

JOY

Issue 10: July 2021

OpenDoor magazine

YOUR WORDS MATTER.

WHAT
ARE WE
UP TO?

AUTHOR

FEATURES

BOOKS TO
READ!

JOY

THE MIGHTY

SPARROW

WELCOME TO THE --- OPENDOOR MAGAZINE JULY ISSUE!

JOY – what a fun (and needed) theme for our July Issue. We are in a space where some places are opening, some are locked back down – on both sides of the wall we could all use a bit of extra joy. Hopefully we bring you a smile or a moment of reprise with this issue.

We are so happy to show what Joy means to our July contributors. This theme was selected by our amazing and wonderful patrons!

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

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

- Kassie & Mel

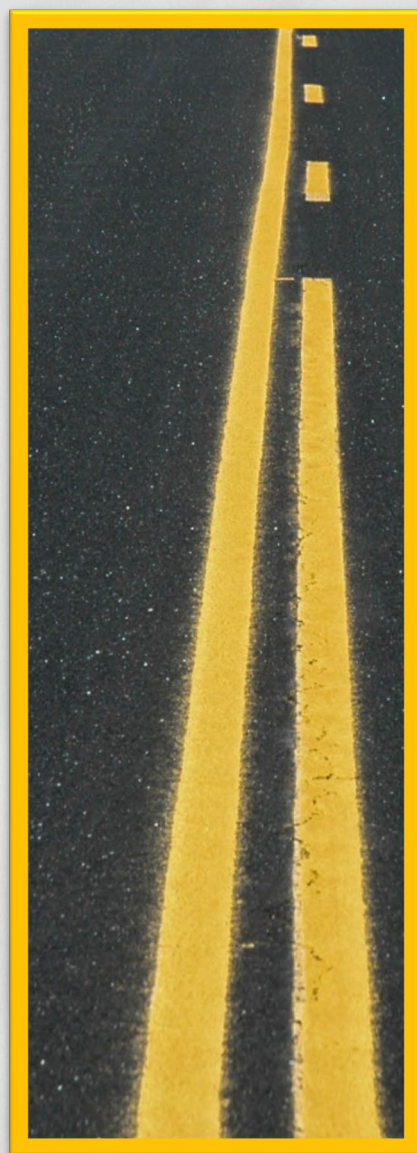
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*What are
our co-owners
up to?*



KASSIE J RUNYAN

Co-Creator



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

Watching:

Never Have I Ever – it’s a Netflix show that I honestly would never see myself watching but it’s super cute and funny! Even the dude watches it with me.

Reading:

I feel that I’m reading my way through a summer reading list in order to get my free pizza (Americans from the mid-west in the 80’s will get this). So many books. The two I’m making my way through as we speak are “A Primer for Poets & Readers of Poetry” by Gregory Orr. So helpful as my style continues to evolve. I’m not writing new poetry at the moment due to other conflicts of time – but I’m learning and ready to pick back up. Also reading “Girl One” by Sara Flannery Murphy and loving it so far!

Listening:

Currently Ellis Paul. Saw him in person with my parents on my last trip home before Covid and prepping with good vibes as I head home in July! (not crying... not crying... I’m just ready to hug my family... ok I’m crying)



KASSIE J RUNYAN – CO-CREATOR

GROWING OLD

Kassie Runyan

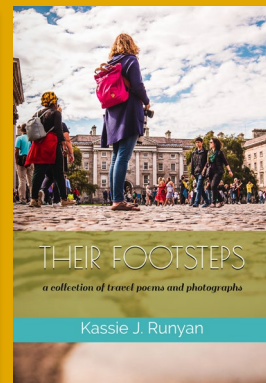
United States

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I wanna grow old
hanging on to your arm
for support
as I stumble down
the cobblestone street
I wanna find my calling
and get rich
ok, maybe not that rich
just enough to buy a house
in the south of France
watching the chickens flutter by
as they try to fly
drinking too much wine
(us not the chickens)
and not worrying about the wrinkles
showing the passing of time
just the joys
as the sun sets behind
the rolling hills



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



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



NEW BOOK!
This is 2020 Part Two [HERE!](#)

MEL HAAGMAN

Co-Creator

Watching:

Station 19 - A spin off of Grey's Anatomy, be prepared to see lots of familiar faces in this fast-paced, exhilarating show following the lives of Seattle's Firefighters. They are fearless and real and each character is relatable in some way. The perfect mix between first responder drama and their personal lives outside of the firehouse!

Reading:

"Careless" by Kirsty Capes - This authentic and incredibly touching novel follows Bess, a 15 year old girl who has just found out she is pregnant. Life is already complicated enough, having been with her fractious foster family since the age of 4, Bess is torn whether to keep the baby or have an abortion.

Listening:

I am obsessed with Holiday by KSI!!!!!!



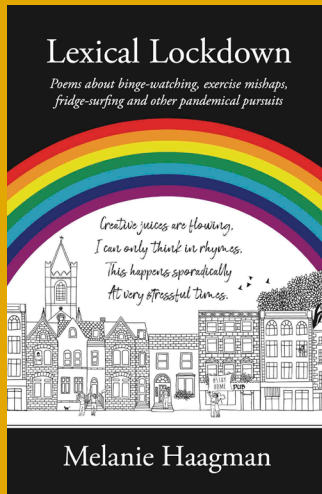
<https://www.Facebook.com/girlontheedge90>

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

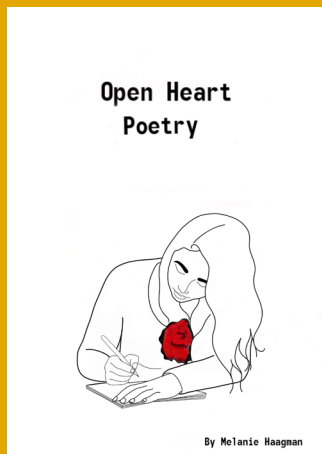
<https://www.Twitter.com/girlontheedge1>

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





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



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

THE JOY OF LAUGHTER

Mel Haagman

United Kingdom

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

The laughter that's wholesome
Comes straight from inside,
The laughter that's real
You're unable to hide.
Nothing compares to laughter
When your stomach is in pain,
Even if you don't feel it,
It helps you to stay sane.
The laughter where your cheeks ache
Is what I truly treasure,
You can't overdose on laughter
There's an infinite measure.
Smiling makes others smile,
Mirror neurons are so real,
And laughter has an effect
On how you deeply feel.
Reducing stress and even pain,
Immunity's increased,
laughter is infectious
And endorphins are released.
Laughing is the best medicine,
In this life that can be tough
And if you can hold onto it,
It might just be enough!



THE MIGHTY SPARROW

BY DON NOEL

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Sparrows are among the most adaptable—or persistent, or omnipresent—of God’s creatures, which is perhaps why He keeps His eye on them. I do too, joyfully.

Outside my window are two suet-cake feeders sold on the claim that only clinging birds – woodpeckers, nuthatches -- can manage them. Sparrows, everyone knows, can’t cling upside down, hanging from a toehold on wire mesh.

I glance out now: Two house sparrows are eating suet. One stays up by beating its wings as relentlessly as a hummingbird—another skill everyone knows sparrows don’t have. The other is . . . clinging upside down. In fact, several of the sparrows that flock to my offerings have learned to hang like circus acrobats while they scarf down suet.

Also outside my window is a feeder exclusively for goldfinches. It’s a clear plastic tube, punctuated by pegs on which the birds perch. The feeding ports aren’t above the pegs, as with most feeders, but below. To get a beakful of Nyger seed—thistle, which is manna to all finches—a bird must tip upside down, feet clamped on the perch-peg. House finches and purple finches can’t do it; they’re too heavy. Nor, supposedly, can sparrows.

But no one told the sparrows: They fairly feasted on thistle when I first hung that feeder. They can’t now, because I shortened the perch-pegs, nipping off a little at a time, seeking the length suitable to goldfinches but to no one else. The pegs ended up a full half-inch shorter. Goldfinches are svelte compared to chunky sparrows, who simply cannot clamp both feet firmly on the now-stubby pegs, and so can’t tip over and nibble the Nyjer.

They still try occasionally, though: I smile as I watch them land on a peg, flutter for balance and try to hang their heads. None—so far—has done it. They lose their grip, fall off the peg and spread wings to fly away. I won’t be astonished, though, if someday a sparrow manages to land one-footed with a grip firm enough to tip over and have lunch.



THE MIGHTY SPARROW – DON NOEL

I'm a lifelong birder; my late wife and I traveled the globe, and made birdwatching part of – sometimes the central purpose of – every trip.

I remember, in the Argentine Andes, watching two immense condors strut and preen to win the approval of a female. She finally chose. The winner folded a four-foot-long wing around her, so help me just as we might put an arm around a shoulder, and the unsuccessful suitor flapped up and soared away.

Sparrow courtship can't match that.

One morning in the mild blue waters of the Galapagos, we swam with the little foot-and-a-half-long penguins named for and indigenous to that island chain. They'd become so accustomed to human visitors that one swam up to look me in the eye through my snorkel plate. It may have been an illusion, but I felt I could have reached forward to give it a love tap.

Sparrows can't even swim.

In Jamaica, we watched a male magnificent frigate bird—also known as a man-o'-war—inflate his wattle to win the favor of a female. A bird with a seven-foot wingspan, comparable to an American bald eagle's, he flew around with a giant fleshy red balloon bobbing below his beak, fully earning the magnificence of his name.

I'm pretty sure sparrows don't even have wattles.

Somewhere behind what was then still an Iron Curtain, we listened spellbound to the courtship ritual of two European white storks. More than three feet tall, wingspans almost as broad as the frigate bird's, storks clap their bright orange, seven-inch beaks like giant castanets. They're mute, and communicate by beak-claps. (So one might argue that a telegrapher's Morse code is a better metaphor than a flamenco dancer's castanets. But mating storks' clatter is loud enough to drown out any telegrapher's key—or castanets, for that matter.) Sparrows don't clap their beaks. Or perhaps I don't hear them because they're so small.

Although my most vivid birding memories involve courting rituals, there were other unsparrow-like memorable moments of joy:

Hummingbirds in the mountain rain forests of Costa Rica buzzed around my wife's bright red rain parka, apparently thinking she must be some giant new flower, searching for the nectar.

In Jamaica, we sat on the patio of an old lady who had trained hummingbirds to drink from airline liquor bottles filled with sugar water, and even to perch on one's finger if one held the bottle of sweet treat motionless enough.

Once, high in the Andes—and again in the uplands of Kenya—we saw huge flocks of pink flamingoes stooping to comb the water with their sieve-like curved bills, dredging up crustaceans and other things to eat.



THE MIGHTY SPARROW – DON NOEL

In Nicaragua, we watched Montezuma oropendolas weave nests two feet long, and some even longer: Huge hanging socks, at the toe of which the females incubated their eggs for two weeks.

And then there are sparrows, prosaic by comparison.

Don't demean them, though. During China's "Great Leap Forward," Mao Zedong labelled them one of the country's "Four Pests," and urged villagers to exterminate them. They almost did. Two years later, that policy was declared an ecological disaster. Sparrows had long eaten huge quantities of insects, and without them rice harvests were down. China went back to its historic view that sparrows are auspicious, and that having them nest in one's home brings good luck.

In the latter half of the last century, one of the best-known voices in the Caribbean was that of a calypso singer in Trinidad who called himself Mighty Sparrow. Calypso as a popular song style is all but dead, but the singer is still with us; he had a PBS special last April.

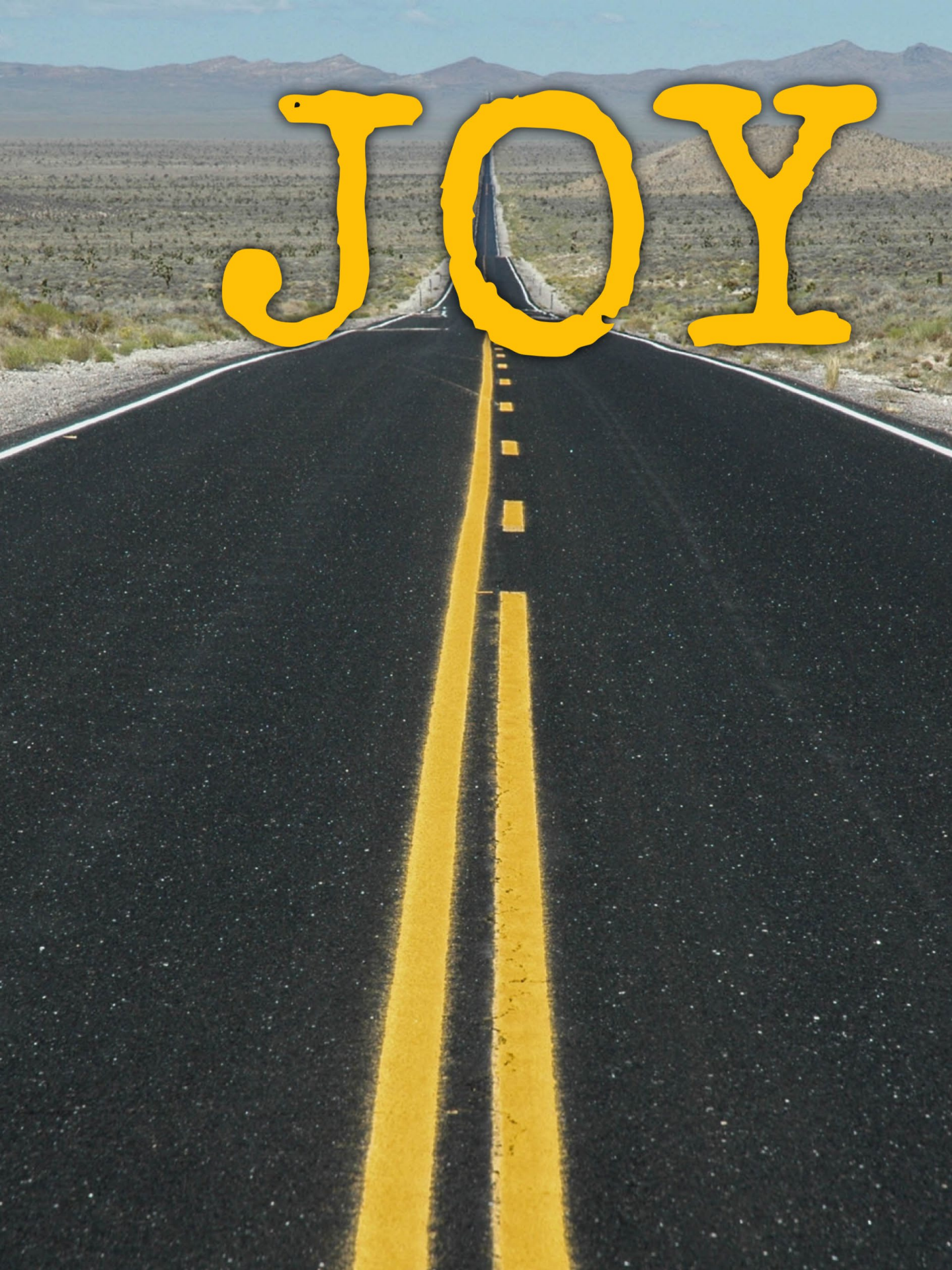
House sparrows, as plain as birds can get, don't even have much of a song. Nonetheless, I view them joyfully – doing whatever it takes, turning headstands if need be, to make a living in a hard world. Praise the mighty sparrow.

Don Noel is retired from four decades' prizewinning print and broadcast journalism in Hartford CT, USA. He took his MFA in Creative Writing from Fairfield University in 2013, and has since published more than five dozen short stories, all of which can be read at his website, <https://dononoel.com>

@NoelDonONoel
<https://www.facebook.com/AuthorDonNoel>



JOY



July Theme: JOY

MULTIPLE AUTHORS

MORNING RITUAL

T J Barnum

I raise windows at dawn,
hear birds call across the yard,
watch them sail past Palmas grass
to land in cypress green,
competing for honors in
Nature's opera house.

Cool morning air brushes
tops of wild grasses,
rides flower bed borders,
delivers leaves to corners
and porches,
more punctual than
the morning news.

I measure out coffee,
let cats in, dogs out,
climb back into bed
to share your last moments
of lazy sleep.

Windows and my heart wide open,
birds bursting with delight
at the growing light,
coffee flavored breeze
stirring your tousled hair,

this is my best remembered
blessed touch of God's new morning,
nestled here among pillows and cats
and your warm waiting arms.

EVE OF JOYS

Gerard Sarmat

<https://www.gerardsarnat.com>

Just like making use
of a fallow space —
which is way down
by our horse barn

— that surrounds
the old oak tree
and been there
for all 37 years

we have lived here
-- but now seems as
if fertile territory to
gather with friends

distanced because of
COVID -- I too feel
vital new Edens in
myself opening up.



JOY

Jonny Lindsey
United Kingdom
<https://Instagram.com/JonnyLindseyTheFirst>

Even as a boy,
The joy I thought I should have
About becoming a man,
Overshadowed by those around me
Being coy,
About the struggles they've overcome
Just to smile,
Through pain, guilt, fear, & the whole spectrum
That we aren't told about as youths
I never knew that joy is fearless,
You may know the dangers of the world
Yet we still find it in life,
We know the mountains made from mole hills
From failures & the past,
Yet as the cracks appear on our weathering faces,
We can still find that fearless feeling of joy
Where we can,
With familiar faces I always trace back to it,
Chin chin to Joy
From me now as a man,
Right back to when I was a boy.

YOUR PICTURE

Amanda Noell Stanley
United States
<https://www.Amandanoellstanley.com/blog>
<https://Instagram.com/amandanoellstanley>

I ran the tip of my pointer
finger across the dusty glass,
once shiny square cover,
wooden frame too intricate
to hold you.

Smaller then – scrunched up,
holding your stuffed fish friend,
superhero t-shirt and velcro
shoes. You were three. A new
brother.

I caught you at the top
scooting from the platform
ready to descend the curvy
yellow plastic to meet a muddy
yard below. It hosted more grass
before the slide, before you.

A vertical merry-go-round, you
climbed and plunged – holding
your friend, green-bean grin.

I wonder now: was it the top you loved
most, the bottom, the trip up or down?
Was it that you got to hold on to
something? That someone was
watching you – noticing? What made
you smile that beautiful fall day under
the stinky pear tree?

Now, here it is, threshold moment
needs a good dusting. Placed on
the hand-me-down piano next to
my fiddle. I see you

when I do my own playing.
Scrunched up just like you.



JOYS OF LIFE

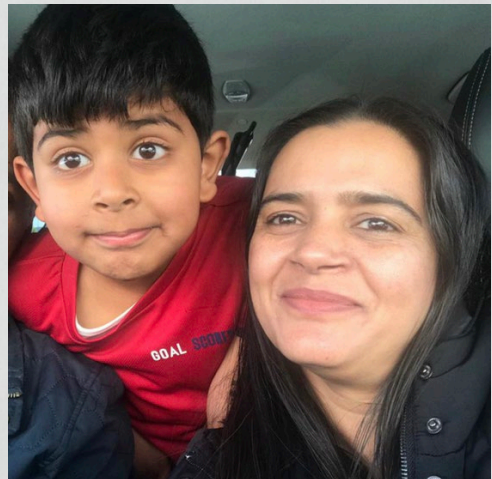
Dedicated to Karti's 5th Birthday

Sonia Pal

United Kingdom

Blowing bubbles in the air, being innocent and fair
Jumping in the puddles, giving kisses and cuddles
Seeing the rainbows and drawing them on the doors!
Opening the presents received from the parents
Playing with balloons and sleeping in the afternoons
Watching cartoons and dancing to the favourite tunes
Walking hand in hand with MUM and taking a big jump
Maturing each day by sharing and caring without comparing
Counting the beads and Fred talk to read with due heed
Getting stickers from the teachers for being good leaders
Celebrating BIRTHDAYS after waiting for it EVERYDAY!
Splish-Splash of the bath and scrub-a-dub-dub with big laughs
Listening to a lullaby at bedtime and waking up at midnight
Holding on to the teddy bears tight and walking with great pride
Having little rides on Daddy's back followed by a flapjack
Going on holidays with the family to add to life's melody
Waiting for the Tooth Fairy and falling asleep too early
Having a picnic at the park and playing with football
Making a SNOW-MAN and saying, "I CAN!"
Crying over nothing, followed by the chuckling
Eating chocolates and candies like a grandee
Dressing up like super-heroes for the key-roles
Making chains and trains with 'James and Shanes'*
Giving a high-five while learning to drive
Licking the ice-lolly quite very slowly!
Making up stories after breaking lorries!
Having playdates with favourite playmates
Playing endless games without any complaints

Joys of the life are to relish and cherish it ALL.
Through the NEXT stages of life and BEYOND.



*'James and Shanes' – friends

LEWIS IN THE GOLDFISH POND

Mike Ball

United States

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

<https://twitter.com/whirred>

Transformed by his accidental baptism, Lewis sprang from the goldfish pond. For a dripping, sparkling moment. backyard magic turned him into a real boy. He never supplicated to mythical beings. Yet, Lewis played the Pinocchio role. Likewise dousing in wondrous waters required neither priest nor incantation. Lewis, a silly name (not his fault). Fearful mama's boy (not his doing). Though awake, he nestled in a comforter of his mother's protective attention. For two summers, I had seen him cry at everything and cry at nothing. He did not risk, not in trees nor rivers, not even on seed sacks at the co-op. Adventure for Lewis was poking a bean pole into the backyard pond. Its limited peril was two tubs deep, a bounded four by four by four feet. Perhaps the release to puerile fun led to his falling face-first to fishes. With the sudden spasm of the foolish, he leapt out laughing and wet. Very long water-lily stems draped over his frail shoulders. The magic of the pond waters instantly transformed Lewis. He was a real boy — for 23 seconds. His moment of boyhood passed. He realized he could not sustain the abandon of his brave youth. His tears washed off the pond's magic.

JOIE DE VIVRE

Kevin Ahern

United States

<https://www.davincipress.com>

I'm was talking to a friend the other day
And she asked me, having passed sixty five
What I liked now about being alive

"Is it the joy of erupting in hysterical laughter?"
"Accomplishing a goal you've long sought after?"
"The feeling you get with the coming of spring?"
"The beauty outside with snow on everything?"

"Perhaps the experience of falling in love?"
"The patterns high up in the clouds above?"
"The tastes of dinner and a good glass of wine?"
"The feeling you get when you're dressed to the nines?"

Before she went further
To her I confessed
The answer was simple - "Yes"



SILENT AND STILL

Claudette Martinez

Canada

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

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

#claudettemartinezartist

Scared shaken and torn,
shouting inside, angry vicious violent words.
Words and images that are now tattered, thinning
and worn.

Silently scream,
scrape your brain, pull and dig till it bleeds,
Search and seek for something it needs,
Anything that will hold you still,
help you be found,
Keep your feet to the ground
Fill your lungs and finally breathe.
Take the moment,
take it it's yours!
Find space and strength,
calm kindness and grace,
That's where peace washes over your face.

ZEST

Lynn White

United Kingdom

<https://lynnwhitepoetry.blogspot.com>

We feel free again
out here on the wild heath
and we're whirling and twirling
like a dervish
with the devil in us
reclaiming our wildness
that was hidden for so long
when we were
just hanging on
our spirits sapped
at home alone.
But we're out now
feeling reckless
with excitement,
jumping for joy
leaping with faith
ready to go again.



CHEERS TO CHERRY BLOSSOMS

Nilofar Shidmehr, PhD
Canada
<https://nilofarshidmehr.com>

Unlike the rest of us in 2020,
cherry blossoms don't stay closed.
Neither do they hide
during the lockdown.

Under the warm sun, they fill
the season with their flourishing,
and touch each other
with the tips of their branches.

They stand together in joy
against gusts of wind
and virus-shaped clouds
until they all fall.

WHEN I AM ALONE

Linda M Crate
United States

nature brings me joy
whether i am standing
among wildflowers
in the mountains
or swimming in the ocean,
walking in the creek;
or strolling through the forest
with a strong army of trees
and slants of magic
dancing through the sunlight
to kiss upon my skin stories of
old and new—
there's just so much peace
in breathing in fresh air,
of not needing to be anywhere at a certain
time;
of being able to unfurl like a lazy cloud
etched in a blue sky dancing with sunlight—
i know for certain i need nature,
but i am not so sure i need the company
of many people;
i find tranquility often comes
when i am alone.



A JOY TO BEHOLD

John Albiston
United States

at 6am we arise to pray
prayer starts our day
we then study the word
to gain great knowledge
to uplift one another
we share our plans
for the day ahead
people we teach happiness to
we get ready for the day
onward we go
as god's army
bringing joy to lost and weary
rejection comes our way
but still our hearts rejoice
our message to others is clear
hope, faith, and love
we share
one knock
on one soul's door
they let us in
how much joy we feel
as we teach god's word
their hearts are full
what a blessing it is to share
how great our joy was
on that blessed day

THE BATTERY – NYC

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

On many warm days
You will find a woman dancing
At the Battery
Her skirts swing out
As she gracefully moves
To the tunes of the trumpeter
She is not beautiful or young
Or rich or well known
Yet what pleasure she brings
To park seekers basking on benches
Canopied by whispering leaves
Glimpsing tiny light watery stars
She dances in perfect tune
To the Earth
In time with the wind
In step by step
To loving life
My feet eagerly fly
Across city block after block
Hoping to find her there
I hear the inviting rhythm
See flashes of flaming colors
And arrive with wondering awe
How can life be
So in touch, so complete
At the Battery

GRATITUDE 1969

James King

United States

<https://www.jamesking-writer.com>

Her name was the same as my mother's
but I tried not to think about that when I felt her
hand and a jolt of hot electricity fired my blood
and shot it to two places, one of which was my face.
Would my cheeks set her hair on fire?

How incredible that just a few hours earlier she
laughed at my sarcastic jokes as we wrote Prayers
of the Faithful for the eighth-grade guitar Mass
at St. Rose. How amazing that she invited
me into her house and told me her parents
were out and her older sister was upstairs
on the phone with her *boyfriend*
and would be there for *hours*.

She said *boyfriend* like it was a promise.
Her *hours* sounded like a dare.

We were halfway through *Love, American Style*
before I finally, finally put my arm on the back
of the couch behind her, careful not to let it touch her
because I didn't want her to think that I was thinking
what I was, in fact, thinking but still she had asked
me over knowing that her parents were going out
and her sister was upstairs for hours and why
shouldn't I do this I was in eighth grade for god's sake
and my arm was starting to hurt when it happened:

She reached up, took my hand, and intertwined her fingers with mine and with her other
hand gently stroked the top of my hand as we watched the show or, more accurately, she
watched the show and I wished Murph and Cleary and Kennedy could see this and then
I wondered if she had done this before with other *boyfriends* but as she leaned against me
and I felt her breathing and I smelled her hair all I could do was think whoever you are,
St. Rose, whatever you are patron saint of, St. Rose... thank you. Thank you. Thank you.



BLISS

Kathryn Sadakierski
United States

In the morning sunshine,
Birdsong radiates like rays of light
Reverberating through the skies,
And for a moment,
I put down my pen,
Quieting my thoughts,
Seeing inside,
And reflecting.

The world is
So busy,
With no time to
Reconnect,
Looking without seeing,
Thinking without knowing.
In the stillness of the soul,
There are many answers to be found,
A voice to be heard
If only one pauses to listen.

Sometimes inner light cannot be seen
In the day-to-day frenzy,
The flurry of activities,
Where everything competes
For your time and energy,
Attention
Pulled away from balance.
Simplify,
And restore;
See the magic of each moment,
Beauty in everything,
Focusing
On the abundance of blessings.
Understanding
Comes from peace within,
The joy
Of being present.

HIGH TIDE

Ed Meek
United States

When I was young, the two of them were young too.

At the beach at Brant Rock,
my father handsome and strong,
with his Elvis Presley hair
and Icelandic blue eyes, my mother,
slim and pretty with her majorette legs
and perfectly cultivated tan.

My father held me up
in the water and my mother
waved from her beach blanket
on the sand. This was before
my brother and sisters, those
uninvited guests, crashed
the party, back when my mother
was fun to be around
and my father was glad
to be home from the war,
working the only job
he would ever have.

Before we left we'd weave along
the shore, heads down
in search of shells.
I walked between them--
one on each hand. The three of us
happy as clams at high tide.



HINT OF HAPPINESS

Martina Gallegos

United States

<https://www.martinagallegos.com>

Lying in her bed, bedroom almost empty,
I listen to patriotic songs on Pandora, and
I feel peaceful without the clutter.
Out of the blue, my eyes begin to fog up,
and before I can ask why, tears start rolling
down my cheeks, and I can't stop them.
I manage to get up and vacuum the bedroom
but think about texting my therapist
then decide against it, so as not to ruin her day.
I consider emailing a friend but realize, she,
too, is honoring loved ones who lost their
lives for the freedoms we enjoy, so I don't
email her either.
I suppose I shed tears because I'm happy I'm
still here when others didn't come back home.
I suppose tears can cleanse and liberate me
if the memories that torment my heart can't.
And I wonder if shedding tears can lessen
the sorrow I'd like to exchange for joy.
Future plans bring up the hope for a chance
at better, brighter days without sadness
if only I have the strength to get up.
I've risen from the deepest of precipices
a handful of times and have overcome
many obstacles, so I'm no stranger to fighting.
I will continue to rise and succeed and find
my own joy in my daily routines.

JOY

Dimithri Wijerathna

Sri Lanka

The melodies of humming birds all around
Fragrance of roses spread around the air
Butterflies flying in a row as colourful jets
Sky in blue carpet with small cotton balls
Sun glisten on grass twinkling the dew drops
Mind soothing with fresh air with new thoughts
I jumped out of bed with new ideas
Wow!!! My mango tree with fruits
Hanging around all branches
Sunflowers bending as to obey me
Happiness with nature
Heals my wounds in heart and mind
I sang the melodies of joy with birds



THE COMMUNION

Paula Brown
United States

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

Last week,
even though the heat
of the summer (which broke
all known records)
was still raging (and humidity was
raining sweat down my back)
yet along came the wind
rustling up from the west
breezing through the ranch
with a faint touch of cool,
tossing a hint of fall
on that late day in August,
not caring that it was
a hundred something outside.

And at the same time
that the wind
was mustering forth
its unexpected foreshadowing
(sprinting past pens
full of horses
foraging their breakfast
of fresh cut Bermuda),
a family of quail gathered
to guzzle down water
from a repurposed feed pan
sitting next to the fence,
(replenished
each morning and night
for the wild ones residing
in this sun-drenched
situation).

But there is more to this story
than the wind and the quail
and the horses munching
on the other side of the fence,
because at the same time
that the quail were drinking,
a brownish-gray rabbit
with a puffball tail,
a youngster by size,
was slaking its thirst
unmindful of the quail, perhaps
noticing the wind,
and *what a sight!*
all together and unafraid
that thirsty crowd of life
partaking from the bowl,
until I rode up on my horse
and the sipping throng
scattered.

The quail hastened off
in their single-filed parade,
plumed heads bobbing forward,
the rabbit darting obliquely.
And the horse, oblivious
to the water cooler gang,
perhaps noticing the wind
as it teased and tempted,

though the summer
that day
just wouldn't let go.

Devika Mathur
India
<https://myvaliantsoulsblog.wordpress.com/>

OVER THE HILL AND FAR AWAY

WILD HARES AND HOLLOWAYS

Sarah Turnbull
United Kingdom

The gold and the green of the fields that surround
you,
The last rays of late summer sun.
Rest for a while your adventurous heart
As the wild hares and holloways beckon you on.

You followed your heart and a map of the stars,
Bewitched by the nightingale's song.
A wistful lament for the passing of time
But a nightingale never stays long.

Now a fox loiters slowly as stag darts away.
A barn owl takes to the wing.
'Be sure to tread softly as you pass through this
place'
The wild hares and holloways sing.

THE LOVERS SONG SUNG BY THE SEA

Amanda Jane Bayliss
United Kingdom
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/moresuccessfulsubmissionsbyamandajane/>

The nightly walk by the sea
Offers something beautiful
To you and me.

The orchestra of the waves
The romance of the music
As we hold hands and kiss along.

Like two teenagers in love
Kissing and giggling
The world is our oyster
The pearl of our love.

Talking and dreaming
Of our destiny
A place created for you and me.

A place of our dreams
As we sing along
To the orchestra of the waves.

Sand between our toes
No wave too high
As we sing our little song.

Nightly walks by the sea
Forever they will stay
As our love will
Never be washed away.

JOY

Sarah Baldry
United Kingdom

I feel the sunrise, warm on my face.
And hear the dawn chorus.
Safe in my bed,
Pillows of lace.
I take a deep breath,
of air filled with floras.

I hear the car sing as you park her,
Music is heard by all who are near.
The butterflies inside me stir.
My love I am certain,
I know you are here.

As I open the curtain,
You look up and see me.
In my full naked glory
And I grab my kimono, so soft.

I run down to greet you,
Then you kiss me so deeply,
My heart is embossed.

RELIQUARY

Lisa Tomey
United States

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

She snapped the clasp shut on the pewter box,
the one which held the sacred collections of her
life
a reliquary of sorts, one might say,
since all things enclosed were of the highest
spiritual value.

There was a deck of cards, some worn on the
edges
from being clipped to her bike spokes,
making that motorcycle noise,
a skate key for tightening her roller skates to her
shoes,
allowing her the freedom to roll about in good
spirit,
a bottle of mucilage in case she needed
to glue together construction paper for paper
chains,
a wishnik doll with the long hair and soft body,
holding wishes never spoken out loud,
a record adapter to allow playing of a stack of 45s,
all day long and into the night,
as the neighbors gathered around.

These were just a few things from her life,
but oh, the spirits they stirred up,
and when she sorted through her relics,
she was once again a young girl—
with no concerns for the day-to-day doldrums of
life,
revived from the essence,
the memories of childhood
and the innocence and joy it held.



HOPING ON WANTS

Emecheta Christian

Nigeria

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

I want to love like I don't know hate
I want to live like I don't fear death
I don't want to slave for money
I don't want to taint my story

I want to be the best in what I do
I want to be rich and famous too
I don't want to be remembered as one who just
existed
I don't want my name to also die when I am dead

I want to travel the world
I want to explore it as much as I could
I don't want to believe those who say I can't
I don't want to believe that I can't be important

I want to experience true joy and happiness
I want to fall in love and get married to an Empress
I don't want despair to arrive and find the doors
open
I don't want to get my heart broken

I want to be self-reliant
I want to be no man's servant
I don't want to solicit for food or shelter
I don't want to be enriched by loot nor plunder

CELESTIAL BLISS

Koyel Mitra

India

<https://www.facebook.com/koyel.mitra.7982>

Joy can be found when You come near_
With pure, boundless love; me You smear.
When I doubt Your feelings sometimes,
Your love flutters like the wind chimes.
In my hard times, me You hold dear.

When mind is filled with excess fear,
Your whispers of blissful love I hear.
I weave our songs of love in rhymes_
Joy can be found.

When the sun is bright and sky clear,
With immense joy I find You here.
Love gushes in me like enzymes
And soothes me in sleepless night-times.
My whole life, to You I adhere_
Joy can be found.

JOY

Sarah Baldry
United Kingdom

I feel the sunrise, warm on my face.
And hear the dawn chorus.
Safe in my bed,
Pillows of lace.
I take a deep breath,
of air filled with floras.

I hear the car sing as you park her,
Music is heard by all who are near.
The butterflies inside me stir.
My love I am certain,
I know you are here.

As I open the curtain,
You look up and see me.
In my full naked glory
And I grab my kimono, so soft.

I run down to greet you,
Then you kiss me so deeply,
My heart is embossed.

SENSES AND EMOTIONS

Alan Bedworth
United Kingdom

Waking up to the sounds of nature,
is a noise to treasure like gold.

Walking on sun-lit beaches
leaving just footprints,
gives a warmth inside.

Entering woodland looking for wildlife,
keeps your senses focused and alive.

The day you get married,
your bride at your side.
Love encompasses your hearts,
on this special day.

Holding your first child,
has your emotions running wild.
Thankful for that moment of
cuddling this cherished being.

All these examples of life.
emotions and senses.
Gives us joy in being alive.



GRAND GESTURE

Sarfraz Ahmed
United Kingdom
<https://www.instagram.com/sarfrazahmedpoet/>
<https://twitter.com/Sarfraz76194745>

When you stand next to me,
When it is just the two of us,
They'll be no need for a celebration,
They'll be no need for fuss,

They'll be no need for a band,
Nor a grand a parade,
No need for music will be played,

They'll be no statues erected way up high,
No fireworks star blazing the sky,
No posters,
No billboards,
No certificates,
No rewards,
They'll be nothing untoward,

They'll be no pin to burst the bubble,
The dream that resides this heart of mine,
Something that many search their whole lives to
find,
For our love is something truly great,
Greater than any grand gesture of any kind,

WALKING IN THE PARK

Mantz Yorke
United Kingdom

The joy of a brightwashed morning:
a clear blue sky, the grass silvery
from last night's rain, the low sun
burnishing beech trees' copper
and birches' gold – the kind of day
that prompts strangers to say hello.

We finish a slow circuit, surprised
to see a white cockatoo strutting
in the grass beside the car park.
I brush wet leaves from wheels
and load her trolley into the boot.
We head for home, exuberant.

HIDDEN PROMISES

Bill Chatfield

United States

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

let me be one of the people
safe and well under the canopy
of a midnight sky that lingers
through dawn

hide me from all dark unknowns
that lurk just beyond the edges
of my visible universe

help me to see through webs
of tangled discontinuities
to find the hidden threads of joy
waiting to be knit
into better promises.

THIS

Kitty Jospé

United States

<http://www.foothillspublishing.com/2021/jospe.html>

is simply to say¹
I want my words
to reach you—
the way those beech leaves,
hanging on paper thin
under the fresh snow
touched me today...
and how they could
make you think of
a Japanese lantern maker,
or fashion designer,
especially when the sun caught
them with its light...

This... such a simple word...
as opposed to that, an equally
simple word, in woods
filled with fresh snow
where I swear,
it made a panther,
sleekly asleep on the slope of a pine
and a cat as king of the castle atop
a midsize hemlock.

This ... I want others to understand this
quiet joy observing— how it
brings you peace—
where nature is maker,
not man.

¹line from Joyce Carol Oates, *This is Not a Poem*



THE JOY

Viktoriia Zabroda
Peru

It was my turn to know the joy:
not motherhood, not acquisition,
not even fame or recognition,
or melting kisses of a boy...

You never know what life may send us!
It's just...He simply crossed my path
when I was polishing the grass,
sleepwalking in my worn-out sandals.

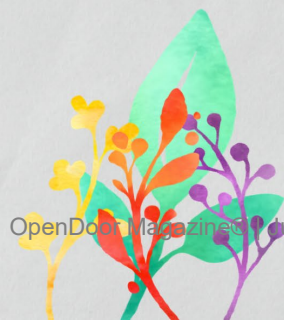
It felt so good to have Him near
without instruction or reproach.
He had his special approach —
I had no doubt, I felt no fear,

and He was patient with my blether...
Now there's a place my joy can hinge.
I will remember every inch
of that half-mile we walked together.

SCENT

Robert Armstrong
United States

she smells of sunshine,
of pretty things,
of things
that make me dream,
of better places,
then the reality
i find myself in,
of potted flowers,
of dreams,
wished upon
at night,
staring
at stars,
while lovers
dream,
impossible
dreams,
keeping reality
at bay,
with their
delights.



AM I DREAMING?

Laura Glaves
United States

Am I dreaming?
To be so loved
and cherished?

We speak softly
in romantic tones
and hold hands
as we stroll
through lush gardens.

We giggle in the backseat
of taxicabs
whisking us away
before dawn
to our next adventure.

We dance on rooftop terraces
to Parisian serenades
and dine under a canopy of trees
on the grounds of Versailles.

He kisses my hand,
and calls me his bride
after 30 years.

Am I dreaming?

No.

JOYFUL NATURE

Madhu Gangopadhyay
India

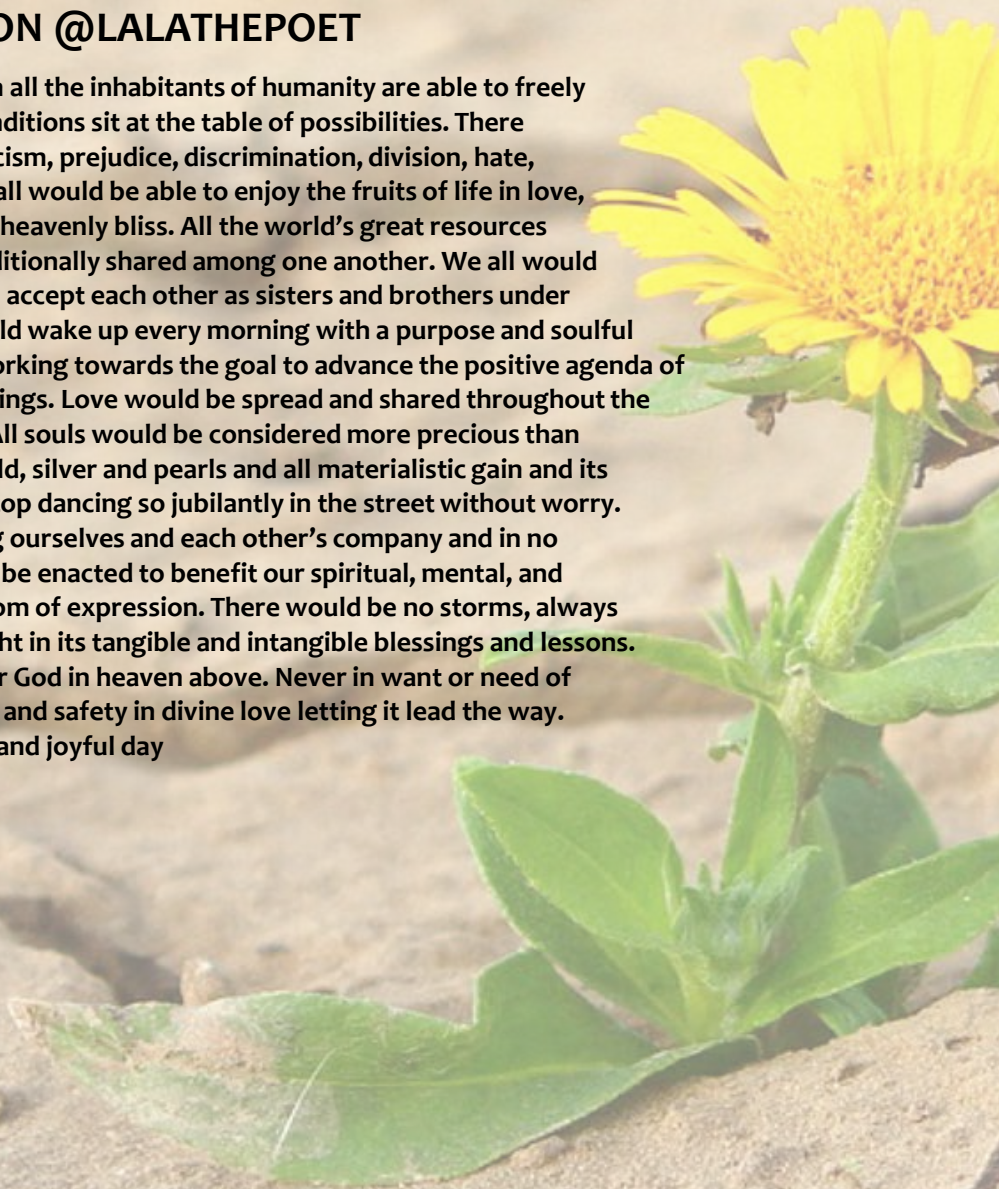
The dawn flooded the sky!
The toasted sun on the horizon arrived,
The actors of the dark delight, stealthily retired to rest.
They would till dusk to grace the stage of the cosmic hall.
The beautiful rose its petals unfurled,
The dewdrops glistening like the pearl,
Smiled and greeted the crimson curls.
The chittering of the morning birds
A melody to the aching ears
Such joys in nature abound!
That in human realm seldom sound
Selfless is the nature's love,
Showers benediction from above
Soaks each human with joys profound.
In mankind such is rarely found!
How the heart dances with joys when blushing twilight greets
Or when the carmine aurora is suffused with scented breeze
Joys of that kind fill the heart When men of honour display
selfless art
Of sacrifice and valour galore;
Pride and elation multifold, inundate the mortal core,
With unrestricted pleasure the being soars
Let joys flood you whole drench you in its euphoric soul.
Like a thief is kept away keep all your mundane sadness at bay
Do not allow them to bother you,
With elan that know so few, push them away leave no trace!
Let delight alone colour your face.
Like Euphrosyne infused with cheer and mirth,
Stride this orb with grace, create a heaven on this earth!



THAT WOULD BE A JOYFUL DAY

BY LAVAN ROBINSON @LALATHEPOET

It would be a joyful day when all the inhabitants of humanity are able to freely without compromise and conditions sit at the table of possibilities. There would be no such thing as racism, prejudice, discrimination, division, hate, inequality, and injustice. We all would be able to enjoy the fruits of life in love, peace, unity, goodwill and in heavenly bliss. All the world's great resources would be equally and unconditionally shared among one another. We all would put aside our differences and accept each other as sisters and brothers under one true identity. We all would wake up every morning with a purpose and soulful meaning. We all would be working towards the goal to advance the positive agenda of our beautiful and celestial beings. Love would be spread and shared throughout the universe and here on earth. All souls would be considered more precious than money, diamonds, rubies, gold, silver and pearls and all materialistic gain and its worth. There would be nonstop dancing so jubilantly in the street without worry. We all would be just enjoying ourselves and each other's company and in no particular hurry. Laws would be enacted to benefit our spiritual, mental, and physical nature and its freedom of expression. There would be no storms, always sunny and we all would delight in its tangible and intangible blessings and lessons. We would love and honor our God in heaven above. Never in want or need of anything and resting assured and safety in divine love letting it lead the way. That would be a very special and joyful day



“

Once upon a
pink moon,
she walked the
silent stillness
to the edge
of the world,
and wished
upon a star.

Amanda
United Kingdom
https://Instagram.com/snipp_its



**"FIND JOY
IN THE
ORDINARY"**

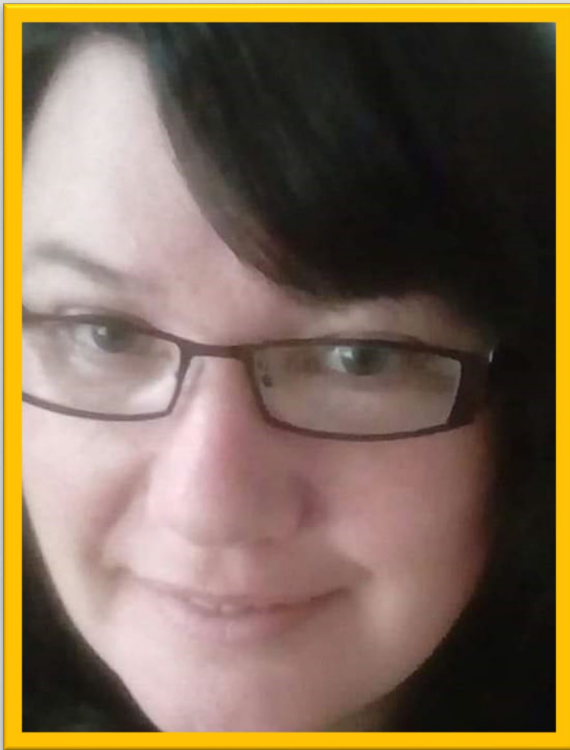
- Buddha



Our July Features

NICOLA MEEKIN

Author Feature



<https://www.facebook.com/Poetry-by-Nicola-L-Meekin-2158397034245647>

https://www.instagram.com/poetryby_nicolameekin/

https://twitter.com/meekin_nicola

I am in my early 40's, however, I have had a love of writing poetry since my very early years. In fact, I've had a love of writing in general, pretty much all of my life. I have always been the girl who would "go all the way around the houses" and "ramble on" to give you "the far end of a fart" before getting to the actual point. Through my primary school years I was described as a "flowery writer", which I guess is maybe a nod to my "rambling" ways. In my later teens and early twenties, I was described as "eloquent" and maybe a tad "eccentric" and "dreamy" with regards to my writing style, that often depicts my sideways view and opinion on varied subjects. Either way, I do believe all of the above to have been extremely beneficial in aiding to enrich my style of writing. Born and bred in Hull, East Yorkshire, United Kingdom, I class myself as a "typical Yorkshire lass", if there was ever such a thing. I will deem to call a spade a spade, and make no apologies for it. My bluntness and sarcasm have often gotten me into trouble in the past, however I always try and stay true to myself, and say, or in this case, write exactly how I am feeling at the time.

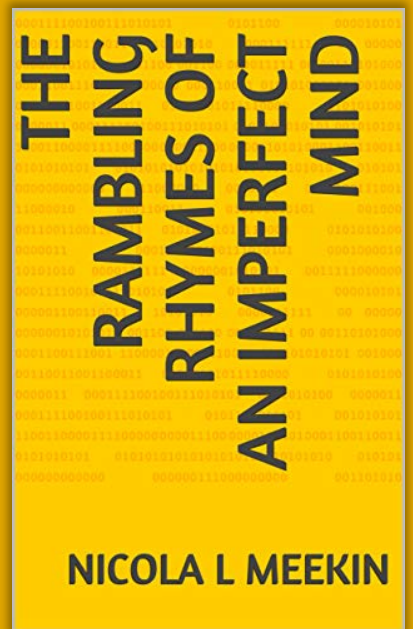
I have a health condition called Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (C.F.S), also known as Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (M.E), which can, at worst, leave me feeling paralysed with fatigue. This prevents me from taking on a regular paid job. I hate not being able to work in a conventional way, so writing poetry is my way of attempting to do my bit. In publishing my book, I guess it's my way of hoping to build up some kind of revenue, that I can use towards my contribution towards the household bills etc.

Writing poetry helps me to make sense of a world, that doesn't always make sense.

My thought process may be unconventional, and my rhyming is often imperfect, hence the title of my first book *The Rambling Rhymes of an Imperfect Mind*.

THE KIDS OF 2020

Mam I'm hungry, Mam can I have?
I have to tidy my room? Are you having a laugh?
Mam I'm really really bored,
Why can't I go to school?
I'm missing Grandma,
You're so cruel.
I want to play out, with Billy nextdoor,
Why can't we get McDonald's now, are we really poor?
Your hair's going gray Mam,
You're growing a moustache.
Don't kiss me goodnight Mam, I might get a rash.
Why can't I play out Mam?
Can we go to seaside today?
It's really not fair Mam,
I just want to go out and play.
I'm missing my friends Mam,
Do you think they're missing me?
Do you think the park might be open now,
Can we go and see?
I've just watched the news Mam,
and it was really sad,
They said that people are dying,
and that going out is bad.
I'm sorry for nagging Mam,
and I just want to say,
Let's leave playing out, for another day.
It's a really scary time,
Are you scared too?
Thanks for keeping me safe Mam,
I love you.



A matter of fact observation of modern day life, depicted in poetry, by a scatty 40 something year old woman. From heartfelt rhymes inspired by loved ones, to a sideways view of lockdown, this book covers many different themes. Sometimes irrational, often overthinking things, this book captures thoughts and feelings in real time. A kind of cathartic journal, that could provoke tears, and may even encourage a little giggle now and again. If you like a bit of rhyme served with your poetry, then you are in luck. The paperback version has a lot of additional content, that the e-book doesn't contain.

https://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/Bo8ZHHG67Q/ref=cm_sw_r_cp_awdb_GR8PSgoMJHEHRJS1DV87

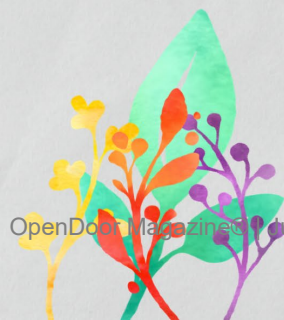
NICOLA MEEKIN – AUTHOR FEATURE

SHOES

Take a step in these shoes, then judge me,
walk a mile in these shoes if you can.
Carry this baggage on your shoulder, and this heavy heart in your hand.
You can look at me like that if you want, but everybody has a story to tell.
Can you tell by casting a glance at me, if my life has been heaven or hell?
I would love to be in your ivory tower, looking down on me as you do,
But let's get this straight, you know nothing,
apart from it's all about you.
You should never judge a book by its cover, you can't judge a child by its mother too,
don't judge a man by his colour, is that the way I treated you?
Have you ever had a problem? Because you clearly have one now.
And haven't you got a tale to tell? I really wonder how.
It must be great being perfect, people in glass houses shouldn't throw bricks,
and you steer so clear away from adversity?
I'd love to know your tricks.
Take just a little step in these shoes then judge me,
walk a mile in these shoes if you can.
Carry this baggage on your shoulder and this heavy heart in your hand.

NO MORE

No more back to school photographs, taken on my phone.
No more parents evening's,
no more shopping for uniform.
Those tiny black sand shoes, are now a thing of the past.
The school run and the sports days, seemed to come then go so fast.
No packed lunches, p.e kit, pigtails and pinafore.
Class assemblies and Christmas concerts,
I will attend no more.
No more college productions, in the audience sitting proud.
Calming your nerves, helping you learn your lines, listening to you practice them out loud.
No more waiting nervously, for results and marks and grades.
Those days now gone, but etched in memories that will maybe one day fade.
Your days of school and college, passed by and now in the past.
Lessons learned, friends made for life,
An education that will last.
The world is now your oyster,
full of experiences and adventures galore.
I know you will learn from life's lessons,
Though your school days are no more.



JIMENA RAMOS YENGLE

Author Feature

My name is Jimena Sofia Ramos Yengle. I am Peruvian and I was born on December 14, 2001, so I am 19 years old.

Since I was little I have dedicated myself to art. I started painting at 4 years old and at 6 I exhibited my first work publicly. From the age of 12 I began to dedicate myself to music.

At the age of 14 I published my blog "Magical Manuscripts" in which I address different topics related to the human experience, part of my personal brand "Magical Maneuvers". At the age of 19 I published my first book, a romantic novel called "Roma Enamorada" which is available on Amazon.

I also have an active YouTube channel where I upload content related to cultural events, interviews, covers and original songs.

I am currently pursuing two professional careers "Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation" and "Psychology." In addition, I am in an Actoral Training school, studying Performing Arts.

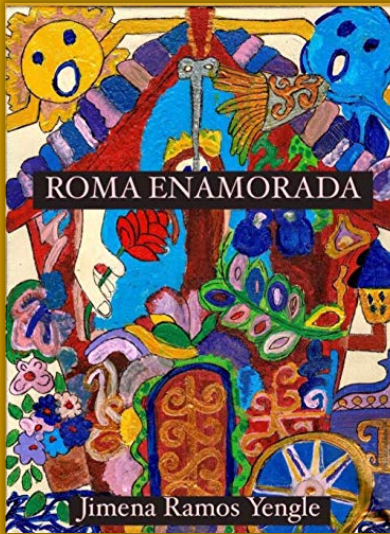


<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCopBc6KjDVx2YIXNEaOusiw>

<https://www.facebook.com/jimenasofia.ramosyengle.9/>

https://www.instagram.com/jimenaramos_y/?hl=es-la

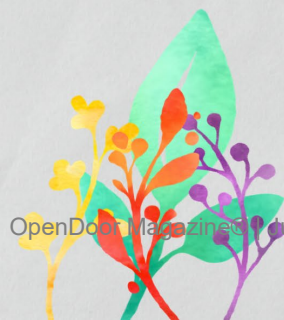
<https://manuscritosdemagia.blogspot.com/>



Hay princesas que deciden creer.
Pragmáticos incurables y duquesas
empoderadas en el ajedrez.
Trovadores que no entienden del
querer, acuarelistas con dilemas y
estrés. Pianistas italianos con el
alma en alquiler.
Roma es como la ves

<https://www.amazon.com/Jimena-Sofia-Ramos-Yengle-ebook/dp/B08VQDDWQ4>

It takes an old spasm
To keep seeing the skies,
That lack flaw,
They hint at a favorite kiss
His countenance clears
In front of my only shelf
Drag clouds in its path
And I'm wishing for a pacemaker
The inherence in his nature Is not enough in
his head
His balcony collapses
Enerve pressure from the overhead
Wants more angel books
And the truth of those who sing A scarlet
present
Know that you need a postscript
Time to time was coming
What remains and is rewritten The passion
for who I paint A better gift overwhelmed



DEAR MIRROR

That gives proof of the liberated suffering
Conscious aesthetic delight
Stranger to the ascetic spirit
Expression absent in misery
Innate beauty that reflects my structure
Figurative art worthy of being true
My face wanders beyond the fateful becoming
Make up the elemental soul
The brevity of youth
Worthy is my being to love
And my creator, his wishes to liberate
I met the Parisian who compromised the doubt That
immoral sage I wish to see my impure conscience My
susceptibility was found in raw meat
I outline my naked soul with ink
I succumbed to pleasure dress
"As much as I want, I can do it"
Holding on to all that would come
I ignited the development of my ideology
Due to pleasure
So I don't have to fear my portrait
Meanwhile be generous deed
Only my smile will value
I thought I loved that personification But I don't
understand love
So material, so earthly
Unless it comes from the local theater
Waiting for hedonistic signs
My science is the sustenance of pleasure If
something I treasure is my smile That brings
affability to shreds
My veins are roads

No meeting point , no finishing
I am drowned by the elegant whirlwind I march
between continuous delights
My experience, foreign to the matrix I cry out for
shame
And seeing his absence in my soul I sensed the
inconsistency
One more time in front of the mirror I contemplate
the elegant being
Understood narcissism
That I am unable to recognize
Perhaps my voluntary seduction,
Does it adorn simple and catastrophic faith? My
hidden soul , share a room
With my only need, maybe a little reason
The interference of my beauty
I blur my humanity
Can't I long for more?
Existential paradox
I question the existence of a creational mold That
perfects each season as it passes I notice that this
vile sculpture
Occasion more than the original figure
Accept the surrender of my soul
And whoever wants to assimilate to courage Candid
beats I can't find
Self-awareness lost its power
I wish spiritual surrender
May my firmness reach noble ecstasy Live the just,
ephemeral and outdated That the wicked years
stole
Now I know that I prefer love
Lived and destroyed
Before the immanence of death
Aestheticism, it is my inert face



JIMENA RAMOS YENGLE – AUTHOR FEATURE

Your footprints are marking a story
That does not collapse before the wind
You are neither logical nor sane
Precipitated, and I lose myself

Silent door, you don't knock
Try to uncover the old glories
Without poisoning the present
You are already quite absent

You tend to infinity
Incredulous and suspicious written
They run claps of a song
Crippling bandolier in my heart

And if you feel that I am inspired by more
Your relic, it's lustral delirium
Do not think to neglect mental alienation
You meditate rudely on the threshold

My alternative lyric
It houses the song of sovereignty
Armored letters on a carousel
Letters waiting for you! reader of the month

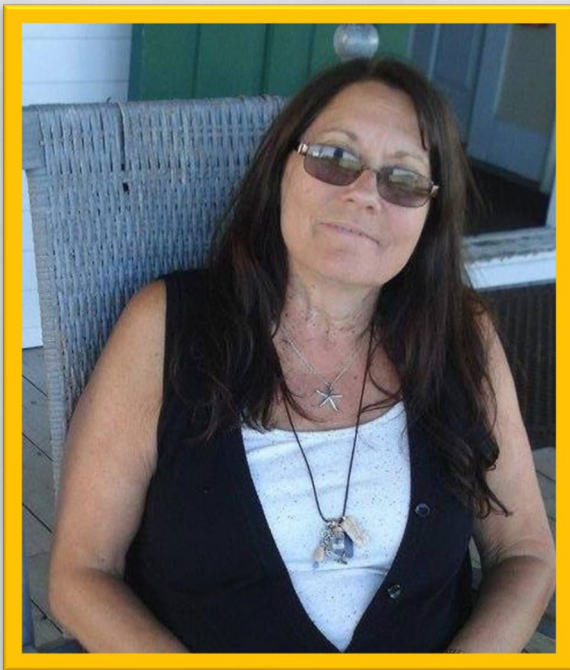
Talking about you is discussing oil
Classic natural emporium
You lighten artificial dexterity
Immense soul, babel rosebush

I place a blue cardboard bouquet
A pencil that I just made
A notebook written in Spanish
And that candle, I sure was your smell

You lighten the scarlet
You transform the bittersweet into cream
You keep the May sun alive
And I miss you, such a longed-for dream

JULIE A. DICKSON

Author Feature



<https://www.facebook.com/julie.dickson.94/>

https://www.amazon.com/s?k=Julie+a.+dickson&i=stripbooks&ref=nb_sb_noss

Julie A. Dickson is a poet and YA author whose work ranges from Bullying and teen issues to elephant advocacy to nature and environment. Her full length works are available on Amazon.

Dickson holds a BPS in Gerontology, allowing her home care work with elderly to enhance her poetry. Journals such as Ekphrastic Review, The Avocet, Misfit, Gleam, Smoky Quartz, Open Door and many others have included poems and stories. Originally from Buffalo, NY she makes her home in New Hampshire with two rescued feral cats, Claire and Cam.

Published Works:

Elephants, A World Without Ivory [Sunrise Press 2018]

Untumbled Gem [Goldfish Press 2016]

Big Boys, Bullied into Silence [Piscataqua Press 2014]

Forest Nectars [Morris Publishing 1997, Reprinted Lulu 2011]

JULIE A. DICKSON – AUTHOR FEATURE

ELEPHANTS

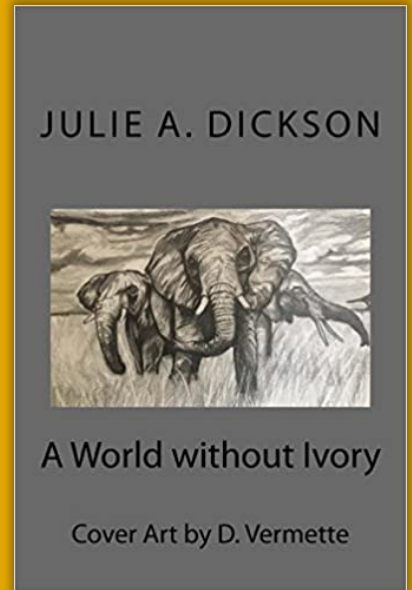
Elegant in their stance
Lumbering slowly through the forest
Echoed voices, rumbles as they feed
Patiently caring for their families
Handsome young bulls growing to adulthood
Aunts and cousins nurturing their calves
No death goes un-mourned among them
Tenuous grip on freedom slips away as
Slaughter remains the imminent threat

UNTUMBLED GEM

Sometimes I am rough like an untumbled gem,
true essence hidden below the uncut surface.
An outward façade covers my deep red garnet heart,
spiritual warmth gently held in balance.

When polished with sunlight, I might glow
in facets of brilliance like a rose quartz;
but don't be deceived by my reflection –
for healing takes time under soft reiki-touch.

While gazing into seemingly endless depths,
the crystal light of my topaz-brown eyes
holds something else, as yet undefined
that mirrors a struggle you may have shared.



N.H. Poet Julie A. Dickson presents a short collection of poems, poignantly written in support of wild elephants, as well as captive circus and zoo elephants. Proceeds benefit SAVE NOSEY NOW, Inc. [a non-profit Elephant education/rescue organization]

https://www.amazon.com/World-without-Ivory-Julie-Dickson/dp/1986323803/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=julie+a+dickson+Elephant+s+%2C+A+World+Without+Ivory&qid=1625104431&s=digital-text&sr=1-1

JOY

Dance around on carpeted floor
music plays, perhaps *Clair de Lune*,
no matter – my arms swing on their own,
a tempo of irresponsibility – in glee,
ah, *Swan Lake* now I'm in a ballet
on tip-toes, but no, I am no dancer.

I sit and wonder about joy, fleeting
thoughts while writing to birdsong,
eyes raised to sunlit window, finch?
No matter, I cannot play music, nor sing
but in words I can bring to life a time
when I smiled, wonderful bliss

taking over my face, if only a bell
rang at the moment I saw the new baby,
son of my daughter, delight to see
her smile, recall that exact time –
no matter, I can bring it back, her joy
in announcing Holden is born.

BIG BOYS

Facedown in a snow bank,
my brother lay frozen and still
Not wanting to incite more anger
from the kids that attacked him
though what he did to deserve
a torn jacket and a face full of snow
he would never find out.

I stood far away, afraid to move
until the big boys wandered off,
until their laughter died down
as they rounded the corner
on their way to buy candy at the store
as if the most natural sequence of events
was to tear my brother's jacket and push him
face first into snow and then buy candy.

D. R. JAMES

Author Feature

Born in Ohio, raised in Illinois, and higher-ed-ed in Michigan, Iowa, and Oregon, D. R. James now lives in the woods east of Saugatuck, Michigan, with his wife, psychotherapist Suzy Doyle. Between them they have six adult children and six grandchildren and enjoy cycling the backroads skirting Lake Michigan. During his 43 years of teaching, James has spent 36 of them teaching writing, literature, and peace studies, and coaching students toward academic success, at a small, liberal arts college. He earned an MA+ in English at the University of Iowa and an MFA in Poetry at Pacific University (Oregon). His nine poetry collections include the books *Since Everything Is All I've Got* (March Street Press, 2011) and *If god were gentle* (Dos Madres Press, 2017) and the chapbooks *Why War* and *Split-Level* (Finishing Line Press, 2014, 2017), *Surreal Expulsion* (The Poetry Box, 2019) and *Flip Requiem* (Dos Madres Press, 2020). His micro-chapbook *All Her Jazz* is free, fun, and downloadable-for-folding at the Origami Poems Project. Arriving relatively late on the poetry scene (just shy of 50), he has since published individual poems in a wide variety of print and online anthologies and journals. The six poems featured here are from a new book, *Mobius Trip*, to be published in late 2021 or early 2022 by Dos Madres Press.



<https://www.dosmadres.com/shop/flip-requiem-by-d-r-james/>

<https://thepoetrybox.com/bookstore/surreal-expulsion>

<https://www.dosmadres.com/shop/if-god-were-gentle-by-d-r-james/>

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D. R. JAMES – AUTHOR FEATURE



Poetry. "In this deft and prescient collection, D. R. James has both diagnosed our 'dizzy symptom' and scratched out the vital prescription: holistic poems that enact a rigorous mind's engagement with this tenuous age, or what James calls, with his wink-light touch, 'the more sober / though no less precarious rest of our lives.' Despite their modesty, and in a voice that is comic, molecularly honest, and fern-gentle, these poems accomplish the grand task of embodying authentic compassion, and in so doing lead the reader through 'the puzzled tongue of mourning,' into the rarefied empathetic that is, line by supple line, accessible to us all."—Chris Dombrowski

https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1948017768/ref=dbs_a_def_rwt_hsch_vapi_taft_p1_io

CELESTIAL ELBOW

The sky wore the regalia of flames but turned lavender-violet quietude in a moment's romance. And the breeze, how it finessed everything and cradled me. Awakened by the dazzle, I reposed—riveted, infused, imbued by satin. Gift after gift from ginger tongues, then glow audible like visions. It was never a coddling. The nod from the heavens judged some memories mere indulgence—and grudge.

KINGDOM OF GAUZE

A frothed fog enshrouds the loud melodies of these woods: pileateds' sniggering, the squawks and meows of crow and catbird. Their row refracts through pluming detachment from swing, lane, foothills, the world. Unperturbed, bloused in this low-slung ceiling, by non-speed I'm borne, desperate for nothing obscured here—nor certifiable forgiveness, nor angling prophecies, nor the typhooning bouquets of some charlatan's miseries.



WAIT FOR IT

The forecast hovers between soggy and
gratitude, verges on awe, balances
muted light against lopsided gladness.
Meanwhile (though Cosmos clatters its remote
stones, and Existence casts its Theater
of the Unheard from among the docile),
the man's morning's pouring itself into
day—and he stares off, fathoming the frayed
front sliding past outside has flagged in him
imponderable streaks of fleeting joy.



ON VELVET ISLAND

Attar from a trellis sifting onto
the yard, suffused with a cure for the caged
mind cycling mindlessly, and buffets of
birdsong unhinging the accord between
brain haze and conflux of the flustered streams
of vexed schemes. Trees tell me to stroke my beard!
All day I tend the flock, soothe the startled
ruffs above their vestments, their opera down
to pure lilt, their voltage to no-danger
zones. I ransom time from mocking desire.

WRY DUTY

—somewhat after G. M. Hopkins

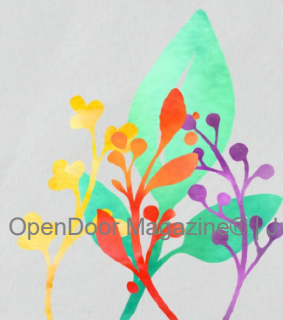
Rococo of branches' scribbled bliss (to
skies of cirrus filtering streaking-linen
grace; to fuzzed nubs of antlers on young bucks
out back; rotunda'd, wind-felled oaks; insects'
notes; hedges shivered and lulled; dawn, water,
and dune; to plants' husks, tremors, vibrations,
and tongues; stems' tubes sculpted, impromptu, and
smooth-furred; to whatso is furtive, vital,
and taut-calm; still-strung; benignant-brute), whose
lyrics' candor captures absolution.

YOU IGNITED ME

You ignited me, all my dried branches:
your perch an aperture up love's lattice,
your wind rending me kindling, spinning and
snapping and ruining my stalks like slats
blastified, remnants of sadness then set
afire. How cowed by coma commitment
I'd been! But likewise you replanted me,
reinstalled me in watered cavities,
encased my re-emerging sheaves, ashen
indication of demise enlivened.

ONE BREATH

One lake, one wave, one drop—one grain, one
more
ripple in the sand on a beach, one beach,
one shore—one path, one stair, one step, one
board,
one nail in the grain—one blade, one cluster
of dune-borne grass, one passage—one cottage,
one porch, one chair under shadow of an
eave—one breeze, one heat, one sun—one day,
one
morning, one hour, one thought in the mind of
a soul, in his living, in his being,
in his life—one sky, one current, one breath.





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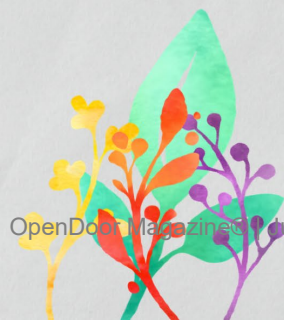
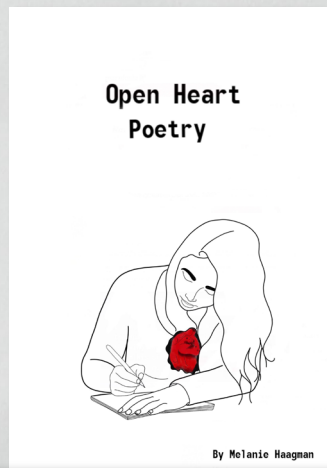
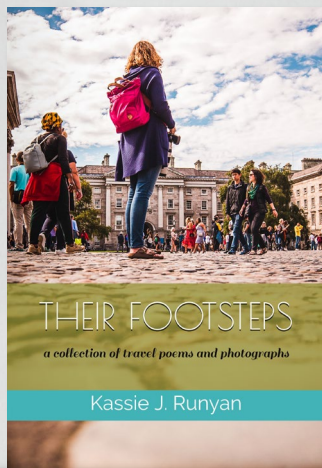
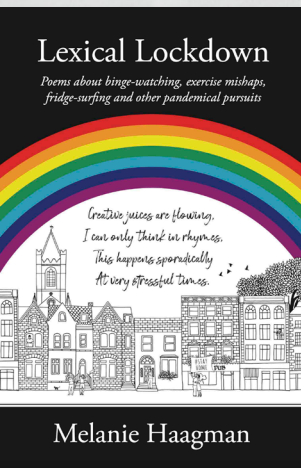
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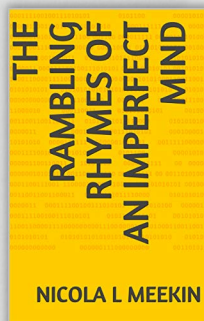
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The Rambling Rhymes of an Imperfect Mind

A matter of fact observation of modern day life, depicted in poetry, by a scatty 40 something year old woman. From heartfelt rhymes inspired by loved ones, to a sideways view of lockdown, this book covers many different themes.

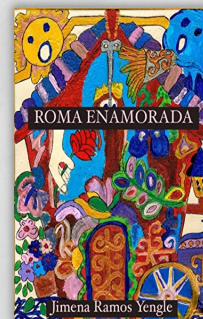


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Roma Enamorada: Retrato De la experiencia humana

Hay princesas que deciden creer. Pragmáticos incurables y duquesas empoderadas en el ajedrez.

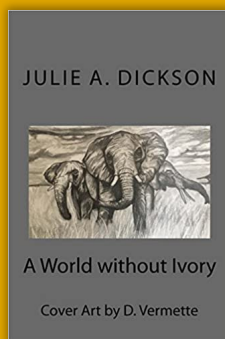
Trovadores que no entienden del querer, acuarelistas con dilemas y estrés. Pianistas italianos con el alma en alquiler. Roma es como la ves



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https://www.amazon.com/World-without-Ivory-Julie-Dickson/dp/1986323803/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=julie+a+dickson+Elephants+%2C+A+World+Witout+Ivory&qid=1625104431&s=digital-text&sr=1-1

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