

OpenDoor poetry

YOUR WORDS MATTER.

Q+A with
Hudson Valley's
open write duo

MUST-READ BOOKS:

BE PROACTIVE WITH

YOUR HOLIDAY SHOPPING

ONLINE
EVENTS NOT
TO BE MISSED

AUTUMN POETRY

INTERVIEWS

WITH POETS

WELCOME TO THE OPENDOOR POETRY MAGAZINE!

Welcome to our second edition of OpenDoor Poetry Magazine. We hope you are doing okay as these difficult times continue and that our Autumn edition will offer you some escapism from the world and the chance to relax and indulge in some beautiful verse.

We have been overwhelmed by all the submissions we have received this month from writers all over the world. It has been an honour to read each and every single one and we can't wait to share them with you.

OpenDoor is only at the beginning of its journey and has already been full of excitement for us. We hope you continue to join us each month and if you're feeling brave enough maybe even contributing!

This edition brings you our brand new 'songwriter feature' which we hope you love as much as we do. We don't think it can be denied that songs are very much poetry.

- Mel & Kassie

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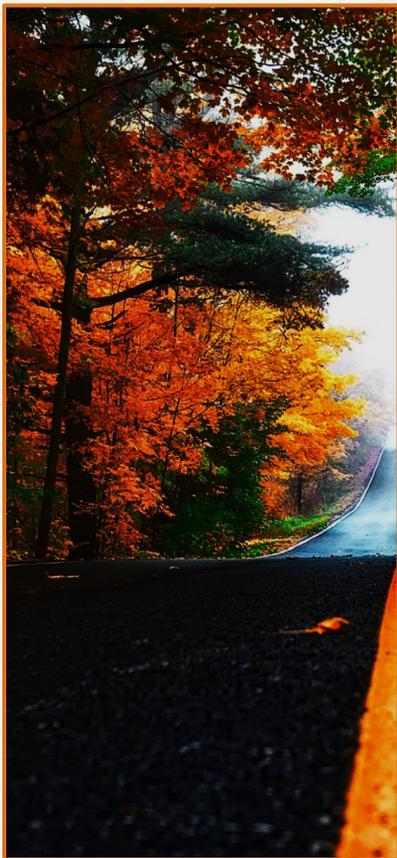
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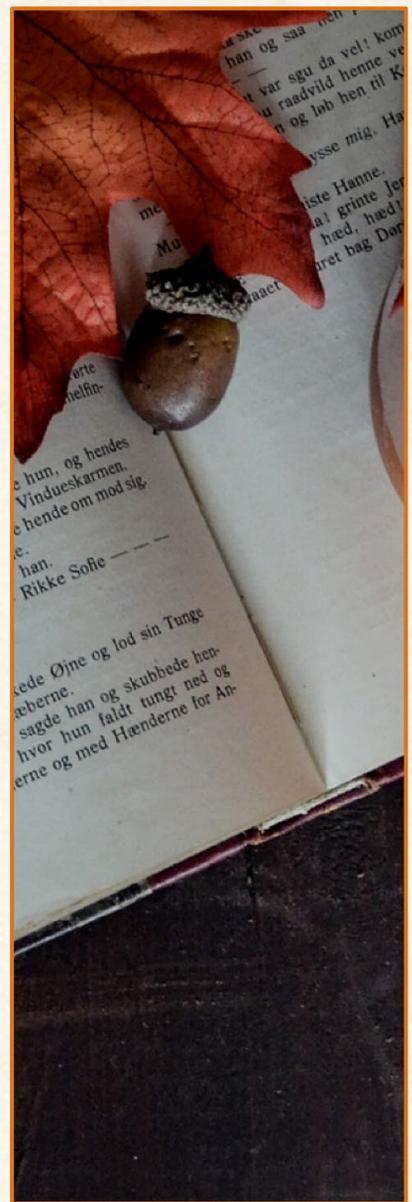


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Autumn Leaves and Missed Moments

KASSIE J RUNYAN

“Life starts all over again when it gets crisp in the fall”
– F. Scott Fitzgerald

We are entering my favorite time of year. And I mean my FAVORITE time of year, especially living in the Northern part of the United States – where the trees turn to red and gold and the air starts to bite just enough for a cute hat paired with a cozy sweater. The return of Pumpkin Spice... EVERYTHING, scary movies in the evening, later sunrises and dark beers. And best of all – it’s heading into my favorite grouping of holiday seasons. Halloween - filled with kids in costume ringing the bell and left-over candy corn for me. Then American Thanksgiving – which historically meant family gathered around a table – but in recent years has meant a quick trip with my parents to destinations drawn from a hat. And finally, Christmas – a time to visit with family, relax, take in the sights of New York done up in red and green, peppermint hot-cocoa, and snow-covered streets.

This year; while it brings the same feelings of excitement and joy as the autumn leaves turn; brings a sadness behind the normal joy. We struggle across the world. Through the loss of loved ones due to the global pandemic, the inability to live our lives as planned, and preparing ourselves to miss our normal moments with family and loved ones as we prepare to enter the holiday season while still keeping ourselves and our families safe and healthy. This is a year like no other and will bring a change as drastic as the changing leaves... while not quite so beautiful.

Just remember, with each new season we receive a new opportunity and a new beginning – to create, and share, and love (even when it needs to be from afar) so count your blessings and look to what you are thankful for. Continue to take enjoyment in the little normal things and we will get through this together.

As for me, I’m off to get a Pumpkin Spice latte and settle down for a showing of Friday the 13th while cuddling under a cozy blanket followed by our weekly family zoom calls.

November Theme: Autumn

MULTIPLE AUTHORS

Autumn
Neil Saltmarsh
England

I love to walk in the wild forest
In Autumn, when the ground is blessed
With a crackling carpet, of dry red leaves,
Which scurry about, as the brisk wind weaves
In and out, between the trees
Leaving piles here and there, as deep as my knees!

The naked bushes have less to hide
So the fox, the badger, and deer are spied
As they move around, trying not to be seen,
Like they could last month,
when the leaves were green.
They can hear me coming, by the rustle and crack,
But they're not concerned, as I stay on the track.

Alas, the birdsong now has died.
Nor can I see one, though I've tried.
They must have moved to a warmer place,
Where food is put out, in garden space.
So, now to see them, I must go home
And find them sitting atop my gnomes!

Leaving the forest, I retrace my tracks.
Now lifting my collar, the wind at my back.
And, over my shoulder, uplifted, I see
Those great, tall trees are waving at me.
As if my leaving might cause them pain!
Farewell, my friends. I'll come again

The Secret Dream
Asoke Kumar Mitra
India

The moon swallowed the dark
Broken dreams silently hanging
Through the window pane,
A rusted frame of night
Stars twinkle gently
Owls moaning

Dreams are fragile glass
Untold story of joy and pain
Come alive with words you have not spoken
This night beside the window
Eyes speak a thousand words
In silence

What are the colors of rain
Falling like lost dreams...
Forgive, but never to trust again.

these things sign of autumn

Linda Crate
United States

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once my hair
was crimson as an autumn leaf,
and the sun shown gold
upon my flesh;
and those are the moments
i live for

those little snapshots
you cannot forget—

times spent with family and friends
even moments spent in solitude
that are so lovely you cannot forget

in autumn i find the colors
of my hair change like the hues of
autumn leaves,

and so i feel connected to this season;

pumpkin spice & apple cider
are both welcome at my house—

halloween costumes,
witchy movies and long thick skirts;
cute boots and the crisp crunch
of autumn leaves in my step

these are things that feel and smell and sing
of autumn.

Autumn

Darshana Thapa
India

[Instagram.com/creatandwrite](https://www.instagram.com/creatandwrite)

Here comes a season colourful with gay,
Paddy fields are so rich with golden hay,
Season of harvesting the paddy I say,
Dancing and singing separating food grains from hay.

Trees are bare since leaves are scattered everywhere,
Golden, brown, green and yellow,
With ripened fruit so delicious everywhere,
I imagine if I were a monkey, I would climb up the tree,
Swinging from branch to branch I would feel free,
Eating apples, bananas, guavas jumping from tree to tree.

Oh! Just feel the breeze, flying away leaves,
falling and kissing the ground without any sound,
it is just a wonderful season with fresh air all around,
Snow capped peak visible feeling profound.

Touch and stamp the leaves feel like eating chips,
So crunchy and crispy feel like dancing all around,
Stamping the leaves one, two, three, four,
oh, it is difficult to score,
let me go!

I imagine the maple leaves falling all around,
with birds chirping, singing and flying,
with blankets of clouds hiding the blue sky high above,
creating romantic mood for lovebirds sitting around.

The Garden & The Tree

Tate Gentry
United States

[Instagram.com/typical_tate](https://www.instagram.com/typical_tate)
Typicaltate.wordpress.com

In my yard is a garden,
Near the shade of a tree,
Every Autumn the story is the same.

It casts its refuse haphazardly down,
Uncaring of the plants I have so delicately tended.
Seeing this unfold I decide today will be the day.

I prepare my axe,
A cold, sharp blade,
It fills my hands with terrible purpose.

I am resigned to the work,
Laying axe to root,
Doom, it seemed, was certain.

Raising my blade,
I lift my eyes,
Beholding a strange, and familiar glory.

Through the near barren branches,
Golden rays of light came cascading down,
Illuminating me in all my folly.

I drop the axe,
Letting it fall to the earth,
How could I commit so great a sin?

If I had felled that tree,
A precious thing would be lost,
And I could not see the light that way again.

Autumn Leaves: Girl

Genevieve Ray
England

[Facebook.com/GenevieveRayPoet](https://www.facebook.com/GenevieveRayPoet)

A child stands alone
in a field that used to be green.
She's been here before
in the elegance of summer,
in the sunlight of her dreams.

Trees whisper around her,
telling the sighing stories
of what winter will become
if you really listen to the breeze,
the dance and the hum.

Blinded by autumn leaves,
the song between the trees,
the little girl dances,
whirling carelessly, mini-tornado,
in childlike ecstasy.

She dreams of being older, taking
her own little ones
to find the mysteries
of an ever autumnal sun.
She will teach the Latin words for
the season that she loves. From all
Hallow's eve
to the ending fires of harvest stars.

Hidden

Kassie Runyan
United States

KassieJRunyan.com

Autumn leaves
over a new house
covering it in gold
like a linen
over a plastic table
to hide the grey.
It provides character
to a characterless mold.
Life to a box
that was placed
in between other boxes
where people forget
the beige world
that resides beneath
the crumpling
crinkling
crumbling
sea of bold
orange and gold.

Rustic Autumn

Bilkis Moola
South Africa

We're getting into Zooming,
Oh, Autumn! Rustle your hues:
Of ochre, gold and melancholic adieu -
To summer in his blazing retreat,
Perforate your fires as flaming feats!

Leaves on trees tingle at your tinge -
Swathes of red and caresses of orange.
What whispers in your breeze beseech -
The passing of seasons and farewell entreat?

Harvest the fruits of a summer gone -
Before the approach of winter in her chilly dawn.
Rueful prints of abundant shrubs
Flush as fading colours in a rustic dusk.

Earthy tones as passionate plumes -
Fall in swirling cascades of leafy volumes.
To carpet a ground in a brittle spread
Crushed underfoot in a restless bed.

Oh, Autumn! Rustle your hues:
Season of mixed temperament and mingling
costumes.
Kindle fluorescence as radiations of light
In flourishing splendour of warmth and delight!

What We So Miss
Michaela Jane Fuller
United States

Brown leaves appear upon the trees,
The bees disappear from sight,
People wrap themselves in warmer clothes,
And the days, they lose their light.

Pubs begin to light their fires,
People flock to nearby seats,
And on every chalk pub menu,
Is a selection of warming, roasted meats.

Apples fall from orchard trees,
Blackberries are in full force,
And people gorge on apple pies,
With not a glimmer of remorse.

For now's the time to stay nice and warm,
To keep the energy levels high,
The animals go into hibernation,
Yet we don't and I ponder why.

It's the time to turn the heating on,
And get the old jumpers out,
And hope for sparklers and fireworks,
With "ooo" and "ahh" type shouts.

And even though this year may differ,
From the season we love and know,
There's no reason to feel too blue,
On account of the firework no-show.

Halloween may be cancelled,
But that's not a reason to be sad,
You can still dress up as a vampire,
Who cares if people think you're mad?

Make the most of this season,
Do what you can to make it fun,
Because things will go back to normal,
Next year when humanity has won.

So practice your firework "ooos" and "ahhs,"
Practice your vampire hiss,
As next year it will be back on plan,
And we will have what we so missed.

Autumn
Mel Haagman
England

[Facebook.com/GirlOnTheEdge90](https://www.facebook.com/GirlOnTheEdge90)
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[Twitter.com/GirlOnTheEdge90](https://twitter.com/GirlOnTheEdge90)

The crisp autumnal air
That I so love to inhale,
And the crunch of flattened leaves Left
behind me as trail.

The temperature, refreshing,
As it hits my pale skin,
And I feel a sense of happiness From
somewhere deep within. Autumn is
my favourite season,
The clothes are just the best,
The boots and the jackets,
But no need to wear a vest. Halloween
and fireworks,
Toffee apples on a stick,
The days are dark so early,
And they fly by like in a tick.
Sitting by a fire, in a warm, toasty pub,
Making soups and winter stews, Yes, I
love the summer sun,
But, It's Autumn I would choose.

Memories of Autumn

Asoke Kumar Mitra

India

Fragrant days of autumn
Chariot of clouds at dusk
Here the clay goddess come
Carries all my songs

The golden touch of her feet
Makes my joy to shine infinite
Birds sing in the morning
And the whispers of the wind
Flutes sound and the laughter

After four days—

Memories swirling into nowhere
Plunged into a sea of silence...

Ode to a Floral Dream

Aminath Neena

Maldives

Oh Fuchsia!
Thou who bring the summer's song
to autumn's crispy ears
Neither the pink gloss of camellia
Nor the satin gown of dahlia
Doeth pave justice
To thy magnum opus charisma

Oh Fuchsia
Thou who bring the summer's song
to autumn's crispy ears
Gentle friend of midsummer begonia
Companion of summer blue lobelia
Thy demure belittles the aura
And dazzle of all seasonal forsythia

Oh Fuchsia
Thou who bring the summer's song
to autumn's crispy ears
Curled velvet of Petunia
violet lips of glazed ambrosia
Thy bloom lone canst suffice
To the homosapien heart's dystopia

Oh Fuchsia
Thou who bring the summer's song
to autumn's crispy ears
Pentamerous petals of peachy freesia
Clutching onto shades of sun kissed zinnia
Thy sultry pout hath shamed
many a lovers' wanton euphoria

Oh Fuchsia!
Thou who bring the summer's song
to autumn's crispy ears
My earthly floral Isabella
Wearing thy autumny tinted penumbra
Dreamt have I so for mine espousal chemise
Thy beauty smiling in a roseate veiled tiara

Fuchsia! Oh Fuchsia!
I beg thee; let not this be
one ficklest dream of utopia

A Friend of Autumn

Loti Uwatabaye

Rwanda

[Facebook.com/uwloti](https://www.facebook.com/uwloti)

I remember and portray; Patience
is the autumn's nature. When the
arrogant sun
burns the chlorophyll,
I become desperate.
But just like the ferns,
I stand firm.
The big autumn tree says,
'I balance freely in nature.'
Without leaves,
living for love,
waving in every side
for the autumn poet
to compose a rhyme
under its open shelter.
I remember and portray;
How they kissed in the season.
Leaning to the woods,
feeling the moods.
As they climb the branches,
singing songs like birds
of the same feather,
they chase away my solitude.
No matter when leaves shade off,
poets are friends who never leave.
I absolutely love it
when the leaves fall.
Because I can compose
each line spontaneously.
After all, every shade
is poetically nurtured,
inspired by the autumn.

The Universe

Genevieve Lyons

United States

The universe
It's expanding, they say
Or is it contracting?
They say It is indifferent; it asks for nothing
I know that's not true
It asks—no, demands, our attention
Why else would I have these senses?
The five I learned about in school
And all the others:
Intuition, anxiety, joy
Injustice and justice and empathy
Like waves that roll and lap
Like electric prickles that poke and zap
Like fingers slammed in a door
So many sensations I did not try to feel
The universe insisted
The universe (that) made me
From a star-explosion/collision
It is only natural, would result in
Sparkles of light and also white-hot rage.



OUR FEATURED NOVEMBER WRITERS

"POETRY SHOULD SURPRISE BY A FINE
EXCESS AND NOT BY SINGULARITY - IT
SHOULD STRIKE THE READER AS A WORDING
OF HIS OWN HIGHEST THOUGHTS, AND APPEAR
ALMOST A REMEMBRANCE."

- Keats

CALLUM MCINTYRE

Songwriter Feature



I am singer songwriter who specializes in piano and voice. My songs are often lyric driven, mellow and emotive. I have been influenced by classic singer-songwriters such as Billy Joel, Nina Simone and Tom Waits, as well as newer artists such as Tom Odell, Bruno Major and Adele. I always turn to music and songwriting as a vehicle and expression of painful and often hard to articulate emotions. Working through certain feelings through song has always been very therapeutic for me!

- *Callum*

[youtube.com/channel/
UCGLtsRC6eQb4NT5cmEP3IIA](https://youtube.com/channel/UCGLtsRC6eQb4NT5cmEP3IIA)

Callummcintyre.bandcamp.com

[open.spotify.com/
artist/29jKr5xT7s2zMW5OWKN
8p4](https://open.spotify.com/artist/29jKr5xT7s2zMW5OWKN8p4)

[Music.apple.com/us/artist/callu
m-mcintyre/id1446211825](https://Music.apple.com/us/artist/callum-mcintyre/id1446211825)

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CALLUM MCINTYRE – SONGWRITER FEATURE

Song26 Lyrics

Smoke the cigarettes down to the bitter ends,
Moderate the way you dress to impress your best friends friends
Feel your blood run cold as you take a joke too far.
You sit and wonder who you are!

Pretend to them you like the skin you're in,
Sit in the corner and smile and have another gin and slim
You can see them making eyes like who the hell did we invite,
Your best friend smiles, and it's alright.

And you second guess your worthiness, how you'll never be enough
And you fill your head with the words they said, instead of call them on their bluff,
You construct a life of loneliness where everything goes wrong,
Instead of fighting the fight you write a song!

And it goes on and on and on and on and on
On and on and on and on and on

I'm down on my Luck and work is thin again,
I guess I could just give up but what the hell would I do then,
Just live to survive and I could work the nine til five,
I've got the dream but not the drive.

And I feel the palpitations like a dagger in my breast!
Simple conversations start to feel a god damn test
And you look at your foundations they don't seem to feel as strong
Instead of putting it right you write a song

And you second guess your worthiness, no I'll never be enough
When you fill your head with the words they said, instead of call them on their bluff,
And you construct a life of loneliness where everything goes wrong,
Instead of fighting the fight you write a song!

And it goes on and on and on and on and on
On and on and on and on and on
On and on and on and on and on
On and on and on and on and on

CALLUM MCINTYRE – SONGWRITER FEATURE

GENERIC LOVE SONG Lyrics

I sat down to write a love song,
But there was no one on my mind
I have chased, I have tried, but I'm
better at saying goodbye,
Why is love so hard to find?

I've been down this troubled road,
One too many times,
But now you're here before me and I
get nothing by your side.

CHORUS

And I've been waiting for so long,
For the right girl to come along.
And I will sing this generic love song til I
find you, til I find you!

Well I've been thinking about you,
The kind of girl that you might be
I guess my one requirement baby,
Is that I love you and you love me.

CHORUS

And I've been waiting for so long,
For the right girl to come along.
So I will sing this generic love song til I
find you, til I find you!

They say I should compromise,
But I'm still out chasing those
butterflies
No baby don't ask me twice,
Cause I just won't stop til I feel I can say
This is love, real love.

CHORUS

And I've been waiting for so long,
For the right girl to come along.
So I will sing this generic love song til I
find you, til I find you!

WAITING Lyrics

Perhaps I've put my faith in fate,
Tell me I'm a fool to wait,
Even though it's getting late I'll state it 'cause it's true.

There may be lover's come and go,
A dozen girls that you don't know,
But I love you and I've told you so; I'm waiting here for you.

I've done foolish things to pass the time in the hope I'd cast
you from my mind,
But in quiet moments still I find your pretty face come
through.
I could fake a smile and have a ball, I'm waiting here for you
to call,
And say you put my love above it all, I'm waiting here for
you!

You told me you had oats to sow,
A million places you might go
and all to have the chance to grow, I did what I could do

I hope for you you find success,
Express the things left unexpressed
And when you've landed from your cosmic quest I'm
waiting here for you!

I know in time we'll both move on, I'll comprehend that you
have gone
And someone else will come along that loves me through
and through.
If you remember all the days I took your hand and held your
gaze,
Allow me to repeat the phrase; I'm waiting here for you!

You can call my name if you find your feelings change,
I can't promise you I will feel the same.
Please don't say it's all for nothing, 'cause I'm still waiting
here for something... something!

If you remember all the days I took your hand and held your
gaze,
Allow me to repeat the phrase; I'm waiting here for you!

JACOB MOSES

Author Feature

Jacob Moses (AKA Jack M. Freedman) is a poet and spoken word artist from Staten Island, NY. Publications featuring his work span the globe. Countries include USA, Canada, UK, Ireland, France, The Netherlands, Ukraine, Bangladesh, India, Nigeria, Singapore, and Thailand. He penned the books: ...and the willow smiled (Cyberwit, 2019), Art Therapy 101 (Cyberwit, 2019), and Seance (Cyberwit, 2020). Each of these books are available on Amazon.

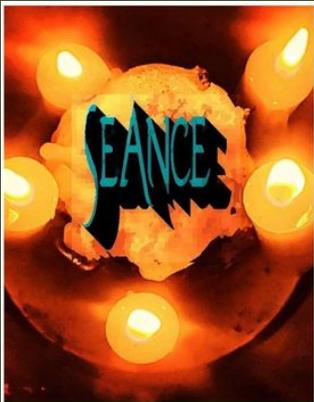


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[PW.org Profile](#)

JACOB MOSES – AUTHOR FEATURE



Jacob Moses

Seance is a collection of poetry written in April of 2020. It delves deep into the mind of a poet in quarantine. Subjects include Covid-19, mental illness, nostalgia, and the occult.

Purchase your copy of Seance [HERE!](#)

Autumn Leaves

Would you care to jump
in a pile of autumn leaves
under this white birch?

Come snap a photo
of your exploits as you dive
into this foliage.

In sweater weather,
you can feel the crunchiness
in your wind-chapped palms.

Stripping this bark bare,
you can feel the heat as you
find a branch to climb.

You need only one
source of vegetation where
these twigs emanate.

Now you may join me
as the brisk wind embraces
and the sap pours out.

JACOB MOSES – AUTHOR FEATURE

Through The Branches

Celestial and surreal

Leaves loosely

Blanket the sunset

Where the horizon meets

Crickets sing the coming

Of crimson descent

Reminiscent of the sea

Forming a gradient meld

With Bermudian sand

Branches mimic the curtains

Yet still reveal the essence

Of a heaven embodying stillness

But a colder equinox makes way

As air accelerates

Breezing between bark

Never forget the roots

These images remind us of

Ancestry neglected

Loosening of dogma

Abandonment of shame

Serenity within illumination

Spike

Bleakness of desert.

Cacti I have befriended.

I saw her come by

in her big red pickup truck.

Nice of her to stop and wave.

And so I wave back,

smiling as I see her pass

My eyes are wistful

filling with a deep ennui

as my whiskers hang below.

Maybe one day I

will find this companionship

and I'll be rescued

Not left in the tumbleweeds

rolling like the passing years.

Alas, I'm alone

reclining upon this rock,

hoping that Snoopy

has some leads on loving homes.

Flying Ace - take me away.

RENATA CLARKE-GRAY

Author Feature

I write what I think, what I feel and everything in between. I am a Brazilian and have traveled to different countries searching for inspiration for my poems. Currently I am living in Grenada. The spicy island, located in the magically fascinating Caribbean paradise.

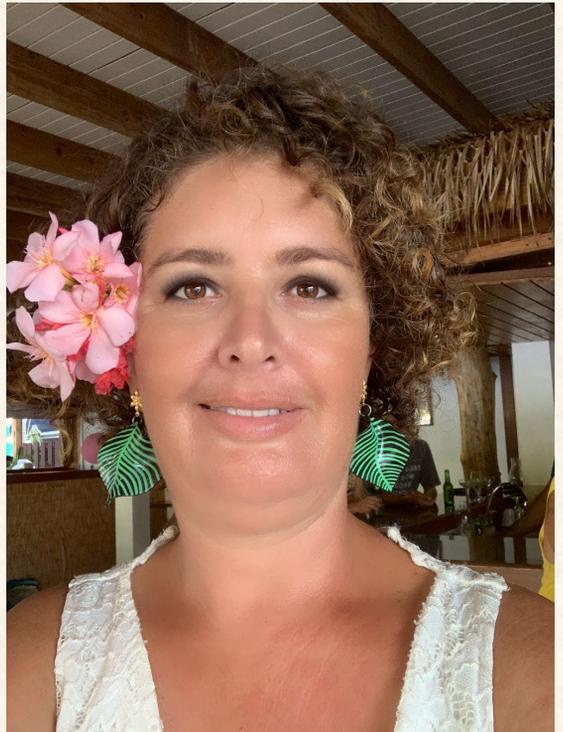
Escrevo o que penso, sinto e tudo mais. Sou uma brasileira que já viajei por diversos países em busca de inspiração para meus poemas. Atualmente estou morando em Grenada. A ilha das especiarias, localizada paraíso Caribenho magicamente fascinante.

- *Renata*

Renata Clarke-Gray, Brazilian, born in São Paulo, but at the age of 12 years old moved to the city of João Pessoa, the capital of Paraíba State. There she was involved in some children's theater performances. Her love for poetry started in 2018.

She has a bilingual blog (English and Portuguese) where in the beginning she was writing poetry, tales, and pillow talk (talking about sexuality and relationships). Now, she only does poetry, were she found it as “her calling.”

She is currently living in St George’s-Grenada on a sailboat – living the dream life of many of us.



[Shadesofclarkegray.blogspot.com](https://shadesofclarkegray.blogspot.com)

[Instagram.com/shadesofclarkegray](https://www.instagram.com/shadesofclarkegray)

#The Voice Of Acceptance

I am trying to believe
In every word you said.
I am trying to see
What you seeing in me.
Every stop in front of a mirror
Is another step to acceptance.
Accepting myself the way you seeing me.
The way the others seeing me.
I am trying to listen
To the voice inside of me.
The voice that is always
Screaming in my head,
But it's a battle,
It's difficult.
Why it's difficult the self acceptance?
It's one step forward
Two steps back...
But in that backs and forwards
I will continue to listen...
Listen to you,
Listen to others,
Listen to the voice,
The voice of acceptance.

#The Dreamland

Passion, desire, fire, poetry.
That was what you gave to me,
That was what I offered you.
Passionate feeling in the body.
Desirable way of wanting.
Fire ignited in the soul.
Poetry transported to a dreamland.
The land of wanting,
The land of dreaming,
The land of ecstasy.
Passion, desire, fire, poetry.
So it was me,
So it was you!

#Out Of Love

You came for a purpose.
You came to make me believe
That it's possible to feel love,
To be in love
To love!
You made me feel accepted.
Part of me wanted to stay
Part of me wanted to leave,
But you pulled the trigger first.
For your sake and mine...
I saw in your eyes your pain,
No words could express better.
Right there, I understood
I couldn't and I wouldn't
Hurt you more then I did.
Now, I am drowning on
My own blood
Blood of hurting, shame and loneliness...
I don't blame you.
It's just happened.
It needed to be done.
Out of love.

#Storytelling

Waves, breeze, sun.
Recollection of a moment that was gone.
Sky, water, sand.
Memories flowing with the wind.
Sunset, moon, silence.
The night that's bring the unknown.
The unknown world.
The unknown word.
Sunrise, birds, color.
The beauty of a new day,
A new beginning,
A new story!
My story.
Your story.
Our story.
Storytelling....

KEVIN RABAS

Author Feature

Past Poet Laureate of Kansas (2017-2019)
Kevin Rabas teaches at Emporia State University, where he leads the poetry and playwriting tracks and chairs the Department of English, Modern Languages, and Journalism. He has twelve books, including *Lisa's Flying Electric Piano*, a Kansas Notable Book and Nelson Poetry Book Award winner. He is the recipient of the Emporia State President's and Liberal Arts & Sciences Awards for Research and Creativity, and he is the winner of the Langston Hughes Award for Poetry.



ON DRUMS:

www.amazon.com/Drums-Kevin-Rabas/dp/0998700371/

LIKE BUDDHA-CALM BIRD:

amazon.com/Like-Buddha-Calm-Bird-Kevin-Rabas/dp/1732241023/

[grocery shopping at Walmart in the pandemic]

for Kelly

For me, God put everything back into perfect order. Before I'd be a few blocks down the road from Walmart in the car, moving away, going home, and I'd realize I'd forgotten three things, and I'd turn back and return to the store, go in, and get them. But now I just keep going. Nothing's worth it. Don't look back. The bug is in the air in there.

[musical]

Gray day, after
the long rain, everything
green, and inside, dry,
he sings the first
few words of "Love
a Rainy Night,"
by Eddie Rabbitt,
and she says, "Enough.
It's not raining.
And it's not night."

Touch

for Lisa

I wanted your heart more than your body,
as unusual as that sounds. Your body

also beautiful, an instrument that waits
to be played by slow or quick hands, a body

fit for only a master musician's touch,
a lover with precision and improvisation at
hand, a body

made for music of the highest level, virtuoso
echelon, instrument of legacy, old master
quality,
a Stradivarius violin, your body, my touch.

[vegans]

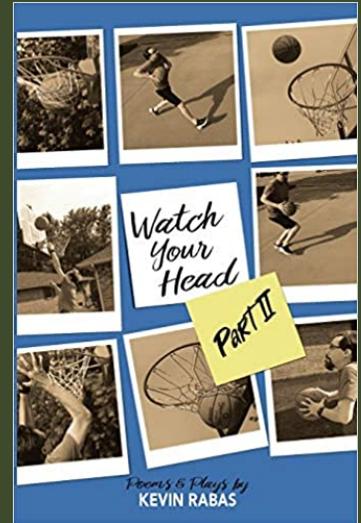
The cat brought in
a ground mouse, left it
on the rug that holds
his food, his water dish,
must've thought
what we needed
was more meat.

KEVIN RABAS – AUTHOR FEATURE

In *Watch Your Head 2*, Kevin Rabas offers more of his poetry of self care while recovering from a brain injury. Even as the poems are older, the reader can still trace back to how they are Kevin Rabas reflections on life, class, position: “I think of the men / I could have been— / if my mother had not / led me to the water’s edge / of books.” Also in this collection, Rabas shares his playwriting. Just as his poems reflect a Midwestern deep life, his plays do, too. His wit and charm shine, like in “Lemonade.” While the conversation between a young man getting a haircut and the stylist turns to Jazz, she asks if Charlie Parker, Miles, Coltrane, Keith Jarrett are any good. His response: “Let me tell ya, they make Kenny G look like Fabio just holding a horn.”

As a long time Kevin Rabas fan, I love this rich volume of poems written two decades ago that still holds up today. If you are new to his writing, *Watch Your Head 2* is just a great introduction to it as any of his collected books.

–Dennis Etzel Jr., *Everything is Ephemera*



A collection of 58 poems and 5 plays all rolled into one amazing collection. This book comes highly recommended by co-creator Kassie as she has been a fan of Kevin’s words for years.

Order your copy of *Watch Your Head Part 2* [HERE!](#)

LINDA CRATE

Author Feature

Linda M. Crate (she/her) is a Pennsylvanian writer.

My works have been published in numerous magazines and anthologies both online and in print. I am the author of six poetry chapbooks: *A Mermaid Crashing Into Dawn* (Fowlpox Press – June 2013), *Less Than A Man* (The Camel Saloon – January 2014), *If Tomorrow Never Comes* (Scars Publications, August 2016), *My Wings Were Made To Fly* (Flutter Press, September 2017), *splintered with terror* (Scars Publications, January 2018), and *More Than Bone Music* (Clare Songbirds Publishing House, March 2019). I am also the author of the novel *Phoenix Tears* (Czykmate Books, June 2018). I have two micro-poetry collections out: *Heaven Instead* (Origami Poems Project, May 2018) & *moon mother* (Origami Poems Project, March 2020). Recently I have also published three full-length poetry collections *Vampire Daughter* (Dark Gatekeeper Gaming, February 2020), *The Sweetest Blood* (Cyberwit, February 2020), and *Mythology of My Bones* (Cyberwit, August 2020). I am also a three time best of the net nominee and my poem *rising of the phoenix* was a finalist in the 2020 Origami Poems Project's Kindness Contest.

- *Linda*



[Facebook.com/Linda-M-Crate-129813357119547](https://www.facebook.com/Linda-M-Crate-129813357119547)

[Instagram.com/AuthorLindaMCrate](https://www.instagram.com/AuthorLindaMCrate)

[Twitter.com/thysilverdoe](https://twitter.com/thysilverdoe)

LINDA CRATE– AUTHOR FEATURE



Fall into *the samurai*, a chapbook by Linda M. Crate, now available for purchase! This collection of poems speaks of rebirth, reincarnation, and lessons from the past as a means to a better future. For the author, this is through a past life discovered in a very vivid dream that had both awed and confused her.

Within this dream, the author was visited by a strong, courageous woman—a samurai—who showed her how to listen to her past, learn from her mistakes, and inherit the future she deserves.

Purchase your copy of *The Samurai* [HERE!](#)

more inviting

pumpkins, pumpkin rolls, pumpkin spice;
i live for all the things pumpkin

but there's also apple cider,
and apple pie;

not to mention every glorious
hue of the leaves—

it is not hard for me to see why
autumn always steals my heart away,

she is the prettiest season;
and unlike spring she doesn't plant lots

of mud on my shoes and boots—
& she usually doesn't have a lot of rain,

the only thing about her that i disagree with
is the mornings are bitterly cold and the evenings

are either very hot or very cold;
i wish she could make her mind up and be

moderate like most of her days
because that would be more inviting.

LINDA CRATE– AUTHOR FEATURE

room to grow

like anne of green gables,
i am glad to live in a world
with octobers;
the best month of the year,
i think
because autumn is like a second spring
with all her colors and vibrant hues—
the leaves dance around
in the wind,
and the crows bedeck
trees;
and everything is beautiful—
in autumn i feel
as if i am pretty, too,
because my best memories are buried
in autumn leaves and apple cider
and pumpkin spice lattes;
in autumn the promise of new beginnings
and letting things go
is every present
reminding me that even in seasons of loss
there is room to grow.

the only aunt that can hug me

when i visit my best friend
in autumn, it feels like
a hug that i've given myself;

her enthusiasm spills
into me
making the season we enjoy
all the more better—

i love to fall into the spell
of autumn

with all her magic,
all her leaves, and all of her
hues and scents and laughter;

if autumn were a person
she would be my favorite aunt—

the only one i would let hug me.

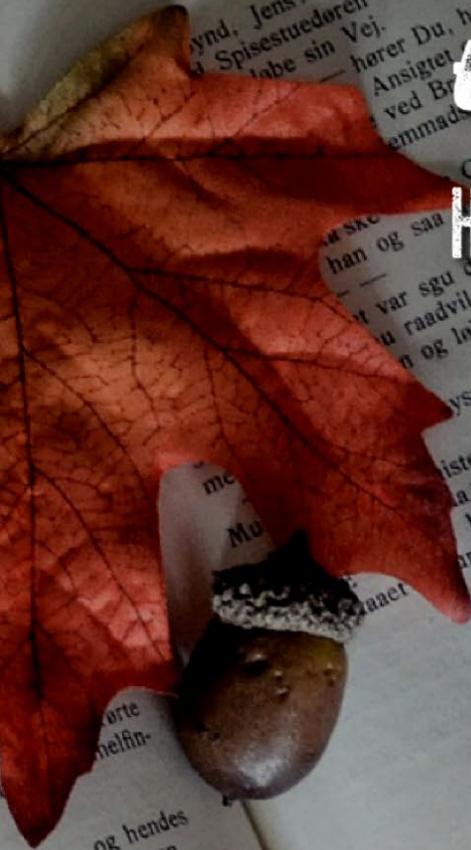


AN AFTERNOON CHAT WITH

CASSIE AND MICHELLE
THE WOMEN BEHIND

the open write at the

HUDSON VALLEY WRITERS CENTER



**LITERARY
FEATURE**

OPEN WRITE – CASSIE CARTAGINESE

Cassie Cartaginese is a fiction writer and co-host of the Hudson Valley Writers Center's Open Write night. She received her Bachelor's degree in Creative Writing from Purchase College in 2013. She is the author of the short story collection, *We Shall Thrive Now and Other Stories*, and her first novel, *Dreamers and Believers*, will be released in early 2021. Cassie has also been a judge in the *Writer's Digest* self-published book award contest, and has a passion for not only writing, but also guiding others on their own journeys (as writers or otherwise). When she isn't reading or writing fiction, you can find her teaching yoga, working in the special education program at a local high school, curled up with a good book and a cup of coffee, or trying to keep up with her tiny dog, Effie.



cassiecwriteryogi.wordpress.com

twitter.com/enviouspenguin

facebook.com/Cassie-Cartaginese-Writer-118529944910096/

OPEN WRITE – MICHELLE THOMAS



You can follow Michelle as she finds a few funny things to laugh at and inspire her on Twitter at twitter.com/MichellieThomas

Michelle Thomas is a fiction writer and co-host of the Hudson Valley Writers Center's Open Write Night. Her work, *Neverland Questions*, was one of the winning pieces for the Hudson Valley Writers Center Pros(e) of Pie contest. She juggles working in an Elementary Special Education Containment room and being a T.A. at a Daycare Center during the week. On the weekends you can find her at her local library working as a Library Clerk for the past 12 years. Once in a blue moon, when she does find time for herself, she is usually drinking mint tea, pondering and jotting down the plot for her next story, relaxing during the ambiance of a thunderstorm or cuddling her guinea pig, Plum.

OPEN WRITE – HUDSON VALLEY WRITERS CENTER

KASSIE J RUNYAN

In the age of Covid, interviews are done over Zoom and rely heavily on technology. Something relatively new and painstakingly obvious as I scramble to connect my phone and computer to the same Zoom meeting that I setup as my computer speakers started acting up about a month ago. I can see Michelle and Cassie talking amongst themselves, both with large smiles across their faces as these two friends and neighbors chat while waiting for me to get to a point where I can hear them. I finally have sound working, just as both of their videos freeze due to loss of Wi-Fi for a moment where they live in Sleepy Hollow, NY. We have a comfortable five minutes of me saying “Can you hear me?” before hanging up to start the process all over again. And we are back on, up and running, and off we go with clear instruction to let the conversation be our guide in this world.

I was introduced to Michelle and Cassie as I started exploring the virtual options for Open Mics early in the pandemic. Then I found the Hudson Valley Writers Center. From there, I was also introduced to the Open Write that these two amazing women run, and I was immediately fascinated by how they got started and curious on how the transition went from in-person to virtual – as our lives have all shifted over the past year.

Kassie: How did you get started with the Hudson Valley Open Write?

Cassie: The Open Write was around for about 6 months before Michelle and I took it over. Krista Madsen who is the managing director of the Writers Center, it was actually her brainchild, and she had two other writers initially who were helping run it. Soon though, they had other commitments and there was a fear it was going to fizzle out. Michelle and I went to almost every Open Write as we’ve been volunteering at the Writers Center for a while and we did a lot with Bill Buschel at the Open Mic Nights so we often

joke that we are already a part of the woodwork there. Krista saw we were there and invested and asked if it was something that we would like to take over. And we didn’t hesitate “Yes! Of course!”

Michelle: We volunteered for a while and the reason why I had heard of the Writers Center was through Cassie. We both loved writing and were already doing writing prompts together at home. She mentioned that she had this place that she would go to write and asked if I wanted to come and as soon as set foot in that place, I never left. Even virtually.

Cassie: What I love about Open Write as an event is that writing is such a lonely and solitary thing, and it can get lonely. Being able to create a community where people can get together, even silently writing, is beneficial when done with friends or people who will become your friends.

“Being able to create a community where people can get together, even silently writing, is beneficial when done with friends”

Michelle: It’s a space where introverts can unite and feed off each others creative energy while helping to bolster the energy and courage that it is all right to write. It is a rough thing to look at a blank page and say, “I have a story inside of me and how do I get it out?”

Cassie: A challenge as facilitate a space for that and help people face that blank page. We give them a prompt. Most people take it and run with it – but the prompt is just a suggestion. Anyone who has written knows that, most often, where you end up is not where you started.

OPEN WRITE FEATURE – HUDSON VALLEY WRITERS CENTER

Kassie: How has it been going moving it virtual?

Michelle: Like most things, if not all things, virtual when the intranet works it is fantastic. But if the intranet decides “I’m done” and it freezes – that can be frustrating. However, this time can be liberating because if you live too far to make it in person to get to our safe space to write. If distance was your one problem – now you have the opportunity to make it virtually. You can sit in the comfort of your own home and with your own supplies and write amongst new faces and common faces.

“It is now a place where introverts can still unite... separately.”

Cassie: The Open Write has been going on for a year and a half and it has always had this sense of community that I thought would be lost when we switched over as so many other things did not translate that well to Zoom. You are not limited to Sleepy Hollow anymore. Not even New York. You could be anywhere in the country or the world and join. That’s been really neat to discover new people that have joined since the pandemic started as well as new faces who don’t want to lose that connection.

Michelle: (laughing) It is now a place where introverts can still unite... separately.

Cassie: Also we sold out almost every month since going into the pandemic. We’ve had to turn people away for the first time, but we don’t want it to get too big because then it becomes unwieldy. That alone tells us that there is a need and to be able to supply that for people is awesome.

Kassie: What are some of your favorite prompts that you’ve given?

Michelle: When we were meeting in person – I loved doing the exquisite corpse – a way to make a collage of everyone’s words. You have 30 seconds to 2 minutes to write one sentence and then slide that paper to the next person who will only read that sentence before writing the next sentence so by the time it gets back to the original owner, you have a whole piece that is created by everyone. Sometimes it makes sense and sometimes it doesn’t, but that’s part of the fun.

Cassie: Yeah, that’s also a great icebreaker. There are a lot of laughs with people loosening up and laughing with people they just make, which is nice because writing is so serious. I also like prompts where you have to pick something out of a hat or a fishbowl and they are themes. Like quotes or one work. This time last year we did fall words. You pick your paper and what you get, you write.

Kassie: Do you think that once the pandemic is over, do you have concern about losing the wider spread crowd?

Cassie: I think that going back to in-person will be a transition. I am open to moving towards a hybrid model where people are both in person and on Zoom.

Michelle: I think we will have to get used to being back in the same room without the fear. The hybrid model will have to be how it works moving forward. We haven’t crossed that bridge yet. It’s still being built. But once that is done, we will figure out how to cross that when it’s right.

Please check out Cassie and Michelle with the Hudson Valley Writers Center Open Write – as a safe space to write and create “separately” through zoom each month. In addition, HVWC offers a monthly Open Mic and many other virtual events that you can find at [WritersCenter.org](https://www.writerscenter.org)



IT'S NEVER TOO EARLY
to start planning
HOLIDAY GIFT GIVING
while supporting
AUTHORS AT THE SAME
time

(WE MAKE GREAT

STOCKING STUFFERS!)

HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE! something for everyone on your list

For person dreaming of a past life and courage



[LINK](#)

For the person needing to reflect on self-care and growth

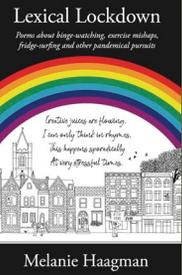


[LINK](#)

For the nostalgic kindred spirit interested in occult poetry

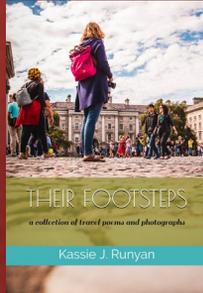


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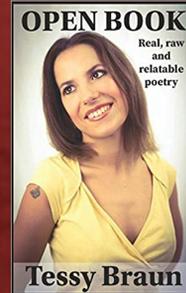
For the lonely soul needing some relatable humor during Covid

[LINK](#)



For the traveler or even the one who dreams to be a traveler in the future

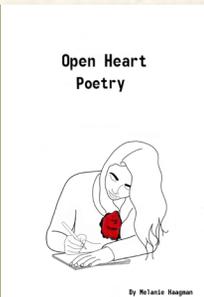
[LINK](#)



For the woman looking for something relatable and honest

[LINK](#)

For the person looking to understand mental health needs



[LINK](#)

For the young adult looking for mystery and love



[LINK](#)

For the protestor at heart looking to fight injustice



[LINK](#)



UPCOMING VIRTUAL
EVENTS

FOR NOVEMBER!

PIER POETS

1ST FRIDAY OF EVERY MONTH

Pier Poetry gets together on the first Friday of every month. At present we're meeting on Zoom. You can find all the details of how to join us on our Facebook page. Our next open mic is November 6th.

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

facebook.com/pierpoets



SOUNDBITES



MONTHLY – THIS MONTH: NOVEMBER 9TH

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

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

This month, Patrick Lodge will be the featured guest!

To take part in the Zoom sessions either in an open mic slot or as an audience member, please sign up [here](#)! Closing date is Saturday the 7th of November.

[Facebook.com/SoundbitesPoetry](https://www.facebook.com/SoundbitesPoetry)

Upcoming Dates:
December 7th

RUN YOUR TONGUE

NOVEMBER 12TH AND 26TH

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

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

We are doing a one-off special event that you can register for at:
<https://www.facebook.com/events/327411755180222>

Our next regular open mic is here: <https://www.facebook.com/events/708882516642091>

Facebook.com/runyourtongue
Instagram.com/runyourtongue



APPLES AND SNAKES

READ. WATCH. LISTEN.

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

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

**APPLES
AND
SNAKES**

facebook.com/applesandsnakes

Instagram.com/applesandsnakes

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ApplesAndSnakes.org

MEET OUR
CO-CREATORS!



KASSIE J RUNYAN

Co-Creator Feature



KassieJRunyan.com

Facebook.com/kassiejrunyan

Instagram.com/kjrunyan

Twitter.com/kassandrerunyan

youtube.com/playlist?list=PLvSEcLEfE196OE_Ya2LNNN3kjFp82Ktt2

I've always had an affinity for reading and writing. I heard that every good writer is also a good reader. If that's true, then I'm in luck. I was always the odd kid walking down the hallway while reading a book... which may also explain my clumsiness... or had book(s) hidden in various places around the house, just in case I had a spare minute while I was supposed to be doing chores. Nothing has really changed all that much. My writing started in much the same way. Here and there, scribbled into notebooks, starting when I was younger. With the start of my first novel when I was 18. It was almost an escape from the real world at a time in my life where I needed it most. Eventually life got in the way and I put down the novel for over 10 years, picking it back up in my early 30's and finishing it. Poetry is my 'magazine writing.' When I have an emotion or an idea and I have to get it on paper but didn't have time to work it into a book, it came out as a song or a poem. That makes this endeavor with Mel even more special. It's something that we both love to write and read, and we get to help build others up while also getting some wonderful things to read. Best of both worlds!

I have two poetry collections out currently – *This is 2020* (a beautifully biased view of the bad and good from 2020 and where we need to find improvements as a human race) and *Their Footsteps* (a collection of poems and photographs that have been created/taken while traveling). These are for sale along with other small gifts on my website at KassieJRunyan.com

- *Kassie*

KASSIE J RUNYAN – CO-CREATOR FEATURE

As I lay dying – September 2020

As I lay dying
will I know I'm declining
or expiring?
Will they be crying
and denying?
A priest occupying
and purifying
ignoring my defying?

Was my life satisfying
or mystifying?
Did I do enough applying
or complying
or flat out buying?
Was I disqualifying
in my intensifying
need for personifying
and verifying
and gratifying
and overflying?

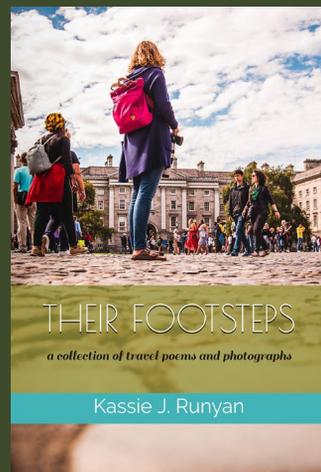
Will I be able to stop trying
and only focus on flying
as I leave my body behind?

Oh, Dear Girl – October 2020

Outside the house,
is there any other place
where you could go?
Across the street
that is paved with threats
and a life...
unknown.
Oh, my dear girl,
take a step outside.
You know that the threats
live only in you head.
Oh, my brave girl,
one foot in front
and then the other.
Lift your head up high
and make your own damn path.
The unknown future
is the best part.



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



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

KASSIE J RUNYAN – CO-CREATOR FEATURE

The Leaf – October 2020

He was born
only a short
while ago.
He started, a young sprout
all shiny and green.
Growing strong
with his brothers
in the summer heat.
Plans for his life,
he made in his mind,
to travel far and wide
and become empowered
to share with others.
He listened to stories
of those below
and curled up to dream
of elephants
and waterfalls
and the explorations
that would never come
as he grew older and bitter.
He thought,
“There’s not enough time”
and the days passed quicker
and here he stayed with his kin.
The harder he pushed,
the longer he stayed.
Until the days grew colder
and he found himself
finally alone.
There’s no time like the present.
Nothing holding him back now.
He had nothing to pack.
He was ready to go.
He said his final farewell
and pushed off of his home.
The wind caught him and he knew
this really was his time
to go into the world;
Just before he fell to the ground
to join the dead and dying below.

drifting thoughts – october 2020

smoke is billowing
inside my little head
trying to form the letters
into words with meaning
before they fall
through my body
and onto the page
words flowing
and glowing
and growing
into substance
full of protest
and pizzazz
that make creatures stop
in their heavy tracks
and full-grown men
weep unashamed
and unabashed
before the letters
turn back into smoke
and drift away
off the page
my arm stretches
hands grasped
on nothing
as the words
slip away from me
and out across the universe
searching for one
more discerning
and deserving
of their power

MEL HAAGMAN

Co-Creator Feature

I am a special needs teacher from the UK. I live by the sea and love nothing more than walking along the beach with a coffee from my favourite café. I have always loved reading and writing poetry.

I have written two books and I'm beginning to work on my third. My first book, 'Open Heart Poetry' was self-published in 2019. This book of poems aims to break the stigma attached to living with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder. The first part focusses heavily on mental health and the second part contains more relatable, light-hearted poetry about a range of everyday life subjects.

My second book, Lexical Lockdown: Poems about Binge-Watching, Exercise Mishaps, Fridge-Surfing and other Pandemic Pursuits was written throughout the UK lockdown. It is written in a diary format, chronologically capturing the daily updates from the pandemic in rhyme as well as the difficulties we all faced being in lockdown. It is written in a raw, honest and at times comical way. Lexical lockdown will be a historical keepsake that accurately portrays the challenging times we have faced and are still facing.

- Mel



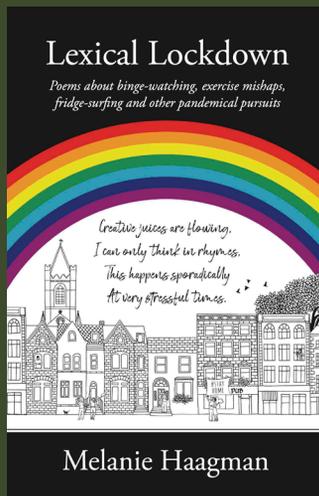
[Facebook.com/girlontheedge90](https://www.facebook.com/girlontheedge90)

[Instagram.com/girlontheedge90](https://www.instagram.com/girlontheedge90)

[Twitter.com/girlontheedge1](https://twitter.com/girlontheedge1)

[youtube.com/channel/UCjh8b4Y7gSF
GKewzPKZH8lw](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCjh8b4Y7gSF GKewzPKZH8lw)

MEL HAAGMAN – CO-CREATOR FEATURE



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



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

You were here...

You were here and you affected me
In a way no one else could ever do
You were here and you inspired me,
And I've been changed by you.
I will try not to feel pain and sorrow,
You were here and that should be enough,
For I was lucky to have known you
Yet at times things still feel tough.
You were here and you taught me things,
That I never would have learnt,
You were here for many years,
And then suddenly you weren't.
You were here and you encouraged me,
To strive to be whatever I desired,
You were here and then you weren't
For your guidance had expired.
You were here and that's what matters,
And your influence won't die,
Which means that when I lost you,
I never said goodbye...

Control Freak

I am a creature of habit,
A control freak maybe too,
I like my own agenda,
Doing what I want to do.
I think this is the case for most,
But I want to go with the flow,
Be spontaneous and care-free,
How this feels, I just don't know.
But something deep within me,
That's inbuilt into my brain,
Doesn't allow this trait to form,
And instead I stay the same.
The pandemic has only heightened,
This sense of restriction within me
And only now do I realise,
This isn't how it's meant to be.
When all of this is over,
I am putting impulse to the test,
In the hope that control freak me,
Will take a bloody rest.

A Fresh Start...

Today is the day...
For a brand new healthy me,
I'm going to quit the sugar
And take up the herbal tea.
I'm going to go veggie
No more dairy I'll consume,
And the running that I paused
I'm going to urgently resume.
I've had enough of regretting
The bad choices I have made
And I hate that it takes half an hour
For my jean indent to fade!
It's just it's been so boring lately,
And with not much we can do,
I've been eating for leisure
I can't deny that it's not true.
But today this stops entirely,
And food is not my friend,
Now I have to go and dash,
I have a soup to blend!

Spider Season for Arachnophobes!

I will happily accept spiders,
When they respect my space,
I don't want them near my body,
Or especially my face.
They evoke a reaction within me,
That shakes me to my core,
Is it their eight legs,
Or is there something more?
I don't wish to kill them,
They have the right to live,
It's just if they come near me,
It's not something I forgive.
I don't mind the skinny kind,
It's the thick and hairy breed,
Where you can hear their footsteps,
As they pass by with such speed.
A spider phobia is so cliché,
But one I just can't fight,
Especially if the spider's legs,
Are an over average height.
If someone cannot help me,
For myself I just can't fend,
So as you can imagine now
I'm going round the bend!





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