

# *News 'N' Notes*

*August 2024*

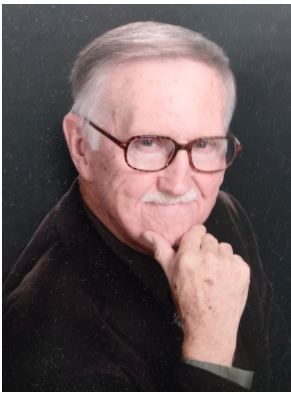
## *Poets' Roundtable of Arkansas*

*Founded February 5, 1931*

*Member of the National Federation of State Poetry Societies, Inc.*

<http://poetsroundtableofarkansas.org>

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### *President's Address*

PRA Members:

Well, it's July/August again. Various names have been used to name this time of year. The Dog Days of Summer is the most common. The ancient Greeks thought the rising of the Dog Star, Sirius, near sunrise, added to the heat of the sun during this season of the year. Some thought it was so-called because dogs went mad because of the heat or the heat was so bad that it was not fit for a dog, let alone for human beings. I always thought maybe it was so-called because of the heat-infused lethargy of dogs and every other living thing.

In Sweden, this time of year is called the Cucumber Season; in Germany, it's Pickle Time. In Britain, sometime in the late 19th century, it was often called the Silly Season, because newspapers, contending with the lack of news brought on by the seasonal doldrums, began printing stories of silly, weird, trivial stories. In the USA, after the famous sighting of "Flying Saucers" on June 24, 1947, by Kenneth Arnold, other reports of strange phenomena seemed to proliferate with the increase in temperature. Whatever we call it, it's hot. I'm ready for the milder days we call Indian Summer. I don't know where that came from.

I look forward to Poetry Day and our new meeting place at UCA. I hope it goes well.

**John McPherson**

PRA President

## *Welcome New Member*

**Robyn Oxford** of Hot Springs, AR

## *Congratulations and Newsworthy*

### **May Monthly Contest Winners**

Judge: **Laura Bridges**

First Place: **Dennis Patton** "From Generation to Generation"

Second Place: **John McPherson** "Fahrenheit 451 Got It Wrong"

Third Place: **Cathy Moran** "Reading in the fullness of time"

First Honorable Mention: **Pat Durmon** "My Love Affair With Books"

Second Honorable Mention: **Donna Nelson** "The Open Book"

Third Honorable Mention: **Fay Guinn** "Greatest Book Ever Written"

### **June Monthly Contest Winners**

Judge: **Christine Henderson**

First Place: **Lydia Cheatham** "Phenomenon"

Second Place: **Patricia Laster** "What Did You Do Last Summer"

Third Place: **Cathy Moran** "Early Summertime"

First Honorable Mention: **John McPherson** "Signs of Summer"

Second Honorable Mention: **Dennis Patton** "Making Memories"

Third Honorable Mention: **Marilyn Joyner** "A Happy Time"

### **July Monthly Contest Winners**

Judge: **Larry Witherspoon**

First Place: **Sara Gipson** "Letter Home"

Second Place: **Jerri Hardesty** "April Fool"

Third Place: **Cathy Moran** "The Furniture is Arranged"

First Honorable Mention: **Lorraine Jeffery** "Gripping Tight"

Second Honorable Mention: **Karen Moulton** "Fishing in Crooked Creek"

Third Honorable Mention: **Rick Houston** "Times Past"

**Suzanne Underwood Rhodes** is happy to announce her chapbook *The Perfume of Pain* will be released this summer by Alabaster Leaves Publishing.

<https://poets.org/poet/suzanne-underwood-rhodes>

**William G. Hill** is honored to be asked by the North Branch of the Mississippi Poetry Society to be their nominee for the MPS Poet of the Year for 2025.

**Pat Laster** has been published in two august journals: In the spring issue of CALLIOPE, find her 2-page-spread article titled, "Genesis of a New Poem." The general editor even mentioned it on the front of the issue. The summer issue of CALLIOPE published one of her poems. Also, her first submission, acceptance and publication in the 104-year-old *The Lyric*, (formed, traditional formed poetry), was a Hexadual sans the final two lines, required by the editor, "Not Wasting Rose Prunings" [included later in this newsletter]. She also won second place in the PRA's June monthly contest.

Her third book, *HIDING MYSELF INTO SAFETY: a Collection of Short Stories and Long Poems, plus an Occasional Essay*, is now available from Amazon.

**Mark Hudson**, member-at-large, had his poem, "Creatures of the City," published in Walt Whitman's 205th birthday poetry anthology published by Local Gems poetry in New York, a limited edition run.

**Teresa H. Klepac** received the First Place Award for Fiction in the annual Well Versed 2024 contest sponsored by the Columbia Chapter of the Missouri Writers Guild for her short story "The Promise of Water." Also published in Well Versed anthology is the short story "Uncle Pen's Fiddle" and three poems "Daisy Petal Summer," "A Dark Poem of Conceit," and

“Hanging the Past Out to Dry.” She has three poems published in the June issue of the anthology from

<https://www.prolificpulse.com/> For *Cadence: Life’s Poetic Rhythms*: “Autumn Joy,” “Grass Dance for Old Lovers,” and “Summer Sunburn.”

At-large member **Janice Canerdy** was published in the Society of Classical Poets; she had three poems published on the website NFSPS and one of her poems will appear in the 2024 *Encore*, the NFSPS journal of winning contest poems; placed second in the May contest of Arizona State Poetry Society with one of her poems to appear in the 2024 *Sandcutters* anthology; three of her poems will be in the June issue of *Halcyon Times*.

**Dennis Patton** received six honorable mentions and a second place in NFSPS contests.

**Cathy Moran** received one first and two second place awards from the Alabama State Poetry Society; received four first place awards from the Oklahoma State Poetry Society; received one first place award from the Utah State Poetry Society; and two first place, two second place, and two third place awards from the Mississippi State Poetry Society.

**Emory Jones’** poem “Jewel Bush” was published in the May 2024 edition of Pennsylvania’s Poetic Voices; “Spring Haiku” was published in the May 2024 edition of Pennsylvania’s Poetic Voices; “The Resting Place” won second place in the Jesse Bartlett Memorial Award of the Pennsylvania Poetry Society’s 2024 Contest and was published in *Prize Poems 2024*; “Her Photograph” won third place in the Eleanor B. Lapham Memorial Award of the Pennsylvania Poetry Society’s 2024 Contest and was published in *Prize Poems 2024*; “Deep Freeze” won first place in the Bobbie Drobeck Memorial Award of the Poetry Society of Tennessee’s 2024 Poetry Festival

Contest; “Border Country” was a finalist in the Tennessee Voices Contest of the 2023-2024 PST Festival Contest; “Catlett Tipton: Sevier County Criminal” won honorable mention in the Tennessee Villains Category of the Poetry Society of Tennessee’s 2024 Poetry Festival Contest; “Living Lantern” was published in *The Avocet*, Summer 2024, print edition; “Summer Hummm” was published in *The Avocet*, Summer 2024, print edition; “Deep Freeze” was published in the April 2024 issue of Pennsylvania’s Poetic Voices.

**Kai Coggin’s** latest book, *Mother of Other Kingdoms* is available at [kaicoggin.com](http://kaicoggin.com). She was selected to be a Festival Poet at the 2024 Geraldine R. Dodge Poetry Festival in October.

**Howard Lee Kilby**, president of Arkansas Haiku and Haiku Society of America South Region Coordinator for Arkansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi and Tennessee, reminds us that “Haiku has been around since the time of Shakespeare yet it is new to many people. I invite members of the Poet’s ROUNDTABLE of Arkansas to investigate the Haiku Society of America at [www.hsa-haiku.org](http://www.hsa-haiku.org) .

The Haiku Club in Hot Springs meets at the Garland County Library the first Friday of each month. Guests welcome. For info 501-767-6096.”



**Rick Houston** is our new membership chair. Thanks, Rick, for stepping up to take on this position. I asked Rick some questions which he graciously agreed to answer. Here are his responses:

My inspiration comes from several places: life, past and

present; lectures and events that I have attended; places I have gone; people I have met; sometimes even an object. For instance, the inspiration for my entry in July's PRA contest came from an old clock hanging on the wall that was my father's. I can still picture him winding it.

I am blessed to have more than one Muse. I would have to say that God is first. It seems the more that I acknowledge Him, the more aware I am of his creation and the people in it. We also have those in our lives whose faith and perseverance inspire us to excel. My revision strategy has been to write the story or what I want to tell first, whether it is poetry or prose. Then condense and edit. There is always some research involved. I would have to say Maya Angelou is a poet I like. *Markham Street* by Ronnie Williams is a book that got my attention.

I first heard of PRA when I attended the Arkansas Writers' Conference in the late 80's. It was my first conference. I was focused on freelance writing at the time. I was very welcomed at the conference and I know that some of my "Welcomers" were PRA members. So the saying "You can't unring a bell" is true! When I joined The White County Creative Writers last year and learned some of the members were also PRA members as well, I had to know more. I had developed an interest in poetry. That led me to join PRA and the Gin Creek Poets. Both groups have been a tremendous blessing.

### *Poetry Day*

PRA's 2024 Poetry Day Conference is scheduled for October 19 in the Fireplace Room on the campus of Central Arkansas University in Conway, Arkansas. Registration will begin at 9:00 am and the conference will begin at 9:30 am.

**Karen Moulton** is the Poetry Day Chair and **Christine Henderson** is the Poetry Day Contest Chair.

The featured speaker is Phillip Howerton of Missouri State University at West Plains. Howerton earned his BS and MEd at Drury University and his PhD at the University of Missouri-Columbia. He has been published in *American History through Literature*, *Arkansas Review*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *The Concord Saunterer*, *Encyclopedia of American Environmental Literature*, *Journal of Kentucky Studies*, *The Midwest Quarterly*, *Plainsongs*, *Red Rock Review*, *The South Carolina Review*, *Teaching American Literature*, *Thoreau Society Bulletin*, and *Writers of the American Renaissance*. In addition, Golden Antelope Press published his poetry collection, *The History of Tree Roots* in 2015. He received the 2019 Missouri Literary Award from the Missouri Library Association for *The Literature of the Ozarks: An Anthology* which was published by University of Arkansas Press. He was a nominee for Missouri Poet Laureate in spring 2019. He is the owner and managing editor of Cornerpost Press Book Publishing, Associate Editor of *The Heartland Review*, General Editor of *Elder Mountain: A Journal of Ozark Studies*, and co-founder and co-editor of *Cave Region Review*. His second poetry collection, *Gods of Four Mile Creek*, was released by Golden Antelope Press in October 2023.

Poetry Day is the main poetry event in Arkansas. Each year this conference honors Arkansas Poet Laureate Rosa Zagnoni Marinoni (1953-1970). As a result of her efforts to promote poetry in Arkansas, Governor Ben Laney proclaimed October 15, 1948, the first annual Poetry Day in Arkansas. For conference questions, contact **John McPherson** at [mcpherson8391@gmail.com](mailto:mcpherson8391@gmail.com) or 501-305-9972.



## *Directions to the Fireplace Room at UCA in Conway*

Directions to the McCastlain Hall, which houses the Fireplace Room are as follows:

If one takes the Oak Street exit, proceed west to Harkrider; turn left (south) to Bruce Street; turn left on Doneghey Ave; right on L A Niven Drive.

If one takes the Dave Ward exit proceed west to Doneghey Ave. and proceed north to L A Niven Drive; turn left.



## *Getting to Know Poetry Day* *Speaker, Dr. Phillip Howerton*

I reached out to Dr. Howerton and asked him to share some information we may not find in biographies and other interviews. Here are my questions and his responses.

### **What happens to you as a writer when you write poetry?**

As with most creative activities, poetry allows a person to remove the self from the daily stream of distraction. Writing poetry requires a great amount of self-inspection. When I'm focused on a poem, I confront myself and get in tune with the deeper, better part of my being, and then perhaps come back to daily life a little renewed and more perceptive.

### **Describe a memorable experience at one of your readings.**

Probably the most memorable moments at readings are when someone is moved by a poem or connects with a poem in a completely unexpected way. For instance, once when I held a reading of Mark Spitzer's *Cryptozarkia* (published by Cornerpost Press), an audience member told the story of an acquaintance of hers who keeps an unidentified human-like head (allegedly that of a Bigfoot) in a suitcase—and several of the audience members knew of this person, the head, and the suitcase.

### **You own a publishing company, Cornerpost Press, and serve as co-editor of Cave Region Review. What impact does being in on that part of the poetry industry have on your writing?**

These editing activities prompt me to do what every poet needs to do—read a wide variety of contemporary poetry. This is especially valuable to me because most of these poets are writing about the same region I focus on. Serving as an editor also changes the boundaries and allows me to view things from the other side of the desk. Editors sometimes have to hold submissions to see what themes and topics might emerge to shape the next issue of a journal. It also reminds me not to rush submission of my own writing, for I see a lot of poems that would have benefitted from more time and revision.

### **Can you offer any advice to a poet wanting to be published?**

Much of the advice I would give has been repeatedly given, and some of the best places to find this essential advice is Mary Oliver's *Poetry Handbook*, Ted Kooser's *Poetry Home Repair Manual*, and Miller William's *Making a Poem*. However, one piece of advice that I repeat to myself every time I sit down to write is to focus on my own experiences and insights—these are the things that only I can write about.

**If you were on the select committee for the next U.S. Poet Laureate, who would you nominate and why?**

Gerry Sloan. Gerry is a retired professor of music at University of Arkansas-Fayetteville, and he has had a lifetime love affair with poetry and life. Gerry has a deep and broad knowledge of poetic history, forms, and traditions, and has quietly amassed an impressive body of published poetry. Arkansas needs to create a special citation to honor Gerry's contribution to the poetry of his state.

**Your route to poetry was not typical. What helped you arrive at poetry?**

I was blessed to be born and brought up on a small, old-fashioned Ozarks farm—forty acres, with a wet-weather creek, a couple of hills, a small herd of dairy cows, an occasional pig, a variety of dogs, infinite chores, and ever-present nature. One cannot get closer to the earth and the world of metaphor than living their formative years on such a farm. I was never too invested in completing chores, and I spent much of my time pondering the changing slant of light through the walnut leaves, the sound of the wind through the empty loft barn, or all the little critters that dwelled in our creek.

**How would you describe yourself as a poet?**

An honest description of myself as a poet is probably not very flattering. I'm a part-timer. I write only when the fit is upon me. Ted Kooser was keynote speaker at a conference I attended a few years ago. He mentioned that he gets out of bed at 4:30 every morning and writes for 2-3 hours before anyone else is up and about. I'm not that dedicated. Perhaps I lack ambition or have too many other interests and hobbies. Dirty Harry said we should know our limitations, and with poetry, I gladly embrace my limitations: I focus on only what I know and feel bone deep, and I always try to deliver (and demand) a

purpose. I suppose I'm old-fashioned, for I want a poem to mean something, and that something must have value.

To find out more about Dr. Howerton and to read some of his poetry, visit <https://www.ozarksalive.com/stories/preserving-the-ozarks-dr-phillip-howerton>

*Poetry for You*

Thanks to **Pat Laster** for being willing to share one of her winning poems in News 'N' Notes. This poem was published in *The Lyric*.

**NOT WASTING ROSE PRUNINGS**  
**Pat Laster**

It's done!  
The sun  
must warm the dirt in which  
rose cuttings stand, enrich  
new potting soil and cause new roots  
to snuggle in and down. Rose shoots  
make new flowers  
by nature's powers.

Thanks to **Dennis Patton** for sharing "Evening's Bookmark" which won second place in NFSPS' Jesse Stuart Memorial Award contest.

**Evening's Bookmark**

Don't be afraid  
of the setting sun  
whose shadows run long  
from the oak.  
The breeze that discomforts  
will cease when dew  
finds the long weeds first.  
Don't be swayed  
by the shadows setting  
on the west porch  
where the wren hatchlings

once perched.  
Don't regret the swing  
with its urchins  
where that first kiss  
was coerced.

Don't worry over  
the squadron  
of dried mums  
or envy the holly  
berries in white.  
Forget the contempt  
for the crickets' choir  
and the screeching  
that's disturbing the quiet.

Step gently into the night,  
its breath will close the day.  
The sky is a pond  
of anchored stars,  
hushed, hushed  
in a peaceful bay.

Members often ask for more poetry to be printed here. If you are willing to share some of your work, please send it to me for the next News 'N' Notes keeping in mind that appearing in the newsletter means it is published.

### *Have You Read?*

*Mother of Other Kingdoms* by Hot Springs Poet Laureate and PRA member **Kai Coggin**? This is Kai's fifth book of poetry. If you've never met Kai, reading these poems will teach you much about her. (To learn more, read her interview in the November 2022 issue of News 'N' Notes.) What we know from the title is that Kai is a nurturer of nature. Her delicate observations of hornworms, snakes, wasps, tadpoles, hummingbirds, and hibiscus, (just to name a few), don't portray them as good or bad; they're simply living things deserving of her attention. In "Ode to the Hornworm" she

celebrates it with lines like these: "your glowing body there on the vine, divine,/invisibly perfect in your chlorophyll camouflage,/bulbous and plump from engorging green, you fattened gorgeous thing." Not only is her description spot on, but the sounds in those lines sing off the page: vine/divine, chlorophyll camouflage, engorging green/gorgeous thing. In "Only the Infinitesimal" Kai focuses on the "magnified graces of infinitesimal beings" as a means of distracting herself from "this stage of heatwaves, wildfires, and cataclysmic human destructions." In the second stanza of this poem, she says, "...can't stop watching the honeybee/ bouncing from the bright petals of giant zinnias,/coral, violet, red, pink, back to coral-/the perfect electrostatic Velcro of her body/pollinating all the colors, playing bee footsie/with small yellow star stigmas open and waiting."

As a fellow Master Naturalist, I easily relate to the affection Kai has for the nature around her. As a fellow poet, I admire her skill to communicate that affection in so beautiful a way.

You can find *Mother of Other Kingdoms* as well as her other books at [kaicoggin.com](http://kaicoggin.com) and on the PRA website under Resources.



*Suzanne  
Underwood  
Rhodes Poet  
Laureate of  
Arkansas*

### **Be Astonished**

"Pay attention. Be astonished. Tell about it."  
— *Mary Oliver*

As I write this column, a barred owl is hooting mysteriously somewhere on my street. What somewhere would that be? How

astonishing, the secrets of night! I've shared Oliver's simple but revelatory words in many a poetry workshop and class—most recently with two new students from the Magdalene Serenity House (MSH), a nonprofit residential program in Fayetteville. They are among the eight women released from prison who live in the house for two years, get jobs, take classes—including quilting and college classes—and benefit from services and support to help them rebuild their lives. Learn more at [lovehealsnwa.org](http://lovehealsnwa.org).

Their surprising poems and creative writings will be included in a book called *Today There Have Been Lovely Things* that I'll be publishing in a few weeks, with the printing costs covered by donations from two wonderful businessmen and friends. The book is being designed gratis by Patsy Watkins, the talented founder and operator of the now defunct Picadilly Press. All proceeds from book sales will go to MSH. Copies will be given to the residents, their families and friends, and staff members. I'll be sending out email notices once the book is published, so if you want a copy (and I hope you do!), ordering information will be in the message.

Every other Tuesday, some members of Ozark Mountain Poets—**Toni Huffman**, Margret Walker, **LaDeana Mullinix**, and I bring poetry to a different residential community. These are women and men in memory care at Butterfield Trail Village in Fayetteville, and the hour spent with these dear people is pure joy. Each visit I design with a theme ("Roses," "Mothers," "Lovely Things," to name a few), and we recite poetry together in call



and response fashion, create collaborative poems, add hands-on activities, music, stimulating conversation, and laughter, to provide a multi-sensory experience that sparks memory and feeling, and unites us in friendship and fun. The activities director, Cayla Ervin, lends her incredible supplies, support and presence to these meetings. I'm happy to announce that *Flyways*, the two individual chapbooks by Gerry Sloan and me about birds are now available. This is a limited edition, so if you want a copy, please send me an email:

[s.underwood.rhodes@gmail.com](mailto:s.underwood.rhodes@gmail.com), and I'll give you ordering information. You'll get two chapbooks nested under one cover, with art by George Dombek and the book design by Patsy Watkins. Gerry and I have a few readings lined up in Northwest Arkansas, so if you're local, let me know and I'll give you places, dates and time.

My other chapbook, *The Perfume of Pain*, is just out at Kelsay Books, Amazon, and Barnes & Noble, with a generous endorsement from Michael Blanchard, author of *The Pearl Diver's Daughter*: "Just as perfume is the result of the distilled essence of fragrant oils, the poems in this new collection by Arkansas poet laureate Suzanne Underwood Rhodes are the products of a sensitive poet's capturing the essence of what it means to love, to lose, and to grieve. And just as perfume's fragrance lingers long after being dabbed on

the wrists, Rhodes reminds us that the sharpness of loss lingers long after the death of a loved one."

I'm continuing my virtual poetry workshops at the Muse Writers Center in Norfolk, Virginia, with a new one lined up for the fall. Those fall classes will soon be announced, so if you're interested in classes or

workshops to sharpen your skill and



discover a new community of fellow poets, check out <https://the-muse.org/>. I'm also teaching a basic poetry class, "The Art of Poetry: From Roots to Fruit," to several members from our Ozark Mountain Poets. "To teach is to learn twice," someone once said, and for all the teachers out there, you know this is true.

I'm sorry to miss Poetry Day this fall! Phil Howerton will be amazing. But I couldn't persuade my daughter to change her wedding date. 😊 I hope everyone reading this will do their best to attend the event, hosted this year by the University of Central Arkansas, thanks to the doings of professor, poet, and *Slant* editor Michael Blanchard. My mother always urged me to write novels instead of poetry, saying, "There's no money in poetry." Those are the exact words of Robert Graves, who went on to add, "But then there's no poetry in money." Ah, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

Yours in our beautiful art,  
Suzanne

### *July PRA Board Meeting*

**Karen Moulton** volunteered to be Poetry Day Chair.

**Frieda Patton** stated that **Lydia Cheatham** once again is sponsoring the PRA Collegiate contest.

Chair positions to fill: membership chair, yearbook chair, collegiate poetry contest chair. (Since the meeting, **Rick Houston** agreed to be membership chair.)

Steve May will continue being our web coordinator.

President **John McPherson** volunteered to chair the Nominating Committee for Election of Officers for 2025-2027.

Members volunteering to serve on this committee are: **Laura Bridges, Fay Guinn, Sara Gibson, Donna Smith, and Naomi Sechrest.**

Page 8 of the yearbook will be changed to the following:

#### Student Awards

**On June 27, 2024, Gregory Lathrop donated funds to the Poets' Roundtable of Arkansas to fund the PRA Student Contest. In the event that Poets' Roundtable of Arkansas ceases to function, the funds in the Account shall be made available to another Arkansas poetry association selected by the Trustees (PRA). Trustees are the PRA President, PRA Treasurer, and any other PRA Board Member the PRA Board deems needed. Lathrop Investment Management Corporation manages the Account and Charles Schwab is custodian.**

**Awards shall be paid to winners by the PRA Treasurer at the Dr. Lily Peter Spring Celebration. Amounts of the awards shall be: Senior Division - 1<sup>st</sup> Place, \$75; 2<sup>nd</sup> Place, \$50; 3<sup>rd</sup> Place, \$40; 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> Honorable Mentions, \$10 each. Junior Division - 1<sup>st</sup> Place, \$50; 2<sup>nd</sup> Place, \$35; 3<sup>rd</sup> Place, \$25; 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> Honorable Mentions, \$10 each. Amounts of awards may be increased at the discretion of the trustees. Only Arkansas students shall be eligible to enter this contest.**

**Rules for the Poets' Roundtable of Arkansas Student Contest, the Manningham, and NFSPS Student Contests will be distributed to schools, PRA branches and newspapers by the Contest Chair. Local branches are encouraged to recognize winners in their area.**

**Poets' Roundtable of Arkansas student winners will be invited to the Dr. Lily Peter Spring Celebration to read their poems and to receive their awards. Contest Chair will mail awards to the winners unable to attend the meeting.**

## *From the Editor*

Last year, I participated in the Postcard Poetry Fest sponsored by Cascadia Poetics Lab. People sign up to send 31 original poems on postcards to folks on a participation list before the end of August. The idea is you receive a poem in the mail each day in August. There is a registration fee. The Fest was initiated in 2007 by poets Paul Nelson and Lana Ayers, and has grown to include poets participating worldwide. Registration opens annually on September 1. The first time I was part of this, I was living and working in Taipei during the month of August, so I got all of my postcards and poems ready by the end of July, so I could mail them stateside. Last year, I painted all of my postcards with watercolors. I am working on that again this year. I'm not sure which is more challenging: the painting or the writing! The poems are short since they have to fit the postcard space which forces me to be even more concise and the guidelines say no revision which I find difficult to adhere to.

If you are interested in participating, visit <https://cascadiapoeticslab.org/poetrypostcards/>

### On a Hike

We scout and scour  
their knobby knuckles,  
hairy with trees, laden  
with life. We trek the length  
of these earthen fingertips  
stretching out to the sea.

I think of these poems as exercise. Speaking of exercise, this week I received Dorianne Laux's book called *Finger Exercises for Poets*. "Throughout, Laux reminds us that poetry is a practice as much as an art and that poets must hone their language as a musician practicing an instrument." I've already started reading it and it is full of

wisdom, wonderful poetry examples, and detailed exercises/prompts. Maybe I'll review it for the next News 'N' Notes. I also received Suzanne's book *The Perfume of Pain* and I am looking forward to reading it.

Read a book you'd like to recommend? I'd love to hear about it. Send me the title and a little something about why you recommend it.

Did you see in the July Board Meeting report that the PRA is looking for a yearbook chair? I am also hoping a PRA member will take over the Collegiate Poetry Contest. A nominating committee has formed which means they will be looking for members to fill board positions.

Currently, I'm the secretary. I'm confident there is someone out there who could do that job. Please think about how you can support the PRA with your time by filling one of these vacancies. Let John McPherson know if you are willing.

mcperson8391@gmail.com or 501-305-9972

I'm very excited to be Poetry Day Chair this year. That is something I've never done. This Poetry Day is different because it is being held in Conway on the UCA campus. For me that means I only have a two-hour drive instead of three hours plus. Perhaps you, too, find that Conway is not so far away. I hope you decide to attend. From reading Dr. Howerton's responses to my questions and looking over his list of accomplishments, I think it is safe to say that his presentation will be well worth the drive. See you there!

Okay, I'm off to paint and write. I'm already behind!

Sincerely,  
**Karen Moulton**  
Editor