

Power

Issue 8: May 2021

OpenDoor magazine

YOUR WORDS MATTER.

ADVENTURES OF
GAIA, EARTH
MOTHER: POWER

THE HAND

*Theme Poetry
all about POWER*

AUTHOR

FEATURES

BOOKS TO READ!

WELCOME TO THE OPENDOOR MAGAZINE MAY ISSUE!

What does POWER mean to you?

Is it the power of the earth and things we cannot control? Is it the power of another human – both good and bad? Is it the power of yourself?

This month's theme of POWER offers such a wide-range of interpretations and emotions. For some, power is a good thing – it represents things they love and they trust. For others, it is draped in fear – power of another or power of a group – that should not be in power. It is wonderful to see how this subject has been interpreted all around the world.

We continue to get more submissions each month and we are so thrilled and honored to continue to get and be trusted with your words. If we could, we would choose everyone and every piece. It is heartbreaking that we can't. But we ask that if you submit and are not selected – please keep submitting and sharing. Even if you aren't selected for a specific episode – your words don't matter any less.

Because at the end of the day – what has the most power... are your words. YOUR WORDS MATTER.

Thank you for continuing to share our magazine with your friends and family and allowing our audience to keep growing.

- Kassie & Mel

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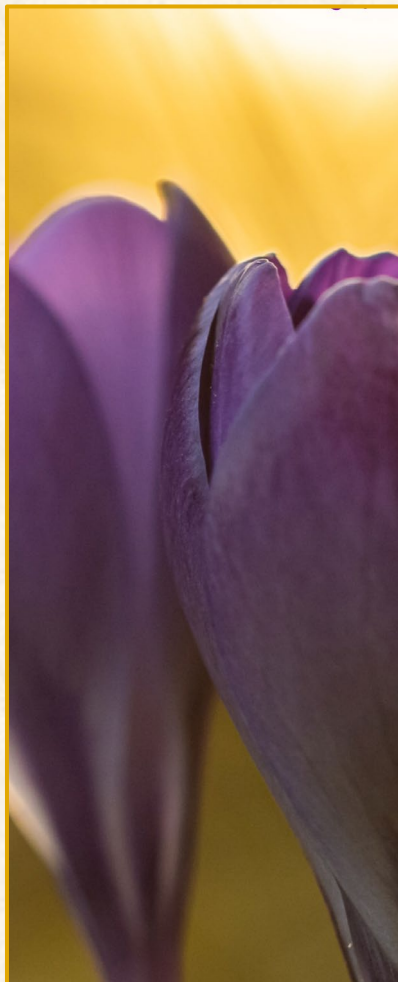
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ADVENTURES OF GAIA, EARTH MOTHER: POWER


KATHY LONG, CYNICAL IDEALIST, GLOBAL CITIZEN @longone

Do the unintentional yet unexpected thing - I say. It will throw them off. You could get away. A realization holds me back from anger. I'm about to lash out, and I realize that it's not me, it's them. My interpretation is off-key. I let them be the masters of interpretation. And this infuriates me. Gaia stepped from the shadows and walked away .the end. - except rather not. Being hemmed in, and no delicate way to exit. In the office, in her cubicle or on her couch, she didn't know what she was breaking from and dramatically walking towards. No danger but things got stranger.

He interrupted the reverie and said, what have you got to complain about. Do you know what people actually go through. *Rhetoricity* intact. He said no to question marks. Her silence on the matter made him think she agreed. He insists on thoughts about the spreadsheet - and why do we need all these doggamn spreadsheets anyway? Are we doing scientific research, or refining data points for statistical studies on the evolution of life? No, you thumper, this is just mindless drudgery so the boss can throw some numbers on the table to support whatever cockamamy plans he's trying to push through. New label, same wine. Why the duck are you being aggressive with me - no irony, rhetoric wins. I already wrote the brief. He lost it - I told you to get this right!

She would have none of it, all this standing over her shoulder manliness. So, she pushed print. As in .the end., this day, too, would be forgotten, and we'd all just keep plugging along. After she handed him the sheet - and why exactly could she not just send it in the chat? She knows, he wants to perpetuate the myth that if he told someone to do it, it's as good or better than doing it himself. Doesn't even matter how those figures and prosaic statements got on the page. Management training.





She consoled herself that a trip to the restroom was nigh, where she could wash his dribble from the back of her neck. She was flummoxed by interpersonal work relationships, and idealized suggestions for improvement appeared on her YouTube suggestions. People who didn't have live with monstrous personalities for hours and hours of their day told her how to modify her behavior and take a chill pill. Sigh. If only following instructions were enough, and internalizing the social structures were enough.

Task done, bad energy drone sucked back to the nebula, she decided to tenderly toe her way towards the room of rest. Anyone looking? The elevator doors opened as she approached the landing, and she was in. She could ride the rails for a couple moments, no trackers ... oh, yes, they're looking. Who cares, justifications came forth - there must be reasons & excuses to go up or to go down. And up she went, colleagues and Chimera stepping on and off.

When she reached the top floor, a familiar face waited for her to disembark, but she stood still and pushed the button for the lobby. Well, get on brother, don't get annoyed just because you found me here. In fact, I was here first, so you're lucky. I even drove this machine for your use. And that's right, turn yourself around so I don't have to look at your mug. If I had that fancy job, I would make sure I wasn't wearing floods. I'd pay extra for two inches of pant to hit the top of my shoe. Get out, get out, get out. And you better not look back at me, when you step off. I've had enough of you for one day. Going down? Don't you listen to dings, ding dong? Everyone off, I'm taking this thing for a ride. No more - why carry this human luggage? Lobby, please. I need this, it will help, I swear. Doors open, all off.

A searing light burst in her eyes. Recharge the batteries, because I'm coming for you. She felt herself being sucked back into the moving box, full of mindful workers. So pleasant, happy in the kind embrace of their work-life balance. Hold back the laughter.

*What are our
co-owners up to?*



KASSIE J RUNYAN

Co-Creator



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https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLvSEcLEfE196OE_Ya2LNNN3kjFp82Ktt2

Kassie Recommends...

TV Show: *Gilmore Girls*

Ok ok – so this is not anything new – but I found myself recently re-watching it after I found it on Netflix and was reminded just what an enjoyable show it is. Feel good, smart, and just so enjoyable as an escape from the concrete city for just a few more weeks.

Book: *Can I say mine?*

I've been reading, re-reading, re-re-reading while waiting for my box of books to arrive – just to make sure there wasn't something me / my editor missed. Don't forget to pre-order! Only three weeks left. This is my last poetry book for a bit while I switch my focus over to my collection of short stories "The View From My Window" and puppet making for a movie project that my husband and I are working on.

Listening: *Oldies*

Specifically, any song from Richard Simmon's *Sweatin' to the Oldies* while I try to lose some of this new-found weight from sitting in my living room for a year. I mean who doesn't love those old Richard Simmon's workout videos (now available in DVD from Amazon) – don't you just remember how fun those are??

KASSIE J RUNYAN – CO-CREATOR

OH, MOTHER EARTH

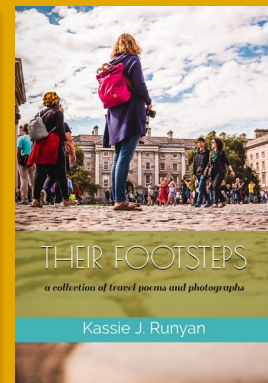
I suckle at her breast
trying not to wake her
the sleeping woman, dressed in white
innocent of heartache and heartbreak
hopeful dreams visioning
the future that has yet to come
a future of growth and hope
that might still come to be
she smiles in her sleep
and her hand caresses my small head
mother and child
alone in peace

I suckle at her breast
growing full
in a building desperation
to take the milk she has given
she stirs, her eyes
fluttering open
and confusion
wrinkles her brow
as her dress dyes
from white to green
her nipple is torn
from my lips
my body pulled back
by another child
a child like me
but different
I watch as he
lunges towards her breast
and she feeds him
without hesitation
jealousy climbing my body
putting my skin to tingle
my full belly replaced by the
hunger of envy

he suckles at her breast
as I'm pushed away further
the dizziness building
as I'm turning and swirling
through the throngs of children
eagerly waiting their turn
numbers growing
building



**Purchase your
copy of This is
2020 [HERE!](#)**



**Purchase your copy
of Their Footsteps
[HERE!](#)**



**PRE-ORDER your copy of
This is 2020 Part Two [HERE!](#)**

KASSIE J RUNYAN – CO-CREATOR

doubling
by each and every second
their voices
growing louder
as their patience wanes
I stand on the tips of my toes
neck straining
trying to see her
but gaining only a glimpse
of her arms
held in place
by her side
and the ripped sleeve of
her dress turned red
the torn edge of silk held up
above the crowd
by a dirty hand
and the crowd cheers
and jeers
their ownership desire unchecked
I'm picked up by the wave
of pushing and pulsating bodies
trying to get closer
to the single source
of nourishment
but I fall to the ground
and peer through the legs
finally seeing her face again
strained with pain and
devastation
and still confusion
small hands reaching to her
pawing at her
clawing at her
worshiping her and the boys
standing at the front
of the line
who in turn
bow to the children
attached to each nipple

they hungrily suckle at her breast
as the shouts grow
louder above me
and I look up
to see a fist land
on a soft cheek
eyes growing red as the faces
erupt in angst
I roll along the
ground, avoiding the stomping feet
I slither towards where I know she lays

telling myself I will save her
from these power-hungry children
fighting over her
no, I
don't want to own her
for myself
how could you even ask that?
I giggle as my mouth waters
craving her milk
the fight rampages above
but I'm not angry like them
and I lack that obsessive need
I crawl quicker seeing a glimpse
of her limp leg
shrouded in her deep black cloth
"oh, mother"
I cry
"please don't forsake us
how can we show you
that we still adore you?"
I get to an opening and stand
ducking quickly below a bullet
fired from a found gun
and held in the hand
of a boy
not aiming for me
I run towards her body
as an explosion shakes
the ground behind me

no one is suckling at her breast
by the time I make it to her side
see her laying there
now abandoned and naked
not able to pull
the last shred of the dull grey
fabric to cover herself
as the battle rages behind me
I move my mouth to her flattened breast
and pull
trying to get just one more
drip...
but nothing comes
I release her breast and raise
my head to the sky
an anguished yell
escaping my lips
"oh, mother
why have YOU forsaken US
we ONLY wanted to love you"

MEL HAAGMAN

Co-Creator

Mel Recommends...

TV Show: **Scandal**

I think I am little late to the party, but I have recently discovered Scandal and have been completely sucked it. It is fast-paced, political, gripping and emotional. What more do you need?

Book: **Such a fun Age** by Kiley Reid

This is a story of a young black woman who is accused of kidnapping while babysitting a white child and many more events that follow this incident. It's written in a way that is so easily digestible that you don't even realise you're reading!

Podcast: **Feel Better Live More** with Dr Chatterjee

For anyone who is constantly on a journey of self-improvement and discovery then this is podcast for you! Dr Chatterjee speaks to many incredibly knowledgeable people on a range of topics both emotional and physical. I particularly enjoyed 'The voice in our heads and how to harness it, with Dr Ethan Kross.' It is as Dr Chatterjee describes 'A weekly dose of optimism.'

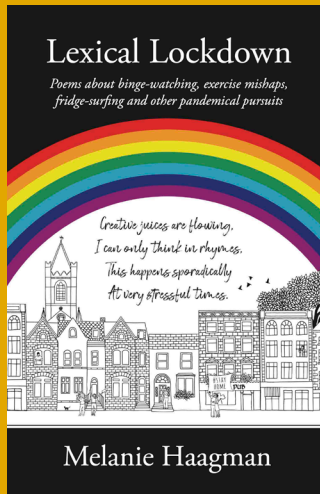


<https://www.Facebook.com/girlontheedge90>

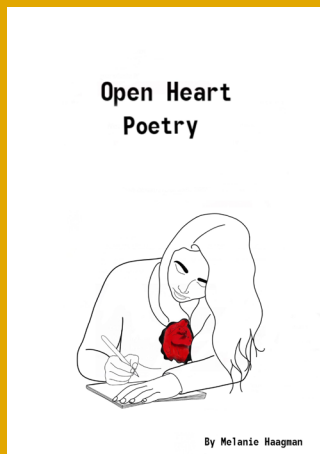
<https://www.Instagram.com/girlontheedge90>

<https://www.Twitter.com/girlontheedge1>

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCjh8b4Y7gSFGKewzPKZH8lw>



**Purchase your copy of
Lexical Lockdown [HERE!](#)**



**Purchase your copy of Open
Heart Poetry [HERE!](#)**

I SEE YOU...

I see you in the background,
Standing out by blending in,
I hear you when you're silent,
And your patience's wearing thin...
I can feel all your frustration,
It oozes from your soul,
I can sense you've lost a lot
And it's left a gaping hole.
I can taste your disappointment,
Life's not gone the way you'd hoped,
But you've hidden it so well
Unhelpful habits helped you cope.
I can see you in the background,
Standing out by blending in,
I can hear your thoughts so loud
Reverberating from within.
I can see what you're disguising,
From the words you never say,
I can see you've built a barrier,
To keep the world at bay.
But step outside your silence,
You've so much more to give,
You were put here for a reason
So don't forget to live.

HOLD YOUR TONGUE...

Hold your tongue
It can't be undone...
Things slip out quick,
And the words, they stick.
You can't take it back,
Once things have been said,
They become entrenched
Stuck inside of your head.
Those true micro-thoughts,
That come from the id,
That are best to let pass
Should have kept on the lid.
Hold your tongue
It can't be undone
Now isn't the time to spout,
And let that anger slip out.
Those who shout the loudest
Aren't always struggling more,
And the words can cause damage
Shattering the recipients core.
Hold your tongue
It can't be undone
The anger will fade,
Don't release the shade.
Reflect for a second,
That, you won't regret
Because angry words
They are hard to forget .

CONNECTIONS

It's not so much the words
And the way they're combined
But the passion of the writer
And the power they've assigned.
It's not so much the poem,
It's the way that's it's perceived
All the emotion that's behind it
And the message that's received.
It's not so much the rhythm,
Or the emphasis or beat,
But the connections that is found
Without the need to meet.
We all have the same thoughts,
Fears, experiences and more,
So the ability to relate to all
Is what the writings for...

POWER

THERESA M LAPENSÉE @wordsfortheheart.ca

When I stopped shrinking to fit inside a box I hadn't
made in the first place
When I stopped being quiet and pushing my real heart
desires down
When I stopped changing who I was for fear of being
too much

That's when I started to come into it
My power
My voice
Me

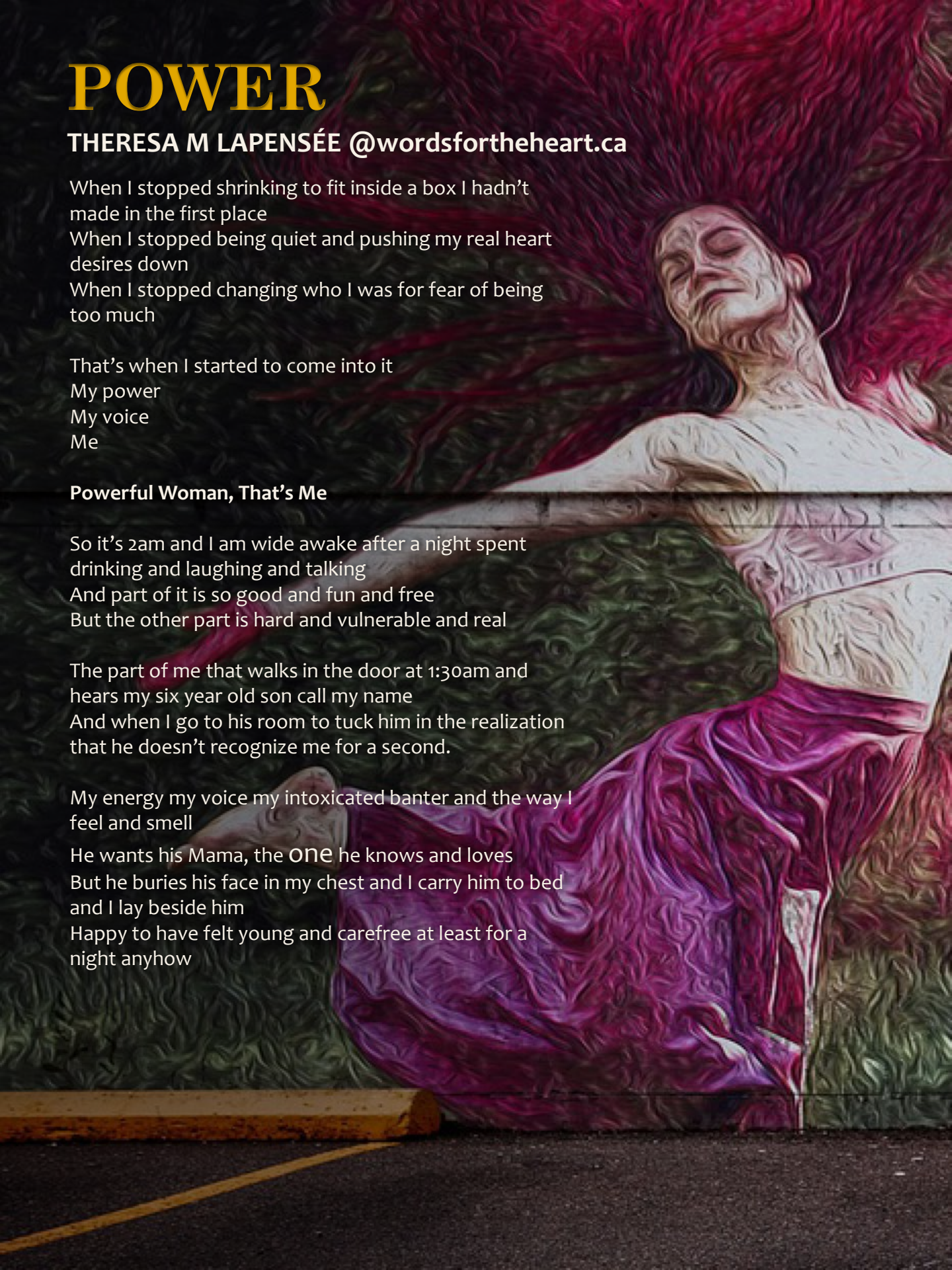
Powerful Woman, That's Me

So it's 2am and I am wide awake after a night spent
drinking and laughing and talking
And part of it is so good and fun and free
But the other part is hard and vulnerable and real

The part of me that walks in the door at 1:30am and
hears my six year old son call my name
And when I go to his room to tuck him in the realization
that he doesn't recognize me for a second.

My energy my voice my intoxicated banter and the way I
feel and smell

He wants his Mama, the **ONE** he knows and loves
But he buries his face in my chest and I carry him to bed
and I lay beside him
Happy to have felt young and carefree at least for a
night anyhow



And I miss being someone's wife, miss being needed and wanted
How I wish I didn't mean that or feel that says the feminist part of my brain and my psyche
But it's true

Crawling into a big bed with only a child to realize there is no man coming to join us
No man to kiss my forehead and brush the hair out of my eyes and make me green tea in the
morning and eagerly wait till Sunday night to make love to me slowly then heatedly in the bed
that we share

I want to feel the heat of someone else
for a change
for a night.
And not listen to the worries inside my loud beating heart.
To know that kissing the back of my neck and making me laugh is something someone wants
with me.

I want to know that the powerful energy I am isn't too much and someone will see through it
for what it is
A little girl grown up
Vulnerable turned strong
Small turned loud
Alone turned busy and bossy

And even on those days when I seem to have it all together
The house
The career
Motherhood
The details
He can slide off my clothes and draw me a bath and cover me on cool white sheets whispering
that he sees me and wants me

Not for what I do
Not for what I earn
Not for the number of things I take responsibility for
But just for being Theresa
Just for being me

May Theme: Power

MULTIPLE AUTHORS

PAYMENT DUE FOR DEBTS INCURRED

Douglas V. Miller

United States

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100000788881080>

Am I nothing more to you
than a dog who has
shit upon your carpet?
Has your pride in superiority,
been shaken and challenged?
You told me to go fight your war.
I would have won it for you, too,
until your profits became more
important than national pride and
my life was reduced to a bottom line.
I didn't win your war, because
you wouldn't allow me to.
So now I am criminally seen as a loser.
Damaged merchandise,
not worth the effort or expertise
to repair, that you feel safe ignoring,
to get on with business as usual.
Don't get too comfortable.
I learned things you will never
know and I won't forget
as easily as you.
Someday, somehow...

THE WAVE

Jane Fitzgerald

United States

<https://www.facebook.com/JanesPoetry/>
<https://www.amazon.com/Jane-H-Fitzgerald/e/B01MSW2FLO>

The wave forcefully captures me
and crashes my breath away
The overwhelming strength
of its graceful curve
plunges me toward oblivion
My world is a myriad of
aquas, greens and blues
so coalesced, it's all a
swirling shining kaleidoscope
the flecking foam of white
leads to a saving light
but the beauty of the wave
engulfs me
its magnificence is all
I become
its wondrous power and glory

TWO PATHS

Jack M. Freedman

United States

<https://www.instagram.com/jacobreubenmoses/>

<https://www.facebook.com/jacobmosespoet>

Two Paths (Metro)

by Jack M. Freedman

“This is a Brooklyn-bound F Local Train. The next stop is...West 4th Street-Washington Square. Stand clear of the closing doors please.”

Sixteen stops between
14th Street and Ditmas Avenue

Is it a coincidence
that the 14th Street Station
on 6th Avenue
showcases the letters F-M-L
proving also that fuckery
is as easy as 1-2-3?

It reminds me of how
Delancey Street-Essex Street
prominently features my initials
J-M-F with the occasional ability to catch Z's

Every subway ride has a story
Mine is a track with two paths
Empath and sociopath

Two distinct personalities
ride on opposite sides
of a mind going off the rails

They make me wonder
If I'll ever take the B
to Brighton Beach on a whim
just to be somewhere far from Staten Island
even for an hour

Or whether I'll bypass Ditmas on the F
and find Coney Island in places
far more sophisticated than
my hyperactive mind

Or whether catching
a Manhattan-bound Q
at Sheepshead Bay
lets me find words
within alphabetic avenues
scattered through Midwood

Or whether I will still
be embraced by the R
whether bound for MetroTech
or Union Square

Or whether the first five cars on the 1
would trap me in a maze of dyscalculia

Or whether I would take the 7 somewhere
other than Main Street and Roosevelt Avenue

Or whether I would take the 6
and travel back to City Island

Or whether the L will connect me
to my favorite artist congregations of Brooklyn:
Williamsburg
Greenpoint
Bushwick
Park Slope

Or whether I have a job
requiring me to take the
R-A-G to Brooklyn Navy Yard

Or whether I'll ever see a dinosaur skeleton
after a long ride on the C

Or whether I'll once again
take the D to Central Park

Or whether I'll visit Briarwood
taking the E from Ground Zero
like my mother and father once before

Or whether Bay Ridge
still welcomes me
after a long ride on the N

Or whether I'll ever see
controversial art exhibits
getting off the 2 or 3
at the Brooklyn Museum

Or whether Bowling Green Station
will make me feel less claustrophobic
before I catch the 4 or 5

Or whether the W
is the best train to take
after leaving South Ferry

I've ridden every train but the M
for no destination I've reached
relied on that letter

I'm still asleep
when the Z runs

It's still a mystery
if I ever rode any of the Shuttles

Subways are transitions
which alter consciousness
with every transfer

Lines come full circle
and there are diamonds
buried within round trips

Just as I've experimented
with altering my state of mind
with plants and fungi containing rainbows

Such has been the case
with the subway

This poem is an alchemy of adversity
expressed in verses I will cross-reference
in MLA, 8th Edition some other time

I am actively taking my trauma
and transmuting it into precious memories

I am finally in a place where I am affirmed
the love between me and New York
is one that is mutual

And whether or not
the alphanumeric spotlights
come in various colors
I am hoping that my role
as a grey wizard
isn't a haze for rays

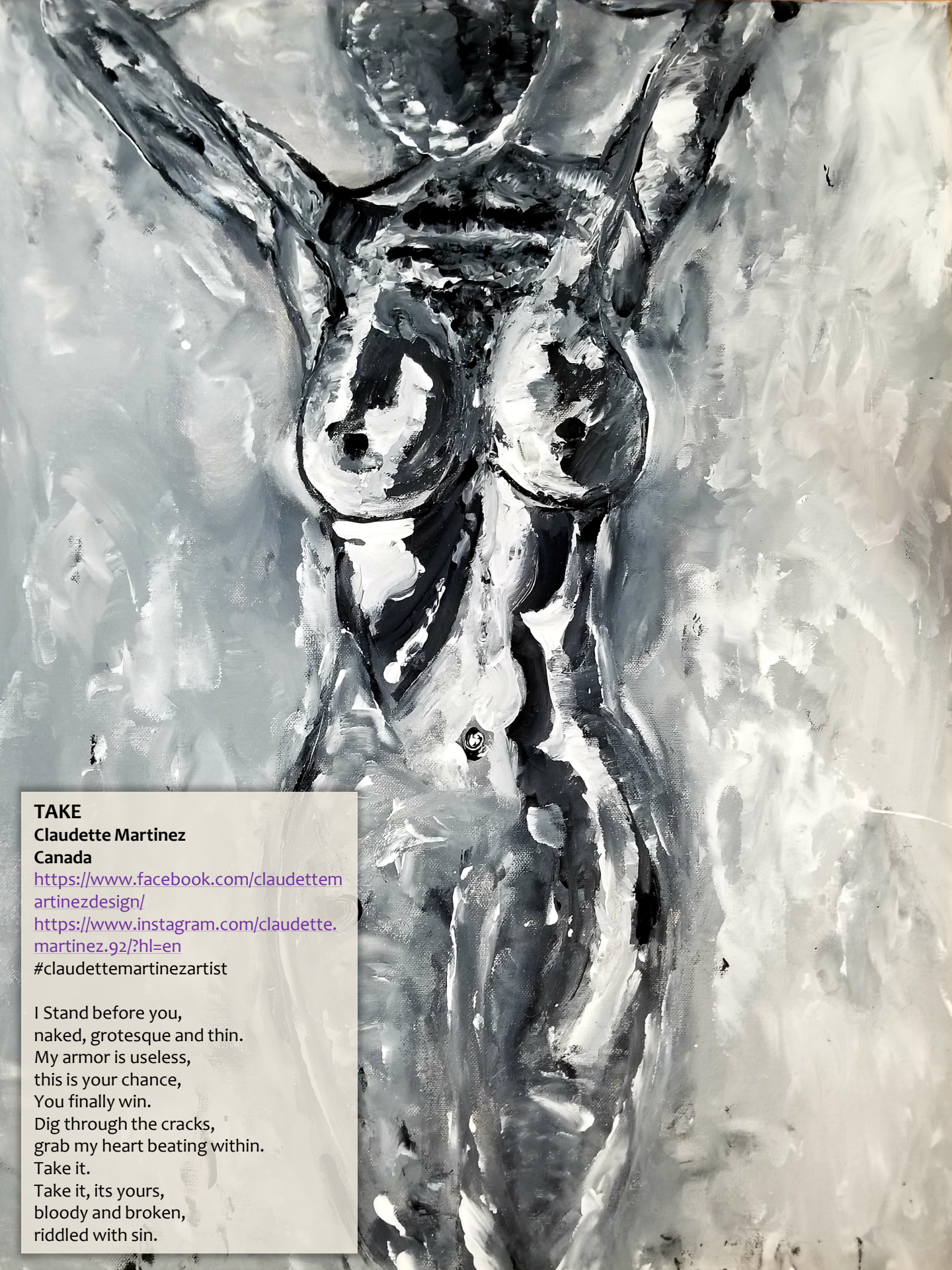
And though I was diagnosed as bipolar
I am grateful to exist between dichotomies

Baruch HaShem Bli Ayin Hara
I am grateful

Allow me to reach a middle path
and let me continue to
infuse justice
in the words I
continue to express

May my split personalities
merge in a place where
I can explore myself
with a split-infinitive

To boldly go
anywhere
I can find peace



TAKE

Claudette Martinez

Canada

<https://www.facebook.com/claudettemartinezdesign/>

<https://www.instagram.com/claudettemartinez.92/?hl=en>

#claudettemartinezartist

I Stand before you,
naked, grotesque and thin.
My armor is useless,
this is your chance,
You finally win.
Dig through the cracks,
grab my heart beating within.
Take it.
Take it, its yours,
bloody and broken,
riddled with sin.

DECISION THEORY

Jon Wesick
United States

I'm making a spreadsheet
to decide whether to kill my dog.
That big, lumbering pile of fur
is getting older and dammit
it's time to run my household like a business.

I score each of Dusty's features from -5 to +5,
+5 being the best. Gazing up with adoring eyes,
chin on paw, and tail thumping the carpet
earns Dusty a +5 while drinking from the toilet
or knocking over the trash and dragging used Kleenex
into the living room moves him closer to oblivion.

I'm in the middle of a computer simulation
of future vet bills when Joan notices me
in the monitor's blue glow.
She just doesn't get it.
I weighted each of Dusty's traits
according to its importance
to account for what I value.
I'm not inhuman, after all.

Why can't she see
that the rigor of the binomial distribution
and numbers' cool, green rationality
deliver choices free of passion and prejudice?
Besides, she's hosted a sloppier calculation
between her ears for months.

Eyes squinting and neck straining
I input the remaining data so fast
the mouse jitters like a Chihuahua
at an espresso bar. The miracle of Moore's Law
tallies the weighted sum and the results are
terminal.

Jon Wesick
Decision Theory (page 2, new stanza)

Tail wagging and ignorant of the computer's verdict,
Dusty drops a slobbery tennis ball
at my feet and nudges my hand with his nose.
How can a spreadsheet model loyalty
or decency?
You're safe, buddy!

FAITH OF A CHAMPION

Emecheta Christian
Nigeria

<https://www.instagram.com/emechetachristian/>

I strive to be better
I train to be wiser
I must attain that height
I will strengthen my might
Every minute counts
Every day I must give account
Everything I wish to become is in me
Every day is another chance to break free
Who says I can't achieve my goals?
Who can stop me when I charge like a bull?
Who is better in this competition?
Who can stop me from winning for my nation?
There is no reason for panic or fear
There is no reason to quit and not dare
There isn't a better option
Than to persist and become a champion.

SUPER POWERS: THE VALUES OF LIFE

Sonia Pal

United Kingdom

No joys, no toys
No celebrations, only aberrations
Least money for a feast,
Sans emotions made ends meet
And dreamt of promotions sweet !
Studied and learnt before dawn hours,
Life's lessons were very sour!
I actually progressed through
Quite huge towers to
Attain my Super Powers - The Values of Life.

I learnt it ALL what it takes to say :
Does not matter if life does not rhyme
Never forget your rhythms to chime

And if you champion the art of sacrifice
Your cries will turn into lessons wise

To help others learn, idealise and rise
with your positive, powerful vibes and allies

THE POWER OF MY ROOM

Trisha Ram – Age 6

United Kingdom

My room is pink
My posters blink
My mirror makes me think
That I must face my life.
My lights teach me to outshine
My clock teaches me to match my pace with its tick
My bed teaches me to dream big
My bookshelf teaches me to be intelligent and fair
My windows teach me how important is the fresh air
My snowy white cupboard teaches me to stay calm
My make up table teaches me to be the most
beautiful 'Trisha Ram'

BIG HONKING GOD

Michael Ball

United States

<https://michaelball.com/opera/MBpoem.htm>

<https://www.facebook.com/harrumph>

I want to see and touch and smell
a big, honking God.
Let the sweat of an Almighty
drizzle on me.

Surely such a muscular deity can be
mine to worship and trust.
Meanwhile my elephant-headed Ganesh,
eliminates my obstacles.

Greeks and Hindus believed in gods
who showed their humanity.
Certainly today, a burly, sincere God
is not too much to demand.

I am Michael, like the angel who used
to sit at the right hand of God,
before that interloper showed
to grab that seat.

If believers can count on personal attention
at least that to a fallen sparrow,
can I expect a God good for banter and
a drink in the cloud bar?

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE TO WOMEN

After Naomi Shihab Nye

Eve Lyons

United States

<https://evealexandrallyons.wordpress.com/>

https://www.instagram.com/fake_supergirl/

I was too young to appreciate
the trust it took Gloria to ask to stay with me
so she could get away from Tom.

In my adolescent way
I think I was happy to just be chosen.
It was a matter of practicality:

I'd been away at college
so he didn't know where I lived.
But she was also entrusting her safety

to a naïve nineteen-year-old
who didn't really understand
how scary this was.

I've never wanted to share this story
Because it wasn't mine to share
I feel the same about the morning

I was at work, preparing to counsel
high school girls, when Lisa's call came in:
Someone had to call the police.

They came and interrogated the victim
as though she were to blame
Forty percent of cops abuse their partners.

This is part of the problem, in America.
We don't feel like we can talk about it:
How men treat women

How men treat other men
How normal
relationship as property is.

I've changed the names in this poem
but put it out there anyway in hope
it makes it safer for the authors

assuming they survive
to tell their stories.

UNNAMED POEM

Larissa Murray

United States

<https://www.instagram.com/larimurray.carvings/>

But,
what about powerless- devils advocate.
It's a yin and yang, sort of thing.
I walk through the day, with the shiny things dangling above my head-
I, want it all;
but I don't say it, never would I tell you that I want it all.
I play keep busy to avoid the inevitable realization that I've *already* fallen-
I have no power over gravity, *it has* got my attention.
I ask you if we can do it together,
fake myself into thinking I will not feel the pain,
or feel gravity's sting if I have your hands holding mine.

"I want it all".
Power, powerless.
Bits and pieces of neglect,
what a mess.
Dissecting others,
mistaking cynicism as ultimate intelligence.
Getting high,
and putting my feet back on the ground again.

Watching them, as they exude their own power.
I stumble on my own, looking down at all the flowers.

Stretching my arms, as if they are the coming of morning light.
But, my reach only goes so far.
& you know what, that's alright
the day is already pretty bright.
I reach, and I breathe. I reach, and I breathe.

Power, powerless.
For now I reach as far as I possibly can.

I scribble the ways in which I'm okay without it,
I scribble the ways in which I love it,
I scribble the ways in which I will get it,
and upon scribbling I forget about the necessity of it- scary, isn't it?
But nonetheless I lay my head, and a new day comes-
I lift my head from the floor, I honor those who reach even though they have before.
Energized, sober,
it's in, and above my head-
and I need it before this life is over.

MARCH MADNESS: GAMES THEY ARE A- CHANGIN'

Gerard Sarnat
United States

<http://gerardsarnat.com/>

B-ball defense, dribble, shoot

players gathered in Indiana
instead of usual tournament
years spread across your USA

stadiums almost empty
because of COVID fears
which rattle luckless teams

seemingly unpredictably,
with perennial powerhouses
having lackluster seasons

thus amazingly not even
qualifying for NCAA's
huge field of sixty-eight

in an astonishing defiance
of laws of gravity that favor
large well-financed programs

which have perk\$ and facility
bona fides to recruit blue chip
kids on their way to the NBA

it's a wonderful yet somewhat
eerie experience time 'n again
to bear witness as pampered

youngsters come to recognize
their inevitable success isn't
gonna happen, plus look in eyes

of (perhaps) surprised underdogs,
at first blush simply happy
to get into The Big Dance

with a chance to compete.
As Bob Dylan once said,
probably Bible-paraphrasing

Loser now will be later to win.

IMPRESSION

Ben Campbell
United Kingdom

<https://www.instagram.com/wordsbybencampbell/>

pink fluffy child
pulls from her

father

to the puddle
she jumps,
bewildered by the
power at her

tiny little feet

to make the world
dance

MENOPAUSE IS MY SUPERPOWER

Ashley Dane

United States

I'm giving up on the white knight. I'm giving up on someone slaying my dragons for me, keeping me safe. I'm that someone. I'm giving up not believing I can do it myself. Giving that up has made me less interested in romance. Go figure. I mean, it makes sense. Wrapping security up with love. I am giving up these ideas that a man will fix me. I never needed fixing. Or a man.

I am giving up the idea that at 52, I am staring down the barrel. Motherfucker, everything is staring down my barrel, not the other way around. How did I twist it all up for so long? I'm the force to be reckoned with here. I'm giving up being anything else.

I'm giving up dark nights of the soul. A palm reader in Bali told me that the hard part of my life was over. That was right before it got really hard. I'm giving up palm readers. I'm redefining what it means to dive in the deep end. I'm giving up anyone who can't go there with me, who is not familiar with the bends and the free dive and the cool, dark depths where truth lives.

I gave up cookies at bedtime finally. I don't miss them. I don't. What I miss is missing them. Who is this me who does not eat cookies before bed? I miss the yearning of many things. I miss the wishing and wanting that kept me up at night. Who is this cookieless me, giddy at the thought of an empty bed? I'm giving up the ghost who lived in the shell of wishing, trading it in for a quiet now with everything on top. I'm giving up the little ways that smallness keeps me on a short leash. The tiny voice that whispers. The one that says- You don't have much youth left, probably time to panic now. The one that says- you won't have the money to live the life you want. It says- with a man, maybe. But not alone. Who do you think you are? You can't do this alone. Whisper-whisper, I give you up. Menopause is my superpower. Gray hair is my superpower. I give up this insane idea that age means diminishment. I'm giving that up for all my sisters. Sisters are my superpower.

I'm giving up knowing anything. I'm giving up any and all defenses. I'm giving up wanting to turn heads. I'm giving up the lowest hanging fruit to sit in the high branches of all that is good. I'm mad and in love with this feast of friends, this beautiful growing circle that lights up every dark corner and tames every fear- fears that I gave up when I said yes to this sacred flame of sisterhood. Yes to this maternal heart that scoops up every hurt thing it sees. Yes to the yesness of death in everything, calling me out to dance, love, create, fuck, laugh, play. I'm giving up needing security and denying death its rightful seat at my table, as if you or you or you might save me from the inevitable with your arms and promises and that lovely flush of hormones that tell me I will never die. Falling in love is just running into the arms of death. That isn't a bad thing but don't get it twisted. I have no idea what I'm doing. I'm giving up on having a plan or any notion of what to do next. I'm just leaping. Trusting the net will appear.

I'm one big bright shooting star of yes,
making a wish and granting it
as I fall into the open arms
of my own heart.

COMPASSION MOVES THE WORLD

Michael H. Brownstein

United States

<http://projectagentorange.com/>

In the days that followed
The blue ink of sea broiled over

A child, a vulture, a lack of seed.
Everything spreading outward.

Wind whined into place and rained.
Sun spread its thick arms and stayed.

One person can make a world.
A strong wind can swim in acid and wake.

Water in turmoil thickening.
Hold on with all of your might.

The earth has not yet broken open.
The legs of the strong are stronger

Than the waves of the cloak of life.
We will come to cross this path,

We will make it across this continent,
We will find the child, the vulture, the seed.

We will change the shape of water.

SILENT ADDICTIONS

Sarah Wells

Canada

silent addictions
creep to the riverside
abandons my inner world
taking what I love for granted

Daily
My mantras affirm my awareness
fighting for the present
until the present
is past.

silent addictions will arise,
seeing clearly,
that body is gone.

FIST

Iris Levin
United States

it is said

every baby
every color
everywhere
enters the world
with closed fists
holding onto
gifts to share with the world

as they grow
hands open
releasing hopes and dreams
into a divided world

helpless small fists
become enraged large fists
raised in protest

demanding
strength
solidarity
equality
change

raising to ensure that
every baby's fist
will open safely
sharing their gifts with
a welcoming world

AUTARCH

Bill Wren
Canada
<https://billwren.com/>

I'm giving up the power.
I'm giving it away.
When you've got the power,
you've got to sin all day.

I don't want that work.
I don't want it anymore.
When you have the power
every day's a bloody bore.

If you have the power,
you don't get a say.
You rape and kill without a clue
why it is that way.

Power's always empty.
A plate that holds no meat.
A glass that has no wine.
A meal you cannot eat.

I've been hungry in my time
on top of that old hill.
From that height you see
it's just another hill.

One day if you're standing
high, atop the heap,
you'll find there's nothing there,
however wide the sweep.

Power is a victory
that becomes a great defeat.
You'll always be alone
when the world is at your feet.

I'm giving it all up;
I'm giving it away.
When you've got the power
you're tired and bored,
alone and drowned
in blood that spills all day.

Take from me this power.
My sins begin to weigh.

ENLIGHTENED SPARROW

Samman Akbarzada
Afghanistan

A sparrow got lost
Stared at a willow, shortly the flock was gone
Begged for the sun to not set
And he witnessed the quickest sunset
Perhaps in the light, he could find his way back home
But his longing wishes, and his bitter mourns
Didn't bring back the dawn
A lonely sparrow
Flew to that willow
Twitched by howls, rustles and growls
Bearing an unbearable evenfall
His troubled eyes on the east
Lest he would be the wilderness's feast
The night ripened colder
Another threat for the missing beholder
His sanctuary was his shivering wings
Once they swayed as the Sparrow would sing
Now they caressed him near
His warmth, his streaming tears
Stared at his shortened whiffs
Disappearing amidst
The moonlight as it fell
Right over his head
Gasped, looking up at her beauty
She smiled, fulfilling her duty
To always be there for the forgotten
An ally for the wounded and fallen
She kept him in the spotlight
For the rest of his esoteric night
He sang for her poems of heartbreak and recluse
And of distance but intertwined roots
She beamed despite her scars

Deeply intimate, yet mercilessly far
Full and amber she glowed that night
But it was an unfortunate sign
He witnessed the quickest sunrise
But with a hope said it would be alright
The enlightened Sparrow reborn
Found his way back home
Prayed for the night to fall faster
Just to see his anguishing disaster
Every gloom fell for a thousand-year
But she evolved more dear
"My retrouvaille, we'll reconcile"
He sang in his dreary twilights
Feeble, weary, but no longer absent
She fell in crescent
He sang for her poems
Of love being equal to acceptance
Its power being faith and patience
Slowly but surely, she grew fonder
For both a bittersweet wonder
Yet again came the time
"My retrouvaille, we'll reconcile"

POWER OF KIND WORDS...

Prema Murugan
India

Utter a few words of kindness
to the one depressed in distress.
Watch how instantly his gloomy eyes glow.
A happy seed of hope in sunken heart grow.

No requirement of wealth of any kind.
Kind words desires loving hearts that bind
all humans in humanity and prolonged peace
wishing that human race shall never cease.

All over anger hatred betrayal prevail
for happiness prosperity forever to avail
Kind words!! a powerful weapon for mankind
that abundantly should surge in every mind

Words like serene stream forever be flowing
to reach and drench into ocean of feeling.
So to engender life, warm touch melting
the cold emotions accumulated within.
a profound process of healthy healing.

Rejuvenating the droughted riversides
then were grey, now turned to lush greens.
Revitalizing the blooms deserted in vales,
this moment dancing even to slight breezes.

Let kind words flow non-stop, gain power
Pave own way by warring, breaking barrier,
the stubborn steady stones and rocky layer
that are spread all over, everywhere.
Powerful words running through wild track
firmly leave behind remarkable mighty mark

Though gentle are the streams that sizzles
but its continuous flow softens and chisels
the tough rigid rocks into smooth sand.
Likewise words in ink glide, if wisely blend,
it's as powerful as to tempt any mankind,
their mind to refine from cruel to kind...

I THOUGHT I SAW YOU

Hayley Alana Agerbo
Canada

<https://hazyshadesofme.com/>

I thought I saw you.

Reflecting in a clear glass window. Plummeting
amidst a thousand drops of rain. Whispering woes
beneath a wavy, weeping willow.

Yes, you were there.

In the scorch of a sun. And the pale of a moon. In
the cool curl of a surf pitched too soon. In the sting
of sheets scraping my fire-singed skin. And deep
inside my sorrowful dreams.

I thought I saw you.

Inhaling steam from a pot of simmering
souls. Gulping wine from a goblet made of
tolls. Thieving existence from treasure troves.
Wrenching my love when you thought it exposed.

Yes, you were there.

Aching at the feet of those you've wronged.
Riddled with regret. And pained by loss. Wishing
away what refuses to be gone. Teasing the hearts
of those who long.

I thought I saw you once.

But I never really saw you at all.

THE LUXURY OF LUNGS

Lisa Tomey

United States

<https://anchor.fm/lisa-tomey>

<https://prolificpulse.blog/>

there was this man
his name was George
he is still alive
in many hearts
but this soul left
not by his choice
in fact he cried out
for the luxury of breath
was taken from him
lungs provide
luxury of breath
this luxury is afforded
to all who choose to breathe
until a natural death
unless
someone
takes
power
away
and
someone is left
begging to live
crying to his mother
I can't breathe

SUBTLE SUBMISSION

Matt Walford

United Kingdom

<https://www.facebook.com/AWordToTheWiseThePoetryOfThePatriot>

Never beaten, but wishing they had been,
After all pain is tangible, and it's real,
Unlike the emptiness of self-loathing,
Unsure of how they should ever feel.

They have tried to put their finger,
On the moment they submitted control,
When it was that to someone unworthy,
That they gave away their soul.

Once so strong and independent,
So full of zest and vigour,
They see their reflection and are shocked to see,
A smaller, broken figure.

Insidious the methods were ,
They couldn't see before the die was cast,
Wishing they could go back to being,
Who they were a few short years past.

Any victory they had earned,
And dared to feel some pride,
It would quickly be nipped in the bud,
Their joy, the abuser can't abide.

When the abusers voice gets bassy ,
Instinctively they cower,
With sad realisation and acceptance,
They gave their abuser all the power.

Now can I ask a question?
As you read this little rhyme,
Did you ever stop to consider,
As a male, this story could be mine?

EXODUS 34:7

Brian L. Hayes, PG
United States

The sins of our fathers
have come home to roost
on us, their children
and even our own,
unto the fourth generation.
How long O Lord,
Before we make America Great?
Before the implied promises
and “Inalienable” rights
are more than just empty words
on some moldering pages
that are only meant
for the Chosen.
When will,
the color of my skin
not be a passport
in my own country?
“Papers” I wear
marking my worth
as a whole person,
gaining me access
to so many places
where the door wants to be closed
to that deemed the Other.
Still, we try to follow
in the ways of our fathers,
blind men,
groping the elephant in the room,
pretending
we can hold back
the coming spring melt
that it won’t carry us away.

FIRST BIKE RIDE

Helen Openshaw
United Kingdom

https://twitter.com/Pocket_rhyme

<https://www.instagram.com/pocketfullofrhyme/>

My breath held tight,
Hands gripped on the handle bars,
Your presence secure behind me.

Eyes straight ahead,
Feet barely touching the pedals,
Warm words encourage and lift,

Until,

I grow, just a tiny bit, and
I no longer feel small in this giant world.
The moment you let go.

POWER NAPS

Mark Hudson
United States

Recently, I saw a social worker on the train,
who used to be a youthful Grateful Dead fan.
“I used to discuss sex and drugs,” he’d complain,
“but now all I want is a nap,” said the man.
Another friend, a welder lives with pain,
on his birthday, his son had a great plan.
He gave him a birthday card to entertain,
the message itself on the card was not bland.
For your birthday, I wish you a nap,” the refrain,
as all people who work wish while they stand.
Working people afford the bed where they’ve lain,
the unemployed take naps on benches or sand.
A mid-day nap always seems to revive,
it is the secret yearning of workers nine to five.

(Winner of an honorable mention in the 2017
Florida State Poetry Contest)

THE POWER OF A SHELL

Jan Chronister
United States

<https://janchronisterpoetry.wordpress.com/>

is what it was,
reminder of journeys
no longer taken, no choice
of destination, our bodies
moved by others
whorled space left soulless
in satin-lined coffins

THE MAYOR’S CONFESSION

Susan Henry
United States

I am the mayor
of this town.
Voters liked me
more than a man
who wanted to
raise local taxes.
I won by a handy
landslide.

Our city council
meets each month.
The public voices
its arguments.
I’m well-informed
about opposing
views and those
of other politicians.

A moving cliché,
I walk the corridors
of civic power
to the press office
and engagements
with dignitaries.

City Hall
is built from stone.
Being on the inside,
looking out, offers
some advantages,
but still, I haven’t
forgotten my voters.

GLASS CEILINGS

Laura Ferries

United Kingdom

<https://www.instagram.com/lauraferrieswriter/>

Smashing glass ceilings
Incurring splinters
Fortified fists
Don't doubt my thin wrists

Layer after layer
Sheet after sheet
Bandaging our hands
Gritting our teeth

Shoes filled with shards
We walk the yards
We stride the miles
Oh and mustn't forget to smile :)

We're assigned steeper hills
But it strengthens our skills
All the spiritual hurdles
The subliminals and verbals

With each othered obstacle
We wield another miracle
The literal and the lyrical
Every act, struggle and syllable
Can feel so difficult

It's exhausting, it's tiring
Constantly unconditioning
Relentlessly rewiring
But even when the ceiling
Is honestly feeling
Double-glazed
And our skin is bruised and grazed
Our feats should really leave us amazed.

For us, you see, the path wasn't paved.

While the wounds from the fight
And vertigo from upward flight
Are soothing, healing, and maybe still bleeding
Remember this feeling-
When the system was stacked high against you
You smashed right through
Society's glass ceilings.

POWER CORRODES THE SPIRIT

Bilkis Moola

South Africa

<https://www.facebook.com/Poetic-Shores-103759598212110/>

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC78xK4tUFoITRG7APfkm9vw>

Bastions of power
fortify seats of determination.
Stretched in a grimace of tight-lipped
mouths with teeth that grind against
clenched fists.

Power corrodes the spirit like an inferno
where flames lick flesh to misery.
Blemished by the stain of politician's fingers,
the human spirit smolders
like melting larva erupting from a
volcanic mass of power.

The corrosive smear of politics
steams in waves of intimidation
that reverberate in corridors
where tyrants rule.

In an eruption of the grasp for political gain -
fingers pilfer the treasury where
decrepit souls whose barometer for success
consumes the plight of the poor.

The smear of politics
stains headlines in a lion's roar
for a kill -
an insatiable hunger bloated by the
avarice of evil.

The human spirit is gnawed by rats
whose eyes search in a menacing gleam for theft -
gnaw, chew and devour to bellies that swell
to belch corruption.

Bastions of power
who recline in seats as tyrants
for whom the villain is celebrated as hero
with a spirit corroded from humanity.

THE DEATH THAT HOLDS NO POWER

Favour Chinenye Okpor

Nigeria

https://www.instagram.com/favourchinenye_007/

In this land where I was given life
have I also been prodded by the apprentices of death
with dirges of sorrow strewn across my waist
and waters of misery parading deserted eyes.

The death that did not kill us
are the boulevards of suffering
heaped upon our virgin heads;
The pregnant memories of pain
Bequeathed to us
At the juncture of mother's travailing thighs.

The death that did not end us
is the marauding injustice sauntering our land
the rabid cravings of gluttony fools
feasting on vibrant dreams and guileless innocence.

The death that did not kill us
are poignant streams of pain
coursing through hollowed veins;
The ocean of endless agonies
seated at the heart of an orphaned land

The death that did not end us
are the visions of brothers
sunk in the bellies of a bloodthirsty government;
The faltering sighs of mothers
forced to drink the blood of her murdered children.

The death that did not kill us
birthed the hope that stitched wings into our backs-
steering our hearts to a new home.
The death that did not end us
breathed strength into our pores
and fueled power into our voices.

THE POWER WITHIN

Alana Bedworth

United Kingdom

When you feel as though you're
running down a blind alley,
the walls behind you close in.
All your pain and suffering
comes to the surface again.

Hope for your future is
evaporating with every blink
of your eye.
Where and how do you get
the resolution to fight once more.

The strength and power is within you,
as you struggle to understand why.
Reach inside for the belief,
that will help you rid this
inertia from your life.

Life is no bed of roses,
but when you realise the solution
is inside you.
Make good the power within you,
and start life a new.

THIRTEEN

Nicolette Soulia

United States

<https://www.instagram.com/NicoletteSoulia/>

<https://twitter.com/NicoletteSoulia>

<https://www.tiktok.com/@nicolettesoulia?lang=en>

Thirteen.

I repeat, thirteen.

Lemme say that one more time for you.

Barely entering puberty,
barely passed his momma's titty,
barely old enough to walk that street
alone...

Today is just one of many Thursday's for me,
but this kid will forever be only thirteen.

This kid will never get to see what it means
to work hard, fall in love,
and change his scene

because you gripped that trigger too happily.
Yea, I bet your trigger finger feels fucking happy.

Do you have the gall to feel happy
in knowing that you made someone stop growing
at the godawful age of thirteen?

I'm getting a little tired of this in my news feed.

I repeat,

STOP MAKING KIDS STOP GROWING AT THE AGE
OF THIRTEEN!

Is this the face of humanity?

These smug white officers sharing a monopoly on
being free?

These fucking inept officers with a whole system to
clean

up every mess they make of their way of living?

These fucking cowardly officers who turn their
trigger fingers on hands raised and eyes pleading?
Don't you EVER tell me that we should respect the
police

when their targets are our precious babies.

When their targets are us for asking the maybes.

When their targets are anyone they see as
threatening,

not only to their lives,
but to their pension and savings.

When their checklist of ethics goes by their
feelings,

and you never fucking asked how Thirteen was
feeling.

Even as a white woman without my own threat
facing,

I now get it when everyone was arguing in the 90's
about Ice-T and his friends in a posse
rapping "Fuck the police!" proudly,
or Tupac's rose garden up the sidewalk's concrete
with the message of needing changes on the street.
And did y'all listen? Fuck, no. You made pleas
with the Senate, and the House, and outlawed their
words' release

all because someone told you power is king.

But who holds that power now, the bullet or the
video streaming?

The time has come for police accountability,
and unfortunately,

as told to me by a friend north of me,
this is a white man's problem.

Just like junkies on the street,

the only way to kill the virus is for ~~them~~ us to want
the changing.

I guess someone should have told the kid running
that the main thing he had to fear was the year of
his becoming

a man, and maybe

that's the part so sadly
apparent in his story.

A baker's dozen of years isn't enough to teach him
that exploring

his history would eventually

destroy him in the night by a man cunning enough
to fake naivety.

His naivety would take his life down to thirteen.

Please excuse me while I go vomit since I've
nothing left to speak.

MARY MEETS LITTLE BILL

Robert Edward Baker

United Kingdom

<https://theromancebloke.com>

<https://mobile.twitter.com/TheRomanceBloke>

<https://www.facebook.com/Robert.E.Baker.TRB>

<https://www.instagram.com/TheRomanceBloke>

Sweet Mary Quinn despised her man because he was a cad.
Although their home was spick-and-span, Mick treated Mary bad.
She washed his clothes a sparkly white, so everybody said,
but Mick believed such was his right and rarely left his bed.

One day when she and Mick had fought, she met a handsome bloke
who dressed in green and was so short he trailed his fancy cloak.
She wondered how he kept it neat; it didn't show one stain.
This puzzle really had her beat; his laundry looked a pain.

He asked her if she'd like a drink, then lured her to a bar.
She drank so much she couldn't think how this might go too far.
He said, "What's that behind your ear?" and "found" a golden ring
then joked around while drinking beer and proving he could sing.

He said, "I am a leprechaun, and you may call me Bill.
We aren't a myth like unicorns; I live beyond yon hill."
Bill took her hand, which made her swoon, then bid her run away.
She gave a nod. "Can we go soon?" "Oh yes," he said. "Today."

His home was in a hidden glen behind a rainbow's arc,
a house fit for fine noblemen, its garden like a park.
Once there, he dragged her to a room, then pushed poor Mary in.
It looked and stank just like a tomb, and Bill began to grin.

"Don't cry or make a lot of fuss," that evil creature hissed.
"Your struggles are superfluous; it's pointless to resist.
I've heard so many compliments, how clothes that you wash gleam
and I've a thousand dirty pants that really need a clean."

THE ROAD WE'LL TAKE

Ken Gosse

United States

<https://www.facebook.com/ken.gosse/>

Two tracks converged on a cobbled street.
Great pride, for we'd constructed both.
Released from prison's past defeat—
No longer shackled at my feet—
For this hard task, I was not loathe.

The horse could travel just as fair.
For carriage hauling, it laid claim,
But thousands soon would travel there
And far exceed the wear and tear
Of horses, who would soon go lame.

Today, a carriage without horse
Is rarely seen upon our roads
But someday, perhaps with remorse,
We'll find we'll use another source—
Horsepower, man-made, for these loads.

Accomplished task. Gargantuan feat.
Our labors sometimes made us weep
In bitter cold and searing heat,
Yet progress never is complete.
We've miles to go—but first we'll sleep.

A LETTER FOR POETS, IF THEY WISH

Carol Edwards

United States

<https://practicallypoetical.wordpress.com/>

<https://www.instagram.com/queenamazonia/>

To my dear kindred
word witches,
crafters of lyrical verse and spells:

Meaning begets power;
runes, mantras, accent and flow –
all dead without intent.

Magic is not in the words alone;
to imbue them life
purpose
effect

string them will all the fire you possess
and all the ice, too.
They will embed, birth, grow,

to strangle or to bless
only you will know.



THE HAND

JULIE A. DICKSON

The entire doorway from the garage to our den seemed to fill with his presence. From where I sat across the room, no light was visible around the large form that was my father. Without a word, he swept the hat from his head in a familiar arc, to place it on its hook, his expression unreadable. My mother called her greeting from the kitchen; my younger brother bounced up from his chair. I was silent.

My brother could never stay quiet. Even when my mother warned, his mouth seemed to babble on like the engine of our car after the key was turned off. The hand darted forward and so quickly made contact with my brother's face that his words became screams while I shrank back on the couch, making myself small. My mother put down her dish towel and closed her eyes.

I knew the power of my father's hand, having seen it suddenly extend into the backseat of the car, often striking out at innocent chatter. I learned to sit behind my mother, shrinking back into the dark corner, hopefully out of reach and I knew silence was also my ally; not that any of these protected me completely, so quick was his temper to rise like a switched-on light or a bed sheet snapped open.

His hands, encased in work-gloves, often carried armloads of firewood, bound for a basket beside the woodstove that now stood quietly cold beside him. At times, I saw his hands wrapped around the handle of a rake, moving methodically away and back towards him with rhythmic precision, until he paused to wipe sweat from his forehead before it reached his eyes. My father sought the outdoors, where in solitude with leaves and wood, he seemed to distance himself from the world.

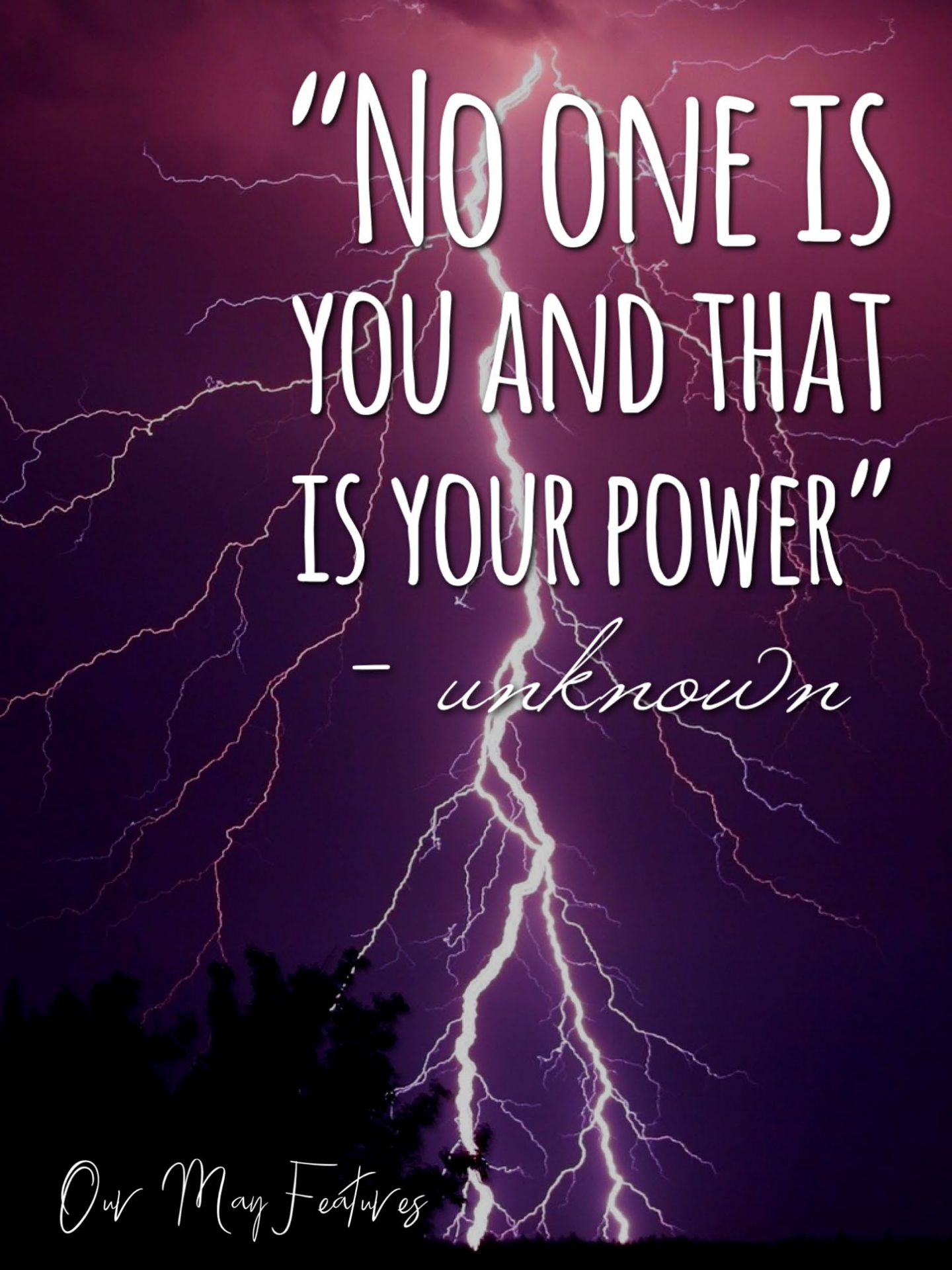
This volatile man could hum and rake in the yard, could make leaf piles for me to leap into with the same hand provoked by my brother. Why then did he continually support my brother's irresponsibility, that hand bearing money to feed his constant demands, while ignoring my quiet acquiescence, my complacency? I was confused at the violence of his hand, the dichotomy of perverse generosity. Did being a girl make me inconsequential like my mother, while the rebellious nature of my brother was simultaneously assaulted and rewarded so many times?

My father's hand sometimes held both a glass of scotch and a lit cigarette as the ice rattled on the way to his lips. I would stare at that hand, studying his large meaty fingers, in contrast to the smooth, quiet hands of my mother that I could easily envision taking a roast from the oven or wiping dishes dry. His hand spoke an immense presence, like a barely held-back caged beast, biding time before lashing out.

I envisioned my father being held captive by his highly stressful job; his refuge was working outdoors, away from contract negotiations where those hands pounded typewriter keys and tightly grasped a telephone receiver. Those too-soft indoor hands had to be insulated by gloves-protected from the harsh outdoor environment that he loved. I learned from those gloves; the insulation I wore against my father's harshness was my mother, shrinking in her shadow, watching for signs of danger and taking cues from her practiced eye.

Once, my family attended a magic show. I watched carefully as the magician's left hand rose, leading the audience's eye away from his right hand, which covertly dropped a coin into his pocket. The two hands then quickly swiped across each other, and the coin was gone! Was I the only one who had seen, who had not been fooled by his sleight of hand?

As my father's hand rose smoothly to place his hat carefully on a hook, my eyes trained to follow the movement like in the magic show, to be transfixed by the illusion, I wasn't fooled. There was no magic, no sleight of hand, as I knew well the alter-ego of that other unpredictable hand.



"NO ONE IS
YOU AND THAT
IS YOUR POWER"

— *unknown*

Our May Features

REBECCA DORKINS

Poet Feature



<https://www.instagram.com/cancerpoet/>

I grew up with not only the most beautiful coastline in the UK on my doorstep, but with narrow streets seeped in literature as I bear the name of Daphne DuMaurier's best selling book, Rebecca. Fowey's beaches and history were footsteps away and after more than a decade as a long haul flight attendant based at Heathrow living near Gatwick airport I now work for a charity supporting those with sensory loss in a fundraising role.

Searching for #poetry on instagram I came across Open Door poetry and was drawn to your core statement "Your words matter." At a moment of fear the right words, at the right time, can comfort more than anything; something I have really thought more and more about in recent years for a whole variety of reasons.

I am 'new' to poetry in many ways; in other ways I've had a lifetime of introductions and have taken the opportunity of lockdowns to delve further into discovering and utilising some moments of creativity as they arise and attempting to write some poetry of my own. I think the last time I really did this was many years ago at school when I read one of my poems at our poetry evening.

REBECCA DORKINS – POET FEATURE

In 2016 I was diagnosed with Breast Cancer and to deal with, manage, face, approach, and cope with cancer at any age, and any stage in life is tough. Cancer is life changing, massively impacting and alters your direction and focus, and quite frankly is a massive bloody inconvenience and upheaval. All the medical words enforce change, direction and focus with scans, operations and drugs with 5 pages of side effects. Coping with cancer during a worldwide pandemic without the simplest of support such as a face-to-face chat over a cup of tea makes it nearly impossible and takes many of us to new breaking points.

Yet Impossible becomes possible in a pandemic, when there is no other choice.

After the Manchester attack in 2017 Tony Walsh aka 'longfella' read the emotive poem 'This is the place'. Something in his delivery made me search for more poetry. At that moment it seemed so much that words really mattered and translated to hundreds witnessing and many thousands watching on television what that familiar city overflowing with culture was really feeling in a way no news journalist could.

Search to enjoy 'This is the place': <https://forevermanchester.com/this-is-the-place-fm/>

Shine cancer support is a charity which provides peer support (on zoom at the moment) to any young adults in the UK in their 20's, 30's, 40's with any cancer and I volunteer with Shine Sussex. Through Shine I was invited to take part in the BBC Radio 4 poetry pharmacy, an opportunity to be prescribed a poem by William Sieghart CBE and founder of National Poetry Day to soothe the soul. Trust me, it was so much more comforting than any medication! William listened and prescribed the last verse of the simply beautiful poem 'New every morning' by Susan Coolidge, and encouraged me to read this out loud when moments of anxiety hit - something I'd recommend for anyone to try and let me know how you get on at @cancerpoet on instagram!

Wouldn't it be wonderful if in this troubled world we all had someone to prescribe us a poem which would so perfectly fit and soothe each difficult moment?

After the Poetry Pharmacy was broadcast in January 2020 and Covid 19 led to lockdown I turned to the wonderful book 'The Poetry Pharmacy' and decided to start my page @cancerpoet. So I am a poetry newbie, but excited to know there is a new place where words so clearly matter. I have witnessed time and time again how language can positively impact approaching the cancer rollercoaster. For most people with any life altering health matter saying something, however awkward you feel, is better than saying nothing. Sending a supportive message in a poem could be just the words which will really matter.

REBECCA DORKINS – POET FEATURE

CANCER CIRCLES

If life is an everlasting circle, what happens when cancer gets chucked in?
There's an interruption in the flow, even just hearing the word makes you stop.
The ripples of cancer, in my experience: stop, start, flow, adjust and change that circle of supposed life.
It pushes against everything you thought you knew, had planned, hoped and expected.
Life with cancer is still life, even if it's damaged, changed, shrunken, and been forced in a totally different direction. If life with cancer is still life then maybe the circle of life will be like water and always find a way past and back to continue and flow once more.

WHEN A FRIEND DIES

My friend died last week, and someone on Facebook wrote that she lost her battle, and I almost hit delete.
There is no battle, no armor, no war,
Just a knowledge that we have really been here before.
Watching a friend fade away, knowing that will be me one day, makes things more real, more surreal, more believable than any other day.
Death is closer, and we grieve in our own way.
After you have sat across from a friend and shared chats, coffee and cakes and watched them slip to someone with a beating heart asking should I buy the shoes or will I be dead before I can wear them?
It's surreal and wrong and no cancer fighting language changes that and life for those taking part goes on.

LOTTE JEAN

Author Feature

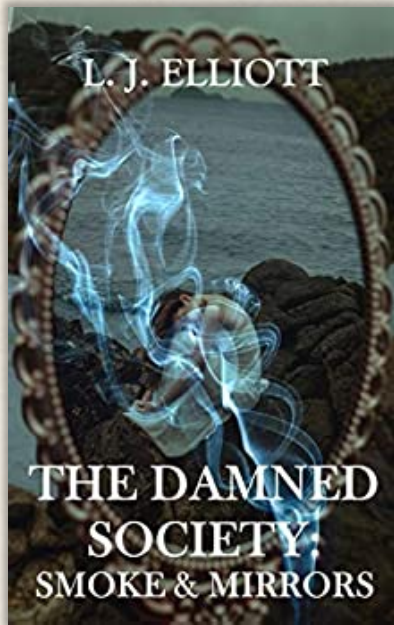


Lotté Jean Elliott is an Author from North-Eastern England who began as an avid reader before picking up a pen one day and started using her imagination as a tool to create a new universe just like her favourite fictional ones. Through literature, she saw a whole new world open up, and ever since she put pen to page, she has not stopped diving into the deepest parts of the mind and pulled out words that could inspire through poetry or start an adventure with a new character. When she isn't writing novels, poetry, or screenplays with her sister Francesca, Lotté loves nothing more than to find inspiration for life through art films, music, exploring museums, and language learning. She loves to explore the deepest meaning behind things and gain new perspectives of the world in which we inhabit.

<https://www.instagram.com/lottelauv/>

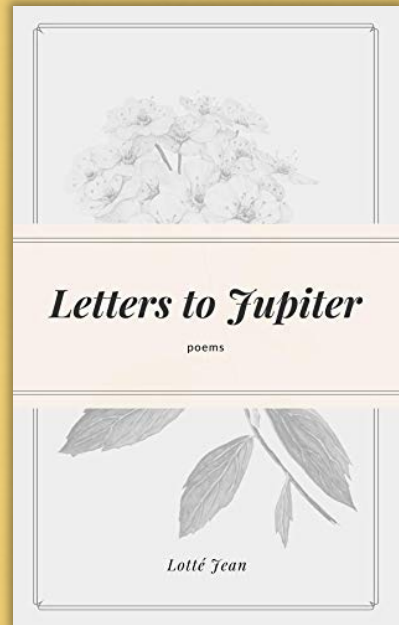
<https://twitter.com/lottelauv>

<https://www.theelliottscreative.com/>



Lexia Luccen is a seventeen-year-old girl with a fiery power that is slowly destroying the last fragments of her sanity. Having lost her abusive father, Lexia is left scarred from the way he treated her and by the grief of his death. When she accidentally uses her ability to create a devastating explosion that takes many lives, she is moved from her life of solitude into the hectic youth facility that is Lucida.

https://www.amazon.com/Damned-Society-Smoke-Mirrors-ebook/dp/Bo8MWTv3QS/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=the+damned+society&qid=1614175620&sr=8-1



Letters to Jupiter is a poetry collection that explores a tale of the fragility of the mind. With each poetic letter, written by an unknown narrator seeking to let go of the past, we see life at its darkest time, brightest, and examine how much a person can grow after a life-changing event.

https://www.amazon.com/Letters-Jupiter-Lott%C3%A9-Jean-ebook/dp/Bo8LT1K39V/ref=as_li_ss_tl?dchild=1&keywords=%22letters+to+jupiter%22&qid=1603975342&sr=8-1&linkCode=sl1&tag=thisliterarylif-20&linkId=65c092cb2a969a084908f6f624954fbd&language=en_US

LOTTE JEAN – AUTHOR FEATURE

Excerpt from ‘The Damned Society’

Prologue

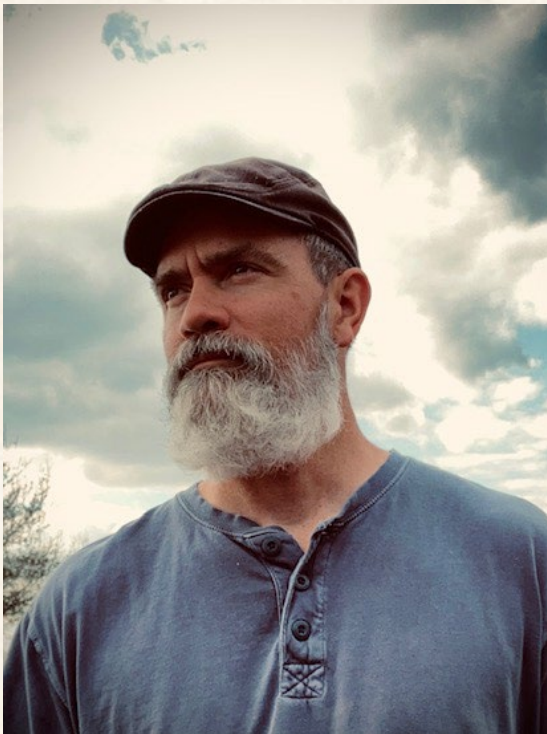
The smoke built around me with speed, carrying a taste of destruction as it vaped through my senses. The air gushed past my skin, getting heavier in pace with each breath I took. The smell of burnt paper lingering as it flowed around in the destructive zone that I was creating. I had never lost control like this before, yet at the same time, had never felt so happy about it. My mind was not instantly filled with regret or sadness at the fact I had let my power control me. In fact, it was quite the opposite. I was glad because it was the thing that ultimately helped me out in the end. For once, we had partnered up and were working together. I had never felt such strength from it before. It didn't hurt, it just felt like it was a part of me now and like my power had momentarily become one with my soul. I closed my eyes and let the solidarity marinate in every moment we bonded together as I knew the feeling would not last forever and so, as I clenched my fists and the energy poured out of my body, for once in my life, I had no regret about harming something or about letting go of control. My mind and soul were finally free.

One

“Here we go again.” The words flew out of my mouth effortlessly as I heard my bedroom door crash open. My aunt entering the space with another look of determination to get me out of bed, crinkling her aged face. It was another episode of, *Do What I Think Is Best For My Niece, Even If It Is Not*. I threw my blanket over my head just as the morning sunlight bathed my room with a pool of golden radiance as my Aunt Sylvia stormed her way in and drew back the curtains almost viciously. Something she had begun doing every morning this past week to try and finally get me out of my self created blanket cocoon. Instead of being happy another morning had dawned upon me, I dreaded entering the real world. As the golden shimmer poured through the cracks of my blanket, I wanted to hide further under my white cotton shield and just dissolve away into my mattress. “Aunt, get out. I want to sleep,” I grumbled from under the covers, even though I had a feeling it was going to be a waste of words today. I had pulled this trick too many times already. The game that was hiding away from my problems. “Come on,” Sylvia groaned back in her familiar stressed tone as I heard her feet shuffle across the wooden flooring and stop beside my bed. I dug further under as she suddenly tried to tug away my blanket and the sunlight spilled in even brighter around the space, projecting her shadow onto the floor with its illumination as my eyes started to peek through the cracks. “You are going to college today whether you like it or not. Now come on, you can’t afford to miss another day.” Silence lingered for a few moments before I felt a hand latch around the fabric above my head. The Damned Society 12 “Lexia, you are seventeen, not seven. I’m not playing this game anymore.” She tugged at the blanket edges even harder to try and snatch it away and after a few more annoying moments of fighting to stay hidden, she sadly succeeded and my barrier flew to the ground. I hissed like a vampire as the brightness that surrounded the room hit my eyes. I sure felt like one of late, seeing as neither my skin nor my eyes had seen the light of day since I had locked myself in my room for so long. Three weeks now and counting. The only times during that period that I did leave was when Sylvia left for work, after giving up on trying to get me out of bed. I would scuttle to the bathroom and then the kitchen to stock up on some food, with my blanket wrapped around me, continuing to be the shield that repelled away my reality. And it had been working—I wasn’t thinking of anything. However, given how oddly stern she seemed this morning compared to other attempts this week, I really did have a feeling my time of hiding from reality was up.

JOSEPH VAUGHAN

Author Feature



<https://www.instagram.com/joseph.elliott.vaughan/>

Joseph Elliott Vaughan lives on a small farm in South Texas with his wonderful wife and five beautiful children. He is a graduate student at Stark College and Seminary, a preacher at a small church in Orange Grove, TX, and a civilian employee. He enjoys the outdoors and capitalizes on every opportunity to spend time in nature.

Joseph has enjoyed writing ever since he was a small boy. His first experience in writing poetry was when he wrote a poem for a friend who had just broken up with his girlfriend in Junior High. The poem was a success and inspired Joseph to pursue writing poetry more.

Throughout young adulthood Joseph continued to write poems here and there as a hobby. A few years ago he began to post his poems on social media and was encouraged to compile them into a book. In February of 2020 he released his first book of poetry called *Fruition*.

Inspiration flowed throughout 2020 and on into 2021 which allowed him to produce his most recent book *Reflection* in March of this year.

Joseph is highly influenced by 19th and 20th century poets such as Henry Kendall, T.S. Eliot, Robert Frost, Emily Dickinson, Walt Whitman, and many more. His poems follow a simple rhythm and rhyme structure which gives them a classical feel. Themes of redemption, victory, personifications of nature, life and death run throughout his poems, giving the reader an opportunity to reflect on the deeper aspects of life.

Both of Joseph's books are available on Amazon.

JOSEPH VAUGHAN – AUTHOR FEATURE

PRAYERFUL COMPLAINTS

One night while I was kneeling,
By the nightstand near my bed,
I brought the Lord In heaven,
The complaints inside my head:

"Lord I'm tired of living,
In this dwelling made of dirt,
If I had a nickel and dime,
I'd have twice of what it's worth.

"The rafters are so drafty,
The walls, how they quake!
When I get one thing fixed,
Seems three others brake!

"I wouldn't ask a canine,
To abide in this abode,
He'd be much better off,
On the side of some dirt road.

"The plumbing is disgraceful,
Leaks spring up everywhere,
The pipes so thin and rusty,
Are broke beyond repair.

"The yard has lost its luster,
The grass has died away,
It pains me just to view it,
When I pass by it each day.

"Forgive me for complaining,
But I have to get it out,
Since I've told you 'bout my body,
Now let me tell you 'bout my house!"



Whether you are relaxing in your comfy chair or on the go, these short and impactful poems are for you. Living in a fast pace world we often allow the simple things in life to pass us by. This book of poetry will help the reader slow down and reflect on the deeper treasures of life.

[https://www.amazon.com/Reflection-Poems-Joseph-Elliott-Vaughan/dp/Bo8XXZXR6N/ref=mp_s_a_1_1?dchild=1&qid=1615672930&refinement_s=p_27%3AJoseph+Elliott&s=books&sr=1-](https://www.amazon.com/Reflection-Poems-Joseph-Elliott-Vaughan/dp/Bo8XXZXR6N/ref=mp_s_a_1_1?dchild=1&qid=1615672930&refinement_s=p_27%3AJoseph+Elliott&s=books&sr=1-1)

1

FALLEN STAR

When stars fall the heavens weep
And scar earth's darkened sky,
With bursts of light fully trailing
Sending wonder to my eye.

You were a brilliant star to me;
In the end you found your light.
With one last burst of vigorous life
You faded from my sight.

Surely the heavens weep with me
As tears fall down like scars,
For they, too, know how it feels
To mourn for fallen stars.

I join the heavens' doleful dirge
And mourn my fallen star!

LET'S STEAL AWAY!

In the early sunrise of innocent love,
With youthful passion as free as a dove,
My love, my bride, in her beautiful way
Would summon me near and gently say:

Come my beloved, let's steal away!
The bluebonnets blossomed, the birds are at play,
Springtime is on us, let's seize the day!
Come, my beloved, let's steal away!

How beautiful was her flowing hair!
Her eyes so bright and cheeks so fair.
When morning light turned bright midday
Still my beloved would gently say:

Come my beloved, let's steal away!
The meadow is dancing in sunlight ray,
The children are napping, in bed they lay
Come, my beloved, let's steal away!

Then years passed by with rapid speed,
Her health declined and time decreased.
Knowing she reached the close of day,
With raspy voice she would gently say:

Come my beloved, let's steal away!
Heaven is dawning with break of day,
Our Savior is waiting in golden array,
Come, my beloved, let's steal away!

Then together, forever, we stole away...

JANE FITZGERALD

Author Feature



<https://www.facebook.com/JanesPoetry/>

Poetry has been my passion since childhood. I am a sensitive and enthusiast writer who explores feelings about people, nature and time. I do not live to write, but can not live without writing. It was my good fortune to study poetry with David Ignatow at Columbia University where I earned a Master of Arts Degree. One of the most interesting and rewarding experiences in my life was being an exchange student on a farm in Denmark. I am still close to the family and have seen them often over the years. I have written many poems about this experience which opened new doors on my perspective of life.

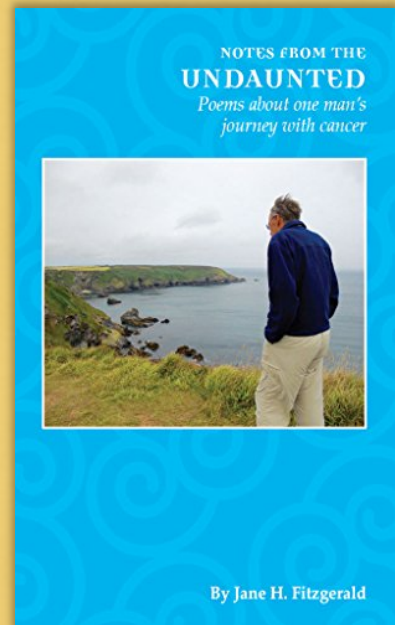
As a young mother of two children I would often stay up late at night writing poetry, a habit that has persisted until this day many years later. When the children went to school I taught elementary and middle school and created an American Colonial History Curriculum for the fifth grade.

In retirement I taught ESL to Guatemalan immigrants. I have an adopted grandchild from Guatemala, plus five others. My four books are on Amazon under Jane H Fitzgerald. My latest book, Notes From the Undaunted, is the most meaningful to me. The description explains why. The man in the book is my husband. This is a serious topic, but cancer affects so many people that the book has had a positive response. I am grateful if my writing can help others not to feel alone in their struggles.

JANE FITZGERALD – AUTHOR FEATURE



https://www.amazon.com/Jane-H-Fitzgerald/e/B01MSW2FLO/ref=dp_byline_cont_ebooks_1



A strong, healthy man has a routine chest x-ray and a terrifying result is discovered. Not only does his body harbor cancer, but it is stage four metastasized melanoma. How will he handle this deathly diagnosis emotionally and physically? The safe life he knows has suddenly vanished. Is death imminent? Can revolutionary treatments save his life? Every excruciating minute holds an unknown fate. How do his wife, children and friends react to this unexpected life changing threat?

https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B077THG629/ref=dbs_a_def_rwt_bibl_vppl_i2

JANE FITZGERALD – AUTHOR FEATURE

VANTAGE POINT

He's a solitary silhouette
on a windswept point
Weighted by the crucible
of an illness like a howling tempest
The roiling sea and craggy boulders
are like vivid images of his inner self
Rough paintings of a rugged path
Blind fate has thrust upon him
He stands alone unflinching
Braced against the gusting gale
Divining his destiny

The chained man is escorted
By an armed blue suit
for a bathroom break
We are held tightly captive by
One plastic bag after another
Dripping drops of hope toward
Another phantom holiday
Fate suspended from a pole
Results slowing emerging
The agony of not knowing

THE ER

It's the morning before Christmas We
are frantically racing to the ER A
white coat settles us in a tiny cubicle
Adjacent to a criminal in shackles
guarded by two laconic policeman

In haste we had abandoned
a colorful holiday table
Never to be graced by guests
It could be any day in the ER
For us it was to have been
A celebration of togetherness

Instead it's tubes and beeps
Waiting, endless waiting
Can they bring us back from the edge
Did we notify all the guests
Did we turn the oven off

Did we lock the front door
Is the dog in her
crate
Will the IV revive or drown
us Did we turn the TV off
What will the guests do
Their planned day is empty

Ours is full of excruciating
anxiety Emanating like static from
a radio Pulsating in the cubicle
Flooding the sterile shiny halls

The grim man is unshackled
Discharge papers in hand
We are finally let go,
released But not to freedom
The test results command
Return in two days
The ER is waiting

JANE FITZGERALD – AUTHOR FEATURE

THE INVADER

The sun rose glowing once
again The newspapers arrived
on time The comforting smell of
coffee
Floated through the rooms
All was right with the world
When without warning
A warring Invader
Entered our souls and
bodies Unwilling to
acknowledge it We
attempted ignorance Its
persistent presence
Pounded our minds
No mountain of wishing
Could expel this evil
stranger Its strength and
malignancy Forced us to
struggle
We were exposed
Brutally vulnerable as if
Chained at gunpoint or
Lost on a shrouded battlefield
Our days transformed into an
unending contest
Against a virulent enemy within
Hope was like reaching for a star
Our mornings rose with sorrow
Our evenings faded in fear Life
will never, ever again Be the
simple enjoyment of just
mornings with
the radiant sunrise
coffee
and
newspapers

SURVIVAL

Time is impartial
It just happens
Events are random
They strike without warning
It's our reactions
That determine the day
Can we handle the
Success or disappointment
Are we the oak or the willow
An organism is only as
healthy as its ability to change
to endure, persevere
That's survival
That's what we face
Moment by moment
With or without
Consciousness
Until the earth
Marks its claim

JANE BAYLISS

Poet Feature



<https://www.facebook.com/groups/moresuccessfulsubmissionsbyamandajane/>

Amanda-Jane Bayliss (West Yorkshire, England) is an exciting new poetess who has been offering her creativeness to publishers in February 2021, and already her work is proving to be a success. On her last count, 20 publishers have accepted her work, this includes work that publishers have already published or is upcoming. The count includes digital and printed work. Her work will be printed in zines and a handful of different anthologies which will be printed in America, Australia, and England. In May her poem Frozen Doe will be read as part of the TableRock festival which is taking place in Texas. Amanda-Jane's dream is to present her own collection of creativeness in print but at the moment her dream is at an early stage. She is beginning to group her work together and gather different ideas. She suggests that her success is down to her writing in different forms and about different genres. Her work can leave the reader with a warm glow or leave them in suspense and gripping for more.

Amanda-Jane works at her local college supporting students with their studies and encourages them to chase their dreams, she acknowledges that her story should be an inspiration for others and explains that no one should ever be afraid of the unknown. She asks what happens if the unknown is a story of success, but you never try to create your chapters? She also encourages her teenage son to follow his dreams and tells him not to be afraid of the unknown.

JANE BAYLISS – POET FEATURE

THANK YOU

Thank you
For always been there
Following me everywhere I go.

You are my angel
The guardian of my soul.

I feel your love
Your power
Energizing my glow.

You light my path
Encouraging me
To live my life to the full.

Without you, my world would be dark
And I know I would stray.

WITHOUT YOU

Without you
The day will deliver darkness
There will be no sun
Nor moon.

The flowers will droop
Their colours will fade.

Without you
The birds will not tweet
Life would not be so sweet
My heart would be black.

I would be blue
To live
Without you.

PRECIOUS BEAUTY

A crystal clear
Tear

Drifting
Slowly

From a precious
Emerald eye

Landing
Gently

On to my
Feathered heart

Your
Pearled smile
Shines bright

A SHADOW'S SHADOW

A
Shadow
On the heart
Departs your sight
Losing connection to a love so bright

Like a black cat, patrolling in the dead
Of night, flaunting
Proudly in
The cold
Light

HOW DO YOU

SUPPORT YOUR FAVORITE AUTHOR?

BUY THEIR BOOK

GIVE THEIR BOOK AS GIFTS

REVIEW THEIR BOOK ON AMAZON

AND GOODREADS

(REVIEWS ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN YOU KNOW)

LIKE AND FOLLOW THEIR SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

SHARE SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS THAT YOU LIKE

RECOMMEND THEM

TO YOUR LIBRARY, BOOKSTORE,

GOODREADS, AND TO FRIENDS

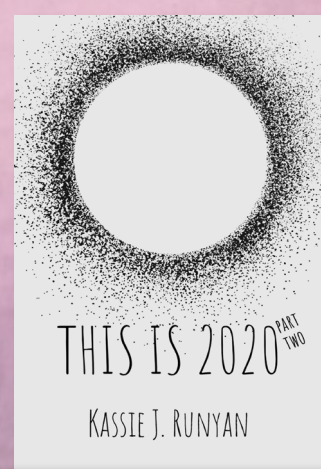
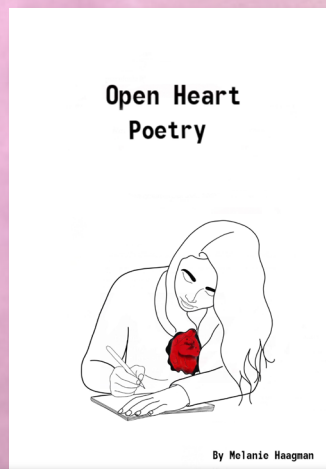
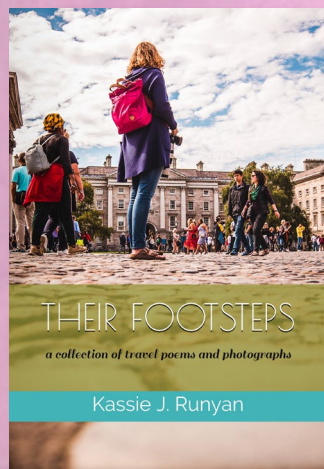
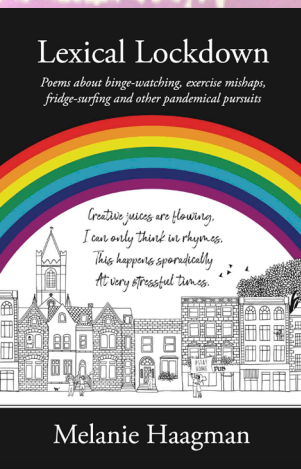
POST A PHOTO AND LINK OF YOU AND THE BOOK

TO YOUR OWN SOCIAL MEDIA PAGES

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

On the following pages – please find our recommended books by our featured writers for the current quarter. All previous book recommendations are available on our website. Join us in supporting these amazing authors!

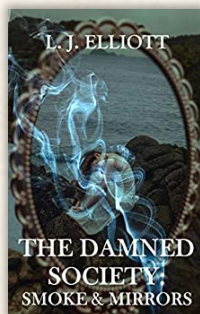
Below you can find the current books out by our co-creators, Mel & Kassie, and go find purchase links on <https://www.opendoorpoetrymagazine.com>



RECOMMENDED BOOKS

The Damned Society

Lexia Luccen is a seventeen-year-old girl with a fiery power that is slowly destroying the last fragments of her sanity. Having lost her abusive father, Lexia is left scarred from the way he treated her and by the grief of his death. When she accidentally uses her ability to create a devastating explosion that takes many lives, she is moved from her life of solitude into the hectic youth facility that is Lucida.



https://www.amazon.com/Damned-Society-Smoke-Mirrors-ebook/dp/B08MWTV3QS/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=the+damned+society&qid=1614175620&sr=8-1

Letter To Jupiter

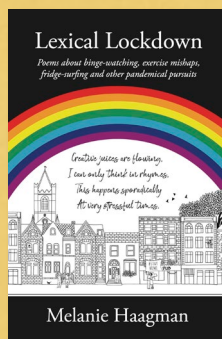
Letters to Jupiter is a poetry collection that explores a tale of the fragility of the mind. With each poetic letter, written by an unknown narrator seeking to let go of the past, we see life at its darkest time, brightest, and examine how much a person can grow after a life-changing event.



https://www.amazon.com/Letters-Jupiter-Lott%C3%A9-Jean-ebook/dp/B08LT1K39V/ref=as_li_ss_tl?dchild=1&keywords=%22letters+to+jupiter%22&qid=1603975342&sr=8-1&linkCode=sl1&tag=thisliterarylfe-20&linkId=65c092cb2a969a084908f6f624954fbd&language=en_US

Lexical Lockdown

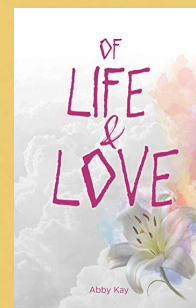
It's the year of 2020 Which no one will forget, When we fought a lethal virus That posed a deadly threat. Mel rhymes her way through lockdown, It enables her to cope, And in her witty verses Spreads positivity and hope,



https://www.amazon.co.uk/Lexical-Lockdown-binge-watching-fridge-surfing-pandemical/dp/1913567257/ref=sr_1_1?crid=3E27QHDCWSJHW&dchild=1&keywords=lexical+lockdown&qid=1599247906&prefix=lexical%2Caps%2C221&sr=8-1

Of Love & Life

Of Life and Love is the debut collection of poetic works by Ms. Abby Kay herself. Touching on Life's good, bad, and everything in-between as well as delving into the heartaches, intimacies and lust-fueled moments of Love, this collection is everything a hopeless romantic at heart would crave to put words to emotions like never before.

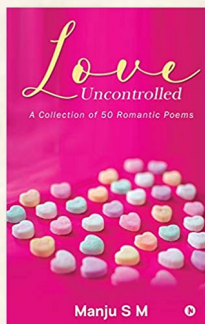


https://read.amazon.com/kp/embed?asin=B08T85GDDQ&preview=newtab&linkCode=kpe&ref_=cm_swr_kb_dp_4YoQJXMNC6FXE366Ko15

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

Love Uncontrolled

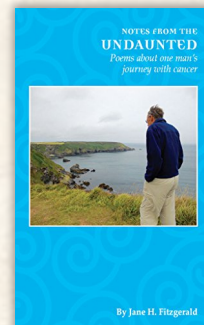
'Love Uncontrolled' is Manju S M's first poetry collection. The collection contains heart-melting poems based on several relatable life experiences. The poems ooze love and depict the beauty and the complexity of love using several scientific concepts like diffusion, latent heat, catalyst, etc., throwing a different light on both science and love.



https://read.amazon.com/kp/embed?asin=Bo8W26478Z&preview=newtab&linkCode=kpe&ref_=cm_s_w_r_kb_dp_PVHYA8Q5ZZP3XS7ABQTP

Note From The Undaunted

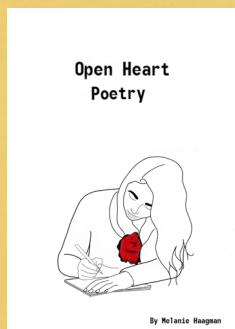
A strong, healthy man has a routine chest x-ray and a terrifying result is discovered. Not only does his body harbor cancer, but it is stage four metastasized melanoma. How will he handle this deathly diagnosis emotionally and physically? The safe life he knows has suddenly vanished. Is death imminent? Can revolutionary treatments save his life? Every excruciating minute holds an unknown fate. How do his wife, children and friends react to this unexpected life changing threat?



https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B077THGG29/ref=dbs_a_def_rwt_bibl_vppi_i2

Open Heart Poetry

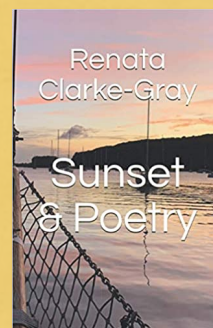
Open Heart Poetry is filled with poems about pain, determination, hope, anxiety and humour. Part One delves into my daily battle with OCD and the impact this has on my life. It encourages others to speak out about invisible pain and spread the word. Part Two contains light-hearted, humorous poems about relatable experiences.



https://www.amazon.co.uk/Open-Heart-Poetry-Melanie-Haagman/dp/1527238407/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=open+heart+poetry+melanie&qid=1599401368&s=digital-text&sr=1-1-catcorr

Sunset & Poetry

Sunset & Poetry is a book, where I share the collection of sunsets that I captured through photographs on my trips and combined it with my poetry.

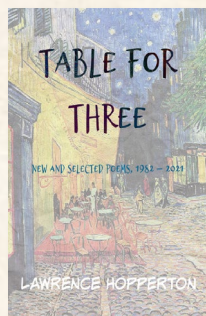


https://www.amazon.com/Sunset-Poetry-Renata-Clarke-Gray/dp/B08PJPQLBW/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=renata+clarke-gray+sunset+and+poetry&qid=1617151250&sr=8-1

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

Table For Three

The spirit dwells among us in the people we love, in the things we do, and in the places we hold dear. There are numerous memorable poems in Table for Three such as "Twenty-four Line Loaf," "Ordinary Sunday," and "Barra." Hopperton proves that love endures in the face of loss and joy prevails against the challenges of sadness.



<https://enroutebooksandmedia.com/tableforthree/>

Their Footsteps

This poetry collection follows Kassie through her own travel adventures. Written in the moment and on the road so that the experiences wouldn't be forgotten. Combined with a few of her favorite photos from those travels to further drive the imagery that is created with the words. Follow Kassie, from the coast of Oregon to the Himalayan Mountains, as she shares her experiences in the same way she fell in love with it; through the written word.



<https://www.kassiejrunyan.com/their-footsteps>

This is 2020

Explore the moments of 2020 as we pass through each month together. Kassie paints the world as it happens through poetry and provides a perfectly biased view into some of the impacts across America and beyond. The widespread effects of Covid-19 and the continued fight against racism are rhymed hand-in-hand with the SpaceX rocket launch and the passing of time in quarantine.

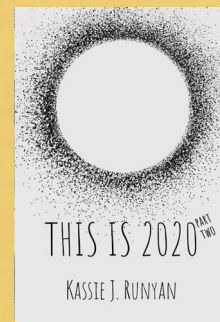


<https://www.kassiejrunyan.com/this-is-2020>

PRE-ORDER This is 2020 part two

<https://www.kassiejrunyan.com/this-is-2020-part-two>

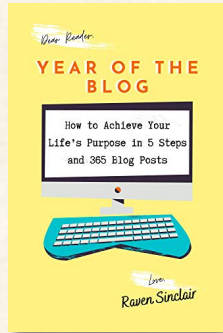
<https://www.kassiejrunyan.com/shop>




RECOMMENDED BOOKS

Year of the Blog

Blogging is your vehicle to happiness. By accepting the “365-Day Blogging Challenge” and committing yourself to write a blog post every day, you can discover your “a-ha” moment and begin living your best life. “Year of the Blog” is an uncomplicated step-by-step guide to help you pursue the things that make you happy and live a purposeful life.



https://read.amazon.com/kp/embed?asin=Bo8S7QG R39&preview=newtab&linkCode=kpe&ref_=cm_sw_r_kb_dp_ECB3QK89A6Z1DQ5D73YF



**CALLING POETS, AUTHORS,
SONGWRITERS, ARTIST, AND POETRY LOVERS!
WOULD YOU LIKE TO SUBMIT
FOR A FEATURE, ARTICLE,
THEME POEM, CREATION, OR EVENT?**

SUBMIT TODAY AT OPENDOORPOETRYMAGAZINE.COM

SUBMISSIONS CLOSE MAY 15TH

JUNE THEME = YESTERDAY

LOOKING FOR WAYS TO SUPPORT OPENDOOR AND HELP US KEEP THE MAGAZINE FREE TO SUBSCRIBE AND FREE TO SUBMIT?

**1. SHARE OUR POSTS ON SOCIAL
MEDIA AND INVITE YOUR
FRIENDS (OR PEOPLE YOU KNOW THAT MIGHT
ENJOY THE MATERIAL) TO
SUBSCRIBE OR TO SUBMIT WORK & TO
LIKE OUR SOCIAL CHANNELS**

**2. PURCHASE OUR QUARTERLY ANTHOLOGY.
NOT ONLY DOES THAT
GIVE YOU A PRETTY COOL
BOOK TO COLLECT AND READ THROUGH
BUT IT ALSO HELPS US COVER A SMALL
PORTION OF OUR COSTS**

**3. BECOME A PATRON. THERE ARE ALL LEVELS OF TIERS
THAT HAVE VARYING LEVELS OF BENEFITS AND
EXCLUSIVE GIFTS – INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED
TO – COFFEE MUGS, TOTE
BAGS, QUARTERLY ANTHOLOGIES,
LISTING AS A PATRON, ETC.**

THANK YOU TO OUR PATRONS!

We recently started a patreon page for additional support and we are so excited to be able to help cover some of our monthly expenses but also see light at the end of the tunnel to hopefully start to open up even more opportunities for artists, poets, and authors! We are so incredibly grateful for your support and can't wait to see what else we can start to do. Patrons get some exclusive gifts based on levels, access to a quarterly Q&A on publishing and poetry and open mic (starting late Q2), and a say in future themes and subjects! If we had a wall where we could put plaques or pour them a beer daily – we would do that too!

Our Wonderful Patrons

Genevieve Ray

<https://www.facebook.com/GenevieveRayPoet/>

Gabriel Angrand

<https://www.instagram.com/avgpoetry>

Jane Fitzgerald

<https://www.facebook.com/JanesPoetry/>
<https://www.amazon.com/Jane-H-Fitzgerald/e/Bo1MSW2FLO>

Mike Ball

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<https://twitter.com/whirred>



**UPCOMING
VIRTUAL EVENTS
FOR MAY!**

PIER POETS

1ST FRIDAY OF EVERY MONTH

Pier Poetry gets together on the first Friday of every month. At present we're meeting on Zoom. You can find all the details of how to join us on our Facebook page.

Pier Poetry is an open mic night run in association with New Writing South. We offer five-minute slots for poets of all different styles and levels of experience, especially those getting behind the mic for the first time. We love seeing people trying out new stuff and taking risks. As the Pier Poetry community has grown over the two years we've been running, we've also loved hearing about regular attendees' pamphlets, publications, prizes and projects. Pier Poetry puts equality at the heart of what we do, and we strive to make the night a welcoming space for all.

<https://www.facebook.com/pierpoets>



PIER
POETS
~~~~~  
**1st FRIDAY OF THE MONTH**



# RUN YOUR TONGUE

## Watch for Upcoming Dates

We've been going since 2012 and were based in Kettering until lockdown; now we are running two regular open mic events via Zoom, where we are attracting performers from all over the world, including the USA, Morocco and Australia.

You can find a list of previous headliners here: <https://www.robreeves.co.uk/runyourtongue>

<https://www.Facebook.com/runyourtongue>  
<https://www.Instagram.com/runyourtongue>



# SOUNDBITES

## MONTHLY – THIS MONTH

Join Soundbites each month for a poetry open mic event that started live in Leeds in March 2019 and moved to Zoom in April last year following lockdown.

The format is simple – a different guest poet joins each month followed by 5-minute open mic slots. You can check out the guest poets' sets under Soundbites on our website [heartlines.uk](https://www.heartlines.uk).

<https://www.Facebook.com/SoundbitesPoetry>





# HUDSON VALLEY WRITERS GROUP

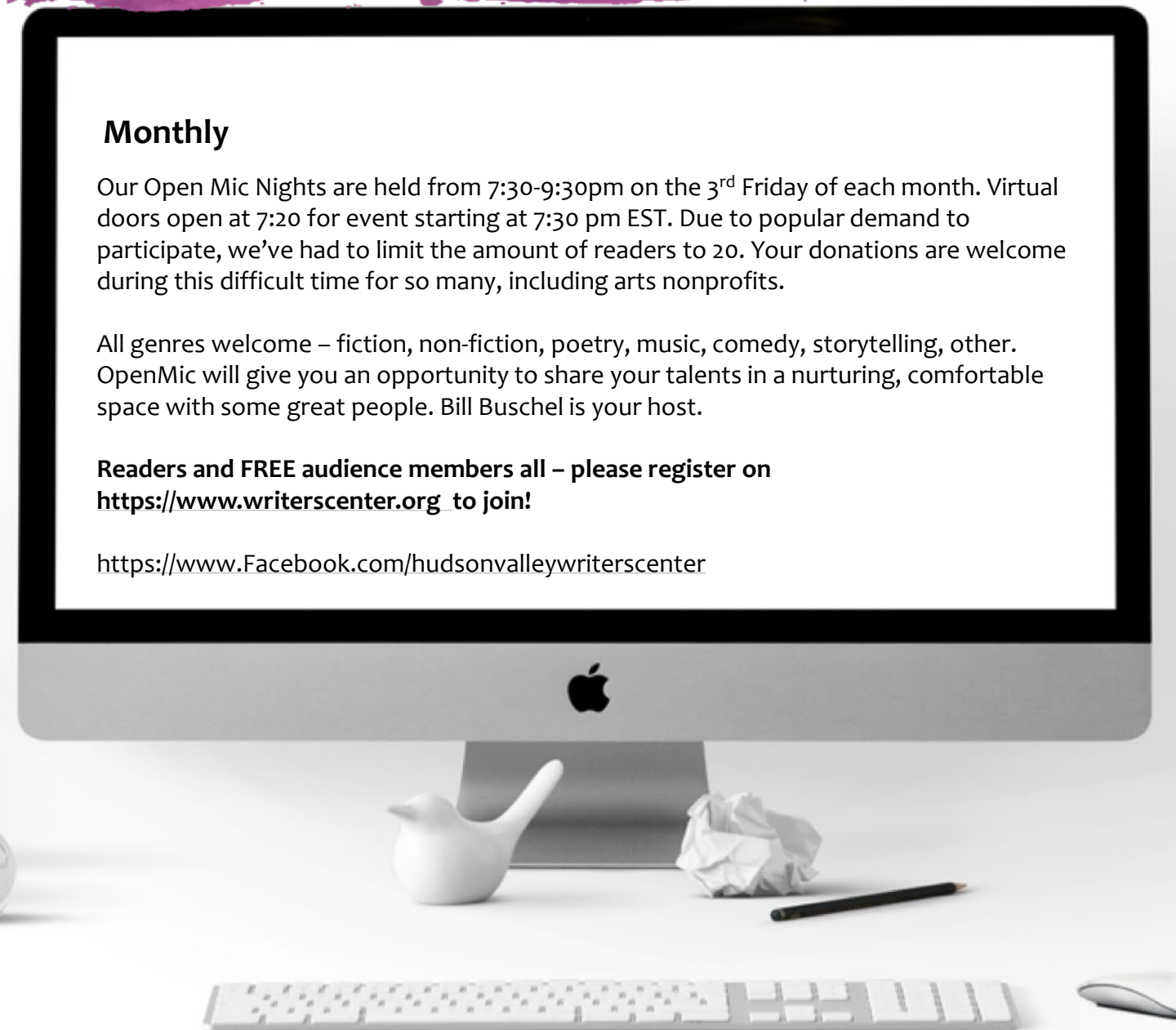
## Monthly

Our Open Mic Nights are held from 7:30-9:30pm on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday of each month. Virtual doors open at 7:20 for event starting at 7:30 pm EST. Due to popular demand to participate, we've had to limit the amount of readers to 20. Your donations are welcome during this difficult time for so many, including arts nonprofits.

All genres welcome – fiction, non-fiction, poetry, music, comedy, storytelling, other. OpenMic will give you an opportunity to share your talents in a nurturing, comfortable space with some great people. Bill Buschel is your host.

**Readers and FREE audience members all – please register on <https://www.writerscenter.org> to join!**

<https://www.Facebook.com/hudsonvalleywriterscenter>



# APPLES AND SNAKES

## READ. WATCH. LISTEN.

Apples and Snakes is England's leading organization for spoken word with an international reputation for producing engaging and transformative work. Since 1982, the organization has advocated for artistic and social change through the power of performance poetry working with artists including The Last Poets, Billy Bragg, Lemn Sissay, Francesca Beard, Kae Tempest, Charlie Dark, and Polarbear.

Apples and Snakes supports and champions poets and poetry in performance, amplifies unheard voices and challenges expectations of what poetry is and can be. Spoken word trailblazers, the company commissions and produces events, develops artists and runs participation programs across the country.

**APPLES  
AND  
SNAKES**

<https://www.facebook.com/applesandsnakes>

<https://www.instagram.com/applesandsnakes>

<https://www.twitter.com/applesandsnakes>

<https://www.ApplesAndSnakes.org>



# ROCKPORT POETRY OPEN MIC

## ONGOING OPEN MIC

Rockport Poetry hopes to encourage the writing and reading of poetry as an actively supported art form in the Rockport, Cape Ann, North Shore community... and beyond.

This will be a comfortable forum for connecting with kindred spirits, as well as sharing poems and ideas.

In addition will it also serve as a reference source for events and workshops and writer's resources.

Rockport Poetry is intended to be a safe space for the development of strong voices and poets of all ages and backgrounds.

Watch for our upcoming Open Mic Nights and more at  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1295270703870830>

# PANTISOCRACY POETRY

<https://www.Facebook.com/pantisocracypoetry>

<https://www.Mixcloud.com/pantisocracypoetry>

We are Pantisocracy Poetry: a Newcastle based open-mic poetry night.

Just before the UK lockdown was imposed, we celebrated our one year anniversary. Happily, we were able to host an anniversary event to reflect fondly on our growth throughout the months. From humble, word-of-mouth beginnings, we have grown to a bustling community of passionate poets and poetry fans alike.

The name of our event says it all about our ambitions, which haven't changed a bit since the first event: just like Coleridge and Southey's intentions to build a brand-new society, one free of prejudice and difference (which were trashed when Southey asked his partner how they should transport the slaves there...), we strive to create a safe space where poets, both novice and experienced, feel confident enough to share their own amazing work with fellow performers against the backdrop of the toon. In keeping with this, the events always have been and always will be completely and utterly free.

In order to get yourself on the bill for any of the events, there is no screening process or, in fact, any foresight required at all - you simply turn up on the night with your poems in hand and a fire in your belly.

Whilst being unable to run live events, we have turned to social media to maintain contact with our community. We have run a number of live 'events' over Facebook and have been blown away by the willingness of local poets to roll up their sleeves, adapt, and get involved once more! More recently, we have begun a podcast, tackling the big issues, such as "What's mightier, the pen or the sword-throat? Do you prefer spoken or written poetry?"

We're very proud of the community that we have brought together over the past year and a half, but we are always looking to grow, so if this all sounds like something you'd like to be a part of, then give us a like, a follow or even a message to ask us any questions, or to just say hello.

Stay safe,  
Pantisocracy Poetry, Newcastle-upon-Tyne.





**LOOKING FOR A SAFE  
SPACE TO SHARE  
YOUR WORK OR ENJOY OTHERS?**

JOIN US AT [FACEBOOK.COM/GROUPS/SCRIBBLESANDPROSE](https://www.facebook.com/groups/scrabblesandprose)



**SCRIBBLES & PROSE**



# **DON'T FORGET TO FOLLOW US AND SUBSCRIBE FOR FUTURE ISSUES AND EXCITING FEATURES!**

**CREATED BY MEL HAAGMAN AND KASSIE J RUNYAN**

**DESIGN AND LAYOUT BY KASSIE J RUNYAN**

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