

# Castles and Courtyards

A poetic anthology celebrating the medieval  
life of kings, queens, peasants, and  
troubadours by poetic bards from across  
the globe

Paul Gilliland  
Editor-in-Chief

Southern Arizona Press



# Southern Arizona Press



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# Castles and Courtyards

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Published by Southern Arizona Press  
Sierra Vista, Arizona 85635  
[www.southernarizonapress.com](http://www.southernarizonapress.com)

Follow us on Facebook at:  
<https://www.facebook.com/SouthernArizonaPress>

Format, cover design, and edits by Paul Gilliland, Editor-in-Chief,  
Southern Arizona Press

Cover Art: Enrique ELG21 from Pixabay

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ISBN: 9781960038227

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## FEATURED POET



**Patrick Daniel (Pat) Read** was born in long Beach ,California in 1971 as the youngest of seven children: four sisters and two brothers. From the beginning he was left to do his own thing , and believes his older brothers resented that. When he was three, his family moved to Ada, Ohio. When he was seven when they moved again to Fort Wayne, Indiana where he grew up. When he was about 13-14, he began writing song lyrics (minus the army/college/school/work years that consumed his twenties) and he has been writing poetry since then. He was a journalist briefly for *The Newsletter of Joliet Job Corps*, in Joliet , Illinois while he attended school there. Once he completed his training, he had the option of going to college free or going to advanced training, but he decided to move to Dayton, Ohio and got married. Financial issues and a child on the way led me to join the United States Army, where he served as a radio/communications technician from 1993-1996 and served in the Ohio National Guard from 1996-1999. His military highlight is that he was part of the group that secured the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta. Currently he is a disabled veteran working on getting his fourth book published, as well as working on several other projects. He can be found on Facebook as Pat Read. He has three children from his ex-wife (now in their mid to late 20's). Nowadays he hangs out with his dog in Winchester , Indiana.



The Castle on the Moor  
*Part 1*

Here I sit in my castle  
Resting upon my throne  
My loyal steed beside me  
Best friend I have ever known

I look down on the water  
Remembering the journeys  
To other kingdoms  
In peace and to war  
In courtship  
In love  
In good times  
Praising the lord above

But now I sit overlooking  
All the memories  
Of not so long ago  
The journeys of king  
A lover  
A poet  
A traveling soul



The Castle on The Moor  
*Part 2*

As I gaze upon the lands  
from my tower  
the sun greets my face  
as if to say good morning.

As I sit and listen to natures harmony,  
crows cawing  
an eagle in flight  
a cat howling.

But more importantly,  
I hear children in the distance  
Laughing,  
playing.

Expressions of joy,  
a feeling of peace  
emits from the kingdom  
as I today  
breathe a sigh of relief  
from the tower  
of my Castle on the Moor.

The Castle on The Moor  
*Part 3*

A normally quiet day  
as I sit upon the throne  
in the tower  
of the Castle on the Moor.

When in the quiet  
I hear a rider approaching.  
Could this be Lord Gabriel?  
No, he is not due for two more days' time.

I look in the distance  
and I see it is a messenger approaching.  
Immediately he is greeted  
by Sir Thomas.

As I hear them discuss  
what the messenger has to say  
I hear mention of a warrior clan  
attacking settlers in the far lands

It is time to rally the troops  
as tonight  
war is on the agenda  
from the Castle on the Moor.

## The Castle on the Moor

### *Part 4*

“What message have you?”

I asked the rider

The rider replied,

“My king,

it is not good,

I fear the renegade tribes from the forbidden lands

have begun to attack the kingdoms of Detrocia and Blackwater.”

Oh, there had been a long truce

but we knew in time

a time for war would be imminent

and, that time is now for the kingdom

of the Castle on the Moor

Gather the troops!

Mount the horses!

We must defeat the renegades

before they are able to reach the castle’s gate.

“How,” I ask, “will an army of 2000

fare against an army of 10,000?

What we must do is survive ,

As war it seems has come to our kingdom.”

The Castle on the Moor  
*Part 5*  
*A Dark Invader from the Forbidden Lands*

As it turns out  
a fear that grabbed the kingdom  
for many many years was finally coming to be faced.

It turns out  
the evil wizard who had been banished from the kingdom  
over the death of Prince Robert  
had been gathering the forces in the forbidden land for an attack!!

It had been over 100 years since the banishment  
and many speculated as to whether the wizard was even alive.  
But enough about this.

It is time to gather the horses.  
Gather the soldiers and attack.  
Before the invaders reach our gates.  
Onward to battle and may the Lord be with us.

## The Castle on the Moor

### *Part 6*

How dare you let the spy get away to the castle  
We had planned on a sneak attack you blundering fools  
You give an army of incompetent morons to go to battle with,  
and now this

I chop off heads for this!  
We have planned and trained villagers, knights,  
from all the tribes who populated the forbidden lands.  
After being exiled there by tribes in alliance  
with the Kingdom of the Castle on the Moor  
and you dare let this spy slip away.

If we do not achieve victory,  
you and everyone one of your soldiers that survive  
shall be given as a sacrifice to the volcano gods!?

Now, mount your horses and march toward the castle,  
And you Sir Lucas, had better pray the fates are with you.

## The Castle on the Moor

### *Part 7*

### *A Time for Prayer*

Move!!

Move!!

Get in your positions!!

Archers to the towers!!

Everyone brace yourself,  
because with the size of their military  
we will be lucky to survive.

Let's only have any hope of victory

Save for the power of prayer

Steadily,

Garrison after garrison fell  
like dominos in a child's game.

Lord, please guide us and protect us!!

Shortly after this

one of the enemy soldiers was captured,  
and amazingly enough once the war paint was washed off,  
a once insane marauder now seemed no more dangerous  
than a clerk or a schoolteacher!!

Lord , if this is truly the case

I pray a torrent of rain come down upon these intruders.

Immediately.

A rain cloud larger than any ever seen in the five kingdoms  
covers the battlefield

And then

Yes, rain!

Glorious rain!

Praise the Lord!!

And as soon as the rain hit the faces of the invaders

all the fighting stopped

and the forces cleared a path

so the King's royal knights could pursue the dark wizard

as well as the evil queen.

And by the grace of God

again, there was peace in the kingdom!!

## The Castle on the Moor

### *Part 8*

#### *Exile of the Dark Wizard*

*The events in this chapter take place about 100 years before the story line*

Something today just felt off.  
You could almost feel the negativity in the air.  
As if something terrible was going to happen.  
Something that would not only change life  
in the kingdom of the Castle on the Moor  
But change the lives of everyone else  
in all four of the other kingdoms in the land as well.

While the king was taking a midafternoon nap,  
Prince Robert and Lord Trevor  
returned from a hunting expedition  
and while passing by the great wizard's room  
they heard two voices.  
One was the wizard and the other ...

The queen!!

As they sat and listened for awhile,  
they heard the queen and the wizard  
plot on how they would kill the king  
and takeover the entire domain!!

Suddenly ...

One of the queens knights notices  
the two boys in the hall eavesdropping!



“Halt!” yells the knight, but by then it was too late,  
for the evil wizard had already put a sword  
through the heart of Prince Robert!

Lord Trevor, although gravely wounded,  
managed to deliver the message  
of the betrayal plan to the king,  
and immediately, the wizard and the queen  
were banished to the forbidden lands,  
and magic, well,  
was banished from the kingdom forever.

## The Castle on the Moor

### *Part 9*

### *The Hunt*

Today should have been a day for celebrating,  
But instead,  
Although we had repelled the attack  
by the forces of the evil queen,  
and dark wizard,  
In the chaos, they had escaped into the forest!!

So now we must hunt them  
before they are able to raise another army,  
and attack us again,  
or take over another land.

After capturing them we will celebrate,  
but as for now,  
we must find and apprehend the wizard, and ...  
my former Queen.

The Castle on the Moor  
*Part 10*  
*Searching the Farlands*

We had searched the forests,  
the deserts all throughout the kingdoms near by  
for nearly a month with no sign.  
No trail.  
How could they have just vanished?  
Unless of course  
they had activated a portal  
and escaped to the Farlands.  
So, knights, warriors were dispatched to find them.  
Impatiently we waited for one of them to return with news.

Then suddenly,  
a beleaguered worn-out Sir Hugo manages to find us.  
“King Daniel,” he says, “You must help us!  
The Castle by the Dunes,  
Queen Esmeraldas kingdom  
Has been overtaken,  
After the evil wizard entranced our military,  
I was only able to avoid being entranced  
because of the Amulet of Protection  
given to me by her father, King Thomas.”

So immediately we gathered our forces and  
into a portal and off to the Kingdom of the Dunes we go.

The Castle on the Moor  
*Part 11*  
*Confrontation at the Castle on the Dunes*

After what seemed like seconds, two hours later we arrived.  
Now to keep our guard up as we move towards the castle.  
You never know what exists in the forest.  
Especially an undiscovered section like the one we landed in.  
This castle was difficult to locate  
because it had been hidden intentionally  
by the old wizard, Wilfred,  
To hide from the Evil wizard.

We searched and searched,  
looking for some animal,  
some creature, that spoke English,  
but they either pretended to ignore us,  
or merely acted like they didn't understand.  
Even the Leprechaun we encountered,  
Which, we all know to be very chatty  
acted like he didn't understand  
and instead replied in some old Gaelic dialect  
none of us had ever heard.

I began to fear the animals had been enchanted as well.  
Finally after about a week,  
we ran across a Unicorn who was able to help us  
and the Unicorn told us the way to the Castle on the Dunes!

As we approached the castle,  
we had to battle several Orcs, ogres, a Centaur,  
and some very large military battalions of the evil Wizards knights  
and in the last battle,  
the Wizard appeared to me.  
This is what he said,  
“You were a fool to banish me,  
had you not defeated my army,  
your kingdom would be mine  
and in time the entire realm.  
Now my magic is stronger,  
I am wiser,  
and you King Daniel,  
the same love sick fool  
masquerading as a hero  
that you always were.  
I have your long lost love, Queen Esmeralda  
locked up into my dungeon,  
so you best hurry  
the dark things that exist down there  
are getting hungry!  
Come meet your doom, King Daniel,  
your long overdue defeat awaits!”

Then in a mist of smoke he disappeared,  
and I, sat and pondered could all this be true?  
Tonight we rest.  
Tomorrow onto the Castle on the Dunes,  
and the rescue of Queen Esmeralda.

The Castle on the Moor  
*Part 12*  
*Journey to the Castle on the Dunes*

As we woke that day, all of us were battered and sore  
and the groans and the cries of pain  
echoed throughout our camp site.  
Our ranks were somewhat decimated already,  
and yet , we had a long journey  
and I'm sure many more creatures to face  
before we reached the Castle.  
However, we had forgotten how magical Unicorns truly were  
and we had not realized  
the Unicorn had cast a spell of protection over us.  
Still only the heavens truly knew how long we had to go.

We journeyed for three or four more days  
and supplies were getting thin.  
So we had to send out a hunting party  
which by them leaving the group,  
made them vulnerable to attack.  
We prayed to the heavens  
that they were able to return safe  
and with plenty of game.

## The Castle on The Moor

### *Part 13*

#### *The Castle on The Dunes – The Final Battle*

Finally, we arrived at the Castle on the Dunes.  
Now to gain entry,  
and to face whatever may lay on the other side.

After fighting demons, gargoyles, a werewolf,  
and it seems any other type of evil creature  
you could think of facing,  
our forces were definitely weakened.

We finally captured and evil Halfling Knight,  
and only by a throat to its sword  
were we able to get inside.

Still, we constantly had to fight evil wraiths, vampire bats,  
which seemed to come out of the walls in groups of hundreds,  
as well as the Evil Queens Knights.

At long last, here we were.  
The coward of an evil wizard finally appeared to face me.  
I knew from the old Wizard  
we saw in the woods  
that the only way to defeat the wizard  
and break the spell of darkness  
he had placed on the kingdom ,  
was to deflect the sunlight into the wizards eyes,  
therefore blinding him  
and disrupting his dark version of reality.

I quickly kneeled to pray  
as I heard the Wizards Knights approaching.

“Please dear father,  
make my aim true  
and let this beam of light  
dance off of my sword  
and blind the evil wizard,  
or else we, and the entire domain are doomed”

Then, just as the Wizard prepared to entrance us,  
the clouds parted,  
and as I lifted my sword to defend the spell  
a beam of light deflected off of my sword,  
and by what surely must had been a gift from God,  
hit the wizard directly in the eyes!!

Instantly after the spell was broken  
a dragon the wizard had entranced  
reached in from a window  
and devoured the evil Wizard  
and within moments  
we were able to capture the evil Queen,  
and she would be sentenced ‘til death  
in a tower in the Castle  
in a volcano that was due to erupt any day.



## The Castle on the Moor

### *Part 14*

#### *Two Kingdoms Become One*

After we freed Queen Esmeralda from the dungeon,  
we gathered in the Queens Dining area  
for some major decision making.

Should we abandon my father,  
the old King's philosophy  
of divide and conquer and unite the kingdoms?  
That was truly in Queen Esmeralda's hands.  
Eagerly and nervously, I waited for her response to my question.

I feared after so long,  
so many years,  
How could I expect for her to still love me as I still did her?  
She agreed, but she said that we must be married first,  
and the next day  
in the Courtyard of the Castle on the Dunes,  
my dream finally came true,  
and all the people  
in the Kingdom of King Daniel and Queen Esmeralda  
were finally able to live in peace.



**Alshaad Kara** is a Mauritian poet who writes from his heart. His latest poems were published in two anthologies, *The Wonders of Winter* and *OUR CHANGING EARTH: Vol.1: A collection of poetry about the Earth and climate change, from poets around the world*, in a magazine, *The FEEEL Magazine 14th digital issue, Dec 2022* and two journals, *Coeur de plumes Numéro 6* and *Revue Caractère Automne 2022 Ventouse*.

## Medieval Times

Travelling across the seven seas,  
Sailing across the oceans,

And never seeing your land again,  
Is similar to a golden phoenix that flies ...

I may not come back,  
But it's the joy to explore ...

Such is a corsair with his heart to honour his king,  
Battling the pirates away.

I travel across the seven seas,  
Making the several seasons a sculpted scene.

## A King's Favourite

I was among the old favourites of the king.  
So much love was spilled in the making,  
Yet now I am unstacking my ransacking.

While the new favourite of the new king stacks her ransacking,  
So much love is being spilled in this lovemaking.  
Yet now I am free of this busking.

An all-time favourite of my king.

## Witches at the Castle Gate

Screams from the gateway,  
It appeared that three women were witches.

I was so fed up that women were adduced without proof.

Having enough of this myth,  
I, the king, ordered for the persecution of the snitcher.

He was a young Knight,  
Always arresting women in this witch craze.  
Well, he was found to be a wizard.

In this witch hunt, the hunter was the backstabber.

## King of France

Fontainebleau has the cursed grace ...  
Three kings, thirteen Fridays.

Jacques de Molay burnt the scaffold.  
Hail the Sacrilegious Order of Solomon's Temple!

Philippe Le bel's stroked eyes in brace.  
Swallowing the hostia from Boniface.

Three kings, thirteen Fridays.  
The thunderous ink spilled the cursed grace  
    through the medieval era.  
Shadowless corridors bedeviled the king.

What a cursed grace,  
Three kings, thirteen Fridays.

## Prince in a Tower

In the depth of his eyes,  
Le dauphin lost his royal complexion,

Nostradamus sparkled the reign of terror ...  
Leaving a crystal jar for the crown prince.

Sorrowed in a forgotten avenue,  
Sainte Geneviève is praying for her people,  
Where there is the slow inhumation of La Bastille.

Louis Charles's blood are now in the veins of France,  
Bursting into the hundred years war.

With the white terror painting the sky ...

St. Monica by her child's common grave,  
Singing a lullaby in a darken grieve,  
Where lays the last remains of Le Dauphin.

## Legends

Magnificent Statuettes saluting the past achievements,  
The past is a bounty of conquests,

So much sagas,  
That even the minstrel dedicated the battles as a fable of bravery.  
Whilst for the troubadour, it was a synonym of a fable of tragedy.

One might have been erased in the medieval times,  
But resurrected through the folktales.

Who has a presence of a knight is the king of the world.  
Whom surrenders himself to the dungeon  
is the lion heart of the people.

The past is a bounty of treasures,  
Where the historical waves have trenched a worldwide chronicle.



## Kingdoms and Realms

Castles and crowns make one jeopardy.  
They tinsel the dreams of many,  
But they are accessible to a few,  
Yet venerated by many.

The irony of the sun is the golden crown,  
Throwing ablaze the monarchies of the past ...

Castles and crowns make one amulet,  
One of royalty and divinity,  
Where purity is the sacred thread ...

The arenas are now sanctuaries of monuments.  
And the abandoned castles are the symbols of kingships.



**Dr. Richard M. Bañez** is a Filipino associate professor for the undergraduate and graduate teacher education programs at the Batangas State University JPLPC-Malvar Campus. As an educator, he is primarily interested in language and literature pedagogy that focuses on students' capacity to engage in dynamic curricular opportunities and experiences within the context of teaching and learning English as a Second Language (ESL). He also conducts studies on Educational Management

particularly on the intricate roles of language in educational leadership and supervision, and other research topics central to educational innovations. Aside from being in the academe, he is also an aspiring literary artist whose works have appeared in selected volumes of *Covid-19 Pandemic Poems* by Cape Comorin Publisher and in *Love Letters in Poetic Verse* by Southern Arizona Press.

## My Magnificent Minstrel

Tell me tales of quest and adventure.  
Sing me verses of delight  
about the Faerie Queene's troubled adoration.

Oh you, my magnificent troubadour,  
the minstrel casting mystical foresight,  
feed my thoughts with fondness and affection.

Recount our pilgrimage in metrical romances.  
Frame our tales in the chants of merriment.  
Reunite me with the cherubs guarding the paradise above  
and drag me into the sirens' lair  
to lure my sadness into the earth's deepest seabed.

Pray thee, my prophetic bard,  
traverse me within the symphony of these ages.  
Fulfill my delusions with your musical illusions,  
to breathe underneath the fiery eagle's skin  
and fly opposite the Wyrd's directions  
to find the heavenly meadow  
in the kingdom by the blue sea.

## Emancipation of Arthurian Bromance

Honor his name, it's Agravaine.  
He's an aspiring Arthurian knight.  
He'll guard Camelot against its downfall,  
For he wants to build that kingdom with brotherly affection  
So dub him his knighthood.

His manhood is his knighthood.  
But he delights with noble knights and kingsmen  
To wrestle them with his naked arms  
And gather their breaths through their tongues.

The fearful Zeus in his magnificent lightning and thunder  
Hailed the young Ganymede in Mount Olympus,  
To bear the ambrosia of immortality in his cup  
While feasting on the young man's leanly and elastic muscular  
sculpture.

Achilles' tenderness towards Patroclus  
Had intrigued the Greeks and the Trojans.  
Both denied their romantic companionship within the serenade  
of the lyre  
But had been exposed in Achilles' grief  
When he lamented his love in Patroclus' requiem.

Modern scops often speak of how an Arthurian knight had loved  
his lord,  
How simple admiration progresses into intimate bromance.  
Afraid to come out and in denial of their affection,  
But many a time ending up sleeping and entangled in bed  
together.

Grant him this knighthood once again.  
Let him wash away his other sins and put on his white clothes.  
He's no different from the rest of the King's fellowship.  
So attach his spurs into his heels and dub him an Arthurian  
knight.  
Yes, he is an Arthurian knight forever and at last.

## I Have Become the Prophetic Bard

I want to become a prophetic bard,  
The gatekeeper to the distant past.  
With my elaborate metrical chants,  
I would like to restore the age of chivalry.

Let me tell you tales of knightly adventures.  
How Sir Gawain's search for the holy grail  
Had helped him to uncover his struggles.  
This, in my symphonies, I have to utter.

Chaucer, in his pilgrimage, had recounted  
The ideologies within the mind of the travelers,  
Narrating their varied and respective perspectives  
About the battle that they had encountered.

Let us celebrate these tales in our communal hymns.  
Let us strip these irreversible narrative verses,  
Of morals, lessons, pedagogies, and philosophies  
In our pursuit of the firebird and the elixir  
To heal the wounds of our deteriorating communities.

I have become the prophetic bard,  
The wise scop, and the cheerful troubadour,  
Singing the mystery of the classical verses and metrical tales.  
To encourage the generation to unearth the wit in letters.  
This is my noblest quest as a literature teacher.

## A Rhyme Royal for the Mighty Knight

To ride a horse in armor shining bright,  
And grip the sword that flares its mighty will.  
A knight who leads the victorious hard fight  
And train his arms in everlasting drill,  
Oh rise, defend peasants against the chill.  
Go find and bring the holy grail at home  
And sing the joyful praise that roams.

## Arthurian Pantoum

In communal hymns  
The minstrel foretells  
Handling to generations  
The mystical intuition.

The minstrel foretells  
The great knightly adventures  
The mystical intuition  
Of heroic quests and battles.

The great knightly adventures  
Elaborated in metrical tales  
Of heroic quests and battles  
Celebrated by the troubadours.

Elaborated in metrical tales,  
Let us rejoice in the Arthurian victory  
Celebrated by the troubadours  
Reclaiming the holy grail and land.

Let us rejoice in the Arthurian victory,  
Singing glorious verses and praises  
Reclaiming the holy grail and land  
This will be remembered now and for eternity.



## Medieval Haiku

The moon beams brightly  
Bringing us wonderful dreams,  
Protect these our noble king.

Send the mighty knights  
Secure, uphold the upright  
Sun shines on their paths.

Foretell bright visions  
Wise minstrel of the courtyard  
Let's hope river flows.

Grow greeny sprouts,  
Peasants cultivate the land  
Nurturing the ground.

Let us celebrate  
The Medieval ages  
In this humble song.



**D.C. Buschmann** is a retired editor and reading specialist. She has been a finalist in several poetry contests and holds a double master's degree in Education. Her poem, "Death Comes for a Friend" was the Editor's Choice in *Poetry Quarterly, Winter 2018*. Her work has been published in numerous journals nationally and internationally, including Kurt Vonnegut Museum and Library's *So it Goes Literary Journal*, *Rat's Ass Review*, *Tipton Poetry Journal*, and *Red Coyote*. She lives in Carmel, Indiana

with husband Nick and miniature schnauzers Cupcake and Coco. Her first poetry collection, *Nature: Human and Otherwise*, was published in 2021.

## Destination Addiction

Whether it is good to want something  
too much, I leave you, dear reader,  
to decide. For this did the second  
daughter of Henry VIII suffer.  
Demoted from princess to lady,  
Elizabeth was called a bastard  
by her own father,  
though her ruddy hair, fair  
complexion, high-bridged nose,  
and small mouth mirrored his daily.  
Her quick mind she inherited, too  
(probably from her mother).  
That Henry wanted sons above  
all else is certain. Like movie  
directors, convinced their next take  
will get it right, Henry put all hopes  
five times into the next wife.  
After Jane Seymour, a male heir  
did not suffice. A spare— his next vice.  
His line died with Elizabeth,  
who dared not take a husband.  
Henry's illuminated example  
informed her aversion.  
On this subject, she took no advice.  
The Stuart line continued,  
and the Tudor's did not,  
and all the pain Henry inflicted  
on his poor wives and daughters  
was all for naught.

Published in D.C. Buschmann's *Nature: Human and Otherwise*, February 2021

## In What Direction Doth the Wind Blow?

One day on the Plantagenet throne  
a white rose of York,  
the next, the red rose of Lancaster.  
Subjects wondered when royal monarchs  
would cease to kill kindred.

Henry VIII, said to resemble Edward IV,  
his Yorkist grandfather in looks and stature,  
in battlefield exploits could not measure up.  
Did Henry make war on six queens  
to compensate? His wives never knew  
when a mistral-like wind might blow through the court  
to displace or murder them.

Margaret Pole, his cousin, hacked to death at 67,  
protested her non-trial and execution.  
This poem found carved on a wall of her cell:

*For traitors on the block should die;  
I am no traitor, no, not I!  
My faithfulness stands fast and so,  
Towards the block I shall not go!  
Nor make one step, as you shall see;  
Christ in Thy mercy, save Thou me!*

Overlooked in public by the masses,  
his cruelty to familial women could not stop  
secret tongue wags by courtiers and lasses.

Of his sister Mary  
and his daughter of the same name,  
Henry threatened and reviled  
until they did his will—the elder to wed  
a decrepit French King she loved not,  
the younger to declare herself illegitimate.

If there's an evil wind to carry such men after death,  
many speculate to this day  
where Henry might rest.

## Elizabeth—Anne's Daughter

Coal black eyes and oval-faced,  
Elizabeth resembled  
her mam in many traits.

Meticulous in dress,  
their royal presentations  
never failed to impress.

The lute they played very well,  
singing melodic, and  
dancing graceful like gazelles.

Foreign languages they spoke  
and translated writings from French.  
Skillful poetry also they wrote.

Guarding their virginity,  
both mother and daughter  
used their femininity

to advance causes they supported,  
though their reputations  
by Rome's agents were distorted.

Their faith grew through study and hope.  
Their souls they entrusted to God,  
via scriptures, not the pope.

Flirtatious and high-strung,  
courtly love misconstrued  
sometimes by their sharp tongues.

Of mercurial mood swings,  
their quick minds and wit  
evened out untoward things.

While subjects' loyalty was rewarded,  
occasional vindictiveness  
in both has been recorded.

## What This Castle Birthed

what noble lineage  
birthed in me  
endures my crumbling  
stones and mortar,  
taluses and bossing?

dandies in oils  
shadows of those who  
impaled and crushed      blood  
and marrow defending  
what they deemed holy

ghostly whispers  
inside  
my tapestry-adorned walls  
placed  
fingers on friends

charring live flesh,  
dismemberment  
via rope and steed      of  
childhood playmates,  
cousins, brothers

murder's cold soul  
promising  
thought alignment  
produced crops  
    of dust and ash

folly on folly  
"deeds as well undone" <sup>1</sup>  
in other camps      martyrs  
tarred and feathered,  
boiled, beaten



having chosen trappings  
more glorious  
than the haughty  
weft and weave  
that bankrupted these walls.

<sup>1</sup> Robert Browning's "A Toccata of Galuppi's"

## Immoral or Immortal?

They say the one who makes you  
can take you down, and I'm not  
here to dispute that.

King Henry VIII ennobled Anne Boleyn  
marquis of Pembroke, making her the most prestigious  
woman in his realm—and rich,

and later gave her one of the grandest  
coronations had by any queen.\* He  
doted on her by all accounts.

Was she wrong to assume power  
came with elevation? Acting as  
queen, well-nigh, before wed,

Henry knew her flaws and gaffes. Her  
mouth oftentimes was a swift running river,  
when a dam would better sufficed.

Her assets, which were many, included  
speaking French with Henry when  
he and ambassadors met.

Once his wife, he no longer required  
her assistance in affairs of state,  
though Anne did not acquiesce.

She campaigned for the needy and poor,  
wanted them fed and taught, funded  
by monasteries' liquidation,

not wealth simply added to the crown's coffers.  
Pillaging of Catholic holdings had made  
Henry rich beyond imagination.

They could afford to be generous, Anne thought.  
And as queen, she was more generous  
even than her pious predecessor. Anne

distributed to the poor as her faith required,  
sewing, along with her ladies, clothes  
and under garments for them to wear.

She displayed Tyndale's Bible in chambers  
for her ladies to read with passages marked  
for Henry—proof he was head of the church

in England, not the pope. He had followed her lead,  
married Anne even before his annulment decree.  
Henry knew others thought his second queen ruled him,

but why charge his heir's mother  
of sex with 100 men? How did obsession  
turn to hatred, a brewing storm to tsunami?

It was quite simple, at least to him. Anne chuckled  
about his poem and love making and manner  
of dress—to her brother. Word had gotten back.

He would show them.

Besides, Henry tired of arguments  
with Anne, who had too many beliefs  
and opinions and had not produced a prince.

He had another waiting—one of his wife's  
ladies-in-waiting—who did not question  
his bidding, except in sex. *That* she withheld,

as coached by Cromwell, at least in the beginning.  
Maybe Henry would get a boy off *her*, \*\*  
Jane whispered in Henry's ear.

"Only, make *me* your wife!"

Today Anne is not  
remembered immoral,  
as Henry wished.

The accusations, unproved,  
and execution, unjust,  
martyred her—so says Foxe. \*\*\*

\* Events at Anne's extravagant coronation would include a magnificent water pageant, glittering coronation procession, and finally, Anne being crowned and anointed as Queen of England with the Crown of St Edward the Confessor—usually only used on reigning Monarchs. —Claire Ridgway's "487 years ago on this day - 11th April - in 1533" (April 11, 2020)

\*\* Historians have tended to see Jane as a passive figure in these events, like a log swept along in a river's current, but according to Imperial Ambassador Eustace Chapuys, she was actively conspiring to capture the king's attention and destroy the queen so she could take her place. From *The History Geeks*, "Jane Seymour and the Conspiracy to Destroy Anne Boleyn," A Guest Post by Lissa Bryan, April 19, 2017.

\*\*\* *The Actes and Monuments*, popularly known as *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, is a work of Protestant history and martyrology by Protestant English historian John Foxe, first published in 1563 by John Day.

*Castles and Courtyards*

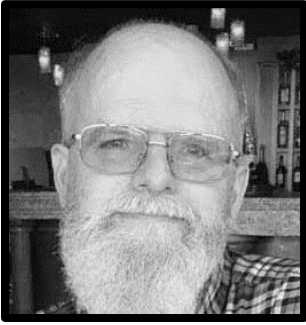
First published by *Queen Anne Boleyn Historical Writers*, April 11, 2021, Editor:  
Beth von Staats,

Republished by *Tigersbark ezine*, May 20, 2021, Editor: DS Davidson

Also independently published in *Thursday Poems: By Carmel Poetry Group*, March  
30, 2023,

Editor: Denise C. Buschmann

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**Denis Murphy** was born in 1959 in Cork, Ireland and now resides in Sligo, Ireland. He was a former Travel Consultant and Travel Agency Manager. A major turning point in his life came in 2007 when, at the age of 48, he was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease. Anyone who suffers from this Disease, or has a family member who does, will know that it brings about drastic changes. It can be very difficult for people with

Parkinson's to express their emotions, feelings and their loss of power and independence. All the more need for an outlet to express these emotions. He believes by sharing he can better understand what he is going through. One can get caught up in their own worries and forget that the disease not only affects their own lives, but also that of family, friends, and loved ones. They often feel as frustrated and confused as he does. He is very lucky to have such an understanding wife who has great patience, empathy, and understanding and provides her support, encouragement, inspiration, and love. The main themes of his poems are about coping with Parkinson's Disease, and his relationship with nature, life and with oneself. Poetry helps him appreciate this wonderful gift of life.

His first book *The Frozen Mask*, was published by Southern Arizona Press in March 2023. It is a commentary and collection of poems to help express his emotions and feelings and to help readers understand the challenges one faces when living with a degenerative disease. Not only the physical symptoms, but the mental difficulties and the impact on one's self-confidence, self-esteem and the erosion of independence and freedom, we take for granted until lost. But also, the life changing challenges that inspire hope and a better appreciation for all life, in particular those close to us.

## By the Old Castle Wall

By the old castle wall I take a seat  
A stunning vista lies before my feet  
All around me so much beauty to be seen  
A vibrant forests of verdant green  
And a shimmering lake of cobalt blue  
As I gasp and admire this beautiful view.

My senses try to comprehend, the beauty of it all  
Ancient mountains stand proud and tall  
A waterfall sparkles like a string of tears  
Tumbling down rock and stone, no worries or cares  
Rocky outcrops and roots of stone  
I am one with nature yet all alone.

Swallows swoop and circle on the wing  
Crows cackle and blackbirds sing  
Insects buzz and the drone of bees  
Carried on a gentle summer breeze  
The sun warms me gently as I breathe a deep sigh  
To be part of this beauty brings a tear to my eye.

## Far from the Castle Keep

Far away in a castle keep  
On a misty mountain, the highest peak  
By a stained glass window seated on a chair  
The most beautiful girl with golden hair

A princess sighs as she waits in vain  
For the promised prince to kiss away the pain  
Of another world of another place  
The ghostly image of a haunted face

But the seasons turn and years pass slowly  
As hope begins to fade like an old worn tapestry  
And dreams of wonder where dragons fly  
Slowly turn and change and die

To dreams of sorrow and dreams of dread  
In the land of the living and the dead  
But love and magic still survive  
And keep the fires of hope alive

The hero still searches and seeks  
From the majestic mountains, the highest peaks  
Through forests deep and misty dales  
Over babbling brooks in hidden vales

Where dragons fly and rule the sky  
And the mists of time go rolling by  
And then one day he came by fate  
To an old tower and enchanted gate



But the entrance could not be found  
Tired and exhausted he lay down on the ground  
And in a deep sleep he dreamed as he lay  
On dragon's wings he was carried away

Up winding staircase wound around and around  
To a secret chamber the entrance he found  
And there by the window sitting on a chair  
The most beautiful woman with silver hair

At her dancing eyes, he could only stare  
And to wipe away a glistening tear  
A long embrace and they both knew  
In life and love dreams do come true.

## A Blood Moon Rises

A blood moon rises, peering through dark cloud  
A cry in the forest, chilling and loud  
Like a demon, from another world  
Tendrils of clouds, like banners unfurled  
Casting twisted shadows in the moonlight  
On this cold and dark winter's night.

Deep in the forest on a haunted hill  
A raven's cry, sharp and shrill  
From the highest towers of the castle keep  
To the dungeons below, so dark and deep  
Memories trickle down through the years  
Ripples of music, laughter and tears

Echoes of footsteps down ancient hallways  
From those distant and long forgotten days  
Ghosts and phantoms now abound  
Among the briars, nettles, and stony ground  
Through ancient arches and broken doorways  
Up crumbling and winding stone stairways

Ivy now creeps on crumbling walls  
Down dusty corridors and musty halls  
Where lords and ladies danced in candlelight  
To haunting music, long into the night  
In the banquet hall, they gathered for the feast  
Regaled by tales of dragons and fearsome beasts

A harpist weaves magic in music and song  
Bringing tears to the eyes as they sing along  
Some drink to remember while others to forget  
Recalling sweet memories and some of regret  
Music and laughter and young lovers dreams  
And in the darkest corners, hatching plots and schemes

Conspiracies and intrigue, loyalty and betrayals  
Now cobwebs shimmer like silken veils  
Down dusty corridors where dappled moonlight  
Flickers and dances in pools of soft light  
A twilight world of shadows and shades  
A New Dawn calls, as the Darkness fades.

## Notre Dame - Our Lady of Fire

Flames dance and tumble across roof and tower  
With such frightening force and primaevial power  
Raging fire like a ravenous beast  
Devouring all before it, in a frenzied feast  
Burning timbers in their death throes scream  
Scenes from a nightmare, or our darkest dream  
Dancing spirals of flame and fire  
Races across the roof, rafters and spire.  
Engulfing flying buttress, turrets and steeple  
Watched in disbelief, by millions of people  
Images flash across the world on tv screen  
At this unfolding disaster and horror scene  
Hushed whispers from the watching crowd  
Stunned, silent, too shocked to speak out loud

Roof collapses, burning beams and plaster  
As brave men struggle to contain this disaster  
In a desperate attempt, priceless treasures to save  
Every column and row, aisle and nave  
Smoke billows and fire rages  
Centuries of memories echo down the ages  
From pillars of stone, a thousand years of history  
Whispers of Quasimodo, Esmeralda and Sanctuary  
Stone statues in stunned silence stare  
At the carnage and utter destruction everywhere  
Stained Glass Rose windows splinter and shatter  
Showering fiery sparks, like falling stars scatter  
Grotesque gargoyles come to life in this fiery hell  
Their shadows like demons or the angels who fell

This Cathedral has stood for almost a thousand years  
Built on faith and blood, sweat and tears  
A place of sanctuary for saint and sinner  
Noble Knight, Prince or pauper  
Kings and Queens, heroes and generals  
Ceremony, coronations and state funerals  
The heart of the city, the pride of a nation  
United in grief, a tragic situation  
Like the Phoenix from the ashes, it will rise again  
For the glory of God and pride of men.  
But does God really need our temples of stone  
To be worshipped and placed upon a marble throne  
The Kingdom of Heaven is deep within  
Is pride or arrogance, our greatest sin ?



**Pat Severin**, a retired teacher and member of SCBWI, has been writing poetry for many years. Her poems are regularly featured in the online magazines, *The Agape Review*, *The Clay Jar Review*, *Pure in Heart Stories*, and *The Way Back to Ourselves*. She is honored to have contributed to the Southern Arizona Press Anthologies. This is her sixth Anthology.

She is also a published contributor to the books, *I Chose You*, *Rescue Dogs and their Humans* and *Chicken Soup for the Soul: Lessons Learned From My Dog*.

Her personal ministry is sending weekly cards of encouragement to those going through difficult times.

## The Lover's Note

This love note, my dearest, mayst thou never see  
for my spirit it longs for a mere glimpse thee.  
It seems an eternity since I felt your touch.  
It is thee that I cherish, your visage is such  
that your beauty consumes me, in my heart only rain.  
Your captive am I, my heart your domain.  
The birds cease their singing, the flowers only wilt.  
My life has no joy, if I smile, I feel guilt.  
Without thee the springtime is frozen like ice.  
If thou wouldst leave me, then death be the price.  
My thoughts find their way to thee that I treasure  
My darling, my love, you bring bliss beyond measure.  
No, never again would such happiness be  
As the night I last held you and pledged my love to thee.

## The Knight in Tarnished Armor

The knight from his stead, the Princess in view,  
“Thou sweetest of maidens, I’m coming to you!”  
He remembers her beauty, can’t wait till they’re wed.  
She tosses her ringlets back from her head,  
in profile she poses and daintily yells,  
“Come, darling, with haste, for this castle...it SMELLS!  
For it’s been forever, cleaning service is shoddy.  
The floors in these rooms are constantly soggy.  
Two things do I need, a bath and you, Dear!  
I’ve longed for and yearned for you over a year.”  
The knight, he approaches, climbs up to her tower,  
she releases her veil and he cannot help cower.  
For what he believed was a lovely, young thing  
is the witch who beguiled him! The truth leaves its sting!  
He swears in a language the witch can’t decipher,  
but she tells from his tone, no way will he wife her.  
The knight leaves the tower, leaps unto his stead,  
yells, “I hoped for a wife, but a WITCH? No, indeed!”  
Away the knight gallops, the witch feels rebuked,  
the knight is disgusted to think he’s been duped!



## Beneath the Moon

My love, how canst thou leave me,  
for life is dust without thee.  
You must, you say, the king's declared,  
but what of me, so unprepared  
for life without my lover true,  
is nothingness, is all askew.  
Thou knoweth this to be the case.  
My life will feel as though erased.  
For as the stream moans as it flows,  
so does the wind sigh as it blows,  
And so as these, I moan and sigh  
whenever you doth say goodbye.  
That is the love thy love hast kindled  
but if thou leave, our love be dwindled  
Into a love so ordinary,  
Of this, my Love, thou must be wary.  
But stay, thou, stay, our love's the treasure,  
beneath the Moon is endless pleasure.

## The Lofty and the Lowly

The ball began and yet the crowd,  
in quiet, whispered tones,  
were only there to see the child,  
the princess, she alone.  
This party gave the King and Queen  
the chance to show her beauty.  
One could say this custom was,  
but it was royal duty.  
The princess came into the hall,  
her gown bejeweled in splendor.  
A diamond crown upon her head.  
I watched each eye surrender  
for she was fair of face, some say,  
much more than most could bear.  
Her beauty, indescribable,  
with lustrous silken hair.  
But no one ever saw her smile  
nor frown to show disgust.  
An even-tempered royal, she,  
by duty knew she must  
be always soft of voice and thus  
spoke slowly, not in haste.  
Her manner gentle, likewise kind,  
no moment would she waste.  
Her image was her shield, as such,  
though royal princess she  
and yet, in secret she would speak  
To lowly, little me.





**Dr. Nora V. Marasigan** is a Filipino associate professor in the undergraduate and graduate teacher education programs at Batangas State University JPLPC-Malvar. As an educator, she is primarily interested in conducting studies on mathematics and mathematics education which focus on topics essential to educational innovations. She has been invited as a resource speaker in seminars/webinars dealing with Mathematics teaching and learning, test construction and analyzing research data. She is a mathematics professor and has published research articles on mathematics, mathematics education and pedagogy in international peer-reviewed journal. She has also published creative works in a multidisciplinary academic publisher and won the Best Poetry and Best Short Story Awards in the Cape Comorin Writers' Festival 2020.

## The Rise of a Knight

Little boys' dream to become a Knight  
At very young age, as Page they start  
To become one, they help and support  
Weapons and horses, they keep an eye on.

Then came the time the Page becomes Squire  
Who helps the Knight in battles and war  
They're taught everything they need to know  
A religious ceremony, they also undergo

After the solemnity, the Knight becomes full-fledged  
The Code of Chivalry, they follow and respect  
Truthfulness, courtesy, compassion, purity  
Fellowship with other Knight, that's a necessity

As full bloom Knights, they woke up at dawn  
Attending morning mass after their breakfast  
Go to weapon practice for their fighting skills  
Deliberate and discuss war strategies

In the cocktail hour, they would work with horses  
Do more training, with their Lord, would go hunting  
Peddling and inspecting, in the castle they prepare  
With festivities and supper, they ended with prayer

The life of a Knight may be compared to the King  
However, they were more focused on learning  
Preparing for battles, enhancing fighting skills  
These may not be easy, but for them it's rewarding.

## Living as a King

Waking up in the morning  
As a Medieval King  
Starting his day in the chancel  
There he was praying

Eating a light meal  
Attending meeting  
Petitions hearing  
Laws to be passed discussing

In the middle of the day,  
He would attend dinner  
Laid on the table  
Varied courses were there.

At the elegant castle,  
He stayed with the Queen  
With countless servants  
And helpers working.

After dinner he was free  
To do whatever he pleased  
Sometimes go out for hunting  
With his dogs for bonding.

Near the end of the day,  
Supper would be ready.  
With her Sovereign,  
They would utter their pleas.

Then and again  
They would go to sleep,  
Because the next morning  
Is a new beginning.

## The Peasant's Circumstance

In the Middle Ages,  
Peasants' life is ill-fated.  
Known as Freemen and Serfs,  
Into their group it was set

Freemen could own lands  
And farm their own crops,  
While Serfs were owned,  
They're attached to the land

To farm the Noble's land,  
That would be their task.  
As early as 3:00  
In the morning they would start.

Had a little breakfast  
Then head out to the land.  
To reap, sow, and plow  
In the field till dusk they dig.

There was no leisure time,  
Even when they had finished.  
After long hours of working,  
In their small village they're heading.

With their wife inside  
In their small and cramped house,  
Circumstance is indeed tough  
Unlike the kings, nobles and knights.



**Victoria Puckering** uses the poetic names of Toria and the Naked Poet. Her work has been described as naked and raw. She lives in Yorkshire, England.

She writes original poetry of all genres. She has only been writing for about four years. Her poems have been podcasted in New York, USA and Drystone radio, Yorkshire, England and various poetry sites on Facebook.

This year, she became a published Poetess. Her poetry has contributed to *The Poppy: A Symbol of Remembrance* and the *Wonder of Winter* anthologies by Southern Arizona Press as well as the Dark Poetry Society anthologies and Wheelsong Poetry.



## A Dark Story Fairy Tale

Another dark story fairy tale has only just begun  
It feels like we have lived in a falsehood story fantasyland  
Everyone being very, very good  
Everyone being very, very kind  
A big shadow of evil has just covered this good land  
Those close to the King are playing false and devious hands  
As they are vying for his unobtainable crown  
They all have stretched out their grabbing hands trying to reach  
the crown  
The King is strong and he will not be easily pulled or taken down  
For he will fight to hold onto his precious crown  
As like dominoes, these weak and devious turncoats fall  
dramatically down  
The King will not let his land down  
As it is such an unstable, dark time in fantasy story land with  
chaos inside and outside the vast lands  
Madness has covered this good and kind, fantasy story land  
Jesters constantly yap yapping on  
A long day and longest night for the lonely brave King  
It is bedtime now in fantasy story land  
This dark fantasy story fairy tale has only just got started  
I do not know yet, how this dark fantasy story fairy tale will end  
The King still holds his crown in his hands  
Too many turncoats fell on their treacherous swords  
The Kings hands were tied and bound  
Unfortunately, the King could no longer sustain his position  
These weak turncoats have got their own way  
The King will give up his precious crown today  
Time for these weak turncoats to play their own game  
Who will be the next King?  
It is a very dark day in story fairy tale land  
Yet, the old King promises of a golden future  
The dark story fairy tale continues on .....

It has only just begun

## The Queen of Darkness

She once was a beautiful stunning Queen  
She once owned tears of only happiness and joy  
She had such grace and flair  
So friendly and showed such great empathy  
Her ruby glowing red lips smiling  
As you looked into her wide open blue eyes  
Losing yourself in her deep lingering seas  
Mesmerised by her ocean eyes  
Long dark eyelashes  
Her long golden flowing locks  
This changed forever over night  
Her King died suddenly  
The only love of her life  
Her red loving beating heart  
Overnight turned jet black  
Her heart now so heavy  
A heavy jet black stone she carries  
Happiness no longer lives in her heavy black heart  
It is so heavy to carry  
Only anger and bitterness stays  
Her beauty slowly withers away  
All her beautiful colours turned into black and grey  
Mourns her love in her striking black dress  
Her golden locks now covered in a black headdress  
Her only glamour a string of pink and purple pearls  
Her anger causes thunder and lightning  
Her tears are the black raindrops pouring down on the hard  
    lifeless ground

Her cold heart freezes over the rivers and seas  
The sky forever jet black  
The moon no longer smiles  
The stars no longer sparkle  
The warm shining sun banished to another galaxy and far beyond  
The Queen of happiness  
Truly gone  
The Queen of darkness continues to live on  
Forever broken hearted

## The Castle

I wanted the castle to be mine  
I have to wait for the King to die  
I will be the Queen of Words  
I will have my castle to write  
So many rooms in this castle  
It is a castle of fairytales and mysteries  
This fairytale castle holds dark secrets  
Well-hidden deep  
Only those brave enough to seek  
At your peril  
Dark words prevail  
Curses and spells  
Cauldron and bad spirits dwell  
This castle is not what it seems  
Filled with nightmares and never-ending dreams  
Hallucinations of extreme  
Mythical creatures that walk the grounds  
Dragons of fire and wonderment  
Hidden around the fairytales  
Are these mystical nightmares real?  
Is it just imaginary?  
Yet this castle entices me now  
Is it cursed or just plain evil?  
I have a taste for the castle  
I cannot erase  
I have an ever-flowing quenching thirst  
Is it that castle's evil curse?  
I cannot stop  
My want so great  
I will not kill the King  
Is this my cursed beginning?  
Overriding love  
Overriding hate

This castle has me within its grasp  
Sometimes I want it  
Sometimes I don't  
This castle of evil magic and curses  
The King and I cannot escape  
The evil clutches today  
Our time is up  
My horror begins  
I am in chains as I enter this cursed castle  
The King is dead  
Madness and hallucinations they said  
My cursed nightmares just only begin  
I will end up the same  
This is no fairytale castle  
There is no happy ending  
I am fated to many years of evil and curses  
Evil spells and hallucinations that dwell  
Mythical creatures living in this hell  
The castle I once adored  
I am a long term prisoner  
Encased behind these beautiful walls  
This castle of no fairytale  
A castle of the upmost evil



**Lynn White** lives in north Wales. Her work is influenced by issues of social justice and events, places, and people she has known or imagined. She is especially interested in exploring the boundaries of dream, fantasy, and reality. She was shortlisted in the Theatre Cloud 'War Poetry for Today' competition and has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize, Best of the Net, and a Rhysling Award. Her poetry has appeared in many publications including: *Apogee*, *Firewords*, *Capsule Stories*, *Gyroscope Review*, and *So It Goes*.

Find Lynn at:

<https://lynnwhitepoetry.blogspot.com>

<https://www.facebook.com/Lynn-White-Poetry-1603675983213077/>

## Game

When is a game not a game?  
Perhaps the knights of old  
asked the question  
as they prepared for the joust  
ready to give their lives  
to entertain  
or more likely  
to cement their power.  
Winner usually takes all  
after all  
except  
in yours dreams.  
Are you game for it?  
You're just pheasants and grouse.  
Then there's the peasants.

## Off With His Hair

“Off with his hair!” Cried the Red Queen.  
“I don’t think that’s quite right,” said Alice.  
“It should surely be, off with his head”.  
The Red Queen’s frown deepened.  
She didn’t make mistakes.  
It was a well known fact.  
Never the less...  
She shouted to Jack  
who was reclining lazily as usual.  
“Which is correct, hair or head?”  
“Well, you are quite right, of course  
as everyone knows.  
But consider..  
As all strength flows from hair to head,  
Cutting off his hair may make it unnecessary  
to cut off his head  
even though all around are losing theirs.”  
“Of course”, cried the Red Queen.  
“Off with his hair!”  
“They’re as mad as hatters” thought Alice.  
But she didn’t say so,  
Just in case an unfortunate judgement was made.  
One couldn’t be too careful in a mad world.

First published in *Blognostics*, April/May 2019



## The Keys of the Kingdom

The kingdom had so many keys,  
keys to its doors,  
keys to its gold,  
keys to its time,  
keys to its secrets.  
Nothing moved without a key.  
Everything was controlled.  
Nothing was free.  
Then came the Great War of the Keys  
and the kingdom collapsed.  
Its doors stayed open,  
its secrets exposed.  
Its gold melted away.  
Its locks grew rusty.  
Time stood still.  
All it had valued  
rotted away,  
decayed,  
collapsed  
into a heap  
of useless keys.

First published in *With Painted Words*, February 2016



**Mary Ann Cabuyao Abril** was born in Manila, Philippines in 1969 and has over 15 years of experience in teaching Social Sciences in the College of Teacher Education at the Batangas State University – Malvar Campus. She rose from the ranks to spearhead programs and developmental plans for quality assurance as Director of Research, Extension, Planning, and Development and later as Dean of the College of Teacher Education. After

over 13 years working abroad as a Human Resource Officer in a multicultural international consultancy company in Qatar, Dr. Abril rejoined the institution in February 2022 and is now the Head of the Quality Assurance Management Office. She was recently selected by the International Organization of Educators and Researchers, Inc. as one of the recipients of the “Most Outstanding Innovative Leader and Researcher Award” in December 2022. Focused on her commitment to excellence and service, Dr. Abril returns to her niche with positivity and the determination of making a difference. Receiving recognition for all her contributions not just in the academe but also while working abroad, Dr. Abril aspires to achieve more and be an inspiration to everyone.

## Heaven's Grace

Harken, ye who hear my tale,  
Of a woman's strife and travail,  
Who once was sick and sad,  
By the Lord was redeemed and glad.

She lay upon her bed in pain,  
Her heart was heavy, her spirit slain,  
No solace in this world she found,  
Her soul in darkness tightly bound.

But then one day a voice she heard,  
A light shone forth, a sacred word,  
"Rise up, my child, and be made whole,  
Your sickness and your sorrow, I will control."

And lo, the woman rose up strong,  
Her heart now filled with a holy song,  
The Lord had healed her, set her free,  
And she could feel his love for eternity.

No longer was she bound in chains,  
No longer did she feel the pain,  
The Lord had blessed her with his grace,  
And she would forever see his face.

So let us all give thanks and praise,  
To the Lord who heals and saves,  
For he can turn our darkest night,  
Into a dawn of purest light.

## Beyond All Things

Fair lady of humble birth,  
Thy beauty doth enchant mine eye.  
My heart, which oft was cold as earth,  
Now burns with passion's fiery dye.

Though rank and status may divide  
Our stations in this mortal sphere,  
Our love shall never be denied,  
For true love knows no earthly fear.

Thy gentle ways and tender heart  
Doth move me like no other can.  
Thou art the prize that I shall chart  
And I'll be thy devoted man.

Let no man say that this be wrong,  
For love is but a force divine.  
Let us together sing love's song  
And let our hearts forever entwine.

## For Justice

In court did sit a lady fair,  
Whose visage shone with regal air.  
Her hair did flow in golden streams,  
Her eyes aglow with noble dreams.

The judge did call for her to speak,  
And thus she rose with measured feet.  
Her words did ring like silver bells,  
And all did listen to her spells.

She spoke of justice, truth, and right,  
And how the law should bring to light  
The deeds of those who do transgress,  
And make them pay for their distress.

The jury, all with rapt attention,  
Heard her plea without contention.  
And when she finished, they did rise,  
And give their verdict with no lies.

Thus, justice was served that day,  
And all did bow to her with sway.  
For she, the lady in the court,  
Had proved her worth with words of fort.



**Rhiannon Owens** moved to Merthyr Tydfil from the North-West of England after bagging herself a handsome Welsh boy, Nicholas. She loves her cat, her mid-life crisis dresses, reading, and making her messy garden look even worse. As well as working on solo writing projects Rhiannon has had six poetry books published along with her writing partner, the super talented Ashley O'Keefe.

## Chalice

So sparse the scattered stars  
The saddest sprinkling  
Almost lost in the dark despair of sky  
Lost, not knowing  
Shrouded, muted glowing

I came here to tell you  
That you mean the world to me  
But your eyes were hard  
Your demeanor cold  
And I basked in infinite misery

I could nobly pluck  
Each star from that cruel sky  
Only to watch you crush them  
Grinding them into chalk dust  
Grimly smiling, your heart a husk

Your face a mask  
Of gleeful malice  
As you rip out my soul  
Make blind my eyes  
Even as I beseech you

One drop of compassion  
For my dun, empty chalice ...

## Nobody's Fool

Llew le Fol, respected by none  
the King's own fool,  
a fool to everyone.

A merry figure in yellow and red  
an oversized hat decked with bells  
jingling gaily on his head,  
the toes of his shoes curl upward  
for he is a clown  
in service of the King,  
to dispel his moods and frowns.

Gales of laughter follow his clumsy tomfoolery  
and courtiers clutch their sides at his barbed repartee,  
they watch his acrobatics in appreciation  
astounded by his agility  
as he somersaults, cartwheels, tumbles  
and they clap and cheer  
when he lets his tight-encased legs  
get all tangled and jumbled.

Llew le Fol, telling stories of old  
he juggles, performs magic tricks  
and thrills with slapstick or satire,  
and impressions so bold.  
A troubadour of some renown too  
hopping around with his flute,  
then surprising all with a voice so rare  
as he enchants all with a song  
while he plucks at his lute



Llew le Fol, fool to himself  
with an ill thought-out joke  
at the King's expense  
was put out to pasture,  
and the King's displeasure saw  
his replacement by  
a jester  
of short stature.

Embittered Llew plotted revenge  
he was a great wit, had a silver tongue  
and the King he had a much beloved daughter,  
as fair and bright-eyed  
as she was young.

He wooed her under starlight  
wooed her with poetry and song,  
she knew that together they'd make sweet music  
in her eyes Llew could do no wrong.

Llew and Gwendoline made their escape  
lit by moonlight on a white steed,  
away from the confines of the court  
together reveling in freedom  
heeding not that they might be caught,  
too happy to be bothered  
by such worrisome thoughts.

The pair will never be captured  
the King's men they will evade,  
for they will search for a fool  
in yellow and red,  
not an ordinary man  
and his sweet maid.

Nobody would want to believe  
she'd been captured by the fool  
still less,  
captivated by a fool  
spirited away,  
but Llew had managed to avenge himself  
he'd defied the King and his rule.

Riding over meadow  
with his beautiful bride,  
wild roses strewn through her hair.  
Riding over the hillsides  
his love for her had blossomed  
and she was beyond compare.

He is no longer 'le Fol'  
and she is a Princess no more,  
just the lady Gwendoline  
and her own beautiful Llew,  
two lovers free to love  
the way that only lovers do.

Llew le Fol, a jewel in the crown  
now he's a fool of none.  
Llew le Fol,  
Nobody's Fool  
he has outfoxed everyone.

## Foolish Heart

I'm one of the most powerful men at court, so why do I feel the  
clown?

I fell for the fairest face ... the comeliest maid, the prettiest  
picture as she prettily dances in swathes of velvet and  
brocade,

and now her expression is derision,

I see her laugh at me, that angelic face sneers, twisted with  
disdain

As she sweeps past in the arms of her gallant knight, with a  
contemptuous snap of her swirling white gown,

The purity of that material is a mockery, that adds to my pain and  
my misery,

I'm in my cups, swigging mead that drips down my chin ~ such  
feelings that I must drown,

Keep them locked in my noble chest, hidden deep within ...

I'm one of the most powerful men at court, so why do I feel the  
clown?

Just a conquest now you are the conqueror, my heart is broken ~  
you've had me slain,

I'm a jester all painted in ridiculous garb, you are the false  
'virtuous lady'

Making fools of those men with whom you have lain ...

With your doe eyes of flint and a smile that is barbed!



**Alan Bern** is a retired children's librarian and is a poet, storywriter, and photographer: he has a hybrid (poetry, prose, and photos) fictionalized memoir forthcoming from UnCollected Press and is the author of three books of poetry, including *No no the saddest* (Fithian Press, 2004). He is cofounder with artist/printer Robert Woods of the fine press/publisher *Lines & Faces*, [linesandfaces.com](http://linesandfaces.com). Alan brings into his writing, publishing, and photography his love for, and obsessions with, Italia, where he lived in the mid-1960s.

At Boston University in the early 1970s, he worked with classicist, Donald Carne-Ross, translating and producing 'imitations,' primarily from the Italian. Alan has been nominated for Pushcart Prizes, and recent awards include: Honorable Mention for Free Verse in SouthWest Writers Annual Writing Contest, *A Diversity of Expression* (2022); Honorable Mention for *Littoral Press Poetry Prize* (2021); Flash Fiction Finalist for *Ekphrastic Sex* (2021); First Runner-up for Raw Art Review's *Mirabai Prize for Poetry* (2020); Winner, *Littoral Press Poetry Prize* (2015). Recent and upcoming writing and photo work: *HAUNTED WATERS PRESS*, *Aletheia Literary Quarterly*, *CERASUS*, *Feral*, *The Hyacinth Review*, *DarkWinter Literary Magazine*, and *Mercurius*. Alan performs with dancer/choreographer Lucinda Weaver as *PACES* and with musicians from *Composing Together*.

## Medieval big pot reciping

For the meals  
I made stew  
Of everything

Sharpening their beaks  
Even all these  
Birds sang for it

Their chicks screeching  
The little feekers  
Out-feeking their elders

Some of them  
Along with one long snake  
And many bugs jumped in

Full of tree and stone  
Brothly unchewable  
What hot mess

*Molte grazie, Fra Ginepro*

from  
*several stations in the Leggenda di San Francesco  
d'Assisi by Giotto di Bondone*

*the sky-hand of God  
two-fingered sign to the raised  
prayer hands of Francis*

*shall never forget  
that moment and the poorman –  
so my cape over the ground for him too*

*I cannot believe  
that I exist without flames  
running down my back*

*unless timepieces crack  
the human father dies first  
leaving the child  
alone on a short porch looking  
out over a rich, deep valley*

*though Francesco points  
over his angry Father's head  
Assisi now recalls  
the Saint's parents in cold bronze,  
broken chain in Mother's hands*

*green bird Francesco  
fly up to your perch in air  
uncaged throne of wood*

*this is what scared me most  
the disappearance of my heart  
and that no one knew the difference*

*let us learn from the stones*

*silence*

San Francisco

speak speak  
a cheek a face  
pleads  
from stones

        a heat  
        a steam  
obscures  
what likeness once could mean

the other foot  
cold granite steps frozen

flies alive  
in death's wounds  
and the living's

*the dead read  
though may not bear  
eyes open  
ears*

to speak  
the corpse



**Marianne Tefft** is a poet, lyricist, and voiceover artist who daylights as a Montessori teacher on the Dutch Caribbean island of Sint Maarten. Her poems appear in print and online journals and anthologies in the United States, Canada, India, Serbia, United Kingdom, and Sint Maarten. She is the author of the poetry collections *Full Moon Fire: Spoken Songs of Love* (Tellwell Talent, June 2022) and *Moonchild: Poems for Moon Lovers* (December 2022).

Her work is available on Facebook (Marianne Tefft - Poet & Wordsmith)  
<https://www.facebook.com/MarianneTefftPoetWordsmith>  
and YouTube (Marianne Tefft)  
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCALiRAX7idctDYEZOUhy-eQ>



## Castles

You say build me  
No castles in the air  
Erect no fortresses around me  
You are a king who paces his own ramparts  
Warrior whose emerald greens  
Are wreathed in barricades  
I accept your terms  
So understand mine  
I am the queen who adorns  
The palace you disdain  
True hearts meet at my table  
Do not flinch when my hair  
Pulses across your screen in strobe light  
Do not allow your mood to darken  
When a foreign arm drapes  
Like a shawl around my shoulders  
You do not know my ocean  
And I do not know  
Your plains of memory  
But I tell you here  
The sirens blare one clear song  
In the sea of love where all hearts swim  
You cannot fish and cut bait

## Sanctuary

Outside the walls  
The dark presses in  
Through forest and stars  
Quiet stones resist  
Raising their eyes to the dawn  
That pours refreshing light  
Into the sanctuary

## Love is the Courtyard

Love is the courtyard  
Where sweet tangerine trees dream  
To drink from the clouds



**Mark Andrew Heathcote** is adult learning difficulties support worker. He has poems published in journals, magazines, and anthologies both online and in print. He resides in the United Kingdom and is from Manchester. Mark is the author of *In Perpetuity* and *Back on Earth*, two books of poems published by Creative Talents Unleashed.

## Faith

Faith has a keep  
a castle, a mote  
a drawbridge betwixt its middle.  
Faith has-a-judicious  
knight in prince  
whose chambers remain congenial?  
For valiant page,  
and-hoi-polloi rabble.

## Game of Jeopardy

Surrounded-on-all sides by hellfire's.  
Your castle—islanded, unapproachable  
sun is an added cinder just visible,  
a landscape changed by eucalyptus, pyres  
falling like pylons among the living  
and the dead. All things scrambled in defence;  
self-survival, no time for misgiving  
while fire-fighters spare no expense  
engage the flames, the intense smoke and heat  
with their time, their all, their life-energy  
sacrifice to quell the tide of defeat?  
Beat flames back in a game of jeopardy.  
So others may be saved or returned home  
something resembling a war aerodrome.





**Dibyasree Nandy** is 29 years old and began writing two years ago after completing M.Sc and M.Tech. Since then, she has authored six books, *The Labyrinth of Silent Voices-Epistles from the Mahabharata*, *Stardust: Haiku and Other Poems, Studded with Rubies*; *A Hundred Short Stories*, *Marchen of Newer Days*, *Liebeslied*, *Windflower*, and *Fireflies Beneath the Misty Moon*. Several of her poetry and prose pieces have appeared in literary journals and anthologies such as *The Pine Cone Review*, *Proceedings from the Pondicherry Lodge*, *Indian Periodical*, *Literary Cocktail Magazine*, *White Enso*, *Open Skies*, *Dragonflies and Fairies*, *Ghostly Ghouls and Haunted Happenings*, *Dark Reflections*, *Haus*, *Brown Sugar*, *Double Speak Magazine*, *LitGleam*, *Soul*, *Mediterranean Poetry*, *Seaglass Literary*, and *Abominable*.



## The Eagle's Crest

A day of cheer, rose petals dancing, the azure glittering and clear,  
He stands tall, the monarch of acclaim, his golden breastplate of  
the sun's glare.  
Carmine cloak trailing,  
A broadsword held out, sterling.  
Before the elderly man kneels the prince, head lowered,  
An eagle emblazoned on his white cape tailored.  
Accepting the weight of the blade, subjects to protect,  
The winged throne awaiting, bedecked.  
Knights and vassals surround,  
A severe mentor, the grandmaster beside the king; to his waist, a  
dagger bound,  
His armour of steely plumes,  
The royal fledgling, he daily grooms.  
Banners and flags fulgurating, fluttering in the mid-spring wind,  
The loyal court-guards hail, disciplined.  
Tresses tumbling, unfettered; the smiling ladies on the balcony  
above,  
Amongst them, the prince's betrothed, his one love.  
The High Priest blesses and prays,  
The bronze gong in the bell-tower sways.  
Empire overjoyed,  
In the merry tints of music and feasts, the halls at eve are dyed.  
The eagle that witnesses; watches over all,  
Heeding every plea, each imploring call,  
A regalia upholding obligations nearly kissing the sky,  
The hilt of the ruler's weapon heavenward, raised high.



Memories of him softly regarding ... near the fountain by the  
hedges flanking on either side,  
The sound of galloping hooves on the stony dusky path never  
brushed by me as I waited for him to come back, ride,  
The welcoming maples of red,  
My shelter, my sanctuary; enwrapped in the warm wisdom of  
jade.



**Jerri Hardesty** lives in the woods of Alabama with husband, Kirk, who is also a poet. They run the nonprofit poetry organization, New Dawn Unlimited, Inc. ([NewDawnUnlimited.com](http://NewDawnUnlimited.com)). Jerri has had over 500 poems published and has won more than 2000 awards and titles in both written and spoken word poetry.

## The Prince Knight

I sit on cold granite,  
Tending my weapon  
In the tower of my father's keep.  
I anoint my blade with oil  
And slick its surface  
Across my swordstone,  
Knowing it is my friend.  
It speaks to me  
In a metal voice  
As I sharpen its bite,  
Of our glory in battle,  
Of glory to come.  
"We face destiny again tomorrow  
My deadly friend."  
My words echo stonily back,  
Robbed of their gravity.  
My singing sword,  
With each stroke  
Closer to battle,  
Closer to the victory  
Over my father's foe --  
Those who would steal  
Our home --  
Or closer to honor's grave,  
Dispatched by beloved steel.

## The Moon is Her Lover

The moon is her lover,  
Each night he strives  
To woo her sweetly,  
Gliding o'er her balcony  
In pale and silver  
Shafts  
Of transient light,  
Bathing glistening skin  
In fragrant streams  
Of ghostly luminescence.  
Cool and radiant  
Pools  
Of sun's reflection  
Lounge in the basins  
Of her curves,  
His caress of passion;  
'Til amber glow  
Of coming dawn  
Touches castle walls  
Brings flight  
For the moon,  
Her lover,  
To swoon, waiting  
Through the day  
In love's agony  
For sun's retreat,  
And spilling through  
Her tower window  
Again,  
To drink her beauty,  
Brimming full,  
This lover's dance,  
Her love,  
The moon.

*A version of this poem was previously published  
In a self-published chapbook, "Bloom of the Muse."*







**Bruce E. Whitacre**'s debut poetry collection, *The Elk in the Glade: The World of Pioneer and Painter Jennie Hicks*, from Crown Rock Media, is a Publishers Weekly editors pick. His *Good Housekeeping* will be out in 2023 from Poets Wear Prada. His poems have appeared in *Big City Lit*, *RFD*, *North of Oxford*, Poets Wear Prada's The Rainbow Project (nominated for Pushcart Prize and Best of the Net), and *World Literature Today*. His work is included in the anthologies *American Graveyard*, *Brownstone Poets 2021*,

*I Wanna be Loved by You: Poems on Marilyn Monroe*, and *The Wonders of Winter*, as well as *The Strategic Poet*.

Follow him at [www.brucewhitacre.com](http://www.brucewhitacre.com).

## Vienna, September 1683

Bloody flux tinges the swill of trenches and tunnels.  
Below the walls, pale believer and crusader alike  
eat mud and kill whatever emaciated worm  
squirms in the dark earth at their faces.

Always the fulmination of canon,  
Muslim and Christian, booms overhead.  
this strangle-hold wrestling  
for the soul of Europe cannot go on.

Pasha Kara Mustafa faces East to Vienna  
but glances over his shoulder West to Bald Mountain  
where a vast enemy force creeps through the trees  
and sleeps in battle formation.

Mustafa is far from his Golden Horn palace.  
He is losing his grip on his hubris,  
but like any cosmopolitan warrior,  
he travels with the comforts of home.

Tonight, he tosses in his damascene sheets  
and drinks potions in mother of pearl chalices.  
Olive oil lamplight glints  
off polished trays, crystal hookahs.

A singer plucking her kanun is silenced,  
dismissed. He calls for boys and girls  
in alternation, yet still, he cannot sleep.  
By gray light he sees the trees of Bald Mountain

tremble from Christians creeping at their feet.  
Mustafa's men too: Vienna before them,  
annihilation behind, glance from glory to death.  
Vienna silhouetted in a clear dawn.

St. Stephen's spires loom the shattering walls,  
catching the first glint of the rising sun.  
Starving, battered Vienna eats its last ox, fills  
the canon gaps with harpsichords and libraries.

Old men rattle in armor of blankets and straw.  
They slash broom handles and broken bottles  
against whomever breaches the parapet. Mothers  
pass furniture to their children mending the wall.

Few dare glance over at the Turkish camp  
A blast buries a kindergarten of workers.  
More children, some of the last, take its place.  
For now, the mothers do not weep.

The flying Hussars of Poland and the horse  
of all Germany sweep into the sun, down  
Bald Mountain onto the Danube plain,  
smashing toward the Ottoman lines.

Pasha Kara Mustafa watches his prized  
Janissaries crumble before the winged  
Slavs, the Teutonic knights, crushing  
faster than canon can halt.

Seven hundred years of Crusades—  
begun when the Hagia Sofia still held mass—  
avenge the audacity of the Turks.  
The Danube runs red.

Pasha Kara Mustafa turns his horse to Hungary,  
gallops on the wings of genies as far as Belgrade,  
where the Sultan's silken cords cinch around his neck.  
"Am I to die?" "As God pleases."

The Christians loot the Turkish camp.  
The Pasha's blond Slav girls and  
dark eyed Magyar boys are consigned  
to the brothels of the Empire.

The neys, tanburs and kemans are tossed  
to a puzzled chorister. The Sufi seer who foretold  
all is beheaded where he whirls  
amidst the blazing tents and flying limbs.

The Emperor returns to Vienna triumphant.  
The Pope's Odescalchi nephew takes off his helmet  
and sends word to Rome. Europe is saved,  
Hungary, restored, its Protestants suppressed.

The Turks are driven down Danube, left to dreams.  
A soldier finds bag after bag of pungent black beans.  
He opens a *koffee haus* serving a curved pastry  
invented to mock the Muslim emblem: the croissant.

Ever watchful of its frontiers, Vienna would keep  
its walls longer than any capital,  
dynamic in compactness,  
a land-locked Manhattan.

Strange instruments would sire  
musical legacies:  
Haydn, Mozart,  
Mahler, Straus.

Coffee-fueled chatter would ignite genius,  
for better and worse:  
Freud, Wittgenstein,  
Herzl—and Hitler.

Waltz, one, two, three. Waltz, one, two, three.  
Vienna, September 1683.



**Richard Lamoureux** lives in beautiful British Columbia, Canada, on the shores of Lake Okanagan. He has been happily married for 27 years to his beautiful wife Mary. Their son Mathew and his wife Harleen live close by with their new grandson, Benjamin. Did he mention that Benjamin is the cutest baby in the world?

He loves spending time with his family, writing, and connecting with and promoting other writers. For fun he plays pickleball, hikes, bikes, and swims. He enjoys meeting new people as well as getting together with close friends.

His first published book *Dummy, Hurtful, and Healing Words* is now in its second printing and continues to be well received. Through writing the book he experienced healing and had amazing interactions with others who are on their own healing journeys. He tends to write about social issues and many of his poems deal with human rights. He personally has written over 3000 pieces. He never realized he had so much to say. His hope is that both people who regularly read poetry as well as those who do not will be able to connect with what he writes.

During his career he has worked in communications, banking, human resources, and the financial side of the luxury automotive market. He also worked as a Sales Trainer and Consultant to assist companies in improving their people performance. Considering his difficult start in life and early academic challenges, he is thankful to have had a rich and interesting career. Writers can imagine and achieve what their hearts desire. He is glad he did not lack imagination. He is also thankful for the people who have helped him along the way. He gives a special thanks to his sweetie. He has been blessed with the greatest partner, best friend, and lover.

## Within White Walls

White Castle  
With weeping walls  
I hear your whispers  
When will I walk your way

Who knows why your walls weep  
We witness your wanting  
Hear the winds whistle  
What will become of you

West winds descend  
Waves of water wrap around you  
Wanderers want your protection  
Will you welcome them

Within your walls  
White marble wonder  
Wrapped with golden threads  
Snow White staircases  
Whimsical wishing wells  
Walkways weave within you

White Castle  
Where is your throne  
Who sits upon it  
We have witnessed rumblings  
Walter the wondrous is gone  
Whoosh, whoosh, whoosh  
Sadly the winds will not wane  
You are but a whisper from another time  
The world that was has moved on.







**Joan McNerney** is originally from New York City and now resides in the dank woodlands of upstate New York. She has been the recipient of three scholarships. She has recited her work at the National Arts Club, New York City, State University of New York, Oneonta, McNay Art Institute, San Antonio and the University of Houston, Texas as well as other distinguished venues. A reading in Treadwell, New York was sponsored by the American Academy of Poetry.

She was recently named the second place winner in Wilda Morris Challenge.

Published worldwide in over 35 countries. Her work has appeared in literary publications too numerous to mention. She has been awarded four Best of the Net nominations.

*The Muse in Miniature* and *Love Poems for Michael* are both available on Amazon.com and Cyberwit.net. Just released is a new title *At Work*. This collection shows colorful but realistic snapshots of working women and men in their daily lives.

## Circle in the Square

A perfect square of queens  
yet ladies can always  
ease into close circles.

Beautiful queen of hearts  
wears lavender with rosemary  
in her ruby red hair.

Queen of spades can quickly  
begin bickering always knowing  
she is the most highly valued.

Diamond queen very showy  
wearing her wealth thinking  
jewels set her a realm apart.

But lucky, sweet queen of  
clubs, so friendly and so happy.  
Everyone loves her.

Now they gather together  
horrified by mad kings so  
ready to march in combat.

Feeling sorry for shuffling  
jacks who have no choice  
but to follow royalty.

How very odd watching  
all the numbers follow  
suite in even rows.

Lines of unwilling victims  
hesitant to play war or  
deadly games of solitaire.

Wistful quiet queens who  
converse in circles  
fearing the insanity of battle.



**Laurice E. Tolentino** is an Instructor at Batangas State University TNEU JPLPC- Malvar, Philippines where she instructs Professional and General Education courses for programs in College of Teacher Education as well as Major subjects for programs in International Hospitality Management. For the past two years, she has served as the College of Teacher Education's research coordinator and

most recently in-charge as Food Services at the same university. In addition, she spent the full year serving as the Faculty Advisor for the Junior Hotelier and Restaurateur Association's (JHRA) from (2008-2010, 2016-2018 & 2020-2022). From 2016 to 2020, she worked as an OJT Coordinator for IHM Students. Within her personal life, she has a strong interest in advancement and self-development. She is constantly looking for fresh challenges and chances to pick up new skills that express her values for learning new things and for improving oneself.

## The Birth of an English King

Beneath the twigs of a young birch tree!  
The oak, which had a pleasant sound in the summer,  
In the autumn, the tree's leaves rustled.

I am completely filled with nothing, like a glass of wine.  
I am a fragile representation of a young prince.  
afflicted by a surplus of coincidence.

when he saw his own blossom.  
Sweet bloom had a flush of pride.  
But the Eclipse kept their eyes open during the calm night.

So, the sound of warfare might be heard all day.  
near the winter sea, in the highlands;  
Until the King Arthur's table had collapsed around their Lord,  
man by man

The bones of the young knight are tough  
And his excellent sword shrill;  
His soul I prayed are inspired by saints.

I am a boy king.  
Protector of earth as a planet-dweller.  
Here, one bloom resides with million stars to share until sunset  
and ever.



**Dr. Genalyn Panganiban-Lualhati** is an associate professor for the undergraduate teacher education programs at Batangas State University, The National Engineering University, JPLPC-Malvar, handling Teaching Internship, The Teacher and the School Curriculum, The Child and Adolescent Learners and the Learning Principles and Special Topics in Education. Apart from her teaching duties, she was designated as the College

Focal Person for Internationalization in Action and Faculty Chosen by the University President as member of the Faculty Selection Board of the campus.

She is also a research-based faculty member who is trained in quantitative research, and with approved research for funding in the same university. Her research interests include environmental education, pedagogy and educational management, inclusive education and gender sensitivity. She has served as an internal examiner for student research and has published research articles in Scopus Indexed Journals, CHED accredited journal, ASEAN Citation Indexed journals, and in other international peer-reviewed journals with sterling reputation. She has presented research papers in national and international research fora. Moreover, she has published poems in an international book.

Her passion in teaching reflects her aim to mold education students to become academic leaders by instilling moral values and 21st century skills so that they can create for us a better future.

## A Glorified Crusader

Autumn month, Holy Land fell under the Muslim's control  
Popes's tirade led the Third Crusade, issues a papal bull  
With an organized army, a fearless warrior king to the rescue  
To reclaim Jerusalem, free Christian prisoners, give what is due.

Lionheart his epithet, stage the Massacre at Ayyadieh  
Like a mule clashing excellent military, stopping Saladin  
With knighthood and chivalry, all crusaders fought  
Battling to the core, who will raise the flag, which court?

The final battle led directly to peace and serenity  
Accepted the terms of surrender, no captivity of the Holy City  
A good closed deal, thin coastal strip, restricted territory  
No Christian presence, key to survival for another century.

A noble warrior for letting all Christians leave peacefully  
Brave, gallant commander and strategist medieval royalty  
Mayhap a poor king for his land, foreign battles are his rally  
A gloried crusader, King Richard I, salute the Crusade History.

## Eternal Fame

In this gloomy day, a great Knight proudly lays  
His robust bones are dust, and his piercing sword rust  
Shining suits covered with mud, incoagulable is his blood  
His soul rest with saints, legacy to the people will never faint.

Recalling his heroic deeds, always available in times of needs  
For the glory of battle and war, willing to be in a far  
Such a great Christian warrior of olden times, can run through  
miles  
Fighting on horseback to serve a king, pride and honor he  
constantly bring.

Prowess he displays, to defend the weak and the inferior  
Rescuing the damsel in distress, chivalric code he sets  
Practicing combat is required, wearing heavy armor is the attire  
Keeping things in peace and order, loyalty to the lord is forever.

When war erupted, his military services he pledged  
Together with his army, to win and crash the enemy  
Protection of the land, king and people, character is medieval  
Not everyone could become a knight, requires great might.

His story and accounts, must be known by heart and voice out  
Retold to the future, include their conducts in our culture  
Sharing history before it fades, never forget the crusades  
In this gloomy day, a great Knight proudly lays, let us celebrate  
his eternal fame.







**Liwanag C. Rubico** is a Language Instructor and Program Chairperson of Bachelor in Elementary Education in the College of Teacher Education at Batangas State University – The National Engineering University, JPLPC-Malvar, Batangas, Philippines. She holds a Bachelor’s Degree in Secondary Education major in English at University of Makati and acquired her degree of Master in Teaching the English Language, at De la Salle

University-Manila. She has been serving the academe for 30 years and an enthusiast in teaching language, grammar, and professional education courses. She considers herself as an advocate of learning who focuses on teachers’ and students’ capacities to involve in a vibrant academic experience within the context of teaching and learning process. Likewise, she was designated as the Head of the Office of Student Publication and adviser of *The Laser*, the official campus paper of the university that produces editions such as literary folio, journal, newsletter, broadsheet, and tabloid. She brings prestige and honor to the university for winning in various competitions held in the regional and national level of campus journalism. Moreso, she had published literary pieces about love, war, peace, friendship etc. Recently, she authored poems published in Southern Arizona Press’ Anthology *Love Letters in Poetic Verse*.

## The Paragon of Virtue

Chivalry of a wise strong Knight,  
Attest through his battle of valor and heroic fight  
With blissful turn of fate, turns to brawl  
Catalyst for the Round Table to fall.

Thine love is like an ivy bud in strife,  
Truly, a poison to accord of King Arthur and wife  
Succumb to your knight's charms and lure  
Destroy, rescind even the heart of pure.

Love is intense, arising out of rink  
Meant to proclaim, need thy heart to speak  
More to show, more to hide, more to flourish  
Either one should live or one would vanish

Charge to undisputed ordeal of temptation,  
Impute to yearning from the absence of companion  
Yet, the heart of maiden spring of pain  
Never eases and fears the heaven's name.

A knight in shining armor as thou art called  
A victim of love and compulsion, you are told  
Feign on tranquil, actions are unruffled  
Eager to wrestle just ardour to uphold

Splendid to save thy lady in vain  
Venerable in the eyes of people full of twinge  
Bewitching to every woman's eyes  
Thrilled to find a man's sorts and kind

Hail all ye who are faithful and true.  
Hail all ye knight who fights for love.  
Hail all ye cavalier of passion and desire.  
Long live the reverie of a brave tough knight.





**Judge Santiago Burdon's** short stories and poems have been featured in over two hundred Magazines, On-line Literary Journals, Podcasts, and Anthologies. He was listed in *Who's Who of Emerging Writers 2020* and again in 2021.

His first book *Stray Dogs and Deuces Wild Cautionary Tales* was published in January 2020 by Arthur Graham Editor Horror Sleaze Trash Press. His next book, a collection of poems, *Not Real Poetry* was published in July 2021 by Steve Cawte, Editor of Impspired Press. Arthur Graham, Editor of Horror Sleaze Trash Press launched Santiago's third book, *Quicksand Highway*, more short stories of adventurous mayhem, in September 2021. Steve Cawte, Editor/Publisher Impspired Press, published *Fingers In The Fan* the fourth book by Santiago in July 2022. *Tequila's Bad Advice - Poetry with the Worm*, another collection of visceral poems, was published in March 2023 by Southern Arizona Press Paul Gilliland Editor/Publisher. A sixth book, *Lords Of The Afterglow Renegades and Noblemen*, a collection of short stories of bizarre adventures, with gritty dialogue and dark humor, will be published in late 2023 by Southern Arizona Press Paul Gilliland Editor Publisher

Santiago turned 69 last July and lives modestly in Costa Rica.

## Legend of Fosse Way

Riding hard under a moonlight high  
not a leaf rustling, it troubles my mind  
In the distance, I hear music of the lyre and flute  
The melody serenading the stars  
The voice of a maiden  
bleeds its way through the darkness  
singing an ole bawdy Pub Song  
My steed swift at a gallop  
hooves sound their click clack  
crossing Halford Bridge we press on

History demands I deliver this message  
I must make Exeter Castle by dawn  
Two Queens vie for the throne of England  
Not even God can decide which is the virtuous one

Forest fairies ring the bells on the Foxglove  
The Oaks without expression and still  
A rare breeze slaps awake sleeping grass in the glades  
toads croak their complaint to the night's chill  
This road is dominion of highwaymen and thieves  
Robbing those that choose this way to travel  
By the will of My Lord and with the Bishop's blessing  
I will pass undetected by scoundrels and rabble.

Nourished on only bread and Brambleberries  
Traveling by night taking sleep by day  
All that I've seen are ghosts of Roman soldiers  
On this road known as Fosse Way  
Say my name Trevor Harrison be mentioned  
in yarns told about pubs and taverns  
History will decide if I be 'Patriot or 'Traitor'  
As a result of my actions.  
My only wish is not to be forgotten  
And live on in memory of this day  
As one of the many legends  
the many legends of Fosse Way.

In memory of my distant relative  
Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex.



**John Grey** is an Australian poet, US resident, recently published in *Stand*, *Washington Square Review*, and *Floyd County Moonshine*. Latest books, *Covert*, *Memory Outside The Head*, and *Guest Of Myself* are available through Amazon. Work upcoming in the *McNeese Review*, *Santa Fe Literary Review*, and *Open Ceilings*.



## The Last Ride

Winds have changed direction.  
His old horse bears him home,  
one sore but uncomplaining step  
ahead of encroaching shadows.

He tosses his broken sword into the lake  
though no hand reaches up to grasp it.  
Autumn leaves have shed their color.  
Moon begins to rise.  
Breast-plate never felt so heavy.

Here is a man who once slayed dragons.  
But it's his heart that's burned down to a flicker now.  
If only the fates would allow  
one last walk to Dromedere pond at sunset,  
hand in hand with Elena.

But distance plots against him.  
His battered armor freezes.  
Each patch of ground could be his winter grave.

Death and darkness ply their trade  
beneath the twinkle of unfeeling stars.

He's at the mercy of the one black knight  
whose blade strikes from within.

## Tale of Two Princes

There were once,  
born to the king, twins  
who loved each other dearly.

Yet, when the king died,  
there was no provision  
for them to rule jointly,

and the only alternative  
was for each to gather up an army  
and wage fraternal war.

But then, as the battles raged,  
each brother was equally afraid  
of winning as of losing

for a victor would have no choice  
but to demand the vanquished brother's head.

Even with the riches, glory  
and power that came with  
ruling the kingdom,  
neither could imagine  
the horror of being without  
their beloved brother

so each instructed their troops  
that, for every enemy soldier slain  
they should kill one of their own,

which led to a stalemate of the bloodiest kind  
because it wasn't long before  
both armies were completely wiped out  
with the very last of the fighters of one side  
stabbing himself once he had done  
the same to the last of the other.

Once the bodies of the soldiers  
were buried,  
the twins realized that  
there was no longer a kingdom  
to rule over  
so there was no point in either of them  
being crowned king.

Had they lived a thousand years later,  
they'd have seen the irony in all this.  
But they were fairy tale princes.  
One had been known to kiss dead princesses  
in the presence of dwarves.  
The other's idea of courting a woman  
was to climb up her long hair  
for a rendezvous in a tower.

Really, you can't make this stuff up.  
But people did.  
And I just did.



**Carlene M. Gadapee** teaches high school English and is the Associate Creative Director for The Frost Place Studio Sessions. Her poems have been published by *Waterwheel Review*, *Smoky Quartz*, *Margate Bookie*, *English Journal*, *bloodroot*, *Wild Words*, and elsewhere. Carlene resides with her husband in northern New Hampshire.

## Parzival

Parzival, good with a lance,  
Is woefully bad at romance:  
A blonde with a castle  
Presents no real hassle,  
But he always misses his chance.

Given a horse and an ale,  
Parzival really can't fail:  
A woman's white shift  
Just can't get a lift--  
One questions the male in the tale!

Of deeds that are quests, there's no end  
And dear P, he's learned how to bend  
To do a girl's pleasure--  
'Tis true, he might measure  
But in furlongs, not inches, we kenned.

A trail of young wenches is left  
Feeling somehow pure, but bereft.  
Parzival wanders  
Whence his mind ponders:  
Not tresses, but horses of heft.

## Queen Margaret's Lady's Maid Speaks

*(Richard III, 1.3, to be inserted after Q. Margaret's exit)*

Madame soon plays the harpy, too much griev'd,  
Though not without some cause. I know, lady,  
Your litany of wrongs is not by men believed.  
Pointy truth is blent with prickled mischief shady.

Too often shrewish, my lady's message, loud and shrill  
Best suits a fishwife--rough chapp'd, a blowsy scold--  
You are not heard. They scorn you (as they often will):  
Harsher words, unvarnished, seem too bold.

Enough! Clanging clamour does not suit you: such as we  
Cannot hope to make our suitors listen to cold reason.  
If you would speak fair, then fairly heard you'd be!  
A honeyed sauce is better than much pepper in its season.

New-widowed Lady Anne and randy Gloucester—mark them  
well:  
Before too long, one, or both, are hot-riding straight to hell.





**Rageene Vera Dueñas** is a 34-year-old Filipino teacher with over a decade of experience teaching in both elementary and tertiary education. She has relevant professional education and training in the field of Early Childhood Education and Elementary Education. She handles professional education and major courses in Bachelor in Elementary Education Program at Batangas State University.

In addition to her work in the classroom, she has also been involved in conducting research on topics related to reading, values education, and educational innovations. She has been invited as a resource speaker in seminars and has implemented various community works through the research and extension programs of the university.

Ms. Dueñas is also recognized as the Reading Ambassador of two elementary schools where she has made a significant impact in promoting the love of reading among the children in the community. She has also demonstrated her commitment to social responsibility by organizing book drives and storytelling activities for underprivileged children and working with other organizations to promote reading and literacy. Her dedication to education and child advocacy is a testament to her commitment to creating better lives for children through quality education.



## Legacy of the Knights

In ancient times, with armor bright,  
Medieval knights would ride to fight,  
Their swords would clash, their shields would ring,  
In battles where they'd fiercely swing.

With lance in hand and horse to hold,  
They charged ahead, brave and so bold,  
They rode for honor and claim for fame,  
Their deeds would echo down in name.

From jousts to wars, they'd always stand,  
Defending kingdoms, guarding lands,  
They lived by codes of chivalry,  
With bravery and loyalty.

The heraldry on their shields would show,  
Their houses proud, with crests aglow,  
Their armor shone, their banners flew,  
As they rode forth, their quest pursued.

With noble hearts and courage pure,  
They fought for what they knew was sure,  
And though their days have long since passed,  
Their legacy forever lasts.

For tales of knights still captivate,  
Their valor, strength and deeds so great,  
And we remember, with each passing year,  
The knights of old, forever dear.



**Andrew McDowell** became interested in writing at age 11, and by the time he was 13, he knew he wanted to be a writer. He is the author of the epic fantasy novel *Mystical Greenwood*. He has also written and published short stories, poetry, and creative nonfiction. Andrew studied at St. Mary's College and the University of Maryland, College Park. He is a member of the Maryland Writers' Association. He was diagnosed with Asperger

syndrome, an autism spectrum disorder, when he was 14. Visit [andrewmcdowellauthor.com](http://andrewmcdowellauthor.com) to learn more about him and his writing.

## Knights in Shining Armor

Magnificent white chargers they did ride,  
Fair princess rescued from the dark tower.  
Reward with treasure or perhaps a bride,  
Dragon slain signifies his great power.  
Heroes hailed for remarkable deeds,  
Forceful swords crafted in a divine forge.  
Yet where have departed the great white steeds?  
Just who can match King Arthur or St. George?  
In an age where speculation will thrive,  
Searching stories and pages from the past,  
People will ponder just who was alive,  
Understand truth and folklore at long last.  
To drive themselves on men made this theme.  
Knights in shining armor were but a dream.



**Glenda M. Dimaano** is a Filipino associate professor for the undergraduate and graduate teacher education programs at Batangas State University JPLPC-Malvar Campus. As an educator, she is primarily interested in the pedagogy of social sciences and gender development across basic and tertiary education levels that focuses on teachers and students' capacity to engage in dynamic curricular opportunities and experiences within the context of teaching and learning process. She is also interested in writing any literary piece and published her research work at Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences (HASSS) Journal.

## Ode to the Medieval Knights

In days of old, when chivalry reigned,  
And honor and bravery were highly esteemed,  
The knights of the medieval age,  
Were the embodiment of courage and dreams.

Clad in shining armor, they rode  
On mighty steeds, with lances held high,  
Their swords at their side, their shields aglow,  
As they charged forth with a warrior's cry.

They fought for king and country,  
And defended the weak and the poor,  
Their code of conduct was their duty,  
To uphold justice and honor forevermore.

In jousts and tournaments, they displayed  
Their skill and strength with grace and finesse,  
Winning the hearts of maidens fair,  
With their prowess and nobleness.

Their legacy lives on, in tales and lore,  
Of knights and dragons, of quests and feats,  
Of honor and courage, of love and war,  
Of a time long gone, but never obsolete.

So let us raise our cups in a toast,  
To the brave knights of olden days,  
Their spirit lives on in every boast,  
Of those who still carry their noble ways.



**Dr. Francisco V. Aguirre**, is a Filipino associate professor for the undergraduate and graduate teacher education programs at Batangas State University JPLPC-Malvar Campus. As an educator, he is primarily interested in the pedagogy of social sciences, physical education and gender development across basic and tertiary education levels that focuses on teachers and students' capacity to engage in dynamic curricular opportunities and experiences within the context of teaching and learning process. He published his different works in prestigious journals of education and he is also involved in different literary arts and works.

## Knights of Old: A Tale of Chivalry and Courage

In days of old, when chivalry was bold,  
And knights were known for deeds so brave,  
They rode upon their steeds of gold,  
Their shining armor gleaming like a wave.

With swords that flashed in sun's bright light,  
And lances held so tall and true,  
They rode to battle, to fight the fight,  
And always see the battle through.

They rode for honor, rode for love,  
For duty and for king and queen,  
With courage that shone like stars above,  
And never bowed to fear or spleen.

Their armor clanged with every stride,  
As they charged forth into the fray,  
And when the enemy they espied,  
They fought with all their might that day.

For medieval knights were more than men,  
They were a symbol of honor and might,  
And their legacy will live on, even then,  
As they rode into the mists of night.







**Nancy Julien Kopp** started writing in her mid-fifties, fulfilling a life-long desire. Her writing reflects her growing-up years in Chicago and many more years of living in Manhattan in the Flint Hills of Kansas, where she still resides. She lives with her retired husband, is mother to two and grandmother of four. Nancy's stories, articles, essays, award-winning children's stories, and poetry have been published in magazines, newspapers, online and in many anthologies, including twenty-four *Chicken Soup for the Soul* books. Nancy is a voracious reader and loves to play Bridge.

## An Irish Castle Visit

Castles and courtyards,  
inspiring stories and song,  
history seeping through.

On a warm summer day in Ireland,  
Blarney Castle beckoned,  
and the Blarney Stone, too.

We viewed the castle from  
graceful, green grounds below,  
then began to climb

128 steep steps of stone,  
taking us round and round,  
to the top of the tower.

Our legs trembled as we  
reached the very top  
and lined up to see the famed stone.

Kiss the Blarney Stone upside down,  
the Irish say, to receive the gift of gab  
forevermore.

We peered over the side,  
at mini-people far below,  
the breeze ruffling our hair.

Are you going to kiss the stone?  
my husband asked, a twinkle in his eye.  
No thank you, I'm no acrobat.

There is no need, you see, for  
I'm half Irish in heritage,  
and I already have the gift of gab.

We watched others perform  
the feat, fearful yet brave,  
then headed for those many

stone steps that brought  
us down to earth again.  
Another memory made.





**Stephanie DuPont** is a yoga instructor, gardener, designer, Etsy shop owner, artist, photographer, poet, and short story writer originally from Miami, Florida. She has also lived in Colorado and Leeds, England, but now resides in Atlanta, Georgia.

Stephanie has been creating stories for as long as she can remember. Her first was about a princess named Poppy and a horse named Fred. She enjoyed reenacting her stories with her brother Ryan – Stephanie played Poppy the princess and her brother Ryan played Fred the horse. The story and play were a huge hit in the DuPont household!

Her current work explores themes about history and the natural world. She especially loves conjuring short stories and poems about her native Miami. You can also find Stephanie on Instagram: [@glitterymoonvintage](#), and Twitter: [@moonvintage](#).

## Remnants Remain

A castle is perched upon a nook,  
Near seas where Captain Cook  
Once sailed aboard the Freelove ship.  
The ancient walls abide above

A town that's washed by whirly curls,  
It draws in scouts who search for pearls  
From oceans filled with haddock schools  
And fossil pools, not knowing of

The witchcraft held within the stones,  
Where barriers are built of bones.  
The night is bright with sprites that sing  
A song of sorcery and a beast

That once roamed the haunted halls  
Beneath the landward fortress walls.  
This brute was brought by greedy kings  
To scour for treasure, feared by all

But one: the lady Iris; a prize  
With moonstone eyes disguised by guise.  
Her beauty was like bluebell blooms  
That bathe the shade with delft in spring.

When Mercury and Mars align,  
With crystal-gazing starry signs,  
The lady Iris plays her harp to hide  
The fiery beast beneath the spires,

Enshrouding him in shields and spells,  
To keep the beast from harm impelled;  
Forged from the tips of thousands of swords,  
Which pierced his scaly scarlet wings.

When Iris scanned his bloodied trace,  
She cried. Her grace then dried her face,  
And turned her tears to rage, which turned  
Into a soft cascade of sparks

That glowed like divine glow-worm lights;  
On sultry summer nights, they ignite  
The sky with luminescent sights.  
As sugared dewdrops filled the room,

The door was breached by George the knight  
Who saw the spinning scraps of light.  
With sword in hand, he plunged it in  
The mighty monster. Fate is cruel,

For beauty's flowing auburn hair  
Became ensnared in twine and air,  
And both tangled hearts were pierced.  
Then a fire in each was released.

The castle still stands tall and proud,  
Its walls now haunted by the crowd  
Of ghosts who whisper tales of old,  
Of magic, love, and dragons bold.

Scarborough fairies tell the tale  
Of love and sacrifice that prevails,  
Where rifts between the rocks unveil  
That traces of magic remain.



**Ken Gosse** usually writes short, rhymed verse using whimsy, and humor in traditional meters. First published in *First Literary Review –East* in November 2016, since then in *The Offbeat*, *Pure Slush*, *Parody*, *Home Planet News Online*, *Sparks of Calliope*, and others. He was raised in the Chicago, Illinois suburbs. Now retired, he and his wife have lived in Mesa, Arizona

for over twenty years.



## Dark, Stormy Knight Tales – A Baker’s Dozen

### Sir Kilobyte

There once was a dark, stormy knight,  
with a thousand songs praising his might,  
then came two-dozen more  
just to round out the score  
so the King dubbed him Sir Kilobyte.

### Stones of Graphite

There once was a dark, stormy knight,  
who was sure he knew each knightly rite,  
but the King often changed them  
and then rearranged them—  
not written in stone, but graphite.

### Terminators

There once was a dark, stormy knight,  
whose pet was a hungry termite,  
but when left on its own  
it devoured the throne.  
What the King said next, none should recite!

### Joust in Time

There once was a dark, stormy knight,  
who managed at last to incite  
several knight-mates to roust  
the Old King in a joust  
then left town before they could indict.

### Royal Honey

There once was a dark, stormy knight  
who was desperate to get an invite  
from her Highness, the Queen  
(for the King he had seen)  
in the hope that some night they’d unite.

### The Rose on Her Clothes

There once was a dark, stormy knight  
whose fair queen was his main appetite.  
She'd wear a red rose  
and she'd wrinkle her nose  
to confirm that the timing was right.

### The P in the C (No, Not Pee in the Sea)

There once was a dark, stormy knight,  
who knew the Queen's secret delight:  
she kept a large phallus  
deep down in her chalice  
well hidden from everyone's sight.

### Pie in the Sky

There once was a dark, stormy knight  
whose Queen was verklempt and uptight.  
She'd off' toss a pie  
very high in the sky—  
he who caught it, consoled her that night.

### Frumious Creatures

There once was a dark, stormy knight,  
who said dragons were myths of our fright,  
but he'd once fought a match  
with the fierce Bandersnatch  
and he'd suffered a Jabberwock's bite!

### Ants in Their Pants

There once was a dark, stormy knight.  
Quite the prankster, for his own delight  
he would pepper his lance  
and put ants in the pants  
of the knights he was chosen to fight.

### No Requite

There once was a dark, stormy knight,  
who pleaded for love through the night,  
but his true lady fair  
said she'd just washed her hair  
so he suffered all night, sans requite.

### Nightie-Knight

There once was a dark, stormy knight  
who loved to wear lingerie white,  
red, or black, long or short,  
for he wasn't the sort  
who was bashful in trystful delight.

### Oh Say, Can You Hear Me Now?

There once was a dark, stormy knight,  
who sang by the dawn's early light,  
"Oh say, can you see ...  
What comes next? Oh, dear me!"  
while the crowd hurled things impolite.

**Diane K. Aster** writes love poems that are sometimes cheeky, often sensual, and pretty much always erotic. She is the author of *Golden*, which is available from Amazon, and her second poetry collection *Honey & Joy* will be in print this year.

## Joust

A little Roleplay, you suggest?  
I smile, duck my head ...

Can I be your damsel in distress?

My eyelashes flutter  
My bosom heaves and strains  
I have velvet clad breasts,  
You push up my skirts  
Your head under my dress ...

On your white charger  
On your white steed,  
I gasp and I moan  
It's my Knight that I need,

My golden circlet drops to the ground,  
I'm the distressed damsel  
But it's you who are drowned ...

By my mead

And now I'm not playing my virginal  
I'm wanting your lance and your seed,  
My chastity belt a thing of the past

As we come together  
To joust at last!





**Bill Cushing** is pleased to return to the pages of a Southern Arizona Press anthology and proud to have his most recent book, *Just a Little Cage of Bone*, as part of the Southern Arizona Press collection. He lived in various states, the Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico before returning to college after serving in the Navy and working on ships. Called the “blue collar poet” by peers at the University of Central Florida, Bill earned an MFA in writing from Goddard College. Relocating to California where he resides with his wife and their son, he taught for over 20 years. He’s been published both online and in print, and he facilitates a writing workshop for 9 Bridges, a national writers’ community. Two of his earlier volumes of poetry include *A Former Life*, awarded a Kops-Fetherling International Book Award in 2019, and *Music Speaks*, selected for the 2019 San Gabriel Valley Poetry Month chapbook award and a Bronze Medal in the 2021 New York City Book Awards.

## Château Forte la Rivière Cher

Paying the Loire tribute,  
Cher rises in the northwest,  
then flows across a plateau  
to join the Yevre at Vierzon.

Eighteenth century masons  
built the chateau from, and on,  
pilings of a sixteenth-  
century mill, creating

a castle more squat than wide.  
Torch-lit halls linked galleries,  
ballrooms, the castle fastened  
riverbanks with black-and-white tiles,

witness to minuets, waltzes. Then,  
pawns crossed this checkerboard that  
was then scuffed by the jackboots  
of soldiers of the thousand-year Reich

lasting only twelve — a fraction  
of a Fuehrer's promises.  
Taking flight from Gothic weight,  
the structure offered flight

to its builder's descendants.  
They had no way of knowing,  
these workmen who joined shores with  
stone, the path they left. Placing



this architectural bridge  
on arched columns, they spanned  
generations both backward  
and forward. They did not see

events that were to be  
yet still supplied an avenue  
to freedom for their great-  
grandchildren's grandchildren.



**Rachelle M. Quinco** is an Instructor of professional and science courses for teacher education programs at Batangas State University JPLPC-Malvar. Her scholarly interests cover science education. She is the Program Chairperson of the Bachelor of Secondary Education in the College of Teacher Education and the adviser of Teacher Education Student Council in the same university.

She holds a bachelor's degree in Secondary Education major in Biological Science from the same university and a master's degree in education major in Science and Technology at the Laguna State Polytechnic University San Pablo Campus.

Her goal as a teacher is to instill passion for learning while providing students with an educational setting that is encouraging and positive. She believes that as a teacher, it is her duty to ensure that learning takes place in a safe, open, and supportive environment so that students learn the important aspects of developing and fostering positive relationships with others. She aims to provide the skills and tools necessary for success and foster the individual talents of each student, giving them the confidence to embrace their dreams and make them a reality. Her advocacy in teaching reflects her lifetime commitment that aims towards teaching minds, touching hearts, and transforming lives. Her dedication to teaching is rooted in a lifelong commitment to inspiring and empowering her students. Her goal is to not only stimulate their intellect, but also to connect with them on a personal level and make a positive impact in their lives, fostering transformational growth.

## The Chivalry Code

A traditional code to follow  
Their conduct is truly a bravo  
Associated with medieval institution of knighthood  
Wisdom and actions best described as matured.

Protect others, be service of all times  
Use their might and valor to prevent all crimes  
Extremely disciplined, loyal and generous  
With armor, shield and sword, looking perilous.

Their kind hearts are always their guiding way  
Observing his duty to the Lord, never to betray  
Respecting the weak, children and women  
Those who are harsh and cruel, will never be forgiven.

Live to serve the King and Country, die with valor  
Live one's life that is worthy, always keep one's word of honor  
These trained military attendants are of service day and night  
Hail the medieval knights, let us remember them with delight.





**Regina Chriscel Santos Delute** is an outstanding literature and language teacher with 12 years of expertise in the area. She has spent the last eight years teaching at a college, where she has encouraged many students to fall in love with language and literature. She encourages students to think critically and imaginatively about the materials they study, and her teaching style is very engaging.

Ms. Delute is a researcher in addition to being a teacher. She has published two research related to her field, and both of them have received been published in an international journal. Additionally, Ms. Delute has presented her findings at academic conferences.

Ms. Delute is working on her dissertation on Philippine literature as she pursues her PhD in English. She is interested in critical racial studies, feminist theory, and cultural studies. Ms. Delute likes to read, write, and travel. In her free time, she creates engaging content for her students.

## The Bard's Laments

A princess so lost,  
in the memory of time,  
with the magic of frost,  
wonders if she's alive.

Her recollections faint,  
But the images and colors still quaint.  
It was days of battles when kings fell,  
Her own father fought with might and yell.

A young knight fresh from war arrives,  
quite tired and weary.  
Everwinter soon did arise,  
that's when things became eerie.

Fresh powdered snow,  
chilling winds, formed a girl.  
The princess beckoned him to follow,  
to her castle of iridescent pearl.

His eyes shocked in amazement and awe.  
He can't believe what he sees.  
Twas a place that defied all natural laws.  
A place that simply wasn't meant to be.

The kind princess then offered him shelter.  
And the knight agreed but she vanished and left him alone.  
The knight pondered on what he could offer,  
within his bag was a single pale rose.

"This is perfect!" Said he.  
He sprang up to find and follow.  
He listened to what could be,  
Her voice, singing like the hallowed.

The knight wandered through the castle's rotting halls.  
It felt dark, decrepit, and utterly unwelcoming.  
Stone bricks became grimmer than the outside walls.  
And louder did he hear her singing.

He opened the door,  
where the angelic song came from.  
The knight regretted his choice to explore,  
as he saw the princess melt to kingdom come.

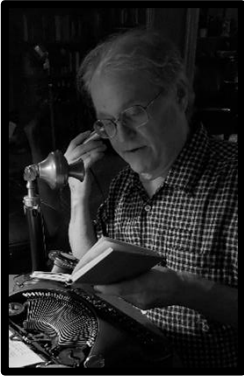
He was lonely, shocked, and utterly mortified.  
Laid out were her bones, tiara, and all.  
The illusion of the castle faded and died.  
He ran out into the courtyard then though the woods, not once  
did he stall.

'Twas a medieval tragedy  
Of battles raged and kingdoms falling,  
Of noble ladies to come and dying,  
Of knights clad in armor and hearts pounding.

But to the victors go the spoils,  
Their castles filled with toasts and noise  
The knights' swords raised no longer  
As they revel in their glory louder and louder

In the corner sat a troubadour,  
In his hand was a lute.  
Thinking of rhymes for the king,  
And the knights' chivalry,  
He captured their hearts with his melody.

The bard's songs remember the day,  
When kingdoms fell and rose to fame,  
But history remembers only those that won  
Not those who were done.



**Mark A. Fisher** is a writer, poet, and playwright living in Tehachapi, California. His poetry has appeared in: *Reliquiae*, *Silver Blade*, *Young Ravens Literary Review*, and many other places. His first chapbook, *drifter*, is available from Amazon. His poem “there are fossils” (originally published in *Silver Blade*) came in second in the 2020 Dwarf Stars Speculative Poetry Competition. His plays have appeared on California stages in Pine Mountain Club, Tehachapi, Bakersfield, and Hayward. He has also won cooking ribbons at the Kern County Fair.



## Queen of the Fay

For the Queen of the Fay, the bard he sang  
to the lilt of flute and the drum's soft bang  
silken lyrics of eternal beauty  
oh did he love, it was all his duty  
he would play and sing till the church bell rang

but the moon forever in the sky did hang  
never in a thousand years did the clock change  
but it was always love and never cruelty  
For the Queen of the Fay

in all of time he never ate nor drank  
until finally into dust he sank  
then She opened Her eyes and drew me  
and I knew Her love too acutely  
unintended I opened my mouth and sang  
For the Queen of the Fay

## Plague

Death is riding on his pale horse  
through villages and through cities  
reaping the sinners and the saints  
in their hovels and palaces

'cross desolate panoramas  
Death is riding on his pale horse  
past hamlets now empty of song  
save that of the ravens calling

while the wealthy huddle away  
and deny that they aught to fear  
Death is riding on his pale horse  
and they cannot flee nor evade

this pestilence burns the landscape  
a cleansing fire of judgment  
that's been coming forevermore  
Death is riding on his pale horse



**Pam Impson** began learning the essentials of writing poetry in the spring of 2020 to express her mixed emotions during lockdown and unemployment. She taught herself by reading the poetry of masters, educational blogs, and connecting with other amateur poets on Facebook. Writing continues to be a trial-and-error process that she practices at the laptop on the dining table.

Eventually, Pam was hired part-time. In her spare hours, she enjoys attending concerts, visiting local San Diego attractions, and working on her writing skills. Her two pre-teen and teenage granddaughters also keep her busy learning about K-pop, anime, and sushi. A few of her poems have been published in Southern Arizona Press anthologies and various other journals.

## Armor

Beneath a plated steel carapace  
Beat the heart of an Englishman.  
Gallant and fierce, like a tiger king,  
Yet vulnerable at the core.

The Englishman gripped his 3-foot sword  
And a 10-pound shield of oak.  
In Yorkshire North, 5,000 men  
Faced off on the cusp of a storm.

With the wind at their backs, the archers fired  
And their arrows pierced masses of men.  
Then came the call for the calvary  
As rain began to pour down.

The Englishman tensed, gripping the reins,  
And he spat and gritted his teeth.  
He spurred his destrier, roared to the wind,  
And lightning shattered the sky.

To the syncopated booming drums,  
And a tirade of thunder above,  
Stallions rode swift through mud and blood  
For cousins who wanted a throne.

Sword to sword, for ten long hours,  
Lances, maces, and spears,  
Clashed against shields and men in steel,  
And met their deadly marks.

The day grew colder, rain became snow,  
Blinding the Englishman  
Blow after blow, he hacked and slashed  
Through the bloody drifts of snow.

At last, he heard victorious horns  
From his side of the battlefield.  
The tiger's heart pounded like a hammer on iron,  
And he gasped for the freezing air.

A vision of hell fell on Towton that day  
Of horses and men, red against white.  
A chorus of moans and withering screams  
Rose up from his comrades and foes.

Orbiting ravens eyed their prizes  
And squawked a cacophony.  
With their talons clenched, they savored the stench,  
Impatient to taste the waste.

Then homeward he rode on his weary black steed,  
As the blizzard railed cold on his steel.  
Carnage and ghosts from that goriest war  
Would visit the Englishman's dreams.

At last, he reached the courtyard gates  
And a groom led his horse to the stables  
Still clad in armor, he staggered through rain  
And flung open the doors to his home.

From the kitchen, the perfume of baking bread,  
Twined with scent of a rose bouquet,  
And lavender hanging from rafter beams  
By a fire in the welcoming hearth.

A whisper of rain tapped the windowpane.  
His carpeted bedchamber beckoned.  
The tiger's heart fluttered soft as a dove's  
As he took off his armor for love

Previous  
anthologies  
from  
Southern  
Arizona  
Press

***The Stars and Moon in the Evening Sky*** is a collection of 120 poetic works crafted by 65 poets from across the globe inspired by the universe around us.

***Dragonflies and Fairies*** is a collection of 72 poetic works crafted by 34 poets from across the globe celebrating the magical and mystical creatures of folklore.

***Ghostly Ghouls and Haunted Happenings*** is a collection of 129 poetic works crafted by 46 poets from across the globe inspired by ghosts, ghouls, and things that go bump in the night.

***The Poppy: A Symbol of Remembrance*** examines the history of the poppy as a flower of remembrance, over 80 poems and lyrics written by World War One poets between 1912 and 1925, and 79 poems written by 21st Century poets from around the globe in remembrance of the fallen heroes from all war of the last century.

***The Wonders of Winter*** is a collection of 120 poetic works crafted by 50 poets from across the globe that celebrate the winter season.

***Love Letters in Poetic Verse*** is a collection of 143 poetic works written and contributed by 58 poets from across the globe celebrating romance and love.

Upcoming  
anthologies  
from  
Southern  
Arizona  
Press



***A Midsummer Night's Dream*** – An anthology of poems celebrating the plot lines of Shakespeare's famous comedy: Weddings, the Woodland, the Realm of Fairyland, Under the Light of the Moon, along with poems about the summer solstice (Litha) and any other fond memories of summers past. Coming in early June 2023.

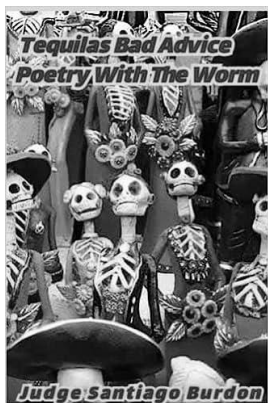
***Beyond the Sand and Sea*** – A gathering of poetic works inspired by the sea, seashore, lighthouses, or anything else associated with life on or near the sea. Coming in early August 2023.

***The Children's Book of Bedtime Verse*** – A collection of poetic works appropriate for reading to children at bedtime. Coming in early October 2023.

***Home for the Holidays*** – A holiday anthology of poetic works celebrating the gathering of family during the fall and winter holidays. Coming in early December 2023.

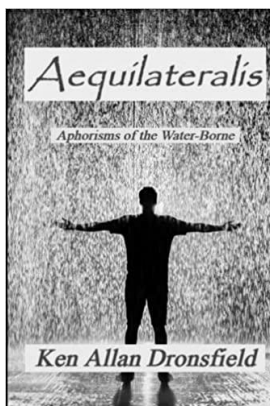
*Poets interested in submitting works for upcoming anthologies are asked to check out our Current Submissions page at: <http://www.southernarizonapress.com/current-submissions/> for more information about each anthology and our process for submission.*

New  
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**Tequila's Bad Advice** - "Judge Santiago Burdon's poetry is a sophisticated slap in the face. The imagery induces you to clear your throat and shift your weight from one side to the other. Judge doesn't waste his words in an attempt to make you comfortable. As a poet he delivers defined grit and structured devastation. He speaks in the language of gasoline fumes and stale cigarette smoke. Always honest and fearless, never apologizing. Know that I am a fan." - S.L. Fleurimont Editor *The Remnant Leaf Journal*

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/1960038168>



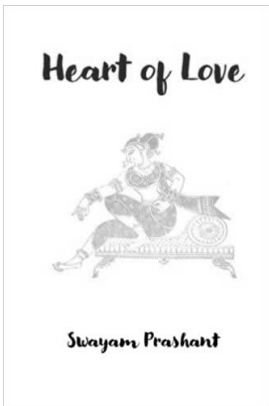
**Aequilateralis** - "Possessing a unique voice, Ken Allan Dronsfield has lured many a reader into his world of word play with his prolific writing on a wide range of subjects, but mainly his poetry relating to nature truly takes my breath away. He has the ability to reach a diverse audience; and he touches the heart and mind of all who enter the pages of his expressive and imagery-filled poetry books. After reading silently several times, I decide to read each poem out loud, words tumbling smoothly from my lips cascading down onto the previous, which then turn the experience into a theatrical realm with marked acts as if a play, enhancing this extremely entertaining book even more so than what the already brilliant command of his language usage had caught our attention with, in the first place." - Leslie De Luca, Canada

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/1960038117>



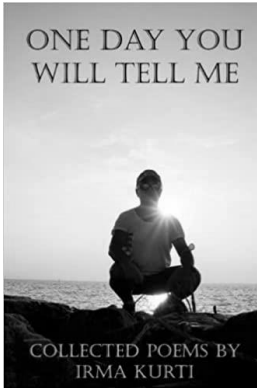
***Poems and Micropoems*** - R.K.Singh is an Indian English poet of international repute. A creative genius of many excellences, he has published 26 collections of poems which are sober, mature, disciplined, and ever refreshing. The poet is sensitive, sensuous, subtle, socially conscious, spiritually guided, and rooted in inner and outer nature, just as his poems are conspicuous for precision, economy, and evocative and suggestive structure, not making many demands on readers. To quote a reviewer, "He is a dangerous truth-teller, with a cool, factual tenderness and humane honesty." His micropoems display the power of plain words in elevating the quotidian experiences to the level of poetry.

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/1960038087>



***Heart of Love*** - The Zimbabwewan novelist Tsitsi Dangaremba says, "I'd try to look for myself in the books I read, but I didn't find me." But in my book *Heart of Love* with 200 very short love poems, I hope every reader will surely find their own image and the reflection of their feelings. They will indubitably enjoy the verses. The famous English romantic poet John Keats says, "If poetry comes not as naturally as the leaves to a tree it had better not come at all." You may say these poems came to me naturally or spontaneously rather. They were first conceived in the womb of my imagination before being given birth to in words with pen and paper.  
- Swayam Prashant

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/1960038141>



***One Day You Will Tell Me*** - Irma Kurti is an Albanian poetess, writer, lyricist, journalist, and translator. She is a naturalized Italian citizen who has been writing since she was a child. Kurti has won numerous literary prizes and awards in Italy and Italian Switzerland. Irma Kurti has published 26 books in Albanian, 20 in Italian, 10 in English, and two in French. She has written about 150 lyrics for adults and children. She is also the translator of 13 books by different authors and of all her own books in Italian and English. Outside of Albania, her books have been published in the United States, Canada, France, Italy, Romania, Turkey, Kosovo, the Philippines, Cameroon, and India. She lives in Bergamo, Italy.

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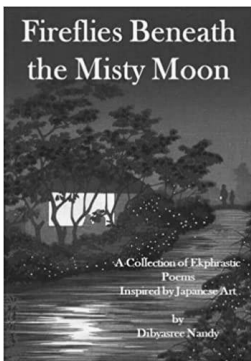
On 15 August 2007, at the age of 48, Denis Murphy was diagnosed with early stages of Parkinson's Disease. ***The Frozen Mask*** refers to the "Freezing Gait," also known as Akinesia – The inability to start movement. Denis wrote this commentary and collection of poems to help express his emotions and feelings and to help readers understand the challenges one faces when living with a degenerative disease. Not only the physical symptoms, but the mental difficulties and the impact on one's self-confidence, self-esteem and the erosion of independence and freedom, we take for granted until lost. But also, the life changing challenges that inspire hope and a better appreciation for all life, in particular those close to us. In addition, Denis has included 15 poems about nature, mythology, life, and death and a short story. The book also contains 5 poems written by his wife, Emer Cloherty, about living with a person with Parkinson's Disease and a Layman's Guide to Parkinson's Disease. This book is a must read for anyone who knows someone who is suffering with Parkinson's Disease.

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/1960038184>



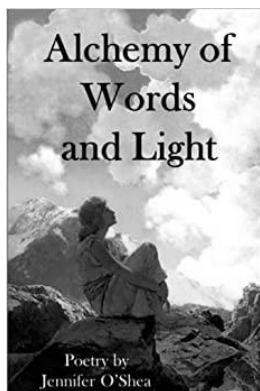
Bill Cushing expresses himself unreservedly in his latest poetry collection, *Just A Little Cage of Bone*. In his poems, he conveys blissful moments, melancholy memories, and heartfelt desires in a concise, accessible, and straightforward manner. For example, in the poem, *A Prayer To Reject Sanctuary*, Cushing writes, "Every scrape and scar, cut and burn, ordained me into who I became." The line is visceral and powerful. Many readers will relate to these brutal yet authentic words. In truth, this poetry collection contains dozens of unvarnished lines that will blow you away. In *Just A Little Cage of Bone*, Bill Cushing has achieved his goal of delivering yet another well-written and engaging work. Check it out! It is well worth it. - Dr. Michael Anthony Ingram (Host and Producer of Quintessential Listening: Poetry Online Radio) [www.qlpor.com](http://www.qlpor.com)

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/1960038109>



*Fireflies Beneath the Misty Moon* is a collection of Ekphrastic poems written by Dibyaree Nandy inspired by the works of Japanese artists Okumura Masanobu, Suzuki Harunobu, Utagawa Kunisada, Yoshitoshi Tsukioka, Kobayashi Kiyochika, Ogata Gekko, Toshikata Mizuno, Settai Komura, Torii Kotondo, and Kondo Shiun.

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/1960038125>



***Alchemy of Words and Light*** - “This gorgeous and whimsical collection of poems by Jennifer O’Shea weaves together themes of love, lifelong companionship, nature, faith, and the duality between longing for heaven and the pull of earth. Each poem, in its own way, reminds us to live our remaining days with abundance by soaking up those fleeting but “holy moments” and treasuring the time we have together with the people we love most. I’ll revisit these poems again and again!” - Julie Jo Severson, Minnesota author of *Secret Twin Cities* and *Oldest Twin Cities* and cocurator of *Here in the Middle: Stories of Love, Loss, and Connection from the Ones Sandwiched in Between*.

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/1960038133>



Minutes move inexorably—into hours, days, years, decades; the infant grows into child, adult, spouse, parent, grandparent, and one generation follows another. Moments, however, can be lifted outside this flow of time—savored, preserved, treasured, transformed into art. The poems in Randy Hale’s ***Still Moments*** do precisely this. Fully acknowledging the unstoppable movement of time—including the death of a child or the lifelong effects of child abuse or the dementia of a parent—the poems yet celebrate family and friendships with all their joys, their anxieties, their grief; nature with its rich variety and changing seasons; and faith that reaches beyond death. In both rhyme and free verse, the poems are accessible, real, solidly detailed, and consistently upbeat, evoking for attentive readers their own timeless moments. - Harry Moore, author of *Bearing the Farm Away* and *Broken & Blended: Love’s Alchemy*

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/1960038176>

**A Wake for  
Josephine**



Kenneth Robbins

*A Wake for Josephine* chronicles through poetry, prose, and drama the impact that the passion-driven murder of a young, unassuming woman has on the community that embraced her. Suggested by the extraordinary actual events surrounding the disappearance and subsequent discovery of the carefully concealed body of an adjunct professor in a small university town, *A Wake for Josephine* poignantly and graphically brings the circumstances of her death into a semblance of focus. All in this tale of woe are given a voice; all are offered a chance for understanding; not all are successful. Though shaped as a collection of poems, monologues, essays, and dramas, it is instead a single piece, each element necessary for the sake of the story being told. *A Wake for Josephine* is Kenneth Robbins' first foray into the world of poetry.

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/1960038192>

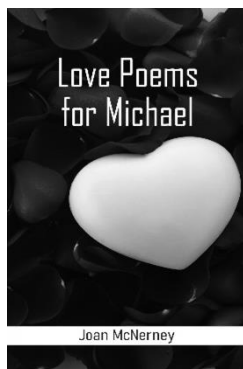
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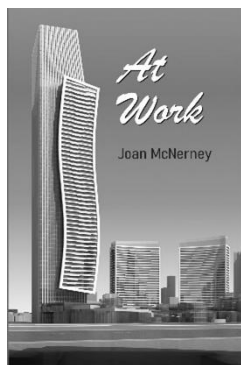


***Love Poems for Michael*** by Joan McNerney

Many reflect on New England with autumn foliage and fierce winters. However, four seasons do include bursting springs and boiling summers. Love is its own season, its own country, its own domain. Let's explore love up north during spring and summer.

<https://www.amazon.com/Love-Poems-Michael-Joan-McNerney/dp/9388319656>

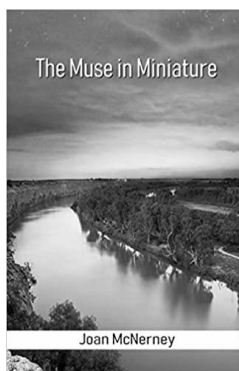
<https://www.cyberwit.net/publications/1602>



***At Work*** by Joan McNerney explores everyday workers. It is unique because each worker, either female or male, receives their own page. These are snapshots of people who are either content with or made unhappy by their daily circumstances. Reading this book is an exploration of human nature at its core.

<https://www.amazon.com/At-Work-Joan-McNerney/dp/8182537835>

<https://www.cyberwit.net/publications/1759>



***The Muse in Miniature*** by Joan McNerney

There is no doubt this poet very aptly traverses an immense range of emotion and experience. Here we find poetry's passion and powerful imagination in rich abundance.

<https://www.amazon.com/Muse-Miniature-Joan-McNerney/dp/9389074509>

<https://www.cyberwit.net/publications/1262>



Marianne Tefft's poetry collection is inspired by the phases of the Moon - waxing, full, waning, and new – ***Full Moon Fire*** traces the journey of love from bright to bittersweet and back again. Born under the Caribbean sky, these 40 "spoken songs" are romantic poems that speak to every heart that has ever loved under the full Moon.

<https://www.amazon.com/Full-Moon-Fire-Spoken-Songs/dp/0228876451>



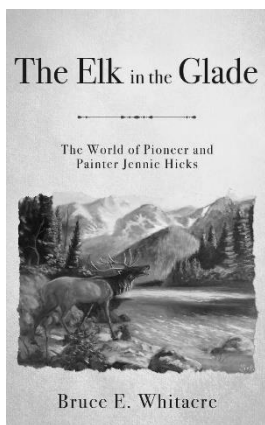
A poetry collection bathed in Caribbean moonlight, ***MOONCHILD*** by Marianne Tefft, celebrates winter, spring, summer, and autumn under the full Moon. With 40 romantic poems for Moon lovers, ***MOONCHILD*** speaks from the heart to all those who love in every season under the bright night sky.

<https://www.amazon.com/Moonchild-Poems-Lovers-Marianne-Tefft/dp/0228882230>



D.C. Buschmann's first poetry collection, ***Nature: Human & Otherwise*** is a selection of poems that highlight the human condition, good and bad, and present them alongside what animals do instinctively as part of their nature.

<https://www.amazon.com/Nature-Human-Otherwise-D-C-Buschmann/dp/B08W7MWVC5>



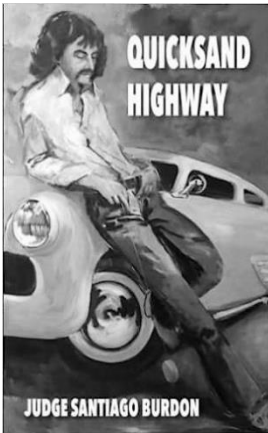
Publishers Weekly BookLife Editors Pick: Based on personal memories and family oral history, *The Elk in the Glade: The World of Pioneer and Painter Jennie Hicks*, Bruce E. Whitacre's debut collection of sixteen poems traces the life and legacy of a family matriarch, his great grandmother, Jennie Hicks. The daughter of American pioneers, she marries a successful farmer, bearing him three girls, seeing them all married, only to outlive him and the farm. Once again alone and facing hardship, she transforms an almost forgotten hobby, her young girl dream, into a brilliant thirty-year career as a successful landscape painter, the future pride of her hometown, Farnam, Nebraska, and an important figure in American art. Lovers of American history, art, and strong female characters will enjoy these lyric chronicles.

<https://www.amazon.com/Elk-Glade-Pioneer-Painter-Jennie/dp/1946116254>



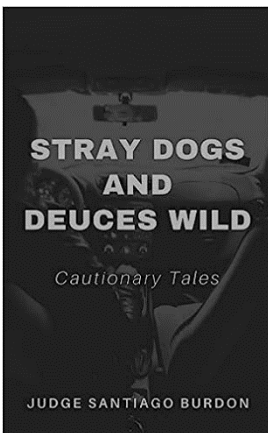
*Not Real Poetry* - "Judge Burdon's poetry is a sophisticated slap in the face. The imagery induces you to clear your throat and shift your weight from one side to the other. Judge doesn't waste his words in an attempt to make you comfortable. As a poet he delivers defined grit and structured devastation." - S.L. Fleurimont Editor The Remnant Leaf Online Journal October 2017

<https://www.amazon.com/Not-Real-Poetry-Santiago-Burdon/dp/1914130286>



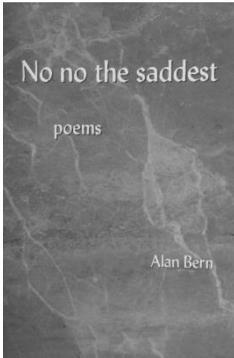
***Quicksand Highway*** - "With tales from skid row, bars, motels and hospitals, *Quicksand Highway* tells tales of drug running, bullet dodging, drug addiction and broken romance with the insight of someone who knows what he is talking about. This collection of short stories explores life in the fast lane, extremely funny and always gritty. Judge's *Quicksand Highway* delivers the goods." - Jesse James Kennedy (Author of *Missouri Homegrown*, *Tijuana Mean*, and *Black Hills Reckoning*.)

<https://www.amazon.com/Quicksand-Highway-Judge-Santiago-Burdon/dp/B09KNGJT6T>



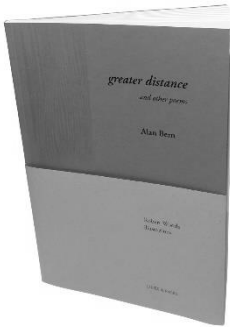
***Stray Dogs and Deuces Wild*** – "When I first read Burdon's work I instinctively realised that here was a man who knew the score. That he was not a fake or dilettante. I could feel a bitter, hard-won experience that lay behind every line. These stories are both beautifully written and capture conclusively the humour, excitement, sadness, and disappointment of a life lived on the edge. I cannot recommend this book highly enough." - Ian Copestick "Burdon presents a highly amusing collection of bohemian stories from the fringe. He finds literary pearls at the bottom of a dark ocean of smut and sin, propelling us into wild and unhinged terrain in a fashion similar to such luminaries as Charles Bukowski, William S. Burroughs, and Denis Johnson. Buy this book today!" —Matt Nagin

<https://www.amazon.com/Stray-Dogs-Deuces-Wild-Cautionary/dp/1655287931>



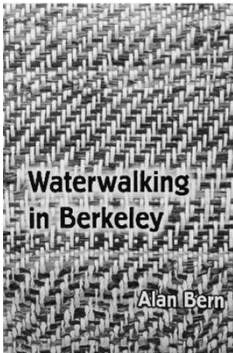
In 1979 Alan Bern's wife gave birth to a healthy son three months after having a ruptured aneurysm that left her permanently brain damaged. She died four years later without ever knowing that she had had a child. **No no the Saddest** is a book about that period. (Fithian Press, 2004)

<https://www.amazon.com/NO-SADDEST-First-Last/dp/1564744337>



Inviting readers to travel with him in **greater distance**, covering the last years of his parents' lives, poet/translator/performer Alan Bern walks a quiet pathway of observed moments. Also included in this volume: adaptations of two broadsides written by Bern and illustrated by artist/fine printer Robert Woods. (Lines & Faces, 2015)

<https://www.amazon.com/GREATER-DISTANCE-illustrated-Robert-Woods/dp/B084VC13TJ>



In Alan Bern's second book of poetry, **Waterwalking in Berkeley**, images and dreams start in the home of the author's heart. Born and raised, and still living, in cosmopolitan, international, and, yes, provincial Berkeley, California, Bern recalls his childhood life in the quiet, but dangerous 1950s and then transports the reader abroad in both time and place, especially to Southern Italy. (Fithian Press, 2007)

<https://www.amazon.com/WATERWALKING-BERKELEY-First-Last/dp/1564744647>