

# Philadelphia**Stories**

Cultivating a community of writers, artists, and readers across the Delaware Valley

WINTER / 2022 / FREE



**FLUTTERING HEART** NEIL KENNEDY / **LIKE SPEAKING IN MORSE CODE** KEVIN KEARNEY  
**MR. SALAMEH GETS DRUNK AT THE WEDDING** SUSAN MUADDI DARRAJ / **BROMPTON'S MIXTURE** KATHY SMITH

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## ART



### **Moonshadow by Patricia Shaw Lima**

Patricia Shaw Lima has practiced and taught the fine art of printmaking since 1996. Her art has been juried into numerous international, national, and regional shows and is included in several public and private collections. A graduate of Temple University's Tyler School of Art, Lima is a faculty member at Abington Art Center and serves as director of the 705 WEST Printshop + Gallery in Jenkintown.



### **Tree by Joy Lai**

Joy Lai is an art educator based in Philadelphia. She teaches at the William Penn Charter School where she shares her love of art and nature with her wonderful students every day. She finds joy and comfort in the presence of trees and in painting them en plein-air.



### **Manayunk Bridge by Rob Lybeck**

Rob Lybeck is a Center City Philadelphia photographer with a large, twenty-plus year collection of work concentrating on the city's built environment, B&V street documentary, architectural details, cityscapes as well as land/seascapes. Lybeck is a member of the Da Vinci Art Alliance in Philadelphia.



### **Blue by Rob Lybeck**



### **Fairmount Rockface by Keith Willis**

Fine artist Keith Willis has lived in the Philadelphia area since 1977. Using oils, his medium of choice, Willis creates realistic landscapes and portraits showing life as it is. He is a member of the Oil Painters of America and the National Oil and Acrylics Painters Society. His work renders the beauty of our world and reveals his wonder in it. [www.keithwillisart.com](http://www.keithwillisart.com)



### **Ivy Hand by Krista Milito**

Krista Milito's two passions in life are photography and dogs. She's been lucky enough to have worked in both worlds. Milito spent many years in the photography/lab industry and exhibited her fine art photography in shows in Center City, Philadelphia. Now a dog trainer with The Philly Pack, she pursues photography as a hobby. She has decided she's more of an "Imaginarian" and maintains her love of photography by capturing images on walks through our city.



### **Open Waters by Catherine Kuzma**

Born in North Philadelphia, Catherine Kuzma earned her Bachelor of Arts degree from Rutgers University. Kuzma's oil paintings have been shown nationally and locally in Philadelphia, New Jersey and NYC in solo, group, juried, and museum exhibitions. Sparking the rich, meditative process of painting, nature and landscape serve as the initial inspiration for Kuzma's paintings. More of her award-winning work can be viewed at [www.catherinekuzma.com](http://www.catherinekuzma.com).



### **Winter in the Park by Ernest Koch**

Ernest Koch's heart was always in his photography. Upon an early retirement from commercial construction, he was able to devote his full attention to that passion, focusing on landscapes, seascapes and cityscapes in black and white or color. Since his first group exhibition in 2008, his work has appeared in many group, solo and juried exhibitions in Philadelphia, Montgomery and Bucks counties. Koch serves as curator for the annual Pennypack Ecological Restoration Trust photography contest. [www.ernestkoch.com](http://www.ernestkoch.com).

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# Fluttering Heart

Neil Kennedy

---

You said we needed a cage. We found one at a thrift store. It was a round cage with a big domed top that reminded me of a mosque or a Russian church. There were three perches inside and plenty of floor space. I'm sure it wasn't brass, but the bars were that color and set far enough apart to not obscure the view looking in. Nobody wanted it to feel like a prison. We brought it home. It sat on your lap on the ride. It was a nice day and the sun came through the windows and reflected on the bars of the cage. You absolutely tapped your fingers on the bars. When you noticed you were doing it you stopped, looked over to me, and smiled.

We put the cage in the library because it was out of the way but not too out of the way, and it looked good in front of the yellow walls in that room. We had already moved the old end table from your mother's bedroom set into that room, just for the cage. When we put the cage on it we stepped back to look at it and held hands. It was like putting up a Christmas tree or painting a new child's room.

After dinner that night we had sex in the bedroom with the window open. I had been on top, and afterwards you rolled me over and playfully pinned me with your hands on my chest. I thought it'd be like that, but that's no way to catch a heart. We both sat up in bed facing each other. You rested your fingers against my chest and then, gently, reached in. My heart hesitated at first. You knew better than to reach for it, just kept your hand still and waited patiently instead. It didn't take long for my heart to step into your hand and perch on your fingers. You brought it out of my ribcage and I closed my chest as it beat calmly between us. It was easy.

It liked its new surroundings right away, hearts being naturally inclined to small enclosed spaces. You fell into the habit of talking to it, and we gave it time out of its cage every day to perch on our hands and fly around the room. Every time I needed a book from the library, I would admire the heart, I have to admit, preening or sitting in the bottom of its cage in the sun. It didn't sing in the morning, but there was a soft, steady heartbeat below life at our place at any time of the day.

Hearts can live for years. When our friends would come over you would show them the library, your face full of pride and happiness any time they showed an interest in my heart. They would stand looking at it sleeping in its cage, laugh with surprise if it happened to turn in a circle. You were patient, letting them look at it as long as they wanted. More than once, a visitor would

begin to cry, softly, while looking at the heart, or exhale deep breaths slowly through their lips like blowing out candles on a birthday cake. We would kiss, just once, in the doorway.

I loved going to the museum with you. We would spend the whole day. I loved the people as much as the art: the students sketching in their notepads on the floor, families whispering or talking too loudly, the people standing in front of a single painting to look as deeply into it as one can. There was always at least someone in front of van Gogh's sunflowers doing that, a lot of times lots of people. But only one room over would be Renoir, women bathing together in water and light. You bought me a postcard once of that one. Do you remember hooking your thumb into the waistband of my jeans while we looked at that painting? I could feel my heart back home doing what hearts do in moments like that.

After we started fighting more often, and then after we stopped, I saved that postcard, packing it with the rest of my things. We divided the books in the library, which didn't take long. They were mostly mine. My heart watched us from its usual perch. It was time, we agreed. I took off my shirt. Then, maybe after a moment of hesitation for both of us, I undid my belt and stepped out of my pants and underwear. You opened the cage. My heart, again, as always, perched on your fingers. You moved your hand to my chest and rested it there for a moment: your hand, my chest, my heart beating between us. Then you reached in, gentle as before. My heart returned to my body. It seemed to recognize the place.

The other day I was walking in the park by the church when I saw some robins bathing in a puddle. It is still spring. I watched them tilt their heads to listen for worms under the mud. They ran a few steps if they heard nothing to try again in a different spot. If they did hear the thump thump thump of a worm as it pulsed through the body of the planet they plunged their beaks into the mud and, as often as not, pulled him out to beat his dirty body against the ground and eat him. It was a nice day, wet and warm and living.

I don't know what happened to the cage. I'm assuming that you sold it, or put it outside by the sidewalk with a sign that said "Free."

---

Neil Craig Kennedy is a librarian. His book *A Jigsaw Puzzle* is available from Finishing Line Press. He lives outside Philadelphia.

# 63rd Street: An Ode to Childhood

Poem by Courtney C. Gambrell

---

We wore slap bracelets and pants that swished. Housed somewhere between paradise and Cobbs Creek where the drill teams pounded percussion into our blood streams. We'd beg our parents for water ice in the summertime, itching to dangle from monkey bars or play freeze tag. The very mention of water balloon fights threatened the glory of our fresh braids and high-top fades. Yesterday's blood-dried scrapes were forgotten. We were too preoccupied to notice the wood chips tickling the bottoms of our feet until the walk home. Cricket chirps, lightning bugs and moths prophet us with knowing that the day was well spent. Our teeth became stars of jubilee rivaling the streetlights. These were the days before it mattered that I couldn't jump double-dutch. My heart hop-scotched to private ideas about rainbows and happy meals. Back then, I harnessed the boon of the present moment. Back then, I could reach for a cloud and give it a name.



Courtney C. Gambrell was born in Philadelphia, PA, where she currently resides. She is a Fellow of The Watering Hole whose poems have appeared in *APIARY Magazine*, *As/Us Journal*, *For Harriet*, *Philadelphia Stories*, the *Healing Verse Philly Poetry Line*, and elsewhere.

# Exit

Poem by Leonard Gontarek

---

*George Segal, 1975, 2020. Plaster, wood, plastic, metal and electric light.*

Lot of good it did me. Rising before dark.  
There was a bench in the woods. I sat on it and waited for Autumn. It came too.  
Light (tangelo bruise) brushed the leaves.  
The wolf's head in my satchel. Smells of fresh laundry and evil. Now the  
  
Building across the way is burning. And not just that one, but all of them.  
The floor feels good under me, cool. Sunlight hacked into fragments.  
Shaved, paper-thin layers. I think I used to know the word

In Spanish. I'll wait right  
Here, dammit. One day they will

Deliver milk again. I'll learn the Spanish for thank-you and betray.

I'll step out the door to The End of The World to admire  
Eros and the roses I spend so much

Time on. The yard, at night,  
Illumined with strange light.



Leonard Gontarek is the author of eight books of poems, including *The Long Way Home* (2021). His poems have appeared in *Field*, *Verse Daily*, *Fence*, *American Poetry Review*, *Joyful Noise: An Anthology of American Spiritual Poetry*, and *The Best American Poetry* (edited by Paul Muldoon). He coordinates *Peace/Works*, *Poetry In Common*, *Philly Poetry Day*, and was Poetry Consultant for *Whitman at 200: Art and Democracy*. He conducts the poetry workshop: *Making Poems That Last*.





# Like Speaking in Morse Code

Kevin Kearney

Do you need instructions? (Y/N)  
>n

You wake up to yelling from downstairs, just like yesterday. You find your glasses on the nightstand and feel the world come back into focus. Your room has gotten progressively filthier since you arrived here. There was a point, only a few months ago, when you could still navigate the mess to find what you needed—deodorant, misplaced socks, the expensive calculator required for Trig. But now, five months in, anything that falls to the ground is as good as gone.

Beside you in bed is your laptop, still on from the night before. This might be the only object that will never be lost to the heap. You don't know what you'd do without it.

> open laptop

The computer powers out of Sleep Mode. You lean in and study the screen, trying to remember where you left off.

Before you can read any further, you're interrupted by more screaming from downstairs. "Are you awake?!"

> ignore

You turn back to the laptop and begin reading.

The game opens in a top-secret underground prison somewhere in the middle of Kansas. There's a long description of how oppressive the room feels. The player doesn't know why he's been imprisoned—something about a shadowy organization of elites intent on world domination. You remember this being better.

You hear footsteps in the hallway, each one louder than the last. When they stop, Pop swings open the door. "You're late!" He's still yelling, even though you're now in the same room. "What the hell are you waiting for?"

> say "i guess i overslept"  
"I guess I overslept," you say.

"Well, now you're awake." His voice is softer now, and more difficult to disregard. "Put on some clothes and grab some food." As he walks back downstairs, you close the laptop, find

your bookbag amidst the wreckage on the floor, and get dressed.

> go to the kitchen

Pop's at the stove, cracking eggs over his cast-iron pan. "So what's with this sleep pattern," he says. It's technically a question, but he delivers it as a statement. You're not sure how to provide an answer. You're not even sure he's looking for one.

> say "i was writing"

"I was writing," you say.

He cracks another egg. "You seem to think you can get through high school without sleep."

Up until five months ago, you'd only spent time with Pop on holidays. It wasn't that you'd disliked him; you hadn't had any say in the matter. According to your mother, the family was toxic. Anathema. "My dad's so judgmental," she always said.

She wasn't wrong about that. Since you began staying with Pop, he's made it clear that you need to "shape up," to "get to working," to "get serious." You nod every time he mentions these things, though you're not sure if he really expects you to change. You're sixteen. Part of you thinks he knows that you're not actually listening.

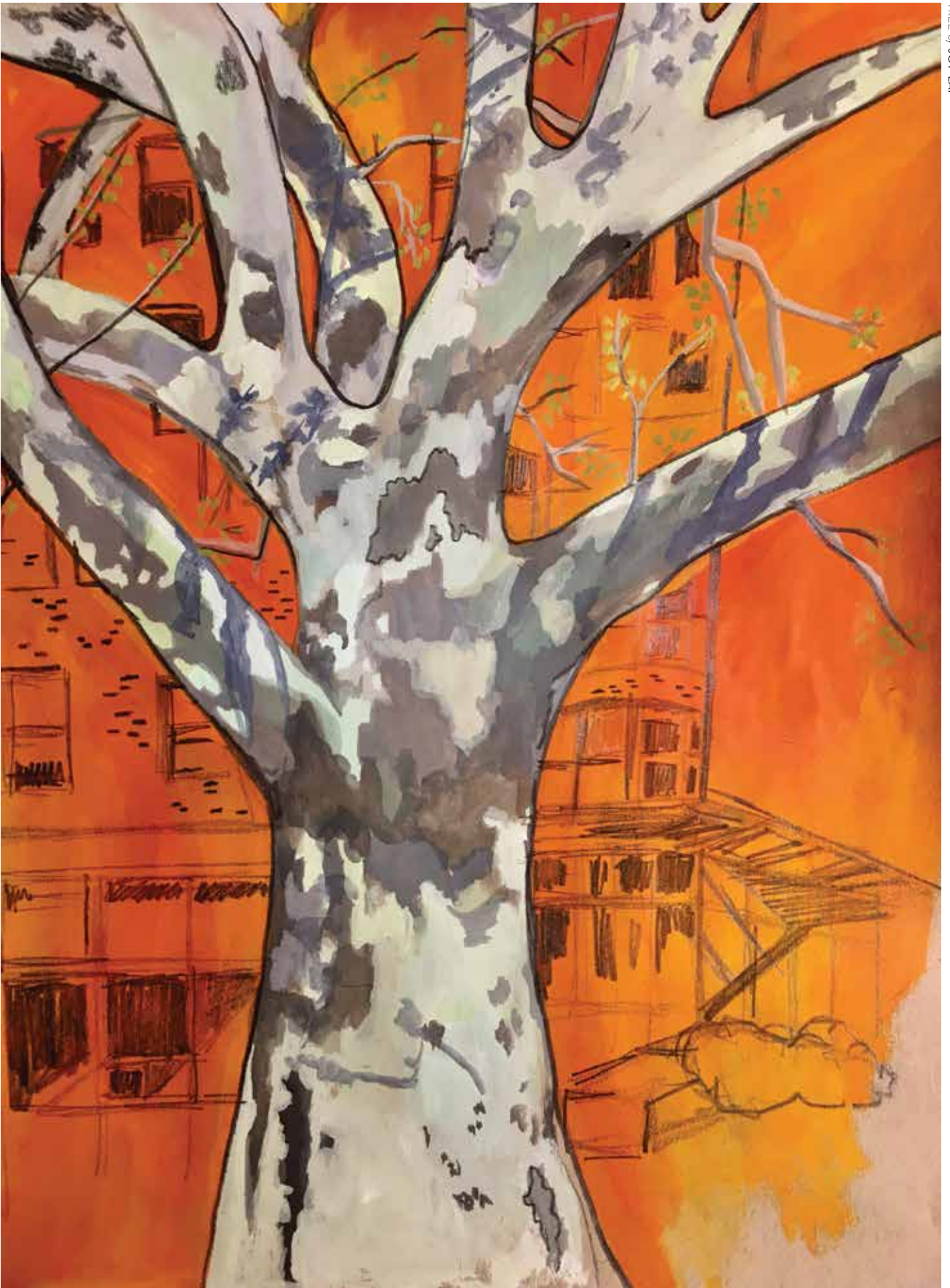
"You need to focus on your schoolwork," he says now, placing some runny eggs and dry toast in front of you. "And to be able to focus on your schoolwork, you need sleep."

> eat quickly and head to the bus

You scarf down the plate in silence as Pop drones on about manhood and responsibility and "the defining moments in our lives." With your mouth still full, you head for the door before he can start his daily lecture about steering clear of your Mom's mistakes.

The yellow bus pulls up to the corner just as you arrive. As you board, you scan for open seats. Only two remain. There's one in the back row, where the kids with vape pens sit and blow grape-scented rings, and then there's the cramped space behind the driver.

> sit behind the driver and take out laptop



You take the seat behind the driver and open your laptop. Almost everyone on the bus is staring at a screen, but they're watching their favorite YouTubers beg for subscriptions or listening to whiny songs about pharmaceuticals and heartbreak. But you, you're different. You're working.

You once tried to explain it all to a classmate, a shy kid with greasy hair you thought might be sympathetic, maybe even interested. It didn't work.

"It's a game?" he asked.

You nodded.

"But it's only words?"

You knew elaborating would be pointless.

> open new doc

You open a new Doc and rack your brain for phrases you've heard over the last few days. You type "THE BORDERLINE" at the top of the page and stare at the way it sits against the white background. Your cursor blinks, like it's taunting you to press Delete.

You ignore that impulse and instead try to imagine where the story might open. You try to imagine the options that would be offered to the player. You try to imagine the narratives that would arise from their choices, and the ones after those, and the ones after those. You start to get a bit dizzy, but you keep typing, hoping some of it will make more sense than whatever it was that you'd written the night before.

The bus pulls to a stop. You've arrived at school.

> hide

Sorry, I didn't understand that request.

> hide under seat

Sorry, I didn't understand that request.

> head to first period

Ms. Andrews is already starting the lesson when you arrive. "I want to give you some time to work on your memoir projects today," she says as you settle into your desk. It's an assignment the class started last week. You, however, haven't written a word. Any minute that Ms. Andrews had allowed for in-class writing, you'd instead spent working on "THE FAMILY," an adventure game about Giuseppe Crambino's attempt to take his rightful place at the head of the Crambino Crime Syndicate. You'd been twenty rooms in when you realized you didn't know anything about the mob. Demoralized, you'd pressed Ctrl+A and deleted the whole thing. The fifteen thousand words you'd written had suddenly vanished and were replaced by an unvarnished white space.

"Alright," Ms. Andrews says, "let's get to work!"

> open the borderline

You take out your laptop, power it back from Sleep Mode,

and reopen the Doc containing "THE BORDERLINE." You decide to avoid reading whatever you'd written on the bus. You want to focus on addition, not subtraction, so you begin typing whatever comes to mind. Character sketches, possible rooms, narrative webs—all of it could be valuable, so long as you can find the right place. At this point, the only goal is to try and keep your fingers moving as fast as your train of thought.

When you look up from your frantic typing, you realize Ms. Andrews is behind you. "Are you working on your memoir?" You know this is what she'd call a rhetorical question.

>lie

"Yes," you say. You know it is not convincing.

She squats beside you, hovering just above the ground so she's eye-level. "You know, your grandfather told me that this is an interest of yours. Honestly? I think it sounds pretty cool." She's smiling, but you can tell it's forced. The whole thing feels like an act. You imagine Ms. Andrews and Pops in this classroom, sitting across from one another in comically small student desks, hatching this elaborate, pathetic plan to try and solve the problem that is your life.

>don't respond

You don't respond.

"You know, I used to play some of these games when I was a kid," Ms. Andrews says. "Floppy disks. Do you know what those are?"

>say "yes"

"Yes," you say.

"And what I remember about all of those games is that they're so focused on storytelling. I mean, if you're spending all your free time writing these games, then you must do a lot of writing." She smiles. This is meant to be comforting. "It just makes me think that if you dedicate some of that effort towards the writing assignments for this class, then your grades will improve. I bet your games will get better, too."

>don't respond

You don't respond.

"You know," she says, lowering her voice so the other students won't hear. "I really think an assignment like this one, where you're asked to dive into your past, to sift through your memories, might be especially helpful for you." She pauses. "I know you've been through a lot."

What you want to say is that your writing has nothing to do with the past. It doesn't follow a straight line backwards. It doesn't follow any straight lines. No, your writing is concerned with the present. Your stories suggest that everything could suddenly change at any given moment, that nothing is ever truly fixed, that everything depends on your next move.

>say "can i use the bathroom"

"Can I use the bathroom?" you say. Ms. Andrews nods and



moves on to the next student. You almost feel bad. She's convinced that she's finally broken through. She really believes you're headed to the bathroom to have a good cry and throw some cold water on your face, that you'll return to the room a new man, ready to exorcise all of your pain through the 750 word assignment.

>leave classroom with backpack

When Ms. Andrews begins working with another student, you grab your backpack and walk out the door. The restroom is to the east, a few hundred feet away. Ten feet to the west is an emergency exit you've seen teachers use for clandestine smoke breaks.

>take exit door to the west and walk off campus

You step outside the door, amazed by how much fresher the air feels. There were rumors that the school building was still rife with asbestos and now you're certain they're true.

You're not too familiar with the neighborhood around school. You've never ventured off-campus for lunch like some of the older kids and you've never paid attention to street signs and landmarks on your bus ride in. That time's always been dedicated to working on the next game.

>use gps on phone to find route home

You pull out your phone and type in Pops' address. The app starts buffering, the circle icon spinning over and over again, asking you to just wait a little bit longer. As you're staring, you feel someone approaching. You tell yourself not to panic, but you also begin thinking of plausible excuses for why you're not in class.

"Do you remember me?" You look up to find an older woman. She's smiling wide, exposing her unnaturally white teeth. "I was a friend of your mom's." She says this like it's a good thing. You figure they must have fallen out of touch before everything happened.

"Okay," you say. It comes out of your mouth without thinking. You hope it somehow sounds polite.

"How's she been?" the woman says.

You don't know how to answer the question. She's wearing a navy pantsuit, the kind Mom wore years ago back when she was working the front desk at the law firm on the other side of the city. Maybe Mom knew this woman back then. Maybe this woman still works there. Maybe everyone at the law firm wears pantsuits, and smiles when they ask questions, and reaches the bare minimum of what qualifies as a "functioning adult." As far as you can tell, the woman seems to have her life together. You wonder if she has kids at home. You wonder what they think of her. You wonder if they appreciate the fact that their mom is simply present, if they realize what a blessing it is to have a reliably boring parent capable of patience and self-control.

The woman's smile turns to a concerned stare. "Are you all right?" she says.

> run

Where do you want to run?

> home

You turn away from the woman, in what you hope is the direction of Pops' house. You start with a fast walk, but in just a few steps it turns into a jog. The woman is calling after you, wondering if she said something wrong, but you don't respond. Soon enough, you're sprinting, and the laptop in your bag bangs against your spine with every step.

After a few blocks, you stop to catch your breath. You're hunched over, hands on your knees, panting as you stare at the sidewalk. When your pulse has finally returned to its normal pace, you take in the surroundings: you're in front of the post office, across from the 4 Points Deli. Pops' place is just a few minutes from here. You know he'll be furious when he sees you at home, but you're too tired to spend the day wandering around town. You'll suck up your pride and nod along with his lecture, hoping that such obvious appeasement will stop him from throwing you in the car and delivering you back to Andrews's English class.

When you enter the house, Pops is fast asleep on the living room couch. You realize you've never actually considered what he does all day while you're at school. Observing him there, eyes shut tight and legs propped up on the armrest, you wonder why. His skin seems to be losing its pigment, exposing purple and blue veins that remind you of the human anatomy chapter in your Biology textbook. It's easy to forget that he's old enough to require a mid-morning nap, that taking you in is not something he'd planned for when he'd retired almost two decades earlier.

>go to bedroom

You quietly climb the stairs and return to your room. You lie down on the bed and open your laptop. "THE BORDERLINE" is still on the screen and you read the first few lines again, trying to put yourself back in the state-of-mind you'd found before Ms. Andrews had interrupted. But no matter how many times you re-read the opening, you can't find the words to continue. You're still thinking about Pops lying on the couch, about the smiling woman from the street, about the awkward way Ms. Andrews whispered, "I know you've been through a lot."

You're still thinking about Mom. You're always thinking about Mom.

You close the file for "THE BORDERLINE" and re-open what you'd started last night: "LIKE SPEAKING IN MORSE CODE." You highlight all of the story's text, every description of that oppressive underground bunker and the player's confusion at his situation, and press Delete. All that remains is the title, centered at the top of the Doc, waiting for direction.

"You wake up to yelling from downstairs," you type, "just like yesterday."

---

Kevin M. Kearney's writing has appeared in *Necessary Fiction*, *X-R-A-Y*, *Hobart*, and elsewhere. He's a fiction editor at *Rejection Letters* and a staff writer for *PopMatters*. He lives and teaches in Philadelphia. More of his work can be found at [kevinmkearney.com](http://kevinmkearney.com)

# Springtime in Philly: A Mirror Sonnet

Poem by Dawn Manning

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(Demeter)

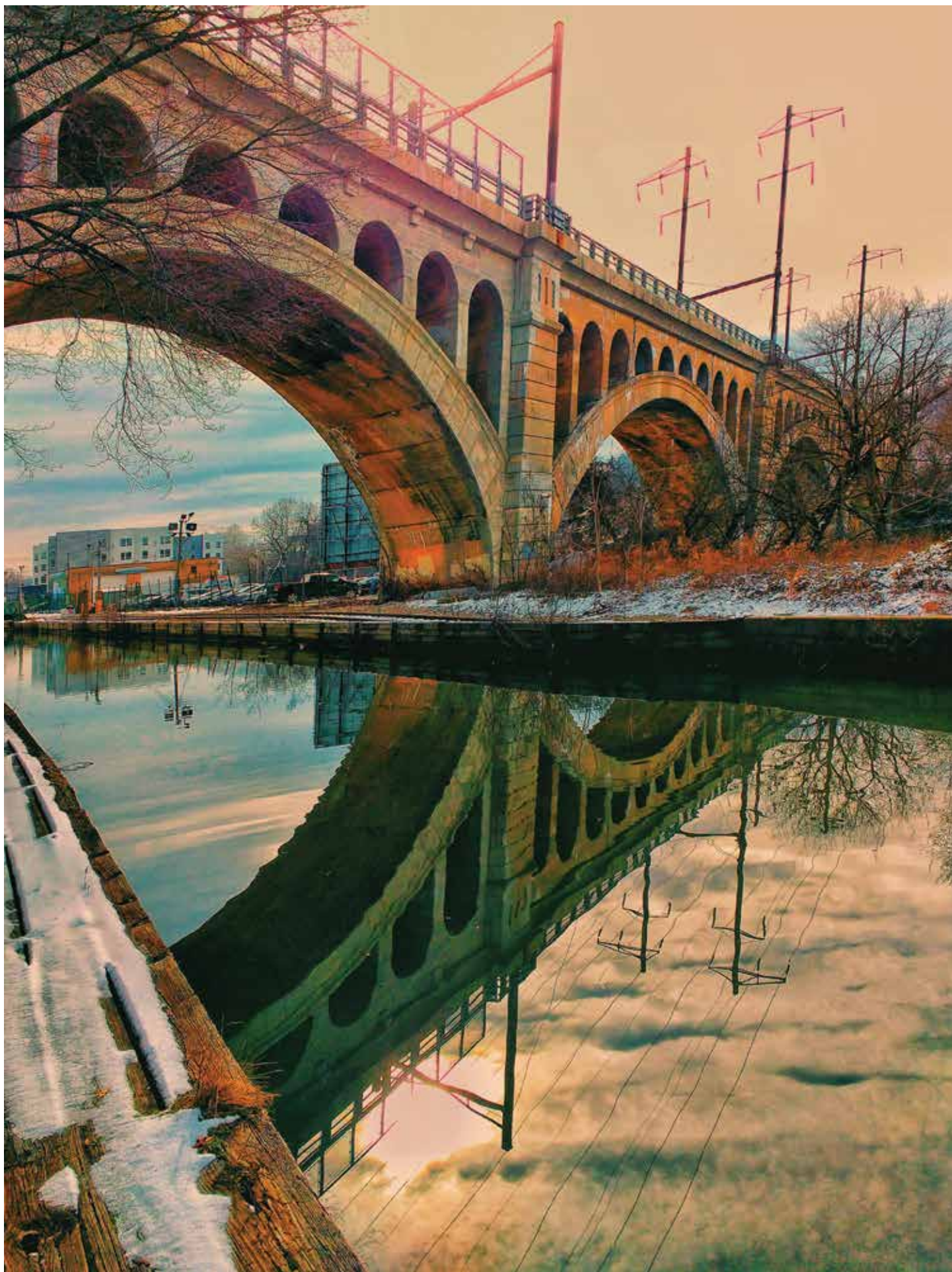
Wake crocuses—push through crumbling asphalt;  
purr and croon, slumbering cats curled like snails—  
let feral dreams rumble through the sewers.  
Snowdrops: root through the frost, unlatch her vault  
and show her the way out; read the rock-braille  
with fingers deft as mice feet, lithe as worms,  
and tunnel to the Market-Frankford line.  
She'll board that train. Wake up, weeping cherries  
and forsythias, down rows of brownstones  
till the thaw gives way to fluttering vines—  
my trademark *welcome back* sign. Wind: carry  
my love notes by sea—fragrant balm of storms,  
lilac, and exhaust. If only she would  
eat that scent like seeds, undo sleep for good.

(Cora)

Eat that scent like seeds, undo sleep for good—  
lilac and exhaust—if only I could.  
Love notes come by sea in a balm of storms—  
my *soon-I'll-be-back* signs. They carry me  
till the thaw gives way to fluttering vines  
and forsythias. Down rows of brownstones,  
I'll board that train, wake up buds of cherries.  
I'll tunnel to the Market-Frankford line—  
my fingers deft as mice feet, lithe as worms—  
and I'll feel my way out, read the rock-braille.  
Snowdrops root through frost, help unlatch my vault.  
My feral dreams rumble through the sewers—  
cats uncurling from slumber to croon, wail.  
But first, I must push through this crumbling asphalt.



Dawn Manning creates art with words, metal, photography, and other media, in Delco, PA. She is the author of *Postcards from the Dead Letter Office* (Burlesque Press, 2016). Her poems have appeared in *CALYX*, *Ecotone*, *Smartish Pace*, and other literary publications. She also herds cats for local rescue efforts.







# Mr. Salameh Gets Drunk at the Wedding

Susan Muaddi Darraj

There was a man in the ballroom of the Sheraton wearing a skirt.

Mr. Salameh watched the man approach the buffet. He still couldn't believe he was at a wedding—his son's wedding—where you had to stand in line and fetch your own food. So many insults, so many things wrong with this wedding. A daughter-in-law who couldn't pronounce her new husband's name. A wedding that cost a year's salary. A fight with his wife. A DJ who played American music that sounded like a video game. A celebration less than forty days after they'd buried his mother. The mass for her soul hadn't even been said, and here was her only grandson, dancing a strange dance with his skinny wife, flapping their arms like terrified birds.

And now, this man.

A man with a red beard and bare legs, at his son's wedding, eating pork on a stick istaghfurallah.

"Meghan's family is proud of their culture, just like we are," Raed had argued. "You have to respect that."

But they had a culture too. He'd asked Raed for Arabic music, and that's when his future daughter-in-law revealed her dark side. "My aunt is a harpist and she's playing a special song," she insisted, her blue eyes staring boldly at Mr. Salameh, momentarily breaking her sweet act. Mr. Salameh wasn't stupid. He'd been in America for thirty years. He knew the elusiveness of delicate white women, how they drew Arab boys to them like planets to a fiery star, how they turned their young men into blushing, stammering fools. He saw how Meghan, with her pink nails, her slim wrists, her tiny waist, transformed Raed, his football-playing, lawyer son, his only son—the child he'd poured all his energy and love into, the child he'd prayed—well, no matter all that now because like a witch, she changed him from a proud racehorse into a mule that lowers itself to the ground for its back to be loaded. And while she was controlling him with her glossy smiles, she'd say, "Culture isn't everything. Ray and I are both Leos," like it was such a big fucking deal. *One-twelfth of the world are Leos*, Mr. Salameh wanted to shout at her every time she said it.

All around him, people talked lightly, and laughed. My moth-

er is dead, he wanted to shout. Stop clinking your glasses. But they continued talking about the tall, dark, handsome groom and the bride who looked like a model. The man in the skirt was back in the buffet line, piling his plate with so much chicken, steak, and pork—so much meat, these Americans, and then they wonder why they're always so tired. Mr. Salameh thought Raed should count him as four guests, not one.

Mrs. Salameh approached, looking angelic, even though he knew she was still upset. His beautiful wife, in a sky-blue satin dress. You'll be overdressed, he'd warned her. They'll all be wearing jeans probably. She didn't care. He's my only son, she'd said. And I'm going to look like the mother of the groom, she'd declared.

"Are you going to eat?" his wife asked, slipping her hand into his as he strolled to the bar and ordered another drink. It felt nice to speak to someone in Arabic.

"Are you still angry?" he asked her.

"You need to eat," she replied, wearing her patient smile. She indulged him a lot and he was grateful to her.

"This whole thing...everything is so rushed."

"They had to marry before Lent," his wife said calmly. "You know that. It was bad timing about your mother."

"She's only been dead three weeks," he said, shaking his head. "And by the way....There is a man here wearing a dress."

"Allah yerhamha," she said. "I miss your mother too."

"They should have waited. It's not even been forty days."

"If they waited, it would be Lent. No weddings during Lent." That was the voice she used when she was annoyed with him, and it was his signal to stop. Sometimes he wanted her to drop the serene veil she always wore. For her to be as angry as he was.

"The living," he continued, "used to pause for the dead. Out of respect."

"Let me put you a plate. You should eat something. How many drinks have you had?"

"I'm not eating." Something caught his attention. "Look...there he is. Do you see him?"

She ignored his question. "People are watching. You're the





father of the groom."

"Do you see what that man is doing?"

She finally turned and looked. "I saw him. He's very nice. His wife is the aunt. The harpist. We haven't met her yet."

"Why do we have to have their music but not our music?" Mr. Salameh asked.

"Everyone can tell that you're not happy."

"I'm not happy. You can see the bride's tits right down the front of her damn dress. I'm scared to stand next to her in case something falls out—"

"*Khalas*." Her voice was firm, so he snapped his mouth shut. She put her arm through his. "I'm going to fix you a plate. And then we're going to chat with Raed and maybe take some pictures. And then we're going to smile and shake hands with everyone. We will mingle. You will look happy."

"There's nobody here whose hand I want to shake."

"Your nephew Marcus came. We should say hello to him. I'm glad he did, even though you wouldn't let me invite his sister."

"Her own father doesn't talk to her. Why would I invite her?"

Mrs. Salameh muttered *Allah give me patience*, dropped his arm, and headed towards the buffet line. As he watched her walk away, he noticed Meghan's father approaching. Raed's father-in-law. It was too late to escape, so he drained his glass as the man trudged towards him. His hair was white and stuck out at all angles on his head, and his glasses slipped down his bulbous nose. He looked like a white Husni from the Ghawar movies—a man nobody could take seriously, no matter how dressed up he got.

"I think they need us at the front for more photos, Wah-leed."

"Ok. Ok. I go get my wife."

"Just the fathers now, I think." He clapped Mr. Salameh on the back and pulled him toward the head table, where Raed and Meghan stood. "Enjoying yourself?"

"Yes."

"It's ok that we had alcohol, right?"

"Yes, of course." He held up his own glass. "I tell you before we are Christians, not Muslims." As if to make a point, he beckoned to a waiter, handed over his empty glass, and took a fresh one off the tray.

"Gotta always ask, you know. This way the culture doesn't become a problem." He was only half-listening to Mr. Salameh anyway, waving at other guests. Before they reached the front of the room, the man stopped and waved his hand around. "Like some of your guests here, they're wearing head scarves. That's not gonna be something Raed surprises my Meghan with, right? In a few years?"

"We are not Muslims." Mr. Salameh's head started to hurt. "These are our friends."

"Right."

"But our guests—they are not forced to wear." He nodded towards Mrs. Hamdi, who stood to the side with her husband. "That lady right there, she is pediatrician. She run the whole clinic at Bayview. Their daughter, she is soccer player. She play for big Maryland team."

"She wears that thing while she plays?"

"Yes."

"Some things are ok. Some things...I gotta ask." Meghan's father shrugged. "This country is changing. Not all the new people coming in are like you, you know."

Mr. Salameh thought about his mother, who was so kind and sweet and would have still looked at this man and muttered,

"*Kalb ibn kalb*." He glanced up at his son Raed, who stood tall besides his elf-wife and wondered, how could he do this to me?

They took the damn picture. The mothers came too. There were more pictures. He drank another glass but saw his wife's glare and declined another one. More and more people joined the picture: Raed and Meghan's coworkers, cousins, friends. He wondered who would see this picture in ten years, twenty years. Maybe his grandchildren? In forty years, his great-grandchildren? He wanted them to see him smiling, but not too broadly. He was going to lose his son. He'd already lost him. And if his grandchildren grew up feeling lost in the world, unattached to anything, he wanted them to know that, even before their birth, he had anticipated this, and he had been sad.

"I wish Sitti Fayrouz were here," Raed told him somberly, as they posed for a father-son picture.

"Is that your grandmother?" his tiny wife asked.

Raed nodded sadly, and everyone made a sympathetic sound, like a rush of emotion, even though they had been dancing something called a curly shuffle a few minutes before.

He wished his son hadn't said that.

Because now, he was sinking into his memory of those final days in the hospice when she was gasping for breath. He'd sat many long hours in that room with her, just the two of them sheltering from the rest of the world. Over the beeping of her machines, she'd mumbled to him, when she'd thought he was his dead brother, and talked to him so lovingly in her delirium. "I missed you, Michel. Where have you been?" And in his own desperation to comfort her, he'd lied. He'd pretended to be Michel, who could make everyone smile just by walking into a room and who should have been the one to live anyway.

And that's why, now, Mr. Salameh couldn't stop himself from replying to his son, "You should have respected her memory, then."

"Stop, Baba." Raed said firmly.

"You're disrespecting her memory. And I don't even know why I came for this."

"Waleed." That was his wife.

"I'm telling you all," he shouted in Arabic, "that I don't even know why I am here. There is nothing for me at this wedding."

Several people tried to calm him. Then he heard, "Uncle Waleed." That was his nephew, Marcus, who barely talked to them anymore. "Let's take this somewhere else."

"Why are you always bossing people around?" he asked Marcus, who gave him a dry look like he wanted to pick him up and throw him. He could too, the beast, he was taller than Raed and even wider and more muscular.

"This isn't the time."

"I guess we should be glad you're even here," Mr. Salameh shouted.

"I'll give you one warning."

"Or what? One warning? For what?"

Raed whispered something hurriedly to his fairy wife, who walked away with her father, clutching his arm as if she couldn't stand on her own skinny legs.

"Are you drunk?" Raed asked him.

"Yes," replied Mr. Salameh. "I am as drunk as Peter at the Last Supper." He yelled towards Raed's father-in-law. "Peter, you hear? Not Mohammad! Peter!"

Marcus rolled his eyes.

"You're mad at us because we don't talk to your sister? Isn't

that it?"

Marcus became very quiet.

"Nobody talks to her." Mr. Salameh had him now. What could he say? "Why would we? She's not welcome here. She's shacking up with her boyfriend..." he shouted, getting close to his nephew.

The punch hit him in the stomach. Later, his wife would say Marcus had spared him his face. All he knew in the moment was that he was suddenly lying on the floor of the ballroom. When he registered the gasps and felt the pain shoot through his abdomen, he understood: Marcus had knocked him flat on his ass.

Within minutes, there was a stampede of people to the front of the hall. Some lifted him, others squawked nervously like chickens. "What happened?" "Why did the big guy hit the groom's father?" "Should we call the police?"

"No bolice. No bolice," he heard his wife imploring someone. "Everything eez ok."

"We're ok, everybody," Raed said. "Not a fight. Just an accident. My father tripped."

The muttering changed as people who had not really seen the punch began to absorb and repeat the new story.

And that was it. Marcus, who was heading out the door, was no longer the aggressor. The story morphed quickly: he, Mr. Salameh, was a drunk fool who'd embarrassed himself at his only son's wedding.

"I'm leaving," he announced, standing up. "This is not right. This hasn't been right from the beginning." He walked out slowly; his hand pressed to his side. It hurt to breathe.

Raed didn't follow him out.

When he turned back to look, he saw Raed at the front, looking angry and disappointed, his arm around his wife to comfort her.

His wife and a few others did follow him. He told them, after a few minutes, that he was fine. They wandered off, including Mrs. Salameh, who said, "I'm going to check on Raed." Alone, he trudged through the Sheraton's carpeted hallways until he found himself in an empty lounge room. He stood under a large chandelier, assembled from thousands of glass beads, each one reflecting the light to look bigger and more important than it really was. The chandelier cascaded down into a cone shape, like a big light ready to beam him up to heaven. Maybe that wasn't where he'd end up, he thought, looking around at the ornate room, lined with tall vases of flowers, plush carpeting, rich sofas and chairs. He slumped onto one couch and stared up at that conical chandelier, which seemed to be pointed down, cocked, and aimed right at his heart.

It was a few seconds later when he heard the music. A soft, rippling sound, like a qanoun. He shook his head, but it was still there. He looked around the lounge, he was alone, but he realized it was coming from a side room. He stood up and lurched unsteadily toward what looked like a break room for employees. Inside, a group of servers, wearing black vests and pants with white shirts, stood listening reverently to a woman sitting behind a large harp, hugging it as if it were a child.

He didn't know the song she was playing and humming, but it soothed him. And then she looked up, stared into his eyes, and he gasped loudly.

"You," he said, holding out his hand.

"Hello," she said quietly, tilting her head to the side just as she used to do before. "What a coincidence."

"My God. I thought I will never see you again."

"I do see patients' families sometimes. It's always nice to reconnect." She spoke softly, stood up and held out her hands.

He gripped them and remembered how warm they'd felt, rubbing his back, holding the prayer beads on his rosary for him when he'd collapsed into sobs. They were not smooth hands, even though her face looked young. Her hands were worn, like supple leather that has been broken. They'd held his mother's hands during an injection, they'd lifted his mother by the arms, held a stethoscope to her lungs, to her back. They'd dipped a sponge into a shallow bucket to clean his mother's legs and feet, and they'd run a comb through his mother's long, uncut, white hair. And in the end, they'd pulled the sheet gently over his mother's contorted face.

"The groom is my son."

"Ah. The bride is my husband's cousin. I promised her I'd play for her. It's an old family song."

"Your husband...he's out there?"

"Yes. Did you meet him? He has a long beard."

"Yes. I see him. He is wearing a skirt?"

She laughed softly. "I always remember our conversations so fondly." She was indulging him, he could tell, the way his wife did. "It's called a kilt. I'm sure you've seen one before. Our family plaid is the design he's wearing."

It's still a skirt, he thought, but this time, he kept it in his own mind. There suddenly didn't seem to be any pleasure, any benefit to shocking someone, to packing his thoughts into a bullet and firing it into his listener. He felt, so strongly right then, that he would rather hurt himself, than insult this woman.

"Thank you for what you did. For my mother."

"It was a difficult few weeks. And I'm glad I had a chance to know her. She was lovely."

He squeezed her hand again, his throat thick, but his mind clear.

"Will you come and listen to me play?"

"Everyone in there." He shrugged. "Nobody happy with me."

"Oh, I can't believe that."

"It's true."

"I'd love for you to hear the song, though." She patted his shoulder. "Won't you come and listen?"

He did, sitting just inside the door at a vacant table. He watched and listened as she fluttered her hands over the strings, pulling out a lovely, echoing sound, along with her pretty voice. He'd walked in on her once singing to his mother, he remembered—the Ave Maria. He watched as people in Meghan's family stood and listened reverently to her. Mrs. Salameh's head was craned, looking around the room for him. I'm back here, he wanted to tell her. I'm ok. I'm listening.

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Susan Muaddi Darraj won the American Book Award and the AWP Grace Paley Prize for her short story collection, *A Curious Land: Stories from Home*. Her writing has been recognized with a Ford Fellowship from USA Artists and an Individual Artist Award from the Maryland State Arts Council. In January 2020, Capstone Books launched her debut children's chapter book series, *Farah Rocks*, for which she won the Arab American Book Award. Susan grew up in South Philadelphia and now lives in Baltimore, where she teaches fiction writing at The Johns Hopkins University.

# Mama & the Clothesline / Tuckahoe 2001

Poem by Edythe Rodriguez

---

She bent slowly, grabbin the damp  
bedsheet from the laundry basket.  
then stood, arms stretched  
so nothin touched the ground.  
Mama snapped the sheet in the  
wind to scare the wrinkles out,  
took the splinterin clothespin and  
stuck it on the thin line runnin  
cross the parkin lot. all our stuff  
danced on display but the drawers.

We headed back to the basement to  
wash the next load and she watched  
me run behind her, her brown eyes  
soft and laughin. this time, Mama  
let me hold the quarters and the  
whole buildin could hear me.  
skippin and jinglin.



Edythe Rodriguez is a Philly-based poet who studied Africology and creative writing at Temple University. She loves neo-soul, battle rap, and long walks through old poetry journals. She has received fellowships from The Watering Hole, Brooklyn Poets, and Palm Beach Poetry Festival. Her work is a call for aggressive healing and is published in *Obsidian*, *Sonku*, *Call and Response Journal* and *Bayou Magazine*.



# A Widow Learns About Mars, Molten At Its Core

Poem by Amy Small-McKinney

---

Even now, is it possible to consider the self-original: *the source  
from which something arises?*

Nothing solid after your death, one hour in that loss-space equaled  
seven years of earthy life. Grief unoriginal and shocking.

Learning that Mars is quiet and seismically stable,  
oddly reassuring. The silence inside of me  
after you died. My thin, rigid outer layer, my lighter  
volatile elements. Maybe,  
I was not alone.

What trust is required to stay behind,  
to hear good luck close by?

Like me, my new lover returns from near-empty space where sound  
could not be heard, where atoms and molecules could not carry  
our voices through air or water.

Now faith follows the sound  
of our original music, wounded and delighted.



Amy Small-McKinney's chapbook, *One Day I Am A Field*, written during Covid after her husband's death, is forthcoming with Glass Lyre Press. Her second full-length book, *Walking Towards Cranes*, won the Kithara Book Prize 2016. She was the 2011 Montgomery County Poet Laureate, judged by Chris Bursk. October 2021, she co-taught a workshop with poet Nicole Greaves, *Poetry & Aging: Does What We Have to Say Matter?* at the virtual Caesura Poetry Festival. Small-McKinney resides in Philadelphia where she was born and raised.



# Brompton's Mixture

Kathy Smith

My grandmother fancied herself a glamorous woman, an old-fashioned movie star, but in fact she weighed seventy-nine pounds and had ropes of veins running up her arms. She rarely changed out of her front-zip housecoat with crumpled, used tissues in one pocket and a pack of Pall Malls in the other. Her hearing aid squealed on and off as she neared various electric household appliances and she'd grimace as she screwed her fingers into her ear to shift the broadcast channel.

The vestigial efforts she made at grooming were rudimentary. Each day she brushed her teeth with Comet cleanser to scour the tea stains and cigarette tar off of her teeth. She wore shiny gold bedroom slippers that slapped her cracked heels when she walked like flip-flops, and she tucked the badly dyed wisps of her hair under a crooked wig. Her fingernails, though thick and ridged, were always neatly painted. By me.

I loved her.

My grandmother had terminal pancreatic cancer and was taking longer to die than the doctors had expected. Every day after school and on weekend nights I got to stay with her to make sure she drank her prescribed Brompton's Mixture and no more. Brompton's Mixture was a combination of potable morphine, cocaine, whiskey, and honey, invented at the Royal Brompton Hospital in London for the most ill of patients. I had a key to the fridge where it was kept in Dixie cups, and I knew it was important that I kept the key on a string around my neck. I did not know that she had become a morphine addict.

She and I slept in her room in two twin beds, her close to the hallway, and I in the bed by the window. I was a light sleeper, so I woke when she roused to have a cigarette or to walk the house in the night. By the time she switched on the bedside table light, grabbed her Pall Malls, smacked the pack against her palm, placed a cigarette between her dried lips and flicked open the metal lighter lid, I was sitting up.

"Go back to bed," she said, her voice dusky.

"I'm up anyway."

"You're too young. Go back to bed." She pulled the flame to the tip of her cigarette, illuminating her face while she drew a deep breath.

"You shouldn't smoke in bed," I said, sitting across from her, our pale knees touching in the narrow aisle. She finished her inhale and held it for a moment, then blew it forcefully to the side, away from me.

"I know." Then leveling her gaze, "Don't you ever let me

catch you smoking."

We had our most peaceful conversations in the middle of the night while she smoked, nylon nightgown hanging off of her bony shoulders, heels tucked up under her.

"You know, I would have slept with Jack Kennedy if he had asked me."

"Who is Jack Kennedy?" I asked, lying down because she made me.

"Oh, for goodness sake! What do they teach you in school?" Tap, tap, the ash dropped into the glass ashtray.

"Nothing about a guy called Jack. Who was he?"

"The president who put the man on the moon. Honestly."

"That was John Kennedy," I said, emphasis on the John.

"Not to me, he wasn't." And then as if to herself, "Not to me."

On some nights, I could get her to tell me a story.

"Tell me the story about the Green Dress."

"I don't want to tell that story."

"Tell it."

"I've told you that a million times."

"Tell me again."

"Well." A pause. A gathering. "My mother. Your Great Grandma Crick. She was a cruel woman. She made me work in the bakery from four in the morning until four in the afternoon when I was a young girl. Younger than you. And she made me sell eggs in the street like we were poor. And we weren't poor. And the boys would tease me and chase me, so I ran."

She crushed her cigarette, turned out the light and lay down on her side facing me, sliding her hands between her knees.

"Then what happened?" My whisper seemed loud in the stillness of the dark.

"I could run. You know, like you can run, like the wind. And I could dance. All the boys wanted to dance with me. So one Saturday, there was going to be the big dance. I kept some of the money I'd earned from the bakery and bought a green dress. Made with a bodice. You know. And silk. So I laid it out on my bed that morning before I went to the bakery." I could hear her breathe. Slow and even. Her small body looked like a child's in the dark. "When I came home, Great Grandma Crick had taken scissors and cut my dress into a million pieces."

"Did you go? To the dance?" I knew the answer.

"I'll tell you where I went," she said. "I went over to Aunt





Rhoda's house and lived with her." She sighed and rolled on her back. "Aunt Rhoda didn't cut up people's dresses."

We had some of our most expansive silences as she sat up in bed, left hand pressed into the mattress to support her, right hand holding her cigarette. I listened for the little bah sound of her lips letting go of the filter, the weighty pause as she held onto the smoke, and the long fffff of her exhale. Sometimes she stalled, gazing softly into the distance while her ash grew longer and longer, finally dropping unnoticed onto the carpet.

One night the pain struck violently. I was sleeping and I heard her yelling. "Oh-oh!" She was in her bed in a ball on her side. She yelled, "Oh!" Both arms, crossed over her belly, knees up to her nose. She rocked and yelled.

"Nana!"

"Oh! Oh!"

"What's wrong?" I leaned over her in the dark. She flailed her arms like a blind woman, hitting me in the side of the face. I ducked and put my hand on her side to reassure. She grabbed my fingers, grinding bone on bone. Though tiny, she was strong, made of piano wire and gristle. "I am here," I whispered. Her eyes were wild and unfocused. She shook her head back and forth. I said, "My hand," and she let go and rolled onto her side, groaning.

After enough time had passed that I thought she had fallen back to sleep, she got up and ran, doubled over. I chased her down the three quick steps into the sunken living room and hugged her to the floor.

"I can't hear!" she shouted. "Get me my hearing aid! Get me my hearing aid!!!!"

I told her, "There's nothing to hear."

"Get me my hearing aid," she yelled, so I ran to her bedside, yanked the drawer, snatched the hearing aid and ran back.

She put it in. It whined. She jammed it deeper. I shouted, "Let me do it," and grabbed her wrist, forcing her arm away from her ear. We stayed like that, a stalemate, an accidental arm wrestle until I felt the fear and strength drain from her and found myself holding her limp arm aloft, the loose skin gathered around my too firm grasp, her pulse pounding louder beneath my clenched fingertips. I softened my grip and guided her hand to her lap. "I'm going to take it out and fix it," I told her, breathless, and she turned her face slowly, as though watching a distant bird fly along the horizon, and I realized she was offering me her ear. I removed the flesh-colored aid and flicked the miniature button to off. "There." I replaced it. "Better?" She nodded, pushing it deeper with her fingers. Breathing heavily, I hugged her to me, pressing my forehead into hers.

I had been staying at my grandparents' home my whole life. My parents had had four children born close together, boom boom boom boom, so my grandparents had moved up the street to help out while my father put himself through night school. On the weekends, my older brother Drew and I went over to my grandparents' house so my mother could focus on the babies. My grandfather, Da, was alive back then, walking around in a pressed white T-shirt, grey Sears trousers with the permanent seam down each leg, and a worn leather belt. He was a fix-it man when he wasn't working at the Mill, so he and Drew built and dismantled things with tools while I spent my time with Nana.

My grandmother was bewitching back then, thin when other



people's grandmothers were heavy, modern when other grandmothers were dowdy. She decorated her house in gold-painted furniture and dressed up every day. In her bedroom bureau, she had a drawer exclusively for belts and another exclusively for scarves. Her foot was a size five, which, according to her, was a sign of a delicate and glamorous nature, so her closet held little high-heeled shoes I outgrew in third grade.

I didn't care that she rarely left the house except for bowling night, or that she only had an eighth-grade education and didn't like to read. All I knew was this: When she asked me what made me happy, I would tell her lots of presents on birthdays and Christmas. When I asked her what made her happy, she would say, "I'm happy when you're happy," and I knew it, in my young heart, to be the truth.

The living room clock in my grandmother's house was imitation gilded gold and rococo, consistent with her fancy but inexpensive taste. At night, the outside light from the lamppost illuminated the clock face through the large picture window. On the bad nights, the clock reminded us how long we had to wait until her next dose.

"Well?" my grandmother asked once she stopped worrying her hearing aid.

"An hour and twenty minutes," I told her as we collected ourselves from the living room floor. We moved the short distance to the lounge chair that faced the window. I had inherited her narrow hips so we could sit, side by side, between the cushioned arms.

She reached for her cigarettes and slid the lighter out of the cellophane wrapper. Her lower leg bounced nervously.

"Are you cold?" I asked. "Do you need your house coat?" She flicked the lighter and leaned toward the flame.

"No," she said out of the corner of her mouth. A car drove by under the streetlight outside and we both watched its red tail-lights disappear around the curve. "You know," she said, snapping her lighter shut, "I wanted you to be the flower girl in Debbie's wedding." She dropped her head to the palm of her free hand and began to weep. "Aunt Ida told me you would be

the flower girl." Aunt Ida was not my aunt and Debbie was not my cousin, but we always referred to them that way. Debbie had gotten married nine years earlier. "She told me you would be. She said you would be the flower girl."

"But Nana, you know I never wanted to." I stroked her bony back, trying to rub the ancient regret away.

"Don't be silly, every girl wants to be a flower girl." She looked at me with watery eyes.

"Not me," I said. "Flower girls have to wear dresses," and she registered the truth, at least for that moment, and looked down. Digging under her seat cushion, she pulled out some old, crumpled tissues and wiped her eyes.

"You always were such a tomboy," she said, blowing her nose. "You know your mother had to write to the school about that."

"I know."

"They didn't like that you wouldn't wear the dresses, but your mother said, 'You're either going to let her wear the pants, or you're going to see her underwear because she's always upside down.'" She elbowed me and smiled through her tears. "On the monkey bars. You know." She chuckled to herself and looked out the window. "I wonder what they thought of that note. Stupid men."

The living room clock ticked loudly. I glanced at it.

After a while, she looked down at her diamond rings, heavy, swinging around her bony fingers. "You know these were Great Grandma Crick's." She twisted one off and handed it to me. "They bought this one in Atlantic City. Did I ever tell you that?"

"No," I said, but I had heard it as well.

"This was the one she got after he beat her up. Black and blue. He took her to Atlantic City to make it up to her and bought a cheap diamond ring. And she took it." I tried it on for a moment and felt its uncomfortable heft, then handed it back, placing it in her warm palm. "That's right. Don't let it touch your skin. It might burn you."

I smiled. She took a drag on her cigarette. "Horrible woman." We both looked at the ticking clock.

Over the next forty-five minutes I watched my grandmother



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slowly deflate. Though she had been leaning on me before, I could feel her weight, heavy now, begin to sag and it became an effort to hold myself upright. Her shoulder jabbed into my ribs and her head rested on my upper arm. Her fingers hung so loose around her cigarette I worried the butt would drop onto the floor. My grandmother, wrestling just an hour before, became limp, boneless. Sleeping, but not. A glistening strand of saliva stretched from her lower lip to her lap and I snapped it with my finger.

"Let's go to bed," I said, kissing her forehead and working my way to face her. Heaving her up, I tucked my arm under her knees and lifted. She drooped and slid, light for a person but heavy for her size, her dead weight folding her in half. I had to stop twice on the short trip to bolster her with my thigh.

She poured off me as I lay her down, immediately curling into a ball, a pill bug. After covering her with the bedspread, I set my digital watch alarm for 6:30 a.m., her next dose, and lay on my side, facing her. I slid my hands between my knees and watched as her back rose and fell, rose and fell, rose and fell.

"Toast?" I asked her, as she padded into the kitchen only twenty minutes after her Brompton's, ready for the day in her housecoat, her lips red with lipstick and her wig on straight. I grabbed the bread out of the breadbox and put two slices of Wonder into the toaster.

"Thank you," she said, leaning to the side to reach for her Pall Malls. She sat in one of the two chrome chairs around the little table. "Did you sleep well?" she asked.

"I did. Did you?" The casual morning banter.

"Yes," she explained with a cigarette pinched in one corner of her mouth while she fished in her other pocket for her lighter.

The toast popped and the acrid smell of blackened bread filled the air. I took the stick of butter from the large refrigerator and cut off a chunk. I never liked the buttering of my grandmother's toast: pressing cold, hard butter onto crumbling burnt toast.

"What are you going to do today?" she asked as I placed the toast in front of her.

"Hang out with you."

"Oh, honey. Don't waste your time," she said, "What about a boyfriend?"

"Uch," I grunted, getting my Cheerios and bowl out of the cupboard.

"Don't 'uch' me. You're a beautiful girl. It's the only thing I ever wanted; to live to see you married." I turned on her. She waved me away before I could get started. "It's wonderful to fall in love. You deserve that in your life." She looked off to the side and sucked on her cigarette, drawing in her cheeks and filling her lungs with smoke to make her point.

The kettle whistled and I filled her teacup, adding a Lipton tea bag and watching the tannin-colored smoke bleed into the water.

"Dad tells me Great Grandpa Crick was no better than Great Grandma Crick."

"He was a drunk," she conceded, placing her cigarette in the ashtray between us. A single plume of white smoke rose straight up then swirled in an invisible air current. "But he wasn't cruel like she was. Your Great Grandma Crick, she was a jealous woman. If your grandfather hadn't come along to take me away, I'd probably still be scrubbing pots in the bakery basement."

"Because you were beautiful."

"Because I was beautiful," she agreed. Old Great Grandma Crick with her bulbous hernia from a lifetime of lifting copper pots, knuckles the size of horse chestnuts and lower eyelids that peeled away from her eyeballs to reveal their pink interior in a way that made me feel as though I were looking at someone's insides. She was so ugly. No wonder there was strife.

"Dad says Great Grandma Crick chased Great Grandpa Crick around the dining room table with a butcher knife," I announced, angling for some information about family lore I'd heard at home.

"It was a paring knife," she confirmed, carefully pulling her red lips away from her teeth to take a bite of toast. "But he's right. She did."

"No way."

"It's true." She set her toast down.

"But why?" I had been certain the knife story was myth.

"He was an embarrassment," she said, as though this were obvious. "After he'd get the early morning baking done, he'd go to the bar and get himself drunk. Then he'd stagger up the street from pole to pole in the middle of the day. She didn't like that." She zigzagged her hand back and forth, pole-to-pole, pole-to-pole.

"I don't think I'd like that either," I said, tipping my bowl to my mouth to drink the milk.

"Oh, she didn't care that he was drunk." She flashed disapproval; Nana wasn't one for bad table manners. "She just didn't like that he did it out in the open in the middle of the day. Great Grandma Crick said it didn't look good. She said people would buy their bread from someone whose husband didn't stagger up the street in broad daylight. She always worried about appearances. She always worried about the money."

"I remember her and her money," I said, standing. "She had a penny jar in her kitchen cabinet behind the doily drapes. Whenever we went to visit, she would show it to me and say, 'I'm saving all this for you. It's our little secret.'"

"Well?" Nana smirked.

"Well what?" I asked.

"Did she ever give it to you?"

"No."

"There you go," she said as she stood, stubbing out a perfectly good cigarette.

We sat. We talked. We laughed without a care or a glance to the Brompton's fridge. After a while, though, she became fatigued and walked to her room, stooped and holding her arm in front of her abdomen as though protecting it. I followed.

There, I helped her remove her housecoat and sat her on the bed. She paused to catch her breath, then lay down on her side. I gently pulled her wig from her head, careful not to pull her hair, and set it on the skull-shaped Styrofoam stand on her dresser, stabbing a single straight pin through the top to keep it in place. I filled her water glass and placed her cigarettes on the night table. Because it was time, I walked back in the kitchen and removed the string from around my neck, careful not to catch the key in my hair.

The smell was overwhelming to me when I opened the refrigerator. Brompton's mixture was musky, strongly alcoholic, viscous, and dark amber in color. The Dixie cups in which each dose was kept had softened a bit where the liquid had been, as if the contents had been eating away at the internal structure.

I gently grabbed a single cup and closed the door, locking it. I walked carefully to Nana's room, holding the cup out in front of



me, as though it was precious and toxic, because it was. When I got to her room, she was cramped up, eyes closed and moaning quietly. I sat on the edge of her bed and placed my hand on her shoulder. Her flesh was loose on her bones, warm and familiar.

"I have it," I said. She opened her eyes slightly and began to push herself up. I put the cup on the night table.

"Let me help you," I said as I reached around her to pull her up to sitting.

"Oh, honey," she apologized, forehead on my shoulder to prop herself.

"Shhh."

I took the cup and held it out to her. She steadied herself on the edge of the bed and then reached.

She tossed it back quickly both because it was vile and because she had learned that it would bring her relief within minutes. My grandmother, who casually chewed Excedrin, shuddered with revulsion at its unmatched bitterness. She crushed the cup and kept it in her hand as she lay back down, her nightgown twisting around her as she rolled to face away from me.

"Want some water?" I suggested. "It won't be so nasty." She waved it away with the slightest gesture of her hand, so I sat and rubbed her back in circles, waiting quietly for the medicine to numb her body.

Over a period of twenty minutes, she unfurled so slowly that you might not have noticed it if you stared only at her. But if you looked away for a while, then looked back, you would see that eventually she lay on her back, ringed hand resting gently on her stomach. I waited until she was still for quite some time before

reaching across her for the crumpled Dixie cup that had fallen from her hand onto the mattress. I dropped it into the plastic wastebasket filled with tissues and crushed cups. I tidied her covers and switched off the light.

I bent to kiss her soft, lined forehead, moments earlier so furrowed in pain, and smelled a rotting whiff of the Brompton's on her breath. I grabbed her free hand and kissed the back of it, then rubbed my own kiss off. Her nails looked good. I was getting better at the polishing. Her eyes opened just a bit.

"Hey," I said. She smiled ever so slightly at me, but she was no longer very present.

"I'll be back in a bit. Go to sleep now." Her eyes began to fill with water. I reached across and took a fresh tissue from the box.

"You're good now," I said, dabbing. She reached up and grabbed my arm, squeezing me toward her with a strength I could not believe.

"I love you most of all," she mouthed.

"I love you most of all," I said, and watched her eyes slowly close.

And I waited with her there, until her grip loosened completely.

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Kathy Smith grew up in Swarthmore, Pennsylvania and earned B.S. in economics at the University of Pennsylvania. She went on to earn an MBA from University of California at Berkeley. Though she still dabbles in finance, her greatest joy is being a mom of three, followed by writing. Her work has appeared in *Apiary*, and she has won two honorable mention awards from *Glimmer Train*. She resides in Bryn Mawr with her beloved husband and snoring bulldogs.

# The Masterpiece in Our Bedroom

*San Girolamo, Caravaggio, 1605*

Poem by Mary Jo LoBello Jerome

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In a dark room, San Girolamo writes with a quill pen.  
He's partially draped in a rich, red cloth, maybe a cloak,  
maybe the covers from his bed as if he rushed naked  
to the table straight from a dream, fevered with ideas.  
A thick book on his lap. A thin halo's edge,  
barely visible in the dark, hints above his balding pate  
at hallowedness. For all the years I've dusted this framed  
postcard on our bedroom dresser, that little light remained hidden.  
The blessedness I've always seen, what gets me  
every time —the firm arm of a man reaching for — what?  
a word? some truth? Muscled, alive, tendoned. Only the holy  
of a bare-shouldered body.

Here's the tableau: the ancient saint stretches without looking  
toward an inkwell in shadows — books, cloth, oaken table,  
and a blank-faced memento mori.  
The man reads. The skull stares.  
That hollow head a warning that the world's fleeting,  
the dark and light of afterlife eternal. But, oh, Master,  
this is a game. The skull is half hidden, dark, a dull  
paperweight, unheeded. Your model — bright, vital,  
glowing with thought.

I conjure you whispering  
as you paint, a voice escaping time from that museum  
postcard on the bureau as my love and I loll in bed —  
*Listen, before it's too late. Allow yourselves scarlet  
bedclothes, and strong bodies in a glowing room,  
and work you want to dive into, and books,  
books are good, piles of them to retreat to,  
partly naked, after rolling around  
half the night with your love, alive, hungry,  
eating up this life and one another while you can.*



Mary Jo LoBello Jerome, a Bucks County PA Poet Laureate, edited the creative writing prompt book *Fire Up the Poems*. Recently named poetry co-editor for the *Schuylkill Valley Journal*, Mary Jo has published poems and stories in many journals. Her chapbook, *Torch the Empty Fields*, is coming out in 2022.





# Bewley Road

Pol-Paul Pat

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The tears started welling up as I watched another man drive off with my dog, Bewley. Bud, an elderly man, had come about an hour earlier to meet my dog. For three weeks, I had been meeting people, searching for a new home for Bewley. And while almost everyone seemed interested, I always hesitated. "The only way I'm giving him away is if I know for certain he would be in a better situation," I'd say to each person. A part of me hoped no good candidate would appear. Then I got a call from Bud. He told me that he was a veteran, long retired, and looking for a new dog because his beloved dog died unexpectedly about a few weeks before. He sounded heartbroken, and as he described his life, I felt a growing discomfort in my heart. I knew that Bud was the one.

When Heather, my wife at the time, and I first found Bewley, he was at a local shelter. I spotted him first. He was the only dog that didn't bark as I walked up and down the row. He had a beautiful coat mixed with dark chocolate, caramel, and white. He appeared about 50lbs, a mix of Chocolate Labrador and Doberman or Rottweiler. There was something regal about the way he stood—as if he were trained as a show dog. But he was not the dog Heather wanted; she wanted "Bubba," the Shi Tzu in the tiny dog section. Because we'd been looking for our first dog together for months, with several close adoptions, I'd relented and agreed on the tiny dog. The next day, Heather drove alone to the shelter with a new collar for Bubba. By the time she arrived, he was already gone. That's when she decided it was time to adopt Bewley.

Bewley was named after the road of our first residence together. The apartment was one of the few major decisions during our marriage that we instantly agreed on. We walked into the Bewley residence with the landlord, took one look at the built-in glass cabinets, turned to each other, and simultaneously said, "We'll take it!"

I was anxious and nervous the day I picked up Bewley from the shelter. While Heather had grown up with a dog at home, I had not. She grew up in rural, upstate New York in a white middle-class family. I grew up poor in Trenton, the son of Cambodian refugees and once had a stray kitten. So, when my workday was

over, I scrambled to get ready for the big moment. I placed garbage bags over the seats of my new car and made an appointment to get Bewley professionally bathed.

When I arrived at the shelter, I filled out paperwork and paid the adoption fee. I looked at his biography and was reminded that his temporary name was "Malta," an awful name for a dog. There wasn't much known about his history; he was found abandoned in Chester, PA. I was worried he might have experienced some abuse, but he showed no signs of aggression during the times I'd visited him.

Getting him home, in retrospect, was easy. As we walked through the pet store, he seemed to love people, and they all adored him. And after his grooming, he smelled and strutted like a winner. I bought him a fancy bed. When Heather got home, she instantly fell in love.

We were only in our second year of marriage when we adopted Bewley and still figuring out how to mesh with each other. Our relationship had always had major challenges. During pre-marital counseling, the therapist suggested we reconsider our engagement. We had regular clashes. But we plowed forward, hoping that love would be enough. We were both twenty-seven. Maybe it was that I was graduating and starting my career and felt the pressure to lay down a foundation. Maybe she was tired of living with her older sister and wanted to chart her own path. For many years after we separated, I turned the questions of our marriage over and over like a rosary that I'd hoped would give me a divine answer.

The first few weeks with Bewley were extremely difficult for us, particularly me. The expensive bed I bought him lasted only two nights before he chewed out the stuffing. He would try to hump everything in sight, which I found odd. Heather worked long nursing shifts at the hospital three days a week, and, on those days, I would drive home in the middle of my workday to walk him and then head back to campus. It grew increasingly stressful.

We decided to crate Bewley. As he adjusted, he'd bark at night. In our tiny rowhouse, that meant he ended up in the base-

ment. He had been so quiet in the kennel—it was one of the main reasons why I liked him. I felt betrayed. I tried to comfort him, even singing to quiet him. One night in the bedroom, while Heather read a magazine on the bed, I brushed Bewley on the floor. I was so frustrated, I blurted, “I don’t know if I can keep doing this.”

She came down on the floor and started petting Bewley. “I know,” she said. “I can see you’re trying.” Her voice cracked. “But if it’s too hard for you, we can take him back.”

This felt like one of my first great challenges as a husband. I had made a commitment to Bewley and the thought of quitting on him after one month made me feel like a failure. I’d understood that getting a dog was one of Heather’s non-negotiables when we discussed marriage. There was no guarantee that another dog would be an immediate improvement, and I held out hope that Bewley could be better. “No,” I said softly, “We can’t do that. I’ll find a way to make it work.”

The scariest thing about him was his aggression. Typically, he was playful but nondestructive (aside from his beds). But he had this other side. Two things riled him up: certain dogs and men. A veterinarian estimated Bewley was only about two-and-a-half. It was a mystery what kind of treatment he received in his early stages. He could have experienced abuse by other dogs or people and any reminders would retrigger rage and fear. I felt the power of it once when I was walking with Bewley at my side. A man strolled by and Bewley lunged at this man with such ferocity and anger that I thought he would tear the man to shreds. The only things that spared the man were his own reflexes and the length of the leash, which choked the dog as he fell to the ground. I repeatedly apologized as the man walked away with a horrified face.

After this and regular dramatic confrontations with other dogs during our daily strolls, I grew committed to changing this behavior. I researched various training programs. The trainer that fascinated me the most was Cesar Millan. I read his work and watched episodes of “The Dog Whisperer” in which he starred and featured dogs far worse than Bewley. I admired Millan’s ability to rehabilitate the fiercest dogs. His simple philosophy of “exercise, discipline, and affection” became my mantra.

I started walking Bewley “the Cesar way,” which required strict obedience and a short distance between owner and dog. By controlling Bewley’s head, I’d control his attention and keep it on me. I’d practice starting and stopping, restricting bathroom stops, and having him wait or even submit when another dog walked by. In essence, I was trying to focus on his discipline. And this worked, mostly.

Then Heather got pregnant. Two years later, we had a second child.

With two kids, a full-time job, and a working wife, being Bewley’s main trainer lost priority for me. I always wanted to be a father—that was my non-negotiable. I delighted in watching Sovi and Asher crack their first smiles, take their first steps, and go through each phase of early life. I had very little time for Bewley.

And so did Heather.

When we agreed to get a dog, there was this understanding that Heather would be the primary caregiver. She was the dog-lover, after all. However, since Bewley had this aggression I was hell-bent on fixing, I became more involved than planned. Heather enjoyed Bewley, and they had a very different kind of relationship. She was the good-cop; I was the bad-cop. But she didn’t do things I’d assumed she’d do, like groom him regularly. It seemed she loved loving a dog but not caring for a dog, and I started to resent her for it.

One breaking point for me occurred when we moved to the suburbs and obtained a real backyard. Early on, I started noticing dog droppings under our holly tree near the fence at the property line of our neighbor. They had two dogs and a concrete yard with a tile pool. They had a habit of letting their dogs do their business until they couldn’t safely walk around it. Only then would they clean up. So, I’d see the dog poop under our tree, look at their yard and conclude: the neighbors were throwing the poop into our yard.

“How could the neighbors do that!” I said to Heather.

“I know,” she said, “it’s so gross.”

It kept happening. Bewildered, I finally decided to confront the neighbors. That got Heather’s attention, and she confessed. Since we now had a yard, she started letting Bewley use it as a bathroom instead of walking him around the neighborhood as we had agreed. I felt betrayed.

The new house was outdated, so we went through renovations of the kitchens, ceilings, walls, and floors. I spent many hours pulling out every single nail and staple left over from the carpets I had removed. And when I refinished the floors, I wanted to keep them that way. The great antagonist to my newly surfaced floors, however, were Bewley’s nails.

Sovi and Asher were three and one-and-a-half when we moved into the new house. We’d increasingly become worried about Bewley accidentally hurting the kids, so we’d often gate him in another room. He’d spend much of his time away from the rest of the family. The weight of married life with children increasingly sucked much of the joy of owning a dog. And it was increasingly making for a sad and frustrated dog.

We kept on plodding along for several months until the day Heather broke. “You need to find him a new home,” she said to me on the phone. “He growled at one of the children. I don’t feel safe with him around them.” I had recently contemplated that idea myself but was stuck on that commitment I made four years earlier. I never imagined that Heather would be the one to ask for Bewley’s removal. I was sad, but I reconciled that if I could find Bewley a better situation I would do it for everyone’s sake.

Bud and I spent about a good hour talking about life, our families, and his experiences with dogs. He looked to be in his late-sixties or early-seventies, tufts of silver hair sticking under his

military baseball cap. He had a leather bomber jacket on, and in his hands his own dog leash. It was much longer than the ones I used. "I have a huge property," he said. "I love taking dogs on long walks and giving them enough slack to let them explore." He and Bewley hit it off right away. Bud loved Bewley with the intensity of a man who had recently mourned the death of his own. I felt a peaceful sadness as I handed Bewley over.

With my phone, I took a picture of them that is frozen in my mind, of Bud in his black pickup truck with Bewley in shotgun, without any awareness that he was leaving our family forever. Heather was at work that morning; the kids were in daycare. I didn't even have the heart to tell the kids beforehand. As Bud backed down my driveway, Bewley's face tilted, as if he was realizing something amiss. When I watched them turn off onto the street, I imagined Bewley jumping out the window and running back toward me.

I ran back into the house and wept. I started putting away items in the basement that Bud had declined. I felt Bewley's presence more than ever before, seeing his head appear in the basement window, and imagining him sleeping in the kids' beds, which I would have never allowed in real life.

It wasn't until years later that I realized that day was the beginning of the end of my marriage. It became easier to let the seams fray. Surprisingly, Heather was less distraught than I was about Bewley's departure. Probably I'd made the environment so miserable for her that she simply lost the joy of having a dog. I don't remember seeing her cry once about him. Likely her goodbye was a slow one that had taken place long before mine. The sad truth is that in the weeks following his departure, we knew we had made the right decision—a great weight had been lifted—and we took comfort in knowing that he was in a better situation.

Bud twice brought Bewley over to visit over the following two years. By the second time, Heather and I were living apart. Bewley was almost ten and no longer had his youthful energy. He had silver patches in his coat. Yet he remembered the tricks I taught him, such as standing on two legs and begging for treats. I had memories of taking him for long walks with Heather, when we sometimes would let him off the leash in the middle of the woods and he'd bolt around. Watching him run care-free brought a smile to my face. It was one of those rare moments where I'd let my real affection for him show. I was only good at two of the three pillars of Cesar's Way: exercise and discipline. I was never so good at affection—with Bewley or Heather. In that way, I failed them both.

The last time I saw Bud and Bewley, Bud struggled to walk up my stairs. This was partly why I stopped reaching out to him. I wanted him to stop feeling obligated to me. But over the years, I have thought about both of their advancing ages, and if perhaps Bewley may need my rescue again.

I've imagined him living with me. And from time to time, I think about reaching out to Bud to see how they are both doing, but I always stop short of sending off a message.



BLUE by ROB LYBECK

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Pol-Paul Pat is currently working on a novel about Cambodian Americans set in the Philadelphia area. He earned his MFA from Penn State University and teaches English composition and creative writing at Delaware County Community College in Media, PA.

# Brutum Fulmen

Poem by Keith Kopka

---

*Man is the only creature that is not always killed when struck — all others are killed on the spot; nature doubtless bestows this honour on man because so many animals surpass him in strength. — Pliny the Elder*

The talk-radio host is provoking listeners to weigh in on what language we believe acts as the official discourse in hell. The host thinks it must be Latin, *too many sins*, he says, *tented under Papal vestments*, meaning too many thighs grazed behind the doors of countless sacristies for perdition to be voiced in any tongue other than that of its most zealous arbiters. The callers, on the other hand, are sure it's English, or Hebrew, or that demons speak all languages, or none, because suffering existed before language, which to me seems the strongest argument, as I shift my car into park up the block from the warehouse you let slip was your last work delivery, last obligation, when you called to say goodbye (a contraction of "God be with ye"). I keep the engine running like Kojak or Columbo, watch you over my trash-strewn dashboard as you load boxes onto a hand truck. I will follow you, stop whatever crime you're planning against yourself, because I know you're asking for a savior. On the radio, another long-time listener shares that the word "suffering" comes from Vulgar Latin, a variant of "sufferer," meaning to "endure," or to "carry," and for a moment I resent you. But then I see your truck bumping down the rutted warehouse drive, and I swing into traffic behind you. I keep at least two car-lengths between us. As we twist through rush-hour, the topic has turned from Hell to Heaven. The host believes we have no need for language in the afterlife because God is complete understanding. And while I agree that there's comfort to be found hiding under the blanket of omniscience, it still makes me want to call in and remind everyone that awareness, God's or our own, is essential to our suffering. Without it we wouldn't know we've been abandoned. God couldn't get angry. There'd be no Hell, no reason for it, or for any of our actions, and as the great TV detectives teach us: motive is everything. You jam a quick right, screech your van into a supermarket plaza, and I'm thinking, good, if you want groceries, it means you don't want to die. Still, I shadow you into the store and calculate our surprise meeting among the vegetables, perform my shock at running into you like this, while you act as if you don't know I've been tailing you since before we both ran that red light.



Keith Kopka is the recipient of the 2019 Tampa Review Prize for his collection of poems, *Count Four* (University of Tampa Press, 2020). He is also the author of the critical text, *Asking a Shadow to Dance: An Introduction to the Practice of Poetry*. He is the recipient of the International Award for Excellence from the Books, Publishing & Libraries Research Network, a Senior Editor at *Narrative Magazine*, and an Assistant Professor at Holy Family University.



# In Paradisum

Poem by Ernest Hilbert

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The basement furnace died at 3AM.  
The chilly weather of early spring  
Arrives by degrees inside the house,  
Like seawater leaking into a hull.

We bundle up, treasuring our warmth.  
By afternoon, the halls have chilled, as wind  
Whines tunelessly and rattles at the glass.  
"In Paradisum" from Fauré's *Requiem*

Chimes down the crooked stairs like lazy stars  
Revolving overhead, pining away  
For me, yearning to have me home again,  
Out there shining in solar Sargassos

Or ocean swirls of discarded plastic  
Gathering in Pacific emptiness.  
Fresh dust snows on furniture and floor. I breathe  
The busy air, teeming with life, split by shafts

Of sunlight. My voice is dry from all the dust.  
It's taken over everything. It coats  
The meniscus of my glass of water.  
It's made of us, our cats and candles—

Rumors of how our lives will be consumed—  
Particles of meteor and pollen,  
The powder that puddles on the floorboards  
As nails are hammered into old walls—

Iridescent archipelagos of pearl  
Trailing lagoons of chalk dust in their wakes.  
Our self-incineration, which hardly hurts,  
Starts lightning racing into nothingness.

I know we're dust, and stardust too, but more—  
Phosphorescent dust in oceans of sunlight,  
Like breaths exhaled, diffusions, traces of song,  
Engines firing in the voiceless dark.



Ernest Hilbert is the author of *Sixty Sonnets*, *All of You on the Good Earth*, *Caligulan*—selected as winner of the 2017 Poets' Prize—and *Last One Out*. His fifth book, *Storm Swimmer*, was selected by Rowan Ricardo Phillips as the winner of the 2022 Vassar Miller Prize and will appear in 2023. Visit him at [www.ernesthilbert.com](http://www.ernesthilbert.com)

# Listen

Poem by Liora Hassan

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Becoming intimate with spirits,  
I put my ear to the ground and listen  
to the ocean rumble

I see wolves  
they wear their hides like masks  
prey on the flesh that peeks out from under skirts,  
between breasts  
what wanders in the dark

*eschúchame, mi amor*

Make yourself hard to chew

The ants are hardworking--  
carry petals like treasures,  
heavy and bright  
each a wish already made

Take one

*rendición*

Attune to the water, cold like a first breath

Most of the fruit is half lost,  
decays slowly  
like magic  
feeds the strays  
soaks the sand

The darkness is a friend

Perhaps this is why the air is sweet,  
why I find kisses in the cracks of the pavement  
awaken dreaming  
a face I remember  
but don't recognize

This is how they paint the sky--  
the gods I mean  
Drinking moments like mead,  
danger is dust behind them  
they follow a golden road  
and it never ends



Liora Hassan (she/they) is an ambitious nonbinary writer and recent graduate of the University of Pittsburgh's English department. Hassan likes to draw from various facets of her identity as well her everyday experiences to guide her work. They're fascinated by the potential that literary art has to upset the norm and unearth new considerations. Hassan recently made Philadelphia to be her new home and looks forward to the changes it will bring.

# Haibun After a Tornado in Pennsylvania

Poem by Faith Paulsen

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The late summer brings forth baseball, roses, and wreckage. A chainsaw roars. The high school gym roof gapes open and unmasked to the cloudless sky. Guests survey the damage. A prostrate street sign blasts the words *Left Lane Must Turn Left* pinned to the concrete. A tree limb excalibured deep into soil. Children grasp and tug, then give up on removing it. Smells of wet grass and sawdust. A family drags debris to the curb, first fence posts, then shingles, then a pink plastic doll house. Second-floor bedroom pried open, cross-sectioning bookshelves, wall, insulation. On one roof, blue tarp flaps while across the street, a patio table and three chairs stand in tea-party formation. It is somehow the most perfect day of the summer. Pennsylvania is not in Tornado Alley yet this year there have been 28. A pickup truck stops in front of a house. The driver plunks a case of bottled water on the curb, then drives to the next house. A neighbor is leaning on her car, head down. When the passerby nods to her, says, *I'm so sorry*, she starts talking and she can't stop. *I've lived here all my life*, she says, *Never saw anything like it. I'll never forget the sound, like a train*, she says. *I don't know why I'm telling you this.*

Look at that steel strung  
around the high oak branches –  
like it was woven.



The author of three chapbooks including *We Marry We Bury We Sing or We Weep*, which was named a runner-up in Moonstone Arts' Chapbook Contest in 2021 (Moonstone Press), **Faith Paulsen's** poetry and prose have appeared in many venues including *Ghost City Press*, *Book of Matches*, *Thimble*, *Evansville Review* and *Mantis*. Faith lives and writes in the Philadelphia area where she and Barton Sacks raised three sons. Please check out her website at [www.faithpaulsenpoet.com](http://www.faithpaulsenpoet.com)

# Philadelphia Geese

Poem by Elliott batTzedek

In Fairmount Park the Canada geese  
migrate from the west side  
of the river to the east, from sun  
to grass to shade across azalea-  
crazed spring days.

These geese roam only the Schuylkill River.  
These geese will take your offered treats  
then bite the hand that feeds them.  
These geese will get all up in your business.  
These geese leave landmines  
of bacterially-loaded fecal matter clusters  
in clumps of hundreds everywhere they go.  
These geese do what they want, don't care  
what you think, and will give  
as good as they get any day of the week.

These are Philadelphia geese.

Our geese—most days  
we ignore them, or complain about  
their shit and their attitudes.  
But in May we watch, needing  
the yellow-green gosling announcement  
that spring has fully ripened, needing  
the traffic-stopped for goose-crossing excuse  
for staring at the river rather than hurrying  
to work, needing the honking sunset flight  
as witness to day's passing, needing the shock  
to our hearts as our geese  
fly so close overhead we feel the beat  
of their wings through our shared air:

*PhillyPhillyPhillyPhillyPhillyPhillyPhilly  
PhillyPhillyPhillyPhillyPhillyPhillyPhilly*

# For the Living on 12th/Catharine

Poem by Alexa Smith

At the park a birthday picnic glitters  
safe as a mirage: soap bubbles float slow  
past the Speedo-clad neighbor's languid sprawl  
beneath tinkling pop acoustic covers,  
past the silver island of cone-capped guests  
as rippling streamers breezily announce  
another year gone, and what can they do  
but mock the bottle's label as they toast  
one last livable, sour-tongued month of heat?

From a passing window, the driver sings  
a PSA: "don't be no fool baby"

as boys spring launch tests off benches, turn sticks  
to scepters hurled skyward as sister bolts  
after them, a chain of vectors flashing  
as a toddler in a flowered smock learns  
to ride the rafts of her father's feet raised  
wave by wave, her open face exposed and  
sunlit, helped and helpless, arms held up



Elliott batTzedek is surprised to find she has lived in Philly for 30 years and probably always will. She holds an MFA in poetry from Drew University and is a bookseller by trade and a liturgist by passion. Or maybe the other way around. Her work appears in: *Sakura Review*, *American Poetry Review*, *Massachusetts Review*, *Cahoodaloodaling*, *Naugatuck River Review*, and *Poemeleon*. Her chapbook *the enkindled coal of my tongue* was published in January 2017 by Wicked Banshee Press.



Alexa Smith is a poet and essayist from Washington D.C. She lives in Philadelphia, where she works for a local textbook publisher, edits *Apiary Magazine*, and teaches creative writing at Temple University. Her work has appeared online in *Entropy*, *Interim*, *Memoir Mixtapes*, *Peach Mag*, *Dark Wood*, and *STELLA Radio*.



# RESOURCES

## 66<sup>th</sup> Annual Great Books at Colby College Summer Institute

Waterville, Maine – July 17 - 23, 2022

### **Authenticity**

Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Nature & Self-Reliance (Essays)*

Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man*

Walker Percy, *The Moviegoer*

Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*

Magda Szabo, *The Door*

Hermann Hesse, *Siddhartha*

Join our annual week of lively discussion at Colby College.  
We are a community of people who enjoy  
reading and discussing Great Books.

For pricing and program details, visit the Colby website:  
[www.greatbooks-atcolby.org](http://www.greatbooks-atcolby.org)



FOR DETAILS, OR DIRECT ANY QUESTIONS TO JOHN DALTON AT  
610-608-7711, OR EMAIL [AGREATBOOK@AOL.COM](mailto:AGREATBOOK@AOL.COM)

## PhiladelphiaStories

Cultivating a community of writers, artists, and readers across the Delaware Valley

## The 2022 Annual Marguerite McGlinn Prize for Fiction

### PRIZES:

\$2,500 cash award – \$750 2nd place prize – \$500 3rd place prize  
Invitation to an awards dinner in October

Deadline: June 15, 2022

For more information, [www.philadelphiastories.org/fiction-contest/](http://www.philadelphiastories.org/fiction-contest/)

## Philadelphia Great Books



Interested in joining a  
Great Books discussion group?

There are over 50 groups  
meeting regularly in PA/NJ/DE  
using the Shared Inquiry  
Method for discussing significant  
works of literature or non-fiction.

Contact us to find a Great Books  
discussion group in your area:

[phila1@greatbooksdiscussionprograms.org](mailto:phila1@greatbooksdiscussionprograms.org)

For further information about Great Books  
events on the East Coast, see

[www.greatbooksdiscussionprograms.org](http://www.greatbooksdiscussionprograms.org)

workshops currently conducted online via Zoom

## Creative Writing Workshops

Express your unique voice. Find joy in writing.

### Evening and daytime workshops

Flourtown, PA • Center City, PA • Ardmore, PA

### Writers of all levels welcome

Fiction • Non-fiction • Creative non-fiction • Memoir • Poetry

Find out if a workshop is right for you.  
Sit in on one workshop meeting as a guest,  
by appointment only.

**Alison Hicks, MFA, Greater Philadelphia Wordshop Studio**  
[www.philaworkshop.com](http://www.philaworkshop.com) • [ah@philaworkshop.com](mailto:ah@philaworkshop.com) • 610-853-0296  
Monday evenings in Ardmore • Tuesday evenings in Center City  
Private Consultation for Manuscript Development

**Rachel Kobin, Philadelphia Writers Workshop**  
[www.phillywriters.com](http://www.phillywriters.com) • [Rachel@phillywriters.com](mailto:Rachel@phillywriters.com) • 610-449-3773  
Tuesday and Thursday evenings in Flourtown  
Coaching for Writers

# PHILADELPHIA-AREA RESOURCES FOR WRITERS

PHILADELPHIA IS A CITY RICH WITH RESOURCES FOR WRITERS. BELOW IS A SAMPLING OF THESE RESOURCES, COURTESY OF LITERARY PHILLY ([LITERARYPHILLY.ORG](http://LITERARYPHILLY.ORG)), A JOINT PROJECT OF BLUE STOOP, A HOME FOR PHILLY WRITERS, AND THE 215 FESTIVAL, PHILADELPHIA'S LITERARY ARTS FESTIVAL.

## LITERARY MAGAZINES

### Apiary

(work with a Philadelphia connection, all genres)

[www.apiarymagazine.com](http://www.apiarymagazine.com)

Apiary celebrates Philadelphia as a great literary city on the page, stage, and in the street. Its mission is to connect and inspire Philadelphians through the power of their own words.

### Atticus Review

(poetry, fiction, CNF)

[atticusreview.org](http://atticusreview.org)

Atticus Review is a daily online journal that publishes fiction, poems, and creative nonfiction, as well as graphic art and mixed media.

### Barrelhouse

(high brow & low brow, all genres)

[www.barrelhousemag.com](http://www.barrelhousemag.com)

Barrelhouse is an independent nonprofit literary organization looking for quality writing with an edge and a sense of humor.

### Bedfellows

(all genres, writing pertaining to sex/desire/intimacy)

[www.bedfellowsmagazine.com](http://www.bedfellowsmagazine.com)

Bedfellows is a Philadelphia-based literary magazine that seeks to catalog contemporary discussions of desire & intimacy (including their lack), with a particular focus on underrepresented & marginalized voices.

### Bookends Review

(fiction, CNF, poetry, interviews, book reviews & art)

[thebookendsreview.com](http://thebookendsreview.com)

Founded in 2012, The Bookends Review is an independent creative arts journal dedicated to publishing the best original fiction, nonfiction, poetry, interviews, essays, book reviews, and visual/musical works from around the world.

### Cleaver

(poetry, fiction, CNF, art, graphic novel, comics,

book reviews & interviews)

[www.cleavermagazine.com](http://www.cleavermagazine.com)

Cleaver is a Philadelphia-based online magazine that provides a platform for underrepresented writers and artists.

### Eclipse Lit

(poetry, prose, art; focus on healing from trauma)

[www.eclipselit.org](http://www.eclipselit.org)

Our mission is to give an outlet for writers to heal through art while benefiting organizations dedicated to helping people with trauma.

### Glassworks Magazine

(fiction, poetry, CNF, art, & flash)

[www.rowanglassworks.org](http://www.rowanglassworks.org)

Glassworks magazine is a publication of Rowan University's Master of Arts in Writing program.

### Green Blotter

(poetry, fiction, creative non-fiction, and visual art by undergraduates)

[wordpress.lvc.edu/wordpress/greenblotter](http://wordpress.lvc.edu/wordpress/greenblotter)

Green Blotter is published annually by the Green Blotter Literary Society of Lebanon Valley College in Annville, PA, and features poetry, fiction, creative nonfiction, and art submitted by undergraduate student writers everywhere.

### Hippocampus Magazine

(Creative Nonfiction)

[hippocampusmagazine.com](http://hippocampusmagazine.com)

Hippocampus is an online publication set out to entertain, educate and engage writers and readers of creative nonfiction. They also have a books division and bring our mission to life with an annual writing conference.

### Jacket2

(commentary on modern and contemporary poetry and poetics)

[jacket2.org](http://jacket2.org)

Jacket2 offers commentary on modern and contemporary poetry and poetics. They publish articles, reviews, interviews, discussions and collaborative responses, archival documents, podcasts, and descriptions of poetry symposia and projects.

### Meet Me at 19th Street

(fiction)

[www.archstreetpress.org/meet-me-19th-street-submission](http://www.archstreetpress.org/meet-me-19th-street-submission)

Meet Me @ 19th Street's fourth quarter competition invites writers to submit the first chapter of a novel grounded in transition or evolution, the subtlest shifts or the most colossal of transformations.

### Night Heron Barks

(poetry)

[nightheronbarks.com](http://nightheronbarks.com)

The Night Heron Barks is an online poetry journal that runs seasonal issues in the fall and the spring. Each one is built like a book. Separate from their seasonal work, they also publish book reviews, essays on poetry, and a blog for poems that are driven by current events.

### Nightblock

(poetry, short fiction, nonfiction, comics, short films)

[www.nightblockmag.com](http://www.nightblockmag.com)

NightBlock publishes poetry, short fiction, nonfiction, comics, short films, art & art criticism.

### North of Oxford

(poetry, reviews, commentary, essays)

[northofoxford.wordpress.com](http://northofoxford.wordpress.com)

Brought to you by the publishers of The Fox Chase Review, (2008-2015), North of Oxford is located north of the Oxford Circle @ Roosevelt Boulevard in Northeast Philadelphia and publishes poetry, book reviews, commentary and essays.

### OC87 Recovery Diaries

(online mental health nonfiction stories)

[oc87recoverydiaries.org](http://oc87recoverydiaries.org)

OC87 Recovery Diaries is an interactive website that features stories of mental health, empowerment and change, created by and for those whose journeys of recovery speak to audiences from all walks of life.

### ONE ART

(poetry)

[oneartpoetry.com](http://oneartpoetry.com)

ONE ART aims to publish poetry that adds value to the life of our readers. A poem must not only be good, it must be lasting.

### Painted Bride Quarterly

(all genres)

[pbqmag.org](http://pbqmag.org)

Painted Bride Quarterly, established in Philadelphia in 1973, is one of the country's longest running literary magazines. PBQ is a community-based, independent, non-profit literary magazine published quarterly online and annually in print.

### Paper Dragon

(fiction, nonfiction, poetry, visual art; focus on underrepresented communities)

[drexelpaperdragon.com](http://drexelpaperdragon.com)

Paper Dragon is the literary journal of Drexel University's MFA in Creative Writing program. It is managed and edited by MFA students and published with help from the Drexel Publishing Group.

### Permission to Write

(quarterly magazine discusses craft, career, and creativity for Black writers)

[www.permissiontowrite.com](http://www.permissiontowrite.com)

Permission to Write's goal is to cultivate the craft of independent Black writers and writers of color, give them space to create, a platform to amplify their voices, and a community to support their journey.

### Philadelphia Stories

(fiction, poetry, CNF, interviews from writers based in Philadelphia & Delaware Valley)

[philadelphiestories.org](http://philadelphiestories.org)

Philadelphia Stories is a 501(c3) that has been serving the writing, reading, and art community of the Greater Delaware Valley since 2004. Its mission is to cultivate a community of writers, artists, and readers in the Greater Philadelphia Area through publications, professional development, and promotion of area writers.

### Prolit

(all genres)

[www.prolitmag.com](http://www.prolitmag.com)

Prolit Magazine is a journal that sets out to recognize, interrogate, and resist capitalism's influence on contemporary art and literature, and to create a space for people to both discuss the realities of its oppression and to imagine better futures in its wake.

### Rathalla Review

(fiction, flash fiction, CNF, poetry, interviews, art)

[www.rathallareview.org](http://www.rathallareview.org)

Rathalla Review is the literary magazine for Rosemont College's Creative Writing MFA program.

### Root Quarterly

(art, ideas, criticism, fiction, poetry)

[www.rootquarterly.com](http://www.rootquarterly.com)

RQ is one part magazine, one part collaborative art project, and one part social experiment. They offer insightful and provocative essays, profiles of regional makers and artists, cultural criticism, fiction, poetry, and carefully-curated recommendations for getting the most out of life in Pennsylvania.

### Rhythm & Bones

(small press & magazine featuring trauma-inspired writing)

[www.rhythmbone.com](http://www.rhythmbone.com)

Rhythm & Bones Press is a small independent press and literary magazine founded by Tianna G. Hansen that is dedicated to dynamic and inspiring authors. They specialize in authors who write with personal emotion and those with trauma to portray to the world.

### River Heron Review

(poetry)

[www.riverheronreview.com](http://www.riverheronreview.com)

A free-access poetry journal first envisioned in the river town of New Hope, Pennsylvania by Robbin Farr and Judith Lagana to serve the literary arts community through publication, readings, workshops, and bringing the written word to life in as many ways as possible.

### Schuykill Valley Journal

(fiction, CNF, poetry, interviews, art)

[www.svjlit.com](http://www.svjlit.com)

The Schuykill Valley Journal publishes poetry, fiction, and essays. They also host monthly literary events at the MRAC.

### The Shoutflower

(journal of art and literature)

[www.theshoutflower.com](http://www.theshoutflower.com)

The Shoutflower is a vision of gritty romance. They celebrate those who walk the world with all the fearlessness and delirium of someone dreaming.

### Sortes

(prose and poetry)

[sortes.co](http://sortes.co)

SORTES is an oddball grabbag wunderkammer mixtape of a spinning collection of stories, poems, songs, and illustrations to help while away the wintery June nights.

### Split Lip Magazine

(poetry, fiction, CNF, art, music writing, film writing)

[splitlipthemag.com](http://splitlipthemag.com)

Split Lip Magazine is a literary journal that's totally bonkers-in-love with voice-driven writing, pop culture, and the kind of honesty that gets you right in the kidneys.

### StoryQuarterly

(short fiction, based at Rutgers-Camden)

[storyquarterly.camden.rutgers.edu](http://storyquarterly.camden.rutgers.edu)

Founded in 1975, StoryQuarterly has been publishing emerging and established writers for over 30 years. Originally an independent quarterly based in Illinois, its contributors' work has been selected for inclusion in many renowned annual collections. Among the acclaimed writers who have written for the journal are Margaret Atwood, T.C. Boyle, Lydia Davis, Mark Doty, Jhumpa Lahiri, Elizabeth McCracken and Joyce Carol Oates.

### Tilde Lit Journal

(poems, fiction, CNF, and nonfiction work from writers across the world)

[www.thirtywestph.com/tildelit](http://www.thirtywestph.com/tildelit)

Tilde accepts unpublished work in fiction, creative nonfiction, poetry, and visual art for the cover. The editors are open to many themes, styles, and forms.

### The Tiny

(poetry)

[www.thetinyamag.com](http://www.thetinyamag.com)

Founded in 2005, the tiny is a biannual online poetry journal edited by Gabriella Torres and Gina Myers.

### Title Magazine

(art reviews, criticism, projects, poetry & prose by local writers)

[www.title-magazine.com](http://www.title-magazine.com)

Since 2012, Title seeks to create a generative environment for engagement with arts and culture and to provide a platform for ambitious, experimental visual and written forms.

### Underground Pool

(featuring writing from UArts students)

[www.uarts.edu/liberal-arts/underground-pool](http://www.uarts.edu/liberal-arts/underground-pool)

Underground Pool, the student literary magazine of University of the Arts, is published each spring by the Creative Writing program.

### Voicemail Poems

(online magazine)

[voicemailpoems.org](http://voicemailpoems.org)

Voicemail Poems is an online magazine that highlights the intimate and raw voices of new and established writers of all styles. Poets submit to the magazine by reading their work to a voicemail box. The editors' favorites are picked seasonally and published on their website.

## INDEPENDENT BOOKSTORES

### PHILADELPHIA BOOKSTORES

#### Amalgam Comics

Kensington

[amalgamphilly.com](http://amalgamphilly.com)

Amalgam Comics & Coffeehouse is a comic book store and coffee shop hybrid located in the Kensington section of North Philadelphia.

#### Book Corner

Fairmount (Bookstore — used books)

[www.librarything.com/venue/4900/](http://www.librarything.com/venue/4900/)

[Friends-of-the-Free-Library-Book-Corner](http://Friends-of-the-Free-Library-Book-Corner)

Operated by the nonprofit Friends of the Free Library in Philadelphia, the Book Corner sells books donated by the community. Profits go to support and advocate for the libraries in Philadelphia.

#### The Book Trader

Old City

[www.phillybooktrader.com](http://www.phillybooktrader.com)

The Book Trader is a second-hand bookstore located in Philadelphia's historic Old City.

#### Books & Stuff

Germantown

[www.booksandstuff.info](http://www.booksandstuff.info)

Books & Stuff sells multicultural, Afrocentric, books and gifts online with the goal of promoting the enjoyment of reading, particularly to children of color.

#### The Big Blue Marble

Mount Airy

[www.bigbluemarblebooks.com](http://www.bigbluemarblebooks.com)

The Big Blue Marble is an independent bookstore full of diverse books for diverse readers.

#### Bindlestiff's

Cedar Park

[bindlestiffbooks.wordpress.com](http://bindlestiffbooks.wordpress.com)

Bindlestiff Books is a volunteer-run neighborhood bookstore in West Philadelphia, with a carefully selected array of new and discounted (but still new) books.

#### Brickbat Books

Queen Village

[brickbatbooks.blogspot.com](http://brickbatbooks.blogspot.com)

Brickbat Books offers new and used books and records in Queen Village, Philadelphia.

#### Frenchtown Bookshop

Frenchtown, NJ

[frenchtownbookshop.com](http://frenchtownbookshop.com)

Frenchtown Bookshop, a family-owned independent bookstore, is committed to selling worthwhile books carefully chosen to inspire curiosity, connection, and compassion.

#### Giovanni's Room

Washington Square West

[www.queerbooks.com](http://www.queerbooks.com)

Giovanni's Room is the oldest LGBTQ and feminist bookstore in the country.

#### Head House Books

Queen Village

[www.headhousebooks.com](http://www.headhousebooks.com)

Head House Books was founded in 2005 on the belief that no community is complete without the inspiration and exchange of ideas that only a locally owned, independent bookstore can provide.

#### Hakim's Bookstore

West Philly

[hakimsbookstore.com](http://hakimsbookstore.com)

Hakim's Bookstore is Philadelphia's oldest Black-owned bookstore.

#### Harriet's Bookshop

Fishtown

[www.oursisterbookshops.com](http://www.oursisterbookshops.com)

Harriet's Bookshop is an independent bookshop and writing space celebrating female writers, activists, and artists.

#### The Head & The Hand

East Kensington

[www.theheadandthehand.com/bookstore](http://www.theheadandthehand.com/bookstore)

The Head & The Hand is a community-focused bookstore that provides curated fiction, local lit, and children's/middle grade books to the neighborhood and beyond.

### House of Our Own

University City

[www.facebook.com/HouseOfOurOwnBooks](http://www.facebook.com/HouseOfOurOwnBooks)

House of Our Own offers a large stock of general and scholarly new and used books, located in a quiet, comfortable Victorian house on the UPenn campus.

### Making Worlds Bookstore

Spruce Hill

[www.facebook.com/makingworldsbooks](http://www.facebook.com/makingworldsbooks)

Nonprofit collectively-run bookstore for abolition, autonomy, ecological self-determination, and affirmation of worlds imagined and made by Black, Brown, Indigenous liberation.

### Molly's Books & Records

Queen Village

[www.facebook.com/mollysbooksandrecords](http://www.facebook.com/mollysbooksandrecords)

Molly's buys, sells, and trades used books, records, CDs.

### Mostly Books

South Street

[mostlybooksphilly.com](http://mostlybooksphilly.com)

Mostly Books sells books and more at 529 Bainbridge Street in Philadelphia.

### A Novel Idea

East Passyunk, South Philly

[anovelandeaphilly.com](http://anovelandeaphilly.com)

A Novel Idea is an independent bookstore and event space that reflects and supports the community.

### Shakespeare & Co

Rittenhouse Square

[shop.shakeandco.com](http://shop.shakeandco.com)

Shakespeare & Co. is an iconic Manhattan bookstore founded in 1983 located at 1632 Walnut Street in Philadelphia.

### Spiral Bookcase

Manayunk

[spiralbookcase.com](http://spiralbookcase.com)

Founded 11 years ago, The Spiral Bookcase thrives on all things strange and unusual, whether that's stories from just off the beaten path or tales told from the clutches of otherworldly creatures.

### Ulises

Fishtown

[ulises.us](http://ulises.us)

Ulises is a bookshop and project space dedicated to artists' books and independent art publications that explores the relationship between publics and publications.

### Uncle Bobbie's Coffee & Books

Germantown

[www.unclebobbies.com](http://www.unclebobbies.com)

Uncle Bobbie's Coffee & Books is a Coffee Shop and Bookstore located in the heart of the Germantown section of Philadelphia. Founded by Marc Lamont Hill in 2017, Uncle Bobbie's was created to provide underserved communities with access to books and a space where everyone feels valued.

### Wooden Shoe Books

South Street

[woodenshoebooks.org/home.html](http://woodenshoebooks.org/home.html)

The Wooden Shoe is an all-volunteer collectively-run infoshop located in Philadelphia that seeks to embody the principles of anarchism and other movements for social justice.

### PHILADELPHIA SUBURB BOOKSTORES

#### Baldwin's Book Barn

West Chester

[www.bookbarn.com](http://www.bookbarn.com)

The Book Barn was built in 1822 and is a five-story building which exudes bookish charm with its cozy nooks, stone walls, friendly atmosphere, wood-burning stove, and shelf upon shelf of books, maps, and prints.

#### Children's Book World

Haverford

[childrensbookworld.net](http://childrensbookworld.net)

Children's Book World is an independent, full-service children's bookstore featuring a comprehensive inventory, knowledgeable staff, and exciting events.

#### Doylestown Bookshop

Doylestown

[www.doylestownbookshop.com](http://www.doylestownbookshop.com)

The Doylestown and Lahaska Bookshops are locally owned and operated bookstores dedicated to preserving the heritage and traditions of independent bookstore ideals.

#### Farley's Bookshop

New Hope

[www.farleysbookshop.com/home](http://www.farleysbookshop.com/home)

Situated on the main street of the historic Delaware Riverfront town of New Hope, Pennsylvania, Farley's Bookshop and its knowledgeable, experienced staff have endeavored to satisfy the literary tastes of the area inhabitants for over forty years.

#### Main Point Books

Wayne

[www.mainpointbooks.com](http://www.mainpointbooks.com)

Main Point Books was born in the summer of 2013. Their goal is simple: to provide a forum to talk about, discover and promote great books.

### Narberth Bookshop

Narberth

[www.narberthbookshop.com](http://www.narberthbookshop.com)

A community of readers, writers, and lifelong learners.

### Open Book Bookstore

Elkins Park

[openbookphilly.com](http://openbookphilly.com)

Open Book Bookstore is an independent bookstore in Elkins Park. Their mission is to curate a quality collection of books to bring to the attention of readers.

## PRESSES

### Arch Street Press

(nonfiction, fiction)

[www.archstreetpress.org](http://www.archstreetpress.org)

Arch Street Press's mission is to publish the work of talented writers and leading changemakers.

### Camino Books

(nonfiction books of regional interest)

[www.caminobooks.com](http://www.caminobooks.com)

Camino Books was founded in 1987 for the purpose of publishing quality nonfiction books of regional interest to people in the Middle Atlantic states. Titles cover cooking, travel, gardening, history, biographies, local reference books, and books concerning parenting and important health issues.

### Frayed Edge Press

(edgy, fiction, poetry, history, politics)

[www.frayededgepress.com](http://www.frayededgepress.com)

Frayed Edge Press is an independent press located in Philadelphia that specializes in publishing marginalized voices, overlooked literature in translation, and works that wrestle with important questions impacting contemporary society.

### The Head & The Hand Press

(novels, poetry, stories, almanacs)

[www.theheadandthehand.com](http://www.theheadandthehand.com)

As a nonprofit arts organization, Head & The Hand is committed to serving as a launchpad for the next generation of local writers and growing as our neighborhood's sole independent bookstore and publisher duo.

### Headline Books

(based in West Virginia; fiction, non-fiction, and children's books)

[headlinebooks.com](http://headlinebooks.com)

With 35 years of publishing experience, Headline Books titles have garnered 691 national awards.

### Hidden River Arts

(outsider fiction and nonfiction)

[www.hiddenriverarts.com](http://www.hiddenriverarts.com)

Hidden River Arts is "Dedicated to Serving the Unserved Artist" and is committed to the "Outsider Artist," in every possible way that an artist might be an outsider.

### Lanternfish Press

(short fiction, novels, novella, CNF)

[lanternfishpress.com](http://lanternfishpress.com)

Lanternfish Press, founded in Philadelphia in 2013, publishes literature of the rare and strange. They seek the grotesque, the alien made familiar, the "I don't know what this is—but I love it."

### Moonstone Press

(poetry anthologies & chapbooks)

[moonstoneartscenter.org/category/moonstone-press](http://moonstoneartscenter.org/category/moonstone-press)

Moonstone began in 1981 on the second floor of Robin's Book Store, where Sandy Robin developed a series of Saturday morning children's programs and Larry Robin presented poets and authors. Incorporated as a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation in February 1983, Moonstone Inc. was established to manifest the Robins' belief that learning is a lifelong activity and that art stimulates both cognitive and affective learning at all ages.

### New Door Books

(innovative book-length fiction)

[www.newdoorbooks.com](http://www.newdoorbooks.com)

New Door Books publishes original, innovative, book-length literature, mostly fiction.

### Paul Dry Books

(fiction, biography, memoirs, history, & essays)

[www.pauldrybooks.com](http://www.pauldrybooks.com)

Paul Dry Books publishes fiction, both novels and short stories, and nonfiction—biography, memoirs, history, and essays, covering subjects from Homer to Chekhov, bird watching to jazz music, New York City to shogunate Japan.

### Quirk Books

(bold, unconventional, trend, & YA)

[www.quirkbooks.com](http://www.quirkbooks.com)

Founded in 2002, Quirk Books publishes a highly curated list of entertaining, enlightening, and strikingly unconventional books for adults and children in a number of genres and categories.

### Radiator Press

(poetry)

[www.radiatorpress.com](http://www.radiatorpress.com)

Radiator Press is based in Philadelphia, rooted in poetry of refusal and imagination. They publish books that make readers think deeply about social conditions imposed by capitalism and the experiences and instances of solidarity that point toward better ways of life.

### Ragged Sky Press

(poetry)

[www.raggedsky.com](http://www.raggedsky.com)

Ragged Sky is a small, highly selective cooperative press. Ragged Sky Press has historically focused on mature voices, overlooked poets, and women's perspectives.

### Recenter Press

(spiritual prose and poetry)

[www.recenterpress.com](http://www.recenterpress.com)

Recenter Press is a Philadelphia-based publisher dedicated to sharing work that documents personal transformation, that speaks to the need for the revolutionary transformation of society, and captures our deep communion with the world.

### Rhythm & Bones Press

(CNF/memoirs, short story/fantasy fiction, and poetry)

[www.rhythmnbones.com/books](http://www.rhythmnbones.com/books)

Rhythm & Bones Press is a small independent press and literary magazine founded by Tianna G. Hansen that is dedicated to dynamic and inspiring authors, whose work deserves to be shared and acknowledged.

### Running Press

(commercial fiction, adult nonfiction, YA, & children's)

[www.runningpress.com](http://www.runningpress.com)

Running Press is a member of the Hachette Book Group, a leading US trade publisher and a division of the third largest trade and educational book publisher in the world, Hachette Livre. The publisher's offices are located in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

### Saturnalia Books

(poetry)

[saturnaliabooks.com](http://saturnaliabooks.com)

Saturnalia Books's mission is to publish poetry of high merit, by new and established writers and to encourage the publication of literature of a non-commercial and challenging nature.

### Split/Lip Press

(poetry, short fiction collections, novellas, anthologies, memoirs, essay collections, & novels)

[www.splitlippress.com](http://www.splitlippress.com)

Split/Lip Press is dedicated to publishing boundary-breaking fiction, nonfiction, and hybrid books, lifting the transition boards that prevent fluidity and smashing those we cannot pry up.

### Temple University Press

(scholarly & anthologies)

[tupress.temple.edu](http://tupress.temple.edu)

Founded in 1969, Temple University Press chose as its inspiration Russell Conwell's vision of the university as a place of educational opportunity for the urban working class. The Press is perhaps best known as a publisher of books in the social sciences and the humanities, as well as books about Philadelphia and the Delaware Valley region.

### Thirty West Publishing House

(handmade poetry chapbooks)

[www.thirtywestph.com](http://www.thirtywestph.com)

Thirty West was founded as a passion project when our founder was an undergraduate at Temple University. They publish primarily poetry, literary fiction and nonfiction manuscripts, and our imprint literary journals..

### Tursulow Press

(undertold stories, odd books on odd topics for adults and children)

[www.tursulowpress.com](http://www.tursulowpress.com)

Tursulow Press in Philadelphia publishes undertold stories and republishes under-read classics. I.

### University of Pennsylvania Press

(scholarly & education)

[www.upenn.edu/pennpress/about/index.html](http://www.upenn.edu/pennpress/about/index.html)

The University of Pennsylvania Press exists to publish meritorious works that advance scholarly research and educational objectives.

### West Philly Press

(poetry, erotica, fiction, memoir, & essays)

[westphillypress.com](http://westphillypress.com)

West Philly Press publishes works by select Philadelphia and Philly-area authors. The core of our catalog focuses on poetry, short stories, and erotica, but if it interests us we'll give it a try.

## CREATIVE WRITING PROGRAMS

### Arcadia

(MFA low-residency, MA publishing)

[www.arcadia.edu/academics/programs/creative-writing-mfa](http://www.arcadia.edu/academics/programs/creative-writing-mfa)

Arcadia University's low-residency M.F.A. program in Creative Writing is distinctive in that it incorporates both a dynamic online environment and a study abroad experience.

### Drexel

(MFA low-residency, teaching assistantships)

[www.online.drexel.edu/online-degrees/arts-and-science-degrees/mfa-creative-writing/index.aspx](http://www.online.drexel.edu/online-degrees/arts-and-science-degrees/mfa-creative-writing/index.aspx)

Drexel University's two-year, low-residency MFA in Creative Writing is designed with the university's commitment to experiential and career-focused education in mind.

### Rosemont

(MFA partial funding)

[www.rosemont.edu/academics/graduate/creative-writing](http://www.rosemont.edu/academics/graduate/creative-writing)

The MFA in Creative Writing program at Rosemont College offers tracks in both poetry and prose, and in prose. Students can choose concentrations in creative nonfiction, short fiction, writing for children and adults, novel writing, and dramatic writing.

### Rutgers-Camden

(MFA full funding)

[mfa.camden.rutgers.edu](http://mfa.camden.rutgers.edu)

The Rutgers University-Camden Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing is a 39-credit terminal degree in the theory and practice of writing.

### Temple

(MFA partial funding)

[www.temple.edu/academics/degree-programs/creative-writing-mfa-la-crw-mfa](http://www.temple.edu/academics/degree-programs/creative-writing-mfa-la-crw-mfa)

The Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing in the College of Liberal Arts at Temple University seeks to develop individual voice and techniques, define your aesthetics, and gain the critical skills needed to realize your creative vision.

## FESTIVALS / CONFERENCES

### 215 Festival

(annual literary arts festival founded in 2001)

[www.215festival.org](http://www.215festival.org)

The 215 (two-one-five) Festival showcases the vibrant talent of the literary community in Philadelphia.

### Bucks County Book Festival

(books, author events, small presses)

[www.bucksbookfest.org](http://www.bucksbookfest.org)

The Bucks County Book Festival celebrates literacy, sparks imagination, and inspires people of all ages by connecting authors and readers.

### Caesura Poetry Festival

(festival and retreat for poets)

[www.monticapoet.org/caesura-2020](http://www.monticapoet.org/caesura-2020)

Caesura features workshops and readings with incredibly talented poets from the tri-state area and beyond, and offers an opportunity to spend time with members of the poetry community.

### Collingswood Book Festival

(books, author events, small presses)

[www.collingswoodbookfestival.com](http://www.collingswoodbookfestival.com)

The Collingswood Book Festival is an annual festival that presents more than 60 presenting authors and an additional 275 authors or exhibitors, plus music, food, and literary games and activities.

### HippoCamp

(writers of Creative Nonfiction, Lancaster, PA)

[hippocampusmagazine.com/conference](http://hippocampusmagazine.com/conference)

HippoCamp: A Conference for Creative Nonfiction Writers is an in-the-flesh extension of their online publication's goal to entertain, educate, and engage writers and readers of creative nonfiction. that three-fold mission.

### LitLife Poetry Festival

(panel events)

[philadelphiastories.org/litlife-poetry-festival](http://philadelphiastories.org/litlife-poetry-festival)

This poetry conference from Rosemont College, the Montgomery County Poet Laureate Program, and Philadelphia Stories brings together poets and poetry lovers to celebrate and discuss the art. Features a keynote, panels, workshops, and master classes.

### Philadelphia Poetry Festival

(annual poetry festival)

[www.madpoetsociety.com/philly-poetry-festival-1](http://www.madpoetsociety.com/philly-poetry-festival-1)

The Philly Poetry Festival takes place once a year in April at The Rotunda in West Philadelphia. It boasts readers from organizations and reading series from the entire Great Philadelphia Area.

### Philadelphia Writers Conference

(panel events, agent meetings)

[pwcwriters.org](http://pwcwriters.org)

The Philadelphia Writers' Conference is America's longest running, open-registration writers conference.

### Philalalia

(Handmade poetry & book arts festival)

[www.facebook.com/philalalia](http://www.facebook.com/philalalia)

PHILALALIA is a regional three-day small press fair which will bring together poets, artists, publishers, and creative enthusiasts in a vibrant arts venue to share ideas, expertise, and performances, showcase their art, & offer their wares to the public.

### Push to Publish Conference

(panel events, business skill building, agent meetings)

[philadelphiastories.org/push-to-publish](http://philadelphiastories.org/push-to-publish)

Since 2009, this annual one-day publishing conference has become a popular networking opportunity for writers of all experience levels. Whether you are an established writer or just getting started, this one-day workshop will provide valuable resources you can use to get your work in print and online.

## WRITING WORKSHOPS

### Alison Hicks' Greater Philadelphia Wordshop Studio

(Delaware County/Center City)

[literaryphilly.org/resources/writing-workshops](http://literaryphilly.org/resources/writing-workshops)

Writing workshops led by Alison Hicks, MFA, following the Amherst Writers & Artists method. Private Consultation/Coaching also available—contact Alison to discuss your project and needs.

### Blue Stoop

(8 week classes, 6-12 students, fiction, poetry, essays, memoir, novel, YA, food writing)

[www.bluestoop.org/classes](http://www.bluestoop.org/classes)

Blue Stoop nurtures an inclusive literary community by creating pathways to access writing education, inspiration, and professional support, and celebrating Philadelphia's rich writing tradition.

### Cooper Street Writing Workshops

(4 week classes & one day intensives in fiction & poetry taught by Rutgers-Camden MFA grads & local instructors)

[writershouse.camden.rutgers.edu/programs/cooper-street](http://writershouse.camden.rutgers.edu/programs/cooper-street)

Cooper Street is for everyone, whether you're just beginning to explore a genre or have been writing for years. Their workshops are taught by published and award-winning authors, seasoned teachers, and professional editors.

### Drexel Writers Room

(interactive writing workshops no preparation necessary, free & open to all)

[www.writersroomdrexel.org](http://www.writersroomdrexel.org)

Writers Room is a university-community literary arts program engaged in creative placemaking and art for social justice.

### Drexel Storylab

(8 week fiction & nonfiction classes for adults)

[drexel.edu/oaas/academics/Storylab](http://drexel.edu/oaas/academics/Storylab)

Drexel Storylab is designed for adult learners who want to explore careers as writers. The program offers creative writing workshops and study abroad retreats geared towards non-traditional students – including working professionals, Drexel alumni and other community members.

### Green Street Poetry

(monthly poetry workshop group in Fairmount)

[www.greentreetpoetry.com](http://www.greentreetpoetry.com)

Green Street Poetry is an organization dedicated to fostering a rich, diverse, accessible community of writers that allows us to create and grow together.

### Janet Benton's The Word Studio

(offers small workshops and private manuscript consultations)

[www.thewordstudio.us](http://www.thewordstudio.us)

Janet Benton helps writers craft and sell their stories.

### Liz Moore's Palumbo Park Writing Workshops

(5 week courses in fiction & nonfiction at area bookstores)

[www.palumboparkwritingworkshop.com](http://www.palumboparkwritingworkshop.com)

The Palumbo Park Writing Workshop serves prose writers in the Greater Philadelphia area by partnering with local independent bookstores to provide ongoing in-store workshops, offering individual manuscript and MFA-application consulting services, and hosting daylong or weekend-long seminars on aspects of the writing and publishing process.

### Mount Airy Learning Tree

(short classes for beginners)

[mtairylearningtree.org](http://mtairylearningtree.org)

The mission of the Mount Airy Learning Tree is to strengthen and enrich the diverse community of Northwest Philadelphia by providing opportunities for individuals to come together in educational and recreational activities.

### Philadelphia Stories Master Classes

(3 week online classes)

[philadelphiastories.org](http://philadelphiastories.org)

Each master class is led by a Philadelphia Stories editor, who will offer a deep dive into topics to help you grow as a creative writer. All proceeds will support Philadelphia Stories.

### Philadelphia Writers Workshop

(Flourtown, PA)

[phillywriters.com](http://phillywriters.com)

The Philadelphia Writers Workshop provides a fun, structured way to write fiction, poetry, non-fiction, memoir, essays, plays, and screenplays in the company of other writers.

### River Heron Review Classes

(online & on-site Lahaska, PA)

[www.riverheronreview.com/workshop-info](http://www.riverheronreview.com/workshop-info)

River Heron offers writers in all genres opportunities to further enhance their creative writing skills through our structured and generative workshops.

### Rosemont Writers Studio

(6 week classes, Rosemont, PA)

[www.rosemont.edu/academics/graduate/creative-writing/rosemont-writers-studio](http://www.rosemont.edu/academics/graduate/creative-writing/rosemont-writers-studio)

The Writers' Studio courses are non-credit offerings of Rosemont College's MFA Program. Our mission is to offer MFA graduates, from any program, and other members of the larger Philadelphia writing community an opportunity to take focused writing and publishing workshops at a reasonable cost.



## OTHER (arts orgs, literacy programs, podcasts, etc.)

### Asian Arts Initiative

(author events, workshops)

[asianartsinitiative.org](http://asianartsinitiative.org)

Connecting cultural expression and social change, Asian Arts Initiative uses art as a vehicle to explore the diverse experiences of all communities which include Asian Americans.

### Athenaeum of Philadelphia

(literary society, book awards, a writer in residence)

[philathenaeum.org](http://philathenaeum.org)

We are an historic and vibrant, Philadelphia-centered and member-supported circulating library, research archive, and cultural forum dedicated to harnessing our resources — our expert staff, our collections of books, art and architecture treasures, and our National Historic Landmark Building — to strengthen our growing urban community through cultural engagement and fellowship.

### Black Writers Museum

(museum celebrating Black writing)

[www.blackwritersmuseum.com](http://www.blackwritersmuseum.com)

The mission of the Black Writers Museum is to provide a venue and forum for the public to explore, celebrate, and experience the wonders of writing and reading through the exhibition and study of Black Literature. Our mission is to inspire and cultivate another generation of writers, public speakers and literary giants that will tell the story of history as seen through their eyes and expressed in their vernacular.

### Blue Stoop

(happy hours, networking, resources)

[www.bluestoop.org](http://www.bluestoop.org)

Blue Stoop nurtures an inclusive literary community by creating pathways to access writing education, inspiration, and professional support, and celebrating Philadelphia's rich writing tradition.

### Book Fight

(podcast)

[bookfightpod.com](http://bookfightpod.com)

Book Fight is a weekly podcast that is, in a nutshell, writers talking about writing. Writing we love. Writing we hate. Writing that inspires us, baffles us, infuriates us. These are the conversations writers have at the bar, which is to say they're both honest and open to tangents, misdirection, and general silliness.

### Broadside Literary

(literary publicity w/Philadelphia ties)

[www.broadsidepr.com](http://www.broadsidepr.com)

From the Pulitzer Prize-winning *The Sixth Extinction* to career-launching novels like *Vater for Elephants* and *White Teeth* to mission-driven organizations such as the American Booksellers Association, the New Yorker Festival, and the Whiting Foundation: the projects Broadside partners promote regularly hit bestseller lists, win landmark prizes, shape the literary landscape, and catalyze social movements.

### Center for the Book

(workshops, events on bookmaking, artbooks)

[www.philadelphiacenterforthebook.org](http://www.philadelphiacenterforthebook.org)

Philadelphia has a rich history in book production and its book collections are strong. Until now, Philadelphia did not have an institution devoted to book artists and the book arts. Collaborating with public and private book-collecting institutions throughout the city, Philadelphia Center for the Book brings together book artists, librarians, educators, and the public to appreciate the book as a contemporary art form within the context of its historical antecedents.

### Center for Literacy

(adult literacy advocacy organization)

[beyondliteracy.org](http://beyondliteracy.org)

Beyond Literacy is fully operational and offers hybrid and in-person classes to our adult learners. Please, review our new safety policy before visiting a Belit Campus.

### First Person Arts

(story slam events, workshops)

[firstpersonarts.org](http://firstpersonarts.org)

First Person Arts pushes the boundaries of memoir and documentary art by helping people shape true personal stories into art for the stage, page, on-air and online.

### Kelly Writers House

(writers house at the University of Pennsylvania)

[writing.upenn.edu/wh](http://writing.upenn.edu/wh)

Founded in 1995 by a group of students, faculty, staff and alumni, the Kelly Writers House is an actual 13-room house at 3805 Locust Walk on Penn's campus that serves as a center for writers of all kinds from Penn and the Philadelphia region at large. Each semester the Writers House hosts approximately 150 public programs and projects — poetry readings, film screenings, seminars, web magazines, lectures, dinners, radio broadcasts, workshops, art exhibits, and musical performances — and about 500 people visit the House each week. They work, write, and collaborate in seminar rooms, a publications room, the "hub" office, a cozy living room, a dining room, a kitchen with plenty of space for conversation, and "the Arts Cafe," the wonderfully open south-facing room that was originally the parlor.

### Leeway Foundation

(grants for women & trans artists, artist support programming)

[www.leeway.org](http://www.leeway.org)

The Leeway Foundation supports women and trans\* artists and cultural producers working in communities at the intersection of art, culture, and social change. Through our grantmaking and other programs we promote artistic expression that amplifies the voices of those on the margins, promotes sustainable and healthy communities, and works in the service of movements for economic and social justice.

### The Library Company of Philadelphia

(nation's oldest cultural institution and research library)

[librarycompany.org](http://librarycompany.org)

The Library Company of Philadelphia is an independent research library concentrating on American society and culture from the 17th through the 19th centuries. Free and open to the public, the Library Company houses an extensive non-circulating collection of rare books, manuscripts, broadsides, ephemera, prints, photographs, and works of art. Our mission is to foster scholarship in and increase public understanding of American history before 1900 by preserving and interpreting the valuable materials in our care.

### Mighty Writers

(youth writing programs)

[mightywriters.org](http://mightywriters.org)

At Mighty Writers, we teach more than 3,500 kids to write with clarity annually. We serve children and families in and around Philadelphia, PA and in Camden, Atlantic City and Newark, NJ. We also run writing workshops in the Washington Heights community in NYC. We are a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. All programs are free to the kids we serve.

### Moonstone Arts Center

(poetry events, community programming)

[moonstoneartscenter.org](http://moonstoneartscenter.org)

Moonstone began in 1981 on the second floor of Robin's Book Store, where Sandy Robin developed a series of Saturday morning children's programs and Larry Robin presented poets and authors.

### No River Twice

(poetry)

[www.norivertwice.org](http://www.norivertwice.org)

No River Twice is an experiment in how to bring playfulness, surprise and communal participation into the realm of poetry readings.

### Overdue

(podcast)

[overduepodcast.com](http://overduepodcast.com)

Overdue is a podcast about the books you've been meaning to read. Join Andrew and Craig each week as they tackle a new title from their backlog. Classic literature, obscure plays, goofy children's books: they'll read it all, one overdue book at a time.

### Paul Robeson House

(writing groups, programs pertaining to African American culture & history)

[www.paulrobesonhouse.org](http://www.paulrobesonhouse.org)

The Paul Robeson House and Museum in Philadelphia is owned by the West Philadelphia Cultural Alliance.

### Pen & Pencil Club

(nation's oldest press club, private bar)

[www.penandpencil.org](http://www.penandpencil.org)

The Pen & Pencil Club is one of the oldest surviving press clubs in the country. Since 1892, the P&P, as it is affectionately called, has been open daily with nearly no interruption, including during Prohibition and World War II. It is the result of the merging of several membership groups and private clubs dedicated to journalists, editors and other members of the working press.

### Permission to Write

(quarterly magazine, meetups, writing classes, and blog for and by Black writers with Philly ties)

[www.permissiontowrite.com](http://www.permissiontowrite.com)

An online and in-person community providing resources to cultivate and amplify the voices of Black writers and writers of color.

### Philadelphia Art Alliance

(now part of University of the Arts)

[www.uarts.edu/centers/artalliance](http://www.uarts.edu/centers/artalliance)

The University of the Arts is committed to inspiring, educating and preparing innovative artists and creative leaders for the arts of the twenty-first century.

### Philadelphia Contemporary

(visual art, performance art, and spoken word)

[philadelphiaccontemporary.org](http://philadelphiaccontemporary.org)

Founded in 2016, Philadelphia Contemporary is a contemporary art organization whose mission is to connect the people and places of Philadelphia through art and partnership. Currently nomadic, Philadelphia Contemporary presents visual art, performance art, and spoken word across the city, with ambitions to establish a freestanding, globally oriented, and locally aware non-collecting arts institution.

### Philadelphia Folklore Project

(folklore, oral storytelling)

[www.folkloreproject.org](http://www.folkloreproject.org)

Folklore means something different to everyone — as it should, since it is one of the chief means we have to represent our own realities in the face of powerful institutions. Here at the Philadelphia Folklore Project, we work to sustain vital and diverse living cultural heritage in communities in our region through collaborative projects, research, documentation and education, prioritizing folk and traditional arts in service of social change.

### Philadelphia Young Playwrights

(youth playwrighting resources)

[www.phillyyoungplaywrights.org](http://www.phillyyoungplaywrights.org)

Since 1987, Philadelphia Young Playwrights (PYP) has partnered with educators to bring the transformative power of playwrighting into classrooms and community settings across Greater Philadelphia. Placing students at the center of their learning, PYP's intensive writing residencies advance writing-based literacy skills while developing critical 21st century skills like creativity, communication, and collaboration.

### The Philly Liars Club Oddcast

(podcast)

[theliarscluboddcast.libsyn.com](http://theliarscluboddcast.libsyn.com)

A bunch of people who make stuff up for a living, interviewing other people who make stuff up for a living. All while drinking beer and wine in the middle of the day. What could possibly go wrong? Join us for a lively round of lies and exaggerations featuring everyone from NY Times Bestselling authors to National Book Award finalists to debut novelists, screenwriters, actors and more. Hosted by The Liars Club. Sorry, not responsible for the truthiness of any content, because, Liars. Pants currently on fire. Ouch.

### PlayPenn

(playwriting craft hub)

[www.playpenn.org](http://www.playpenn.org)

Our organization thrives because of the ever growing variety of Playwrights that we have the pleasure of supporting. Because PlayPenn does not produce plays, we can nurture the creative impulses of artists and dedicate our work to the developmental process in its purest form.

### The Rosenbach

(events, short writing classes, special events)

[rosenbach.org](http://rosenbach.org)

The Rosenbach offers exhibits, programs, and tours showcasing rare books, manuscripts, and art.

### Scribe Video Center

(digital storytelling workshops)

[www.scribe.org](http://www.scribe.org)

Scribe Video Center, a non-profit organization founded in December of 1982 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, seeks to explore, develop, and advance the use of electronic media. Including video and audio, as an artistic media and as tools for progressive social change.

### Smith Publicity

(book publicity & marketing)

[www.smithpublicity.com](http://www.smithpublicity.com)

Founded in 1997, Smith Publicity has evolved from a one-person operation run in a bedroom office to one of the leading book publicity agencies in the world. Founder Dan Smith's goal for the company was to offer unparalleled customer service and work to exceed, not simply meet client expectations. This fundamental principle of Smith Publicity's book promotion programs resonated with clients, and over 20 years later, we've worked with thousands of authors and publishers, as well as entrepreneurs, consultants, publicly-held companies, and businesses in many industries.

### Tree House Books

(literacy non-profit & children's bookstore)

[www.treehousebooks.org](http://www.treehousebooks.org)

At Tree House Books, our vision is that every child in Philadelphia has access to books, and every opportunity to pursue their dreams.

### Tell Me A Story

(storytelling workshops)

[www.tellemastory.info](http://www.tellemastory.info)

We train multi-passionate entrepreneurs, mission-driven leaders, and committed changemakers how to find their voice and share their unique story with honesty and passion. We help you to communicate differently without changing who you are so that you can connect with clients, colleagues, and any audience in a more human way.

### Warrior Writers

(support for writers who are veterans)

[www.warriorwriters.org](http://www.warriorwriters.org)

Warrior Writers is a national non-profit. Our mission is to create a culture that articulates veterans' experiences, build a collaborative community for artistic expression, and bear witness to war and the full range of military experiences.

### Write Now Philly

(reviews and interviews of Philly-based writers)

[writenowphilly.com](http://writenowphilly.com)

Write Now Philly is an online magazine devoted to writing, books, literature, publishing, and the literary community, with a focus on the Philadelphia area. We publish book reviews and articles and announce new book releases. Write Now Philly is run and staffed by Drexel University faculty and students.

### Writers House at Rutgers-Camden

(writers house with community programming)

[writershouse.camden.rutgers.edu](http://writershouse.camden.rutgers.edu)

With a front door on historic Cooper Street, the Writers House provides a welcoming space for the campus and community to celebrate writing across diverse disciplines, communities, and media. Writers House programming is always open to both the Rutgers community and the general public: our annual reading series Writers in Camden, Cooper Street Workshops, and our unique menu of interdisciplinary programs unite artists, scholars, students and citizens around the power of the written word. The Writers House is also home to the Masters of Fine Arts in Creative Writing and to Story Quarterly, the English department's literary magazine.

## Michener Level (M)

(\$30 - \$49)

Aaron Bauman & Leigh Goldenberg  
Alexander Balis  
Alice Chung  
Annalie Hudson Artist  
Art of Inbound Marketing & Design  
Barbara East  
Brigid Brennan  
Cathleen Cohen  
Cheryl Squadrito  
Christine & William Schuster  
Christine Henninger  
Christine Obst  
Cirel Magen  
Daniel A. & Roberta K. Zehner  
David Arey  
David Updike  
David Strickler  
Deborah & William Off  
Diana Krantz  
Eileen Sanchez  
Elizabeth Hughes  
Ellen Langas  
Evan Schwartz  
Frances Metzman  
Hadley Witcher  
Harvey & Marcia Steinberg  
Hayden Saunier  
Hello Sunshine Gifts  
Edwin & Brit Stickle  
Jane McGovern  
Jesse Daniels  
Jessica Herring  
John & Christine Benigno  
Joseph Buehler  
Julie Rockefeller  
June Flavin  
Karen McLaughlin  
Kathryn Ionata  
Katie King  
Kenneth Fifer  
Laura Panarello  
Laura Ducceschi  
Linda Garfield  
Lora Lavin  
Lori & Peter Joyce  
Marialice Stanzeski  
Mark Cofta  
Mary Erpel  
Merry & Robert Bloch Jones  
Pam Mclean-Parker & Gregory Parker  
Peter & Robertta Krok  
Robin Rosecky  
Rosalind Bloom  
Sandra Nork  
Sharon Steinhofner

Sheila Fox  
Stephen Burke & Giselle Garnicki-Burke  
Stephen Campellone  
Stephen Cirillo  
Suzanne Comer  
Talmage Brennan  
Theodore Heron  
Thomas & Loretta McFadden  
Tom & Sarah Molinaro  
Tom Teti  
Treacy Nicole Cirone  
Virginia Smith  
Walter Thomason  
Watsuki Harrington  
William Hemmig

## Buck Level (B)

(\$50 - \$99)

Adriana Lecuona  
Anne & David Flynn  
Ave Maria Merritt  
Brenda Leon & Patrick Bambrick  
Carmen Febo San Miguel  
Catherine Johns  
Chantal Jauvin  
Charles & Kathryn Bahnson, in memory of Nancy Kress  
Charles Holdefer  
Christine McNamara  
Christine Schuster  
Christopher Beardsley  
David Sanders & Nancy Brokaw  
David Stephens  
Debra Fox  
Dennis Lawson  
Dorothy Fulton  
Elisa & Victor Sheronas  
Elizabeth Abrams-Morley  
Elizabeth Larsson  
Gerard Di Falco  
Jennifer & Erik Streitwieser  
Joan Tropp  
Joel Burcat  
John Alexanderson  
John & Nancy Farrell  
John Swan  
Joseph Quinn  
Karen Yuska  
Kathleen Furin  
Kay & Roy Peters  
Kenneth Romanowski  
Laura Regnier  
Lois Schlachter  
M. Kathryn Taylor  
Mary Scherf  
Mary & Lance Donaldson-Evans  
MC Burgert  
Mo Ganey & Don Kates  
Paul & Hairong Dobias

Robert & Judy Schachner  
Roger Hart  
Shoshana Loeb  
Stanley Syzmanski  
Susan Etkin  
Susan Karol Martel  
Talmage Brennan  
William & Elizabeth Kirk  
WMJ Untereker

## Whitman Level (W)

(\$100 - \$499)

Adriana Lecuona  
Cheryl & Ross McLaren  
Christine Le Ager & Deborah Waxman  
Deborah Burnham  
Dennis McGlade  
Eileen Cuniffe  
Elisa L. Sheronas  
Gary Zimmario  
Jacqueline Hopkins  
Jane Day  
Janine Pratt & William Hyman  
Joan & James Husted  
John & Karen Shea  
Laura Tamakoshi  
Lynn Harvey & Scott Jahss  
Martha Bottomley  
Melisa Spencer  
Nathan Long  
Pamela Burgos  
Paul Smith  
Rebecca Lipner  
Sandra Sampson  
Stefanie Levine & Steven Cohen  
Subhashree Ramesh  
Susette Brooks  
Thomas & Jennifer Durso  
Vernita Hall

## Potok Level (P)

(\$500- \$999)

James Knipp  
Matter Press  
Nicole Salemno  
Thomas Rush & Meriam Zandi

## W.C. Williams Level (WC)

(\$1000+)

Barbara Holmberg  
Carol Oberholtzer  
Daniel V. & Michelle Johns  
Heather McGlinn Hansma & Scott Hansma  
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