

WE LOVE BOOKS & COMPANY

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A Poetic Journey in the State of New York Capital Region

"I write poetry because I must."

A Guided Tour

by Ray Ortali

"A special issue of *We Love Books & Company* on poetry in the Capital Region? Do you think we could have enough good material for such an issue?" Such was the naive question I asked my friend Mimi Moriarty a few months ago and, after receiving her initial series of suggestions, I enthusiastically responded: "Now I am convinced. A special issue it will be!"

And as I later established contact with dozens of local poets and personally discovered some of the local "poetic venues," I became increasingly amazed and delighted about the richness of "the poetic life" in the Capital Region. That richness is hopefully reflected, for your reading pleasure, in the present issue.

Almost all poets whose names Mimi had suggested are here. Some are well known and have published extensively. Some of their poems included here have been published before, some are brand-new. Other poets are less well known because I had, early on, invited *We Love Books & Company* members to send me a poem, even if they had never been published before. Several of them did and you'll read their work as well. In which order? The alphabetical order (the only non-judgmental order) of course! **28 poems, by 18 different poets. All different, and all exciting I believe.**

But this issue is not just an anthology. it's also a poet's tool kit of sorts. Peruse the last 3 pages (10 to 13), and get answers to a myriad of questions: Why is poetry often published in chapbooks today? Could I make a chapbook myself? (Yes) Too hard! Who could help me? (Leah Maines, M.D. Friedman, Judith Prest or Jessica Hazleton) Where can I listen to poetry, and perhaps read my own poems? (Therese Broderick has 14 suggestions for you.) Why is *Caffe Lena* so famous? (Carol Graser tells you why.) Where else can I go to meet other poets? (Dan Wilcox has all the answers!)

Enjoy the tour! And if you do, please tell us all about it, poets and publisher alike, OK?

A Poet's Perspective

by Mimi Moriarty

Let me tell you a story. I spent a week in Ireland at a poetry workshop with Billy Collins, who had recently been named *Poet Laureate* of the US. It was a thrilling week, and at the same time, a challenging week because the poets sitting around the table were much more advanced and experienced than myself. I returned from that workshop determined to pursue the craft of poetry, and shortly thereafter enrolled in an MFA program at Goddard College in Vermont. You don't need an MFA to be a great poet, but I realized that there was so much I didn't know. For me, that was the road to be traveled.

That road has led me to a vibrant and diverse poetry community in the Albany area. I feel blessed to be part of that community and to call so many poets my friends. The talent and commitment in this community are astounding: from the grinding schedule of open mics and workshops to the writing groups who gently guide fledgling poets, to the academic programs offered, and to the birthing of ever-new opportunities for poets and their desire to be heard.

I want to thank Ray Ortali for this issue devoted to poetry. My contributions were small, really, just a recommendation of poets to contact. He is an enthusiastic, brilliant champion of all things related to the written word. Most difficult were the choices. He had his own list, I had mine, and together I believe these poets represent a variety of styles, points of view, and experience. If this issue could have been expanded to include all of my choices, we would have had a tome of historic proportions!

Alan Catlin

Self Portrait as the Devil's Disciple

Out of time and place,
in his bedroom, a still

life of empty bottles,
spilled wine and turpentine,

swabs of paint left
on wood floors like

trails of blood leading
to a landscape with rain,

leading to a rutted highway
of one way signs that lead

to a forest scene with
two figures: an undertaker

and his ghost.

Prisoners Exercising

after Vincent

The walls contain them,
men whose lives and work

are defined by defeat,
no words can express.

Captured in tight brush
strokes, they walk, bent

figures assailed by a failing
light, endlessly pacing in exact

circles, with no place to go.

Alan Catlin says: Over the years, I was one of the original readers at the epic 24 Hour *Reading Against the End of the World*, read, later, for the same host, at the Q, was an original feature reader for *Albany Poets Word Fest* and an annual participant ever since, and have been a semi-regular at Dan Wilcox's Third Thursday readings, in all four venues, was a regular at the *Poet's Speak Loud* at the Lark, a semi-regular at Caffe Lena, weather permitting, I take the bus, and others such as Don Levy's reading at the *Pride Center*. In recent years I have been a two time board member of *The Hudson Valley Writer's Guild* and have been co-coordinator of the Schenectady Public Library's Community of Writers, which the Guild co-sponsors.

Valley Writer's Guild and have been co-coordinator of the Schenectady Public Library's *Community of Writers*, which the *Guild* co-sponsors. My public activities increased after I retired from my unchosen profession as a bartender which provided enough thrills and chills, sometimes known as material, to last two lifetimes.

A good deal of my published works reflects my time in the so-called service industry, but just as much, in recent years, reflects close to eight years of college studies and lifetime of reading literature of all types. Presently, I am editing the online poetry journal *misfitmagazine.net*. The title reflects the role of the artist and the editor in relationship with his work.

I have published over 50 books, depending upon what you count as books. Some are pamphlets, none of them are e-books. Most are available at Amazon. *Drunks and Disorderly* is a beautiful trade sized paperback. *Alien Nation* is my most recent book length poetry collection. The other full length book is *Schenectady Chainsaw Massacre*, the biggest collection of all, both physically and contents wise. And so it goes. You can reach Alan at thecatlins@msn.com.

Christina Chant

Snowpeas

Snowpea perfume gently wafts under
the death mask of winter. Coyly coaxing,
tendriled promises heave March's pall,
breach snow sheaths and bitter hearts,
atrophied.

In lapsed light, airless, waterless, craven,
tender petals flirt with April breezes,
spilling scent: newborn, untainted, nubile,
awakening memory of watermelon
juices sating the cracks of winter lips,
leaving sticky kisses on papery skin.
Snowpea, the Lolita of legumes,
Clings and strives stubbornly towards
the sun.

Christina Chant says: I have played with poetry all my life: as a passionate teenager, I impaled my rhymes on patient parent ears, as a teacher used my classroom as a poetic bully pulpit, and have mined my experiences as a mother into exploring and refining my poetry. You can reach Christina at christen.chant@gmail.com.

Ann Cockcroft

A Taste of Stars

Ah, be warm winter;
Warm enfolding earth enclose me.
Slow motion snow, you flow everywhere
Swept up, blown down, whirled round and round.
Hold cold in your individual crystal star.
Touch and melt, spill in warmth on my hand,
Run down that I might lick you,
Taste with tongue a star.

Unlocked Time

Damp and cool the day dawns
And the sun, swollen, contracts
Renewed, we pull on our old shoes.
The familiar reoccurs
While ecstasy crouches
In unlocked time
One minute ahead.

Ann Cockcroft says: I describe myself as *aide de camp* of my husband Luke Rhinehart on most of his novels and sometimes screenplays. However, I have written several romances and one book of poems, self-published many years ago. I have now begun to work on a second volume of poems, new and old, this time joining with my husband. Only a few of those poems have appeared, and only in his book *The Book of the Die* and his novel *White Wind, Black Rider*. My new book is Luke's idea. I think it's a well conceived plan to keep me locked and out of his study! *You can reach Ann at Annmusing@taconic.net.*

Carol Graser

Snow on the Roof

In the depths of winter
the snow finally became an icicle
Her lifelong dream, to grow by melting
to be clear in her intentions

to stretch thinly from a fat start
wield a formidable spike
to overhang the bareheaded
walking in and out of doors

and silently threaten

In the deep freeze of winter
she perched and hung heavily
gusty winds trembled her length
Complacent in her mass she blinked

slowly, blank with certainty. Everything
would happen: the bright shine

and steady drip, the slow loosening
the sun's hot gaze, her perfect

daring leap, the jarring crash

Carol Graser says: Poetry at Caffe Lena has always happened...*Continue reading on page 13.* *You can reach Carol at graser.carol@gmail.com.*

Anne Hohenstein

Bottle of Milk

A rich man can imagine
only cream. He forgets five things:

Put some butter on your head,
if you want sweet dreams.

Actions are incontinent,
even when withheld.

Find the smallest needle
for the biggest thread, or else.

Singers who cannot dance
are in the majority.

If your heart is a tuba,
there will be flowers.

Hell of a View of Heaven

When purple thistle falls and burdocks tumble,
when even apple trees are cut for corn,
row after hundredth row of it,
we cannot argue with fact:
a faded fence is still a fence,
a heart deprived of oxygen fails,
herons flock alone to fish, and a man
can get in trouble standing still, if he wishes.
And so we spin on this green dot, alive
in the endless black and blue of space
hot in cold around us, and yet, maples turn
and their sap rises, and a mother's love
is buried, knowing it was not her mother's work,
but her heart that is covered in black dirt, beneath
a coffin of nothing in the end, at the start, ever.

Anne Hohenstein says: I write poems because I must. I was selected to participate in the Fall 2011 New York State *Writers Institute Community Writers Workshop in Poetry* and enjoyed the rigor it brought. Under a pen name (and back when the Earth was burning), I and another authored a small chapbook of poems entitled *Stick This in Your Medicine Chest*, and my work has appeared in various small press print and on-line publications over the years (translations from the Catalan and Spanish, as well as my own poems).

Beyond that, I simply write every day and send poems to a very small group of patient readers. *You can reach Anne at vocesnovistas@gmail.com.*

Cecele Kraus

Homework

Side by side at the kitchen table Mother wrote numbers for my sister Anna to copy—three plus two, four plus one.

You know the answer, Anna, Mother chided. We just did that yesterday. That's good, Anna. Look, Cecele, Anna got an entire row right. Isn't she smart?

No, I'm not, Anna protested.

Mother wrote out words and numbers for her in a tablet with dotted and solid lines as if one day Anna would learn how to spell,

as if good penmanship would undo Mother's screams for relief from labor pain, as if she could refuse that second anesthesia, make her baby pink instead of blue, reverse the damage to Anna's brain.

Mother wrote, *Good!*, across Anna's drawing of a never-changing landscape—green yard covering the bottom third of the page, square house with a door, rectangular windows, a small chimney puffing smoke,

an oval cloud endlessly hovering in a blue sky.

Scant Shadowed

Cheaha Mountain spans loblolly-pines, cut-over farmland vast and vacant. A rock lodge overlooks ledges rising low—vessels on a flat sea—just miles from my father's homeplace. Walk the trails. Dry yellow leaves crunch. The smell of depression era workers, hungry, penetrates. Feel in your pit the gnaw. Go deeper beyond the handicapped ramp. Hear the train's wail from the valley transporting farmboys to Birmingham's steel mills. On this same train my mother nursed me as we headed west and away from her mother, sisters, and her boy who died. Deeper yet, hear the leave-takings of Creeks forced off lands by immigrants too poor to own slaves—hear the understory, the slight sound of May buds opening.

Cecele Kraus says: I worked as psychotherapist for over 30 years in Manhattan, suburban New Jersey, and rural New York. Place is important in my writing. Where we live and how societal forces shape us is fascinating to me. I am currently working on a collection of essays and prose poems in which place plays a large role.

My chapbook *Harmonica* (March 2014) was published by *Liquid Light Press*. It truly was a collaboration. It is available through Amazon as an e-book and is placed on other sites for global distribution.

A previous chapbook, *Tuscaloosa Bypass* (2012) was published by *Finishing Line Press*, a press familiar to many Hudson Valley poets. It was my first acceptance and I was deliriously happy.

In 2009, I self-published a small set of poems entitled *Dreaming Barranquilla*. The editor at *Troy Book Makers* was wonderful to work with and made the experience so much fun. The finished product still looks great (I think!). You can reach Cecele at cecelekraus@gmail.com

Joan McNerney

December

Winds toss foliage in air.
Birds bend against frost
their wings catching the
last sunlight.

In cosmic dance snowflakes
light up evening.
Diminutive
galaxies circling abandoned gardens.

We hunch our shoulders with winter.
Our shadows are long now.

Joan McNerney says: Perhaps it is because I live near the Hudson River or because of asthma, but I **hate** hot, sticky weather. It is very humid here and the only things I enjoy about summer are the village pool and availability of fresh fruit. Well, I am fond of birds and green trees too.

But I really love winter, snow, long black nights. Now it is time to relax with hot tea and read, read, read. I am also a computer potato and enjoy many blogs and websites, especially those pertaining to poetry. It is during winter that life begins...deep underground...growing slowly, secretively like a poem shrouded in mystery. You can reach Joan at poetryjoan@statetel.com

Mimi Moriarty

The Eulogy You Deserved

No, I would never have mentioned your coffee
pot with its bent handle, scorched bottom
the mud you brewed by boiling grounds
the predictable menu of potatoes
and turkey breast on Sunday
afternoons

nor would I have mentioned the Jim Beam
the desperate lie to cover your late age
pregnancy so that no one knows now
or will ever know how old you were
when you bore your daughter
how old you were when we
bore your coffin.

If I had been standing at the stained pulpit
I would have mentioned instead the way
you resisted your last breath, fighting
it off with the will of legions,
the fear of leaving behind
absent children, thimbles
of regret and dismay

and the secret you had been carrying
all those years, childhood terror
held in place by mute sisters
why your brother left home
at sixteen, how he died.

I would not have mentioned your confession
only alluded to your sorrow, the way your
voice quavered when you questioned
a heaven where your brother might
be lurking, the irony of meeting
him again on the steps
wondering how he
got there in the
first place.

Four Marines

I.

starched shirt, pants with sharp creases,
wears his clothes like armament,
opens a window to my father's
folded story, if you do not speak it
the war will be forgotten,
the nation allows you to forget it,
the good war is held like a grudge
to the vest

II.

shares a curious incident, he has never
told this story, his wife and son are in
the audience, but he has never told this
story, he aims, follows the gook in his site,
never shoots, lets him pass by, a ghost in
rubber sandals, he is a sniper

III.

quiet as a lullaby, stirring his memory
about a farmer with a shovel, how Iraqi
farmers
work at night to avoid the heat, how you don't
know if they are digging their crops or digging
holes for mines

IV.

paces the stage, the one with the most kills,
doing penance in public, he signed off
in the name of intelligence, he signed off
bunkers that were residences, bunkers
that were schools, he still wants to fight
terrorism, but knows how flawed
intelligence can be, he has killed
enough for all of us

Mimi Moriarty says: These two poems reflect two of the themes that recur in my work: war and family. "Four Marines" was written after listening to four men recount their experiences in four different arenas of war. I believe this event was held at Cap Rep. "The Eulogy You Deserve" is an attempt to honor the memory of one of the elders of my family, and at the same time respect the complicated and oftentimes tortured truths held in secret until the end. Neither of these poems has been published before. *You can reach Mimi Moriarty at winterview@earthlink.net*

Leslie Neustadt

Listen, Please Listen

Sweet crimson and golden marrow,
birthplace of my blood,
let light suffuse your spongy core.
Call upon Kali to banish the invaders
who have infiltrated my bones.
Nurture the tender chrysalis
of each stem cell so it can
bloom into a butterfly.
Nourish the poets of red
who bring breath to my body.
Strengthen the white coated warriors
who defend me from harm.
Be open to miracles.

Bearing Fruit

Sometimes truth
has sharp edges
that pierce my skin.
The lullaby of lies I've sung,
a hand me down coat
that no longer fits.
Sometimes truth bubbles up
like a spring. Bloody water
no white wash can clean.
Then it is time to burst
like a pomegranate
and spill my ruby seeds.
Only then can I reclaim
the sun's kiss and let
the juice of blood oranges
flow from my lips.

Leslie Neustadt says: While my transition from an Assistant Attorney General to a poet, writer and collage artist was not purely volitional, it has allowed me to explore parts of myself that were underdeveloped before my diagnosis with an incurable, albeit indolent form of blood cancer and other chronic illnesses. Writing poetry and working with visual images has been an incredible healing, transformative experience. I could now speak openly about my struggles as an incest survivor. And it was a groundbreaking moment when I decided to donate the entire purchase price of each book to various non-for-profits. In addition to doing readings, I occasionally speak and give workshops. My book *Bearing Fruit - A Poetic Journey* (April 2014), dedicated to the memory of my beloved sister Laurie, was published by *Spirit Wind Books* and is available at Amazon. You can reach Leslie Neustadt at lesbn96317@aol.com.

Will Nixon

Sunday Afternoons the River Smelled like Engines

I slipped through the pier fence hidden behind the green copper terminal where commuter trains sat vacant on Sundays. Tempering all week, I had no other time to plan out my novel, *Hoboken Rising*. For inspiration, I brought my cache of \$1 paperbacks from Hoboken Vintage Comics, where someone had unloaded college staples: Sartre, Celine, Brecht, *Gravity's Rainbow*, classics I'd skipped, too busy majoring in misery over girlfriends. Finally serious about literature, I piled old dock ropes into a chair & held pages firm against wind that tossed gulls on wingtips dipped in black ink. I read the first line but not for the first time: "A screaming comes across the sky." What was it about Pynchon's masterpiece? All summer, I couldn't get past his octopus with Pavlovian training. My attention drifted to washed up buoys trapped in pier piling eddies, then the green Fuji blimp nosing overhead, a sky whale bound for Newark. I stood up & waved like an airport runway jockey, pretending to redirect the beast to Bayonne. My wife asked why didn't I read fun books instead. "Let's go together," I replied. "I'll read Keats to your nipples." But Sunday afternoons she volunteered at the church shelter, baking lasagna for forty. "Literature's no substitute for helping others," she told me. But she hadn't read what I'd write. "Sunday afternoons the river smelled like engines," was my first line. The rest could be anything.

Will Nixon says: Will Nixon does not like to speak about himself, so others have to do it for him. He grew up in the Connecticut suburbs, spent his young adulthood in Hoboken and Manhattan, then moved to a Catskills log cabin in 1996 complete with a wood stove and mice. For years, he wrote environmental journalism, then turned to poetry and personal essays. His work has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize and listed in *Best American Essays 2004*. He now lives in Woodstock, NY with a wall thermostat for heat, but still can't get rid of the mice.

Three of his books are available on Amazon. *Walking Woodstock, Journeys into the Wild Heart of America's Most Famous Small Town*, with Michael Perkins, Kindle edition, 2012. *Love in the City of Grudges*, paperback, 2010, and *My Late Mother as a Ruffed Grouse*, paperback, 2008. You can reach Will Nixon at will@willnixon.com.

Catherine Norr

Components

There's the dried skeleton of a sawtooth palm stuck in the fence behind late-bloomers.

This jagged spine of palm, memento from New Orleans' lakeside, like those

across from my childhood home, curves like the jaw and teeth of great fish.

In my unconscious, great fish swim in dark depths, surface, dive deep again.

Catherine Norr says: I have been a French teacher, restaurateur, musician and now focus on writing, particularly poetry. I host a poetry reading series the second Wednesday of the month at Arthur's Market, 32 N' Ferry St, Schenectady, NY 12305. My poetry has been published in a number of journals and in a chapbook, *Return to Ground* (2014), by *Finishing Line Press* and is available at Amazon. You can reach Catherine Norr at catherine.norr2@gmail.com.

Ted Phelps

Still There

At the wake
the body lies out long
eyes pressed
dressed for dinner

The shruti fills the air
with all that he can think
full with all that was and
what will be

And lying just awake and full
he does not hear the guests
nor know yet anymore than they
how one he is and they
in the pool that they together
make

Mowing on Sunday

Here on my backyard deck
somewhere on the coastal swath
cleansed of the old time stories
I hear them break the placid
Sunday air
Mowing

Yet hear how many
as in their fathers' time
Hold back their labors until noon
Have they stood there long
at the backyard door
holding the pull cord
Listening for the midday bells

Bells that peel back the pall
That held god's ghost in town this morning
Bells that let it out like a cloud of bats
so it might sleep in the distant trees
and never have to see them
bent so hard at their moaning machines
Cutting

Ted Phelps says: I write poems mostly that come knocking at the door looking for a place to stay for the night. I have meditated since 1970 and teach a culturally neutral method I designed called Natural Meditation detailed in my online course and book, *A Course in Meditation*. Many of my poems, as for many of us, come out of meditative awareness. Here, "Mowing on Sunday" brings an image of the god of emptied churches, no longer wanting to see us. "Still There" brings a vision of one who has just died, filled yet silent, as in meditation, bathed in the sound of a Shruti box. *You can reach Ted at phelpstk@gmail.com.*

Judith Prest

November Garden

nothing standing but the kale
frost sweetened, ready to pick
all else stripped to stems
glistening under cold rain
something starts
runs through my blood
out my feet into
chilled clay

something about the resonant
wet silence of November gardens
stirs, tingles
the nerves of memory

something beyond collapsed
tomatoes, blackened basil
the dried cornstalks
making their last stand
against knife edged wind
something...

Judith Press says: Two of my passions are appreciating the natural world - all that grows, flies, swims or walks on the planet, and the cycles of the seasons and nurturing my own and others' creative spirits. (Nature does this for me, as well as being in the company of other writers/artists). I wrote "*November Garden*" at one of June Gould's Advanced Poetry Workshops - we gathered in a retreat center in Connecticut, and wrote for three days. This poem reflects my connection with the natural world as well as the magic that comes when I am writing in community with other poets! I am my own publisher. I started *Spirit Wind Books* in 1998...*Read about Judith's publishing company on page 12. You can reach her at jeprest@aol.com.*

Luke Rhinehart

From Shore

The light on water winks
On each small rise,
The winking ripples like a dance
Of evanescent stars drowning,
Then rising to wink again.

Letting Go

I am old now.
Illusions are losing their grip.
They are dropping off me like leaves
From an autumn tree.

How nice.

Luke Rhinehart says (actually, Anne Cockcroft, his wife says): As Luke declines to write about himself, out of modesty or, dare we mention it, ego, or worse, sheer laziness, we (I) give you permission to say anything that comes to you. He will have earned any of it, for sure, having lived large **large** most of his adult life and achieved much and still going strong. Therefore I (Ray) am now continuing: As many of you will remember, Luke was at the heart of the first issue of *We Love Books & Company e-Magazine*. That's because he is the internationally acclaimed author of *The Dice Man* (1971), in which bored psychiatrist Luke Rhinehart is forever changed when he finds religion through a simple roll of the dice, thus turning his life—and the world—on its head. Luke has published seven other novels and has just finished another one, a science fiction satire. In the same issue of the magazine, you have read the first chapter of *Our Autobiographies*, that begins as follows: One trouble with wives is that they have ideas of their own. My wife Ann has insisted for fifty years on having ideas on their own. So inconvenient. *You can reach Luke at lukec@taconic.net*

Sharon Stenson

Roadkill

An instant of inattention,
a collapsing of the will.
A deer, crossing over
from woods to stubbled field
is blinded, frozen in place
by the headlights of the car.

My hands, light upon the wheel.
I could let go. Things at the side
of the road, fallen deer, smashed rabbits
rocks that catch the light and shine,
tufts of dry grass. The world has made

a place for them and when they are gone,
the air closes around, and what was there
is there always. Becomes.

Becomes. What kills you
becomes your life. The self, whole,
at the moment of splintering.
From the maggot in the rotting rabbit's belly
the fly rises into the sun.

Look, see how the light
refracted through that lucent wing,
becomes a paradise.

Sharon Stenson says: My poetry has been published in many literary anthologies. I plan on having a book in late winter or early spring of this year. I am also a playwright. My play *Cantata for Two Voice and Horn* was presented this year in several venues and was selected for the playwrights' showcase which is an annual event of *Albany Civic Theater*. I am a musician, so I try to keep the musicality of words in my poetry. Many of my poems deal with looking behind the façade and the ability of the human spirit to recover from failure and loss. *You can reach Sharon at [sstenson@nycap.rr.com](mailto:ssenson@nycap.rr.com)*.

Denie Whalen

October Morning

open the door,
listen as the earth settles
after the hard rain and wind
that woke me at three am

moisture dripping from the trees
and the gutter line
sinking deep into the earth
creating a kind of sizzle
in the air as the cars pass by

yet the air is lovely, cool and fresh
planes rumble overhead
geese are flying

my daughter drives her husband to new york city
another station on their journey

a train sounds in the distance

a friend writes he is in Colby, Kansas
"huge moon rising in the vast wide open"

travelers all finding reasons to continue

Do you see them?
standing on the edge of the unfamiliar
breathing deeply the sweet air

moon poem

a cow jumped over
...and landed elsewhere
amazed ...astonished really
at her nimbleness
so unexpected
so not cow
those heavy udders would suggest earth boundedness
yet miracles happen
some find a way to
transcend the ordinary
and make the leap of faith
over the moon

Denie Whalen says: I enjoy bringing the “low skill-high sensitivity” methods of expressive arts to others who have never experienced the joy of writing a poem and are convinced they cannot. It may not be correct to call everyone a poet or a dancer or a painter, but everyone can create a poem and a painting and move like a dancer. Plutarch once said that “painting is silent poetry and poetry is painting that speaks.

Expressive Arts is a field of practice and a way to enter art making, created in the 70's as a way to open the pleasure and transformation inherent in all art making to everyone, regardless of "talent" and training. We acknowledge the sensory foundation of all the arts and often move from one form to another; for example I may create a painting and then respond to the painting with words that then find their way into poetry. We are interested in finding a form for our lived experience and see the art work and the process of making as a way to deepen, broaden and explore our capacity to live life to the fullest. In the theory that supports this approach, poetry is seen as the crystallization of meaning. Denie is Director of *New York Expressive Arts*, www.newyorkexpressivearts.com. You can reach her at denie@newyorkexpressivearts.com.

Dan Wilcox

Medicine Buddha
(*Bhaishajya-guru-buddha*)

This is not the way he told it
the guru, scholar behind the counter
but it meant the same thing —
I said it's like:

Nuns in a taxi, who take out
their beads when the cab
gets a flat. The driver
gets out to change the tire.

This mantra I can't pronounce
is Mary Poppins' sugar
her umbrella useless
without belief.

Birthday Poem - 2014

Once again, this year I return
to the beach, to last year's beach
to the ocean, to this City of Fish.
A late year now for me, I return
this year with you, where we began
last year, returning for this Birthday
like the tide & Moon phases to walk
the beach again in Winter, again.

Dan Wilcox says: If you are a poet living in the Capital Region of Upstate New York, you have a variety of literary events and resources available to you each month... *Continue reading on page 13. You can reach Dan at dwlcx@earthlink.net.*

Caleb Wistar

Status Quo Man

Of course, I go to work.
In my car, no passengers.
In front flows a wave:
Driver, car, no passengers
Driver, car, no passengers.

And when I go home at night
Of course I behave myself.
I watch TV, see more and more;
Need more and more of what I see.
Finding ways to feed those needs,
Of course I go to work.

Caleb Wistar says: I am Director of the *Bureau of Workforce Incentives and Investment* in the New York State Department of Health. In my spare time I write poetry, which I have published over the years in several notable but small publications, including *Pilgrimage* (Highlands, NC) and *Pen and Ink* (Ann Arbor MI). You can reach Caleb at caleb.wistar@health.ny.gov

*The poet's tools?
Read about them
on the next 4 pages.*

What is poetry?

Poetry is an art form in which human language is used for its aesthetic qualities in addition to, or instead of, its notional and semantic content. It is often created from the need to escape the logical, as well as expressing feelings and other expressions in a tight, condensed manner (*Wikipedia*).

When were chapbooks created?

A chapbook was an early type of popular literature printed in Europe as early as the 16th century. Almanacs, folk tales, satire, cookbooks, astrology, political and religious tracts were often published as chapbooks. The corresponding French and German terms are *Bibliothèque bleue* (blue book) and *Volksbuch*, respectively.

Why is poetry often published in chapbooks today?

Therese Broderick, a Capital Region poet, outlines the following 7 reasons:

- A. Small book of poems -- or one longish poem -- written by a single author
- B. The poems are linked by theme; they cohere more tightly than other poetry collections
- C. Made from sheets of 8x11 paper folded to create a page size of 5x8
- D. Pages are stapled or hand-sewn (not perfect-bound). That is, a chapbook, by definition, lacks a book spine.
- E. Sold hand-to-hand by the author, for about \$4 to \$12
- F. The contents can be read by the reader in one sitting
- G. The chapbook author honors, somehow, the centuries-old tradition of chapbook pamphlets & tracts & gossip: it's counter-culture, subversive of major commercial publishers, experimental, inexpensive, innovative, personalized.

Could I make a chapbook myself?

Therese Broderick says yes, and even provides us with the following templates:

Here are step-by-step instructions for making a chapbook.

http://www.pw.org/content/diy_how_make_saddlestitched_chapbook

Here's how to fold a sheet into small pages, once they are printed with poems.

<http://thechapbookreview.wordpress.com/2010/03/01/149/>

Too hard! Who else could do it for me?

Leah Maines at *Finishing Line Press*

M. D. Friedman at *Liquid Light Press*

Judith Prest at *Spirit Wind Studio*

Jessika Hazelton at *The Troy Books Makers*

Turn to

next page for details.

Finishing Line Press

Leah Maines, Publisher

Finishing Line Press, www.finishinglinepress.com, is located in Georgetown, in the Bluegrass region of Central Kentucky. Since Leah Maines took over as a publisher in 2001, she has published over 100 poetry chapbooks per year. **When asked about e-chapbooks**, she revealed that *Finishing Line Press* "has just ventured into publishing e-chapbooks companions to our paper chapbooks editions. We have found that, so far, readers still prefer the paper version. I suspect it's because poets tend to do public readings, and readers enjoy buying signed copies of the collections. This also allows readers/listeners to engage with the poet and show support of the poetry. I believe that both will coexist but the formatting for e-chapbook poetry can be somewhat challenging and therefore expensive to typeset. We have found that, so far, most of the demand for e-chapbooks comes when the collection is used as a classroom text."

In an interview with Jendi Reiter, Leah Maines added: "**The chapbook is where you introduce the poems and prepare them.** Then you move on to the bigger collection. Our average press run is 500. Several are 1,000. Our books stay in print until they sell out and we have an option to do reprints." She then adds: "**Don't wait for your publisher to promote you!** Have a web site. Join poetry groups. Do readings. Join *Facebook*. When you have gigs, send out press releases to your local newspapers."

Finally, when asked about poets who prefer to create and **publish their chapbooks themselves at home**, she is enthusiastic: "I think it's a wonderful idea, but please make sure to use high quality paper, and sew the binding —make it look as lovely as it reads."

She has lived in Japan, where she studied and researched classical Japanese poetry, and also in England and Ireland. She is an ordained pastor/chaplain for hospital/hospice, and has published several books with poets with terminal illnesses. You can reach Leah Maines at leahmaines@aol.com or Christen Kinkaid, Senior Editor, at flpbookstore@aol.com

Liquid Light Press

Markiah Friedman, Executive Editor

I started *Liquid Light Press*, www.liquidpress.com, one year ago to fill what I found to be a void in contemporary small press poetry publication. I had been publishing e-books, audio and video poetry through the popular *Internet Poets' Cooperative* web site since 2001 and, with all the poets I knew, I found the work that appealed the most to me was **the poetry "that speaks to the heart."**

Even though this type of poetry was a favorite at the open readings I often attended, it was, according to my poet friends, difficult to get published. It seems the poetry establishment generally preferred to publish poetry that is more scholarly, academic, and clever (poetry that speaks to the head) over poetry that is transformational and attempts to convey the inner experiences difficult to express in linear vocabulary (poetry that speaks to the heart). Even though small presses were aplenty, presses that published just poetry in store quality, unlimited chapbook editions in both print and e-book formats with global distribution were a rarity. This is the niche I am attempting to fill with *Liquid Light Press*."

I started the *Poets' Co-op* in 2001 to capitalize on the synergy of what was then the beginnings of e-publishing. All the poets who have taken advantage of this free service offer **a manuscript for free distribution**. These are all protected pdf format e-books. There is no charge to submit to the *Poets' Co-op* and no money is collected from the publication, but the web site gets over 1 million hits a year and thousands of people have read my work there, although only hundreds have purchased LLP publications. We publish e-books for sale in all current platforms and online stores. Although the focus of LLP is very narrow, the *Poets' Co-op* publishes any poetry manuscripts of any length I find interesting.

We do create e-books for all of paper books at LLP. I have no idea about the future of ebook formats, but wish they would settle on just one format for all readers. My guess is that will eventually be all e-pub. You can reach Markiah Friedman at editor@liquidlightpress.com

Spirit Wind Studio

Judith Prest, Publisher

I started *Spirit Wind Books* in 1998 when I published my first collection of poetry, *Sailing on Spirit Wind: Midlife Reflections*, which was followed by *Late Day Light* in 2011. However, I did my two chapbooks, *The Geography of Loss* and *Wildwoman's Scrapbook*, on my computer and printed them on the "Office Max" press, and did not give them an ISBN. Then, after studying Expressive Arts for a number of years, I unofficially **changed the name to Spirit Wind Studio** to reflect my involvement with all the arts. Poetry is still "my first art," and even though I have had my work published in 6 or 7 anthologies and a handful of literary journals, I have found that, if I want to publish a collection, I have to do it myself.

Way back in 1998, I had purchased 10 ISBN numbers, which I have shared over the years with a few of my writing teachers and friends. Judi Beach, one of my favorite teachers and a truly gifted poet, published *How Far Light Must Travel* in 2007 using one of my ISBN numbers. And Leslie Neustadt published *Bearing Fruit* this year under *Spirit Wind Studio*. Does that make me a publisher? I don't know, but I know that I am committed to getting good poetry out there however I can do it.

www.spiritwindartcenter.com Read Judith's poems on page 7. You can reach her at jeprest@aol.com

The Troy Book Makers

Jessika Hazelton, Manager

We have done a number of full length poetry books as well as chapbooks. As "book makers," we do put the printed page first --and while **we have not done any e-chapbook at this time**, the potential to do so is certainly there. I think the really charming thing about chapbooks is how easily they can pass from poet to reader. It's something easy to carry and hold, to take with you to read and reflect on at any time.

We of course work with Amazon --it is very difficult for writers to make their way without it these days. But our company was founded by independent bookstore owners, so we try to honor that as much as possible.

We are happy to make listings and process *Amazon* sales; we do it all in-house, with a dedicated staff member to maintain our inventory and send the books out. That's about the extent of our relationship with *Amazon* though. Since we print and bind our authors' books here, we have no use for their POD features, and we do try to use independent companies for e-book conversion, especially since that allows us to make e-books compatible on several platforms such as Kindle, Nook, Kobo, and iPad. www.thetroybookmakers.com You can reach Jessika Hazelton at jessika@thetroybookmakers.com

POETRY & THE SPOKEN WORD

by Therese Broderick

0. **Arthur's Market and Café**, Schenectady -- newest open mic, 2nd Wednesdays
1. **Albany Barn**, Albany -- open mic, 4th Thursdays
2. **Arts Center of the Capital Region**, Troy -- open mic, 2nd Sundays
3. **Caffe Lena**, Saratoga -- open mic, 1st Wednesdays
4. **College of Saint Rose**, Albany -- offers MFA program of study ; offers Frequency North visiting poets
5. **Emack and Bolio's**, Albany -- open mic, every Tuesday
6. **Hudson River Coffee House**, Albany -- Starving Artist Thursdays
7. **Low Beat**, Albany -- Nitty Gritty Slam events
8. **McGeary's**, Albany -- Poets Speak Loud, one Monday per month
9. **Old Songs Office**, Voorheesville -- Sunday Four open mic, 4th Sundays
10. **Pine Hollow Arboretum**, Slingerlands -- occasional series of poetry and open mics
11. **Poetry Out Loud**, Albany -- annual recitation competitions for high school students
12. **Pride Center of the Capital Region**, Albany -- gay-friendly open mic, 2nd Wednesdays
13. **Social Justice Center**, Albany -- open mic, 3rd Thursdays
14. **William K. Sanford Town Library**, Colonie area -- open reading, Tuesdays

Poetry at *Caffe Lena*

Carol Graser is your Host

Poetry at *Caffe Lena* has always happened. The sign by the door attests to it: **Music, Theater, Poetry, the words arranged like a kind of holy trinity.** Poetry readings would spring up over the years like mushrooms, when the conditions were just right. Poetry readings and poets were always an element, a piece of the configuration, a vital underground part of making the whole work.

The current reading series began when a scheduled poetry open mic was canceled. I turned up at the door, poems ready for the stage and found the wooden doors locked. The organizer, a Skidmore student and volunteer, had bailed on the project. A combination of my willingness to whine about my personal disappointment and small town connections put me in the position of organizing another poetry open mic, this time with a featured poet reading, and the possibility of turning it into a monthly event.

The amenities that make *Caffe Lena* beloved by musicians are all just as appealing to poets; we like a supportive, listening room, a great sound system, enough lights and atmosphere to help you feel like a performer (as opposed to an awkward poet shuffling papers to the beat of dry coughing). I tapped into that vibrant network called *Albany Poets* and put the words poetry and *Caffe Lena* into the same sentence. That was all it took to fill the room that first night with an enthusiastic crowd. We shared our own work, listened hard and got a classic featured reading from a *Lena* denizen, Franklin Whitney.

That was in July 2003. The series has evolved, transmuted and held steady since then, with the poetry community blending with the larger *Caffe Lena* scene. I've watched poets turn into volunteers and volunteers turn into poets. There have been two poetry festivals, an anthology, poetry fundraisers and **a marriage proposal from the poetry stage (with ensuing happy marriage!).** We've had some notable readers; Carolyn Forché, Jared Smith, Lyn Lifshin Diane Lockward, Andrea Gibson, to name a very few, and we've had innumerable memorable readings. There have been confessions and collapses, rants and redemptions; sometimes it's a bit boring and depressing, but **poets and their living words are at *Caffe Lena*, the first Wednesday of every month.** www.caffelena.org. You can reach Carol Graser at graser.carol@gmail.com

Listen to Dan Wilcox!

If you are a poet living in the Capital Region of Upstate New York, you have a variety of literary events and resources available to you each month. I daresay it is more than in anyplace else in the country. I go to a poetry reading or open mic at least once a week, often more than that. In fact you can see exactly what readings I have been to by visiting a blog I write, DWx, at dwlcx.blogspot.com. In addition I host an open mic with a featured poet at the *Social Justice Center*, 33 Central Ave., Albany on the third Thursday of each month. This is the fourth place — and the longest running — that I have held third Thursday readings since 1997. I also co-host with Nancy Klepsch an open mic for writers of poetry and prose on the 2nd Sunday of each month at 2pm at the *Arts Center* on River St. in Troy.

Other organizations sponsoring readings or other literary events include **Albany Poets**, who have a **comprehensive monthly calendar on their website** AlbanyPoets.com; the *Hudson Valley Writers Guild*; the *Pine Hollow Arboretum* in Slingerlands; the *New York State Writers Institute* at the University at Albany; the *Frequency North Series* at the College of St. Rose; the *Pride Center* of the Capital District on Hudson Ave. (2nd Wednesdays); and *Urban Guerrilla Theater*, sporadic events at various locations in Albany. In addition there is a monthly open mic & reading (1st Wednesdays) at *Caffe Lena* in Saratoga Springs, & monthly & weekly readings at various venues in Woodstock, Saugerties & Kingston. You can reach Dan Wilcox at dwlcx@earthlink.net

Let's Do Lunch!

Some of us will have lunch

Wednesday, November 26 at noon

at Mingle

544 Delaware Avenue in Albany, a few blocks from the Spectrum.

We'd love for you to join us!

If possible, RSVP no later than Monday, November 24. Merci! Ray