

# A Children's Book of Bedtime Verse

A poetic anthology of verse to be read to  
children at bedtime.

Paul Gilliland  
Editor-in-Chief



Southern Arizona Press



*Old Mother Hubbard*

*Mother Goose's Story Book* (New York, McLoughlin Bros, 1899)  
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# Southern Arizona Press



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*Little Bo Peep*

*Mother Goose's Story Book* (New York, McLoughlin Bros, 1899)  
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# A Children's Book of Bedtime Verse

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## FEATURED POETS



**Victoria Puckering** goes by the poetic name of Toria and the Naked Poet. Her work has been described as naked and raw. She lives in Yorkshire, England.

She writes original poetry of all genres and has only been writing for about four years. Her poems have been podcasted in New York, USA and Drystone radio, Yorkshire, England and also various poetry sites on Facebook.

Last year, she became a published Poetess. Her poetry has contributed to the following anthologies:

*The Poppy: A Symbol of Remembrance*, *The Wonders of Winter*, *Castles and Courtyards*, and *Beyond the Sand and Sea* published by Southern Arizona Press; *Encore Anthology* by Jimmy Broccoli as well as The Dark Poetry Society anthologies and Wheelsong Poetry.



## CATAPULTED CATERPILLAR

The caterpillar was catapulted out of bed  
He landed in a hedge  
On his little head  
He was hungry  
He had not been fed  
Since he was catapulted out of bed  
In search of food  
He was so relieved  
As he noticed he landed on a beautiful green leaf  
He took a bite  
He thought it was awfully nice  
A bite became a leaf  
He was so bored  
The only thing to do is eat  
He was eating many leaves  
He was clearing the hedge  
He wanted to sleep  
Upside down on a branch  
He fell asleep  
Started to moult  
A natural chrysalis appeared  
The chunky caterpillar did sleep  
We could not even take a peak  
Ages and ages past  
How long does a caterpillar sleep?  
Movement in the chrysalis  
I still could not peak  
It shook  
I could not look  
I turned around just in time  
I saw the most beautiful butterfly fly

## MR. FOX READING HIS POETRY BOOK

Mr. Fox is sat reading his favourite poetry book  
Wearing his reading glasses due to his short sightedness  
Immersed in his poetry book  
His nose sniffing out the smell of each and every fresh crisp page  
As his sharp paws turnover each page  
Ever so, ever so carefully  
Making sure never to tare or rip each and every precious page  
Poetry is his therapy after each hard working day  
Mr. Fox is an unusual breed  
A rarity  
A one-off fox  
He is Mr. Fox a poetry scholar  
Mr. Fox is sat reading his favourite poetry book  
The published book that the talented Mr. Fox wrote  
So of course, it is his favourite poetry book  
I'm itching to have a look

## THE BUG BALL

The Bug Ball covered the delicious green leafy dance floor  
On the green leaves the insects boogied deep into the dark  
sparkling night  
The bumblebees pollinated the pretty bright flowers  
Buzzing, buzzing, buzzing around  
The bumblebees played their unique loud buzzing songs  
Flapping their fine silk like elegant wings  
The bugs including worms, centipedes and slugs ate all of the  
luscious green leaves  
The snails left their boogie sludgy trail  
The butterflies in their colourful dresses  
With their style and grace  
Like 1920's flapper girls  
Butterflies are the extraordinary glamour of the Bug Ball  
So many bugs at the Bug Ball  
I couldn't name or see them all  
The insects had such gigantic fun  
They also had a very full bulging tum  
When they left  
The green leafy dance floor was totally eaten and now long gone  
The Bug Ball for 2021  
Now finished and gone  
The insects will return next year for yes another one

## THE SNACK RACE

The apple and banana were in a race  
The pear and bunch of grapes soon made up the pace  
The pineapple soon pushed through  
He pricked the plumb who became a prune  
The apple, pear and banana soon got sliced that was not nice

The orange, lemon and lime were having a spat  
The ruby red grapefruit squeezed his way through and juiced the  
opposition to the rind  
So much so they start to mush into a juicy slush in no time

Down at the rear the strawberry, raspberry, blackberry, cherry  
and peach  
Followed by yoghurt and ice-cream  
A pineapple slice came tumbling through it splattered them all  
Got stuck in the yoghurt pot and made a beautiful compote

The fruit and nut and popping candy and fudge pieces were  
making a run for it  
The Milky Way, Mars bar, Twix were taking the mick a bit  
The Snickers bar hit them all with a chocolate wall  
They were no more and Snickers surpassed them all

The Bourbon, Hobnob, Digestive and Rich Tea rolled passed  
them all

As they neared the end their heart sank, the last hurdle was a  
dunking feature

The biscuits went head on but many crumbled under the pressure  
and were not up to measure

The Hobnob held his oats and kept it together at his leisure

The race had come to an end

Snickers and pineapple were disqualified Ruby red squeezed into  
second place

The crowd cheered when Hobnob got his medal as he was the  
only one with a smile on his face the rest of the contestants  
were in a fruit daze

Oh what an amazing race!

## DRAGON SURFING

Dragon surfing  
Riding the sea waves  
When he blows his red hot flames  
While catching the big waves  
Douses out the flames  
Dragon clears his croaky burnt out throat  
As he surfs on the mountainous waves  
Waves splashing in his scale like face  
He needs his ginormous space  
Dragon catches the highest waves

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Dragon catches the highest waves  
He needs his ginormous space  
Waves splashing in his scale like face  
As he surfs on the mountainous waves  
Dragon clears his croaky burnt out throat  
Douses out the flames  
While catching the big waves  
When he blows his red hot flames  
Riding the sea waves  
Dragon surfing

## A CLEANER GALAXY

I wanted to dust the planets  
I wanted to iron the creases out of Saturn's rings  
Catching the spinning rings with my hot steaming iron  
I washed and dried the blanket night sky  
I hung it back up  
I polished each of the millions of twinkling stars  
I set off a few sparklers for the shooting stars  
I was moved as the Earth spun  
I wiped away the unwanted pollution  
The Earth's colours shone through  
I nearly burnt my hand on the glowing burning sun  
I dusted the silver moon  
I gave the entire galaxy  
A thorough clean through  
I was dazzled by the sparkling beautiful colourful galaxy  
I needed my sunglasses to see  
A cleaner galaxy

## BRIANNA, THE BLACKBERRY FAIRY

Brianna, the Blackberry Fairy  
Her swinging wand of blackberries and sharp thorns  
Swinging slowly on the green pointy blackberry leaves  
The green leaves her comfy swinging seat  
Her beautiful purple transparent wings  
Her vintage pink floating dress down to her knees  
Her green Peter Pan collar of thorns  
Her dark curly hair caught in the summer breeze  
She cares for the wild blackberry hedgerows  
Where luscious, tasty blackberries grow  
You will find Brianna the fairy flying and fluttering to where all  
    wild blackberries grow  
You have to believe in her fairies though  
To see Brianna, the Blackberry Fairy





***Little Boy Blue***

*Mother Goose's nursery rhymes : a collection of alphabets, rhymes, tales, and jingles.*  
(New York McLoughlin Brothers, Inc. n.d.)  
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**Nancy Julien Kopp** started writing in her mid-fifties, fulfilling a life-long desire. Her writing reflects her growing-up years in Chicago and many more years of living in Manhattan in the Flint Hills of Kansas, where she still resides. She lives with her retired husband, is mother to two and grandmother of four. Nancy's stories, articles, essays, award-winning children's stories, and poetry have been published in magazines, newspapers, online, and in

many anthologies, including twenty-four *Chicken Soup for the Soul* books. She has appeared in previous Southern Arizona Press anthologies: *Dragonflies and Fairies*, *The Wonders of Winter*, and *Beyond the Sand and Sea*. Nancy is a voracious reader and loves to play Bridge.

## ONCE UPON A SPRING

Two red balloons  
Above the trees,  
Softly floating  
On an April breeze.

Look! There they are,  
Reaching out  
To gently touch  
A distant, shining star

## ON WITH THE SHOW

I went to the circus,  
and what did I see?  
Two lions, three tigers  
who bared sharp teeth at me.

The ringmaster smiled  
when he waved to the crowd,  
swept his hat to the ground,  
and bellowed very loud.

The big cats paced in the cage  
and answered with a roar.  
Clawed paws slapped at the air  
when the Tamer slipped in the door.

He bowed from the waist, with  
a shout and crack of his whip,  
he approached the big cats—  
commands flew from his lips.

Tigers paced and lions growled.  
The slap of the whip quieted all.  
Then, a lion crouched and jumped.  
I gasped as I saw the Tamer fall.

The predator slipped back, ready  
to pounce again on his prey.  
The circus band sat silent and grim,  
until a lone bugler started to play.

The uniformed man stood,  
turned to the beast in the cage.  
He blew a tune on his horn.  
Would it stop the big cat's rage?

Softly at first, then a great deal louder.  
The lion's head lifted, turned quite around.  
The downed Tamer now leaped to his feet.  
From the crowd, there wasn't a sound.

At the next crack of the whip,  
the stalking lion paced to and fro.  
Then quietly, moved to his place.  
The Tamer grinned and went on with the show.

## THE GRASSHOPPER FAIR

Have you ever been to  
The Grasshopper Fair?  
Oh, hurry outside,  
it will surely be there.

Look on the walkway,  
peer into grass so green,  
to see dozens of grasshoppers,  
not one of them mean.

They'll put on a show,  
if you don't make a sound.  
Acrobats all, they leap  
and jump off the ground.

Size doesn't much matter,  
big, medium, or small,  
they all know the tricks.  
You'll never see one fall.

It's the Grasshopper Fair.  
The show's all for free.  
No tickets are needed,  
for you or for me.

## BEDTIME

At dark, I climb  
into my bed.  
Mama tucks me in,  
my prayers are said.

Then I snuggle  
down in my cozy nest,  
waiting for sleep  
and a good night's rest.

## CHINATOWN CAT

Ling Po had a ginger-colored cat,  
not a very pretty one at that.  
Near a window he oft slept by day.  
Nights he went out and far away.

Where in Chinatown did he go?  
Ling Po really wanted to know.  
Night after night Cat went  
As if on a mission he'd been sent.

One warm and moonlit night,  
Ling Po followed on Cat's right.  
Cat slid by cans for trash,  
then Ling Po padded softly past.

He stayed a bit behind,  
while Cat continued down the line.  
Cat didn't even seem to slow  
when sirens began to blow.

On through dark and eerie streets,  
Master and pet moved on silent feet.  
Farther and farther, past store upon store.  
Ling Po could not take much more!

Now, beyond temple and pagoda.  
This Chinatown boy needed a soda.  
Then, Cat stopped, looked all around  
and crouched down close to the ground.

He lay there, green eyes peering  
at an ancient man now nearing.  
"There you are, my friend," he fretted  
"Come close to be petted.



Ling Po waited behind a car.  
Was this the reason they'd come so far?  
The Old One bent, pigtail swinging,  
from Cat's throat, a purr like singing.

Now Cat belonged to the pair,  
for Ling Po knew he would share.  
This cat who loved both young and old  
was surely worth his weight in gold.

With patience, Ling Po watched the two,  
no more than that could he do  
until Cat turned to take his leave  
and Ling Po followed him home with relief.

Initial published in *Boys' Quest* magazine in June 2004

## FALL FROLIC

Autumn leaves,  
Swirling,  
Whirling,  
Twirling,  
Dancing 'round my feet.

Watch me now,  
Crushing,  
Jumping,  
Stomping,  
Laughing down the street.



***Jack and Jill***

*Mother Goose's nursery rhymes : a collection of alphabets, rhymes, tales, and jingles.*  
(New York McLoughlin Brothers, Inc. n.d.)  
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**Pat Severin**, a retired teacher and member of SCBWI, has been writing poetry for many years. Her poems are regularly featured in the online magazines, *The Agape Review*, *The Clay Jar Review*, *Pure in Heart Stories*, and *The Way Back to Ourselves*. She is honored to have contributed to the Southern Arizona Press Anthologies. This is her ninth anthology.

She is also a published contributor to the books, *I Chose You, Rescue Dogs and their Humans* and *Chicken Soup for the Soul: Lessons Learned From My Dog*.

Her personal ministry is sending weekly cards of encouragement to those going through difficult times.

## MY DOG, JOE

My dog is such a character,  
A person – ality  
Because he thinks he's human,  
And that's okay with me.

I tell him he's my baby  
And rock him back and forth.  
We go on walks, the two of us.  
We're best of friends, of course.

He snuggles in my bed with me.  
He loves the morning sun,  
And all I have to say is "OUT"  
And he won't walk, he'll run!

He sits, he stays and he obeys,  
Oh, yes, he loves to eat,  
And he'll do almost anything  
If you'll give him a treat!

There's never been a dog like Joe.  
I'm lucky that he's mine.  
That's why I'll always love him so.  
Together we're just fine!

## SPRINGTIME CONDO

We had this tiny windchime,  
that sang the sweetest tune.  
It hung outside the window  
of our sun-drenched family room.

Above the chimes there sat a nest.  
That nest was made of sticks  
and on the edge a resin bird,  
his plastic look transfixed.

One day we noticed near the nest  
a sparrow and his mate.  
The two seemed rather deep in thought  
as if to contemplate

the prospect of this home for two,  
a bird's nest, ready-made,  
for them a condo, they could use,  
and so the sparrows stayed.

The mother sparrow laid her eggs  
while father kept his watch.  
He perched upon a nearby fence  
a predator to squash.

When eggs were hatched I tried to see  
the babies in the nest.  
But they were tucked beneath their Mom,  
who did her very best

to keep them warm, while Sparrow Dad  
kept watch and searched for food.  
It wasn't long before it was  
the time to send his brood

into the world to find their way.  
But we both mourned the loss  
of sparrows two, one springtime day,  
our condo came across.

## THEY WERE TOO FEW

Do you remember sledding  
Down our hill, just you & me?  
That whoosh of snow as we took off  
Both arms swung happily?

We wanted to propel ourselves  
So, we could gain some speed.  
Remember what that feeling was?  
We said our hearts felt freed?

But till we got the hang of it,  
We thought the kids would laugh  
If it was not a perfect ride,  
One faster than the last.

They noticed how we mastered it;  
And wanted to jump on.  
We knew that we could handle it,  
And all us kids were gone.

Then finally like the other kids,  
Accepted that we had  
Achieved the art of sledding now!  
And we were both so glad.

But worrying about that stuff,  
It wasn't worth the bother.  
In fact, sometimes you said you liked  
Just going with your father.

But either way, that sledding  
Was such fun, we couldn't wait  
Get out of bed and get our sleds  
And rush down passed the gate



Then off we'd go to Wilson's Hill.  
The snow had newly fallen!  
Remember at the top we'd shout  
***"The winter winds are callin'!"***

We'd rush to be the first ones there,  
No one but me and you.  
They sure were memory-making days?  
A shame they were too few.

## MY FISH AND ME

At breakfast while I ate my eggs,  
I wished my goldfish had two legs.  
And if he did, then I could say,  
My fish and I, we walked today.

We walked downtown, to Grandma's, too,  
Then Tommy's house, then to the zoo.  
We'd walked real fast but sometimes slow,  
Then talked about where we should go.

When we were tired we'd head back home,  
But then tomorrow, where should we roam?  
I know, I'll bring my fish to school.  
I bet the kids will think he's cool!

They'll be surprised when I produce him.  
At Show & Tell, I'll introduce him.  
I wonder if my first grade teacher  
Will faint when seeing such a creature?

A fish like mine, I know it's true,  
They've never seen, well, how 'bout you?  
I wonder what tomorrow brings?  
Maybe my fish will have some wings!

## FIREFLIES

I love to watch the fireflies  
Lighting up the night.  
I'd like to keep some for my own!  
Would doing that seem right?

I went outside, with jar in hand,  
Then stood there for a minute...  
A firefly, inside a jar?  
He'd have no freedom in it.

I even thought how it would feel  
To be a firefly.  
I'd turn my light on, then I'd soar,  
But capture me? I'd cry.

If I would be inside that jar,  
I'd be so sad that I...  
Could not be with my family  
Or soar and fly so high.

I bet if I remained in there  
My light would soon grow dim.  
Just thinking of that made me mad.  
The thought of that was grim.

That's when I knew that I was right.  
To capture them was wrong.  
I'll be content to watch them fly.  
The sky's where they belong!

## MILLIE

My friend, you know, Millie?  
Just loves to act silly.  
Why, she's just the funniest of girls!  
She stands on her head,  
While singing in bed,  
Two rings on her feet Millie twirls.

My friend, you know, Millie?  
The one who acts silly,  
Makes everyone laugh till they ache.  
As she ties her shoelaces  
She makes funny faces,  
I'm laughing so hard that I shake!

My friend, you know, Millie?  
Will run willy, nilly,  
And make such incredible sounds.  
My ears just can't take them,  
Those sounds when she makes them,  
Our friendship has both ups and downs.

By now you know, Millie.  
She's stopped being silly,  
And me, I'm so glad that she did.  
For when Millie was silly,  
You couldn't tell, really,  
That she was a nice little kid.



*There was a Crooked Man*

*Gems from Mother Goose* (New York, McLoughlin Bros, 1899)  
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## ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTORS



**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*. This is her eighth appearance in a Southern Arizona Press anthology.

Find Lynn at:

<https://lynnwhitepoetry.blogspot.com>

<https://www.facebook.com/Lynn-White-Poetry-1603675983213077/>

## CROCK OF GOLD

I'd searched the rainbows for so long  
I'd given up hope of finding it  
and then it happened!  
It was sitting there  
on the top shelf in Grandma's kitchen,  
just waiting to be discovered.  
It was hidden in a brown jug.  
Such an ordinary  
piece of crockery.  
The perfect place  
for my grandma  
to hide her secret.  
As I reached up to bring it down,  
some of the contents spilled out  
in a scatter of golden buttons  
gleaming so much more brightly  
than the foil-wrapped chocolate ones  
I was used to.

I felt guilty to have discovered it  
before she shared her secret.  
I knew she would share it.  
She always did.

Perhaps their light would capture rainbows.  
I would have a surprise for her then,  
a secret to share  
when she returned.

First published in *Phoenix Z Journal*, August/September 2023

## THIRD BIRTHDAY

Until I was three I had a pet rabbit.  
For a long time  
I took him everywhere with me.  
He was made of felt  
and stood upright  
tall and thin  
holding a bright orange carrot  
in front  
of his yellow chest.  
I held him by his ears  
which were dark green like his back.  
And then  
my mother decreed he had become  
too shabby, too dirty  
to be my constant companion.  
A wash did not improve  
his appearance too successfully.  
So he became my sleeping partner  
and I still loved him as much.  
And then  
for my third birthday  
he was allowed  
to come to tea.  
I was sick,  
too much cake,  
my mother said.



Yes  
I was sick  
all over  
my pet rabbit.  
And then  
he disappeared.  
No one knew where.  
“He’s gone,”  
they said  
hippy hop.  
I never saw him again.

First published in *Continuing The Voice*, Issue 15: Celebration, March 2022

## BATH TIME

The bath used to hang on the wall  
in the scullery.  
Not our scullery.  
His scullery.  
We borrowed it from Mr Neil  
who rented us the rooms  
at the front of his house.  
One down, one up.  
My mother would knock on his door  
and he would lift it down for her.  
But she had to carry it to our  
living room.  
It was heavy,  
made of zinc she said.  
It took a lot of water  
which had to be carried from the outside  
tap and then heated on our gas ring.  
It took a lot of hot water  
and had to be filled  
and emptied  
with a jug.  
Sometimes it was just too much work  
for her  
and she washed me in a bowl  
as I sat on her fat lap.  
It was snugly.  
I preferred it  
that way  
really.

First published in *Visual Verse*, May 2018

## WAITING FOR RAINBOWS

Hardly a moment ago  
the sun was shining  
and we were singing  
our summertime welcome.  
Life was good and getting better.  
The future looked bright as the sky.

Now the dark clouds  
have appeared  
and brought  
drizzly rain.  
So the music must stop  
and we must take shelter  
as best we can  
to wait for the rainbows.

Wait for the sun  
to bring us rainbows.  
and hope  
that the darkness  
will not last  
forever.

First published in the *Mindful Phoenix Review*, Vol 1 Coping Day To Day, July  
2023



**Rebecca Loggia** has been writing stories since childhood, eventually earning a degree in Creative Writing at Arizona State University. Her work has been published in *Allegory Ridge*, *Dogwood*, *Harmony Magazine*, *Open Minds Quarterly*, and elsewhere. Her essay, *How to Rewrite a Medical Record*, placed second in the 2023 Doro Böhme Nonfiction Editor's Contest, and her poem "Infirmary" placed third in the Phoenix Sister Cities 2017 Writers with Disabilities Competition. She is a reader for

CRAFT and a Teaching Artist for the Virginia G. Piper Center for Creative Writing. She lives in Arizona with her dog, where they cherish each sunset and dream of other worlds.

## THE PROVING GROUND

The Proving Ground's a mountain  
Or sometimes just a hill  
Or a great roaring sea  
Or a lake calm and still

The Proving Ground holds everything:  
Your *dreams*, *hopes*, and *fears*  
Crossing might take days  
Or several years

When roaming this ground  
You must always be cautious  
For the Proving Ground proves  
That it can be lawless

You'll be tempted and shattered  
Or feel buried alive  
But with patience and courage  
You'll always survive

It has monsters and traps  
And danger on all sides  
But you'll never be lost  
With your heart as your guide

For the Proving Ground is  
Yours—and yours alone!  
In this short thing called life  
That's all I've come to know.

## *THE NOISE! THE NOISE!*

'There's *NOISE!* over here  
'There's *NOISE!* over there  
*THE NOISE! THE NOISE!*  
Is everywhere

It chitters and chatters  
And hollers and screams  
It wants to *talk now*  
And *by any means*

I want to go hide  
Somewhere out of sight  
Cause' *THE NOISE! THE NOISE!*  
Is so hard to fight

Now I've gone to a place  
Nobody can find  
To leave this city  
And its *NOISE!* behind

No comparing or sharing  
Or uploading violence  
A place calm and green  
And filled with silence

They say I'm too anxious  
Or a little too scared  
Of *THE NOISE! THE NOISE!*  
Still, I tell them *beware*

Cause' it wants to talk now  
It'll make its voice heard  
*THIS NOISE! THIS NOISE!*  
Until you're disturbed

## THE WORRY BUG

The Worry Bug is going 'round  
With sore throats, coughs, and sneezes  
I thought that it'd be gone by now  
But it changes with the seasons

It's unlike anything else  
I've ever caught before  
No flu, nor ache, or chill  
Has made me quite so sore

It fogs my brain and causes pain  
Until my heart begins to race  
It whispers that I'm a failure  
Or that I'll never find my place

The Worry Bug worries me  
With thoughts and names and fears  
They say it's gone in a few days  
But I've felt this way for years

They say to drink more water  
And to try and change my diet,  
That depriving it of fear or guilt  
Will make it much more quiet

I'm still finding ways around this bug  
And ways to conquer shame  
Step one: *Remember who I am.*  
Step two: *give it a name—*

*The Worry Bug.*

## LABELS

'They tell me I'm too wild  
Or claim that I'm too witty  
They say I don't look good enough  
Or tell me I'm too pretty

'They say that I'm too muscular  
Or claim that I'm too thin  
They mock me if I'm popular  
Or laugh when I don't fit in

'They say my hair is far too long  
Or my eyes are far too wide  
They say so many things 'bout me  
I want to run and hide

Perhaps it's not the things they say  
Or even what they think, 'cause  
When *you* like you and what you do  
The labels tend to shrink.





***Jack Sprat***

*Mother Goose's Story Book* (New York, McLoughlin Bros, 1899)  
Public Domain



**Celjoy P. Catapang** was born on June 14, 2002, in Tanauan City, Batangas, Philippines. She is a twenty-one-year-old student at Batangas State University, Philippines. She is currently in her last two semesters of her bachelor's degree as a Secondary Education Major in English. She is fond of reading inspirational books and essays and often writes to express herself. She is an

aspiring writer who finds writing essays and poetry an escape to reality. Celjoy found literature as a tool to express her emotions, feelings, and experiences. Her aim is to write freely — as she tends to isolate herself among the others. For her, writing is her best way to communicate and to be understood. Moreover, literature allows her to widen her vocabulary, imagination and creativity which helps her more in loving her chosen degree.

Celjoy writes things that she experienced or imagined in her life, as a gateway out of boredom and a great way for learning and improving.

## ASLEEP

Oh the night is young  
We can still do things and have fun  
Singing twinkle, twinkle little star  
Perhaps read some bedtime stories or play some guitar.

The sound of the night is music to my ears  
The calmness take away my fears  
With bedtime stories or anything fun with my mom,  
Makes everything worth it — makes me calm.

Her voice as she sings the lullaby  
“Rest my baby, go to sleep” as I close my eyes  
Her hands softly caressing my hair  
Equates to “I won’t leave you, I won’t dare”.

With her unending bedtime stories  
It made me imaginative; it took my worries.  
A child who loves imagining things  
And a mom who tells stories and even sings.

I can feel her love as I give in to sleep  
The night is young, it’s worth to keep.

## IT'S BEDTIME

The bed is enchantingly soft and warm  
It suits you the best; it suits your charm  
Oh Snow! Everything is ready, it's by your mom  
Oh Snow! Go to sleep and you'll be calm.

What happened today will never happen again  
Tonight, it's just you and mom, no more pain  
A kid like you deserves to be caressed to sleep  
Not to be scared of, forget that creep.

Snow, your eyes are as bright as star  
You do not deserve any bit of scar  
And do remember your smile is as sweet as mine.  
I'm your mom and your existence shines.

Snow, your intentions are pure  
Snow, you are pure, I am sure  
But witch with the broom is evil  
Run fast, kindness will prevail.

The red apple looks fine  
Fine, as red as wine  
Look her hands are intertwined  
Biting it will put your life in line.

Snow, as tempting as the red apple  
Do not trust so much people  
As a kid, your innocence is outstanding  
I love your intentions, but I do not want you crying.

Stop! It's the elderly's fault.  
It's like your wound has added some salt.  
It's not a kid's wrongdoings  
It's by some bad human beings.

Snow! Oh go to sleep and feel the warmth of my palm.  
Let go of your worries, this is your mom.  
I will never leave you behind crying  
I love you, you small human being.

## DREAMS COME TRUE

Every child dreams to be a princess  
Or a knight shining armor in the magnificent dress  
Watching Disney movies became part of our routine  
Imagining I am the princess or a queen.

I took the curtains out from the window  
Wore it as my princess' dress in our simple bungalow  
I swayed it like a graceful queen in the planet  
Or like a hero, the cape is my best asset.

I jumped from my bed gracefully  
Like a princess shown in the movie  
I love how sparkly everything I saw in them without even trying  
Even their eyes are twinkling, I am not lying.

I tried my mother's things as I wanted to pursue this dream –  
of becoming a princess or a hero with my team  
I curl my hair,  
applied some sparkler.

My mother came in, with a surprised face  
Oh, I just touch her things, but she welcomed me with an  
embrace.

“You look pretty, my dear.”

“You are my princess, even your face is bare.”

## UNHAPPY

I am unhappy as a kid.  
I cannot say that  
I am happy and grateful —  
Everyone deserves to be happy  
So do people — every human being  
The world is not built the same  
I cannot say that  
At a young age, morals must be learned;  
Kids, please remember  
Be happy.

*(After reading it, you can start reading it from the bottom. It is a reversed poem)*



**Ken Gosse** generally writes whimsical, rhymed verse with traditional forms. First published in *First Literary Review—East* in November 2016, since then by Lothlorien Poetry Journal, Academy of the Heart and Mind, Pure Slush, Home Planet News Online, Spillwords, Southern Arizona Press, and others. Raised in the Chicago suburbs, now retired, he and his wife live in Mesa, Arizona, with rescue dogs and cats underfoot.

This is Ken's fifth appearance in a Southern Arizona Press anthology.



## TODDLERS' TALES ENTWINED IN MY MIND

Tales told often, and many quite old,  
can readily soften the sorrows we hold  
when it seems times are rife, full of troubles and strife,  
but we find hope and comfort through sharing our life.

There was an old woman who lived in a shoe;  
her cupboard was bare and her children were, too,  
except for knit gowns from a wooly black sheep  
who said, "I'll share mine, for it's warm and it's deep."

Her cupboard was empty; just seven starved flies.  
When opened, she swallowed one—what a surprise!  
Since that didn't kill her, she thought, "I'll be fine.  
Perhaps there's a spider on which I can dine."

Her skinny old cow had jumped over the moon  
so she worried they'd run out of milk very soon.  
Her poor, hungry cat, nearly out of his mind,  
ran off with the fiddle—his grin stayed behind.

She had an old lodger, a crookedy man  
who sold pies at the fair—apple, cherry, pecan.  
On his way he met Simon who traded three beans  
for the lodger's last pie (Simon had simple means).

Since the path to the fair was a long, twisty mile,  
he stopped by a brook where he rested a while.  
A troll 'neath the bridge shouted "Answer all three  
of my questions, old man, or you can't pass by me!"

But he, in good wisdom, returned to his lodging,  
not waiting to answer the questions, but dodging.  
The woods he traversed on the way were quite deep  
yet he scurried along with a promise to keep.

On arriving, he opened his pack and he said,  
“It’s time for bean stew, even though we’ve no bread,”  
but the first bean fell out and it dropped on the floor  
where it rolled and it rolled till it rolled out the door.

That moment, a peddler arrived with two sacks  
full of tin pans and candles and other knickknacks.  
Before every sale he’d regale with some tricks,  
so he lit and jumped over two tall candlesticks

as his wife, lovely Jill, who returned from the hill  
where she’d taken a bucket they needed to fill  
from the well at the top, and she walked very still  
taking care not to fall or the bucket would spill.

Although not a liar, Jack’s his pants caught on fire!  
Jill soused them and doused them before it was dire  
but some of the water drained out the front door  
and moistened the bean that had rolled there before.

The seed quickly grew till its stalk reached the sky  
where it broke through the clouds drifting hazily by.  
Growing fast as could be, first two miles, then three—  
Jack said, “That’s a sign of adventure for me!”

His pants were still steaming when he grabbed the creeper.  
'Twas quite a hard climb and it couldn't be steeper,  
but quickly he flew like the down of a thistle  
and reaching the top, he let out a loud whistle.

The Jabberwock guarded a great castle gate,  
but Jack was excited and just couldn't wait.  
From his pack he pulled out the renowned Vorpel sword  
and jabbed the Jab-Jab like a butternut gourd.

As fast as he could, through the entrance he ran  
stopping dead in his tracks when he saw a huge man  
who was snoring like thunder to waken the dawn!  
'This roused Jack's courage, and so he moved on

through a hall full of riches too great to behold:  
in the corner, a cage made of silver and gold;  
inside it, a shoe which was carved out of wood;  
inside that were three boys in a trance where they stood.

Winken and Blinken and Nod manned the boat  
which they'd sailed in a dream when it started to float,  
flying up through the sky past the eye of the giant  
who caught them and caged them, though they were suppliant.

Their pitiful pleas brought no ease to his ear  
for the giant liked crying—it brought him good cheer—  
and though they stayed quiet while Jack slashed the cage,  
the noise woke the giant who yelled out in rage!

Too late—for their boat had reached such a great height  
it was well past his grasp though he flailed with his might.  
On this dark, stormy night, now released from his plunder,  
o'er treetops they sailed in a great clap of thunder.

The bow of their ship held a marvelous sight  
which Jack hadn't seen in the darkness of night,  
for hidden away was a sight to behold—  
a goose in a nest laying eggs of pure gold!

While soaring, their path crossed a trulio dragon  
named Custard, who said he would pull their shoe-wagon.  
No coward was he (once the billows had passed),  
though when danger appeared, he was brave, first to last.

Far off in the distance they saw Peter Pan,  
John, Wendy, and Michael who crossed the sky's span  
on their first trip to Neverland, floating with ease  
as if they'd been tossed from a flying trapeze.

At last homeward bound, as they passed the full moon  
came an owl, cats, and cow, and a runcible spoon.  
One cat was singing, another played fiddle;  
two hitchhikers joined them, brers -Dee and -Dum Diddle.

On landing, they saw the vine's flowers had bloomed  
sprouting food of all sorts—hunger no longer loomed!  
Gold petals and eggs were passed throughout the land,  
now freed from the greed of the giant's fierce hand.

The giant was angry! The vine was too small  
and he couldn't climb down to take vengeance on all  
so instead, in a violent rage he jumped down  
but fell through the Earth a short distance from town.

And now they're all happy, their lives full of laughter  
with love, hope, and joy in their dreams ever after.  
'These journeys we've taken, like many before,  
still help us believe there is more hope in store.

This poem was originally published online April 23, 2021, by Lothlorien  
Poetry Journal



**Diane Sahms**, a native Philadelphian, is author of seven poetry collections, most recently *Luna, the lesser light* (Moonstone Press, 2023) and *City of Shadow & Light* (Philadelphia). Published in *North American Review*, *Sequestum Journal of Literature & Arts*, *Brushfire Literature & Arts Journal*, *The Northern Virginia Review*, *POEMS-FOR-ALL*, *Valley Voices*, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, *Chiron Review*, *Southern Arizona Press*, among others, with poems

forthcoming from *Wingless Dreamer Press: Echoes of T.S. Eliot*; *Tiny Seed Journal's Wildflower Anthology*; and *Arlington Literary Journal*. Winner of several poetry awards, including the *Partisan Press Award*, and recipient of an *AE Ventures Foundation Grant for Poetry*. Former high school English teacher, she works full time for the government and is poetry editor at *North of Oxford*.

She can be followed at:

<http://www.dianesahms-guarnieri.com/>

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

## TYGER SWALLOWTAILS

*after William Blake*

Countless tyger swallowtails  
burning bright, composed  
symmetries darting in & out  
of magnolia's tapestry  
with carefree ease.

Fluttering as notes lifting,  
having already fled chrysalises  
with newly dried wings,  
as if voices of tenors soaring  
high as these three-story-trees.

This summer an overabundance—  
countless tyger swallowtails  
with untamed gold flamed wings  
pattern-welded black stripes,  
everywhere a hammering eye

rings out joyful. Anvil heart beats  
& my graced eyes zoom in on one  
*tyger, tyger burning bright*  
stylishly swimming through  
lake of sky, & I agree,

undoubtedly & noddingly:  
*he who made the lamb made thee.*

## SLUG WITH HEADDRESS

Slug with headdress horns as hieroglyph “V”  
though not an ancient horned “viper” carved  
into Egyptian stone, rather a tough-skinned  
terrestrial mollusk secreting silvery smudges,  
undecipherable looping on this stoop  
late last night when no one was awake.

Slug’s hazy smear appears with minute specks  
of glitter, as if the moon guided its single finger-  
body & the stars skated a figure-eight with it  
across a meltless marble slab, leaving only  
a beginnerish, cursive signature shimmering  
in daylight’s glow like graffiti with a bad hand;  
& he’s not even here, having disappeared  
when night fled the city.



## AMERICAN GOLDFINCHES

He's a sunbeam with shadowy wings, perched atop  
coneflower, balancing a circus routine: to chip out  
seeds from a woody, prickly miniature cone—  
to eat—with reverently pressed black napkin wings.

She's of a lighter yellow with olive tint, also an acrobat.  
Beneath a buoyant body & shadowy wings, she too plucks  
out seeds from black-eyed Susan's gumbdrop-center-piece  
& beneath finch's pale peach feet, Susan's golden ray  
floreets unfurl paper streamers as a fringed tablecloth.

Their fledgling imitates. Eats dead seeds with ease.  
His lesser body's risen radiance & scissor black wings  
cut through envelope of air, sacred as morning prayer.



**Dibyasree Nandy** began writing in 2020 after completing M.Sc and M.Tech. She has authored poetry and short-story collections as well as full-length fiction. Her book of 200 sonnets is scheduled to be published in 2023. Many of her individual pieces have appeared in 58 anthologies and magazines. Her first work has been enlisted in the *Journal of Commonwealth Literature*. She is from West Bengal, India. She has two books of poetry, *Fireflies*

*Beneath the Misty Moon*, a collection of ekphrastic poems inspired by Japanese art and *April Verses*, both published by Southern Arizona Press. This is her seventh appearance in a Southern Arizona Press poetic anthology.

## MARIA AND THE PRETTY WITCH

Lost in the jade woods while she played,  
Towards a manor, deep within the forest, her eyes strayed,  
Apple trees all around, branches hanging,  
Curious Maria climbed, finally landing,  
A lovely garden around,  
Full of roses and butterflies fluttering, cherries round.  
By a clearing, sat a lady,  
“Welcome, child,” said she, “afternoon tea is ready,  
Have a scone and a pastry,  
They’re quite tasty.”  
Maria stepped close, near the lawn’s centre,  
The woman with golden hair wore a dress of splendour,  
“Did you wander away from home, dear?  
I know magic, there’s nothing to fear.”  
The little girl’s eyes widened,  
“Show me, show me,” her expression brightened,  
“Those tiny rabbits of porcelain in your pocket, give them to  
me.”  
The witch waved her hand, they turned big; carrying instruments,  
producing music with glee.  
Maria jumped in joy, clapping; then she spoke in reply,  
“I have a stuffed lion, will you turn him into a wee boy who’ll be  
a dear friend when I cry?”  
The witch looked sad,  
She hoped to make the child glad,  
“Of course. From today, a companion you shall get.”  
Thus, a small, sweet boy in yellow Maria met.  
“Thank you, Madam Witch. You’re so nice, I want to help too,”  
“Will you come have sweets with me, my ally new?  
I’m all alone here,  
I can move the waves of the sea with a finger mere, yet my life is  
without cheer.”



**Connie Carmichael** is a former mental health care worker. She is retired and lives in Columbus, Ohio with a head full of poetry. Her poetry has been published in *Better Than Starbucks*, *Pocket Lint*, *Writers and Readers Magazine*, and *Open Skies Quarterly*. This is her second appearance in a Southern Arizona Press anthology.

## THE DOGS AND THE BONE

The dogs were out  
and thick as thieves  
they fought beneath the rotting eaves,  
where the dirt flew high  
and they barked and moaned  
all for the sake of a little bone.  
The fangs were bared  
and the hair went wild,  
I tell you dear reader that was mild.  
For they dug and they spit  
and they bit and they growled  
and they circled each other and started to howl,  
and the air was filled  
with such horrible sounds  
that no one dared to muzzle the hounds.  
Now it's hard to believe  
yet very well known,  
that they fought to the death for a very small bone.



**April Garcia** was born and raised in South Central Texas, Garcia's passion for writing poetry began in high school. Her work has appeared in multiple anthologies published by the Laurel Crown Foundation of San Antonio, Texas, Southern New Hampshire University, River Paw Press, Southern Arizona Press, and the *Chaos Dive Reunion* anthology by Mutabilis Press. She was included in Northwest Vista College's literary journal *The Lantana Review* as well as a number of online literary magazines including The Penmen Review, Red River Review, and Unlost Journal. Her most recent work appeared in the May 2023 issue of *Voices de la Luna* of San Antonio, Texas. Garcia is a wife and mother homeschooling four children. She earned her Bachelor of Arts in general studies majoring in poetry from Southern New Hampshire University. She is a member of The Poetry Society of Texas and also enjoys reading, crocheting, hiking, blogging, and traveling. This is her second appearance in a Southern Arizona Press anthology.

## A GIRL IN A DRESS

There once was a girl in a dress,  
who always did look quite a mess.  
    Her hair in a bun,  
    she sure loved to run,  
but why did she run, who can guess?

## A BOY FROM BOMBAY

A boy from the town of Bombay  
took a trip to the Bay of Biscay.  
The boy spoke no French  
so, he sat on a bench  
and thought to himself, "It's okay."



**Ann Iverson** a writer and artist. She is the author of five poetry collections: *Come Now to the Window* by the Laurel Poetry Collective, *Definite Space* and *Art Lessons* by Holy Cow! Press; *Mouth of Summer* and *No Feeling is Final* by Kelsay Books. She is also the author of a collection of personal essays *Then Eat My Love* by Southern Arizona Press. She is a graduate

of both the MALS and the MFA programs at Hamline University. Her poems have appeared in a wide variety of journals and venues including six features on *Writer's Almanac*. Her poem "Plenitude" was set to a choral arrangement by composer Kurt Knecht. She is also the author and illustrator of two children's books. As a visual artist, she enjoys the integrated relationship between the visual image and the written image. Her artwork has been featured in several art exhibits as well as in a permanent installation at the University of Minnesota Amplatz Children's Hospital. She is currently working on her sixth collection of poetry, as well as several children's story books.



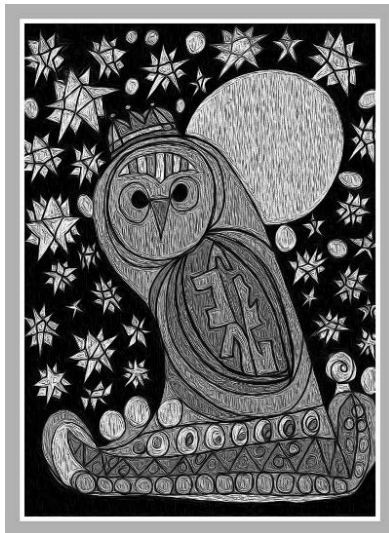
## WHOOOOO GOES THERE?

High up in the tree, so very late at night  
You hear a sound and it gives you a fright.  
But never to worry it's just a hoo hoo  
From your friendly owl saying hello to you!

He likes to gaze at every bright star  
And the shiny moon away so far.  
With his bright orange beak, he's really a cutie  
And his name is Mr. Hooty.

He has big round eyes and wears a little crown  
All dressed up like he's going downtown.  
But he flies in the dark patrolling the sky  
Swoops and darts then says goodbye.

When you wake up, it's time for his sleep.  
He needs his rest for the promise he must keep.  
He protects the stars and the silvery moon  
While you sleep tight in the merry month of June.



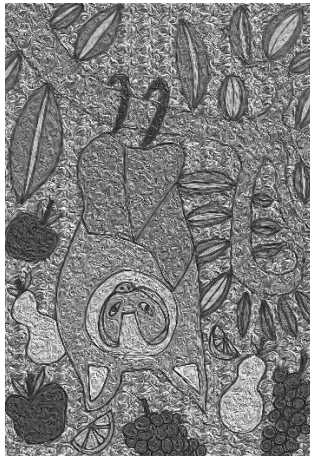
## FREDDY THE FRUIT BAT

Freddy the fruit bat lives in a tree where he chomps on fruit all  
day long.  
When his wings span out in the beautiful night sometimes it feels  
like a song.  
He likes oranges and apples, grapes, and pears too.  
If you ever go see him, he'll share some with you.

He likes to eat bugs when he flies through the night.  
And his funny brown face might give you a fright.  
But he's as friendly as any bat you know  
And with expandable wings, he has places to go.

Freddy and Hooty are best friends forever.  
They sleep through the day and they *never* say *never*.  
They always know there are things to do.  
And if they ever need help, they might call upon you!

Freddy the Fruit Bat with his pretty blue eyes is just so very cute.  
And if he ever needs a laugh, he calls upon Hooty for a hoot!  
Upside down he hangs in the tree  
And sees the world differently or how it might be.



## MR. MCWHISKERS

Mr. McWhiskers is a charming old cat  
And when you visit, he just likes to chat.  
He'll talk and talk 'til he's blue in the face  
About the silly old mice, always up for the chase.

He's a handsome old chap who wears a tall hat  
Telling his stories about this - about that.  
He wears a tuxedo and fancy black shoes  
And a selection of ties from which he can choose.

Mr. McWhiskers is as kind as can be.  
He'll invite you to visit for crumpets and tea.  
He's a fluffy old gent with whiskers galore.  
When he sits on your lap, his purr you'll adore.

Mr. McWhiskers is the cat about town.  
And if weren't for the hat, he'd be wearing a crown.  
He's the best friend to have in better or worse.  
And he'll help you to smile if your heart ever hurts.





**Luisa Kay Reyes** has had pieces featured in *The Raven Chronicles*, *The Windmill*, *The Foliate Oak*, *The Eastern Iowa Review*, and other literary magazines. Her essay, *Thank You*, is the winner of the April 2017 memoir contest of *The Dead Mule School of Southern Literature*. Her Christmas poem was a first place winner in the 16th Annual Stark County District Library Poetry Contest. Additionally, her essay *My*

*Border Crossing* received a Pushcart Prize nomination from the Port Yonder Press. Two of her essays have been nominated for the Best of the Net anthology. With one of her essays recently being featured on *The Dirty Spoon* radio hour.

## A CALM GOOD NIGHT

The day has faded into night  
And into bed we go with kind delight.  
The sun gives way to the stars and moon  
As a lovely lullaby we softly croon.

So tomorrow we may be in good form  
Beneath the covers we stay warm.  
Then we close our eyes to sleep and dream  
Of fairies, toys, and ice cream.

And while you rest and sweetly sleep  
I'll send my love for you to keep.  
For all of the caring doting of my heart  
To you I gently now impart.

Serenely looking forward all the while  
'Til the morning with your beaming smile  
That fondly sets all things right  
I bid you now a calm good night.

## MY BEDTIME PRAYER

Please look out for all of my pets  
They really are as sweet as it gets.  
For as we calm down the cool night air  
Feels much warmer with my teddy bear.

My siblings can be looked after, too  
For together we are quite the crew  
And lying here beneath the covers  
I'll dream of games with them and others.

My Mommy and Daddy need lots of care  
Since they work and take us everywhere  
I love to give them great big hugs  
To help them sleep and just because.

I pray that you look out for me  
To help me wake up happily  
And that my angel's warmth and glow and light  
Will keep us safe throughout the night.

## NIGHTY-NIGHT

Close your eyes and dream away  
It's time for sleep to have its say  
The sun has set and night has come  
As we calm down and softly hum.

The blankets now are soft and cozy  
Making our cheeks all warm and rosy  
Good rest is good for us to be  
Happy, healthy, and full of glee.

Throughout the evening all is still  
As we have eaten and had our fill  
Our angels guard us as we sleep  
And in our hearts their glow we keep.

May toys and tunes comprise the theme  
Of many a sweet and lovely dream  
So 'til the morning shines its light  
Hugs, and kisses, and nighty-night.



**Mary Ann Cabuyao Abril** was born in Manila, Philippines in 1969 and has over 15 years of experience in teaching Social Sciences in the College of Teacher Education at the Batangas State University – Malvar Campus. She rose from the ranks to spearhead programs and developmental plans for quality assurance as Director of Research, Extension, Planning, and Development and later as Dean of the College of

Teacher Education. After over 13 years working abroad as a Human Resource Officer in a multicultural international consultancy company in Qatar, Dr. Abril rejoined the institution in February 2022 and is now the Head of the Quality Assurance Management Office. She was recently selected by the International Organization of Educators and Researchers, Inc. as one of the recipients of the “Most Outstanding Innovative Leader and Researcher Award” in December 2022. Focused on her commitment to excellence and service, Dr. Abril returns to her niche with positivity and the determination of making a difference. Receiving recognition for all her contributions not just in the academe but also while working abroad, Dr. Abril aspires to achieve more and be an inspiration to everyone.



## BOND OF LOVE

Fair child, thou art the jewel of mine eye,  
The very essence of my heart and soul.  
No force on earth nor mortal could untie  
The bond that maketh thee mine life's true goal.

For in thee I see my hopes and dreams,  
A legacy of love that shall endure.  
Thou art the light that ever brightly beams,  
A precious gift that doth my heart assure.

So let us cherish this bond forevermore,  
And hold each other close with steadfast love.  
For in this love, we shall find true joy,  
And blessings from the heavens up above.



**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 seven poetry books published along with her writing partner, the super talented Ashley O'Keefe. This is her seventh appearance in a Southern Arizona Press

anthology.

## I DON'T LIKE THE DARK

I don't like the dark  
As the wind whistles outside,  
I'm scared of what's under my bed  
Else I'd crawl beneath it and hide.

There are faces in the shadows  
That stare out at me all creepy,  
And noises from downstairs  
Which means I'm not at all sleepy.

My covers are cosy  
My pyjamas are warm  
But I'm frightened of the monsters  
And the nightmares that swarm.

Then I reach out my hand  
For a fistful of matted fur  
Sound asleep, thumb in mouth  
Face pressed against  
My tatty teddy bear.

## REST THY WEARY HEAD (A LULLABY)

Sleep my sweet one  
rest thy weary head  
let your mama cradle you  
you're warm, safe and fed

Dream of pretty things  
rest thy weary head  
no troubles can find you  
in your little bed

Sleep my sweet one  
and know I hold you dear  
Mama's here beside you  
sleep soundly without fear

Sleep my sweet one  
you enjoyed your bedtime song  
ssshhh now no tears  
you'll slumber afore too long

Rest thy weary head  
the Sandman has just been  
he sprinkled thee with magic dust  
to give you pleasant dreams

Sleep my sweet one  
I'll stroke your downy hair  
plant a kiss on your pretty head  
watch you sleep without a care

Mama is here beside you  
to sweep nasty dreams away  
so sleep my sweetest one  
wake to the sunshiney day

Sleep my sweet one  
rest thy weary head  
now you are deeply sleeping  
Mama can go to her bed.

Sleep my sweet one  
rest thy weary head...



**Joan McNerney's** poetry has been included in numerous literary magazines such as *Seven Circle Press*, *Dinner with the Muse*, *Moonlight Dreamers of Yellow Haze*, *Blueline*, and *Halcyon Days*. Four Bright Hills Press Anthologies, several Poppy Road Review Journals, and numerous Kind of A Hurricane Press Publications have accepted her work. She has four Best of the Net nominations and her latest titles are *The Muse in Miniature*, *Love Poems for Michael*, and *At*

*Work*, all available on Amazon.com

## EZ

I found the EZ way  
to tie your shoes.  
All those grownups  
making big holes out  
of string and somehow  
loop them in.  
Pretty bow but too hard.

Don't like shoe strings  
until the EZ Way...  
make a knot to tie it up first!  
You don't need your  
little finger to make  
knot. Tie it up.  
Then you can make  
pretty bow on top.  
No loose strings.  
EZ.

## FROM ME TO YOU

Rain is my best friend  
when I just want to  
sit and sing songs.

Happy it falls on  
my red umbrella.  
See how it wets all  
those yellow flowers.

Hear it pitter patter  
on rooftops.  
Now I can kick puddles  
up with my boots.

I like rain.  
It is splashy and cool.



**Nolo Segundo**, pen name of L.j.Carber, 76, became a late in life published poet in his 8th decade in over 155 literary journals and anthologies in America, England, Canada, Romania, Scotland, Hungary, Australia, China, Sweden, Portugal, India, and Turkey. A trade publisher has released three paperback collections: *The Enormity of Existence*; *Of Ether and Earth*; and *Soul Songs* [all available on Amazon]. A retired English/ESL teacher [America, Japan, Taiwan, Cambodia], he has been married 43 years to a smart and beautiful Taiwanese woman.

## A CHILD'S CHRISTMAS CAROL

'Then... it was a time of true magic,  
When the world was small and soft.  
It had to be magic, my mind of five  
Told me: how else could my brothers  
And I go to sleep on an ordinary,  
Dull and quiet night, to awaken in  
Sheer joy the next morn as though  
We had been zapped by a warm  
Bolt of harmless lightning, setting  
Our now restless bodies tingling....

Like racehorses at the gate of magic,  
We stood at the top of the stairs,  
Pulling at whatever patience we  
Could muster under the admonitions  
Of Mom and Dad to wait! wait! the  
Camera must be loaded—but how  
Painful to be still when we knew  
Children's paradise was only a  
Stairway away—and what a  
Paradise we saw unfolded in  
Our now unfamiliar living room!

The tree drew our eyes first—  
It was big and fat, with its  
Branches sagging under all  
Its myriad ornaments: glass  
Balls, plastic candy canes,  
Tinsel drooping as though  
It hung on a weeping willow  
And not a proud Blue Spruce.

And hundreds and millions of  
Colored lights, some blinking,  
Some staid, made our tree  
Sparkle like the royal crown  
Of a giant king—perhaps  
The King of Toys, for they  
Were seen in abundance  
Wherever we looked: trucks  
And bikes, and bats and games.  
Each brother had his own pile  
(we marveled how thoughtful  
Santa must be) and we knew  
In each stack there were boxes  
Beautifully wrapped but sans  
Treasure, alas, hiding only socks  
Or shirts, perhaps a sweater.

Well, even the jolly fat man  
Could not be perfect—still,  
He would bring magic to our  
Home every year, overnight  
Transforming our prosaic lives  
By wonder, by magic, by love.  
And after he went away,  
When I was an ancient six,  
The world grew much bigger  
But colder, dull and empty  
Of that special joy that  
Can only come to those  
Children who believe....



**Dr. Nora V. Marasigan** is a Filipino associate professor in the undergraduate and graduate teacher education programs at Batangas State University JPLPC-Malvar. As an educator, she is primarily interested in conducting studies on mathematics and mathematics education which focus on topics essential to educational innovations. She has been invited as a resource speaker in seminars/webinars dealing with Mathematics teaching and learning, test construction, and analyzing research data. She is a mathematics professor and has published research articles on mathematics, mathematics education, and pedagogy in international peer-reviewed journal. She has also published creative works in a multidisciplinary academic publisher and won the Best Poetry and Best Short Story Awards in the Cape Comorin Writers' Festival 2020.

## WHISPERS OF THE DREAMING LAND

In a land where moonbeams play,  
And stars paint the night with gentle sway,  
Children find their dreams take flight,  
As they bid the day goodnight

Amidst the meadows of sleep so deep,  
Where secrets whispered, treasures keep,  
Little hearts in slumber's embrace,  
Embark on journeys to a magical place.

The Sandman comes with grains of gold,  
Scattering dreams, as stories unfold.  
Each night a canvas, a world anew,  
Where fantasy and wonder bloom.

A knight might ride on a dragon's back,  
Or a mermaid sing 'neath a starry track,  
Imagination's brush paints scenes so bright,  
Guiding children through the night

So close your eyes, my child, so dear,  
Adventure beckons, have no fear.  
The land of dreams is yours to explore,  
As you sleep and dream evermore.

## TWINKLING DREAMS

In a land where stars align,  
Children's dreams begin to shine.  
As the moonlight softly glows,  
In dreamland, a story flows.

Wrapped in blankets, snug and warm,  
You're safe from any nighttime storm.  
As darkness wraps around so tight,  
Embrace the wonder of the night.

So rest, dear child, in tranquil sleep,  
Where dreams their secrets gently keep.  
Let twinkling skies your mind caress,  
And lead you to night's sweet undress.

In slumber's arms, may you find,  
A world where dreams and stars align  
And as the night holds you in its sway,  
Embrace the dreams that come your way.

So close your eyes, my little one,  
Daylight's adventures are done.  
Snuggle tight, let worries cease,  
Drift into a world of peace.

## GOODNIGHT, SLEEP TIGHT

Goodnight, my dear, it's time to rest,  
In the arms of dreams, you are so blessed.  
The twinkling stars will guard your sleep,  
As night's embrace grows dark and deep

In sleep's embrace, worries gently fade,  
As moonbeams dance in serenade  
The twinkling stars, a shimmering array,  
Illuminate night's quiet display.

To dreamland's gate, you're gently led,  
Where stories and adventures spread  
A land of magic, where you are the queen,  
Where fantasies take flight and sing.

Goodnight, my dear, in slumber's grace,  
Embrace the night's warm, tender embrace.  
As stars above your dreams ignite,  
Rest peacefully, dear child, tonight.



**Jerri Hardesty** lives in the woods of Alabama with husband, Kirk, who is also a poet. They run the nonprofit poetry organization, New Dawn Unlimited, Inc. ([NewDawnUnlimited.com](http://NewDawnUnlimited.com)). Jerri has had over 500 poems published and has won more than 2000 awards and titles in both written and spoken word poetry. This is her eighth appearance in a Southern Arizona Press anthology.



## ZERO-G

In space I would love to be,  
Existing in Zero-G.  
I find it appealing  
To sit on the ceiling  
Or hang (right-side-up)  
From a tree.

## GARDEN DRAGON

Tiny baby dragon  
Hiding in the garden green,  
Changes colors with the flowers  
To keep from being seen.  
He sneezes at the daisies  
And giggles in the fern,  
He dances with the daffodils,  
Then gives the rose a turn,  
He nibbles at the clover,  
And plays with dragonfly,  
He lounges on a drooping leaf  
To watch the clouds float by,  
He blows on all the dandelions  
Laughing as he goes,  
He takes a secret bubble bath  
Beside the water hose,  
And if you try to find him,  
He'll only disappear,  
But if you listen carefully,  
You'll hear him, loud and clear,  
Singing happy dragon ballads  
All the day and long night through,  
Take time to see life's beauty,  
And you'll be happy, too!

## COWTAILS

In the wee hours of night with the crickets and snails,  
'The cows get together to tell tall tales.  
Now, they don't admit that the stories aren't true,  
And, maybe they are, I'll leave that to you.  
One of them always begins with a croon  
And claims that he once jumped over the moon,  
Another proclaims she was purple as silk,  
The brown cow takes credit for chocolate milk,  
The one with patches says she's smarter than foxes  
And that's why her picture's on computer boxes,  
The youngest says she set Chicago afire,  
But her obvious youth makes it clear she's a liar,  
The last one to speak before they all roam  
Says she's the proverbial cow that came home,  
And, of course, that's always the very last word  
As they head for the pasture and join with the herd.

Previously published in *Encore*, 2007.



**Karen A. VandenBos** was born on a warm July morn in Kalamazoo, Michigan. She has a PhD in Holistic Health where a course in shamanism taught her to travel between two worlds. She can be found unleashing her imagination in two online writing groups and her writing has been published in *Lothlorien Poetry Journal*, *Blue Heron Review*, *The Rye Whiskey Review*, *One Art: a journal of poetry*, *Anti-Heroine Chic*, *The Ekphrastic Review*, *Southern Arizona Press*, *MacQueens's Quinterly*, and others. This is her third appearance in a Southern Arizona Press anthology.

## THE TINY HOUSE IN THE BIG FOREST

She was traveling to market, her basket full of potions when she came upon the tiniest house she had ever seen. It was covered in moss and vines and the door was hanging open on rusted hinges. The trees did their best to aid in the camouflage. Slowly she kicked the leaves off the doorstep and entered the house. As she looked around she noticed cobwebs hanging in the corners and a pile of scattered ashes on the hearth within a cozy little room.

Taking off her cloak to hang on a wall hook she heard the squeak of a wee mouse asking her if she had come to stay and what was her name? Bending down and looking the white whiskered mouse in the eye, she made the decision to say yes! Esther began a frenzied cleaning of the house until it was shining like the sun. She swept the darkness out the door, lit a fire and settled in.

Through the years Esther learned to weave stories from the threads of the spider's web. She wove wreaths with acorns, twigs and berries and bowed to the trees for the fuel they gave to keep her warm. She grew a garden of such bounty she never went hungry and the rest she shared with the animals of the forest and gave freely to everyone at market time.

Esther sang to the stars and tended her gardens. Soon the villagers were knocking at her door to purchase her potions and drink her teas. The children settled in for her stories in the darkness of winter. The sun kept setting and the moon rising until one day the chimney exhaled no more smoke. The door was once again hanging on its hinges and the cobwebs went back to hanging in the corners.

The story of Esther became larger than myth and a book was published about her life called "The Tiny House in the Big Forest". Within the pages of that book, Esther would dwell forever. Children would continue to fall in love with her during story hours and the tiny house itself disappeared back into the woods.

## MAPLE GWEN

Her name was Maple Gwen. She lived in a tree house at the edge of Treehaven Road. She loved all of the trees, but maple trees were her favorites. She loved her trees so much that she started to look like them. In the fall her hair was short and turned pretty shades of red, gold and orange, just like the color of the leaves on her trees. In the winter her hair turned white. She stood outside, her arms stretched out to her sides and the birds landed on her just like they did on the bare branches of the winter trees. In the spring, Maple Gwen's hair started to grow again. To help her hair grow faster, she washed it with the spring batch of maple syrup and rinsed it from her hair with a watering can. The fresh spring rain added a fullness to her hair as it went from a winter white to a dirty brown and kept growing until summer when she had a head of long thick hair. This way of life went on season after season for many years. She learned to bend with the wind, reach towards the sun, the moon and touch the tips of stars. She became sturdy as an oak and learned the lessons and wisdom of each and every tree.

Then one day as Maple Gwen sat in her treehouse and looked out over her maple groves, she could see a car in the distance rambling towards her road. She grabbed her spy glass and saw the sign on the car door that read "Land Development Company". Maple Gwen went to meet the two men as they got out of their car. They wanted to make her an offer for her land so they could put up a business and other nonessential buildings. Well, Maple Gwen knew how important her trees were and she loved those trees. She felt they belonged to each other. Pulling herself up to her full height and trying to look as tall as a redwood tree, she told those men "NO"! No money in the world could buy those trees or this land from her. With the feeling that the trees were all closing in around them, the two men left, never to return. To this day, Maple Gwen can still be seen living in the seasons with her trees. The earth is a healthier and more beautiful place to live thanks to Maple Gwen and her love of trees.

## THIMBLE

Once upon a time there was a wee fairy whose name was 'Thimble. Her hair was the color of sunshine and her eyes as blue as the sea. When she laughed the birds tried to mimic the sound as it was the prettiest song they had ever heard. She drank raindrops from an acorn shell and read her books by the light of fireflies at night. When the stars came out she went to the edge of the river and sang to them. She danced among the trees and played leap frog with the shadows. She had tea with the mice under the mushroom umbrellas. She found gold at the end of rainbows and knew how to speak the language of the mermaids. She could spin tales with a spool of thread and she could scare away the darkness with her smile. She wore tutus on Sundays and knew where to find poems under rocks. She slept in the petals of the flowers and sprinkled the world with her kindness. You see, 'Thimble's heart was so full of love for everyone and everything, she made the world believe she was twelve inches tall.



**Tasneem Hossain** is a Bangladeshi multi-lingual poet. Her wanderings in other areas of literature include fiction, translation, academic pieces, columns, and op-eds. She writes in English, Bangla, and Urdu. Her writings appear in magazines, different dailies, and annual publications of different countries. To name a few: *International Human Rights Art Festival 2022 Anthology: Tyranny Unchained; Woman's Freedom*, Southern Arizona Press 2022 anthology *The Wonders of Winter*, *The Mocking Owl Roost* (USA), *Polis Magazino* (Greece), *Migosepta Global* (Indonesia), *Borderless Journal* (Singapore), *Discover Mississauga and More - eBook* (Canada), *Krishnochura* (United Kingdom), *EDAS Chronicle*, *The Dhaka Literature*, *An Ekushey Anthology*, *The Daily Star*, *bdnews24.com*, *The Business Standard* and *Asian Age Online* (Bangladesh).

Her publications consist of *The Pearl Necklace* and *Floating Feathers* (poetry), and *Split and Splice* (article). She recently published a collection of poetry, *Grass in Green*, with Southern Arizona Press. Four more books are underway.

She runs a project named Life in Verses where she conducts poetry writing workshops.

She completed her Masters in English Language and Literature in 1986 from Dhaka University. She is the Director of Continuing Education Centre. As a training consultant her expertise lies in Communication Management and Language.

She worked as faculty (English Language) in Chittagong University of Engineering and Technology. She also worked as newscaster, commentary reader, and radio presenter in radio Bangladesh for 10 years. She directed Shakespeare's play *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

She resides, sharing time, between Bangladesh and Canada.

This is her fourth appearance in a Southern Arizona Press anthology.



## FAIRIES AND KNIGHTS

Starlit night,  
Shines so bright;

Little fairies with wings,  
Sing sweet lullabies.

Flying fairies,  
dance in circles  
makes babies giggle;

Travelling with sprites,  
The gentlemen knights;  
On horses they ride.  
To slay giants, they fight  
To keep away babies from fright;

The sweet wind fairy,  
To make babies merry,  
Swirls her magic wand;  
brings happiness to the land.

The stars, the moon all shine  
To bring in all that is divine.

Go to sleep my dear little baby,  
Dream and be happy.

## LITTLE MINNIE

Little Minnie Maina,  
Wants to go to China;

'Mama please, buy me a pair of goggles;  
pair of shoes and small water bottles.'

Mama asks, 'Why?'

'I want to climb the mountains,  
To look for water fountains  
That makes people nicer.  
Helps them not to die of thirst or hunger;  
The water makes them happy.  
Please call my daddy.  
I don't want anyone to be unhappy.

So let's go to the mountains  
And bring the water from those fountains.'

## SLEEP MY BABY

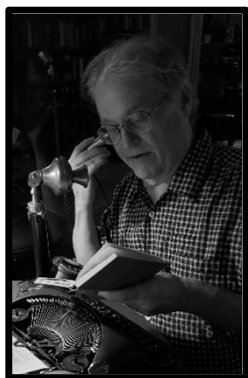
Twinkling stars in the sky,  
Singing along with fireflies;

Come to me baby, close your eyes.  
Sleep my baby, I will sing you lullabies.

Moon is shining bright and high,  
Lovely fairies dance and fly;  
Soft wind blows and whispers low,  
Look how beautiful the fireflies glow.

Time to sleep now, off you go,  
In the dreamland where fairies go;

Come to me baby, close your eyes.  
Sleep my baby, I will sing you lullabies.



**Mark A. Fisher** is a writer, poet, and playwright living in Tehachapi, California. His poetry has appeared in: *Reliquiae*, *Silver Blade*, *Eccentric Orbits*, and many other places. His first chapbook, *drifter*, is available from Amazon. His poem “there are fossils” (originally published in *Silver Blade*) came in second in the 2020 Dwarf Stars Speculative Poetry Competition. His plays have appeared on California stages in Pine Mountain Club, Tehachapi, Bakersfield, and Hayward. His play *Moon Rabbit* won Audience Favorite at the Stillwater Oklahoma Short

Play Festival in 2023. He has also won cooking ribbons at the Kern County Fair. This is Mark’s fifth appearance in a Southern Arizona Press anthology.

## PANCAKE ISLAND

Late one night Maddie yawned big  
and Meema said "it's time for bed"  
but Maddie knew she wasn't tired  
"upstairs!" with a smile her Meema said.

Claiming loudly it wasn't time  
up the stairs Maddie climbed  
mumbling sleepily to the top of the steps  
with Moonpi (the dog) following behind.

So once all her teeth were brushed  
Meema had her in bed all tucked in  
she kissed her forehead and turned out the light  
Maddie's thoughts began to spin.

Then Maddie was up, setting her sheet as a sail  
first mate Moonpi clung to the bed  
as out of the window the pair then flew  
she knew she wasn't no sleepy-head.

So through the night sky the pair did fly  
past birds and stars over many hours  
till on the horizon an island was seen  
"Look," Maddie said, "that place's ours".

So out of the sky they flew the bed  
onto the beach and chose to explore  
so then down they climbed  
onto crumbs of a graham cracker shore.

And out there beyond the tasty beach  
there were trees that had pancake leaves!  
And some bushes that grew pots of preserves  
"Meema," said Maddie, "this will never believe".

Up the tree tops were monkeys to be seen  
each one held a huge banana muffin  
they juggled them quickly up and down  
the muffins looked fresh out of the oven.

Moonpi and Maddie through the jungle did wander  
and jumped over a brook of strawberry jam  
and found a pile of biscuits  
that were growing like clams.

“Grororarooar!”

From ahead in the bushes came such a growl  
Moonpi and Maddie jumped with a start  
they hugged and looked and were quite scared  
then they heard thumping, but it was their hearts.

“I’m not afraid,” Maddie told Moonpi  
so very bravely, her teeth all a chatter  
there was a monster on the island  
somewhere out there, just waiting to grab her.

Moonpi crept up and peered in the bushes  
but nothing hid there not even a mouse  
just pots of more jelly and syrup with butter  
there was no monster ready to pounce.

Grororarooar!”

Came the roar even louder than before  
together they ran through pancake jungle  
into the bed covered with sheets  
then onto the floor they fell in a jumble.

Just to discover they were still in her room  
it was morning, and her stomach was growling  
It was just time for breakfast  
there wasn't any monster prowling.

"Maddie! Moonpi! Come on down"  
so down the long stairs they came in a clatter  
just in time to see to see Meema  
putting pancakes on the big platter.

"Did you have a good sleep," Meema asked  
Maddie she nodded while filling her plate  
then she proceeded to tell her where they'd been  
and their frightening narrow escape.



**Dr. Richard M. Bañez** is a Filipino associate professor for the undergraduate and graduate teacher education programs at the Batangas State University JPLPC-Malvar Campus. As an educator, he is primarily interested in language and literature pedagogy that focuses on students' capacity to engage in dynamic curricular opportunities and experiences within the context of teaching and learning English as a Second Language (ESL). He also conducts studies on Educational Management particularly on the intricate roles of language in educational leadership and supervision, and other research topics central to educational innovations. Aside from being in the academe, he is also an aspiring literary artist whose works have appeared in selected volumes of *Covid-19 Pandemic Poems* by Cape Comorin Publisher, *Love Letters in Poetic Verse*, *Castles and Courtyards*, and *Beyond the Sand and Sea* by Southern Arizona Press, and *Spring Offensive* by CultureCult Press. This is his fourth appearance in a Southern Arizona Press anthology.



## PRINCESS CATCHY

Tonight, when the stars spark their merriment,  
I tell you tales of the king and a little princess.  
Under the silver moonlight,  
Forever gleaming and worth remembering  
As your guiding star traverses into the secret garden  
Where your golden slide is serenaded  
By roses, daisies, and daffodils  
As they glide gently with the breeze.

The cheerful ponies and winged pegasi  
Painted rainbow all over our evening sky,  
As we chased the mallow clouds  
To find the golden pot of cookies and other delights.

We gracefully danced as father and daughter,  
As our feet hadn't made haste,  
To enjoy every moment and step we shared  
On the squishy and mushy dance floor  
Sprinklered with glitters and scented with strawberry fumes.

We sang with the mermaids and their crustacean bands  
To lure our worries with our sweet symphonies,  
And fly with our mighty dragon  
To venture all over our kingdom  
And explore the territory beyond the seven seas.

Sparkling star shining bright,  
Our hope and guiding light.  
We dream that you might  
Fulfill this magical wish tonight.

## SAILOR MOON

Tonight

I dreamed of the moon princess,  
Silky ponytails hovering over the winter breeze side by side  
While the acoustics from the distant music box  
Brings me back to miles of decades ago.

I used to wonder about romance and love  
In serene moonlight,  
The moon princess embraces the masked prince in the shiny  
    black tuxedo  
Seizing the moment with smiles and tears  
As the roses red blaze their scarlet petals  
Withering to mysteriously hide desolation  
Beneath the selfish sweet-scented fumes.

Has the moon crystal lost its beam?  
Shining rainbow spectrum  
To the darkest and hidden corners  
Of the inner-self  
Until it fades  
Memory by memory.

The cosmic powers collide  
Exploding fragments with sinister intentions  
To bruise my thoughts with the recollection  
Of the other sailors - Mercury, Mars, Jupiter, and Venus  
Individually taking their own journey  
Towards life, reality, and forgetfulness.

As the moon continuously sails  
Night and every night  
On a gloomy stary night  
Trying to send me back  
To miles and miles ago,  
I want to breathe the world that once I had  
When rainbows are painted  
Over the morning skies.

Princess Serenity  
Sail me back  
Drown me into my childhood dreams  
Night after night  
Long and for longer hours  
Before I wake  
And found myself alone  
Under the serene moonlight.

## CHILDREN OF JC ROOM 101

Delay not your slumber, dear children,  
The moonlight calls you to gently close your eyes,  
Embrace Neverland, worry-free and wild,  
Explore the depths of your dreaming skies.

Hush now, my little ones, softly rest,  
Dream of wonders, both near and far,  
Chase rainbows to find a treasure chest,  
Or munch on colorful sweets, like a shooting star.

Craft verses that are beautiful and bold,  
Sing of your triumphs, let merriment flow,  
Picture a pony in Snow White's hold,  
Dancing in sneakers, wherever you go.

Use onomatopoeia with rhythmic grace,  
In verses that echo solitude's grace,  
Paint stories vibrant, set your heart's pace,  
In a theatrical show, your dreams will be embraced.

Ignore the myth of the \*Red Witch's snare,  
The wicked witch in the Limbo's core,  
As the Solitary Reaper's eerie stare,  
Can't steal dreams you hold in your soul.

Avoid the woods, my JC Room 101 children dear,  
Where the big bad wolf lurks with glee,  
Don't let fear feed on your cheer,  
Hold your aspirations high and free.

In this struggle, cling to hope's warm light,  
Confront the malevolent \*Red Witch, akin to Gretel's dark plight,  
With your soaring dreams, you'll ascend to new heights,  
Through Neverland's realms, from day to night,  
Just think of happy thoughts and fly high.

\*The Red Witch is a fictional character, a self-absorbed and wicked witch known for her sarcastic laughter, which has the power to shatter innocent dreams. She can be likened to Medusa, but in many ways, she's even more sinister, as her primary intent is to deliberately crush the hopes and dreams of innocent children.



**Cai Quirk** (they/them or ey/em) is a trans and genderqueer multi-disciplinary artist who focuses on the intersection of gender diversity throughout history, its erasure, and contemporary reclamation and *restoryation*. Their self-portrait series ‘*Transcendence*’ engages with connections between gender, mythology, and nature-based spirituality, and was published in March 2023 with Skylark Editions.

Cai’s work has been exhibited in thirteen states and four countries, and in 2022, Cai gave over sixty talks and workshops in conferences across America. In the spring of 2022 Cai received the *Minnie Jane Scholarship* and a four-month artist residency from the Pendle Hill Quaker Center, where they created the poetry series ‘*Beyond Pink and Blue*’. They received bachelor’s degrees in music and photography from Indiana University. See more at [caiquirk.com](http://caiquirk.com). This is Cai’s fourth appearance in a Southern Arizona Press anthology.

## FIERY ROCK

a heart of stone in the molten flow  
one fiery rock from the earth below  
longing to know what it is to be hard  
not melted together but set apart

this lone soul longs to rise to the top  
ey tries and tries but is always stopped  
by fluid rocks who constantly move  
flowing together, not bound by earth's grooves

magma can't see why ey wants to change  
to be hard rock seems so very strange  
they've never seen it, it's never been done  
how in the world could being hard be fun

off in the distance, far up above  
sits a hard little boulder who longs to be loved  
the rocks all around want to stay gray and still  
leaving the boulder's little heart unfulfilled

each stone on their own, one above, one below  
each born into places that don't feel like home  
they feel very stuck but one thing is clear  
they can't stay here for hundreds of years

years come and they go for each little stone  
not moved any closer by the harsh wind's blow  
but just as they're about to give up in despair  
comes the scent of a truly new kind of air

the skin of the earth begins to move  
air sulfuric and fresh passes through  
tossing and turning as if in sleep  
red magma is pushed up from the deep

as steaming cracks open in the crust between  
stones hard and soft see sights yet unseen  
struggling and swimming to get ahead of the tide  
the heart of stone does not want to hide

the hard little boulder looks down from the edge  
hoping to fly like a bird set to fledge  
as rising up from the cracks down below  
flows a wave of molten stone

rumbles and shakes come as lava emerges  
led by the stone with transformative urges  
shooting high in the sky and ready to fly  
molten stone turning hard gives a delighted cry

tumbling down comes the hard little boulder  
falling towards lava and ready to smolder  
stone and boulder in transformation  
years weary and dreary now lead to elation

one enveloped by magma sinking back below  
one high above, nearly hardened gray stone  
each freer and calmer, in joy and ecstasy  
surrounded now by a new kind of family

the other stones hadn't wanted to shift  
but then as they changed and began to grow stiff  
they saw the fear they'd had of the other side  
and now they too no longer yearn to hide

they meet other rocks, some old and some young  
and feel biased notions start coming undone  
they feel what it's like to live life another way  
some feel at home and want to stay gray



but as the cracks begin to close  
and molten rock no longer grows  
rocks up above and down below  
feel the loss of friends long ago

out in this new world so firm and so odd  
with fissures and cracks some rocks feel flawed  
though the first stone loves to feel the earth's grooves  
others dearly miss the molten rock's ooze

some try to force their way back inside  
but they are stuck no matter how hard they try  
stuck like the first rock had felt before  
the pain they had caused they can no longer ignore

the first little stone now high on the hill  
though mostly cooled, is not yet quite still  
ey hears the complaints of stones on the ground  
and rolls down to help those who now feel bound

the stone had felt what it is to be stuck  
down in despair, out of hope, out of luck  
much as ey sees solace in others who shift  
some others don't see this change as a gift

gray stone calls to boulder now down in the crack  
please use your red strength to melt your way back  
so up from the deep comes the magma once more  
to heat and to soften, to push and to bore

and up on the surface stones do what they can  
to widen the crack by foot and by span  
from both sides they come, they push and they strain  
melting and pounding 'til no obstructions remain

and there in that well of molten red rock  
sits a truth no rock or magma can stop  
some want to go and some want to stay  
and so many more want to keep open the way

so the ball of magma that was once a boulder  
and some of the souls that are much much older  
begin to think, to plan, and to scheme  
to find an idea though it feels like a dream

if the molten rock within the earth circles 'round  
and this pool of lava can always be found  
then the divisions between wouldn't be so complete  
and restrictions on change would become obsolete

the red molten stone from within the earth  
can come up above to find a new birth  
and firmer gray rocks from the world in the sky  
can come down below to give magma a try

and for all those stones now longing to be in the middle  
the answer to this becomes much more simple  
they can live near the edge and stay in between  
not hard or soft but with a liquidy sheen

and in this new place of shifts and changes  
stones old and young are surprised by the ranges  
of colors and textures, of shapes and shades  
that become much more possible without barricades

the rocks find more colors than they've ever known  
beyond the gray from above and the red below  
shiny greens and blues when they cool certain ways  
and semi-molten iridescence beyond the light of day

they begin to be grateful to those brave little stones  
who showed rocks the way to create a new home  
even those once reluctant are no longer dismayed  
and all feel more free with the world this way

they all grow more knowledge and understanding  
that each path means more when there's no commanding  
and now the boulder and the heart of stone  
can live into lives that are truly their own

instead of limits, possibilities now abound  
and deep authenticity can truly be found  
when love and acceptance isn't conditional  
on staying put and seeming traditional

and now they realize that whether soft, firm, or hard  
no matter if magma, boulder, or shard  
they are all stone at their end and their start  
and what's most important is what's in their hearts

## SHRIVELED BEING

I found a being in the woods  
shriveled and left there to die  
no water no food no sanctuary  
maggots had begun to multiply

I took this being upon my back  
not knowing eir origins or kind  
but kindness is a human trait  
I couldn't leave em behind

resilience gleamed in the teary gaze  
as ey turned eir face to mine  
far beyond defeat or fear  
eyes with a steely shine

releasing the harm internalized  
as tears fell like rain  
cleansing renewing purifying  
no longer surviving in vain

I nourished this being back to health  
ey began to flourish and thrive  
a rich green aura came from within  
bringing em vibrantly alive

green rays shone from eir very core  
as into eir power ey grew  
freed from the lies ey once was told  
of auras only pink or blue

but then when ey returned to this world  
with hopes it would now be benign  
few others could see beyond two colors  
and eir shine began to decline

ey came back to me for shelter once more  
and together we agreed to try  
to create a culture both free and kind  
where no color would live a lie

and so we began to build and to plan  
inviting the others we found  
to bring their colors of every shade  
to this place of common ground

we built a community so welcoming  
that soon others wanted to come  
even pinks and blues that once were cruel  
were no longer quite so troublesome

so instead of fighting our way to the top  
in a world that hated our souls  
our new way of living brought others to join  
leaving behind their rigid controls

and soon their systems fell apart  
but nobody cared anymore  
with these new ways where all were free  
people's truths began to restore

and so my dear this is how  
the once shriveled being and I  
formed a vision beyond pink and blue  
and helped the world to unify

Originally published in *Written Tales, Freedom Chapbook*, 6/2022



**Rowena C. Madsa** is a dedicated teacher from the Philippines. She imparts her knowledge to junior high school students and engages in part-time tertiary teaching. Aside from her passion for education, she finds great joy in reading and writing poetry. In these works, her inspiration flows from her adventurous toddler son, who delights in shadow play at night and was seemingly born with the spirit of an explorer.

You can find her online on her website at:  
[sinnersavedbygrace29.blogspot.com](http://sinnersavedbygrace29.blogspot.com).

## SHADOW'S NIGHT DANCE

Shadow, oh shadow, elusive and true,  
In the sunlight's grace, I glimpse you anew,  
Yet in the absence of light, you're darkness profound,  
A captivating beauty, in night's embrace found.

You paint the world with your mysterious art,  
A dance of shadows, a play of the heart,  
In the evening hours, we frolic and play,  
Together we revel till the night turns to day.

Oh, how I marvel at your magical show,  
As you twirl and whisper, to and fro,  
With every movement, you create a sound,  
A symphony of shadows, enchanting, unbound.

But as the moon rises and stars start to gleam,  
My mother reminds me, it's time to dream,  
Do shadows like you, too, ever take rest,  
Or do you keep dancing, forever at your best?

I wish to see you when morning arrives,  
Yet your allure, in the darkness, thrives,  
With each passing night, I'll wait and adore,  
For your beauty shines brighter than ever before.

## TODDLER'S DAY OUT

In the realm of wonder, a toddler roams,  
Yearning for freedom, they wander and comb,  
Their eyes filled with curiosity and glee,  
To explore the world beyond what they see.

Outside, the sun's rays, a golden embrace,  
A world of adventure, a magical space,  
Chickens and ducks, a delight to behold,  
Their hearts skip a beat as tales unfold.

They count the dogs, each one a new friend,  
A tender goodbye, a memory to send,  
But as the day stretches and shadows grow long,  
Mama's voice gently sings the bedtime song.

"Oh, my little explorer, it's time to rest,  
Your weary feet and heart, be at your best,  
The world will wait for another day,  
Close your eyes now, dream and sway."

The tears may fall as the road leads back home,  
Yet dreams await, where imagination may roam,  
Within the walls, there's joy to be found,  
Toys that come alive, laughter that's unbound.

So, sleep now, dear one, for the night's embrace,  
Holds dreams aplenty, in its softest grace,  
Tomorrow's another adventure, a tale untold,  
As the moon and stars their secrets unfold.





*Humpty Dumpty*

*Mother Goose's Story Book* (New York, McLoughlin Bros, 1899)  
Public Domain



**Romardo Lyons** is a multi-award winning Jamaican poet and journalist. In 2021, he copped the Press Association of Jamaica's Young Journalist of the Year and the Sports Journalist of the Year awards. In 2022, he copped Journalist of the Year again.

Lyons is the 2023 recipient of the National Library of Jamaica's award of High Commendation for Poetry. In 2020, he won the Edward Baugh Poetry Prize, another highly coveted award hosted annually by the National Library of Jamaica.

## SEE YOU SOON

Bed time, rest time.  
Eyes shut, the stars  
peek at me to make  
sure I'm fine.

Toys put away in the  
blue bag. Room quiet,  
and not messed up.

I'm tucked under my  
sheet like scrambled  
eggs under ketchup.

Night lamp sings a  
pretty song. Tinker Bell,  
and Rapunzel would love it.

Dad comes and kisses  
me goodnight. It's a  
good night. I love it.

Mom warmed my milk.  
I drink and drink. Belch.  
Sleep is coming.  
More blinks.

Goodnight, my friends.  
Goodnight, Spider-Man.  
Goodnight, Mr. Moon.  
See you soon.

## LITTLE KEMAR

Little Kemar loved picking from  
the jar of gummies for his tummy  
in the afternoon.

Always happy like he lived in a  
world of cartoons, balloons and  
little, pretty, blue, round ice-cream  
spoons.

And at lunch time, his best friends  
are chocolate chip cookies. He's the  
king of sugar in his blue,  
Sonic hoodie.

Sugar, sugar, sugar and fun and  
playing and dancing and skipping,  
and swimming in the pool. And then  
seeing more cookies and  
starting to drool.

But when it's night, he was never  
quite alright. He'd rather drift off in  
the sun's light and might, like a free,  
triangle-shaped, summer kite.

He cried and cried and cried.  
His mom begged and begged  
and begged. But little Kemar  
refused to brush his teeth  
before bed.

And one day; one sad, sad day,  
he felt a pain in his mouth.  
Two of his teeth from the front  
decided to jump out.

Little Kemar started brushing  
every night, every morning, after  
every sip, after every bite.

## TOMORROW SOON

'Treehouse climbing, bubbles  
blowing, bubbles chasing,  
shape tracing in coloring books,  
visiting Kendall's house next door,  
playing with him, his sister, his dog,  
asking his police dad questions about  
work, eating buttery popcorn, watching  
TV late and sleepovers.

'That's what summer days are made of.  
When night comes, I can't wait for  
morning to come back again and again  
and again. Looking forward to no homework,  
no school, no teachers, no classmates, no  
desks and chairs. Just fun and fun and  
fun in the sun. So let's go to bed now,  
so tomorrow can come quicker.



*I Went to the Woods and Got It*

*Mother Goose's Story Book* (New York, McLoughlin Bros, 1899)  
Public Domain



**Katy Huth Jones** grew up in a family where creative juices overflowed and made puddles to splash in. Since 1992 she has published stories and poems in *Highlights for Children*, *Cricket Magazine*, *Jack and Jill*, and many others, all under Catherine Jones, as well as two easy readers that are fun to read out loud. Since surviving cancer, she has published eleven fantasy novels and one historical fiction as well as poetry. Her favorite job is being a fun Grandma to four imaginative grandchildren. She and her husband Keith live in Fort Worth, Texas.



## THE SHIP OF DREAMS

Drift away, drift away, off to sleep  
Through the gates of the Dreamer's Keep  
Hitching a ride on the ship of dreams  
As it sails on pale moonbeams.

Fly away, fly away, fly away high  
High above the clear night sky  
On a journey of the mind  
With no boundaries to confine.

Sail away, sail away, sail away far  
Far beyond the brightest star  
To a place of visions and dreams  
Where nothing is quite what it seems.



**Reneé Drummond-Brown** is a renowned author residing in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. She holds an honorary doctorate from the prestigious Global Oved Dei Seminary and University (GODSU). She earned a Master of Arts in Creative Writing (concentration in poetry) from Chatham University and a Bachelor of Science in Christian Ministry Leadership (minor in biblical theology studies), *summa cum laude*, from Geneva College of Western Pennsylvania. She also received an Associate of Arts in Christian Ministry at The Center for Urban Biblical Ministry (CUBM), where she served as class president and graduated with the Honours: High Distinction Executive Director List Certificate. Drummond-Brown plans to further her education in the near future.

Drummond-Brown is an accomplished poetess with experience in creative writing and has authored several books, Magazines, and Anthologies. She especially takes pride in her very first poem (shared) that was published by Judith Hampton Thompson in *The Metro Gazette Publishing Company, Inc.*, Albany, Georgia. The poem, “THANK YOU FOR YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT,” was written for Ms. Rutha Mae Harris. She is the “Original Freedom” singer of The Civil Rights Movement, a member of The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), a songbird, and activist.

Drummond-Brown’s poetic works are recognized across the globe. Please feel free to follow Drummond-Brown on Face-book, Instagram, and LinkedIn alike. The following is her contact info:

Website: [www.reneespoems.com](http://www.reneespoems.com)

## THROUGH THE EYELIDS OF A CHILD

So very innocent  
So very young  
so very pure  
So very kind

So very sweet  
So very honest  
So very simple  
So very naive

So very frank  
So very candid  
So very ingenuous  
So very guileless

So very fond  
So very blameless  
So very faultless  
So very tender

So very spotless  
So very loving  
So very affectionate  
So very righteous

Perfections  
created  
in the midst  
of a fruitful garden

So very colorful:  
Red, Yellow, Black, Brown, Biracial, Albino, and White  
Through the eyelids of a child's  
untainted sights

## UNTAINTED

Unashamed

Unembarrassed

Unjudgmental

Unapologetic

Unscarred

Unharmed

Unmarred

Uninjured

Undamaged

Unblemished

Untarnished

Unmutilated

Unforgettable in every-way are the children



## Ding Dong Bell

*Mother Goose's Story Book* (New York, McLoughlin Bros, 1899)  
Public Domain



**Jullie Anne P. Belascuain** is more of a reader than a writer. A bona fide college student at Batangas State University-Malvar, she is taking her degree in BSEd in English. She is living with her family in Tanauan City, Batangas, Philippines. She was a former feature writer for the LASER student publications for three years. Her works were mostly published online. These are: an opinion piece: How Being Civil Served Me; features: I can still breathe, 5 Things You have to

Know to Survive Online Classes, and Nostalgia in White Dust: The Tragic Tale of Manila Bay (co-authored with Marie Dominique Oña); Devcom articles: A Saint Influencer, Voice of the Signers, and Messenger: Stand guard over kids; and poems: Voices and How to Conform. Both The Fishy Debate about "The Little Mermaid" and MMDA's Green Goal 2022 have physical copies.

## SLUMBER

**S**weet little one, the moon replaced the sun.

**L**et me read your favorite tale so your mind can run.

**U**p in the night sky there are infinite twinkling stars like they must;

**M**ay the Sandman comes and sprinkle his magical dust;

**B**e still now, my child, and close your drooping eyes.

**E**ach sheep you count is dreamland's bait,

**R**elax and be rested tonight for tomorrow awaits.

## THE LITTLE MONSTER THAT WANTS TO BE FRIENDS

There's something living under the bed.  
What a strange little thing it is!  
No bigger than a palm yet smelling of old socks and cheese,  
It has many beady eyes which doesn't look nice,  
Born with one long crooked horn bringing it scorn,  
Fur covered pudge except leathered hands and feet,  
Looking wrong like the monsters you meet.

This little monster is really strange,  
It doesn't want to scare, spook, or shock the kid on the bed  
But desires to befriend him instead.  
"Hello, can I be your friend?" It randomly said.  
The child can only be scared, spooked and shocked on the bed.

It wants try its luck again  
While the kid was getting ready to head to bed.  
The hopeful monster asked, "Can I be your friend?"  
A bit startled he still replied "no".  
It didn't stop there the persistent monster kept on asking:  
When he's doing his homework, an annoyed "no";  
When eating his favourite treat, swallowed wrong and choked out  
a "no";  
When he's taking a bath—  
Get out! That earned a flying loofah right in the head.

Honestly, it's taking its toll on our little monster,  
Each failure makes it smaller and smaller.  
If only it can turn into a ball so it can just roll,  
Then like that it was no more.

The first day the kid was glad,  
"Good no more monster making me mad"  
The next day he was almost happy;



The third day he waits until it's late;  
On the fourth he looked everywhere,  
Under the bed, inside the closet,  
that particular cabinet,  
even the garbage can over there.

Days pass by and there's no sign of the monster coming back.  
Guilt gripped him tight and heavy,  
It's a weight he carries inside his chest.

Dark clouds rolled in,  
The wind blew and whistled.  
At first it was drops then it steadily got worse.  
That night a terrible storm visits their quaint town.

The kids is shaking and shivering  
in multiple blankets he was fidgeting.  
A rumbling thunder and lightning flash.  
He dived under the bed,  
Heart beating fast and loud,  
Enough to drown out the sound of crash.

But then there's crackling and a muted balloon pop.  
A figure suddenly appeared beside him.  
Why, it's the little monster!  
It came back?

"It's scary right? I'm scared too,"  
comforts the monster.  
"Let's stay here until it passes."

The storm did pass leaving clear skies and fluffy white clouds.  
"Hey, can I be your friend?"  
This time the kid asked.



**Michael Lee Johnson** is an internationally published poet in 45 countries, a song lyricist, has several published poetry books and anthologies, and has been nominated for six Pushcart Prize awards and six Best of the Net nominations. He has over 293 YouTube poetry videos as of 09-2023.

## CHILDREN IN THE SKY

There is a full moon,  
distant in this sky tonight,

Gray planets planted  
on an aging white face.

Children, living and dead,  
love the moon with tiny hearts.

Those in heaven already take a gold thread,  
drop the moon down for us all to see.

Those alive with us look out their  
bedroom windows tonight,  
we smile, then pray, then sleep.



**Amie L. Mendoza** is currently teaching Professional Education and Specialized courses at the College of Teacher Education in Batangas State University-TNEU-JPLPC Malvar campus, Malvar, Batangas, Philippines. She started her career in the Basic Education where she taught English and Campus Journalism for High School students. She finds joy in giving back to the

society through engagement in programs that could promote the young people's quality of reading and writing skills.

## WHERE'S MAMA?

You know what scares me a lot  
Is when Mama's out of sight.  
Especially when owls howl at night  
Seconded by a wolf's moan in dim light.

Where's Mama? I cry as my blanket shivers  
While my legs roll up to stop the shakes  
I think of Mama in the middle of noisy voices  
Ringing in my head, running through my veins.

Mama, where are you? A weakling sound repeats  
Mama, rescue me for my helplessness.  
At last, someone gets to my ears and whispers,  
"My child, Mama's here. She hears and listens.

Mama's in your arms when their trembling stops  
She warms your skin and soothes those goosebumps.  
Mama calms down your feet, shields and straightens  
Them with a mantle of the night's stillness.

Mama's in your teardrops that dry up so quickly.  
She clears away your fears when you trust her fully.  
Mama's in your mind to clean it up and help you freely  
Fill it with thoughts that aren't frightful but happy only.

Feel me, my child, in your heart at any rate  
That you're anxious or lonely, for I am in every beat  
A Teddy or a pillow that God gave you as a gift  
Because Mama's your guardian angel lifting your spirit."



**Melanie D. Nora**, a 22-year-old Filipino student who is pursuing a Bachelor degree of Secondary Education Major in English at Batangas State University TNEU - JPLPC Malvar Campus, Philippines. She previously held a position as a media specialist for their department organization, "The Chatterbox Society." As a student, she believes that having a variety of interests will help her to grow as a person and

enhance her skills and abilities as a future educator. Also, she believes that if she's dedicated to her profession, she is capable of and motivated to impart knowledge and inspire those around her, especially her future students.

## DREB THE DREAMER

What a sunny day to fly across the ocean and make friends with  
dolphins.

What a glorious evening to talk to the stars and dance with the  
moon.

What a drizzly afternoon to play outside and swim with the  
tadpole.

“And what else do I dream about now?”

Going straight to the magical space and looking for a pencil and  
paper.

What a gloomy day to fly across the town and say hello to Perry  
the T-rex.

What a jaded feeling to look for gems and climb up to the mount  
everest.

What a spooky atmosphere to dig graves and find the lost  
mummy.

“And what else do I dream about later?”

Going straight to the realm of space and continuing to dream.

What a lovely morning to paint with a cat and play that soulful  
music.

What an exciting midnight dream to be an extraordinary artist.  
And what a serene atmosphere to make that dream come true.

“And you, what do you want to be in the future?”

## TWINKLE, TWINKLE, LITTLE STAR

As you open your eyes  
You open the world around you.  
As you stretch your arms and legs  
You begin to wander.

As you start to walk  
You begin to learn.  
As you start to talk  
You begin to listen.

As you begin to read  
You start to understand.  
As you begin to wonder  
You start to fill the void.

As you open your eyes  
You can see the world around you.  
As you close your eyes  
You can see the darkness creep in.

As the darkness starts to creep in  
You will start to feel it  
And as the darkness continues to creep in  
Remember to pray and don't be afraid.

As you begin to believe  
You will start to accept it.  
As you begin to glow in the darkness  
He said, "shine bright, little kid!"



## “DREAM BIG, LITTLE KID!”

She's waiting for you in nine months,  
until she wakes up by your side.  
Embracing you in thousand times  
And watching you crawl outside.

Waking up and see your angelic smile,  
It makes her the happiest.  
To be with you is her joy and pride,  
And watching you do the things that make you happy  
makes her the proudest.

She said, “Dream big, little kid!”  
Show how strong you are.  
“Dream big, little kid!”  
Smile as you make those dreams come true.

“Dream big, little kid!”  
Don't fear those monsters.  
“Dream big, little kid!”  
And be the hero you really are.

“Dream big, little kid!”  
Wipe that tears of yours.  
“Dream big, little kid!”  
And look how far you are now.

Once again, “Dream big, little kid!”  
And she said, “I'm always here by your side.”



**Eva Lianou Petropoulou** an awarded author and poet from Greece with more than 25 years in the Literary field has published more than 10 books. Her poems are translated in more than 15 languages.

She is the President of creativity and art of Mil Mentos Por Mexico Association representing Greece; Member of International Association of Authors and Artists, Greece; Member of Association of Korinthian Authors; Member of Association of Author and Artist, Piraeus; Advisor of Web Magazino in China; Member of Editorial Board Ambassador of Namaste Magazine India, representing Greece.

## PEACE

I like the colour of nature:  
Pink and green and blue;

I like the dreams that come to my sleep,  
Smiles on children's faces;

I like the creativity that brings me so much happiness.  
Poems and stories travel like birds.

Feel like a child,  
Feel free.

I like the colours of the rainbow.  
I like the rain;  
I like the sea.

This is peace for me.  
People from so many different countries  
became my brothers and sisters...

**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 wild west 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, author, form poet, and publisher. He is a member of the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP); National Writers Union; Authors Guild; Poetry Society of America; the Academy of American Poets; and the Association for Publishers for Special Sales. In addition to teaching interviewing techniques and report writing for the US Army, he is the Editor-in-Chief of his own publishing company, Southern Arizona Press. He currently has four published volumes of poetry, *Hindsights of 2020*, *The Journey of the Fool: A Poetic Journey in Three Parts*, *A Heroic Crown and Other Sonnets*, and *Deeper Meanings* all available through Amazon and The Southern Arizona Press website. He is currently working on completing his fifth collection of poetry, *Tales from a Southwest Inn*. His poetry appears online in numerous Facebook poetry group as well as being published in *Sonnet Sanctuary Anthology Volume 1* (A Romeo Nation); *Open Skies Quarterly Volumes 4, 5, 6, Perceptions* (Shrouded Eye Press); *Dark Reflections, Myths, Legends, and Lore*, and *Open Skies Poetry – Volume 2* (Open Skies Press), and *From Sunset to Sunrise* (Dark Poetry Society Anthology). When not busy with teaching, reading, editing, and publishing, he provides services as a Certified Expert Sound Healer.

He can be followed online at:

<https://www.facebook.com/PaulGillilandPoetry>  
<https://www.facebook.com/SouthernArizonaPress>  
<http://www.PaulGillilandMusic.com/>  
<https://www.SouthernArizonaPress.com/>

## OBONATO

*(I exist because we exist)*

For once two mules were placed midway  
Between two heaping stacks of hay  
With each unto the other tied.  
But as each tried to reach his stack  
He held the other brother back  
And both remained unsatisfied.  
When both mules pondered on their plight  
And worked together with delight  
They ate their fill 'til satisfied.

A group of hedgehogs in the cold  
Unite together, heat to hold  
But each was poked by neighbor's spine.  
And so, they gave each other space  
But freezing cold were left to face  
And death became the ending line.  
The smarter hedgehogs did the best  
To tolerate the spines at rest  
And through the cold they all did fine.

A group of children in a Ville  
All ran a race to win their fill.  
A plate of luscious tarts the prize.  
But then, they interlocked each hand  
And ran as one to make a stand  
And sat and all enjoyed the pies.  
For no one child could thus be glad  
If all the others would be sad  
Here in the secret answer lies.

## THE PARABLE OF THE CHINESE FARMER

Once upon a time  
In the village of Hemu  
There was a farmer and his son  
Just trying to make do.

Then one day  
Their horse ran away  
And all the neighbors came to say,  
“What a most unfortunate day  
To have your horse run a way.”  
The farmer said, “Perhaps.”

The next day  
The horse returned  
With seven new wild horses.  
And all the neighbors came to say,  
“What a most fortunate day  
To have now eight horses here to stay.”  
The farmer said, “Perhaps.”

The following day  
His son tried to tame one horse  
But was thrown and broke his leg.  
And all the neighbors came to say,  
“What a most unfortunate day  
To not have your son to help bail hay.”  
The farmer said, “Perhaps.”

The next day  
The conscription officer came  
To take all the young men off to the army  
But he refused to take the son who had a broken leg.  
And all the neighbors came to say,  
“What a most fortunate day  
That your son was able here to stay.”  
The farmer said, “Perhaps.”

So, you see in all that happens  
neither bad nor good is understood  
One never knows the value of a calamity  
Or the repercussions of something good.

# THE BOOK OF GALIEN

## *CHAPTER I*

Good knights from all earth's kingdoms, rise  
To look and see the fateful skies.  
Upon you now the future lies.

Make sure you watch things closely where  
The men surround the guarded lair.  
The secret's in the hidden stair  
Of dragon's breath and mosses green,  
The gateway to the in between.  
Remember all that you have seen.

Oh, good brave knights, prepare to greet  
The mystic one that you will meet  
To lead your party through the heat  
Of chambers cold and waters deep.  
You'll find a key that you should keep.  
Conceal it well when e'er you'll sleep.

When you arise before the dawn  
Through crystal tunnels you'll be gone  
For any other will be wrong.  
You'll reach two forks, first left, then right.  
You'll find its end before the night,  
And here you'll sleep 'til mornings light.

So now awake, sun's ray invert  
To cast a beam on stone inert  
The key in that spot you'll insert.



The wall before you opens wide.  
You see a light and step inside.  
The arrow follow down-upside.  
You'll find a brook beyond the wood.  
You need to rest and wish you could.  
If here you stay you know you should.

For once the darkness starts to fade  
A nymph appears to offer aid.  
Then down a foreign stream you'll wade.  
Until you reach an iron gate.  
Where on the other side you'll wait  
'Til comes your destiny and fate.

## *CHAPTER II*

Nay more a quarter moon doth pass  
Before your enemy's attack.  
The final flicker of the flame  
Will dwindle to a burnt orange glow.

For on this morning you will see  
A silhouette in dawn's first light.  
A timid seer, bent and blind  
Who speaks with much an armed wit.

Expecting armies, you're surprised  
Or are the legions yet to come.  
Who is this man of Acheron,  
Unless the god of death himself.

He turns to speak his guiding words  
And lifts a single finger high,  
That's swollen stiff and straight with strain,  
Bestowing you the final test.

"When tides are low, the moon is full,  
The north point lighthouse sounds its horn,  
The waves will part and sands shall rise  
Disclosing treasure at your feet.

A stainless silver sword so straight  
To guide you on your holy quest.  
Recover it and keep it close  
The magic sword will guide your fate."

### *CHAPTER III*

Along the coast you travel to the west.  
And you will take three nights so stop and rest.  
For as the morning sun begins to rise  
An unexpected sight's before your eyes  
A burning mountain comes into your view.  
You'll see a cave and know what you must do.  
The entrance yields a dragon as its guard.  
Its breath has left the walls all burnt and charred.  
The sword shall guide you to its point of death.  
Thrust in with all your might 'til its last breath.  
The message lies within this evil cave.  
Secure it for all people, so to save.  
And have God's will reign on the world again.  
It reads "Let there be peace, goodwill to men."

## THE WORDS OF POPE FRANCIS

The rivers do not drink  
The water flowing there.  
The trees do not eat  
The fruit they've come to bear.

The sun does not shine  
To drench itself with glow  
And flowers do not smell  
The fragrance they bestow.

They do it all for others  
This is nature's plan  
All born to help each other  
Each man helping man.

No matter how difficult  
The job may be to do  
Life is best when others  
Are happy because of you.

Based on the following words of Pope Francis:

*Rivers do not drink their own water;  
Trees do not eat their own fruit;  
The sun does not shine on itself  
And flowers do not spread their fragrance for themselves.*

*Living for others is a rule of nature,  
We are all born to help each other.  
No matter how difficult it is ...  
Life is good when you are happy;  
But much better when others are happy because of you.*

## A WEEKEND AT COOPER'S HOLLOW

We spent a lovely weekend  
Down at Cooper's Hollow.  
It's not too hard to find cause  
There's lots of signs to follow.

The roads all seem to lead there  
A pretty famous place,  
And just the thought of going  
Puts a smile upon one's face.

There were always groups of people  
Even still you're left alone  
To savor the openess  
Of the Hollow on your own.

Our weekend had just begun  
Down at Cooper's Hollow.

We ventured through the forest  
The trees were so inviting  
We found a field of flowers  
Whose fragrance was delighting.

Resting by a babbling brook  
The sound was mesmerizing.  
'Til we found a quiet pond  
That willows were disguising.

We waded in up to our knees  
The water was reviving.  
We climbed up on some boulders  
And did a little diving.

We always enjoyed the sun  
Down at Cooper's Hollow.

As evening fell upon us  
And the skies turned orange and red.  
We pitched a tent amidst the pines  
And made ourselves a bed.

The sun slowly sank behind  
The mountains to the west  
And twilight crept across the sky  
A welcomed nightly guest.

We built a small campfire  
To sit around and talk  
And as the night grew darker  
We ventured for a walk.

We always had a lot of fun  
Down at Cooper's Hollow.

The night was filled with music  
From crickets to croaking frogs  
With a distant barn owl hooting  
And far off barking dogs.

The wind whispered through the trees  
Telling tales of long ago  
The burning wood popped and cracked  
From the embers all aglow.

The stars and planets twinkled  
As the moon raced 'cross the sky.  
We laid and watched in wonder  
As the hours floated by.

And then our first day was done  
Down at Cooper's Hollow.

'Then as dawn began to break  
With the early rays of sun.  
We woke to find a new day  
Of adventure filled with fun.

The air was fresh and oh so crisp  
It took our breath away  
Our time at Cooper's Hollow  
Would be gone by end of day.

We fixed a hearty breakfast  
Of bacon, eggs, and toast.  
We made some campfire coffee  
The thing we love the most.  
We finished all our breakfast  
And set out toward the hills.  
Exploring Cooper's Hollow  
Is always filled with thrills.

We began the trails to run  
Down at Cooper's Hollow.

We came across a cavern  
And explored it for a while  
Before we continued on  
And walked another mile.

As midday came upon us  
We reached the highest rise  
From there we saw the Hollow  
Stretched out before our eyes.

We saw the fields and forests  
With greens in every hue  
The brook, the pond, the boulders  
All against a sky of blue.

The beauty was next to none  
Down at Cooper's Hollow.

We made our way back down to camp  
And packed our things to go  
We said we'd be back later  
But when we didn't know.

When it was time to leave  
We did not say good-bye  
Cause leaving Cooper's Hollow  
Brought a tear to every eye.

We watched as Cooper's Hollow  
Faded from our view  
We promised to return  
The adventure to renew.

We longed for one more day of fun  
Down at Cooper's Hollow.

## 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.



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.

## MY WILD IRISH DREAM

In my wild Irish dream  
Are leprechauns and fairies,  
That live in Ash and Hawthorns  
Eating mushrooms and berries.

There are men drinking pints  
Of Guinness in the pub  
Singing songs of colleen  
And the country that they love.

The pipes, the pipes are calling  
For Molly Malone  
And Oh Danny Boy  
Who is far, far from home.

The heather on the moors  
Is home to the Golden Plover  
A land dotted with castles,  
Amidst valleys full of clover.

With my mind on vacation  
On the island of green  
I take nightly leave  
In my wild Irish dream.

## ON A COLD WINTER'S NIGHT

A flurry of flakes  
In the winter of white  
Like the twinkling stars  
On a cold winter's night

The whirling of winds  
Send flakes all a flutter  
Freezing icicles  
That hang from the gutter

We stare through the pane  
At the frosty delight  
Trapped in a snow globe  
On a cold winter's night

## IN THE NIGHT SKY

In the night sky with stars aglow  
Where planets wander to and fro  
The full moon rises like a ball  
Above the towering garden wall  
As Northern Lights begin their show

With Mars and Venus sitting low  
Midst constellations I don't know  
The harvest moon smiles down on all  
In the night sky

Orion's belt, three in a row  
Points to his faithful dog in tow  
As meteors begin to fall  
A distant owl sounds its call  
And a cool soft wind starts to blow  
In the night sky

## TALES ON AUTUMN NIGHTS

The cloudless skies of mid-November nights  
Form ceilings for forgotten tales of old.  
As stars above provide the Heavens' lights  
To illuminate the stories being told.  
The legends told of heroes' quests for good  
Near fire lit to warm each hearth and home.  
Where air that's filled with scents of burning wood  
Is mixed with crispness of the twilight gloam.  
The children gather round to hear the tales  
Some humorous and others filled with dread.  
From romance on the sea in search of whales  
To fantasies that fill each tiny head.  
This is the time when family unites  
To share their tales on chilly autumn nights.

Previous  
anthologies  
from  
Southern  
Arizona  
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***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.

***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.

***Ghostly Ghouls and Haunted Happenings*** is a collection of 129 poetic works crafted by 46 poets from across the globe inspired by ghosts, ghouls, and things that go bump in the night.

***The Poppy: A Symbol of Remembrance*** examines the history of the poppy as a flower of remembrance, over 80 poems and lyrics written by World War One poets between 1912 and 1925, and 79 poems written by 21st Century poets from around the globe in remembrance of the fallen heroes from all war of the last century.

***The Wonders of Winter*** is a collection of 120 poetic works crafted by 50 poets from across the globe that celebrate the winter season.

***Love Letters in Poetic Verse*** is a collection of 143 poetic works written and contributed by 58 poets from across the globe celebrating romance and love.

***Castles and Courtyards*** is a collection of 79 poetic works written and contributed by 37 poets from across the globe celebrating the medieval life of Kings, Queens, peasants, and troubadours.

***Poetry Inspired by "A Midsummer Night's Dream"*** is a collection of 102 poems penned by 43 bards from across the globe inspired by William Shakespeare's romantic comedy *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

***Beyond the Sand and Sea*** is a collection of 148 poems from 48 poets from across the globe about the sea, seashore, lighthouses, or anything associated with life on or near the sea.

Upcoming  
anthologies  
from  
Southern  
Arizona  
Press



***Home for the Holidays*** – Poetic works celebrating the gathering of family during the fall and winter holidays. Coming in early December 2023.

## **Anthologies for 2024**

***Riding the Rails*** – Poems about trains and the railroad. Coming in early February 2024.

***Hidden Meanings*** – Poems written in the Acrostic style. Coming in early April 2024.

***School's Out*** – Poems about school and the fun of summer vacations. Coming in early June 2024.

***A Day at the Park*** – Poems inspired by a day at a park, amusement park, water park, fair, carnival, camping, or any type of family outing. Coming in early August 2024.

***Ghostly Ghouls and Haunted Happenings Vol 2*** – Poems about ghosts, ghouls, haunted houses, vampires, or any of the creatures that go bump in the night. Coming in early October 2024.

***Tropical Vacations*** – Poems about tropical or romantic vacations. Coming in early December 2024.

*Poets interested in submitting works for upcoming anthologies are asked to check out our Current Submissions page at:*

*<http://www.southernarizonapress.com/current-submissions/>*

*for more information about each anthology and our process for submission.*

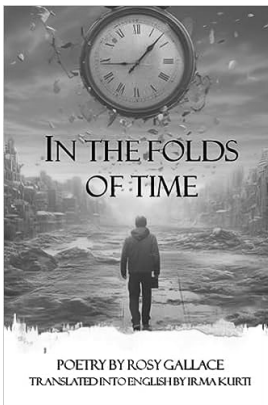
New  
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releases  
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***Moments in God's Creation*** by April McCay.

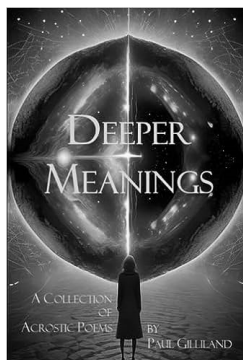
This little book hopes you can visualize the masterpieces God created for discovery upon my path to share with others. With camera and notepad in hand, capturing moments of simplicity and beauty that I could not keep to myself. Walk with me through the pages within and begin everyday, noticing the lovely along your own pathway. That, itself is a gift from God.

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/1960038362>



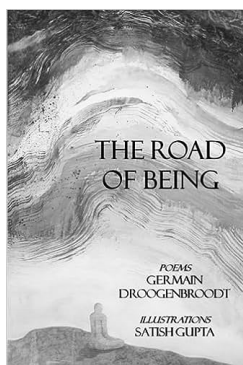
***In the Folds of Time*** by Rosy Gallace, Translated into English by Irma Kurti. Rosy Gallace presents herself to the audience of her admirers with a fine book of poems in which she reveals in the first person—with grace, sobriety, and remarkable emotional transport—a varied range of the feelings she has experienced in the course of her existence. She describes with measured modesty the bittersweet episodes and the ineffable enchantment of young loves, thoughts, plans, and dreams that waned as the sun set. The plot of the poems reaches the present day then concludes on notes of memories filtered through that subtle veil of restrained sadness that runs through the entire work with calm tones, never aiming at pessimism or exasperation. The expressive form that the author prefers is marked by velvety phrasing, often enriched by appropriate and dazzling images that make reading very pleasant and engaging. — Fabiano Braccini — Poet, writer, and director

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0CGL4FLB6>



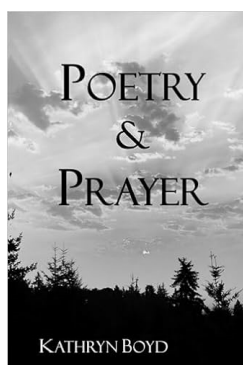
***Deeper Meanings*** by Paul Gilliland. An acrostic poem is a composition where the first letter, syllable, or word on each line spells out a word or message. In this collection, poet Paul Gilliland examines the thought-provoking *Deeper Meanings* of 33 words and famous quotations through the use of this poetic technique.

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0CGL9VMNJ>



***The Road of Being*** by Germain Droogenbroodt. Written in the three parts that make up the set we will find diverse thematic approaches and interests, they all converge in that backbone that constitutes a concise and suggestive style that makes Germain Droogenbroodt's poetry unmistakable.

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0CGSX2VXY>



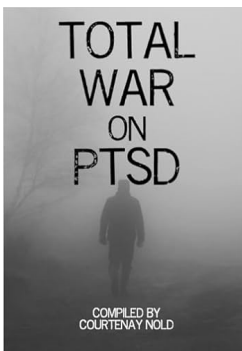
***Poetry & Prayer*** by Kathryn Boyd. Thought provoking poetry that touches the heart and soul. She explores imperfection and growth, and her poem's directness creates an immediate connection of our shared humanity. Kathryn's talent includes navigating through profound themes with a gentle touch.

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0CH2HFYBW>



***Overdose of Destiny***, Judge Santiago Burdon's fifth book of short fiction, takes us on another wild and crazy ride. Considered to be one of the most influential writers of hard hitting and raw fiction of our time, this 21st Century "Mark Twain" has shared a book of 20 Impulse Fiction stories that a reader will find hard to put down. Each story recounts a moment in life that creates a person's character, and Santiago is certainly "a character". Whether he is addressing young teen hormones or losing one's virginity to an older woman, drug running or standing lookout for a Payphone Bandit, aiding an injured fruit bat or a Senator's ex-wife, or sharing tall tales from grizzly bears to big fish, each story will take you on an adventure with the hero winning in the end. It has been my honor to bring this book to publication.

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/1960038397>



***Total War on PTSD*** by Courtenay Nold.

"Here, finally, is a comprehensive guide to healing from the devastating effects of PTSD. This compassionate and detailed guide could only have been written by a veteran with frontline experience who has researched a myriad of potentially helpful treatments. If you know or love someone suffering from PTSD, give them this book, because it has the potential to change lives and even save them." — Donna Thomson, Author of the *Four Walls of My Freedom* and the *Unexpected Journey of Caring*. Caregiver activist and blogger at the Caregivers' Living Room

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0CHKZH2TZ>

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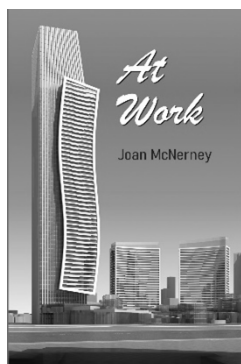


***Love Poems for Michael*** by Joan McNerney

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>

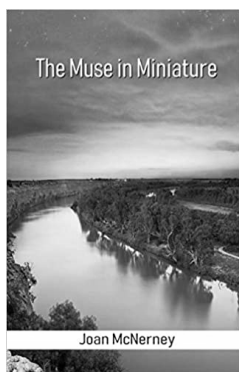
<https://www.cyberwit.net/publications/1602>



***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>

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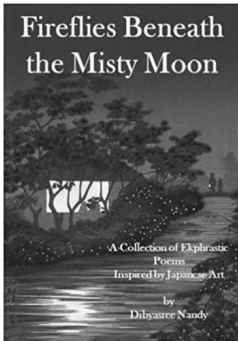


***The Muse in Miniature*** by Joan McNerney

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>



***Fireflies Beneath the Misty Moon*** is a collection of Ekphrastic poems written by Diblyasree Nandy inspired by the works of Japanese artists Okumura Masanobu, Suzuki Harunobu, Utagawa Kunisada, Yoshitoshi Tsukioka, Kobayashi Kiyochika, Ogata Gekko, Toshikata Mizuno, Settai Komura, Torii Kotondo, and Kondo Shiun.

***A Southern Arizona Press Published Book.***

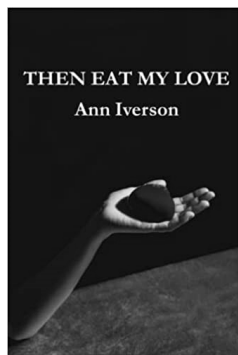
<https://www.amazon.com/dp/1960038125>



***April Verses*** by Diblyasree Nandy. Getting up early in the morning, savouring the clemency of the month, at the threshold of a severe summer, we turn to poetry as the means to paint a picture of the mountains and seas.

***A Southern Arizona Press Published Book.***

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/1960038273>

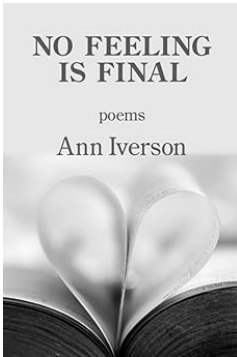


***Then Eat My Love*** by Ann Iverson. A delicious collection of essays, is about okra and Swiss watches, about loving and letting go, but mostly about family. The stories are delectable tidbits from a full and heartfelt life. I enjoyed every bite.

***A Southern Arizona Press Published Book.***

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/196003815X>





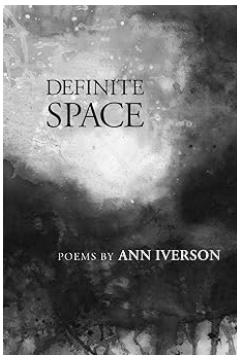
***No Feeling is Final*** by Ann Iverson. there is deep faith in God and also in language itself. Iverson is a poet whose lyric poems speak to the heart of the matter, page after page. It is good to have another fine collection by Ann Iverson in our world.

<https://www.amazon.com/No-Feeling-Final-Ann-Iverson/dp/1639800875>



***Art Lessons*** by Ann Iverson explores the connections between visual art and the written word. By incorporating the words and insights from Vincent Van Gogh's intuitive work and life, **Ann Iverson's** poetry reveals her keen insights into the mysterious interplay between art and poetry, happiness and sadness, God, and nature.

<https://www.amazon.com/Art-Lessons-Ann-Iverson/dp/0983325421>



***Definite Spaces***, Ann Iverson's second collection of poetry conveys the emotional journey of a son's first and second deployment to Baghdad, as well as the spiritual and physical adjustment to a move from the inner city to a country-like suburb. In spare, distinctive imagery, Iverson ponders the personal, familial, and social transitions brought about by life change. She thoughtfully considers the tension within relationships that change often engenders and by doing so, personalizes a national tragedy and the subsequent war in Iraq.

<https://www.amazon.com/Definite-Space-Poems-Ann-Iverson/dp/0977945847>



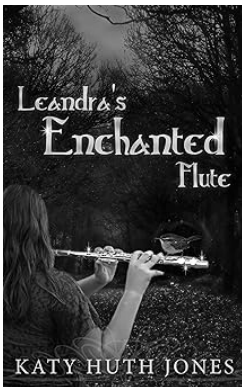
***Bug Feet: An Introduction to Rhythm in Poetry*** by Katy Huth Jones. An introduction to rhythm in poetry for young children with examples and illustrations.

<https://www.amazon.com/Bug-Feet-Introduction-Rhythm-Poetry-ebook/dp/B07LC4MX52>



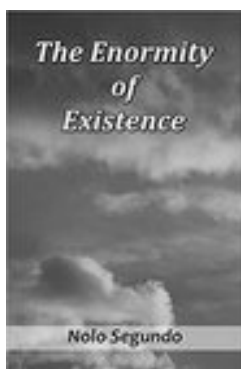
***Growing Pains: A Story Collection*** by Katy Huth Jones. A collection of 8 short stories for children, most previously published in magazines

<https://www.amazon.com/Growing-Pains-Katy-Huth-Jones/dp/1721265546>



***Leandra's Enchanted Flute*** by Katy Huth Jones. A standalone fantasy for ages 8 and up with talking birds, music, magic, and a young cancer survivor.

<https://www.amazon.com/Leandras-Enchanted-Flute-Finian-Jahndra-ebook/dp/B00JBEGHY>



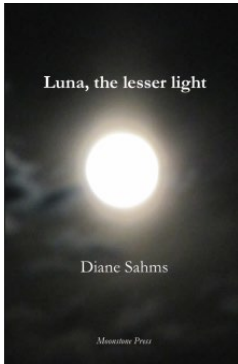
The publisher Cyberwit.net released the first paperback poetry collection of Nolo Segundo titled *The Enormity of Existence* in 2020 and has since published two more collections: *Of Ether and Earth* [2021] and *Soul Songs* [2022]. These titles and many of the poems in the books reflect the awareness the poet gained when he had an NDE (near-death experience) when he almost drowned at 24 in the Winooski River in Vermont: That he has-- IS--a consciousness that predates birth and survives death, what poets since Plato have called the soul. For 52 years he's had more questions than answers, but knows this world is really just a dream, seeming 'real' until you 'awaken'-- much like you do every morning.

<https://www.cyberwit.net/publications/1532>



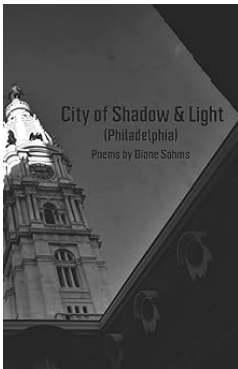
Cai Quirk's *Transcendence: Queer Restoryation* invites people into a world where distinctions of gender, time, and place become fluid and flexible. Binary ways of seeing the world will not simply disappear — we must actively replace them. 38 self-portrait photographs and six mythic tales explore paths beyond supposed binaries, creating new stories that empower, inspire, and heal. The book came out this spring with Skylark Editions

<https://www.skylarkeditions.org/shop/pre-order-transcendence-queer-restoryation>



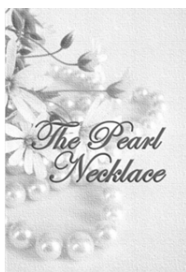
***Luna, the lesser light*** by Diane Sahms is a delightful collection of short poems honoring the moon. They are wonderful pieces best read and absorbed while sitting in the darkness of night and looking with wondrous eyes at the “lesser light” in the evening sky. I am especially fond of her collection of poems about the full moons, a subject I always find inspiring. This marvelous collection of works should find its way into the library of anyone who has a fascination with the moon or the night sky in general.

<https://moonstone-arts-center.square.site/product/sahms-diane-luna-the-lesser-light/442>



***City of Shadow & Light*** by Diane Sahms. Wade into the mirror with Diane Sahms as she unveils and unravels identities—probing for meaning and finding connections. Different life forms fuse into a “universal soul” in these “heart shuttling” sojourns that sonically imagine the magic of “spirits united.” Morality and mortality yield their secrets in exhilarating lyric passages in which emptiness is purified via resolute perception and consequent insight.

<https://www.amazon.com/City-Shadow-Light-Diane-Sahms/dp/B0BMSZ8NV8>



Poetry to Tasneem Hossain is an ever-flowing river reflecting all that surrounds us. ***The Pearl Necklace*** is a lyrical journey of sensitivity and contemplation through life in its different colors and shades. The title poem is about unfulfilled true love. *The Invisible cord* is a celebration of mother's love. *Agony* is a cry for social justice. The last poem *The lighthouse* ends with an aspiration to make our existence more meaningful. The essence of her poems is the beauty of nature and human life.

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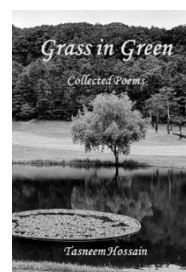
The poems of Tasneem Hossain's ***Floating Feathers*** are an outcome of the spiraling moments of her emotional outbursts. The poem *Floating Feathers* is a confession of the poetic thoughts floating and falling into her lap. *Let's walk together, you and I* deals with old age agonies and pains of becoming senile. Human emotions, social justice, kindness towards humanity and transience of life are some of the themes of her poetry. At the end there is a collection of haiku poems.

<https://forms.gle/4JdcJi792ZSZS63R7>



Tasneem Hossain's book ***Split and Splice*** is a compilation of some of the writer's articles published in different newspapers. Some of the articles deal with historical events and interesting facts about different issues, some are about acquiring good habits for a peaceful and successful life, some discuss ways of improving lifestyles and overall well-being having relevance to day-to-day life. The different aspects of life will help readers to become more conscious of life and the world surrounding them.

<https://forms.gle/4JdcJi792ZSZS63R7>



Tasneem Hossain's book ***Grass in Green*** is a journey through life's different moments. In a world full of chaos and complexity the title poem *Grass in Green* speaks of harmony between communities, countries and religions leading to a life of happiness and peace. *Fractured: Rise* is about domestic abuse and courage to fight it. *I am a Prostitute* creates awareness in society. Greed and misuse of power is the theme of *Pawns in the Game*. Some of the poems portray the devastation created by COVID 19 ending on a note of hope; some are affirmations for gender equality; some express love in its purest form; some speak of the inevitable uncertainties of life and inspire us to recuperate; and be strong to embrace the inevitable changes and jump back to life again with vigour.

***A Southern Arizona Press Published Book.***

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/1960038060>