A LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Digging Deeper with Form: Haiku

One of the perks of this position is that I get to talk to people about poetry. All kinds of people—from folks with a vast experience in the written art to neophytes who haven't written a poem since high school. Inevitably when a new acquaintance discovers that I'm involved with the Poetry Society, they tell me about the poems they've written or the poets that they love. Among those who maybe don't come into contact with poetry on a day-to-day basis, a few common points of reference almost always come up: Edgar Allan Poe. Robert Frost. And Haiku, which is quite possibly the most misunderstood form in contemporary poetry.

This is, of course, not the fault of the layperson. Our system of education is generally designed to break poetic concepts into easily digestible forms. Sonnets are reduced to a rhyme scheme without the understanding of why one writes a sonnet in the first place. The more complicated forms are omitted almost entirely. Too scary to teach, I guess.

"Five, seven, five!" An enthusiast will knowingly exclaim when you ask them about haiku. It's been popularized as being the easiest form of all when, in fact, the writing of a truly excellent haiku is probably one of the most difficult feats in the English language—if it's even possible at all!

Let's dig into why this is, shall we?

**Syllables versus On:**

Your third grade teachers lied to you when they explained that the most important part of a haiku is how many syllables it has. In Japanese, the form contains seventeen On or Morae. Seems easy enough, right? We chop those seventeen beats into three lines and bam! We've got the poem. Except Japanese and English syllables don't exactly translate. Linguists disagree to this day as to the exact definition of these terms, usually settling around "sound" as an acceptable compromise. Essentially, while a haiku is constrained through seventeen On, it might contain only half that many syllables. It turns out that syllable count is the least important part of a haiku. Don't use more than seventeen syllables, but you're actually allowed to use less.

**Subject Matter:**

You were told that haiku can be about anything so long as you get that syllable count correct. But traditional Haiku references seasons in nature. It should contain what is known as a Kigo—a specific term to reference a time of year. Kigos are collected in a physical volume called a saijiki. These were created by haiku masters through direct observation with terms separated through portions of the Japanese calendar. Poets would keep their little books with them constantly, adding new terms as they observed aspects of spring, summer, fall, and winter. Frogs show up in Spring. Snow shows up in Winter. Etc. These lists could grow to hundreds and thousands of words, which would often be copied from a master to a student, and thus passed on.

**The Cutting Word:**

The soul of a haiku, above all else, is the art of kiru. The juxtaposition of ideas or images is separated by a masterful use of the "cutting word." The Japanese term for this is kireji. Imagine if we were to speak out punctuation marks in English, and you start to get an idea of the purpose kireji serves. There is really no part of the English language that effectively translates to the purpose of the cutting word. We separate ideas in sentences using conjunctions or various forms of punctuation that lack the panache of kireji. Indeed, without a directly comparable mechanism in our language, I question whether haiku can be written in our native tongue at all.

Of course, that would be no fun, and besides—Japanese poets swear that it's possible. Who am I to disagree? In your own work, I challenge you to think about these three long overlooked aspects of mastery in writing your own haiku.

Begin by compiling your own personal saijiki. Pay close attention to your surroundings as you move from season to season. Get yourself physically out into the world where you can observe and record nature with all your senses. As an added bonus, this is something you can pass on to other poets down the line. Imagine the joy of a grandchild who receives such a treasure from a poet grandparent.

Let go of the syllable constraints: try using as few words as possible to construct your haiku.

Lastly, but certainly not least? Experiment with your own approach to kireji. Try separating your juxtapositions with words that employ harsh consonants or sharp sounds to replicate the edge of a cutting word.

There's a whole new (or rather, old) world waiting for you in one of your favorite forms of poetry. I wish you adventure on the journey of exploration.

Jeff Hewitt, President
Poetry Society of Virginia
THE 2020 POETRY SOCIETY OF VIRGINIA

Terry Cox-Joseph, PSV Eastern Region Vice President

The 2020 Poetry Society of Virginia Festival will take place on campus in The College of William and Mary Sadler Center. The dates are May 29 and 30, 2020. Friday night runs 7:00-8:30 p.m. and will include a book signing and refreshments. Saturday begins at 10 a.m. and will include a book signing. Closing Banquet will take place at Fords Colony. Keynotes Gregory Donovan and Michele Poulos will present a film on Friday night. Saturday we will have presentations by E. Ethelbert Miller and Lisa Russ Spaar, as well as a panel discussion with all four of the poets. Saturday evening will conclude with a dinner banquet and short reading by the winner of the Virginia Book Award.

SATURDAY POETRY SERIES

Sharon Dorsey

This year’s Saturday series in Williamsburg kicked off the new year with an outstanding group of poets on January 4: Derek Kannemeyer, Terry Cox-Joseph, J. Scott Wilson, and Louise Sharer. Their subjects were diverse; their styles, individualistic; and their talent, obvious. Our masterful M. C., Bill Glose, introduced them in his characteristic comedic style, keeping us smiling. It was a great morning, and we missed all of you who couldn’t be there.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS TO JOIN US:
- Saturday, February 1, at the Williamsburg Library Theatre at 11 a.m.
- Saturday, March 14, at the Stryker Building, Williamsburg at 11 a.m.
- Saturday, April 18, at the Stryker Building, Williamsburg at 11 a.m.
- NO SATURDAY SERIES IN MAY DUE TO POETRY FESTIVAL
- Saturday, June 6, at the Kitzinger Room, James City Library, Croaker/Norge at 11 a.m.

Please note that the March date will be the SECOND Saturday instead of our usual first, and the April date will be the THIRD Saturday, due to lack of library availability on those first Saturdays.

NORTHERN REGION REPORT

Mike Maggio, Northern Region Vice President
mmaggio@poetryvirginia.org

Hello, PSV Northern Region Members and Happy New Year to ALL of you!

I hope you have all had a wonderful holiday season. Whether you celebrate Christmas, Hanukkah, or Kwanzaa or simply enjoy all the festivity, December is always a culturally enriching month with a spirit that brings us all together as one. Let’s maintain that spirit throughout the new year and spread the message as far and wide as we can.

Other than holidays, December was a quiet month, though, as you will see later under Announcements, our members have been busy with their creative activities. (Eight of the current listings are members of the Northern Region.)

In the meantime, please continue to send me your announcements and accomplishments, so I can disseminate them to our members. And thanks to all those who help make our region active and successful, and to Sally Zakariya for gathering each month’s listings.

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS: Please send articles, announcements, and poetry to share with your fellow PSV members. Your work may be unpublished or previously published, but if necessary, don’t forget to include an acknowledgement. Remember to include a brief bio for the Contributors’ page, and keep work apolitical and family friendly. Issues are sent out on even months, so please send to janhoffpoetry@gmail.com by the 15th of odd months.
Everyone has a family story that becomes oral history, passed on miles and years beyond its origin. Versions of “reality” catch up with us: I am amused at the irony of divergent recollections. The Thanksgiving Day Ping Pong Table Chase is legend. I was six, and my older brother turned thirteen the week before Thanksgiving. I was the baby sister who believed without question. He was my hero.

In all accounts, he was chasing me around the ping pong table in the basement of our family home. At some point, he issued an iteration of the classic “I’m going to get you” taunt. The terms of engagement were clear to me.

I was a reasonable child: I evaluated my options as I circled the ping pong table. Keeping one eye on my brother, one on the door out of the basement, I focused on my escape plan. I took a deep breath, said a quick prayer, and made a break for the steps that would get me out of the basement.

I ran up the stairs in desperate quest for escape. I slammed the basement door behind me. This is where “reality” becomes perspective and accounts diverge.

We agree my brother ended up in the emergency room. He wore the cast on his leg for the next six weeks with the pride of a warrior wounded in combat. “It’s not a true holiday family gathering until someone ends up in the E.R.,” is muttered, sotto voce, to ward off injury in other families I know.

My niece was fifteen when she told me the story of how I “threw Dad down the basement stairs and broke his leg on Thanksgiving.” My father, a private pilot, has a saying: “It’s not the fall; it’s the landing.” I leave the mechanical iterations of the event to anyone who chooses to do the physics.

My brother’s version may be hyperbole, but it’s Family Legend. Every family has at least one. I think my brother’s recollection makes a better story, continuity and laws of gravity set aside.

My takeaway is that perspective is relative (pun?). Stories evolve without regard to poetic license. Writers are taught, “Write what you know” and “Don’t let details get in the way of telling the story.” When we relate personal experience, and our readers acknowledge the universality of experience, we invite them to tell their stories.

Now it’s your turn.

POEMS

SOOTHING THE NAUSEA

by Jacqueline Jules

In the weeks before her first treatment, I called every day with a new reminder.

Did you ask your doctor about this? Are you sure he knows about that?

After all, I was the expert, having nursed my sister to her grave.

Amy needed an advocate, someone not as close as her husband or son who were still too shell-shocked to control a situation I knew too well.

A grim diagnosis, a reason to grieve.

I stood by the window, late into the night screaming at a universe so cruel to choose another kind and caring soul as if Heaven needed her more than Earth.

And in the morning, I called Amy with more internet advice on how to fix what could not be fixed.

Until the day she started chemo and she asked me to bring a bag of what she really needed— club soda and crackers, ginger and green apples— recommended remedies to soothe the nausea over a world which makes us cry.
IS TO WAS
by Louise Sharer

My best friend died today.
She passed with difficulty.
Her vibrant spirit more willing
than her cancer-riddled body
to exit this vast mystery.
At her request
I wrote the obituary,
a gift she bestowed.
One of so many
throughout our years.
I had her read it,
she felt honored,
humbled by the words.
Just like her to crown me queen
when I wanted her to wear the tiara.
I long to call her
to tell her my best friend died
to read a poem I’ve just written
to plan time together,
to share a glass of wine.
She knew me like no other,
I knew her secrets, too.
It feels wrong
to be using past tense,
if only this could be fixed by editing.
An author and poet
A keen observer
nurturer and nurse
loving, giving
bold, brave and irreverent.
Sweet friend, did we think we’d end?
I did not. Not ever.
You left before me. I shouldn’t be surprised.
You were always more adventurous.
Save me a table and you know I prefer red.

SWEET TART
by Linda Partee

Folds of crepe paper stacked like fabric
to be smoothed, ruffled, crimped or pleated;
colorful reds, pinks and white
surrounded by crusty-rimmed paste jars,
flimsy lace doilies and blunt scissors,
crimson paper hearts
and cupid stickers to be licked—
all vying to disguise a drab shoebox.

Transformation quivers in the air—
promise in the heart and hands of a child
who will choose the right tools
to create a dreamed masterpiece
that turns a shabby container
into a fancy desk mailbox,
li’d-slot nestled in art,
to summon evidence of belonging.

The fourteenth day of the second month,
thin-ply sentiments slip into dressed boxes
asking, “Will You Be My Valentine?”
with crayoned names printed shaky or bold.
No matter frilly or silly,
it’s the abundance received
that announces peer standings—
paper arrows aimed at hopeful young hearts.

COUNTERPOINT
by Richard Rose

Art, always confrontational,
Shows all knowledge is relational.
Crawlers creeping on all fours,
We make our way on metaphors.
Assault both from the rear and frontal
Compels us to be contrapuntal.

There are no town limits here.
We anchor our craft from fear
The churning swells of voices
Will tip out our devices.
Guiding art or how we think
We use images or sink.
**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Patricia Adler, of Mechanicsville, passed away Nov. 23, 2019. PSV regrets to be the bearer of this sad news. Pat was a great poet but, more importantly, a supporter of a great many other poets, especially of Virginia's finest. Many of you receiving this got your first foray into print fostered by Pat. This link is from Legacy.com where you can access her official obituary: https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/richmond-va/obituary.aspx?n=pattricia-anne-adler-strehl&pid=194545916&fhid=11939

**WIDER PERSPECTIVES PUBLISHING** is proud to specialize in bringing Virginia poets to print. Let's sit down together and start forging your dreams into very real form. The mission is your book in 1/3 the time and around 1/3 the cost of the big publishing houses. Contact HRACandWPP@outlook.com for more information.

James Wilson, Director of Innovation
Hampton Roads Artistic Collective
and Wider Perspectives Publishing

**OPEN MIC AT WILLIAMSBURG LIBRARY:** The Williamsburg Library and the Chesapeake Bay Writers are sponsoring an Open Mic on the third Sunday of every month from 1 – 3:00. Bring your poetry, prose, fiction, or non-fiction and share your writing. For more information, contact Susan Williamson at susanwilliamsonnc@gmail.com.

Talya Chapman lists the following poetry venues for February:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Venue</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Host</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>02-05-20</td>
<td>February Slam!</td>
<td>The Venue on 35th</td>
<td>6:30</td>
<td>Norfolk, VA</td>
<td>Verb Benders</td>
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<tr>
<td>02-06-20</td>
<td>Open-Mic Poetry</td>
<td>C'est Le Vin</td>
<td>7:00</td>
<td>Richmond, VA</td>
<td>Joanna Lee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02-14-20</td>
<td>Poems After Dark</td>
<td>Blue Bee Cider</td>
<td>6:00</td>
<td>Richmond, VA</td>
<td>River City Poets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02-15-20</td>
<td>Words on Fire</td>
<td>Poetry Happy Hour at Firehouse</td>
<td>6:00</td>
<td>Richmond, VA</td>
<td>Host: River City Poets</td>
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<td>Richmond, VA</td>
<td>Host: River City Poets</td>
</tr>
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<td>02-29-20</td>
<td>Poetry Spotlight</td>
<td>Featuring: Cheryl Pallant</td>
<td>1:00</td>
<td>Richmond, VA</td>
<td>Host: River City Poets</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**AROMAS COFFEEHOUSE AND WORD4WORD POETS**

Open Mic Poetry
2nd Tuesday of each month
Sign-up @ 6:30pm
Open Mic @ 7:00pm

The coffee is great, the food is delicious, and we have an Open Mic. We love, support, and encourage First Time Readers in this family friendly venue. Bring a friend. Everyone is welcomed. Hosted by Ann Shalaski, Tanya Cunningham-Jones, & J. Scott Wilson

Aromas Coffeehouse, 706 Town Center Drive, Newport News, VA 23606
Sharon Ackerman’s poem “Equinox” is published in the current issue of The Atlanta Review. Her poem “Points of View” is published in Issue 8 of Heartwood Literary Magazine.

Robert P. Arthur, Past President of PSV, released two books at the Muse in December. Master William and the Finman is a novel with pirates of the Golden Age of Piracy adventure, including an Orkneys’ sorcerer of the sea. Robert P. Arthur: Selected Works presents the best poems the author has written over the last 60 years with major preoccupations including the Eastern Shore, the Chesapeake Bay, Crazy Horse and his woman, Jamestown colonists, inhabitants of Appalachia, the sea, martial arts, Van Gogh, witches, snake handlers, fauna and flora, and more.


Pia Borsheim has had a number of publications this year, including “Wisp” in the We Are Residents Here: Poems from the Bridgewater International Poetry Festival, “Down the Road” in Cumberland River Review, “On the Au Sable River” in Bear River Review, “Maple Drive Lake Esau” in The Olive Press, “Norwegian Krone 1891” and “Thunder Bay” in Virginia Bards Poetry Anthology, and “Doubt” in Apricity Magazine. She has work forthcoming in the Michigan Quarterly Review and in 101 Jewish Poems for the Third Millennium. Her manuscript, Above the Birch Line, has been longlisted for The Able Muse and the C & R book prizes.

Terry Cox-Joseph is not only a published poet, but she also is an accomplished artist with work recently accepted for two poetry journals: Morning Light Swan, White Egret Warwick River, and Journeys will appear in Issue 14 of Split Rock Review, and The Northern Virginia Review’s Editorial Board has selected Hummingbird Fairy and Whangaparaoa to be included in its forthcoming edition to be published in April. See more about Terry on the Contributors’ page.


Claudia Gary’s latest chapbook, Genetic Revisionism, is available at claudiagary611@gmail.com. Her workshop “Whole-Brain Poetry” began on Jan. 25 and will be held in Arlington. For more information and to register, visit https://www.writer.org/event/wi20poe5a/

Katherine Godhardt’s children’s book, A Crane Named Steve, was published in Nov. and made #1 new release in its category on Amazon. Proceeds from sales go to local charities. The book is available at https://katherinegotthardt.com/a-crane-named-steve/.

Neva Herrington’s 4th book of poetry, Among the Absent, was recently published by Finishing Line Press. A retired faculty member of Northern Virginia Community College, she has given readings in a retirement community in Williamsburg and at the Martha Washington Library in Alexandria. She is scheduled for a presentation to a reading group at the Alexandria Library in March and is interested in giving readings in the Williamsburg area where she currently resides.

Donna Isaac has published a poetry chapbook, Persistence of Vision (Finishing Line Press), a cinephile’s poetic look at some favorite movies.

Janice (Jan) Hoffman will share her children’s book, Four Fairy Friends, at the Iris Art Studio in Poquoson on Sat., Feb. 29, from 1-3:00 (501 Wythe Creek Rd Suite 100). She will also be interviewed on Neal Steele’s radio program at 8:05 a.m. on Mon., March 9 (WXGM, Xtra 99.1 FM). In January, she had the honor of serving as a judge for the Poetry Out Loud regional competition sponsored by the Center for the Arts of Greater Manassas/Prince William County, Virginia Arts Counsel, Poetry Foundation, and National Endowment for the Arts. She will serve in this same capacity in Virginia Beach in February.


JoAnn Lord Koff’s exhibit Camera Eyes: On Poetry is currently featured by the Center for the Arts of Greater Manassas/Prince William County, 9419 Battle Street, Manassas, through Feb. 5. Her work is described as “a lyrical ambrosia of poetic writings and captivating photographs.” Come support our friend and published poet and photographer. For more information, contact (703) 330-2787 and/or center-for-the-arts.org.
ANNOUNCEMENTS (cont.)

Mike Maggio’s “Angels” appears in the 2019 Mizmor Anthology. (See also Contributors.)

Joan Mazza has two poems forthcoming in Prairie Schooner and other poems in Rain on the Roofops and Italian Americana. Her poem "Now that he had a taste of war" was published at New Verse News on Jan. 8, 2020. https://newversenews.blogspot.com/2020/01/now-that-hes-had-taste-of-war.html?fbclid=IwAR1CPTVFUIkqv3Tmizfk_CCVhunr6rDxqFTjSF322Yc2DFdTG0XKcs3fY


D.L. (Dan) Pearlman was awarded the 2019 Dogfish Head Poetry Prize for his manuscript Normal They Napalm the Cottonfields. The prize was presented on December 14th at the Dogfish Inn in Lewes, Delaware, and consists of $500 and publication of the winning manuscript by Broadkill River Press. Dan is a native of Norfolk, holds an MFA from George Mason University, and teaches at Tidewater Community College in Chesapeake. He is also the 2019 recipient of the Edgar Allen Poe Prize from PSV.


CONTRIBUTORS

Shari Berk is a poet, writer, violinst, and mental health advocate. First published at the age of ten, she’s proud to be a lifetime member of the Poetry Society of Virginia. She currently resides in rural Eastern North Carolina where her neighbors have granted her permanent “Damn Yankee” status in spite of her accent, which persists after living in the South for over three decades. She believes in the adage by poet Theodore Roethke: “What we need is more people who specialize in the impossible.”

Terry Cox-Joseph is the Eastern Regional Vice President of PSV and a former newspaper reporter and editor. From 1994-2004 she was coordinator for the Christopher Newport University Writers’ Conference and Contest. An award-winning poet and artist, she has been published in Northern Virginia Review and Chiron Review, among others. Her first poetry chapbook, Between Then and Now, was recently released by Finishing Line Press. She has a BFA in illustration from Minneapolis College of Art and Design.

Sharon Canfield Dorsey has published fiction, non-fiction, juvenile fiction, and poetry in magazines, newspapers, journals, and anthologies. She is author of four children’s books: Herman, the Hermit Crab and the Mystery of the Big, Black, Shiny Thing; Revolt of the Teacups; Buddy and Ballerina Save the Library; and Buddy the Bookworm Rescues the Doomed Books. She has also published a book of poetry, Tapestry; a memoir, Daughter of the Mountains; and a new travel memoir, Road Trip. Her work is also included in the anthology Captured Moments.

Jacqueline Jules is the author of three chapbooks: Field Trip to the Museum (Finishing Line Press), Stronger Than Cleopatra (ELJ Publications), and Itzhak Perlman’s Broken String, winner of the 2016 Helen Kay Chapbook Prize from Evening Street Press. Her work has appeared in over 100 publications including Paterson Literary Review, The Broome Review, Sou’s Ear Poetry Review, Hospital Drive, and Imitation Fruit. She is also the author of 40 books for young readers. “Soothing the Nausea” previously appeared in Dragon Poet Review.

Mike Maggio is Vice President for the PSV Northern Region and faithfully submits monthly reports to members in his region and for the PSV newsletter. His latest book, Letters from Inside, is a collection of short fiction.

Linda Kennedy Partee is a regular contributor to Poet’s Domain and other anthologies. As an Osher volunteer instructor, she invites all level of poets to stretch their skills through a 6-week course. Linda is the co-facilitator for the James City Poets, planning member of the Saturday Poetry Series, and member of Creative Critique and the Chesapeake Bay Writers.

Richard Rose is a retired teacher residing in Richmond. His most recent book of poems is Coming Around, published by Brandylane in 2018. On June 6, 2020, highlights from several of his operas and operas by Walter Braxton and Michelle Hampton will be performed at a Composers Forum from 2 to 5 p.m. by Capitol Opera Richmond at Westminster Presbyterian Church.

Louise Sharer is a member of the Williamsburg Poetry Guild and the Poetry Society of Virginia. She is a published and award-winning poet who hails from Minneapolis but has called Williamsburg, Virginia, home for the past thirteen years. She has always found writing poetry a balm that soothes life’s rough spots.