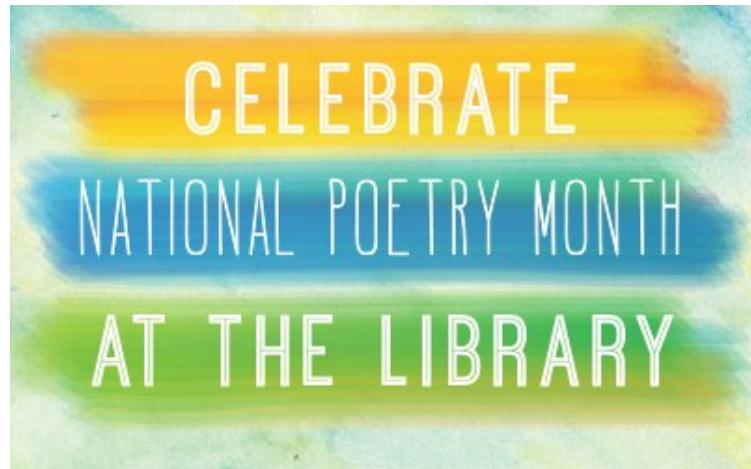


Thoughts On Paper

WBPL's Writers Group Quarterly Journal



Inspired by both Black History month (February) and Women's History month (March), The Academy of Poets proposed this month long holiday in April, in 1995 to celebrate and promote poetry, but also to increase awareness and appreciation of the art form. The first National Poetry month was held in 1996. Here are some fun facts about National Poetry Month taken from poets.org (<https://www.poets.org/national-poetry-month/home>):

- "In 1998, the Academy of American Poets joined with American Poetry & Literacy Project to distribute 100,000 free books of poetry from New York to California during National Poetry Month."
- "On April 22, President Clinton and the First Lady hosted a gala at the White House."
- "For National Poetry Month in 2001, the Academy of American Poets invited people to "vote" for poets they most wanted to have a postage stamp. More than 10,000 people cast ballots. The vote tally was sent to the United States Postal Service, which issued a Langston Hughes stamp in January 2002."
- "On April 5, 2005 the Empire State Building was illuminated with blue lights to mark the 10th anniversary of National Poetry Month."
- In 2006, the Academy of American Poets launched Poem-a-Day, publishing one new poem on its website Poets.org each day during the month-long celebration. Poem-a-Day is now a daily, year-long series, which has been syndicated by King Features.
- In 2012, the Academy of American Poets launched the Dear Poet project, which invites students to read and write poems during National Poetry Month, some of which are published on Poets.org. The project is accompanied by a lesson plan offered to K-12 teachers for free.
- Each year, a special poster is commissioned by the Academy of American Poets for National Poetry Month, with almost 150,000 copies distributed to schools, libraries, and community centers for free.
- Numerous books and poetry compilations have been published acknowledging National Poetry Month, such as *The Knopf National Poetry Month Collection* by Random House and *Celebrating National Poetry Month* by children's book author and poet Bruce Larkin.

I Left Something Behind

By Tony Trapanotto

From my cradle to my bed
there sits my terry bear,
as I turn my head
and look one more time
for I left something behind.

From my toys to my school
as I turn my head
and look one more time
for there sits my little truck of mine
for I left something behind.

From my high school that has ended
off to college I will attend
in the garage sits my bike
for I left something behind.

From my college to my wife
with plans to start a good life
to all my teachers, I say good bye
for I left something behind.

Now my children all have grown
and all have families of their own
for my time has come to an end
and I must say good bye
for I left something behind.



Five Minutes More

by Tony Trapanotto

Here I lay quietly and still in my bed with the memories
running through my head,
will he walk through that door, please Lord, give me five
minutes more,
the flash back to twenty years or so, as he and I played in
the snow,
the day he made the all-star team, I was there and proudly
beaming,
will he walk through that door, please Lord, give me five
minutes more,
the day he graduated tops in his class, I was there, even
though I got there last,
his wedding was the best I've seen, one that I kept in my
dreams,
will he walk through that door, please Lord, give me five
minutes more,
than that beam of light appear, as I saw him standing there,
thank you Lord, as I looked towards the door, for giving me
five minutes more.



"Nanay," A Eulogy

By Nicole Peters



"The only constant in life.....is change" - Heraclitus

My grandmother, Norma, was born in the Philippines on December 11, 1927, for those who knew her, my grandmother was a strong and determined woman, she accomplished anything she set her mind to.

We can say she was strong because of her experiences, hardships that helped shape her character, particularly the stories she would tell us about surviving World War II in the Philippines, when her and her family hid in the mountains to survive, or the stories about how, at an early age, her mother had passed away, and then her step mother and finally her father, leaving my grandmother to help take care of her younger siblings.

We can say that my grandmother was strong because of her determination, whether a beautician or dietician, wife or mother, gardener or cook, my grandmother succeeded in all things - ***she was determined***. But according to my grandmother, all of the things that she survived or achieved, was only possible because, and in her own words -

"prayers moved mountains."

For those who knew her, she was a devout catholic. Her favorite devotions, the infant of Prague and Sacred Heart. And among her favorite saints, is St. Jude, the patron saint of hope and impossible causes: both her and my grandfather survived the impossible and achieved many things in their lifetime together. We were taught that life is far from perfect and it is not meant to be, they both taught us how to keep going.

We call my grandmother "Nanay" which means mother in Tagalog, and that is what my grandmother was. Not only in the sense that she was physically a mother, but also in the sense that she was motherly to all . She was kind but still showed tough love, she taught us how to survive but still care about one another, take care of each other. She showed us how to walk away from issues that were insignificant, but also how to deal with issues we didn't want to deal with. My Nanay showed us the value in things and in people, that being real and being honest with those around you is why people respect you, why they will love you. She never sugar coated anything, if my grandmother gave you a compliment, just know that she was being completely honest.



And best of all she taught us how to cook but also how to eat!

I'll never forget what she told me one day specifically about relationships. She said growing up as a young woman she asked god, "if this person isn't for me, remove them from my life." She trusted in god to help make that decision but she also knew how to read people. The only thing she wouldn't tell you was of course, her age, she'd say, "ah never mind," and I realize now that it never mattered anyway, how old you are, but what is important, is where you are and if you're happy in your place.

We all know my grandparents happy place was in their garden.

Did you ever think about that? It's funny because I never thought about it until I began writing this, that gardens symbolize growth and beauty but only because of the hard work you put into it. Their garden not only symbolized their love for each other but it is also an example of their work ethic. So after you've finished reading this, remember that, that the hard work you put into anything, hobbies, our careers, love, family, friendships, that the hard work you put into all or any of these— that it will grow into something ***beautiful***.





New Growth from Old Soil

By Patricia Soper

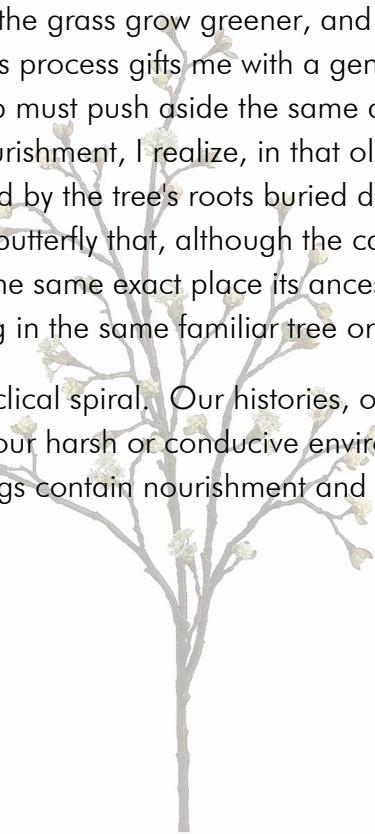
The slow unfolding of Spring seems to mirror my own reluctance to peak out from beneath the covers and face the fullness of life again. I relished the sheltering coziness of winter days, the quietness that inevitably invites reflection, musings, and mental wanderings into past and future. With endless cups of tea and too many accompanying cookies, I sat and read my journals from the last decade, copying insights, events and lessons I hope not to forget. Then, I let go of the remaining pages and the redundancy of life's daily minutiae and annoyances.

I could not help but notice, with much dismay, that some of the recorded thoughts could have been written on the day I re-read them this winter. I found the same vows for personal reform, the same reactions to the daily news or another's moods, the same internal arguments for and against the decisions I am still trying to make. I chided myself for going in circles, round and round, without moving forward.



Now, this Spring, as I watch the grass grow greener, and bits of foliage pop through the bareness, nature's miraculous process gifts me with a gentler, less critical insight. I see that, each year, the perennial tulip must push aside the same dirt to edge its reawakening self toward the sun. There is nourishment, I realize, in that old soil. The leaf, too, sprouts from the same crusty branch and is fed by the tree's roots buried deeply in the compost that lies beneath the ground. It is said of the butterfly that, although the caterpillar spins a new cocoon, the mature Monarch returns to the same exact place its ancestors once inhabited. And doesn't the bird build a nest for its young in the same familiar tree or rafter as it did the year before?

We are connected to that cyclical spiral. Our histories, our bodies and all they have been through, our trees, our soil, our harsh or conducive environments, and even our repetitious thoughts, mistakes and failings contain nourishment and the seed of new growth.



Metamorphic Nerves

by Patricia Soper

Butterflies in my belly,
excitement or fear,
remind me of winged creatures,
safely sheltered by cocoon,
but ready to leave the
chrysalis for unknown realms.
Familiar comfort tempts
nestling in sameness,
not risk change.
But, fully blossomed,
metamorphic wings
are meant to fly,
unconfined,
majestic,
free.



Sunflower

by Rita B. Rose

Lovely lavender sunflower
Bathe in sunshine by day
Pearls of moonlight by night
Unlike many mundane in the garden
You thrive and dazzle
Sweet, spectral delight
You quiet the restlessness spirit
Within me





My Day in the Park

By Tony Trappanotto

Sunday, the clouds finally gave way to a beautiful clear blue sky, and the warmth of the sun for a nice Spring day. Then off I was to my town's park, that sat on 25 acres of beautiful grounds, with flowering trees, bushes and flowering plants. The park even had a small lake with a waterfall, surrounded by plants of all kinds, park benches that were placed by the lake and picnic tables for the families to sit and eat. And a play ground for the youngest to play in and finally a walk trail that circles the lake.

It was such a pleasant afternoon, as I sat on my favorite bench, where I could see everything about the park. I saw the joy and smile as a young couple walked hand in hand, with love in their eyes, as they stopped and said hello to me. There was the father with his son, both sitting on folding chairs with their fishing poles dangling in the water, with hopes of catching some fish.

There were the joggers as they circled the lake about five times, before calling it a day. There was the proud parents pushing their child's stroller along the walk way, with a big smile on their face as they passed by me, and nodded hello.

Then there were the old timers with their crafted speed boats in the water, racing each other and for the amusement of all those that were there watching them, and being cheered on by. The old timers put on a great show at the park every weekend, and take the time out to talk to the people there.

To the right of me were two large ducks with their four small ducklings all gathered together and walking in formation on the grass going into the lake, such a wonderful sight to see. To the left of me was an older couple sitting so close and holding hands, smiling at each other and laughing, something you don't see too often.

As I sit here, on the very same bench year after year, and think back to all the times that I have come here to this park, I am always amazed that even though things have changed and time has passed, one thing seem to always be the same, and it's the people here doing what they have been doing for years - enjoying a beautiful fun day in the park.



The Country is Full

By Carlo Frank Calo



The country is full says our leader

We have no more room for the tired, poor huddled masses yearning to be free

The country is full

We will stop aid to those places most in need, to discourage them from coming

The country is full

No matter your poverty, your fear, your desperation

The country is full

We will fire all who are not tough enough and severe enough at our borders

The country is full

Separating children from their families will deter them

The country is full...The country is full...The country is full...

But why does it feel so empty



Dear Mom

by Megan Goff

As I am about to become a mother, I wonder how I can do this without you and grandma. There are so many people who say that I can do this, I still have many doubts. Heather has told me that I had two of the best role models for being a mother. I wish I could ask so many questions. There is so much time that I thought I had with you.

Now I wish I could have one more moment with you. Another moment to tell you all the things I wish I could have said. One more time to ask you those questions that I so wish that I had, for so many years. Though I question myself as to whether given the chance I would change anything that I have done, not knowing you would leave me that day, would I change anything?

We all wish for more times with our loved ones but I ask myself and everyone if they had another chance to tell your loved one something, what would it be?



What is the Point of Life....

By Angelina Trapanotto

What is the point of life, for we are only a dot on an island that is only a dot on a state which is only a dot on a country that is only a dot on a continent which is only a dot on the world which is only a dot in the universe and that is only a dot on the whole grand scheme of things.

The meaning of life to have loved ones, to be there when others can't be, to be the rock, to help people in need, and to be able to accept help from others, to live your dreams.

If you think I'm bluffing, go ahead and try to defy my words, do what you've planned, but if what you've planned is suicide then I can only feel sorry for you because you're not giving yourself a chance to be what you could be, to do great things, to do anything you've ever dreamed of and wanted to do.

The point of life is to live life to the fullest it could be and then go hand and hand in death as friends when you feel you've made an impact that screams your name, your legacy, to anyone that notices it.

What are you waiting for? Go Live...



"The thing is, you have to really want to change."

You Bury Me

by C.J. Colligan

I have woken from the deep sleep
With the taste of dirt in my mouth
So often
My ribcage has become a mossy gate
My chest a garden plot
My heart
A blooming, blue forget-me-not

I have woken from the deep sleep
With dreams of burial
So often
My headstone rises from the headboard
Here it says engraved:
"They may have lived with fear, but they died unafraid."



Sweetheart

by C. J. Colligan

Honey, hexagonal love
You say there is sweetness in order
Sweetness deep in the cell
Every step a choreographed dance
Tap, tap, tap out the pattern
That I was never born to learn
Never blessed to understand
Tap, tip, tip, I tiptoed around
Every conversation turns to buzzing
Don't you know that in the sweetness
The treasure of you
Leaves me chaos
Ready to swarm

Fleeting

by Julie Newman

Life is so fleeting, it goes by so fast. I look out my parents bedroom window.....they are both gone now. First my dad, my mom five months later.

The trees are budding and the fresh smell of spring is in the air. The sadness around me is oppressive. I see my parents everywhere and wonder if that will last forever. Time went by, I have unspoken words.

There never seemed to be the right moment to tell them how much they mean to me or to apologize for words that never should have been spoken.

Oh God, do we get another chance? Time went by, the love of my life is not well. Not a person, it is my faithful dog.

I carried her home as a puppy. We've shared the best and the worst. The years meshed quickly. My best friend will be thirteen soon. I have gone through this before. Five dogs and one amazing cat. How did it all pass so fast?

Fleeting, so fleeting, give me some more time.

Please give me some more time. I don't want to let go of my dog, but one day I must. This is not meant to be a sad story, it is a celebration of life.



Life is fleeting.

Appreciate every moment.

Treat everyone well.

I look in my dogs eyes, all those special moments together, days of yore, when all was how it was meant to be.

Sleeping the day away, I watch her in her bed. Moments and days passing. It is not a waiting game. Life is real and I will enjoy my time with her.

Looking back, my whole life skimmed by. As fast as it passed, it created amazing memories of my entire life. It cannot be that all these memories are fleeting as well. There must be more meaning to our lives.

What seems like a fleeting moment or memory, has a purpose. There is more to life. That is my belief.

All that we learn, love and cherish cannot just end with death. As I look out the window, of where I live now, I have new sights and sounds that remind me that I will never forget my past, present or future. It will all go with me to an unknown paradise. I hope I meet up with all of those whom I loved and respected. The pets I have been lucky enough to have in my life are waiting for me.

Our time on Earth is so fleeting.





About the Authors' Six Word Biographies

Carlo Frank Calo: **Pondering life's journey; enjoying it more!**

Christine Colligan: **Star-drop in a cosmic sea.**

Megan Goff: **Always writing from the heart.**

Julie Newman: **Perceptive, honest, kind and open-minded.**

Nicole Peters: **Forging the road ahead, endless skies.**

Katherine Regina: **Shelving books, writing stories, exploring worlds.**

Rita B. Rose: **Resilient, Perceptive, Honest, Kind, Sage**

Patricia Soper: **Discovering mystical wisdom in nature & crone-hood.**

Tony Trapanotto: **Energetic, Helpful, Friend, Companion, Dad, Grandparent**

J. Roland Sullivan: **Womb to crypt; so be it!**

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