

News 'N' Notes

May 2025

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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First things first. Thank you for choosing me as your next President of PRA. It overwhelms me, and I will do my best as your representative.



I'm looking forward to this opportunity, but the pilot is only as good as his crew and I plan on enlisting many of you to keep the boat on course over the next few years. I also have too many things to discuss and not enough time to do it in, so I will take every opportunity I can to bend your ear. Those of you that know me well know that's true! Recently, someone asked me how I developed my skills. Skills? I have skills? Every time I read a good poem, I sigh and think, 'Oh I'll never be able to write like that.' You too? So I was very flattered. But it made me think about my own ongoing development.

I was one of those lucky people who was raised with words. My father loved reading, especially poetry, and my earliest recollections are of listening to him read poems. I'm sure I was fascinated by his voice more than the poems, but I paid attention to them. Not Mother Goose, as you would expect, but his favorite, Robert Service, as well as Kipling, Frost, and many others. I still have the book he read from –

an incredibly old, tattered copy of *The Best Loved Poems of the American People* – on my bookshelf at home. Poetry was always part of our lives. Every time I visited home, he would challenge me with a line, and I was expected to know the next one. It kept me on my toes.

I have Dad's love of words. Any words. Along with books, magazines, blogs, labels, and other things, I read lots of poems – unconsciously studying form and function, rhyme, meter, and anything else I can glean from them. As I grow into actually being a poet, I attend seminars, workshops, and lectures, and listen to poets read their works, and follow others and the art. I am constantly searching out poets that other people mention, to discover their styles and their words. I want to grow, to be better, and to someday feel that yes, I have skills. I know I don't know anything at all, so I must pay attention.

Rita Dove said, "For many years, I believed a poem was a whisper overheard, not an aria heard." Yes, poetry whispers. It demands awareness. It is not something vaguely noticed among other noises. It asks that you listen closely to every word, every hint, every idea. When you do that, as she discovered in her poetic journey, it can also shout and be powerful.

But first, you have to pay attention.

Christine Henderson
President, PRA

Welcome New Members

Lee Anna Mitchell of Camdenton, Missouri

Terry Rhoades of Conway, Arkansas

Violet Blair of North Little Rock, Arkansas

Caroline Jackson Cash of Little Rock, Arkansas

Palmer Hopkins of Little Rock, Arkansas

Olivia Nony of Little Rock, Arkansas

Heather Olvey of Little Rock, Arkansas

Samantha Olvey of Little Rock, Arkansas

Caroline Riley of Little Rock, Arkansas

Kalina Smith of Jonesboro, Arkansas

Anne Wells of Festus, Missouri

Judith Rycroft of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Dues Reminder

Membership dues are \$20 per year for regular members, or \$15 per year for students (under 18) and seniors (65 and over). New first-time members joining between Jan. 1 and June 30 will pay ½ price membership dues for those few months, then full price for the new year. If a former member pays late anytime during the year, it is full price. The fiscal year runs July 1 through June 30. In order to have your name listed on the membership roster in the annual Yearbook, dues must be paid by **July 1**. You do not have to be an Arkansas resident to join PRA. Out-of-state poets are welcome. PRA only accepts US currency, checks or money orders. Payments should be made out to PRA and sent to:

Rick Houston

1559 HWY 213

Hattiesville, AR 72063

Please include your name, address, phone number, and email address (if you have one).

Membership Chair, **Rick Houston**, and News 'N' Notes Editor, **Karen Moulton**, man the registration desk at Spring Celebration.



Congratulations and Newsworthy

February Monthly Contest Winners

Judge: **Marilyn Joyner**

First Place: **Karen Moulton** "At Midnight—When carriages turn back to pumpkins"

Second Place: **Bonnie Clark** "Midnight—Midnight, mysterious, magical"

Third Place: **Alyssa Darby** "Midnight Reminds Me—Exhausted. This night feels unending."

First Honorable Mention: **J.B. Hoffsommer** "Midnight—Each day will pass away at midnight"

Second Honorable Mention: **Lydia Cheatham** "Ruminating under midnight sky."

Third Honorable Mention: **Terry Rhoades** "Midnight—Midnight comes with the rotating earth."

March Monthly Contest Winners

Judge: **Laura Bridges**

First Place: **Cathy Moran** "A look at backyard feathering"

Second Place: **Barbara Shepard** "Ravens"

Third Place: **Sara Gipson** "Lake at Autumn"

First Honorable Mention: **Janet Ryan** "Cardinal Rule"

Second Honorable Mention: **Larry Witherspoon** "The Trumpets of Magness Lake"

Third Honorable Mention: **Lorraine Jeffery** "Ducks in the Backyard"

Dr. Emory D. Jones “Jewel Bush” won first place in the Today is What? Award of the Poetry Society of Oklahoma 2024 National Poetry Day Contest; “The Patriot” was published in *Sandcutters 2024* of the Arizona State Poetry Society; The following poems were published on the Illinois State Poetry Society Member Poems 2025: “Art Appreciation—A Golden Shovel Poem,” “Pine Song,” “Sacred Music,” and “Thanksgiving”; The following poems were published in *Pennsylvania’s Poetic Voices* of January 2025: “Eagle Snow,” “Dancing Autumn: An Ethereal,” and “Summer Hummm.” “The Rabbit Patch” and “Spring Acrostic” were published in the March 2025 edition of *Pennsylvania’s Poetic Voices*; “Injured Angel” was published in the Poets’ Roundtable of Arkansas February 2025 issue of *News ‘N’ Notes*; “Bones Die Hard” won first place in the Poetry Society of Tennessee’s 2025 Contest; “Fury Haiku” was published in *March Haiku 2025* of the Connecticut Poetry Society; and “Eagle Snow” was published in volume 23/2024-2025 of *East on Central*.

John Crawford won second place in the Illinois State Poetry Society contest for “Ode to Spam”, first place in the Massachusetts State Poetry Society February contest for “Of Thee I Sing”, third place in a Pennsylvania Poetry Society annual contest, first place in March Member Contest, Mississippi State Poetry Society, and was awarded an Honorary Lifetime Membership by the Ozark Writers League (OWL) for his service of 20 years in April.

On February 27, 2025, **Teresa H. Klepac** attended Miller Conversations on Literary Publishing hosted by The Missouri Review featuring 2020 Pulitzer Prize winning poet, Jericho Brown, associate professor and the director of the Creative Writing Program at Emory University; She read three poems on January 23 and a piece of flash fiction called “Cat Bird Seat” at Spoken Word hosted by

Columbia Chapter of the Missouri Writers Guild held at Café Berlin in Columbia, Missouri; “Cat Bird Seat” was published in Still Point Arts in Spring 2021.

Christine Henderson won first place in the Lucidity Poetry Contest. She also won the Critic’s Choice Contest which is decided by attendees at the Lucidity Festival.

South Arkansas Poets of the Pines (SAPOP) conducted a poetry workshop on April 15 as part of the ARTS in APRIL program at SouthArk College. **Janet Ryan** spoke about Ekphrastic poetry using music and video examples while eliciting audience feedback.

Jack Ryan, Melanie Moses and Marilyn Joyner assisted and read their own Ekphrastic poetry. Janet also covered shaped poetry showing some known examples and giving steps she has used to write this type of poem.

The students were given criteria for an Ekphrastic poetry contest sponsored by SAPOP. The contest is only open to those in attendance. The goal of the workshop was to promote an interest in poetry and give awareness to SAPOP and PRA.

Lydia Cheatham won first place with “Success” in the Dr. Lily Peter Memorial Award at the Spring Celebration. She had three poems published in 2024 *Grist*, Missouri State Poetry Society’s Annual Anthology.

Janice Canerdy, Potts Camp, MS, member at-large had one poem published in *Westward Quarterly*, spring issue; one poem published on the Society of Classical Poets website in April; an honorable mention in the Society of Classical Poets annual contest; second place in the Poetry Society of Indiana’s spring contest; and served on the festival planning committee.

Karen Moulton’s nonet, “At Midnight” took first in PRA’s February monthly contest; “Benediction” won first place in the Verna Lee Hinegardner Memorial Award; “Literary Still Life” was in a three-way tie

for first place in the Serious Verse contest at Spring Celebration; "Dimorphic" will be published in the 2025 Spring Edition of *SLANT: A Journal of Poetry*.

Opportunities

2025 ALABAMA STATE POETRY SOCIETY ANNUAL JOHN AND MIRIAM MORRIS MEMORIAL CHAPBOOK COMPETITION

Deadline: 5/31/2025 (postmark)

Winner receives \$100 and 25 copies of their winning chapbook.

(Journal sized, saddle stitched, black ink, colored cover stock)

Poems may be previously published if poet retains rights.

A. Submit up to 24 total pages of poetry, no more than one poem per page, however a single poem may continue for more than one page.

B. Submit two title pages, one with author information, and one without, along with only one copy of poetry manuscript. A table of contents can be helpful, but is not necessary.

C. Author information should appear on only one copy of the title page and nowhere else on the manuscript.

D. Previous chapbook winners can be purchased through New Dawn Unlimited, Inc at 1830 Marvel Road, Brierfield, AL 35035 for \$5 each. (\$7 with shipping) A complete list is available at NewDawnUnlimited.com under the "chapbooks" button.

E. ASPS sponsors both Fall and Spring contests. Info is available online at Alpoets.org

F. Send entry with \$15 reading fee (made out to New Dawn Unlimited, Inc. and postmarked by May 31, 2025) to:

New Dawn Unlimited, Inc.

ASPS Morris Memorial Chapbook Competition

1830 Marvel Road

Brierfield, AL 35035

NewDawnUnlimited.com

National Federation Of State Poetry Societies Inc's Annual Convention and BlackBerry Peach SLAM will be held in Albuquerque, New Mexico on July 23-28, 2025. Find out more and how to register:

<https://nfsps.net/2025-enchanted-words-convention-registration>

Poetry Day Contests Brochure

You can find all 33 contests here:

<https://poetsroundtableofarkansas.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/2025-poetry-day-contests-brochure.pdf>

Don't forget PRA's monthly contests:

<https://poetsroundtableofarkansas.org/contests/monthlycontests2016/>

ArtVerse sponsored by the Conway League of Artists runs from May 1 to June 9 at the Faulkner County Library in Conway. PRA members, **Michael Blanchard**, **Paulette Guerin (Bane)**, and **Suzanne Rhodes** are part of the event. For more information, visit this site: <https://conwayleagueofartists.com/>

Siloam Springs Writers Guild's 7th Summer Writers Conference: Elements of Storytelling. The conference will be held on Saturday July 19, 2025 from *9:00 a.m.- 5:00 p.m. at the First Baptist Church at 2000 Dawn Hill Road in Siloam Springs.

*Check-in/registrations start at 8:30 a.m.

The conference fee is \$50 for adults with \$5 off adult price before June 28. For ages 12-17, the fee is \$10. To register: send name, address, email, and check to: Gail Davis 2151 B Kristy Lane Siloam Springs, AR 72761. Make checks payable to SSWG or Siloam Springs Writers Guild.

For more information and registration form,
contact: siloamwriters@gmail.com

Spring Celebration

Spring Celebration

Chair **Larry**

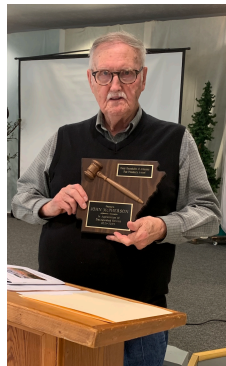
Witherspoon kept things moving and filled time with creative activities.

Speaker Jake Stratman from John Brown University in Siloam Springs talked to the group about the



musicality of poetry using different types of rhyme: near, slant, internal, end, and sound devices such as assonance, consonance, and alliteration. He read poems that demonstrated his points. Look for his books: *The Shell of Things* and *What I Have I Offer with Two Hands* from major booksellers.

Outgoing PRA President, **John McPherson**, is shown here with the Past President's Award. John will continue to serve as a Member-at-Large. Thank you, John, for your dedication to the PRA.



New PRA Board Members for 2025-2027 (picture follows) were installed as President-**Christine Henderson**; Vice-President-**Fay Guinn**; Secretary-**Marie Allison**; Treasurer-**Frieda Patton**; Counselor-**Dennis Patton**; Parliamentarian-**Suzanne Rhodes**; Historian-**Renee Ramsey**; Members-at-Large: **Larry Witherspoon**, **Rick Houston**, **John McPherson**, and **Michael Blanchard**.



Lisa Lindsey announcing the junior and senior division contest winners. Arkansas Poet Laureate



Suzanne Rhodes reads her 2024 Sybil Nash Abrams Award-winning poem, "Beloved Enemies" at Spring Celebration.



For a complete list of winners, visit <https://poetsroundtableofarkansas.org/contest-winners/>



Laura Bridges with her door prize donated and made by **Larry Witherspoon** whose pottery can be found at the Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts Store under the name El Dubya Pottery.

April Business Meeting

At the Spring Celebration business meeting, there was no old business. New business addressed what branches do with accrued funds when that branch dissolves. It is up to the discretion of the branch to use those funds as they see fit.

Poetry Day will be held in the Fireplace Room on the University of Central Arkansas (UCA) campus on October 18, 2025. Guest speaker will be Eric Paul Shaffer. Once again signs will be displayed to help members find the venue. Also UCA will be providing lunch.

Poetry Day Contest #30 has been clarified on the PRA website under Contests/Poetry Day Contests 2025.

Poetry For You

Midnight Snack

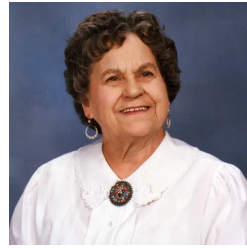
By **Lydia Cheatham**

1 HM March 2022 Monthly PRA

“When dreams unbidden slither through the night to
chew away my rest,”....Pat Laster

Poems begin when
designs that were dreams
haunt my mind unbidden
to slither
around and through
my brain, pushing the
thoughts from day to night
until they drive me to
write them down, then I chew
on the details, to put away
the dreams so that they're my
reality, and then I can rest.

...line from Pat Laster's poem "Unrestful
Rest".



Arkansas Poet Laureate Series

Verna Lee
Hinegardner was
appointed Arkansas
Poet Laureate on

October 4, 1991, by Governor Bill Clinton. She served until 2003. She is known for a poetry form she created called the minute. The minute consists of sixty syllables in rhyming couplets and is capitalized and punctuated like prose and captures a slice of life.

Verna was born in Morrisonville, Illinois, in 1919. After her marriage in 1937 and after World War II, Hinegardner moved to Mississippi. In 1953, she moved to Hot Springs where she was a land management technician for the U.S. Forest Service traveling in the twelve districts of the Ouachita National Forest.

Verna began writing as a young child with her first poem published when she was just nine years old. She continued writing, attending workshops and conferences, as well as taking classes to improve her craft. She was a charter member of the Hot Springs chapter of the PRA. She was president of the Arkansas Pioneer branch of the National League of American Pen Women, was active in the Poetry Society of America and the International Poetry Society. She chaired two National Federation of State Poetry Societies (NFSPS) conventions as well as holding various offices in that organization. She was inducted into the Arkansas Writers' Hall of Fame in 1991. One of her books was part of the Ozark Sunlight Series, which includes some of former Arkansas Poet Laureate Rosa Marinoni's titles. She published twelve books of verse, from *Magic Moments* (1966) to *I Own One Star* (Pine Hill Press, 2005). In 2003, she stepped down from the position.

I Own One Star

I own one gleaming steadfast star
way up there – far
above Mount Hood
Swamp Cottonwood
confusing figures, man-made wars
and mental scars.
It seems to say,
“You know The Way.”
My star can gently motivate
a sweeter fate
and grant my heart
a knee-jerk start.

Winners of the 2025 Pat Laster Collegiate Poetry Contest

Many thanks to Joan Barrett Roberts for
judging the 33 entries.

First Place: Emma Field for “royal woods”

Second Place: Kas Armstrong for “Waiting
on God in a Hair Salon”

Third Place: Aithne Emmons for
“Catalogue”

First Honorable Mention: Madeline
Mundkowsky for “A Love Poem to the
Ginkgo Tree in Sewanee”

Second Honorable Mention: Jiana Manglicot
for “I found our yellow home”

Third Honorable Mention: Clara Kernodle
for “East”

“Emma Field is a
generational enigma,
pencil in hand since
childhood, weaving
words into short stories
and poems long before
she knew what poetry
could be. Her work explores the tender,
ephemeral beauty of nature and life, often
shaped by experimental forms such as
villanelles, spiral poems, collage, and
blackout poetry. Drawing creative energy
from both structured tradition and
spontaneous invention, she lets form follow



feeling. Emma’s writing has appeared in *The Lyric Magazine* and *Shapes and Names*. She is also a member of *Souvenirs*, Harding University’s poetry club, where she studies English and Creative Writing. A passionate member of her literary community, she continues to push the boundaries of poetic expression with curiosity, care, and a love for language that deepens by the day.”

Paulette Bane, associate professor of English at Harding and PRA member says: “The imagery of “royal woods” transports the reader to a lush world richly described. Woven into these woods is also the past. The poet remembers, “In my youth, I put grass in my teeth / wanting to be an animal instead of a child.” In tune with nature’s unfolding, the poet layers the present life with memory as well as the wisdom that nature will change, as we, too, must. In a moment of epiphany, the speaker of the poem notes, “I didn’t realize how much the earth had given.” The poem’s expanse ends on the final, bittersweet image of the all-too-soon-gone blackberries. In carefully crafted lines, “royal woods” reminds the reader of the power of the image to hold meaning.”

Watch Emma read her poem here:

https://youtu.be/kYo_FpQlogs?feature=shared



“Kas Armstrong is an
upcoming poet from Central
Arkansas. They are an
English and creative writing
double major at the
University of Central
Arkansas and currently serve

as the editor-in-chief of the
university’s *Vortex Magazine of Literature
and Fine Art*. They will graduate in May
with a Bachelor of Fine Arts and plan to
pursue a master’s degree in poetry at
Virginia Tech.” Associate Professor of
Creative Writing at UCA, Sandy Longhorn
says: “It has been a true delight to witness
Kas Armstrong grow into the poet they are
today. A poem like “Waiting on God in a

"Hair Salon" showcases many of the skills Kas developed over the last several years in creative writing courses at UCA, including their attention to sound and imagery. They have a keen ear for the musicality of language which makes reading one of their works out loud a pleasure. On top of this, their use of concrete, specific images means the reader is able to inhabit their poems. In the winning poem, we can hear and see the hair salon, feel the weight of the magazines in the speaker's hands, taste the sweetness of the butterscotch, all serving to create that sense of coming-of-age longing at the end of the poem. As Kas leaves us to pursue an MFA in creative writing at Virginia Tech, I can't wait to see where their poetry takes us next." Watch Kas read their poem here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xWBio91K7oo>



"Aithne Emmons is a student of the University of Central Arkansas' Creative Writing program. From a young age, Aithne has been a voracious reader, and she

first began writing her own stories at the age of four. She began dabbling in the poetic field at the age of nine, but she mostly used it as a way to express and put aside whatever feelings stood in between herself and the work that she did as a prose writer. It wasn't until her second year of college that she began to consider her poetry to be a serious aspect of her craft.

The poem "Catalogue" was written in November, 2024, and holds a position of honor as the best poem that she feels she has written to date. Aithne currently works as the Associate Editor of the Vortex Literary Magazine and is a member of the Faulkner County Library's Circulation Staff. Going forward, she hopes that she can continue to support her literary community through her work with the public, as well as through her own writing." Associate Professor of Creative Writing at UCA, Sandy Longhorn

says: "Aithne Emmons is a skilled writer in many genres, and the poem "Catalogue" showcases her talent. In this poem, Aithne paints a clear narrative scene but layers in the interior thoughts and emotions of the speaker with a deft hand. While we are captivated by the speaker and their companion working together to make dinner, the speaker lets us in on their uncertainties and fears. In this "[a]lmost domestic" moment, the reader feels deeply all of those questions of the speaker. The ability to create such an empathetic connection is one of Aithne's greatest accomplishments."



First Honorable Mention winner, Madeline Mundkowsky says: "The first poems I ever read were by Shel Silverstein, and since then I've been hooked. My sixth-grade teacher

introduced me to the haiku and I wrote my first ever poem; I think it was comparing the branches of a tree to the arms of an angel. The two things I never leave home without are my headphones and a book! I'm a junior at Hendrix College where I am an English major with an emphasis on Creative Writing. After college, I plan to pursue an MFA." Assistant Professor of Creative Writing at Hendrix College, Samyak Shertok, PhD, comments: "Madeline is a gem. She enlivens the classroom with her warmth, intelligence, and generosity. It's been a joy to work with her and watch her grow. Formally bold and tonally complex, "A Love Poem to the Ginkgo Tree in Sewanee" is an expansive and elegant meditation on desire, loss, coming-of-age, and the transience of life. This is a deeply moving poem."



Second Honorable Mention winner, Jiana Manglicot says, “I am majoring in Interdisciplinary Studies and Theological Studies. With my degree in IDST I

have “created” my own course of study, selecting classes primarily within the English, Communications, and Women’s Studies departments in hopes of preparing myself for future studies. Though I am undecided on my next steps post-graduation, I am looking forward to possibly pursuing a Masters in English or a Masters in Theology after a gap year. With that gap year, I hope to read and write as much as possible. I never considered myself a creative writer—straying as far from workshop classes and creative writing as possible—until I decided to take Professor Bane’s “Writing Poetry” class this past semester. This class has transformed me as an English student so much over the course of just a few months. I am so grateful to have had the opportunity to study under Professor Bane and be stretched by her writing prompts in ways that I would have never stretched myself before.”

Paulette Bane, associate professor of English at Harding and PRA member says: “I found our yellow home” is ambitious while also being understated--the direct address to the beloved finds the right tonal balance, with carefully controlled verse that somehow feels conversational, hopeful, and free. The poet captures deep yearning--“I can't wait to no longer wait”--without veering into the sentimental or cliché. Her use of a wedding registry to organize the arc of the poem offers a creative thread into the relationship and their future. Structured in

four parts, the poem offers the wonderful “before” moment and the dream the couple reaches for.”



Third Honorable Mention Winner, Clara Kernodle, from Harding University says, “I am a junior English and Theological Studies major planning on attending law school. I’ve practiced creative

writing since I was around ten, but only began writing poetry in college, after I read poems by John Ashbery, Frank O’Hara, and H.D. in my American Literature class.” Jon Singleton, Chair of English at Harding said, “A rising star of our Harding English department, Clara Kernodle has talent as a poet and essayist that is matched by her intellectual energy and unswerving professionalism. Her poetry has won both collegiate and intercollegiate awards and has been published in *Shapes and Names*, *Slant Poetry Journal*, and *Eunoia Review*. She has also served in the Hertog Foundation’s prestigious Constitutional Studies Program in Washington, D.C., in a Shaftesbury Fellowship at the Center for Religion, Culture & Democracy, and as a weekly columnist abroad (for the *Harding Bison*) during a semester she spent studying in Greece. In her poem “East,” she ties the rough beauty of the land--her country and her forefathers’ country--to her people’s moral character and resilience through suffering. With a Romantic’s sensitivity to the emotional and physical landscapes of human existence, she stakes her own claim between the deep past and an expanding future.



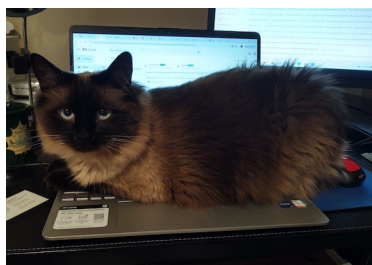
*Suzanne
Underwood
Rhodes
Poet Laureate
of Arkansas*

Greetings, my fellow poets!

April was a cruel month for weather but a good month for poetry, being National Poetry Month (inaugurated in 1996) and the right month for PRA's 2025 Spring Celebration featuring

Dr. Jake Stratman from John Brown University. With his warmth, his informal and interactive teaching style, and his helpful critiques, Jake was extremely effective encouraging us to try unconventional uses of rhyme in our work. Another highlight for me was being asked to read "Beloved Enemies," my long narrative poem about the Japanese-American internment camp in Rowher, Arkansas, that won the Sybil Nash Abrams award. It's a tradition to read the winning poem at Spring Celebration.

As I write this, "Kitty Boy," my nickname for Samurai, the big Balinese Siamese I'm keeping for my daughter, reminds me of the ancient



Arabian proverb, "If the camel once gets his nose in the tent, his body will soon follow." Only the tent in my case is the computer, and if I don't stick to my boundaries, he'll worm his way to the keyboard and settle into the loaf position for a nap. Many a poem of mine has been inspired by keen and affectionate gazes upon this cat. If you like to laugh and appreciate a

brilliant and learned wit, check out Henry Beard's [*Poetry for Cats: The Definite Anthology of Distinguished Feline Verse*](#) (poems from the cats of famous poets like Poe, Milton, Dylan Thomas, Emily Dickinson, and more. It's one of my favorite books!).

The Yellow Goldfish

By William Carlos Williams's Cat

so much depends
upon

a yellow gold
fish

washed down with bowl
water

inside the white
kitten.

* * *

But I digress. Karen, our talented and devoted editor, herself an accomplished poet, assured me the PRA family would like to hear about my activities as poet laureate, so I will share a few of these since the last newsletter

As I've traveled throughout the state, I've seen first-hand that poetry is in full bloom here. I've been impressed with the poetry of young people, some of whom are students in Classical Conversations, a thriving homeschool-based educational community found here in the US and globally. They selected my book *The Roar on the Other Side: A Guide for Student Poets* as their poetry textbook. So far, I've given workshops to CC classes in Fayetteville, Bentonville, Tulsa, and Neosho, and found the enthusiasm for poetry among students and teachers to be high voltage.

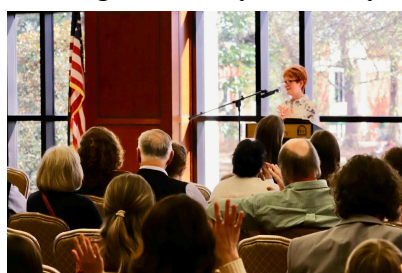
In March I was honored at the Arkansas Arts Council Awards Luncheon in Little Rock for receiving the Governor's Individual Arts

Award. [A short video](#) was made for each artist; mine is at around 45:20. Thank you, PRA friends and others, for coming, and others for nominating me.



Suzanne receiving her handcrafted vase at the Arkansas Governor's Arts Awards Luncheon

Another March highlight was visiting Harding University in Searcy at the



invitation of professor and poet **Paulette Bane**. Wanting to promote poetry

outside the confines of the campus, she arranged for me to give a reading at Searcy High School. To my surprise, this was before an audience of over 300 students. Three hundred students and poetry! It doesn't get much better than that, and as an added bonus, several students came up to me afterward with questions and comments. At the university, I met with Paulette's creative writing class for an informal conversation with students who had read my collection of poems in [Flying Yellow](#). They asked many thoughtful questions, and I asked them questions too. That night I gave a poetry reading in the chapel and felt wonderfully appreciated by this lovely college community.

On April 22, I traveled to the University of Central Arkansas where **Michael**

Blanchard invited me to introduce Alison Pelegrin, the Louisiana Poet Laureate, who read poems from her newest collection, *Our Lady of Bewilderment* (LSU Press) and talked about her work with inmates at Angola prison, which is the largest maximum security prison in the US. She's a remarkable poet and person as you will discover by reading her work and checking out [her website](#).

On April 24, I gave a poetry workshop at the West Fork public library. The group was composed of six women (including two PRA members). We all agreed the small size opened up large possibilities for writing and sharing our work. My presentation was called "The Poet as Orb Weaver."

May's looking busy too, with ArtVerse in Conway (artists interpreting poetry) on May 12, and a keynote speech I was asked to give at the annual conference of the Adult Learning Alliance in Little Rock on May 15. I want to express my appreciation to the PRA board and branches for the faithful and tireless work they do to keep the machinery going and the tree growing. Have a happy and wordful summer!

Suzanne

From the Editor

Ken and I received an email letting us know we won the lottery to visit Congaree National Park in South Carolina to experience the synchronous fireflies that appear there for about ten days each May. It cost a token amount to enter the lottery and if you are selected, that amount goes toward the entrance fee. I am excited to experience this phenomenon. And I have a teacher friend who is going to drive over from her South Carolina home to experience it with us. I haven't seen her since 2018 and she recently had a health scare, so I am really looking forward to spending time with her. I have a strong suspicion that the fireflies and the friend meet-up will "spark" some poetry.

There is another firefly event in Tennessee in June. We're going to enter that lottery as well.

Something that came up at my Baxter County Poets' Association meeting was how often poets repeat a word, not within a poem, but when you read six or eight of your poems written within a year of each other, you see the same word emerge in every poem. For me it was shards. That was when I was writing about my husband's illness and subsequent death and it fittingly described how I felt and how my world seemed. It's not necessarily a bad thing, just something to be aware of. I especially keep an eye out for that when submitting poems to a journal or when putting together a manuscript.

I recently took an online course with Danusha Lameris: one hour on five consecutive Sundays. The theme was "Small Worlds, Infinite Universe." I loved this idea of playing with scale: going big or going small, moving back in time or zooming to the future. It could be as simple as moving from the ground to the sky, your yard to outer space, from childhood to ten years from now. She talked about changing the backdrop with scale—so what does a staple look like to an ant? I will add scale to the list of things I consider when writing a poem, but I also think it is a great device to try when a poem I've written doesn't seem to be working.

As we read various poems, Lameris pointed out that poets have an irritant and a solace and if you look for them, you can see them in the poet's body of work. The irritant might be grief—often is—and the solace might be nature. (This is different from what triggers a poem which I learned about in the book *The Triggering Town* by Richard Hugo.) I'll be looking for irritants and solaces when I next read a collection and I'll be more aware of what mine are when writing my poems. I learned a lot more from

her and look forward to her next course, "Temporary Kingdoms," which starts in July. If you are interested, check out <https://www.danushalameris.com/> and no, I don't get a discount for referrals!

I was thrilled this year to receive 33 submissions for the collegiate poetry contest. I hope you take a minute to watch the first and second place winners' videos. Our third place winner recently had surgery. I hope when she is recovered, she'll send her video. If and when she does, I'll share it with you on Facebook.

By the way, I am now the one posting news on the PRA Facebook page. If you have a news item that you'd like to share with the membership, please send it my way. There are many opportunities in Conway to experience poetry and art these days. If you haven't visited PRA's Facebook page or if you don't follow it, you may want to check it out.

I signed up for the Poetry Postcard Festival for the third year in a row. I've mentioned this event before. The way it works is, you sign up and receive a list of folks and their addresses. You write a poem on a postcard and send it to each of them in the order designated. The idea is all participants should receive a poem a day for the month of August. Truthfully, it doesn't work out that way—I get two or three on one day and none on others, but in the end, I get pretty close to 30 poems written on creative and interesting postcards. I watercolor paint my postcards. There is a fee to register, but if you are interested, visit www.poetrypostcardfest.org. Maybe you will be sending me a postcard poem this August!

Sincerely,
Karen Moulton