Accept... I can.

A little each day - I'll be ok.

---

Patricia is a single mother flight attendant biker, that writes. Most of her free time is spent taking naps; in order to dodge romantic relationships, avoid dealing with her emotions, chores and human interaction. She enjoys walking in the rain and the sound of thunder. Strong winds are most comforting to her, and writing helps to release her demons.



## Dd. Spungin

### **Still Early Rescue**

Especially on dim mornings,  
sun hiding or has it been exiled,  
rekindling the power  
of astonishment

The constant, sometimes hidden  
knowledge that this is a world  
most beautiful and generous

Bending low in a moment,  
almost prayer, almost meditation,  
I am discovered in my doubt

A pinprick of light  
decides to abort the darkness  
I rise in renewed revelation,  
astonished once again.

---

Dd. Spungin hosts events for Poets In Nassau and Performance Poets Association. Her poetry can be found in anthologies and in print and on-line journals, most recently *Maintenant 12*, *isacoustic*, *First Literary Review East* and *Fearless*. Several of her poems have been set to music by NY composer, Julie Mandel.

Jaishree Subramani

**A Scenic Retreat**

You dazzle me with your colors bright  
Atop the mountains and trees  
In red and yellow shades of light  
Your splendor does not cease

Are you the artist or your art?  
Waking up with a blush of pink  
Or a deep yearning in my heart  
Transforming my being to link

To the skies with an expectant look  
I scan the clouds and peaks  
Gaze deep into the gurgling brook  
To my wandering heart it speaks

And as I drive down the windy road  
Littered with golden leaves  
Bursting to reveal a nature's code  
A signal it receives

Retreat deep into your consciousness  
In meditation you will find

An infinite wealth of graciousness  
A spirit so wise and kind

The fire of Life burns brighter today  
In homage to the moonlit sky  
New beginnings will come your way  
With introspection you must try

To the rhythmic melodies of the night  
Many voices in harmony sing  
May peace and love bind us tight  
And morning it's happiness bring

As we paint our hues of gold  
Reflective of earth's glory  
Let us all together unfold  
A picture perfect story

Lisa Testa

**My Prison**

Although I weigh way below  
The adult heathy range  
I feel so fat and huge  
Others think I'm deranged

I can't sit in my skin  
It's utterly painful  
That no one gets it  
Makes it even more disdainful

I feel like I literally  
Can't get through the door  
I want to throw up  
At the idea of eating more

It's like being in a prison  
But one I've created  
That I can't get out of  
Making sustenance overrated

I don't feel worthy  
Of the space I take  
I'd rather sit on the floor

Than eye contact make

Cause it is so intense  
The shame that I feel  
That it sends my head spinning  
Like a really fast wheel

And if I'm lucky  
The day without food  
Leaves me totally numb  
Unaware of my mood

So I look at you and wonder  
Why should I get rid of this?  
These behaviors and thinking  
Are best friends I'd truly miss

How would I function?  
Having all those feelings?  
You really think I can do it?!  
Get through life's little dealings

Underneath it all  
Is extreme anger and rage  
It would be like letting loose  
A rabid animal from it's cage

Yet you think I can do this?!  
You think I can eat  
And gain more weight

No more defeat?!

Sounds like a fairy tale  
I'm not sure that I want  
So in the meantime I'll try  
And keep up the front

Cause at the end of the day  
It's me, myself and I  
No one else there with me  
Yet I might want to try...

So if I hang in there  
And give it a real go  
Will you still be there with me?  
This I have to know  
Cause this is a long journey  
One that won't end real quick  
But if I'm really, really honest  
I'm so tired of being sick

But I can't do this alone  
And everyone judges me  
But I'm truly the worst culprit  
Yes of this I am guilty

So take my hand  
I'll lead the way  
I'm so scared and frightened  
But we will start again today

---

Lisa Testa is a new writer of poetry from Bayville, NY. She has a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology and works as a psychotherapist. She is also a Coordinator of a Perinatal Psychiatry Program at Zucker-Hillside Hospital. Although not all of her poetry is driven from her work, the poems below are.



J R Turek

## **Birdworld**

Our backyard transformed to  
an outdoor theme park resort  
listed as Birdworld on frequent flyer sites  
like TreeTime and family-feather-friendly Aviary.

Sparrows and swallows, blue jays, finches,  
robins and wrens, even a cardinal or two  
pick our address as their favorite vacation spot.  
Hummingbirds check in and out so fast,  
we barely see them.

We have nine cottages, thatched nests tucked  
into awnings that serve as nurseries during their stay;  
if we have too many families, they built nests  
in garage gutters that double as wading pools,  
down spouts make great water slides.

24/7 show here at this bird paradise, songs played,  
replayed at all hours. No reservations required.  
Surprise guest star, a mockingbird stops by;  
no comic relief when he repeats same old sparrow song  
again and again, but when jays crash the party, the joint  
is jumping with jive screech and squawk choruses

that entice warblers to join in, woodpeckers keep the beat –  
it's enough to make you tap your foot.

Overhead, starling acrobats fly from one wind chime  
to another, spinning, swirling like an overhead Tilt-A-Whirl  
until you're dizzy with watching. No need for a net,  
sparrows take wing, swoop and dive from tubular chimes  
to cowbells, making music magic as they carousel  
across the awning.

No brooding here. Mourning doves coo all day,  
waddle around the midway, admire aerial attractions.  
Colorful finches peer through forsythia bushes  
and evergreen branches, cardinals compete  
with floribunda roses for county fair ribbons  
for Best In Show. In a brisk breeze, tanagers ride  
the garden spinner like a ferris wheel.

Who could be happier than the larks that park  
along pool ledge beside robins admiring their reflections.  
Grackles dip beaks into placid pool water, take flight  
to tell friends perched on telephone wires to crow about  
this whimsical new amusement park.

An added attraction, today I found  
a fledgling not fully feathered paddling in circles  
in the dog's water bowl below one of the bungalows.  
Like a wave master, I tipped the bowl with my foot,  
he rode the roller coaster wave, shook his feathers  
flew off chirping *free water rides!*

As owners of this local attraction, we've become  
janitors, grounds crew cleaning up after messy guests,  
maintenance crew picking up hay and straw  
from shoddy building practices,  
renovations never complete before they fly the coop.

It's our first year as theme park owners  
and hope it's a seasonal crowd. We shudder to think  
what winter might bring.

---

J R (Judy) Turek, WWBA 2019 LI Poet of the Year, Superintendent of Poetry for the LI Fair, Bards Laureate 2013-2015, is an internationally published poet, editor, workshop leader, and 23 years as Moderator of the Farmingdale Creative Writing Group; she has 2 Pushcart Prize nominations. She was named a 2017 NYS Woman of Distinction. She is the author of *Midnight on the Eve of Never*, *B is for Betwixt and Between*, *A is for Almost Anything*, *Imagistics*, and *They Come And They Go*. J R, The Purple Poet, lives on Long Island with her soul-mate husband, Paul, her dogs, and her extraordinarily extensive shoe collection. [msjevus@optonline.net](mailto:msjevus@optonline.net)

Margarette Wahl

**Fandom reaction to Lou Pearlman, Boy Band Con  
*for Erik-Michael Estrada***

I wanted to reach in and pull out his eyeballs  
I know I can't but even if I could,  
Wounds like these they can't be erased.

The idea he grabbed at your innocence  
when you carried stardom in your eyes  
Disturbs me.

I feel the chills of the night I listened,  
sounds of your voice  
describing scenarios of uncomfortable touching.

When I saw the smile his face held  
as he critiqued your performance  
in his land of pretend,  
I wanted to choke him.

There is no closure in the darkness  
his past placed upon you,  
the dreams and money he stole.  
Forgiveness was never an option  
when he died.

The only comfort we both have is  
Now, he can't hurt you.

Never become a crumpled sheet of music  
or a dried out guy in an once Boy Band.  
Stay the beautiful soul you are,  
the one you're meant to be.  
Keep singing and dancing inside fan dreams  
and on life's stage.

I promise to always follow.

Thomas Zampino

**HANDS – Remembering My Grandfather**

Whenever the barbershop apron failed,  
the floor stepped in to collect every  
last bit of gray that fell from my  
head. Except for those few  
strands that dangled  
precariously from  
his hands.

Hands that moved quickly across  
my face. Then side to side  
And with every passing,  
an old memory was  
recaptured.

The faint smell of tobacco on  
fingers that held the same  
brand of cigarette that  
my grandfather had  
smoked whenever  
he too cut my  
hair.

---

Thomas Zampino is an attorney in private practice in New York City. He and his wife have raised two daughters, four cats, two dogs, and various other domesticated creatures over the past three decades. He formerly blogged at Patheos and now writes reflections and poetry at The Catholic Conspiracy. One of his poems was recently published in Bards Annual 2019. Poetry is his second act!





## About the Author

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