

Ghostly Ghouls and Haunted Happenings

*An anthology of poetry
celebrating spirits, ghosts, ghouls, and things
that go bump in the night.*

**Paul Gilliland
Editor-in-Chief**

Southern Arizona Press

Southern Arizona Press



The mission of Southern Arizona Press is to promote the works of self-published and lesser-known unpublished authors and poets to the rest of the world through publishing themed and unthemed anthologies and assisting in the publication and promotion of their works.

It is our desire to make the voices of these aspiring poets and authors available to as wide an audience as possible with the belief that no writer of poetry or literature should ever have to pay to have their works published.

Ghostly Ghouls and Haunted Happenings.

All rights reserved. Copyright © 2022 by Paul Gilliland and Southern Arizona Press. Except as permitted under the Copyright Act of 1976, no portion of this book may be reproduced or distributed in any form, or by any means without prior written consent of the individual authors or the publisher. Individual works Copyright © retained by the poetic author. Previously published works have been cited and each publication acknowledged to the best of our ability. If any citations have been missed, such errors will be corrected in subsequent reprints.

If you would like your work to be considered for future anthologies, please visit us at <http://www.southernarizonapress.com/current-submissions/> for a full list of current open anthology submissions and submission guidelines.

Published by Southern Arizona Press
Sierra Vista, Arizona 85635
www.southernarizonapress.com

Follow us on Facebook at:
<https://www.facebook.com/Southern-Arizona-Press-112058221245295>

Format, cover design, and edits by Paul Gilliland, Editor-in-Chief, Southern Arizona Press

Poets photos Copyright © retained by submitting poets

ISBN: 9798847628792

Table of Contents

FEATURED POET – Martin Gedge 14

The Darkman
Blood Harvest
The Demons Gate
The Blood Tree
The Riverboat of Madness
The Devil's Pirate
Creeper Feature
Loco-Motive
Chatterbox
Dog Soldiers

Marvin W Wooten II 30

Unearthed
Empty Tombs
Darkness Matters
Haunted Hideaways
Darkest Day Eclipse
Until Sunrise
Twisted Creatures
Shadows Lurking
Punishing Pumpkins
My Nightmares

Pam Impson 42

Haunting
It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year
A Dark and Stormy Night
Fear
Your Halloween Haunting
Another Ghost Story

Usha N Shrinivaasun 52

Frogged Night
A Child's Revenge
The Merry Ghost
Hades in a Hollow
Kindly Ghosts
The Castle of Evil

Jerry Langdon 66

Witchboard
Last Guest
Let Me In
Devour Flesh
Pale Horse

Gavin Prinsloo 74

Give the Devil His Due
Familiar
Acceptance
Fantasy

LaVern Spencer McCarthy 80

Halloween Night
The Halloween Cat
On Halloween
October Moments

Joan McNerney 86

Shhhhh...
Beware
How Trouble Grows
Knave

Moe Phillips 92

Hag of Oak Hollow
The Ghoul
Night Beast
The Midnight Folk

Steve Bowman 98

First Encounter with the Monster
In the Chapel
Haunted Houses
Moonlight Cemetery

Rhiannon Owens 104

Aunty's House
Seeking Shelter
Beneath the Surface of My Eyes
Don't Look Behind

Ashley O'Keefe 112

In Your Dreams
Filling for Her Pies
Where Spirits Dance

Mariam Finch 116

Séance in New Jersey
The Deranged
Witches

Catherine Brogdon 122

The Bird Witch of Newtmire
Spirit Eaters
The Dead Girls of Stoneriddle Bay

Joshua Gage 128

Absinthe Hymns
Ghazal
Ghazal

Carl Butler 132

Buried Alive
Nevermore

Rob Bristol 136

The Elf
Stormy Night

Deborah Mears 140

Spring-Heeled Jack

Ron Conway 142

Late October

Janelle Erin Elizabeth Peters 144

Lady in Black

Elaine Reardon 146

Hallowed Night

Lynn White 148

Magic

Jeanie Sanders 150

La Llorona Fashions a Hat

Joseph A. Farina 152

Songs of the Dead

Johanne Lee 155

Dark, Dark Times

Ross Leishman 158

*Demons Inside
Go with Grace*

Andrew Turgeon 162

A Gory Glory Story

Pat Severin 164

Haunted by Monsters!

Helen Kemp Zax 168

Haunted Happening

Courtney Glover 170

*The Harvest
Lenore*

Ursula O'Reilly 174

*Footsteps
Where the Light Came In*

Ndaba Sibanda 178

*Ghostly Satire
Face-to-face with a Faceless Face*

Jennifer O'Shea 182

The Graveyard

Rp Verlaine 184

Hitchhiker
The Sleepwalker

Michael Minassian 188

Growing Up With a Ghost
Last Night the Dead Returned

Colleen Moyne 194

Trick or Treat
Under the Floorboards

Mike L. Nichols 198

Like a Horror Movie
Pull the Covers to Your Chin

Linda Imbler 202

Mary Roberts
Poe's Annabel Lee

Prayerlife Onyinyechi Nwosu 206

Who Could That Be?
Dark Edges

Dibyasree Nandy 209

The Dying Tenth Month

Lennart Lundh 212

*If you see
Dance with Me*

Valerie Hunter 216

Ghost

Linda Ahrens Brower 218

The Black Cat's Tale

Jerri Hardesty 220

*Halloween Party
The Health Benefits of Gardening*

Michael Lee Johnson 224

*Witchy Halloween
Resurrection Mary*

Paul Gilliland 228

*The Celebration of Samhain
The Night Death Came to Call
An Evening at Palisades Park
The Demons in My Dreams
A Dark and Stormy Night
The Ghosts of Bisbee
Home at Last
The House of the Hill
Homage to E A Poe
The Inmate and the Guard*

Featured Poet



Martin A Gedge

was born the youngest of the boys including seven other siblings. His father was American and his mother Canadian. A big family meant a lot of interaction, great for holidays and thus they all had interests of their own but the one thing they did all enjoyed was music. He

can still remember using the coffee table as a piano while singing to the Beatles and Barry Manilow. “I Write the Songs” is where his interest in writing all started. He was always singing whether you wanted to hear it or not. In his later teens he got so involved in music and listening to all types he started to read albums sleeves and cassette covers going through all the lyric sheets reading and ingesting flow and form. In his early twenties he started working for a video store and found his interest in movies as well, all genres. Although a bit timid when it came to horror/suspense it slowly grew on him. He thought he had discovered an avenue where he can let his imagination go. Where else could he create something and make it seem possibly real. Music and movies became his passion. So, he began writing lyrics, short stories, movie scripts, and poetry. It wasn’t until his late twenties he started to follow his dream of being up stage and front as a lead singer in a rock band. The band travelled around Ontario playing gigs and the venues started off small but

Ghostly Ghouls and Haunted Happenings

found themselves coming into their own when they were asked and honoured to open up for the Pat Travers Band of “Boom Boom Out Goes the lights” fame. Unfortunately, over time in the music business one gets to a point where there are too many chiefs not enough Indians and the band parted ways, but oh what a rush. He always kept writing and singing. He remembers his college professor once told him, “Martin, you have this craft like your always writing a song.”

Since poems can be songs, artists can be poets. He became more of a visionary. He has been writing for more than 30 years and always considers himself to be his worst critic: never satisfied, always changing, but words always come easy to him, visions become clearer, and the path of where he wanted to take his message gives the reader a picture and story and hopefully brings them to a point where they can relate.

He is not inspired by many of the great poets of our time but he has met through social media some very influential minds with a grandeur touch of the written canvas. If he were to consider being inspired through the written word and visions of a genre it would most likely be Stephen King and the Clive Barker, a candle burning at both ends that brings a different mystery to the table.

He has been published in a several anthologies but is yet to release his own book. As his own worst critic, he still is not sure if the interest is out there or if he feels his work is good enough to pursue releasing a book at this point.

He does appreciate the honour of being the featured poet in this anthology and as a humble person in his own right, if his work inspires anyone to follow this avenue, he feels that in knowing, that it is good enough for him.

“Let your mind lead your ink and create your vision for the world to see”

The Darkman

In the dark deep of night while the city she sleeps
through a subway of steam and the silhouette streets
the Darkman awaits in the black of the grade
while the pulse of the traffic slips the heavy charade
he carries a message for the sake of mankind
that evil is coming just a matter of time
in a wave of such fury like a volcanic spill
from the rumbling of stomach to the raging it's will
the armies of thousands will dig from their holes
and rush through the valleys to devour the souls
and the place shall feel chaos as the fever will thrive
the dead will come hunting on all those who survive
there will be no pity and the cities will fall
the Darkman has spoken you must bid to his call
when the shadows come knocking on the doors of the
kings
it's best you get ready for the death that he brings
care to run if you want to but there's no place to hide
cause hell hath no mercy when the devils your ride

Blood Harvest

Deep within the hallow grin in fields of pumpkin spice
it lies in wait in chain and crate to slice and sacrifice
for farming folk will often poke and joke of such affair
but little knows October tows for those who truth or
dare
a time of year to live in fear as kids play in the corn
while words pursue and chant voodoo a devil that is
born
a demon soul with evil goal to harvest every seed
as night to fall as red as ball to curve and cut and
bleed
with lust of blood this brazen stud to lurk into the dark
and take in kind the party line of those who like to
park
and ones to drink beyond the brink as easy as
pumpkin pie
will skin alive as sharp as knife to scream until they
die
and twist of torque with pitch of fork to pin a squiggly
pig
each branch of bone will crack and moan and snap
just like a twig
for just one day a call to prey no one is safe to
breathe
from dawn to dusk for those that lust they cum but
never leave
and I heard it said in papers read those vanish dead
and gone
if you trespass your ass is grass so get off my fucking
lawn

The Demons Gate

Beware to those who dare to dwell
Beneath the bones and broken shell
For they don't care to drown a desperate soul
As thee to swim in through the skin
Of every needle prick and pin
The blood will swarm and curdle every hole

And if your breath to gasping out
The fear that you should get some help
Will only echo down the empty well
For little known your all alone
Your words are bricks and cobble stone
To bury you beneath the gates of hell

The Blood Tree

Alone it sits among the crypts
this ragged quarry spawn
for years it grew but no one knew
what nurtured it so long
that gave it life through all the strife
and tears it saw in rain
the mourns and cries what wilts and dies
has soaked up all it's pain
but gave to shade and darken spade
each dig and darkly hole
to watch by chance from bark to branch
the lying of each soul
and in it's grin the whispering wind
to howl on through the night
from trunk to bud all trenched in mud
was red as cherry ripe
so in these gates and stone estates
from the dead and misbehaved
it draws from leaves it's blood to breathe
with roots in every grave

This Riverboat of Madness

Steady as steam this smooth of a dream a swan of a
queen on her mark
Ready to sail this boat like a whale with a scary old
tale of the dark
For rich to had dine like pigs of the swine drinking
barrels of wine through the night
With nothing to fear that was haunting quite near as
dear that was willing to bite
And the dinner and dance was left to the chance to
romance the impertinent guest
Through the song and folk something willing to poke
at the throat just to choke at the chest
That this float and charade like a palace parade
through the swamp Everglade she would view
And those unaware had the dark of a stare that was
cannibal rare of the crew
For on the banks of the side was an ancient old tribe
well endowed to inscribe of its curse
That with taking to task through the spit of the mask
every body to bask in the thirst
And clear of the wheel a captain of deal to seal of the
skin and the flesh
Was the king of the throne eating right from the bone
as they zone on the drone to ingest
And the eyes of the flies from the bush to the skies
Through a scowl of cries on the wind
Of every last soul that would come and see go would
just blow in the grin of its kin
And back to the port for the more they would court to
sort just in sport of the game
Always counting the dead of the sheep in the bed in
the river of red and the rain

The Devil's Pirate

Off to sea we sail me laddies
what treasure that she hides
upon the roar abandon shore
to breach the deadly tides
anchors weigh release the curse
of Davey locker Jones
feel the break of a devils shake
right to the very bones
gather up the steely knives
and sharpen all the shanks
tonight we fight for all is right
before the vessel tanks
raise the mass into the dark
and hoist a serpents sail
bow to steer and have no fear
and spear the killer whale
toss the torch into the black
and let the fury reign
steady course show no remorse
and bleed the bloody drain
atop the helm a captain crook
bat eyes that beat the dead
in full control this ghostly soul
will paint the oceans red
galleys low and tally ho
here comes the wrecking ball
punching holes into the trolls
to watch them as they fall
and through the fog of misty sea
the calms to silent still
the white of rag upon a flag
that feeds undying will
for I the pirate of the sea
that has no guilt or shame

Ghostly Ghouls and Haunted Happenings

of taking hold of all the gold
for death shall be my name
so gather round and tell the tale
as tongues to catch the breeze
this deadly ship is well equipped
to bring mercy to it's knees

Creep Feature

In a whisper on the wind something wicked hath hell spin
from the dark and deep within this grin of evil stew
for the nights ungodly light of lust and blood and severed
bite
of flesh and bone of feast delight this beast about to brew
to sniff such gifts of taste and tongue upon the slate with
skin undone
as sharp as blade and spade of gun and cold as stone in
death
no mercy soul will ever know each hit and rip and pick in
tow
with every blow in vein and sew the fear to hold your
breath
for harvest time as ripe as wine in fields of corn and born
of slime
a thirst in curse and worse the sign define his pedigree
that of this space to show his face of kill intent with such
distaste
his will to vent and never waste this place he'd rather be
a human seed to drain and bleed to feed his greed a
dying breed
to strip the skin at lightning speed a need and dearly
must
and sharp as teeth to pierce the dark as rich as pitch and
crypt of heart
of hallowed corpse of stitch and mark to spark his violent
thrust
to be aware if he should care to share in prayer of your
despair
to ever dare or even spare the life you cherish so
that there he flies from red of skies wings of dead from
bed to rise
to spawn the lawn and fertilize the eyes among the crow

Loco-Motive

Far out from the dead unknown
beneath the devils drain
where darkness dwells the reckless rails
and rides the crazy train
as black as coal of every hole
that breathes out from the host
through fire steam this mean machine
will passenger its' ghost
for there that lies with pitted eyes
all blood and red as thick
this demon seed with bullet speed
will feed upon the sick
and trapped among it's haul of shell
deep down the belly's core
the engine drips of human flesh
that grips the bloody floor
and echoed through the sleepless night
like screams to pierce the soul
the sudden rush of every gush
will flush into it's bowl
and with raging steel of blade you feel
that drives the evil thirst
of every track that cracks the back
to swallow in then burst
and through evil eye for those to die
each ticket toll will sell
a sacrifice to pay the price
to ride the gates of hell

Chatterbox

In the shadows of the dark
through holes that pierce the air
that brings to life the walking dead
and feed upon despair

they cling to every beating heart
that remedies the night
and leaves you gasping for your breath
as morning breaks to light

they burl their way into the soul
and feast upon the brain
and drain the skin to bitter cold
in showers red as rain

they leave the empty corpse to bare
with scars upon the shell
the stricken heat to those who dare
to walk the streets in hell

and like a whip to tie the throat
you can't escape desire
the poison runs as cities choke
into the fields of fire

and like a horde to race the wind
across the broken ground
you see a judge and jury grin
that reeks the beastly hound

you try with what there is to gain
to stand and fight with cost
and learn to take the killing pain
with every single loss

Ghostly Ghouls and Haunted Happenings

you can't escape this darkened room
for all the chains and locks
for he who sits the devils throne
must feed the chatterbox

Dog Soldiers

Unleash the beast the devils son
let terror reign the lands
sniff them out and get your fill
and join the pack in clans
pump the veins and rush the blood
the hungry hearts of gore
strike the fear into their homes
and feast until the core
dark of night the howling moon
like eyes of demon horse
upon the wind that we will ride
and follow on its' course
take to hide for shadows gloom
upon the walls of town
nestle deep without a peep
god sake don't make a sound
the hunt is near the fangs are out
the teeth so steely fine
in quiet take the children wake
to cry like serpents wine
they pounce upon the feeding air
and strike without remorse
the gathering in howling ring
and fill the night with force
every crisp and crescent moon
across the countryside
to wait for sun and off you run
to places you can hide
but death beware you hear the hoofs
like soldiers on platoon
through the fog a soldiers dog
will fill your bloody room

Ghostly Ghouls and Haunted Happenings



Marvin W Wooten II was born in Rome, Georgia and has been writing poetry for over 30 years. His father's family came from England to Orange, Virginia in 1638 and his mother's family came to America from Ireland in the early 1700's. The Wadsworth blood runs deep in his family and has been known to produce some great story telling poetry. He writes as a hobby and hopes his words move people.

Unearthed

Night in falling darkness,
sun slowly slips away.
Daytime hidden in shadows,
they soon come out to play.

Creatures blind to sunshine,
pasty, so blotchy brown.
Like earthworms from below,
creep up from underground.

Dead unlike the living,
they stalk you in the night.
For brains they're so hungry,
an endless driving plight.

So many zombies, they converge,
smell of flesh crowds the air.
Death they all have eluded,
your brains they all will share.

Up from the many graves,
like caskets giving birth.
Tonight they come to seek,
the dead have been unearthed

Empty Tombs

Night on us soon will fall,
from the ground they will arise.
One by one they'll search,
looking at us, cold black eyes.

No heartbeat will control,
their never changing need.
To feed upon the living,
uncontrollable cryptic speed.

From all around they rise,
rotten flesh with one intent.
Once husbands, moms, children,
just one purpose, they're hell bent.

The undead now amongst us,
their intentions oh so clear.
Together we must runaway,
being chased, fleeing in fear.

Listen to all the moaning,
undead dragging bodies rot.
Drawing closer to the end,
we must give it one more shot.

Looking for a place to hide,
as they rise from their wombs.
Unearthed and all around us,
leaving behind their empty tombs.

Darkness Matters

Out in the narrow street,
where the light is very dim.
Lurks a creature never seen,
a sight so very grim.

Lock up all your doors,
latch the windows too.
Turn on as,
pray it won't get you.

Outside the moons blood red,
all the stars have gone away.
The creature in the darkness,
has just come out to play.

Listen to the dogs barking,
now it's a scathing howl.
Out in the dark its lurking,
all night it's on the prowl.

Until the morning sunrise,
darkness the creature owns.
All that's ever found,
are gnarly little bones.

Sidewalks covered in blood,
so funny how it splatters.
All throughout the night,
is when the darkness matters.

Haunted Hideaways

There are so many places,
places close to home.
A short ride from my house,
where legends ghosts do roam.

There is a haunted lighthouse,
where souls of lost ones stay.
Many graveyards in the city,
after dark just stay away.

There is a haunted jail,
where many lives were taken.
Do the deed, pay the price,
at dark they all awaken.

Some lives the hangman took,
others by firing squad.
All of this was witnessed.
townspeople did applaud.

Through hundreds of years,
the stories have been told.
Passed down through generations,
old souls were brought and sold.

Some souls are of young ones,
who died a tragic death.
Never wanting to leave us,
with chills we feel their breath.

Sometimes we feel them calling,
when nights turn into days.
We go on tours to meet them,
in the haunted hideaways.

Darkest Day Eclipse

Sunshine turns to dark,
blood red icicles drip.
Creatures run amuck,
our mind, souls do rip.

Fire from down below,
souls come up to beg.
Heat rising so internal,
blood flows a powder keg.

The reaper he will come,
to claim as many souls.
To take us all down below,
one of his many goals.

Days they come, they go,
this moment takes many years.
Ripping apart our heart, our soul,
in dark days living fear.

Waiting on the waning day,
praying not for the apocalypse.
Wanting just to see the light,
from the darkest day eclipse.

Until Sunrise

Tonight we'll both go out,
on a journey few will take.
Looking for the answers,
lives and loves at stake.

Nobody knows what's next,
once we meet our end.
How we meet the reaper,
on many things it depends.

Walking through a graveyard,
just looking at headstones.
No moon in total darkness,
the dead, we hear their moans.

Children around us singing,
our senses seen so alive.
Died young, souls lost forever,
gives us the weirdest vibe.

We march into the dark,
so many souls around.
Wanting to release them,
not all are heaven bound.

We feel their hands upon us,
our chills make us shudder.
Fathers, sons, and daughters,
moms, and grandmothers.

So many things do deny them,
on this journey we all must go.
Lost souls here without purpose,
for reasons we'll never know.

Ghostly Ghouls and Haunted Happenings

Hanging out here together,
waiting for a big surprise.
Listen to the screaming,
awake here until sunrise.

Twisted Creatures

Tonight seems like the darkest,
the darkest night in days.
So many creatures waiting,
tonight they all will play.

Way out in the distance,
where no light can be found.
We hear a lonely howling,
it's such a freakish sound.

Slowly we see the moon,
as dark eyes begin to shine.
Surrounded by the unknown,
we fear out end of time.

Moving in from dark to light,
we feel a breath as they surround.
Knowing we have no escape,
pounding paws here on the ground.

Trying just to see our way,
in darkness we see their features.
Gnarly teeth, gnashing howls,
alone with twisted creatures.

Shadows Lurking

Out in the bright moonlight,
when all come out to play.
Hides a secret in the shadows,
for daylight we all do pray.

Leaving trails of blood behind,
so, all others around can see.
Noises in the deepest wood,
in escape mode we try to flee.

Our hearts do race in fear,
as our blood pressures will rise.
Looking in the darkest place,
we see those moonlit eyes.

Peering out into our soul,
we feel deep down inside.
This creature it controls us,
nowhere to run, to hide.

Howling like a rabid werewolf,
no silver bullets to be found.
Too scared to move a muscle,
petrified just from its sound.

As clouds drown out the moon,
a dense fog does roll in.
Changing winds starts screaming.
new fears they do begin.

Gnashing teeth, stoking fear,
its face seems like it's smirking.
Keeping us out in the night,
the beast in shadows lurking.

Punishing Pumpkins

Walking down the lonely street,
where nothing else is around.
Looking upon lit up faces,
on steps or on the ground.

All their eyes are flickering,
from candles that lies within.
Evil faces us are beckoning,
with devilish twisted grins.

Eyes that pierce our souls,
as together we stroll on by.
Kids in hand holding tight,
no candy for them or I.

A headless horseman nears,
pumpkin head at his side.
Trotting of his horse not heard,
coming at us is ghostly stride.

Like an evil dark led army,
these pumpkins us surround.
Asking kids to grab them,
raise them off the ground.

Children running in circles,
like screaming little munchkins.
In the field green and orange,
kids punishing the pumpkins.

My Nightmares

Wake me up don't let go.
our dreams seem so real.
In darkness we do wander,
this terror we can feel.

Sometimes we see a clown,
there's no circus we can find.
Runaway never looking back,
into darkness we are blind.

Flick the switch once again,
there's no power to be found.
Hear the creaking floor ignite,
greatest fears with every sound.

Trapped inside we cannot hide,
from a terror that lies within.
Inside this house of mirrors,
on a floor our bodies pinned.

Tied up within a surreal dream,
we feel our warm blood drip.
Hearts beating out of control,
just one ending to this trip.

A stranger lurking bearing knives,
the dark encounter is not fair.
My loaded gun is in my hand.
at the end of my nightmares.



Pam Impson is a mother, grandmother, and social justice activist living in Southern California with a chatty cat. During the early weeks of the pandemic, Pam lost her job and turned to creative writing to find peace and connections in isolation. Her writing became daily mental exercise intended to entertain and evoke emotional memories as a bridge to

other hearts. To date, Pam's poetry has been published in *The Sad Girls Club*, *Africa Poetry and Love*, *Paucity of Being Heard*, and the *Interdimensional Clown Collective*. She now works from home for a non-profit organization and still tries to make time for creative indulgences.

Haunting

In a graveyard long forgotten
Far away from mortal eyes
Lie the bones of misbegotten
Spirits waiting to arise

Damned forever by the living
No one comes to mourn or weep
Wracked with wrath and unforgiving
Raging demons never sleep

As their flesh is slowly rotting
Restless voices still resound
Whispering their wicked plotting
Deep beneath unholy ground

Wrapped in reeking shrouds and filthy
Seeking out immoral souls
Striking down the doomed and guilty
While the midnight church bell tolls

When the wind moans harsh and numbing
When the moon glows pale and white
From the earth the dead are coming
Stalking in the Autumn night

It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year

It's the most wonderful time of the year
With the kids trick-or-treating
And walking dead eating some brains with a beer
It's the most wonderful time of the year

It's the hap-happiest season of all
With those trick-or-treat greetings and cowards
retreating
When spooks come to call
It's the hap-happiest season of all

There'll be witches' brew brewing
And ghouls will be chewing
While everyone's holding their breath
There'll be scary ghost stories
And tales that are gory of
Murder and mayhem and death

It's the most frightening time of the year
There'll be screaming and shaking
And hearts for the staking
When vampires are near
It's the most wonderful time of the year

There'll be demons for battling
And skeletons rattling
And werewolves that give you a fright
There'll be creepy clowns leering
And everyone fearing
The things that go bump in the night

It's the most nightmarish of the year

Ghostly Ghouls and Haunted Happenings

There'll be corpses a-falling
When Jason comes calling
The grim reaper's near
It's the most wonderful time of the year

There'll be goblins awaking
And candy for taking
Our teeth will be rotten and sore
There'll be apples for bobbing
A telltale heart throbbing
And ravens that quote "nevermore"

It's the most wonderful time of the year
There'll be bats in the moonlight
To give us a good fright
And ghosts will appear
It's the most wonderful time
Yes the most wonderful time
Oh the most wonderful time
Of the year

A Dark and Stormy Night

A storm thundered in like a stampede of cattle
The rain on my roof beat a deafening rattle
The power blew out as I shivered and huddled
In darkness I quivered, my senses befuddled

The light of the candle my only companion
The howl of a wolf echoed up from the canyon
A cadence of drops from the ceiling was leaking
Outside through the pine trees I heard the wind
 shrieking

Then out on my porch I could hear voices talking
Their timbre was wicked, their laughter was shocking
The door bursting wide made the candle extinguish
Then in blew three forms I could barely distinguish

The lightning revealed a grotesque apparition
These figures of horror defied definition
They glowed with an aura that made me uneasy
The stench in the air made my stomach turn queasy

Their gray linen shrouds hung in old rotting tatters
With stains of black mud streaked with rusty blood
 spatters
One carried a book and it muttered my name
Another dragged chains and was groaning in shame

Their mouths gaped like chasms, their black eyes
 were stony
Their faces were pallid, the fingers were bony
The biggest approached me and uttered a warning:
"Your soul will be ours before sunrise this morning."

Ghostly Ghouls and Haunted Happenings

The ghost seized my hand with a sinister scowling
Then closer and louder I heard the wolf howling
I gasped with its touch and in terror sat frozen
Unable to grasp why my life had been chosen

I breathed out a whisper and begged for a chance
But its hollow black eyes drew me into a trance
My heart started fading, my throat couldn't swallow
They flew to the doorway and forced me to follow

The wind slapped my face and it whipped through my
air
Then a ghost began rising up into the air
Still dripped by the cold bony hand on the spirit
I screamed in the darkness, but no one could hear it.

Then all of a sudden, the power restarted
The lights flickered on and the demons departed
They faded to mist with a furious clamor
My heartbeat was pounding as hard as a hammer

Alone in the light of my safe living room
The wolf wailed once more far away in the gloom
I bolted the door and stood silent in winder
My pulse keeping time with the echo of thunder

I warmed with relief as the daybreak was rising
But when my mind cleared I began realizing
A terrible question as shudders arose
What happens the next time a stormy wind blows?

Fear

Complacent and trusting, with no thought of danger
I sat in the dark by a soft-spoken stranger
Then quicker than lightning, the earth cracked wide
open

The stark realization left no time for coping
A plunge into ice water, piercing and frigid
Gripped with paralysis, aching rigid
Awareness came surging, electric and crushing
I shrank in my skin from the universe rushing
My veins began pulsing, my heart boomed like
thunder

Sensations of quicksand were dragging me under
Ideas came racing too fast for defining
The air in the space burned too close and confining
My pores released sweat like a zealous bloodletting
All sense washed away in a flash of forgetting
I reasoned and pleaded a constant outpouring
That sounded drowned out by a tidal wave roaring
My vision of death from a bullet was clear
And that's when I learned what it meant to feel fear

Your Halloween Haunting

When my ghost has finally risen
Say no prayers and cry no tears
Leave no headstone with my name, just
Look for me on Halloween

I don't need a weepy service
Don't plant me in hallowed ground
Plant a pumpkin vine instead and
Look for me on Halloween

Save the hearse and fancy casket
Sing no hymns and send no flowers
Carve a pumpkin, light a candle
Look for me on Halloween

Dress up like a witch or vampire
Hand out candy, raise a beer
I'll come back and drink beside you
Look for me on Halloween

I'll be watching from the shadows
You might catch a spooky glimpse
Maybe I'll play tricks to scare you
Look for me on Halloween

Promise me you won't forget me
Read my poems from time to time
Laugh about my silly blunders
I'll haunt you each Halloween

Another Ghost Story

Children, gather close around me
While I tell this dreadful tale
Wicked winds and ghosts surround me
When the hunter's moon glows pale

Lock the doors and draw the shutters
Light a candle in the dark
Can you hear the spirits mutter
From the graveyard cold and stark?

Out beyond our sleeping city
Where no mortal footsteps tread
Lie the bones that none may pity
Of the damned and wicked dead

From the shadows comes a preacher
Whose dark heart has turned to hell
Lessons from a demon teacher
Taught him how to cast a spell

In the graveyard he is kneeling
As a wind blows from the north
To the darkest force appealing
Conjuring the spirits forth

With his force of concentration
Magic words ring in the night
In a secret incantation
Souls released are taking flight

Shouting out the words of power
Fire burning in his eyes
Church bells toll the midnight hour
As the restless spirits rise

Ghostly Ghouls and Haunted Happenings

Heartless wraiths intent on spreading
Doom and horror none forgive
With the cold wind they are heading
Toward the city where we live

Keep the curtains drawn up tightly
Keep the doors and windows closed
Keep the candle burning brightly
Keep your courage well composed

Can you hear their voices calling?
Can you hear the shrieking owl?
Can you feel your cold flesh crawling?
Can you hear the dark wind howl?

Children, gather close around me
While I tell this dreadful tale
Wicked winds and ghosts surround me
On this night, the moon glows pale



Usha N Shrinivaasun,

popularly known as Usha, hails from a beautiful hill station called the Nilgiris situated in the southern state of India in Tamizh nadu. It's a wonderful place where nature has generously endowed its gifts. Abounding in Eucalyptus and lavender tinted jacaranda trees, it is heaven on earth. May be these sylvan surroundings

encouraged her to write poetry

She previously worked as a visualizer in charge for an English fortnightly in which she wrote the astrological column and music reviews. Even then, she would incorporate a few lines of verse which her readers would actually love.

Two years ago she became a member of some poetry groups and has won a number of awards. Poetry now has become a part of er life like sleeping and eating. Her poetry has been published in tabloids and anthologies.

She loves the poets of bygone days and tries to emulate them. If her poems make her readers happy, she would be truly gratified

Frogged Night

Rain, rain, rain pour
Knock, knock, knock, hark a sound I hear
The door I lift the latch hark none over here
A tiny frog croaks shivering in the dampened air
A drop of water from my drinking glass on it rears

Hey presto!!! The frog grows, grows, and grows
Its face and eyes larger than my front door
A shriek of horror I give and rush indoors
The Halloween like frog follows me with full force

Into the kitchen I run and bang the door shut
It beats on the door
and says, "Come out a score I have to settle with you,
you slut"

"In our last birth you ran out on me and married
another
You hurt my ego and insulted me altogether
You will marry me now and little froggies we will
produce with our association
In a hollowed stone in a ditch, we will live in
harmonious annexation."

The door fell open as this horrific creature was upon
me
Its stink unbearable as I slipped
and fell on the spilled water which I didn't see
Suddenly woke I with my nightgown wet from my
water bottle opened and kept
Too many Halloween stories read made me dream
this spooky horror and in relief I wept

A Child's Revenge

In the jungle of teak and mahogany
Wandered I as my leg took me
Suddenly I came upon a log house decrepit
Fascinated was I by it and a sort of a slightly
malevolent air it did emit

Sat I on an abandoned log of wood when of being
hugged a feeling
Enveloped me and it seemed so real my wits had
gone I'm sure abegging
As there was not a soul around in this jungle land
To keep me company and with me stand

I wondered at my imagination of feeling hugged
What made me think like that and this had me bugged
I got up to leave but I felt something pull at my skirts
Alarmed I turned around but none was there to
disconcert

In a thoughtful mood I reached home and dined then
went to sleep
The clock struck twelve and I woke up with a jerk and
around I did peep
I fancied I heard a child's voice calling out to me
From beyond the open window and I got up at once
and went to see

As I peeped out I fancied I saw a filmy child's figure at
the gate
Curiosity aroused I threw caution to the winds and
went to investigate
The figure I could not reach however fast I went
But it stopped at the log cabin and a wave to me it
sent

Ghostly Ghouls and Haunted Happenings

Intrigued I followed it into the cabin and stood still
What I saw the horror of it, never forget I will
Enacted was a blood chilling scene of the past
A man at a child's throat on it his fingers viciously cast

Then the inert form of the child dead and gone
Sick I felt as I had seen this child newborn
I had cuddled and kissed it when it grew up later
years
Played with it and consoled and wiped away its tears

As in a riding accident the parents had left this world
Leaving the property to this five-year-old
The next in line was an old cousin whom I realized
was the murderer
Who, should anything happen to this child was the
inheritor

Something drew me to the spot where the scene was
enacted
Amidst the dead leaves a shiny object I spotted
It was the ring which I recognized as the murderer
always wore
Now I knew that I was chosen by the dead child to
bring this to the fore

The Merry Ghost

Hush!! An unearthly silence prevails
In raiments of black a crowd clothed and veiled
With bowed heads and visages sad
The sign of the cross they make mournfully clad

Why doth my wife and along with her my children they
weep
Into my psyche a question does creep
I call out to them, but they don't react
I shake them up still no impact
Deaf have they all become
Why don't they heed me all of a sudden

Then the coffin I spot just outside my gate
Who in my house is dead I cannot relate
Then on a stretcher a body is brought
And into the coffin it's wrought

My God!! It's me. It's me. It's me.
Then why am I standing here looking at me
Then all of a sudden it entered my head
That I am dead, dead, dead, dead

The crowds outside about me they say
That I was an honest person with integrity in every
way
Little do they know that last night alas
I celebrated my drink with a comely lass
And death I realized revealed
That I do look good with my facial
lines wiped out and concealed

Ghostly Ghouls and Haunted Happenings

The coffin goes into a van and I with it get into it and
in it land

In a mischievous act I pinch the undertaker's hand
No emotion flits across his face
Then I remember that I have no face

Then lowered my sarcophagus in the church yard's
cemetery
A pit dug ready and waiting for it to be lowered into it
with me
A prayer solemnly with sadness said
The coffin lowered into the hollowed mud
From dust we came and into it goes my remains
Chanted in a funeral refrain
A tomb over my body in the soil within
On which an obelisk is built in

As I sit on it and plan my on-dit
Why not haunt my jaunt the pub
Pilfer a drink or two from a filled cup
Then go home and raid the food filled crockery
My favourite food to satiate me
Next is where should I go and haunt
Rile those whom I don't dig in their jaunts
Let me see how this works out
Whether I'm here or up there I have my doubts

Hades in a Hollow

Went for a walk into the woods at eventide
The cuckoos trilled the jackdaws hawed and larks in
 melody replied
The air redolent with the scent of spring blooms
Wove a fragrant jewel bright loom

From the green canopy above flowers fell
A rainbow carpet, its beauty only a poet could tell
A shiver ran up my spine
Darkness shrouded the scene on all that was fine

The whistling wind howled like a ghoul
Flowers vanished as brambles and rotting vegetation
 smelt foul
A yawning hollow beneath a withered tree gaped
 open scowling at me
A mysterious gravitational pull propelled me towards
 for me to see

Fathomless leagues and nothingness could I skirt
As I peered down from the edge of the hollowed earth
As my vision cleared, I looked into the coal black
 scene
Like a movie of yore was the scenario I could glean

My blood froze in every artery and in every vein
Paralysis I experienced of my brain
Craggy mountains menacing and in a sinister thread
Lucifer with an evil grin, embedded at the peak with a
 dark halo around his head

Ghostly Ghouls and Haunted Happenings

Queen of the night bemoaning her plight
In permanent eclipse on this site
Distorted trees stood twisted and gnarled
And out of them villains of literature snarled

Old Fagin, the Jew of Oliver Twist
Who sent the youth to beg, with an excruciating pain
 he twists
Oh! Is that Mister and Miss Murdstone writhing in pain
Who tortured David Copperfield and his mother in
 every grain

And there goes Shylock the money lender all battered
 and bruised
Who demanded Antonio's flesh as a barter to be used
The heavens be praised! That's Macbeth and his
 consort within
Boiling in the witches brew with which they murdered
 kith and kin

The one who bade Othello to murder his Desdemona,
 the villainous Iago
Now being whipped by none other than Othello
So fascinated was I by it all that I failed to observe the
 magnetic pull
Plummeting me into the depths so sinful

I poised myself to scream but woke up in a cold sweat
 amidst the bed clothes strewn on the floor
A nightmare had turned me topsy turvy and affected
 me to the core
It dawned on me: That the sinners in their graves
got it as good as what they gave

And that the world is a beautiful place to live
Never demean it as with the bad it has good aplenty
 to give

Kindly Ghosts

Drizzle, drizzle, drizzle never does it cease
The rain God in his element none can appease
My mother and I at Huttingdon station alighted did we
There was not a cab we could see

Choice there was none we had by foot to traverse
The road leading to our dwelling in the hills the rain
 didn't disperse
In momentum the showers did gain
Looked we for a shelter against the rain

Espied we a house stop a hillock and towards it we
 went
Knocked with a quaint knocker like a skull designed
 but with age bent
Opened was the door by a figure in stiff black
 bombazine
Who enquired what brought us to this doorstep on
 thus day not so fine

A quavering but a voice with power rent the air
Which said, "Emily who stands there
Outside our door
Let them in the cold wind bites into my core"

Whereupon the venerable maid let us in
Glad of the shelter we entered the hall within
Sat their enveloped in blankets his whole being
A gnarled man of indiscernible age his eyes strangely
 gleaming

He made us welcome in not an unkind tone
He bade us partake of the victuals before him while
 letting out a moan

Ghostly Ghouls and Haunted Happenings

Hungry and cold we were
So, we obeyed him without demur

That done we were led to a room to rest for the night
Grateful were we for the night to close our sight
But suddenly a feeling of unreality beset my brain
As fiercely outside did beat the rain

It dawned a bright and sunny morn
From our nocturnal shelter we wished to be gone
Bade goodbye to our host who smiled at us in a way
 so strange
Ma and I left this remote wooded Grange

We had not even gone a hundred odd feet
When a whirring sound behind us did greet
Turned we to look as our shelter of the night
Disappeared and only a bare clearing in its place we
 could sight

Our eyes wide open in horror we realized that our
 hosts
Of bygone times were a family of kindly ghosts

The Castle of Evil

Lived we, my widowed mother and I
In the village green where the parsnips and swedes
lie

A decade I had lived with no novelty
Home to school and school to home was my variety

But change I did on a memorable night
As I stood looking at a castle far away bathed in
moonlight

Atop a cliff perched precariously
As though t'would fall down ignobly

Disturbed and broken from that day was my sleep
As sounds so strange into my conscience did leap
Withered, gnarled, and cruel a devil's face
Mocked me with a grimace

Shaken and shivering, wake up did I bathed in sweat
The Hail Mary I said, until a modicum of peace I did
get

But t'was shattered as a thunderous roar rent the air
The castle faraway loomed ominously giving me a
scare

A pair of hands grew and grew hugging me tight
And I let out a Yelp of fright
A feeble voice whispered not unkind
"Save me dear child from this sinister bind"

Don't tarry, on a full moon night, my dear boy,
A spirit so evil castle and village t'will destroy
The voice so beseeching touched my heart
I set out, with a globe of a moon showing the path

Ghostly Ghouls and Haunted Happenings

All of a sudden, the sound of the whirring wind I did
hear

In a wink of an eye, I was catapulted into mid air
Miles and miles with it I had flown
When without warning down was I thrown

At the foot of a staircase worn out and steep
Its murky heights I had not the courage to peep
But up the steps an invisible force propelled
As I stood looking at an enormous door, repelled

Gingerly I pushed at its carved filthiness
The door opened wide, creaking and groaning under
duress

I was in a rodent infested room
Which for eons and eons hadn't seen a broom

A moon beam scattered, lit up the place
Stood a bedstead with its coverlet of tattered lace
A figure emaciated on it lay
Letting out a wail as if to pray

Beckoned me to its bedside near
Feebly raising its hand above its ear
Showing me a place in the rear
Where a picture lay with candle and incense to it near

Purified the portrait decayed, did I with water and
scent
That cruel twist of his lips and body doubly bent
As if his sins past weighed him down in a demonical
stance
A shiver ran up my spine when the picture I did
glance

A mocking cackling laugh offended my ears
When my eyes drenched in frightened tears
A cross and the picture of Christ the saviour of the
damned I did hang

When the gargoyle portrait shook and hit the wall with
a bang
Pretending grit and courage steadily on the wane
The candle I lit and incense I burnt....and then, shook
the windowpane

The cross upturned and backwards was chanted the
Hail Mary
A prayer I said to Mother Mary, my eyes tearfully wary
Then a miracle wonder did happen
The picture demonical into smithereens was broken

The cross looked up and the room flood lit
Floated a soothing chant, my spirit it did uplift
A smoky spook wormed it's way outdoor
And heavenly peace was restored

A voice hailed, "My grandson come to me"
Looked up I into a noble visage loving and teary
Hugging he held me and I recognized the voice of my
dreams
A royal personage my Grandfather it seems

Said he, "You just exorcised the evil who was my
father
A marriage upon me he forced which I did not favour
As my heart was given to your grandma true and
secured
I married her in secrecy and the wrath of my father I
incurred

Ghostly Ghouls and Haunted Happenings

He cunningly invited your grandma and me
To begin our life in this castle which you see
With revenge in his mind but with a false sweet smile
He separated my enceinte wife and me with guile

Your father born in a warehouse shed
Secretly ferreted was he away by a peasant to his
humble homestead
My wife, my father killed through acquired demonical
power
He swore he would destroy your father grown up and
wedded to his lover

On a moonlit night in September this year, this was to
be the hour
My child came you and saved your grandpa and all
with courage on par
Heir you are to this castle and its grounds"
Looked I up into my grandpa's face with peace and
love unbound.



Jerry Langdon is originally from Southwest Michigan and has resided in Germany since the early 1990s. He is an artist and poet whose works bathe in a darker side of emotion and fantasy. He has released five books of poetry: *Temperate Darkness*, *Behind the Twilight Veil*, *Death and Other*

Cold Things, *Rollercoaster Heart*, and *Frosted Dreams* and is the editor and publisher of the literary magazine *Raven Cage Zine Poetry and Prose*. His poetic inspirations are derived from poets such as Edgar Allen Poe, Robert Frost, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and various rock bands. His apparently twisted mind, twists and intertwines fantasy with reality.

Witchboard

Oh, had we not been so reckless that night
When we were taught the true meaning of fright.
It was just a board, a game; so we thought.
We were sure we had control, but we were caught.
The Ouija was more than a toy dug from the attic.
It was not a joke we soon learned in our panic.
Asking simple questions who, what, when and why.
Until something went seriously awry.
The room grew cold and the air was thick.
The moving planchette had to be some trick.
We were the pawns in a vile game.
We never received a clear name;
Or did we without knowing the quirks.
Straight answers are not how the witchboard works.
Simple who, what, when, where, why
Continuously answered with.....DIE.
When asked a name silence
Before the letters flew without reference
Always ending with die.
Then the light started to flicker
The air felt colder and thicker.
The picture window next to us began to breathe
Tina fell to the floor and began to writhe.
Tim took the Ouija and threw it out the door.
Things calmed down and the lights slowly stilled
Until the room was dimly filled.
We could all hear our hearts pounding
Oh, hell we forgot the board grounding.
We never said good-bye or got a good-bye.
Does this mean we will all die?

Last Guest

What shadow overcomes
My broken serenity
Angelic visitation
Immortal guest
From the darkness blessed
Hair raven black
Skin pale as snow
Switchblade eyes
Impaling my soul
:I have come to hold you home
Eternity awaits.”
He comes not alone
Gruesome escorts
She without eyes
But can see my every sin
She without tongue
But can taste my despair
She without nose
But can smell my fear
He without breath
Sucks in my soul
Mocks my fear
Sheds no tear
Smirks over my despair
For I am
But a name
Upon his list

Let Me In

My heartbeat is all that fills the silence
Here in this decrepit tomb of my existence.
'Twas once a place of joy and ambition
Before falling into this shabby condition.

Just as rickety as I've become over time;
Long past and over-turned our prime.
Misery has its own stench
A scent that makes my stomach wrench

Wakening my hungered inner beast
Prowling to find a feast.
Where there is misery
You are inviting me.

There is nothing but sorrow in the air.
I can smell you; I know you're there.
Tears always overcome me in a flood.
I want to taste your blood.

I have lost the strength over time
To save this house from the grime.
The only thing holding me to this place
Is a memory that has lost its grace.

I know.....it is almost a sin.
Let me in!

Devour Flesh

Sometimes in the place we go to mourn
Something of vile darkness is born.
Now and then the dead refuse to rest;
Rising from the grave, hungry for flesh.

I passed by the fresh grave of some poor soul.
Not a cross nor wreath crowned the covered hole.
'Twas a desolate and nameless place
That seemed little more than a disgrace.

I was there to visit the bed where my love laid;
So, with no further thought was paid.
I spent hours grieving and talking about my day.
It had grown late, and I went on my way.

I asked forgiveness and took a single flower
And laid it on that lonely grave to mourn their final
hour.
No one should rest without a farewell.
I paused in silence for a spell.

The cold thought had followed me home.
"Ye forth! In these walls thou shalt not roam!"
O'er the span of the next days, I passed that
wasteland
Barren of all signs of cares at hand.

I witnessed as the green around that grave died.
As if it were mirroring how I felt inside
Each evening I would leave a single blossom there
That upon the next had disappeared into thin air.

Ghostly Ghouls and Haunted Happenings

And each evening I saw death expand
Growing from that lovely wasteland.
'Twas so that one evening I had visited my dear
And in my mourn had fallen asleep between tears.

I woke to a growling somewhere in the dark.
Certain some evil planned to leave its mark.
I could hear something gnawing on some old bone.
"Devil be forth! Leave this soul alone!"

I hurried on my way to flee the drear
My chest pounding with senseless fear.
That wasteland was now an open hole
In this place there was never a soul.

And the neighboring grave had been upheaved
And in the darkness, I mourned and I grieved.
From the depths came a stench of decay.
In the depths was some creature eating away.

Some vile demon that gnawed on bone and ate flesh.
Something dead that refused to rest.

Pale Horse

Beyond the cross which lies
Pressed 'gainst weeping skies
Where mourning shadows drape
Are spirits wishing to escape

Who follows you home
Who is darkness roam
'Til the pale horse comes
'Til the mental state numbs

Wraiths of memories in gray
Phantoms from a sorrowed day
Regret and a heart of pain
Cling to you like a stain

They are blood and tears
They are all your fears
And the pale horse comes
And the mental state numbs

I vow that I shall escape
Where mourning shadows
Pressed 'gainst weeping skies
Beyond where the cross lies

Ghostly Ghouls and Haunted Happenings



Gavin Prinsloo is a resident of Cape Town, South Africa. He has been writing poetry since 2020 and has penned over 3500 poems to date. He has published his works in a series of three poetry books (*Pieces of My Mind* Volumes 1 - 3) with a fourth volume to be released in September 2022, and two additional volumes scheduled to be released at the end of 2022. His

work has appeared in *Raven Cage* and *Dark Poetry Society Poetry and Prose Ezines* and anthologies to include *Spotlight* (Jimmy Broccoli), *From Sunset to Sunrise* (Dark Poetry Society), *Dreamscapes* (Open Skies Collections/Shrouded Eye Press), and will also be feature in *Impspired Volume 9*, releasing in late 2022. All of his books and mentioned anthologies are available on Amazon.

He also creates video promotions and reviews on books, as well graphic poetry readings on TikTok and YouTube, under the profile Soul Whisperer.

https://www.tiktok.com/@tiktoktok_35?_t=8Uxd0HaBCEf&_r=1

https://youtu.be/RJcKm_ryzXw

Give the Devil His Due

Bones and sinews, blood and muscle too,
Stripped from carcass, I can hear him chew.
Souls stripped from boney cadavers, his castanet jaw
clack with delight,
He shreds with horn and tooth, and sends souls to
hell in dead of night.

Faces floating to infernal damnation, he plays a game
played since time began,
Grinning at the ethereal horror, he chews the souls of
living man.
Into Hell he sends them too, like balloons at a country
fair,
His jaws covered with blood, and bloodied matted
hair.

Familiar

Go thee silently, betwix deaths crypts thou dost
wander,
Thy sleek and silent form, an unwary life to plunder.
Thy name be familiar, thy purpose as protector of the
grave,
From ancient king and Pharoah, or the lowly
commoner knave.

Pads of magic satin, embedded with sharpened claw,
Thy purpose for witches intent, for the mischief they
have in store.
Treading boldly upon this hallowed ground, here
Death hath no claim on thee,
Aimless sauntering in the darkest night, thy purpose
for none to see.

Callest now to the ancient times, awaken the sleeping
dead,
Caterwauling the souls to life, filling these graves with
dread.
Let thee be gone from here, for thy hunt be an
unnatural affair,
Thy mistress calls thee to her deeds, blood matted on
feline hair.

Moonlight glows where light resists, in green eyes it
reflects the beast,
Seeking out the dead for sustenance, from those for
whom mortality ceased.
Thy lives nine times recurring, mocking Death on holy
ground,
Silently preying upon the unwary, and then fading
without a sound.

Acceptance

(Inspired by Dylan Thomas)

Why dost thou go raging into the night,
Giving violence and voice, for the dying of the light?
Canst thou not dispel the immaturity of thy spirit, for
thy life be returned to the soil,
Ashes to ashes dust to dust, as thou shed thy mortal
coil?

Rally thee not against the lonely touch of mortality,
supp thee not on stale bread,
Drink thee not the draught of cold indifference,
but accept thy mortality instead.
Why dost thou seek to extend thy time, thou art but a
leaf on a vine,
For once thy fruit is come to ripen, on death thou shalt
surely dine.

So rage not, as thy eyes perceive the dying of the
light,
Bereave not thy futility, clinging onto cold stone with
all thy might.
Stand thee true to face thine end, breathe thy last
breath and end thy fight,
For it be the nature of thy birth, to face thy end raging
against thy loss of sight,
Go in peace, into thy last goodnight.

These words I now belabor, cast in stone by quill,
As I lay down mine hand, for now thy words be still.
The candle snuffed in silence, I shall now lock the
door,
As I too step put into the gentle night, for now I too
must rage forevermore.

Fantasy

With spreaded wings and ice-cold heart,
she stands before me so contrite,
For devilish as this angel is,
my eyes she will delight.
For I am supping the angels offering,
am delighted in her fleshly lust,
While paradise lost in those burning eyes,
in those thighs I cannot trust.

For she is Hell incarnate,
for she is Lilith and she's a bitch,
Hells spawned to entice the souls of man,
to scratch that infernal itch.
Now that wings enfold,
and I am lost to those burning thews,
Now that I am the report of a missing soul,
on the evening news.

For darkness follows her like a myriad swarm,
like a murder or ravens in full flight,
To hide the perishing of her delights,
in the darkest night,
For as she becomes real to me,
when her nails start drawing blood,
Wings spread she rips me apart,
in a crimson flood.

Ghostly Ghouls and Haunted Happenings



LaVern Spencer McCarthy

has written and published nine books, five of poetry and four of fiction.

Her work has appeared in *Writers and Readers Magazine*, *Meadowlark Reader*, *Agape Review*, *Fenechty Publications Anthologies Of Short Stories*, *From The Shadows*, *An Anthology Of Short Stories*, *Visions International*, and others. She is a life member of The Poetry Society Of Texas and National Federation of State Poetry Societies, Inc.

She resides in Blair, Oklahoma where she is currently writing her fifth book of short stories.

LaVern had three poems featured in the Southern Arizona Press anthology *The Stars and Moon in the Evening Sky* and we are delighted to have four of her works included in this anthology.

Halloween Night

Beneath a jack-o-lantern moon
the ghosts and goblins trick-or-treat.
The wind begins an eerie tune
beneath a jack-o-lantern moon.
An old witch and her cat will soon
go 'scritch-scratchy' down the street.
Beneath a jack-o-lantern moon
the ghosts and goblins trick-or treat.

The Halloween Cat

On Halloween nobody knows
where Mr. Golden Whiskers goes.
His eyes of emerald green turn red.
He bounds across the garden bed,
jumps the fence and disappears
with eerie howls and laid-back ears,
then takes a trip across the sky
to scare the clouds and make them cry.
I thought I saw him through the gloom
behind an old witch on her broom.

The north wind told me it believes
he guards the spirits of autumn leaves
and guides the goblins as they pass
through walls and shuttered window glass.
When his long journey is complete,
he wanders home on weary feet.
Mr. Golden Whiskers sighs
and looks at me with haunted eyes.
He'll never tell the things he's seen.
He's had enough of Halloween.

On Halloween

Outside my door a spirit growls.
An orange-eyed cat perfects its howls.
A thousand leaves I thought were gone
are dancing jigs upon the lawn
on Halloween

The north wind plays a ghostly tune
to serenade the pumpkin moon.
While witches roam and goblins fly,
a skeleton goes shuffling by
on Halloween

This eerie night is full of eyes.
I won't be taken by surprise.
Let other souls behold the dead.
I'll spend my night beneath the bed
on Halloween.

October's Moments

When the moon is school-bus yellow,
sleepy children say their prayers,
waiting for October's spirits
to arise from haunted lairs.

House cats dream of brooms and witches,
bare their claws and scratch the night.
Dead leaves skitter down dark alleys,
tiny ghouls in endless flight.

Old dogs hang around back porches,
shake and shiver, full of woe,
seeking solace from their masters,
every howl portending snow.

North wind whoops it up, carousing,
states a round of future goals,
murmurs at the eaves, conniving
mischief on unwary souls.

Hazy stars wink out their candles
while the silent hoot owl stares.
When the moon is school-bus yellow,
sleepy children say their prayers.

Ghostly Ghouls and Haunted Happenings



Joan McNerney has been the recipient of three scholarships. She has recited her work at the National Arts Club, New York City, State University of New York, Oneonta, McNay Art Institute, San Antonio and the University of Houston, Texas as well as other distinguished venues. A reading in Treadwell, New York was sponsored by the American Academy of Poetry.

Published worldwide in over 35 countries. Her work has appeared in literary publications too numerous to mention. She has been awarded four Best of the Net nominations.

The Muse in Miniature and *Love Poems for Michael* are both available on Amazon.com and Cyberwit.net. Just released is a new title *At Work*. This collection shows colorful but realistic snapshots of working women and men in their daily lives.

Shhhhh...

There is a
witch living
on the corner
where the four
roads meet.

Her eye is
evil, her
nose crooked.

She lays down
the tarot
pattern
with wrinkled
hands.

Asks "do you wish
tea of wormwood
or henbane?"

She will enchant
your mind now
into fields of
wild roses.

Beware

If you touch Medusa
her serpents will wrap
themselves around you.
She soars through water
with giant wings gold fins.
Hundreds of snakes
crawling from her head.

Some long to be near
Medusa to hear her hissing
lispings songs forgetful.
She can suck blood from
throats coiling minds
past infinity before
they breath again.

How Trouble Grows

Trouble is patient
hiding around corners.
creeping through shadows
entering without a sound.

It starts as a seed blown
by careless winds and
covers your garden with
foul brackish weeds.

Or sparks from a match
spread over fertile ground
becoming flames speeding
through the long night.

Trouble knows where you live.
You cannot hide from it.
Gaining a foothold, growing
fat feeding on your flesh.

Watch how trouble grows
inch by inch, molecule
by molecule coursing
through your veins.

Trouble begins as a whisper
day by day growing louder.
Stronger than your heart beat
becoming a thumping drum.

Soon you will forget
there was a time
when trouble was
not at your side.

Knave

Full of himself flaunting
his black leather jacket
covered with silver studs.

Bling hangs from his bulging neck.
Flashy zircons, deep cologne,
tattoos, piercings, purple hair.

Puffed up, he struts across alleys.
Headlight eyes scoping
each corner searching prey.

Pushing down anything
in his way. Sniffing rear
doors, sniffing out death.

His hands move like claws
through shadows with
crooked nails buffed blue.

Lugging a bag of tricks loaded
with brass knuckles, chains,
zip guns, switchblade knives.

Opening his cavern mouth,
smacking wide lips, he drains
a cool cocktail of ruby red blood.

Ghostly Ghouls and Haunted Happenings



Moe Phillips is a native New Yorker who now lives with her photographer/producer husband Ian in the sleepy town of Lambertville, New Jersey. Moe is a believer in all things magical. She credits her Irish ancestry for her love of words and wonder. Over twenty of Moe's poems and essays have appeared in anthologies and magazines for adults and children. Whether Moe is delving into the world of Fairy folklore, silly poems, or essays that honor daily living, they all contain her imagistic style of storytelling. Moe's latest poetry endeavor is a tall tale series of audio stories entitled *The Feisty Beast*. She has created films for award winning poets: Naomi Shihab Nye, Rebecca Kai Dotlich, and Georgia Heard as well as several shorts of her own for New York City's beloved Wild Bird Fund. Moe is a member of the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators - NYC chapter. Moe was recently the first poet featured on The Dirigible Balloon's website – Moe Phillips, a wonderful children's poetry anthology series out of Yorkshire, England.

The elements and elementals are her inspiration.

Moe had four poems featured in the Southern Arizona Press anthology *Dragonflies and Fairies* and we are delighted to have four of her works included in this anthology.

Hag Of Oak Hollow

Battered hat and mud-stained cloak,
creeps from beneath the hollowed oak
Sulfur curls through stagnant air,
remnants of what once was hair
On bony hands twines midnight lace
Of fingernails- there is no trace
Sprouting from a withered chin,
a whisker pokes sharp as a pin
A spattered satchel holds a book
filled with names of lives she took
The ancient pages torn and creased
clasp the claw of a fabled beast
She squats beside the narrow road,
a deadly twisted, blistered toad

(Previous appeared in *Written Tales Magazine Volume #11 –
Night Terrors, 2022*)

The Ghoul

The waxing moon lay in a shroud
Behind a wall of ashen cloud
It was now All Hallows Eve
When the dead rise to grieve
What drove me to this haunted place
Shunned by my fellow human race?
My need to know what lay beyond,
When we break our Earthly bond
On the headstone the inscription read
“HERE LIES ONE WHO EATS THE DEAD”
As I knocked upon that stone,
I prayed what rose was flesh and bone
I shivered madly-held my breath
For my chance to speak with death
I heard a voice call out my name
“I see your soul! Why you came!
You long to hear of Heaven’s heights,
Angel song and blessed sights.
On this night, you’ve roused a fiend
Who feasts on those life has demeaned
I eat the living and the dead
I’m the thing that all men dread!”
My mind cried out in fresh alarm
Why had I dared to tempt such harm?
This ghoul will eat me limb by limb
What madness made me call to him?
My soul will perish in this quest
And never find eternal rest
The face was tattered, rotting skin
The ravaged eyes had sunken in.
Blindly I ran toppling stones
Heard lost cries of rattling bones
A streetlamp lit the way ahead
To lead me from this place of dread.

Ghostly Ghouls and Haunted Happenings

Each night I quake at midnight's toll,
Chimes that haunt my cursed soul
For the fiend I woke from its tomb
Will now deliver me to my doom.

Night Beast

Behind racing clouds of pewter lace
A full Moon hides its mournful face
Fog cloaks the forest's every bend
Chaos rules before this night's end
The forest trembles in silent dread
This cursed man beast must be fed
Dark has closed its taloned grip
Clothes burst, tatter, shred, rip
Fangs emerge from cracking jaws
Breaking all of nature's laws
Wild howling freezes every heart
The blood hunt is about to start

The Midnight Folk

You must beware the Midnight Folk,
who feast on spoils of lonesome night,
waiting that haunted midnight stroke.
You must beware the Midnight Folk.
No spell you cast or prayer you spoke,
will spare you from their toothy bite.
You must beware the Midnight Folk
who feast on spoils of lonesome night.



Steve Bowman teaches writing and literature at IU Southeast. His work has previously appeared in *The Legacy*, *Amarillo Bay*, *The Zen Space*, and *Last Leaves*. He is currently working to rebrand the lesser-known genre “Rust-Belt Literature” as

Northern Gothic Literature.

First Encounter with the Monster

On Halloween, in the glass
of Dad's gun cabinet
the monster mask I'm wearing
looks back at me. I stare
until the whites
of my eyes bulge
through the eyeholes –
The monster's
high cheekbones
protruding brow
its bleeding scar.

The mask pulls me
into the world on the other side
of the glass. There, the monster lunges
and sneers when blue light
from the TV flickers
down the hall.
It fluoresces the monster's
yellow skin.

I pull the mask
off my face
and close my eyes,
but his glare at me
inside my lids.

In the Chapel

I was a praying person in the nineties
seeking sacred spaces for quiet contemplation.
That's how I ended up
in a private chapel at Mt. St. Francis.

Chapel is an overstatement;
It was a carpeted upper room
in a dormitory with lots of windows.
The friars carried candles
and a portable altar in and out
when needed for a retreat.
That's how I discovered it.

That day the chapel was empty
flooded with summer sunlight.
I sat on the floor, praying with closed eyes
when I heard the door open.
Thinking it might be a friar
asking me to leave,
I looked up but saw no one.
The door I had entered was unmoved.
Another door had opened
to a room I didn't see before,
a kind of closet on the far side.
Maybe the door came unlatched,
so I went back to praying.

I heard it again.
The door closed.
I went back to praying.
It opened again.
 Who's there?
But the door stood with silent invitation.
I got up thinking it might close

Ghostly Ghouls and Haunted Happenings

when my feet shifted
pressure on the floorboards.
It stayed open,
wide as could be.
Halfway across the room,
still thinking it would slowly close
as my movement changed the airflow.
Five feet away, still open.
Three feet, still open.
One more step
it slammed shut with an almighty crash.

I ran out fast as I could
down the long, dark hallway,
heard the door open and slam repeatedly.
In the parking lot,
looking back
I thought I might see a ghastly face
in the chapel window.
But it was just gold sunlight
on the white walls and a cross
shadow cast by the window frame.

Haunted Houses

Every town has one
kids have the secret power to find them.
Ours was an abandoned two story
with decaying Victorian trim.
Most windows were busted
out by older kids and boarded up.
Inexplicably the glass in the upstairs windows
and fancy front door remained intact.

From the sidewalk we'd dare each other
to run up and see how much we could see
before the next door neighbor ran us off.
Inevitably we'd get sidetracked
by the mound of dirt beside the house.
It was covered with weeds
and old forgotten flowers
We argued about what was buried there.

A dog, killed by the older boys.
The old ghost lady's baby
which died in childbirth,
causing her to haunt the place.
Or the story that won most often,
the old lady's cheating husband.
She killed and buried him and haunted
the property to make sure he stayed in the ground.

We would forget our dares
to run up the treacherous front steps.
We'd walk our bikes back down the hill
and the strange chill on our shoulders
would loosen its grip for another day.

Moonlight Cemetery

Late one night, I walked across the field
beside my parent's house. I stumbled
through a wide wooded ravine
and wished I could use my flashlight,
but the batteries were nearly dead.
Instead I trusted the bright moon overhead,
casting spidery silver shadows
in all directions. My destination:
a small circle of trees.

Inside was a cemetery
whose last occupant was buried in the 1800s.
The graves were close set and most tombstones
were cracked, disintegrating in the cold ground.
A few chunks winked up at me,
twinkling in the moonlight.
One stone still stood
a crooked obelisk pointing
at the boney November tree branches.
Pointing to my past.
To the night in grade school when dad
made me walk here
with the same dying flashlight.
His idea of a joke after a horror movie marathon.

Across the highway,
I heard a coyote howl in the distant hills.
I looked at the moon and asked her
why was it so important to meet
the demand of my father's challenge.
Was I more afraid of him or this dark cemetery?



Rhiannon Owens moved to Merthyr Tydfil from the North-West of England after bagging herself a handsome Welsh boy, Nicholas. She loves her cat, her mid-life crisis dresses, reading, and making her messy garden look even worse. As well as working on solo writing projects Rhiannon has had six poetry books published along with her writing partner, the super talented Ashley O'Keefe.

Their books are available on Amazon.

The link to their poetry page:

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

Rhiannon had three poems featured in the Southern Arizona Press anthology *Dragonflies and Fairies* and we are delighted to have four of her works included in this anthology.

Seeking Shelter

The Devil rides out
On this night of death,
As lightning fills the sky
Spectres seek my last breath,

The road is long
The night is dark,
I fear the unknown
Clutch my racing heart,

Booming heart
Booming thunder,
I fervently pray
As all is torn asunder,

A ramshackle house
Looms out of the night,
I think of warmth, shelter
Closing sleepy eyes tight,

I walk into this trap
Into my doom,
She waits to embrace me
To have me entombed...

Aunty's House

Your aunty frightens you
This is not your home,
Your parents now both dead
You are frightened and alone,

In this ramshackle house
With no electricity, floorboards creak,
There's cackling from the attic, around the mouldering
 rooftop
The storm winds whistle and shriek,

Aunty never speaks
Not a coherent word...
Sits muttering in her rocking chair,
Her eyes rolling back in her head,
The whites as yellow as her frazzled hair,

There's a cook who is very nice
Feeds you up, pats your cheek
and ruffles your hair,
But she only pops in and out
And then it's just you and your aunt's crazy glare,

The house is really creepy
But you want to be like Nancy Drew,
Adventurous, brave and bold
You can be a girl detective too!

There's someone in the cellar
A woman's voice that plaintively cries...
'Help'... it's almost a whisper
Nearly lost as the house settles and sighs,

Ghostly Ghouls and Haunted Happenings

You are trembling but determined
As you grasp your torch and head for the stair,
The cellar steps gust puffs of dust in your face
The wood is full of splinters - your little feet are bare,

'Heeeelp' that voice echoes again
Your torch illuminates only shadow and spiderweb,
There's a rustling and the cracking of wood
As a hand bursts through the steps and grabs at your
leg,

Screaming, you fall... sliding, bumping
Thumping...
Onto the cold, stone cellar floor,
Your torch smashes to pieces
You hear the heavy thud of the slamming door,

Something breathing heavily
Slurping and licking at the floor,
Where unknown to you your blood pools
You'd hit your head in the fall,

'Heeeelp'... that cry again
And then a high-pitched giggle,
Teeth clamp around your ankle
The shadows seem to quiver and pulsate and wriggle,

You call for your aunty to help you
Screaming out her name,
But the shadows are advancing
Your screaming is in vain,

The very last thing that you see
Are sickly yellow eyes staring into yours,
'Aunty?' you choke out through the pain,
But a voice rasps out...
'Aunty isn't here anymore....'

Beneath the Surface of My Eyes

Beneath the surface of my eyes
There are veins and capillaries,
There is muscle, flesh, blood
But emotionally there is nothing...

Nothing in my eyes
No flicker where there should...

Be
Feeling,

If an eyelash works its way in
Then water will fall,
The salt washing my orb clear
But no real tears will ever fall
At all,

I might think about evisceration
Of killing once more...

And then in my eyes there might be a strange light
A brief glint,
But other than that flash of excitement
There will never be another hint,

Beneath the surface of my eyes
There is nothing,
In the cavity of my chest
Lies a stone,
I stare at you blankly
With large black pupils,
My eyes lack expression...
Why oh why did you bring me home?

Ghostly Ghouls and Haunted Happenings

No look of anger could be more menacing
Than this mute souless mask,

Your voice quavers,
"Who are you?"
You ask,

You are in my sights...
You are here with me
All alone...
A rabbit in the headlights
Your terrified face reflected in my eyes,
I step toward you
Fearfully, uselessly
You moan...

Beneath the surface of my eyes
There lies
Nothing

Don't Look Behind

A room in SHADOW
A MUSTY air,
A breathless CHILL
Eyes that STARE,

A tool of the devil
A talking board,
Answering questions
Its mysteries explored,

Fingertips on the planchette
As it slowly moves,
The question asked
An eerie magic to prove,

From LETTER to LETTER
Spelling out the extreme,
When the answer is read
Eyes GLARE, eyes SCREAM...

'DON'T LOOK BEHIND YOU'
The letters spell out,
'OR YOU WILL DIE!'
Nervous laughter...
This must be a joke?
But the laughter is muted
On their laughter they choke,
And they feel icy fingers
On the back of their necks
And nobody looks behind them,
Too frightened to check...

Ghostly Ghouls and Haunted Happenings

'It must be him
My bloody brother!
Lisa cries out
As they accuse one another,

'Who moved it 'fess up?'
TREMLING in fear,
On each blanched face
A QUIVERING lip, a tear,

WHISPERING voices
Is it all in their mind?
LOUDER and LOUDER
Don't look behind!

The curtain fans out
Extinguishing the flame,
The candle is dead
Will they all be the same?

'DON'T LOOK BEHIND YOU'
The letters spell out,
'OR YOU WILL DIE!'
Nervous laughter...
This must be a joke?
But the laughter is muted
On their laughter they choke,
And they feel icy fingers
On the back of their necks
And nobody looks behind them,
Too frightened to check...

(In collaboration with Ashley O'Keefe)



Ashley O'Keefe is a son, brother, husband, father, and uncle from Merthyr Tydfil, South Wales. 2020 saw him complete his first feature film screenplay and have two poetry book collaborations published with the incredibly talented Rhiannon Owens, 2021 has seen them publish two additional books with a fifth again in 2022. 2022 has also seen the two writing partners publish their first themed poetry book called *Nocturnals*.

Where Spirits Dance

Behind wrought-iron gates
Within ancient stone walls,
Amongst crumbling gravestones
Where the grieving calls

Gnarled trees hunch over
Across the expanse,
Plunging graves into shadow
Where spirits dance

Painful grief echoes
The empty heartfelt loss,
Our beloved; their bodies
Beneath verdant moss

Footsteps tread lightly
Over the soil,
Searching through names
Trying hard to unspoil

Suddenly the eyes
Rest on the graves,
The heart hears the sounds
Of the voices it craves.

In Your Dreams

Come into my barber shop
In good old London town,
Sit back in my chair
After I've put you in your gown,

Sit back, close your eyes
Lightly stropping leather, my blade gleams,
Let all your thoughts drift away
My razor singing in your dreams:

SHARP and shocking
Silently SLITTING,
Cutting throats
While you're up sitting,

Pumping, SQUIRTING
Crimson Red,
GUSHING, gasping,
Coughing... DEAD!

PULLING the lever
Backward FLOP,
FALLING into
Darkness... DROP!

Filling for Her Pies

A darkened cellar
Pooled in blood,
DRIPPING, spreading
Another THUD,

DRAGGING, lifting
Removing cloth,
With the right ingredients
She makes her broth,

CUTTING, STRIPPING
Flesh from bone,
In his basement
She works alone,

Food from heaven
The meat arrives,
CHOPPING, STUFFING
FILLING for her pies.

Mariam Finch

Séance in New Jersey

A gathering of the young and somewhat naive,
gather to be enlightened and maybe believe..
the meeting arranged in a derelict farm
No one around to cause mayhem and harm.
Silent except for the shuffle of feet,
a quiet so profound they could hear their hearts beat..
They entered a room that was over a stable
candles in a circle on a scrubbed rural table.
From the darkest corner of the hay fragranced room
a gentleman spoke from the stygian gloom.
He bade them welcome and ushered them in
to repose round said table on chairs placed by him.
He explained that the gathering, with him at the head
would shortly attempt to contact the dead.
A few of the faces showed a flicker of fear,
but all remained stoic, kept each other near.
Lay your hands on the table, palms down if you
please,
thumbs and pinkies touching, it`s contact we need.
He sat there in silence, his face like a mask.
Does anyone have a question to ask?
I have the spirit with me of a boy child,
who says that he passed because he was wild, an
accident maybe?
He says he`s your baby..
Who knows this poor boy?
he says his mama`s life no longer holds joy.
One of the women then raised her hand..
What is his name? I think I understand.
The medium looked sombre..his name is Jim
and he`s telling me that a horse brought death to him.
The woman was sobbing...that is my son!

Ghostly Ghouls and Haunted Happenings

a horse drawn carriage .. in it`s path he did run.
At once the table, still under their sway
began to rock in an alarming way.
The women screamed and all rose with the men
but the table still rocked again and again.
They looked at the medium, his strong concentration..
and couldn`t decide..was this an aberration?
could it be trickery? but then they saw with surprise
a small boy materialise before their shocked eyes.
His mother screamed..it`s him..its my Jim!
and she tried unsuccessfully to fold her arms around
him.
As she touched him, he vanished from sight,
he had the substance of smoke, the cover of night.
They got up to leave, that party of six,
not sure in their minds if they had witnessed foul
tricks.
They remembered the boy with the tow tousled hair,
believing their eyes that he was really there..
They departed the farm having had quite enough,
some throwing derision at `that rediculous stuff`
Supernatural or metaphysical, they all had opinions.
but spiritually speaking, they were just mere minions.
Whatever their verdict on the evening just passed ~
for each was a first and for most was their last.

The Deranged

It was no surprise that he was odd.
Saved from death by a merciful God,
his mother`s gift `round his neck at birth
almost took him from planet Earth.
Thanks to the doctor`s slight of hand,
he just escaped the Promised Land.
Starved of oxygen, face turning blue
Despite exams and scans they had no clue
of his lowly brain capacity,
but he was strong born with resilience and tenacity.
As he grew, his unusual features
marked him as a freakish creature.
His peers ignored or bullied him,
saying that he bore his mother`s sin.
She must have been the Devil`s whore
and his father`s mark is what he wore.

No girls would be in his vicinity
and he reluctantly hung onto his virginity.
Not because he planned it so,
but when girls approached him, he would know
that their reason was a spiteful dare.
They sat on his knee and stroked his hair,
smiled with their big mascaraed eyes,
but if they knew, they`d be so surprised.
They thought that he was dumb and slow,
but what his peers could never know
was of his nighttime meanderings
and horror fueled dreams and ramblings.

Ghostly Ghouls and Haunted Happenings

Replays in his damaged head,
visions of the recent dead
that plead with him for their existence
while using pathetic weak resistance,
and of souvenirs of chains and rings
that he took from pretty little things
snatched from Momma`s apron strings.
Oh, the joy that killing brings.
He lets them think that he`s just strange,
not vicious and completely deranged.
If they knew of his nocturnal proclivity
for noisome, vile blood-soaked activity
the townsfolk, always wary of him
would gather to tear him limb from limb.

The town lived for a decade in perpetual fear.
More murders followed throughout the years.
Teenage screams and parents tears
but no forensics ever made it clear
who was responsible for the damage,
the sheer depravity and the carnage.
Suddenly, the killings ceased
and tensions in the town decreased.
No more was heard from the wicked beast.
What became of the Devil`s son?
He died ... mourned and pitied by everyone.

Witches

Earth, air, water ... fire
In the circle we conspire ...
Three witches do a coven make ...
A bond we three will never break
Close as sisters ... strong as chains
We live as Mother Earth ordained.
We work within the book of spells ...
Our secrets are strong ... nobody tells
If you have a relevant need
A witch can remedy it with speed...
Eye of newt and tongue of bat
A shake of this and pinch of that.
Anise, Caraway, and garlic cloves ...
A spell to cure a spouse that roves ...
We are nowhere close to witches white ...
We prefer the velvet night.
Remember the black witch's bent ...
We never harm the innocent.

Ghostly Ghouls and Haunted Happenings



Catherine Brogdon is the pen name of an author who grew up under the scrub oaks of California's Sierra Nevada foothills. A late bloomer who couldn't read until the fifth grade, her first passions were drawing and building elaborate worlds in her imagination.

While most of her work consisted of college writing center articles and training handbook procedures for various jobs, her love of fantasy and horror produced a writer of horror stories taking place in California's Central Valley, high fantasy epics, and the lore to go with it. She currently works in a place that doesn't interfere with her daydreams.

Catherine had a poem featured in the Southern Arizona Press anthology *The Stars and Moon in the Evening Sky* and we are delighted to have three of her works included in this anthology.

The Bird Witch of Newtmire

The bird witch of Newtmire keeps the wolves at bay
who prowl the pines and marshes at night,
and walk around in human skins by day,
benign and plain by the morning light.

The stringy beasts are starved for flesh, soft and
sweet,
stuffing their lusts down determinedly in the daylight
while supping on any spirit they happen to meet
in the unanointed graves they haunt by night.

Her white sigils and black stones protect her hosts,
making the wolves howl and snarl with hunger,
and with no choice but to eat the wandering ghosts,
they salivate for anything fresher and younger.

Spirit Eaters

Birds don't sing in the oak trees around the
unanointed graves
of heathens apart from the Faith, of beggars, thieves,
and knaves.
Only jet owls, menacing and black, or ghost hawks
from the Cape
keep vigilant in the gnarled branches, lest a
condemned soul escape.

These birds never seem to bother with the graves of
the ordained,
and why they stay away from the anointed cannot be
explained.
They hop around the Fasmapits, spreading wings as
black as pitch,
hoping they might rip into the ghost flesh of a dead
heretic or a witch.

These birds increase in number as the Hallowed Eve
draws near,
and good citizens try to ignore this phenomenon,
smothering their fear.
They abandon the shops and taverns, and stay off of
the road and trail
as the sunsets on that Hallowed Eve and the thinning
of the veil.

Any other time, the good citizen's faith is
uncompromised and clear,
but at the gates of Winter, it is tested, privately, every
year.
When the chill wind of autumn rises and the sun hides
its face,

Ghostly Ghouls and Haunted Happenings

they rely on the magic of the oaks and Pits to keep
evil in its place.

The blood-freezing shriek of a jet owl is one every
good citizen dreads,
and makes the bravest of the King's soldiers shudder
in their beds.

For that shriek of delight from a jet owl tells them with
horrid certainty
that a famished ghost from a Fasmapiit had somehow
broken free.

The Dead Girls of Stoneriddle Bay

Nestled against the granite cliffs that surround
Stoneriddle Bay
is a special graveyard for women who left the earth a
certain way.
Girls who are abandoned at the altar are given special
care
when they do something irreversible in a moment of
despair.

Forgiven in the Pentadite temple, they receive grace
from above,
and in the temple's records, they write, "Bride: Slain
by Love."
Those fickle would-be grooms are regarded with
disdain
in polite Agrimedan society for causing a man's
daughter pain.

While walking at night on the shore, the rogue might
see, to his dismay,
his bride among the dead girls haunting the graves of
Stoneriddle Bay.

Ghostly Ghouls and Haunted Happenings



Joshua Gage is an ornery curmudgeon from Cleveland. His newest chapbook, *blips on a screen*, is available on Cuttlefish Books. He is a graduate of the Low Residency MFA Program in Creative Writing at Naropa University. He has a penchant for Pendleton shirts, Ethiopian coffee, and any poem strong enough to yank the breath out of his lungs.

Absinthe Hymns

Let the incense smoke
tendrils up your skin.
The evening has arrived.
Sing out your absinthe hymns.

The beryl fairy's magic
is blushed across your skin.
Feel her potion's power.
Give in to absinthe hymns.

The world is blurred and hazy
with laughter and with sin.
Your inhibitions waft
away on absinthe hymns.

The shadows gather closer.
The candlelight grows dim.
Still you sip this emerald
and drown in absinthe hymns.

The night is now upon you.
Green demons dance within.
Torments swell your mind
gone mad with absinthe hymns.

Ghazal

In the basement of the orphanage, so many unnamed
wraiths.

From the shattered incubators, on hands and knees,
the bloodstained wraiths.

My heart is the catacombs where acolytes slit their
wrists for you.

The wail your name against my ribs and claw my
chest, these lust-chained wraiths.

The priestess lights the galbanum and sprinkles it with
menstrual blood.

A stench perfumes the moonless night and summons
forth inflamed wraiths.

Oh, yes...the earth keeps secrets in its stones which
it only whispers to rats.

Avoid the starving maw of the mine, lest you succumb
to blue-veined wraiths.

When the Pilgrim stumbled barefoot from the ruined
abbey's stones

and spat unholy psalms, some blamed devils, others
blamed wraiths.

Ghazal

After the bonfire, her sisters' calloused fingers sifting
grave dust.

Her screams and curses smoked to silence, they find
her last gifts in grave dust.

The priest sips his tea alone, lets the bergamot slick
his tongue.

The storm profanes the earth; each drop casts runes
from rifts in grave dust.

A ripe apple splashed with blood. A plow blade biting
the dirt.

The secrets this land keeps become your ship adrift in
grave dust.

Perched in the starless sky, the full moon waits, a
mute witness.

In the potter's field, the scrape of a shovel lifting grave
dust.

The Pilgrim rolls away the stone to resurrect his
madness.

Come dawn, his cot is scattered with feathers and
persistent grave dust.

Carl Butler was born in Walsall West Midlands, United Kingdom and later in life moved to leafy Cheshire. At 56 years of age he rediscovered his love of poetry and realized he had a burning desire to write it. Now at 58, he has written poetry in a number of genres. He is the joint owner and administrator of Facebook's Dark Poetry Society and has his own Facebook page, My Black Swan Calling Poetry. He published his first books of poetry, *My Black Swan Calling*, available on Amazon.

Buried Alive

Black pitch cold wet
Laid to rest but not dead yet
Restrained I strain within a box
Six feet under earth and rocks

Worms turn chest burns
Breathing hard clean air I yearn
Wood strips nails split
Claw but can't get out of this pit

Kick, scream, all a dream?
A nightmare scenario, the final scene
Banged head fingers bled
Asphyxiated now I'm dead

This the thing I will always dread
Buried alive but left for dead

Nevermore

Nevermore the raven cawed
On this dark and moonless night
The gravestones unkempt
And overgrown
A sad and mournful sight
Even death with reapers scythe
Had such an awful fright
With tears of shame
Took careful aim
He cut the grass tonight

Ghostly Ghouls and Haunted Happenings



Rob Bristol currently resides in Carclaze, St Austell in the glorious country of Cornwall where he moved in 2012, achieving an ambition that first began in 1981 when he first visited the county. As with his late in life move to Cornwall, he did not start writing poetry until 2010, when he was 49 years

young. It all started as whimsical fun, just writing about anything that entered his mind, and posted to Facebook. However, he was astonished by the reactions and comments people posted about each poem he wrote. He followed this response and in 2011, joined Fanstroy, a world-wide group, which boasted over 33,000 registered members and was totally taken by surprise to be voted the 3rd Best Poet in 2011. He has now written in excess of 3000 poems over the following years. His other interests include photography and the new wave of British heavy metal. He has seen Led Zeppelin, Pink Floyd, Genesis, and many other bands live in concert. Nowadays he spends his time visiting the beautiful spots in Cornwall with his two dogs, Zeus and Thor.

The Elf

Deep in the forest, where buttercups grew,
Came this short story, which I share with you,
It tells of the day I first met an Elf,
And how he insisted on toasting my health.

My first recollection was seeing his face,
The smile he had, just lit up the place,
It was then he insisted on asking my name,
I replied Rob, may I ask the same?

They all call me Shamus, replied the wee Elf,
I live in the forest, all by myself,
Today I woke up to the sight of a flood,
I fear I have lost my small dwelling for good.

I instantly offered a room he could use,
Ensuring my friendship, if he should choose,
He acknowledged my offer, though he declined,
Assuring me that he had options in mind.

It was then he insisted on toasting my health,
Wishing me peace, and long-lasting wealth,
Upon, he produced a bottle, marked "Gin,"
I remained unconvinced, there was nothing mixed in.

The next I recall, was waking in bed,
Wondering why I had a sore head,
Then I thought back, on what had occurred,
Were these merely dreams, to which I referred?

Later that morning as I sat alone,
The peace was disturbed by a call on my phone,
Where a voice, I swear, belonged to the Elf,
Said, "Goodbye my friend, look after yourself."

Stormy Night

Driving home, late at night, the road ahead was dark,
As my concentration lapsed, I sought a place park,
It was then that I first saw her, standing in the rain,
A lady who was crying, as if she were in pain.

Having safely parked my car, and stepped out on the
floor,
The lady turned to glance at me, as I closed my door,
But as I moved towards her, she turned to walk away,
My instinct was to call her, in hope that she would
stay.

Trying hard to find the words, so not to freak her out,
Soon a silent whisper, would turn into a shout,
As the distance lengthened, I ran to keep in sight,
Before the girl in question, could vanish in the night.

Appearing panic stricken, she had a change of pace,
What started as an act of faith, was now a frantic
race,
Still I sensed the tears, flowing sadly from her eyes,
As she looked behind her, rain still filled the skies.

Suddenly it came to me, the cause of all her fright,
She was frightened by a stranger, lurking in the night,
I stopped still for a moment, to understand her fear,
It was then that it occurred to me, she simply was not
there.

Ghostly Ghouls and Haunted Happenings

I searched for what seemed hours, all to no avail,
There were no sign of footprints, a way to leave a
trail,
Though she passed me closely, I could not recall her
face,
The lady I was seeking, had gone without a trace.

I approached a local policeman, in hope of doing
good,
He assured me not to worry, as all was understood,
I was only asked one question, to where I saw her
first,
When I gave the answer, the policeman turned and
cursed.

It was then he told the story, about his loving wife,
A lady who had vanished, as they shared married life,
The road where I first saw her, was once a farmers
field,
Though he hunted day and night, her fate remained
concealed

Later that same year, on a dark and stormy night,
An item on the radio, gave me such a fright,
A report about a lady, who's body had been found,
Forty years to the day, since she was last around.

Driving home, late at night, the road ahead was dark,
As my concentration lapsed, I sought a place to park,
It was then when I last saw her, smiling in the rain,
She looked as if to thank me, for uniting them again.

Deborah Mears

Spring-Heeled Jack

Spring-heeled Jack is out tonight
Hopping rooftops with delight
See his shadow, long and black
Waiting for his next attack
Lock your doors and stay inside
Even though you cannot hide
Jack will find you in the dark
His thin, long fingers light a spark
I've seen him jump up twenty feet
To grab a child, he wants to eat
Alone while sleeping in their bed
He grabs them by their little head
Then disappears into the night
Laughing that he gave a fright
To reappear next Halloween
His shadow mark can still be seen

Ghostly Ghouls and Haunted Happenings

Ron Conway is a poet living in Bridge Lake, British Columbia, Canada. He retired from wages and moved to the Cariboo region about seventeen years ago where he lives with his wife, Anne.

Ron was born in Toronto, Ontario, Canada in 1950 and moved to British Columbia in 1970.

He always has an interest in the power and beauty of words and expression, but did not begin writing in earnest until about five years ago.

He has published four collections of poetry: *Slightly After Dark* is a collection of various forms and styles evoking a wide range of emotions. *Hidden Agenda* is a themed collection wherein each poem has an additional narrative woven in using various acrostic forms. *Inspired Imagery* is a collection of ekphrastic poetry with each poem paired with a piece of art created by a member of the Cariboo Artists' Guild. *From the Rill* is a curated collection of poetry previously published in Open Skies Quarterly literary Magazine.

Late October

In late October light comes spare,
as darkness claims the greater share;
when time calls forth a vacant stare
and shadows gather form.
Beneath a broken-promise sky,
fatigue and water calcify,
without the strength to even try
to stay the restive storm.

The bitter days of autumn lash,
a grievous stripe on season's gash.
The sickly stench of sour mash
betrays the demon seed.
A sleet redeems a thousand cuts;
converts the path to gnarly ruts.
In urgency a window shuts,
to deaden those who plead.

Through branch and bone a piercing howl
evokes a creature's savage prowl.
A shadowed shape with blade and cowl
emerges in the wood.
What happens in the plait and fold
are grim and dernel stories told
of stum'bling in the dark and cold.
where evil conquers good.



Janelle Erin Elizabeth

Peters was born in Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada. She is a mother of three. She studied Dental and Medical Administration as well as Personal Support Work. Currently she works in nursing taking care of seniors. She has been writing since she was 8 years old. Poetry is a form of therapy

for her. She writes about many different struggles with mental health as well as addiction and recovery. Writing is a healer. On Facebook she runs a group called The Poetry Labyrinth and has a personal poetry page under the name "Poetry Pen." She is in the process of completing her first book *My Poetic Journey to Healing*. She hopes her writing will reach others and show them they are not alone.

Lady in Black

When the day had turned to night
She came to see her lover
He was in the ground below
Not in the clouds above her

He was her dark death
Every night to him she'd speak
Her heart had nothing left
From him the answers she did seek

She sat atop his grave
And even though he died
His soul inside remained
Where his spirit chose to hide

He taught her a chanting verse
Every night she would recite
The dead mans spirit would rise
He would soon come back to life

On day forty three
of visiting his grave
The ground began to move
The soil began to shake

She finally set him free
Once again their souls were one
Death had came to be
But their life had just begun



Elaine Reardon is a poet and herbalist. Her first chapbook, *The Heart is a Nursery For Hope*, won first honors from Flutter Press in 2016. Her second chapbook, *Look Behind You*, was published by Flutter Press in late 2019. Most recently Elaine's poetry and essays have been published by *Pensive Journal*, *Syncopated Journal*, *Prospectus Literary*, and several anthologies.

Her works can be found at:
<http://elainereardon.wordpress.com>.

Elaine had two poems featured in the Southern Arizona Press anthology *Dragonflies and Fairies* and we are delighted to have another of her works included in this anthology.

Hallowed Night

On Halloween the veil thins
to make ready for visitors.
I find the linen tablecloth,
place lit candles inside
carved pumpkins,
set a basket of green apples
from the gnarled tree that stands
in front of the house.

Thick creamy milk from Chase Hill
cows is poured into mugs,
wedges of homemade bread
slathered with butter is set out.
Hot teas, both mint and black,
a measure of whiskey for dad.
This night, a gathering comes.

I wait with anticipation
under orange streaked sky.
There's a shift, a soft hum,
before the air begins to stir.

Welcome the old ones
this Halloween Eve,
Sidhe and nature spirits,
ancestors who travel the
rivers of blood, others
who follow the stars tonight,
welcome.



Lynn White lives in north Wales. Her work is influenced by issues of social justice and events, places, and people she has known or imagined. She is especially interested in exploring the boundaries of dream, fantasy, and reality. She was shortlisted in the Theatre Cloud 'War

Poetry for Today' competition and has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize, Best of the Net, and a Rhysling Award. Her poetry has appeared in many publications including: *Apogee*, *Firewords*, *Capsule Stories*, *Gyroscope Review*, and *So It Goes*.

Find Lynn at: <https://lynnwhitepoetry.blogspot.com>
and <https://www.facebook.com/Lynn-White-Poetry-1603675983213077/>

Lynn has poems featured in the Southern Arizona Press anthologies *The Stars and Moon in the Evening Sky* and *Dragonflies and Fairies* and we are delighted to have another of her works included in this anthology.

Magic

Now is the season of magic,
from the witches of Halloween
to the fairies and elves of
Father Christmas.
Only for children,
though.
Magic for adults has Pagan qualities
referencing the myths and legends
that made sense of earlier times,
though
some still invite their ancestors
to picnic with them on the Day Of The Dead.
Only for children,
though
are the fairy stories and fantasies
of yesterday and today.
But children know
that these are only the building blocks
of magic.
Yes, children know
that magic is something you make
and celebrate.
Sometimes adults forget.

(Previously published in *Blognostics*, 2018)



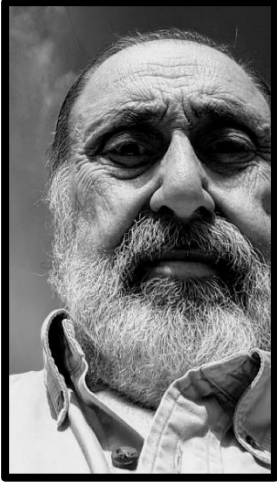
Jeanie Sanders is a poet and collage artist living in Lytle, Texas. Her poems have been published in *The Texas Observer*, *San Antonio Express News*, *Texas Poetry Calendar*, *Voices de la Luna*, *Austin International Poetry Festival Anthology*, *Passager*, *La Voz de Esperanza*, *100 Thousand Poets for Change*, *'Women Speak' Anthology*, *Mutabilis Press Anthology: Enchantment of the Ordinary*, and *The Larger Geometry Anthology*. Her book of poetry is called, *The Book of the Dead - Poems and Photographs*. She is the Poetry Editor for the 2021 Texas Poetry Calendar.

La Llorona Fashions a Hat

La Llorona is upset. Where is her place in the Day of the Dead parade? She has been dead a long time and knows the feel of every aspect of death. She is no full fleshed woman but she senses in her unbeating heart that reveling in anything dead is right up her ally. That thought causes her to sob as she strolls along her chosen river. She needs a hat as wide and brilliant as La Calavera Catrina wears.

While La Llorona walks and cries she begins to pick up treasures. Several bright plastic bags with advertisements marking their folds. Dead fish with their sparkling scales, slick frog skins, rattling snake teeth, and water weeds of every shape and kind she gathers in her withering arms to carry home. Smugly, La Llorona thinks I will be brighter then La Calavera Catrina can be in any parade of death.

Sitting crossed legged in her hut La Llorona begins to weave magic with her bony hands. Snake teeth jangle, fish scales sparkle, water weeds drip around the edges of the hat she has covered with frog skin. All held in place by plastic bags arranged helter skelter. Finished with her masterpiece La Llorona steps to her cracked mirror and smiles as only she can. She knows La Calavera Catrina will prance tomorrow wearing her large hat. But she, La Llorona, will be brave and challenge the sunlight as she marches in front of everyone in the Day of the Dead parade. She believes nothing can match her splendor as she takes a hand and gives the snake teeth a twirl on the wide brim of her new hat.



Joseph A. Farina is a retired lawyer in Sarnia, Ontario, Canada. An internationally award-winning poet. Several of his poems have been published in *Quills Canadian Poetry Magazine*, *The Wild Word*, *The Chamber Magazine*, *Lothlorian Poetry Journal*, *Ascent*, *Subterranean Blue*, *The Tower Poetry Magazine*, *Inscribed*, *The Windsor Review*, *Boxcar Poetry Revue*, and appear in many anthologies including: *Sweet Lemons: Writings with a Sicilian*

Accent, *Canadian Italians at Table*, *Witness from Serengeti Press*, and *Tamaracks: Canadian Poetry for the 21st Century*. He has had poems published in the U.S. magazines *Mobius*, *Pyramid Arts*, *Arabesques*, *Fiele-Festa*, and *Philedelphia Poets*. He has had two books of poetry published, *The Cancer Chronicles* and *The Ghosts of Water Street*.

Joseph had two poems featured in the Southern Arizona Press anthology *The Stars and Moon in the Evening Sky* and we are delighted to have another of his works included in this anthology.

Songs for the Dead

songs for loved souls to purge their passing
reveal our grieving this all souls eve
the earth gives up its dead to-night
waiting to be received-
to their tombs we bring our offerings
of water, wine, oil and grain
sit and eat with them beside us
sharing our lives again-
we recite the prayers for the dead
with the cross, the book, and sword
promising salvation and the cleansing of all sins
of those whom we this day commemorate
to pass from death to eternal light
unto the constellations

Johanne Lee is a proud mother of three and Mancunian, presently published in nine anthologies including *Open Skies*, *The Sacred Feminine*, and Soul Poet Society's *Quintessence*. She was shortlisted and included in the Coast and Waters Anthology Prize. Recently published By *Impspired* magazine , she is also a children's picture book author of *Dream Big Little One*, *Maximus the Humpback Whale*, and *Maison Mouse* (all available on Amazon) all of her books raise for charity. She is about to publish her own poetry Book, *Woman's Journey* and can be found as Johanne Lee Author on Facebook and Instagram as well as joleeinpoetry on Instagram.

Johanne had two poems featured in the Southern Arizona Press anthology *Dragonflies and Fairies* and we are delighted to have another of her works included in this anthology.

Dark, Dark Times

In a dark, dark room
in a dark, dark stare
Was the ugly face of devilment
In dark, dark glare

Morning said the devil
in dark, dark delight
Tis I in all accomplishment
shall darken this light

In a dark, dark room
of a dark, dark fate
was the weary of the worrisome
in dark, dark relate

Morning said the devil
I'm about to steal the day
and the dark, dark impression
Sought argument to sway

In a dark, dark room
Twas a tiny crack of light
that with niggling creepy crawl
did seep to feed the fight

Morning said the devil
what delectable fun
this warmth I see in emanate
about to be undone

In a dark, dark room
as the light began to spill
in evocative nature
Did the whole room fill

Ghostly Ghouls and Haunted Happenings

Morning said the devil
a fight I love indeed
and yet I planted every thought
and now I come to reap the seed

In a dark, dark room
the light took on a shape
Twas a woman with an axe
hair twisted at the nape

Morning said the devil
Why this will be a treat
when you fall in eves agony
and kiss my very feet

In a dark, dark room
Twas the very last straw
and the woman lost patience
Of this bad luck in draw

Morning said the devil
chop went the axe
it was she who came to save the world
Those are the facts

In a dark, dark room
on every dark, dark day
if the devil comes to take the blessed
it's he shall pray

Tis said she walks the corridors
with heads about to roll
for she is no hand maiden
the devil shall patrol

In a dark, dark room
is this darkness sought
and yet the devil in this detail
soon chopped off in thought



Ross Leishman lives in Dunedin, at the bottom of the South Island of New Zealand, with his wife Shelley, their three children, Darceah, Bryn, and Bonnie, and their two dogs, cat, and turtle. He is the Head Chef and Food Service Manager at Tolcarne Boarding where they cater for and look after 155 Boarding school girls. He has a liking for Italian scooters and motorcycling and loves music. His influencers would be Jeff Buckley, Rodney Crowell, John Hiatt, Lana Del Rey, and Tom Petty.

He actually wrote his first poem for an English project at high school when he was 16. It was called "Sitting on a Beach" and he still remembers it word for word. Sadly, that's where his writing creativity stopped or ... paused. Fast forward to 2009. He had recently separated from his wife and children and was living alone. Misery loves company and so he started writing again, it was a great way of getting those pesky dark demons out of his head and onto paper where they belong.

Now at 52, he has gotten older and greyer and has become more comfortable and confident sharing his soul with whoever wants to see it. His life has been full of ups and downs, but he finds the most inspiration in the darker, tragic things, events in life, those dark melancholy thoughts. He writes about what he sees, what he feels, and what he hears. A couple of years ago he started doing this little introduction before each poem; "freshly deposited into tins and baked at 180 degrees in the bread bakers' oven of his mind", for example, and its sort of become his trademark.

Recently he has been privileged to be included in the *Open Skies Poetry Anthology Volume 1* and hopes to some day soon have his own collection published, watch out for *Lost Thinker - Word Alchemy*.

Ghostly Ghouls and Haunted Happenings

*Freshly dug up, shaken off, washed, and boiled with salt and
served with lashings of butter in the allotment of my mind,
Demons inside.*

Demons Inside

She was his, he was hers, but then his own personal
demons got in the way.....

The chaos and angst inside his head, a clockwork
heart bleeds for the unmade dead,
Fighting for life, fighting for a single breath, crossing
over the painful threshold, inhaling in his emptiness
The eternal battle of heart vs ego, in a past life and in
the afterlife, trick with a knife, quick as you like, death
is just a feeling, trick with a knife, ends your beautiful
life, love is more than a feeling
Demon's inside, there's nowhere to hide,
mind like a steel box, a trick with a knife can't even
prise open it's rusted old lock,
Tick tock goes the eternal clock, tick tock, tick tock,
tick..... tock..... forever.

*Freshly unpacked from the steamer trunk of my mind,
Go with Grace.*

Go with Grace

Her name whispered on the mists of angel's breath
and in the muted songs of tortured banshees,
Death and her disciples follow her like an addict to the
needle, like an ice-cold scalpel to a pulsating hot vein.

The beauty in her snow kissed vanity, the pain in her
pay per view insanity.
Dripping tongues like melted popsicles in hells
sizzling sun,
The beauty in her uncaged reality, whispers and
moans, her soul is out on permanent loan, there's
something arousing in her deadly unearthly sexuality.
Blood dripping, reaper tipping, unrelenting soul
removal machine, running high on 100 octane
gasoline,
Snow White goddess possessed by an unkept
promise, left at the alter but never again, now she's
mankind's revengeful beautiful pain, she's no man's
leftovers, no man's door mat
Her bloody vitriol drips as the chrome blade rips and
leaves an eternal stain.

Ghostly Ghouls and Haunted Happenings



Andrew Turgeon currently lives in Northwest Connecticut. He received an Associate's Degree in Computer Science from Niagara County Community College. He had a collection of poetry, *Social Graces*, and a novel, *The Elusive Enigma*, published in 2010. Visit his Facebook fan page, "Rhyme and Reason" for more of his works.

Andrew had a poem featured in the Southern Arizona Press anthology *Dragonflies and Fairies* and we are delighted to have another of his works included in this anthology.

A Gory Glory Story

Halloween is coming, and you had better beware.
There are already zombies wandering out there.
Poor, desperate, and lost souls without any heart,
greedy, and hell-bent on tearing you apart.
Lacking properly functioning brains of their own,
they feed on the life force that loving souls have
shown.

A thoughtless abandon to appease their own needs.
Down a nightmarish road this unquenchable lust
leads.

Their travel companions are witches, and ghosts,
casting their spells, and haunting from coast to coast.
The witches, they cackle with an evil glint in their
eyes,

stirring their nasty brew of misery in disguise.

Black cats walk on the wild side along a thin line,
risking their lives just for fun, these foolish felines.

Vampires out for blood, such a human disgrace.

They gaze in a mirror but cannot see their face.

The werewolf howls at the moon as if in remorse,
wondering how on Earth he can change his course.

All the blessed saints will prevail with the rising sun,
and this reign of terror will at last be over and done.



Pat Severin, a Milwaukee native, is a retired elementary school teacher currently living in Appleton, Wisconsin. Her love of writing poetry goes all the way back to the third grade when her poem, *Worry Wort*, was published in the school newspaper.

She has self-published three poetry collections and a brief biography of her Mother's life. Pat is an active member of the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators, participating in a critique group for writers of children's stories in rhyme. She has been a featured writer in the group's *Ready Set Write!* flash fiction for the seasonal newsletter.

Her Christian poetry is published in both the *Agape Review* and the *Clayjar Review* and she is one of the contributing writers to the book *I Chose You, Imperfectly Perfect Rescue Dogs and their Humans*, scheduled for publication in the fall of 2022 by Wagaway Publishing.

In addition, Pat has been actively creating weekly cards of encouragement for people going through various health struggles.

Pat had a poem featured in the Southern Arizona Press anthology *Dragonflies and Fairies* and we are delighted to have another of her works included in this anthology.

Haunted by Monsters!

My brother once called me a scared little mouse,
'Cause I thought we lived in a haunted old house.
I was sure it was haunted by Monsters I'd hear
Who'd creak in my closet and fill me with fear!

When I told my parents I hear spooky sounds,
They said, "This old house creaks when we walk
around!"
"But, Mom, those same monsters at night I hear
howling!"
"That sound is the wind through the windows
allowing..."

Your mind to imagine there's something to fear,
When really there aren't any Monsters in here."
We all went together and checked each location
And found every sound had a clear explanation.

Just thinking of Monsters would scare me before.
I was worried and frightened, but not anymore.
My brother says, "Monsters they do not exist.
Now I know the truth, that's why I insist!

But sometimes I like pretending they do,
So here is a story I made up for you.
My story begins as I snuggle in bed,
And pull all the covers right up to my head.

"Hey, Mom, "Do you hear it, that horrible noise?
(I point to my closet) Beneath all my toys!
Oh, Mom, it's so scary, like nothing I've heard.
Just listen, Dad, listen...and don't say a word."

“I know it’s a Monster, and boy, he sounds mad.”
(I sure love pretending with Mom and my Dad)
(They both play along) “Yes, we hear it, too!
That noise is so scary, oh, what should we do?”

“Should I tell him my closet is not a good place?
I keep all my toys there; he might like the taste!”
“You tell him!” My Dad says, “Now hop into bed.”
He tucks me in tight with a kiss on the head.

I say, “Pretend Monster, I might let your stay,
But not in my closet, off limits, no way!
You might be a Monster but you’re make believe.
Now play by my rules or you’ll just have to leave!”

Then I tell him, “Monster, now this is the deal,
The toys in my closet are NEVER a meal.
If you sleep right here and not under my bed,
I’ll give you permission to stay, like I said.”

I wait till he’s settled (*when I hear him snore*),
I cover him up and prop open the door,
So, if he gets thirsty and might want a drink,
Then he can get up and go right to the sink.

I think that tomorrow we’ll play hide and seek.
If we’re having fun, he could stay for...a week!
We’ll play lots of games, my Monster and I.
I heard that some monsters like playing, I Spy!

If the weather is nice, we could go to the park.
Going high on the swings is my favorite part.
We’ll slide down the slide, climb the new Jungle Gym.
The park has a pool, so we’ll go for a swim.

Ghostly Ghouls and Haunted Happenings

When it's time to go home we walk super-fast,
I tell him, "Today was a real total blast!"
Then we both decide that we're going to be friends.
And then, at that point, my pretend story ends.

And once and a while we still like to play,
My Monster and I in our own pretend way.
I hope from my story you've gotten to see
That Monsters aren't real, but they're good company!



Helen Kemp Zax was joint winner of the 2021 YorkMix International Prize in children’s poetry, won First Prize in the 2018 middle grade Katherine Paterson Prize for Young Adult and Children’s Writing, and was a Finalist in the 2019 contest. Helen’s poetry appears in these anthologies: *Imperfect II*,

Things We Do, Hop To It, the Austin International Poetry Festival *di-verse-city 2021*, and *Dear Tomato*. *Hunger Mountain, Cricket, High Five, The Caterpillar, Touchdown, Launchpad, Pegasus, Better Than Starbucks, The Dirigible Balloon, The Feisty Beast*, and *Berry Blue Haiku* have published her poetry. Her poetry has also been accepted for publication in *Chasing Clouds . . . adventures in a poetry balloon*, *Highlights Hello*, and the *SCBWI Bulletin*. Helen received her MFA in Writing for Children and Young Adults from Vermont College of Fine Arts, where she won the Critical Thesis prize for “Learning to Feel: Practicing Empathy in Coming-of-Age Novels.” She has taught writing at all levels, from elementary to post-graduate. Helen lives in Washington, D.C. with her husband Leonard and their crazy Aussie-doodle Huckleberry Finn. See more of her work at www.helenzax.com and on Twitter @HelenZax.

Haunted Happening

In my firelit den, I'm a gifted ghost-host:
the rare medium now with the knack
to summon the dead, and though I hate to boast . . .
that Neanderthal guy—well, he's back.

When I gaze, my eyes glaze with a faraway look.
Then my voice becomes *his*, and I swear—
“I'm evolved,” the guy raves. “Did I mention I cook?
My meat preference? It's medium, rare.”



Courtney Glover is originally from Fulton County, Georgia. She is a writer, published author, editor, and amateur photographer. Her passion for both writing poetry and photography started when she was very young. Three poets that greatly inspired her are Edgar Allan Poe, Robert Frost, and Shel Silverstein. She is the author of four poetry books, including *Calypso Dreaming: A*

Collection of Poetry. Her hobbies include reading, writing, listening to music, and watching movies. She is also the editor of *The Sacred Feminine: An Open Skies Collection* poetry book and the Open Skies Poetry anthology. She currently lives with her family in Camden County, New Jersey. Her Facebook page, Calypso Dreaming Press and Photography can be found at <https://m.facebook.com/SouthernSpunk77/>.

You can check out all four of her books on Amazon:

Calypso Dreaming: A Collection of Poetry
Calypso Dreaming: A Collection of Sunshine and Sorrows
Calypso Dreaming: A Collection of Ravens and Revenants
Calypso Dreaming: Crimson Ink

Courtney had two poems featured in the Southern Arizona Press anthology *Dragonflies and Fairies* and we are delighted to have two more of her works included in this anthology.

The Harvest

An ancient darkness flows through these very veins.
As I patiently await for the harvest, for tonight is
Samhain.

I will cull them all one by one, in honor of this
hallowed day.
And they'll all end up as gifts tonight, in honor of
Samhain.

Selecting those of wicked birth, who find joy in
sadistic pain.
For my scythe is sharp, and tonight I must gather in
the grain.

Call me Atropos, the one who severs the threads of
life, ancient and arcane.
Call me Nyx, the goddess of the night, culling the
impious without refrain.

Call me the Grim Reaper, call me Santa Muerte,
goddess of death ordained.
For I am Samhain's devoted acolyte, and tonight I
must gather in the grain.

Lenore

Poe's lament for his most beloved wife
The raven, perched atop his darkened door
Her premature death, his heartbreak and strife
His sweet Virginia, now on Heaven's shores
As the raven reminds him, forevermore

Drowning in dysphoria, and merlot
A complicated tale of gloom and woe
No safe harbor for lost souls, heretofore
A sadder tale has never been more told
Then of Poe, the raven, and his lost Lenore

Ghostly Ghouls and Haunted Happenings



Ursula O'Reilly lives in County Cavan, Ireland. She enjoys writing fiction and poetry. Other interests include painting, drama, and walking in nature. Ursula has had her work published online and in various magazines including: *Lothlorien Poetry Journal*, *Vita Brevis Press*, *The Literary Yard*, *Otherwise Engaged Literary and Arts Journal*, *Poetry Plus magazine*, *Woman's Way magazine*, and by *Earlyworks Press*.

Ursula had five poems featured in the Southern Arizona Press anthology *Dragonflies and Fairies* and we are delighted to have two more of her works included in this anthology.

Footsteps

Pale moon spreads silver
Over the shadowed garden,
Where folk used to wander
Long ago. We walk again,
In the footsteps of the dead.

Their laughter is not heard.
Their soft hands, quick feet,
Hopes for life's treasures.
Beaming smiles, suffering too.
Only footsteps left behind.

Some knew God and followed.
Some did not follow. Others
Did not know, lived anyway.
The loved and the loveless.
We trace their footsteps.

Mother with sickly babe.
Hungry, ignorant, innocent.
No knowledge of cures,
Or money to purchase them.
Cries silenced by harsh fate.

We walk on, deaf to the
Stilled voices, their stories.
We stand on their shoulders.
Bravely forge new paths,
In the footsteps of the dead.

Where the Light Came In

I was despondent in the house,
In the house where the light was dim.
Phantoms crept within the house,
Where sunlight had not been.

Woeful tunes played in the house,
In the house where the light was dim.
Shadows loomed and time was lost,
Where sunlight had not been.

Window shutters bolted firm,
In the house where the light was dim.
Off times I felt no hope at all,
Where sunlight had not been.

Now I'm exultant in the house,
In the house where the light came in.
Spectres crept out stealthily,
Where sunlight ventured in.

Unbolted shutters opened wide
And golden sun flowed in.
Jubilant laughter banished tears,
In the house where the light came in.

(Previously published online in *Poetry Plus Magazine*)

Ghostly Ghouls and Haunted Happenings

Ndaba Sibanda is a Bulawayo-born poet, novelist and nonfiction writer who has authored 28 published books of various genres and persuasions and coauthored more than 100 published books. Some of Ndaba`s works are found or forthcoming in *Page & Spine*, *Piker Press*, *Scarlet Leaf Review*, *Universidad Complutense de Madrid*, *The Pangolin Review*, *Kalahari Review*, *Botsotso*, *The Ofi Press Magazine*, *Hawaii Pacific Review*, *Deltona Howl*, *The song is*, *JONAH magazine*, *Saraba Magazine*, *Poetry Potion*, *Saraba Magazine*, *The Borfski Press*, *East Coast Literary Review*, and *Whispering Prairie Press*. Sibanda has received the following nominations: the National Arts Merit Awards (NAMA), the Mary Ballard Poetry Chapbook Prize, the Best of the Net Prose, and the Pushcart Prize.

Links:

https://www.amazon.com/Books-Ndaba-Sibanda/s?rh=n%3A283155%2Cp_27%3ANDaba+Sibanda

<https://www.pagespineficshowcase.com/ndaba-sibanda.html>.

<https://ndabasibanda.wordpress.com/2017/03/26/first-blog-post/>

Ghostly Satire

voices stalked darkness
with footsteps
with whispers
on Halloween chaps decided
to declare war on apparitions
on invisible footsteps
on eerie echoes

tired of ghostly satire
colorful attire was bought
chaps wore clothes that sought
to give ghosts shivers

Face-to-face With A Faceless Face

the sun had rolled and retired
into the cheerful cuddle of its mom,
giving way to a dense dusk to dance,
and nocturnal creatures to creep,
shamble and sing their silly songs,

late, she was stomping and singing
in a bid to give herself a false sense
of fearlessness, freeness, and fun,
a hunch herded her to turn around
and take an abrupt look, and Lord!

there was something unfamiliar
about the fast fellow's familiarity,
she couldn't figure out who he was,
but his gaiety appeared like a sight
his eyes were used to slapping on,

*but who is he? what is he up to?
is he rushing to catch up with me?
would he not harm me? would he say
hi? would he propose to me? would
he accept a direct or diplomatic snub?*

there was an air of awkwardness,
quickness and foreignness about him
that made her hair to stand on end:
*who is this long-limbed loose rover?
look at is robotic speed, his lankiness!*

Ghostly Ghouls and Haunted Happenings

*if only I had a cheetah`s legs that are longer
and leaner than those of other cats ... then
I would lift them off the ground and cross them
underneath my body while abounding along!
If I were a horse, I would lengthen my stride*

*and transition from a careful ,cute canter
to a faraway, flying and fierce gallop,
if a hole could just heave up and swallow
me up, if I had left home earlier ... if ...
if that man had just left me alone ...*

she lamented, labored, reflected;
pondered, prayed as she purred;
was he an alien with a faceless face?
the shadowy lanky loner paced
past her quaking frame without

as much as a care or a sound
along a fine forested footpath,
as a result a mammoth mass
of gathered firewood fell off
her flighty flummoxed head!



Jennifer O'Shea lives with her family in beautiful Minnesota, a place of transforming beauty. She is building a cabin with her husband in the woods up north where she finds abundant inspiration!

Her writings reflect the observations and synergy between the concept of her eternal spirit and the experiences she accumulates with nature and art. In recent years she has been especially inspired by the poet Hafiz.

Her Ekphrastic poem, "Full Moon Bath" was published this summer in an anthology by Southern Arizona Press. Recently some of Jennifer's work was featured in a book of poems by Open Skies Poetry.

Jennifer had a poem featured in the Southern Arizona Press anthology *The Stars and Moon in the Evening Sky* and we are delighted to have another of her works included in this anthology.

The Graveyard

I wander through the graveyard
I seem to think here best
I'm inspired by the names
I postulate dates born and left.

A quiet spot on a bench
Under the gnarled oak
Is where I come to let my thoughts
Accumulate and float.

Peaceful it is as I consider
The shortness of our lives
I see that I'm not alone
With the cardinals and damselflies.

I pull out my journal
My pen and then I write
About the ideas of people
Who have lived and now have died

Some mothers and some fathers
Some sons who died at war
Some babies and some children
Maybe medicine has found a cure?

I speculate, I conjure
I create scenarios
I write in this fantastic place
Ideas in technicolor stereo.

Although it is ideal to write
Where people have been laid to rest
You'd never find me here at night
I'm gone at twilight, I confess.



Rp Verlaine lives in New York City. He has an MFA in creative writing from City College. He taught in New York Public schools for many years. His first volume of poetry, *Damaged by Dames & Drinking*, was published in 2017 and another, *Femme Fatales Movie Starlets & Rockers*, in 2018. A set of three e-books, *Lies From The Autobiography vol 1-3*, were published from 2018 to 2020. His newest book, *Imagined Indecencies*, was published in February of 2022

Rp Verlaine's poetry has appeared in *Atlas Poetica*, *The Linnets' Wings*, *Moving Images*, *Scissortail Quarterly*, *Chrysanthemum Literary Anthology*, *Last Stanza Poetry Journal*, *Booze Cocktails*, *Wales Haiku Journal* *The Mainichi*, *Splintered Disorder Press*, *Rigorous*, *The South Shore Review*, *The Local Train*, *Proletaria*, *Haikuniverse*, *Scry of Lust 2 Anthology*, *Rudderless Mariner*, *Humankind Journal*, *The Wild Word*, *Under The Basho*, *Plum Tree Tavern*, *Fresh Out Magazine*, *Scissortail Quarterly*, *Prune Juice*, *Incense Dreams*, *Last Leaves*, *Blazevox*, *Buk 100*, *Pikers Press*, *Poems' bout Love & Hate anthology*, *Stardust Haiku*, *Heart of Flesh*, *Upwrite Mag*, *Cajun Mutt Press*, *Runcible Spoon*, *The South Shore Review*, *Lothlorien Press*, *Dumpster Fire Press*, *The Dope Fiend Daily*, *Mad Swirl*, *Fleas On The Dog*, *Yellow Mamma*, *Otoliths*, *Alien Buddha*, *Ygdrasil*, *Ink Pantry*, *Dirty Kids Press*, *Flights*, *Dreich*, *Pop The Culture Pill*, *Trouville Review*, *Better Than Starbucks*, *Failed Haiku*, *The Rye Whiskey Review*, and *Autumn Moon Journal*.

RP had a poem featured in the Southern Arizona Press anthology *The Stars and Moon in the Evening Sky* and we are delighted to have two of his works included in this anthology.

Hitchhiker

On a road stop-the quarter moon's a scythe
cutting swaths of light on a
deserted highway. There waits a young girl wearing
only faint dried tears and a torn dress
two sizes too small.

When a truck stops and
two drunk men climb out. Hands open,
staggering forward/toward
that young girl who turns to run.

They smile for she cannot escape but are
startled to see her disappear,
vanishing before their eyes
in the night.

Minutes later, their truck swerves off a bridge
becoming a wreck in flames. As a comet blazes
across the dark sky and the wind blows cold and
for a thousandth of a second, the face of the young
girl replaces the sky, stars and intimate
darkness of night ... her laughter is thought
to be midsummer thunder.

The Sleepwalker

Too delicate
in your fine silks
but your eyes unfettered
and your tongue removed
if you had to talk
without aid of drink.

I paint the obscure details
of each day that
age quickly like fat
worms on a skeleton
looking for meat.

I get so much done
that I get nothing done the limits
of sleepwalking are vast.

I measure progress
in minutes not the hours
drugs release me from thinking.

Three days at last count
but the mirror hints
it's been longer
since I slept.

With another painting done
one year after your death
I may even have the talent
you called a mirage.

But it is time for leisure
so, all can see me walk
through the town
one hand with a paint brush
the other with your still beating heart.

Ghostly Ghouls and Haunted Happenings



Michael Minassian was born in New York City and grew up in New York and New Jersey. He holds a BA in Political Science from Fairleigh Dickinson University in New Jersey and MA in English with a Certificate in Creative Writing at California State University at Dominguez Hills.

In addition to living in Florida, California, Connecticut, North Carolina, and Texas, he lived and taught overseas in England, Jamaica, Saudi Arabia, and South Korea. For over 30 years he taught in the English Department at Broward College in South Florida. He also studied and served as a guest tutor for ten years at Cambridge University's Summer Study Program in the UK.

He has published two chapbooks of poems – *The Arboriculturist* (out of print) and *Jack Pays a Visit* as well as three poetry collections *Time is Not a River*, *Morning Calm*, and *A Matter of Timing* – all available on Amazon. He is also an avid photographer; his photos have appeared in print, online, and in exhibitions in New Jersey, Florida, Texas. He is still a member of the Poetry Society of Texas and the Denton (TX) Poet's Assembly.

He and his wife and recently moved back to New Jersey where he continues to write poetry, film, and book reviews, and take the occasional photograph.

For more information:

<https://michaelminassian.com>

Growing Up With a Ghost

When I was growing up,
we had a cat named Toni,
a male cat neutered
for his own good.

When my parents bought a home,
neighbors told us
the previous owner's son
had robbed a bank,
the money never found,
speculating it was hidden
somewhere in the house.

No one told us the place was haunted:
every month around the full moon
a thin, frail looking old man
appeared, sitting in a bowl of water.

My mother, who claimed
to be able to read fortunes
in the bottom of a Turkish
coffee cup, spoke
to the ghost, asking him
to show us where the money
from the bank robbery was hidden.

Our neutered cat, Toni,
developed a fondness
for exotic flowers and ate
a poisonous blossom.

The next time we saw Toni
he was sitting on the old man's lap,
moonlight from the open window
shining through them both.

When my father ran away
to Florida with his secretary,
the ghost disappeared
and I moved into an apartment
with three friends from college,
including one who claimed
to be clairvoyant,
although she never said
much that surprised me.

My mother and sister
searched the house
for the stolen money,
tearing up carpets,
knocking down walls,
and digging up the basement,
but never checked the attic
or the hidden stairs
in my old bedroom.

The ghost showed up once more,
outside my apartment window
the cat still on his lap,
scaring the clairvoyant
who was sleeping
in my bed and woke me up,
Don't be afraid, I said,
that's our cat Toni.

Ghostly Ghouls and Haunted Happenings

She moved out the next day—
I never saw her or the ghost again,
but every once in a while
I see a cat that reminds
me of Toni, and I lean down
to scratch its head,
my fingers remembering
what it was like to touch
fur and skin, instead
of thin wavering light.

Last Night the Dead Returned

Last night the dead came knocking
on my front door, friends and relatives
and a few I had hoped never to see again.

I didn't want to let them in,
but they came right through
the closed door, pale and oblivious
like the shadow of the moon
in a bright summer sky.

Oh, and they were very polite;
one or two even removed
their shoes, then glided
into the kitchen and pointed
at the refrigerator door: keeper
of mementos and reminders
of those best loved and some
who would never be seen again

All the magnets came unstuck —
some strange reversal
of polarity caused, no doubt,
by negative energy; the dead
crowded around my kitchen
with no atoms to keep them
stuck together; and so,
everything fell
from refrigerator to floor.

Ghostly Ghouls and Haunted Happenings

The dead hovered another moment,
crying without tears or sound,
fading out through the walls
and windows and up through
the ceiling and attic, still dead,
and I can say, really, I was not
sorry to see them go.

(Previously appeared in *NEBO*, 2016)



Colleen Moyne is a South Australian based writer, currently living and travelling full-time in a van with her greyhound, Winter.

Since completing studies in Professional Writing in 2013, Colleen has had poems and stories published in over 30 different collections, both in Australia and overseas. Her work has appeared as part of an audio book for the Fringe Festival and as radio plays for both the *Tales to Terrify* podcast and *Creepy* podcast.

Her first solo poetry collection, *Time Like Coins*, was published in December of 2018. Her second book, *Called to Coddiwomple*, is due for release in 2023

She has also won awards for her poetry. In 2013, she received the Mindshare Australia *Open Your Mind* Poetry Award and was shortlisted for the 2015, 2016, 2017, and 2018 awards. She was long-listed for the COTA Zestfest award and placed second in the Ken Vincent Poetry Award. Her first book, *Time Like Coins* was nominated for an Anne Elder Award.

On top of all this, she has established several writers' groups and teaches courses and workshops in all aspects of creative writing.

You can learn more about Colleen at:
www.colleenmoyne.com

Trick or Treat

'Trick or treat!'
cried the little white ghost
as I opened the front door.

There he was,
standing on my porch,
cute as a button
clutching his pumpkin-shaped basket.

'I'll take the trick,' I said,
much to his bewilderment.

'What do you mean?' he asked,
shrugging his little white shoulders.

'When you say, 'Trick or treat'
and you don't get a treat,
then you have to play a trick.
I don't have any treats for you,
so, I'll take the trick.'

'Well, that sucks,'
moaned the little ghost,
and after a moment's hesitation
added, 'You asked for it...'

and with that, the little ghost shimmered,
levitated from my veranda
and floated off into the night.
like a puff of smoke.

Under the Floorboards

This house is old, a history book
with intriguing stories in every nook

It has watched time pass through its windows and
doors
and many a footstep has graced these floors

Lives have been lived in the rooms and halls
and a million memories are stored in the walls

Families have grown here, children have played,
fights have been fought and love has been made

To those who may visit, this home is a dream,
but I'm here to tell you – all is not as it seems

For under the floorboards, long since forgotten,
there lies a dark secret all withered and rotten

A bundle of bones, a handful of hair
are all that remain in the darkness there

They tell the sad story of one fateful day
when this lovely old house was the scene of foul play

A cheating husband, a scullery maid,
a dangerous game that shouldn't be played

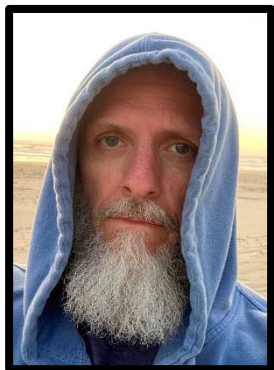
An unplanned child, a murderous plot,
two lives ended with one single shot

A clumsy grave, a newly laid floor,
and the scullery maid was a problem no more.

Ghostly Ghouls and Haunted Happenings

Time has a way of concealing the past
and the scandalous deed was forgotten at last

The secret lies buried beneath the foundations...
until the new owners begin renovations.



Mike L. Nichols is a graduate of Idaho State University and a recipient of the Ford Swetnam Poetry Prize. He lives and writes in Eastern Idaho. Look for his poetry in *Rogue Agent*, *Tattoo Highway*, *Plainsongs Magazine*, and elsewhere. Mike's first poetry collection, *Dead Girl Dancing* was released in 2021.

Find more at deadgirldancing.net

Like A Horror Movie

Sad Ghost floats
into the waiting
room. If he even has
feet, they do not feel
the splintery floor
boards beneath.

It's too dark to see
under the ragged sheet,
its eyeholes forever
shift, causing him to bump
his shins on coffee tables
while he wanders, searching
for someone whose features
he can almost recall.

Images sometimes flare across
his darkness. A yellow dress.
Blonde hair with a white hair bow.
Perfectly placed. A child's
casket resting in the corner,
buried in flowers. Sad Ghost always
is relieved not to see who's inside.

Pull the Covers to Your Chin

The dead ghost in, making my candle gutter.
My chamber fills with unblinking eyes and their

hospital gowns flutter, alive with cartoon characters.
I've waited so long for them to arrive, hoping they'd
have

answers. They keep quiet. Still, I hope they'll stay a
while.
Proof of after-life. Beyond that, what remains to say?
My sister

stands before them, tall as my doorknob, clutching
close her yellow
hospital robe. She stares through me, smiling coyly as
if she has a secret.

The dead drift off when the birds first sing. She fades,
a glance promising
nothing. But the fact she showed at all and stayed a
while is worth something.

Ghostly Ghouls and Haunted Happenings



Linda Imbler's poetry collections include six published paperbacks: *Big Questions*, *Little Sleep*, *Big Questions*, *Little Sleep* second edition (expanded with 66 additional poems); *Lost and Found*; *Red Is The Sunrise*; *Bus Lights*; *Travel Sight*; and *Spica's Frequency*. Soma Publishing has published her four e-book collections, *The Sea's Secret Song*; *Pairings*, a hybrid of short fiction and poetry; *That Fifth Element*; and *Per Quindecim*. Her new book, *Rhythms Told*, will be published this autumn.

Examples of Linda's poetry and a listing of publications can be found at:
lindaspotryblog.blogspot.com

Linda had three poems featured in the Southern Arizona Press anthology *The Stars and Moon in the Evening Sky* and we are delighted to have two of her works included in this anthology.

Mary Roberts

Mary Roberts, are you alive?
I thought you were twitching.
Living eyes shifting and darting
as you study the room,
but you're made with skin of plastic,
your traveling cannot be.
You can only stay in one place.
Your eyes in that face cannot see.

Mary Roberts, are you alive?
I'm sure you were twitching.
Showing much more wrist than before,
hands stretched from the gingham,
fingers pulling on the stitching.
If your arms could rise much further,
just what could those hands do?
What is that lying on the floor?

Mary Roberts, you ARE alive!
I just watched you twitching.
Feet moving inside pretty shoes,
and those legs, if they moved,
could they possibly be creeping?
Warm liquid now on floorboard seeping.
Now prone, I hear feet being shuffled.
Now prone, I hear breath being muffled.
How did you get from there to here?

(Previously published in *Spillwords* and *The World of Myth Magazine*)

Poe's Annabel Lee

Dearly departed,
your face fitted inside the ornate filigree frame.
Your feathered hat
surrounds a rawboned face.
Your shoulders hold a filmy wrap of satin and lace.
Your skeletal fingers
shift in the light on graceful hands.
Velvet gloves clasped as you, the lost lover,
endure your woeful waiting,
as the pendulum wall clock ticks,
and you hoard his books,
as you anticipate
his arrival.

(Previously published in *Poetry Quarterly* and *Necro Magazine*)

Ghostly Ghouls and Haunted Happenings



Prayerlife Onyinyechi

Nwosu is from Nigeria and enjoys writing and drawing. She is a graduate in Mass Communication from Federal Polytechnic Nekede Owerri Imo state Nigeria and the state Information secretary of the Society of Young Nigeria Writers Imo state chapter (SYNW).

She is a talented poet whose poems have been recognized in lots of Anthologies and Magazines which include: *Abhyuday The Rising International Magazine, News Corner Media, The Pine Cone Review Magazine; Issue II, Poemify Magazine; Memories Issue III, Sixth Chinua Achebe Essay/Poetry Anthology* with an award of outstanding entry, *Upwrite Magazine, Ezena carnival of unity Magazine, 11th women stream anthology, Anthology in honor of Late Prof Jerry Agada, Libretto Magazine; Issue 7, OPA Annual Anthology of Poetry; Bridges to Tomorrow, Nigerian book of Miscellaneous insults, and Voices of Africa Anthology.*

She can be followed on Social Media at : Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/nwosu.plife>

Who Could That Be?

At twilight I peeped out of my window
Shading a shadow with tipsy eyes
Pretty sure I have no neighbors
Who could she be in the cold stormy night?

A white-skinned lady in a white dress
Barefooting with a long dark hair
Sad and bent anticlockwise
Weary at the twilight cold hour

Having a rain shower in blood-stained dress
By the river she stood with a wet rose
Under deep roaring of thunderstorm
Never moved by fright but seemed like a leech

Still like a frozen statue
With no move of joints and blink of the eyes
Made no sound nor said a word
As her wiggling dress waves and cheers

Stood for hours as the wind whispers
Staring more like a helpless zombie
 Sudden drop of her wet rose
She vanished into the tin air

Who could she be?
Where cometh she?
A mermaid in human form
Or a spirit visitor at twilight?

Dark Edges

At twilight the wolf howls at the full moon
As staggering zombies move around
From the graveyard the old owl stares
Deep from the forest an evil bird screams:
Blood thirsty demons, vampire alert!

Quiet and creepy; its midnight
Dressed in darkness roaring so loud
Angry and thirsty as he stares around
Who could that be? No one knows

Just in a wink, a blind bat is trapped
Struggles to escape but was firmly gripped
Straight to his mouth he chews so fast
Poor blind bat, what a sudden death!

Quickly it flows, it's a blood meal
I cried out so loud shivering and panting
What a nightmare, could this be real?
I saw Dracula the deadly vampire.



Dibyasree Nandy is a 29-year-old resident of India. After completing her Master of Science and Master of Technology degrees, she began writing during the lock-down period of the COVID-19 pandemic. She has written five books: *The Labyrinth of Silent Voices- Epistles from the*

Mahabharata, Stardust-Haiku and Other Poems, Studded with Rubies; A Hundred Short Stories, Marchen of Newer Days and Liebeslied. Some of her works have been published in magazines such as *The Pine Cone Review, The Literary Cocktail, White Enso, Open Skies Anthology, 10 by 10 Flash,* and *Double Speak.*

Dibyasree had a poem featured in the Southern Arizona Press anthology *Dragonflies and Fairies* and we are delighted to have another of her works included in this anthology.

The Dying Tenth Month

As the last of the red maples fall to the ground;
The feline creature with smooth black fur leaps up
from the shadowy mound;
Peals of the knell, the dying tenth month;
Footfalls of the cackling witch disturb the quietude of
the woodland amaranth.
End of the harvest days;
The ominous eve dawns, the fading dusky rays;
A candle-light realm of silvery laughter;
They return for an instant, smiling fondly, before
turning away; many a Drifter.
The ones from the Grimoire manifest;
Scoffing at the paltry banquets of the humans and
their embellishments best;
Scarlet apples and the orange glow;
Baskets for children on tables low.
Raisins on fire;
Demons with faces blue, their plights dire;
Claim the fruit;
The dragons snap to ashes and soot.
A night for those divine;
As lofty as the planets nine;
Psalms whispered in the shrines beneath shimmering
stars;
Those from Beyond hide behind the rustling conifers.
Pumpkins alight line the cobbled winding lane;
The barren boughs stark against the lunar fane;
Sages watch in disdain as ravens perch on
tombstones nameless;
Golden hay is carried by a spirit in a white dress.
Parades of little ones traipsing;
Tiny skeletons and devils terrifying;
Lanterns bobbing amidst vermilion streams;
Sink not into quagmires of dreams.

Ghostly Ghouls and Haunted Happenings

Sorceresses serenely sip tea;
Served by butlers from Hell set free;
A parley of mischief;
The Pagan soul-reincarnation of make-belief.



Lennart Lundh is a poet, photographer, short-fictionist, and historian living in Orland Hills, Illinois. His work has appeared internationally since 1965

If you see

a shadow in the night that isn't yours, call to it. Weigh the effort and reward. The worst you can get is no answer, or a ghostly sorry, wrong house. The best would be to hear your mother's voice, your father's or a loved one claimed by time: Come to comfort in your sorrow, returned to join in your rejoicing. Speak with them a while, recall the things you still love because they did. And in the morning, seek for something left behind to reassure you didn't dream them: A scent, a picture straightened or heart traced in a spot of dust you missed, perhaps a single slice of someone's favorite rye.

(Previously appeared in *Pictures, Postcards, Letters* (Kelsay Books, 2020))

Dance with Me

Buy me a drink, she asked.
Sit next to me in this loud place
and calm the screaming of my trepanned heart.

Come dance with me, she said.
Take me in your arms and slowly two-step
around the memories I fear.

Do me a favor, she whispered.
Hazme un favor, querido mio.
Let my hair run softly off your cheek,
warm my hip with the trace of your fingers,
brush my lips as we sweetly dream.
Keep away the ghosts that follow day.

(Previously appeared in *Love Songs and Other War Poems*
(Writing Knights Press, 2016))

Ghostly Ghouls and Haunted Happenings

Valerie Hunter teaches high school English and has a Master of Fine Arts degree in writing for children and young adults from Vermont College of Fine Arts. Her poems have appeared in publications including *Edison Literary Review*, *Room*, *Other Voices*, *Paper Lanterns*, and *Wizards in Space*, as well as anthologies such as *Rhyme & Rhythm: Poems for Student Athletes* (Archer Publishing), *Byline Legacies* (Cardigan Press), and *I Sing: The Body* (Cardigan Press).

You can find her on Instagram:
@somanystories_solittletime.

Ghost

You make me out of
tennis balls and tissue paper,
crumpled newspaper and trash bags,
sheets and twine and paint.
You hang me from trees and fences,
then discard me or pack me away
at the end of the season,
creating and uncreating me
without a second thought.
You envision me as a cartoon
or a monster, something invented
for stories told by flashlight
or movies watched in the dark.
You don't actually think I'm real;
you laugh off my existence,
mock me in crazed, high-pitched tones—
whoooooooooooo!

Never mind.
I laugh, too, at the Halloween version,
this belief that I can be seen,
manifested,
consulted,
exorcised.
I am not a cold, white, floating thing,
and my existence does not depend
on you believing in me.
I am the in-between,
the otherness,
the all-around.
You breathe me into your lungs,
circulate me through your blood.
I am omnipresent,
and someday
I will be you.



Linda Ahrens Brower lives and writes on the wide-open plains, loves to travel, create and make new friends. She has received many writing awards for her poetry and short stories. She believes the best people and places are the ones you imagine.

She imagines she lives with a tassel of children, a husband, a menagerie of pets, a wayward dog, and a knobby old horse. She believes in music you can dance to and vibrant colors that caress the soul and living your story so loud it sets your soul on fire. About life, she thinks it's best if you make it all up. Most of the best things are. And just to let you know, some of this is made up too.

The Black Cat's Tale

I'm the cat that sits upon the broom,
all sleek and black with a face of doom.

My job is to sit and watch the vat
that bubbles and boils with 'nary a rat.
I can tell you frogs aren't great to eat –
they are all skin and bones, but where's the meat?
So "just leave it," I say, "in the vat
for there is no call for a meal like that!"

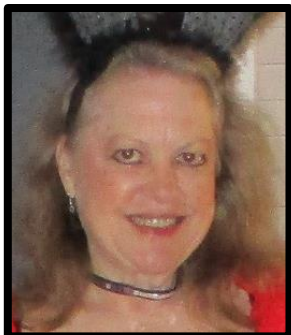
All I want to be is a regular cat.
"But there's no need," *she* says, "for that -
for a cat who can bounce and purr and play
and spend the day just stalking his prey."

All I get to do is sit
upon the broom with that old witch!
And fly about here and there
while she cackles and screeches and cries, "Beware!"

We fly through the air at the speed of light,
zipping a left ...and then a quick right,
and plummet to the earth to give someone a fright—
(and really it may be..me! It might!)

So all I can really tell you is this –
it's hard to sit upon a stick.
And it's no wonder I look like that
with my tail and my hair like a scaredy-cat!
I'm about to be blown right off this broom
the way it zips and bucks and lurches and vrooms!

When the night is over, just turn out the light,
unplug the stars and make it dark as night
so I can sleep in 'til next Halloween
when again on the back of that broom I'll be seen.



Jerri Hardesty lives in the woods of Alabama with husband, Kirk, also a poet. They run the nonprofit poetry organization, New Dawn Unlimited, Inc. (NewDawnUnlimited.com). Jerri has had over 500 poems published and has won almost 2000 awards and titles in both written and spoken word poetry.

Jerri had three poems featured in the Southern Arizona Press anthology *Dragonflies and Fairies* and we are delighted to have two of her works included in this anthology.

Halloween Party

Shadows
Weave in and out
Amongst the tombstones.
Flickers of light,
Sprite-like,
Illuminate
The cool marble skin
Of statues,
Guardians of the dead,
Perched upon their
Pedestals.
They watch the midnight
Procession
On All Hallows Eve.
They come from
Every direction,
Spirits drawn here
To dance and whirl,
Parade and twirl,
Invisible
To the sight
Of the living.

(Previously published in *Austin Poetry Society Best of 2018*)

The Health Benefits of Gardening

Out in the woods, an old woman knelt down
To plant a small seed in the ground.
She waited, and in the misty dawn,
The seed had grown into a young girl.
The woman gently touched the form,
Transferring her life-force into it.
The elderly body disintegrated
As the child walked away
To the country store on the highway;
"Can you help me, please? I'm lost."

(Previously published online at the Science Fiction Poetry
Association website)

Ghostly Ghouls and Haunted Happenings

Michael Lee Johnson lived ten years in Canada, Vietnam era. Today he is a poet in the greater Chicagoland area, Illinois. Michael is an internationally published poet in 44 countries, several published poetry books, nominated for four Pushcart Prize awards and six Best of the Net nominations. He is editor-in-chief of three poetry anthologies, all available on Amazon, and has several poetry books and chapbooks. He has over 536 published poems and over 264 poetry videos on YouTube. Michael is the administrator of six Facebook poetry groups and a member of the Illinois State Poetry Society:
<http://www.illinoispoets.org/>.

Witchy Halloween

Inside this late October 31st night,
this poem turns into a pumpkin.
Animation, something has gone
devilishly wrong with my imagery.
I take the lid off the pumpkin's head
and light the pink candles inside.
Demons cry, crawl, split, fly outside —
escape through the pumpkin's eyes.
I'm mixed in fear with this scary, strange creation.
Outside, quietly tapping Hazel the witch,
her broomstick against my window pane rattles.
She says, "nothing seems to rhyme anymore,
nothing seems to make any sense,
but the night is young.
Give me back my magical bag of tricks.
As Robert Frost said:
"But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep."

Resurrection Mary

I learned years ago true stories versus myths.
I learned early in hustle times to distinguish single
cashback rewards
from whores-dime store dancers from proper dates,
believers in white party dresses—
I never worried about the lingo of my sentence
structure in my life.
Until the resurrection, Resurrection Mary came along.
Life is a melody breather, philosopher of ghosts, past,
pink pillow talk, and dreams.
Resurrection Mary was a factory worker always
dressed in white satin on weekends.
Single life is a hollow road. A narrow highway passes
with a cemetery nearby.
I was then a writer, a poet of screams, dementia,
limited skills, and open skulls thoughts.
I hampered history into craniums, criminal minds,
images of release, sexual climax.
She kissed my breath and dreamed of fog, new
beginnings when she was conscious.
I was a drifter of singles dances; she was a drifter in
time, shadow maker.
I often breathed on her forehead, kissed fleeting lips,
left the body for legends
toss carcass into the south wind those south gate
storms.
Jesus is a perfume seller of night scent when
midnight arrives.
Jesus is aroused by an iron bar cemetery bender,
stretcher of the nights into years.
Mary clutches her small purse, talks of injustice, and
hitchhikes back and forth in time.
She posted her stamp on me, fooled my desires, her
stopwatch clicked in time then stopped.

Ghostly Ghouls and Haunted Happenings

Resurrection Mary still holds a French 75 cocktail at
the end of the barstool in time.

Shake it off. No shame, put those dancing shoes on
one more time.

(Anecdote: Resurrection Mary is a well-known Chicago
area ghost story. Of the "vanishing hitchhiker" type, the story
takes place outside Resurrection Cemetery in Justice, Illinois, a
few miles southwest of Chicago. The quote is taken from
Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.)

Paul Gilliland retired after over 30 years of service with the US Army and settled in the high desert of Southeast Arizona, just miles from the historic towns of Tombstone and Bisbee. He holds Associate of Applied Science Degrees in Intelligence Studies, Linguistics, and Education from Cochise College; a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Music Theory/Composition and Technical Theater Design from Olivet College; and a Master of Fine Arts Degree in Music Composition from the Vermont College of Fine Arts. He is an educator; composer of 21st century chamber music; and form poet. He is a member of the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP), National Writers Union, Authors Guild, Poetry Society of America, and the Academy of American Poets. He is the Founder and Editor-in-Chief of Southern Arizona Press and currently has two published books of poetry, *Hindsights of 2020* and *The Journey of the Fool: A Poetic Journey in Three Parts*, both available through Amazon. He is currently working on completing his third book of poetry, *Tales from a Southwest Inn*. His love of World War One poetry is guiding him in the researching, writing, and editing of the text for the opening sections of Southern Arizona Press' fall anthology, *The Poppy: A Symbol of Remembrance* which will include the story of how the poppy became the symbol of remembrance, a huge comprehensive collection of World War One remembrance poetry, and a section dedicated to 21st century poetic works honoring fallen war heroes from living poets across the globe. His poetry appears online in a number of Facebook poetry group as well as published in *Sonnet Sanctuary Anthology Volume 1* (A Romeo Nation), *Open Skies Quarterly Volumes 4, 5, 6*, and *Perceptions* (Shrouded Eye Press), and *From Sunset to Sunrise* (Dark Poetry Society Anthology). He can be followed online at <https://www.facebook.com/PaulGillilandPoetry> <http://www.paulgillilandmusic.com/>

The Celebration of Samhain*

* *Pronounced "SAH-win"*

The veil between the realms is growing thin
as spirits of the dead prepare to rise.
On Samhain* they will come to visit kin
as living folk wear costumes for disguise.
We honor those departed with a feast
to share between the living and the dead,
but since through years the Christian faith increased
we celebrate All Hallows' Eve instead.
From singing songs in costume door-to-door,
receiving cakes and other morsels sweet.
We now have children dressed up as before
in what we now all know as Trick-or-Treat
For some Samhain is faced with fear and dread.
For some a celebration of the dead.

(Previous published in the author's book *The Journey of the Fool*
– *A Poetic Journey in Three Parts*)

The Night Death Came to Call

There were three knocks upon my door
for Death had come to call,
but I knew it was all untrue
I felt no pain at all.

Inviting him to come inside
to have some wine and bread,
he kindly then declined the snack
To tell me I was dead.

I asked to see some proof of this,
some facts to back his claim.
He sighed and opened up his book
and pointed out my name.

I said that did not mean a thing
as books are sometimes wrong,
but he continued to insist
that I must come along.

I said that he should take a seat
to rest his weary bones.
Then poured for him a pint of ale,
set out a plate of scones,

Insisting that he had no time,
his duties could not wait.
I told him it would take a while
to finish this debate.

I showed him all my evidence
for he seemed to have none
and after several pints of ale
conceded I had won.

Ghostly Ghouls and Haunted Happenings

So now that he had gotten drunk
I helped him to the door.
He turned and in slurred speech he said
“Ye shan’t see me no more.”

And so, I say to all of you
when death knocks at your door,
be ready with your evidence
and lots of ale to pour.

An Evening at Palisades Park

I got to my hotel quite early that night
and quickly checked in from a grueling long flight.
The room I was given was really a bore
so went for a walk on a trail by the shore.

As evening was falling the end of this day,
a fog slowly formed from the warmth of the bay.
The further I journeyed, the denser it grew
until there was nothing coherent in view.

But then through the fog I could sense rather clear
that freshly popped corn and hotdogs were near.
Then faintly I heard in the distance the sound
a calliope from a merry-go-round.

As the music grew clearer, I saw through the haze
the flashing of neon in grand light displays
and as the mist cleared, I then saw in the dark
the dancing of lights from the Palisades Park.

I walked through the gate and took in the sights:
The colors, the rides, the food, and the lights.
I saw up ahead was the Spinning Cups ride
so, I entered the queue and was seated inside.

As I sat in my cup, much to my delight
a lady slid into the seat on my right.
She was quite lovely and flashed me a grin
and grabbed my hand as we started to spin.

We laughed as we spun in the circles so fast
and agreed at the end that the ride was a blast.
She told me her name was Mary Jo Laine
and asked me to ride on the Miniature Train.

Ghostly Ghouls and Haunted Happenings

We rode on the train and the Rocketship
and shared cotton candy and Dairy Whip
and when stopped at the top of the Ferris Wheel
the kiss we both shared was something unreal.

We snuggled and hugged in the Tunnel of Love
and held each other under the moon above.
I spent the whole evening with dear Mary Jo
and when the park closed, I was saddened to go.

She said we could meet the following day
I promised her nothing would keep me away.
So, as we parted, we hugged, and we kissed
and I left her that evening through the foggy mist

The following morning, I asked the valet
while getting my food at the breakfast buffet
to hail me a cab for my trip to the park,
the one I had visited last night after dark.

The man was bewildered, and said, "By the shore?
There is no amusement park there anymore."
I asked what he meant, "Did it leave overnight?"
But the story he told gave me a great fright.

Some decades ago, a park rather small
existed until one night ended it all.
He told me it was on the edge of the bay
where locals and tourists would come every day.

But then, on one evening, some decades ago
a gas leak ignited and ended the show.
The blast could be heard for miles it was said
resulting in over three hundred folks dead.

Now most of the park was destroyed in the blast
and that which was left, was never to last.
The rides were dismantled and shuttled away,
the land was left vacant and still is today.

Now I was bewildered, it was not a dream
the sights and the sounds and the people I'd seen.
I told him I wanted to visit the sight
where I had just spent the most wonderful night.

I left the hotel, and I followed the shore
to prove to myself what I saw there before.
The walk seemed much longer while not in the mist
but I knew that the Palisades Park did exist.

At long last I came to a wide-open space
and the park I had seen was gone with no trace.
No smell of the hotdogs, no laughs from the crowd,
no sounds of a midway that blasted too loud.

The only thing left where the park had once been
was a monument built to the women and men
who had perished that night many decades before,
there at the park on the New Jersey shore.

My mind was a blur, were my memories real?
I could not explain my most haunting ordeal.
But then what I saw nearly drove me insane,
the street sign before me read "Mary Jo Lane"

*(Inspired by the song Palisades Park, written by Chuck Barris
and recorded by Freddy "Boom Boom" Cannon)*

The Demons in My Dreams

As darkness falls, I fight to stay awake
for fear that demons haunt my nightly dream
and death arrives, my mortal soul to take
with torture 'til my inner voices scream.
I shiver in a pool of cold wet sweat
and feel my heartbeat pulsing in my head.
The horrors that I see I shan't forget
when in the darkness I lay down in bed.
I gasp for breath, anxiety takes hold,
it paralyzes me with fright and fear.
I feel that I am under the control
of creatures that in day do not appear.
If I can only dream within the light
then how shall I find rest throughout the night?

A Dark and Stormy Night

It was a dark and stormy night
as I sat upon the floor
When suddenly the lights went out
then a knock upon the door.

It sounded like a single rap
at least that's what I heard
So, it must have been a gust of wind
or a misguided little bird.

I got up from my comfort spot
to try to find a light.
The power might be out a while
on this dark and stormy night.

As I crossed to get the candle
in a bottle dripped with wax,
there was a tap upon the window
that stopped me in my tracks.

I fumbled for the matches
as my hands began to shake.
The adrenalin was flowing.
Was my safety now at stake?

I struck a match and lit the wick,
the candlelight grew strong.
I looked around my cozy room
to see what could be wrong.

The candle danced and flickered
casting shadows of every kind
'til I couldn't tell the real ones
from those created by my mind.

Ghostly Ghouls and Haunted Happenings

I heard the shutters rattle.
something scraped across the roof.
I had to go investigate
to calm my nerves with proof.

I went to venture in the yard
to see what was about
but as the door was opened
the west wind blew my candle out.

Barren branches breached the sky
beneath the full moon's glow.
They creaked and cracked with every breath
the cold west wind did blow.

Then this demonic unseen force
sent a cold wind through the pine
that even through my sweater
sent a shiver down my spine.

I ran straight back into my room
and slammed the door closed tight
as the power was restored
on this dark and stormy night.

So, when wild winds whistle
'neath a full moon in the fall
I never will forget the night
the west wind came to call.

The Ghosts of Bisbee

Once a booming mining town
of copper, silver, gold
From the mountains of the Mules
comes haunted tales of old.

The famous Copper Queen Hotel,
the grandest in the town,
has its own ghostly stories
that makes it now renowned.

A little boy named Billy
drowned in a nearby stream.
we hear his steps and giggles
but his spirit's never seen.

The poor young Julia Lowell,
a lady of the night.
Fell for a paying client
whose love for her was slight.

She could not take rejection,
her life was now a wreck,
and so, she was found hanging
with a rope around her neck.

An older English gentleman
with top hat and black cape,
leaves scent of burning cigar
from a soul that can't escape.

The house of Edith Oliver
was quite a bloody scene,
where twenty-seven lives were lost
due to room thirteen

Ghostly Ghouls and Haunted Happenings

For miner Nathan Anderson
the house cost him his life.
When he was caught in an affair
with his moneylender's wife.

The husband learned of their affair
and caught them in the act.
He shot Nat between the eyes
and a bullet to the back

The murderer was never caught
and poor Nat wanders still,
haunting the famous room thirteen
for his outstanding bill.

Does poor Nat wander out at night
a long-lost miner's soul
and climb the thousand steps or more
with heaven as his goal

For all the gold and copper
is not only Bisbee's worth.
or is this southern mining town
a heaven found on earth?

Home at Last

Jack and John were driving back
on a dark and foggy Friday night
when up ahead there on the right
they saw a young girl dressed in white.

She seemed to be there all alone,
walking along the dark roadside.
As they got closer; the car slowed
and they stopped to offer her a ride.

She said her name was Laura
and she thanked them for their aid.
She said as it got darker
she had gotten more afraid.

She quickly climbed into the back
and asked if they could take her home.
She said her boyfriend dropped her off
and left her on the road alone.

They asked her where he dropped her off
and she said near the Oak Creek Bridge.
They knew that was a few miles back
just before Saint Everett's Ridge.

They asked her why she had been out.
She said that she was at a dance,
but things had not all gone as planned
which left her in this circumstance.

The boys said they could drop her off
and asked her for the house address.
But, Jack saw she was getting cold
in nothing but a thin white dress.

Ghostly Ghouls and Haunted Happenings

He offered her his college coat
to shield her from the cold night air.
She thanked him for the nice warm coat
and said she lived in Mount Saint Clair.

They said they didn't know the streets
but she said she could guide them there,
and so, they took off down the road,
Laura with the college pair.

As they approached the edge of town
she told them when to make a right.
On Summit Street was where she lived,
the fourth house with the front porch light.

They stopped in front of number ten
as Laura thanked them for the ride.
They waited as she walked up to
the front door and was safe inside

The next day Jack had realized
that with his coat she left the car,
and so, the two drove back to town
and things then got bit bizarre.

The two arrived on Summit Street
and rang the bell outside at the door
Both were sure this was the house
where Laura went the night before.

An older women greeted them
and asked them why they both had called,
but when Laura they asked to see
the older woman was appalled.

She asked what type of prank this was,
why had they come to fuel her grief.
They told her of the former night
to which she looked in disbelief.

She told the boys to come inside
and in the parlor take a seat
and then she told the tale of Laura
her darling daughter, oh so sweet.

For twenty years ago last night
she and her boyfriend had a date,
but as she sat and waited up
the time had gotten very late.

It was nearly midnight when the
Sheriff came to give the word
of Laura and he boyfriend Jack
And the tragedy that had occurred.

As they approached the Oak Creek Bridge
the car would swerve and lose control
into the creek the car would plunge
with not a single living soul.

With this she showed a photograph
of Laura twenty years before
and both boys said that was the girl
whom they had dropped off at the door.

With that the woman asked the time.
the night before they dropped her there
and when they told her ten o'clock
the time she heard steps on the stair.

Ghostly Ghouls and Haunted Happenings

She guided both the boys upstairs
to Laura's room, and then she said
she had not changed a single thing
since she had learned that she was dead.

And as she opened up the door
they all were given quite a fright.
There folded neatly on the bed
was the jacket and the dress of white.

The House on the Hill

In every town there seems to be a house
A spooky one that sits high on a hill
That brings a fright to minds of all the youth
And often brings a fright to grown-ups still

But why in every town does one exist
Surrounded but an iron fence and gate
With darkened windows on the second floor
Does evil need a place to watch and wait?

More sinister as night begins to fall
It waits for those who venture on the grounds
And as it wanes into the dark and fog
The air is filled with strange and haunting sounds

At times we see the flicker of a light
That seems to fade as quick as it appears
But never any human is in sight
Which only aids the feeding of our fears

The old folks tell of stories from the past
Based on bits of fact that they obtained
Or mysteries surrounding the strange house
Of happenings that never were explained

And then there are the stories that are told
Of those who ventured inside late at night
They tell of ghostly sounds and eerie sights
That gave to them a cold bone chilling fright

This story is a tale from one of those
Who took a dare and entered one such place
I will leave opinions up to you
Of whether spirits leave without a trace

Ghostly Ghouls and Haunted Happenings

It was a dark and chilly autumn night
As we walked past the house with quicken pace
I swear we both had heard the haunting sounds
And knew our fears where something we should face

That's when I dared my buddy to explore
The house to see what evil lie inside
Although I know deep down, he was afraid
His fear was stifled by his teenage pride

Without a word he quickly jumped the fence
And made his way up to the darkened door
He turned the knob, the door, it opened wide
And entered in the darkness to explore

I stood beside the gate and wondered if
I'd ever see my friend alive again
But then I laughed it off and asked myself
How could an empty house devour men?

But he remained for such a long, long time
I ascertained it wasn't just a game
I slowly made my way up to the door
And called out to my buddy by his name

I entered in and looked about the house
And found him sitting in a parlor chair
I called his name, but he did not respond
As he was bound in some transfixing stare

I grabbed and shook his arm for a response
He slowly turned his head as if in shock
I picked him up and carried him away
Outside the house and down a city block

A sat him down beside an old oak tree
And talked to him to bring him back around
He slowly seemed to wake up from the trance
That seemed to have his mind and body bound

I asked him what had happened in the house
What had he seen that put him in that state
He did not find the words that could express
The feelings that he had of death and hate

He told me he was overcome with grief
Emotions that he'd never felt before
The powers in the house had bound his feet
And kept him from advancing toward the door

He said he felt his body growing weak
It seemed that he was losing all control
He had no recollection of his thoughts
Like spirits had command over his soul

As years went by, we'd look the other way
When passing by that house up on the hill
We never talked about that night again
And I have kept it to myself until

This night when I have shared my tale with you
For some strange reason led me now to share
My story of the house up on the hill
That gave my friend and I a frightful scare

I hope you all will understand our plight
For I'm not sure we ever were the same
But what we learned is evil does exist
And visiting old houses is no game

Homage to E A Poe

I hear a constant heartbeat in my head
Insistent drumming as the raindrops fall
And ticking of the clock out in the hall
That fills my mind with sounds of fear and dread
I hear the sounds of night while I'm in bed
The silent creeping creatures as they crawl
"For Nevermore," a distant raven's call
With church bells as they peal to raise the dead
A presence that I sense, but cannot see
The pendulum marks time with every swing
The bumps and creaks that give my soul a fright
As images that manifest in thee
Through darkness, to my sanity I cling
On this and every dark and stormy night

The Inmate and the Guard

Amanda couldn't take the threats her husband nightly
gave
And so, one stormy autumn night, she sent him to his
grave
She pled that she had killed him for the years of his
abuse
But prosecutors clearly proved that this was no
excuse

The jury did not care that she had been a battered
wife
They quickly found her guilty and then sentenced her
to life
And so, she found herself inside a women's prison
cell
Which quickly had become for her a type of living hell

Until one day she found a friend within her prison
ward
A guard that swore he'd help her see her freedom be
restored
So, every night they'd meet for their familiar
rendezvous
To try to figure out a way that they could start anew

And then one night within the morgue, he formed a
gruesome plot
To steal her from these walls of stone without them
getting shot
He said whenever someone died, they'd ring the
tower bell
And she should go into the morgue to bid this place
farewell

Ghostly Ghouls and Haunted Happenings

For she would climb into the box with the unlucky soul
And this would prove to be the pass to serve as her
parole
The warden then would bury them outside the prison
gate
And once the dark of night had fell, he'd come to
excavate

For he would dig the coffin up and they would run
away
As no one would have missed them both until the
break of day
And finally, after several weeks she heard the death
bell peal
She slowly slipped down to the morgue, her freedom
she could feel

There in the dark she found the box and quickly
climbed right in
And she could feel the coldness of the corpse's
lifeless skin
An hour passed before she heard them nail the cover
down
Then carry it outside the wall and put it in the ground

She got a little frightened when she heard the dirt
above
But knew that by the break of dawn she'd be with her
new love
And so, she laid there quietly, awaiting to be freed
For surely, he would come for her as they had both
agreed

As hours past she wondered who was laying by her
side

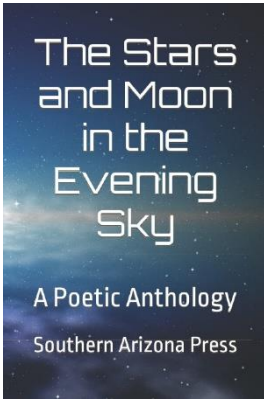
But she let out a morbid scream when she saw who
had died

The inmates say they heard faint screams outside the
prison yard

That seemed to come from over by the gravesite of
the guard

Ghostly Ghouls and Haunted Happenings

Previous
Anthologies from
Southern Arizona
Press:



The Stars and Moon in the Evening Sky is a collection of 120 poetic works crafted by 65 poets from across the globe inspired by the universe around us.

Available at
<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0B4HJ2FY2>



Dragonflies and Fairies is a collection of 72 poetic works crafted by 34 poets from across the globe celebrating the magical and mystical creatures of folklore.

Available at
<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0B8VLH1H2>

**Upcoming
Anthologies from
Southern Arizona
Press:**

The Poppy: A Symbol of Remembrance –

This book will include the history of the poppy and how it became a symbol of remembrance for the fallen men and women of World War One, a section of remembrance poetry by World War One poets, and a section of new poetry in remembrance of the fallen from all wars written by 21st Century poets. Coming at the end of September 2022.

The Wonders of Winter – A themed anthology of poetry celebrating the wonders of the winter season (Note: this is not intended to be a holiday anthology) Coming in Early December 2022.

Poets interested in submitting works for upcoming anthologies are asked to check out our Current Submissions page at:
<http://www.southernarizonapress.com/current-submissions/>

**Published works by
our featured
contributors:**



Welcome one and all to Courtney Glover's **Calypso Dreaming: Crimson Ink**! You are sure to enjoy the newest addition to the Calypso Dreaming poetry series. This latest edition holds many surprises and shocking revelations. From intensely dark poetry to mythical landscapes of heroic proportions. This book contains all sorts of interesting pieces that vary widely. Nothing is ever quite what it seems!

<https://www.amazon.com/Calypso-Dreaming-Crimson-Courtney-Glover/dp/B09TZBPZ8V>



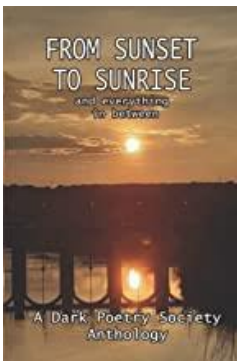
In **Woman's Journey**, poet and author Johanne Lee has created a collection of poetry that reflects on the journey of a woman and her arrival at the phenomenon of menopause. Including poems from women across a broad spectrum, this anthology looks at womanhood through amusing, heartfelt, and honest verse. Every woman will recognize a part of themselves within these pages, making this gem of a book something that will resonate with women everywhere.

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Womans-Journey-Johanne-Lee/dp/1915472067>



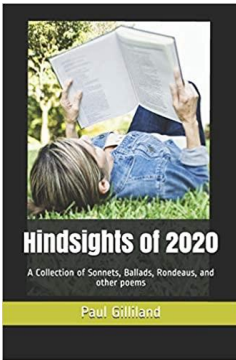
A black swan is an unpredictable event that is beyond what is normally expected of a situation and has potentially severe consequences. Black swan events are characterized by their extreme rarity, severe impact, and the widespread insistence that were obvious in hindsight. Carl Butler was originally going to do a modern-day Decameron, 100 poems over 100 days during the lockdown. To date, he has written over 1600 in total! So, how appropriate a title, ***My Black Swan Calling & Other Poems!***

<https://www.amazon.com/Black-Swan-Calling-Carl-Butler/dp/1952818036>



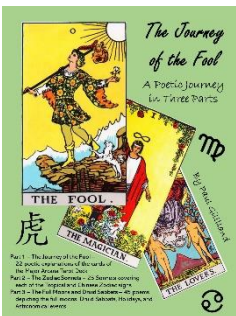
This Anthology from the members of Dark Poetry Society poetry and stories that will touch your heart, creep up your spine or take you on a journey. ***From Sunset to Sunrise*** and everything in between has it all. Those between the pages bleed their hearts and dreams for you like the sunset and sunrise. What happens in between. Find out.

<https://www.amazon.com/Sunset-Sunrise-everything-between/dp/B0B42W7XGD>



Paul Gilliland's *Hindsights of 2020* is a collection of 69 poems written during the last five months of 2020. It includes sonnets, ballads, rondeaus, and other poems influenced by patriotism, love of nature and astrology, and reflections on memories and the world we live in.

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B08STHXXGT>



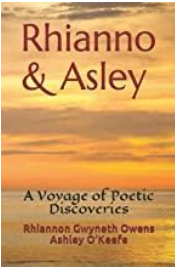
Paul Gilliland's *The Journey of the Fool* is a poetic journey in three parts:

Part 1 – *The Journey of the Fool* - A poetic journey through the 22 cards of the Major Arcana Tarot deck each written in a different poetic form.

Part 2 – *The Zodiac Sonnets* – A collection of 25 Shakespearean sonnets about each of the Tropical and Chinese Zodiac Signs.

Part 3 – *Full Moons and Druid Sabbats* – A collection of 45 poems depicting each of the full moons, Druid Sabbats, holidays, and other astronomical events presented in chronological order.

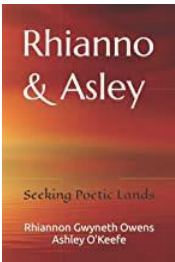
<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B09PMH12BW>



Rhiannon Owens and Ashley O'Keefe join forces as Rhianno & Asley to take readers on voyages of poetic discoveries in the series of poetic collections:

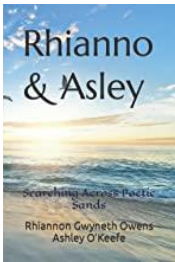
A Voyage of Poetic Discoveries

<https://www.amazon.com/Rhianno-Asley-Voyage-Discoveries-Collections/dp/B08B325GPT>



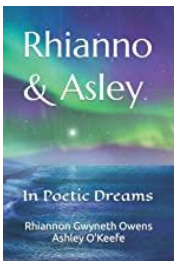
Seeking Poetic Lands

<https://www.amazon.com/Rhianno-Asley-Seeking-Poetic-Lands/dp/B08L7W5PWJ>



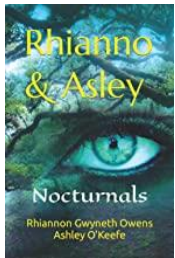
Searching Across Poetic Sands

<https://www.amazon.com/Rhianno-Asley-Searching-Across-Poetic/dp/B098GJDCTP>



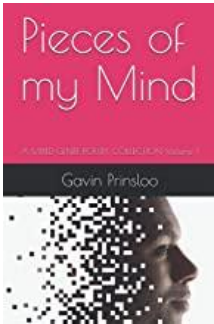
In Poetic Dreams

<https://www.amazon.com/Rhianno-Asley-Poetic-Ashley-OKeefe/dp/B09SNW7G69>



Nocturnals

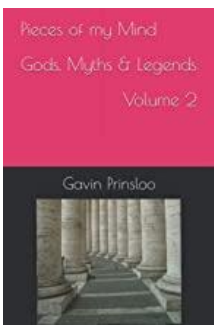
<https://www.amazon.com/Rhianno-Asley-Nocturnals-Ashley-OKeefe/dp/B0B5KQSKVN>



Gavin Prinsloo takes readers on a marvelous poetic journey of his work in a continuing series of poetic anthologies titles ***Piece of my Mind***

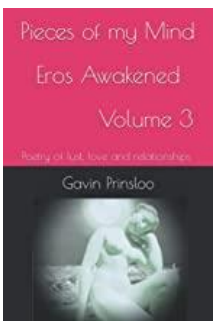
A Mixed Genre Collection – Volume 1

<https://www.amazon.com/Pieces-Mind-MIXED-GENRE-COLLECTION/dp/B095GNM3PX>



Gods, Myths & Legends – Volume 2

<https://www.amazon.com/Pieces-Mind-Gods-Myths-Legends/dp/B09ZD14972>



Eros Awakened – Volume 3

<https://www.amazon.com/Pieces-Mind-Gavin-Martin-Prinsloo/dp/B0B2TTVKNQ>



Slightly After Dark is a stimulating and entertaining book of poetry by Ron Conway

<https://www.amazon.com/Slightly-After-Dark-Ron-Conway/dp/B086Y4CRYY>



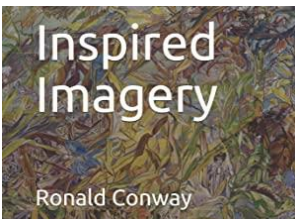
In ***Hidden Agenda***, Ron Conway presents each poem in this collection with an alternate narrative woven within. Assembled here are "Hidden Message" and "Acrostic" poems incorporating humorous and inspirational quotes and short poems. Every stimulating poem in this book will touch you in a unique way.

<https://www.amazon.com/Hidden-Agenda-Ron-Conway/dp/B08NYG3VD9>



From the Rill is a compilation of poems by Ron Conway that have previously appeared in the publication, "Open Skies Quarterly".

<https://www.amazon.com/Rill-Ron-Conway/dp/B09KN63JZF>



Inspired Imagery presents selections of art and poetry displayed at the Parkside Art Gallery in May/June of 2021. Ron Conway and the artists were challenged to interpret each others' work and to provide artistic expression.

<https://www.amazon.com/Inspired-Imagery-Ronald-Conway/dp/B0975FX4FN>



Temperate Darkness is a collection of Dark Poems by Jerry Langdon,

<https://www.amazon.com/Temperate-Darkness-Poems-Jerry-Langdon/dp/1494262398>



In ***Behind the Twilight Veil***, Jerry Langdon allows us to peer behind the veil of fears and dreams. Endure the pain love and loss can bring, and face ghosts and creatures of the night. This is his second collection of Dark.

<https://www.amazon.com/Behind-twilight-veil-Jerry-Langdon/dp/1496052846>



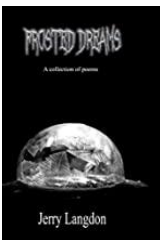
Death and Other Cold Things is a collection of dark poems by Jerry Langdon centered around death.

<https://www.amazon.com/Death-Other-Cold-Things-collection-ebook/dp/B07R9VSRX4>



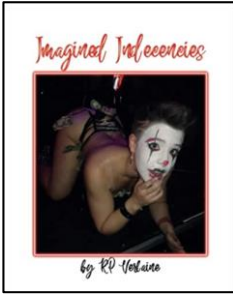
The Rollercoaster Heart is Jerry Langdon's fourth collection of poems centered around the ups and downs of Love and Life.

<https://www.amazon.com/Rollercoaster-Heart-collection-poems-ebook/dp/B084TNH372>



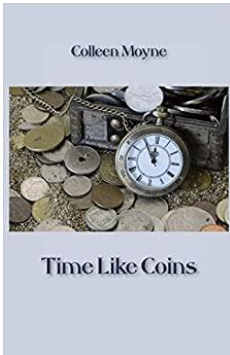
Frosted Dreams is Jerry Langdon's fifth collection of poems. Fall into a dark dream-like series of poems.

<https://www.amazon.com/Frosted-Dreams-collection-Jerry-Langdon/dp/B084QN6PVG>



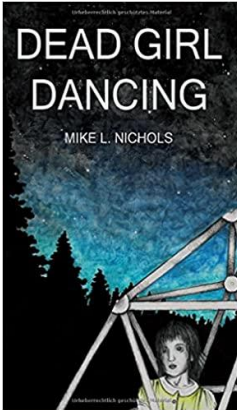
Imagined Indecencies is Rp Verlaine's third book. Poetry that is Profusely Illustrated with color photos taken by Verlaine of models and friends who posed for him. The poems are haiku, Seneru, sonnets, and one-line poems. A notable change from previous books is there are several free verse poems as well. All the poems have been published before in Literary Journals, Magazines, Newspapers, and websites. They have been published in Japan, Africa, Wales, Scotland and of course Verlaine's native America.

<https://www.amazon.com/Imagined-Indecencies-Rp-Verlaine/dp/145663867X>



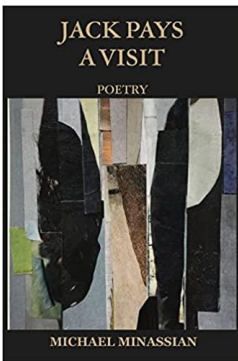
In ***Time Like Coins***, Colleen Moyne looks at the 'ordinary' things in life and makes them extraordinary with her gentle, nuanced observations, where frost becomes toffee, and dew drops become thousands of miniature rainbows. Colleen sees things and thinks deeply about them. Whether finding solace after loss, in the lives of tiny ducklings, or examining herself gently and honestly, via the face she sees in her own mirror, Colleen's words will strike chords with our lives, as she shows us glimpses into her own examined life. – Carolyn Cordon

<https://www.amazon.com/Time-Like-Coins-Colleen-Moyne/dp/176041669X>



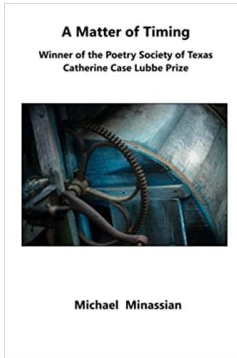
Mike L Nichols *Dead Girls Dancing* is a widely accessible treatise on grief and loss. The poems in this debut collection, sprinkled with slant rhyme and sound, provide catharsis for those who've experienced death and loss.

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/3347181727>



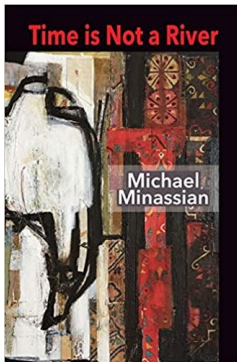
Jack Pays a Visit (2022) The poems center on Michael Minassian's uncle, Jack Karapetian who wrote under the pen name of Hakob Karapents. Ancestors and the recently departed are as real and compelling as those still living, companions to help the living find their way through life. Invoking folklore and fable, family, and a rich cultural heritage, the poems record the relationship between the poet and his novelist uncle where they prefer "the symbol/rather than the word."

<https://www.amazon.com/Jack-Pays-Visit-Michael-Minassian/dp/1954573146>



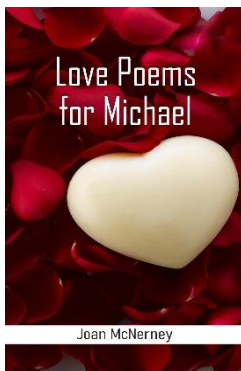
A Matter of Timing (2021) Winner of the 2020 Poetry of Society of Texas Catherine Case Lubbe Prize. The poems in *A Matter of Timing* are occupied by ordinary people, as well as figures from history, fable, and mythology, diverse characters such as Icarus, Medusa, Mother Teresa, and Joan of Arc, some unexpectedly appearing in the 21st century, all of them struggling with the human conditions of life, death, love, compassion, and suffering.

<https://www.amazon.com/Matter-Timing-Michael-Minassian/dp/B0974KY6Q7>



Time is Not a River (2020) examines time from a personal perspective, influenced by love, loss, world events, age and place. The poems move from the past to invented futures featuring historical figures to the present. The imagery is precise, often startling, and told with a subtle humor and irony. Here is a narrative voice that is always well-controlled and compelling, with a keen eye for the meaningful image, and an understated, highly effective musicality.

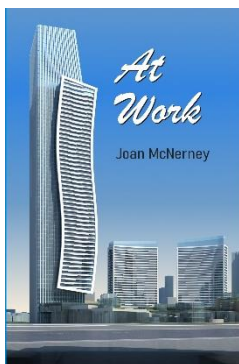
<https://www.amazon.com/Time-not-River-Michael-Minassian/dp/1946460044>



Love Poems for Michael by Joan McNerney
Many reflect on New England with autumn foliage and fierce winters. However, four seasons do include bursting springs and boiling summers. Love is its own season, its own country, its own domain. Let's explore love up north during spring and summer.

<https://www.amazon.com/Love-Poems-Michael-Joan-McNerney/dp/9388319656>

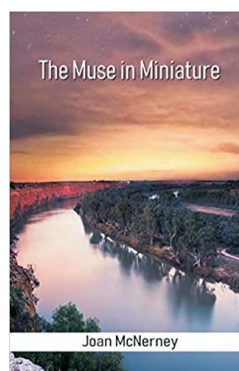
<https://www.cyberwit.net/publications/1602>



At Work by Joan McNerney explores everyday workers. It is unique because each worker, either female or male, receives their own page. These are snapshots of people who are either content with or made unhappy by their daily circumstances. Reading this book is an exploration of human nature at its core.

<https://www.amazon.com/At-Work-Joan-McNerney/dp/8182537835>

<https://www.cyberwit.net/publications/1759>



The Muse in Miniature by Joan McNerney
There is no doubt this poet very aptly traverses an immense range of emotion and experience. Here we find poetry's passion and powerful imagination in rich abundance.

<https://www.amazon.com/Muse-Miniature-Joan-McNerney/dp/9389074509>

<https://www.cyberwit.net/publications/1262>