

# ***Ekphrasis***

*'ekfrəsəs/* noun

-the use of detailed description of a work of visual art as a literary device

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*Poems inspired by artwork in The Delaplaine's National Juried Exhibition by members of the Maryland Writer Association, Frederick Chapter*

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THE DELAPLAINE  
*arts* CENTER

**M** MARYLAND  
WRITERS'  
ASSOCIATION

**Artwork: /cut by Ally Burnett**

**Poem: *Red* by Kari Martindale**



## Red

Red paint drips from her tiny fingers  
as she proudly holds up her creation;  
she did it all by herself.

"Mommy, Isn't it pretty?" she asks.

"It's beautiful!"

Nailpolish sits neatly inside her cuticles,  
Red dripping down the bottle;  
she did it all by herself.

"Mom, Aren't they pretty?" she asks.

"They're beautiful!"

Forearms kept to themselves,  
red lines under a row of bracelets  
up to their elbows,  
by themselves,  
in their rooms  
all the girls are doing it;

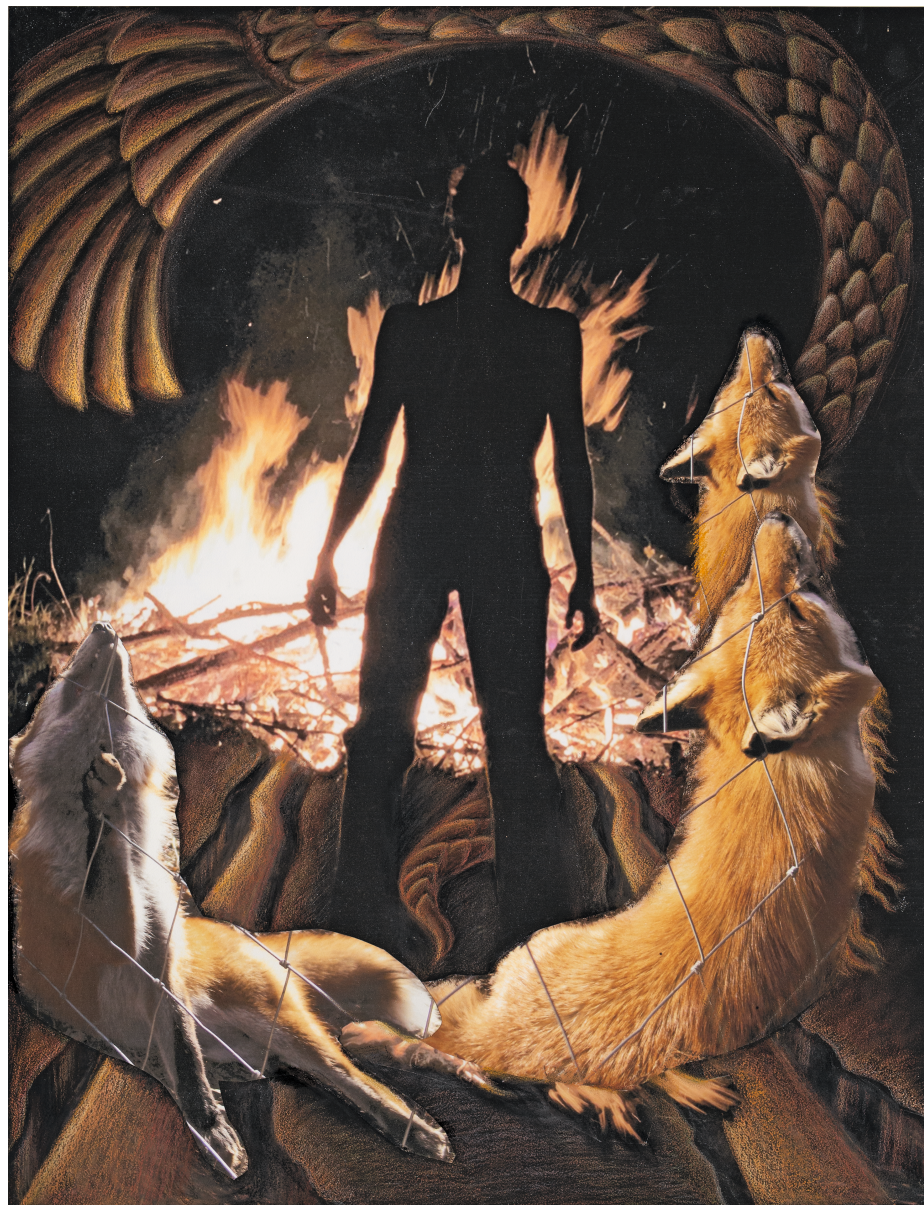
"Why aren't we pretty?" they ask.

Like watercolors and nail polish,  
tears drip from mothers' eyes.

"Why can't they see they're beautiful?"

**Artwork: *Burnt Offering* by Cynthia Baush**

**Poem: *Burnt Offering* by Nicole Abuhamada**



## **Burnt Offering**

Dear Gratitude,

I have an offer for you. If you choose to accept, do not send me the paper money nor your gold capped teeth nor steel toed mountains; don't send me silver dipped aspen leaves nor palladium stadiums; don't send me diamond fingernails to scratch down my back nor crystal crusted buttes to survey. No, send me on my way.

A list numbered ten, hurriedly written, ink smears on napkin scraps. That is what I have given you. I have given you that new canvas, the gently used clothing, the upgraded smart phone, the 3% raise.

But I have another bounty for you this time. I have written my own little name on brittle paper, that now turns to ashes in your furnace of overwrought passions. Take me.

I come to you burned by the blue glow of screens flashing simulacra of me, but gelid inside. Send no more synchronicities, excellent timings, nor fated meetings—send me on my way.

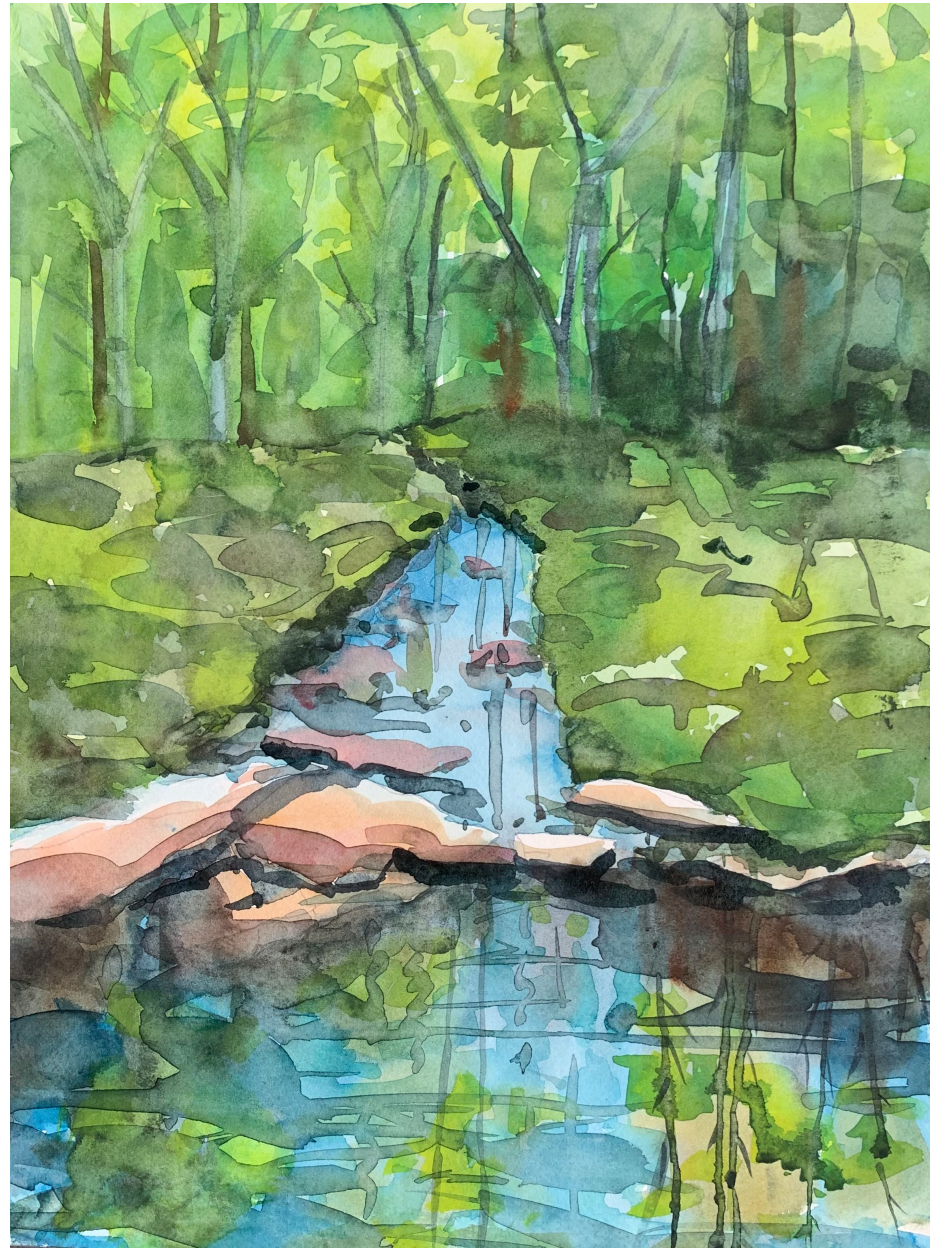
Please accept this burnt offering. I come to you lined in fox fur, bound with chain links, chained to a famous former name. I give you the B movies, the commercials, and magazine spreads. I give you the internet rankings, her famous quotes, and her best moments compilations. I give you her celebrity astrological profile and her hottest makeouts montage.

My dearest Gratitude, here is the sedition: I will give you her and in return, please send me nothing, but send me on my way.

Yours,  
Burnt Offering

**Artwork: *By the Trail* by Angela Giraldi**

**Poem: *The Trail to the Stream* by Diane Helentjaris**



## The Trail to the Stream

We cut it long ago – after King and the Kennedys but before Kent State –  
deep in the Ohio woods, lush with trees of substance and punctuated with  
the stony detritus of the final glacier, strewn about like the toys of a giant baby.  
Red oak, white oak, shagbark hickory, maple, beech carpeted the hills and the gorge, the woods  
so large one name didn't cover it – glen, gorge, park, camp, reserve, mill – all the same  
wilderness.

No one remembered what the Shawnee called this forest,  
though their aura still permeated the air as if they walked up ahead beyond the morning mist.

A cool breeze frosted my cheeks under the crisp canopy of canary, scarlet, tangerine,  
Brown leaves skittered over my boots and chattered  
as Brenda and I beat at the briars,  
building our trail through the woods.

There had never been a path here  
through this section of forest, down this hill, to that stream.  
One ancient trail led to the spring where iron-strong water slid over rocks, stained them canary  
and tangerine to match the overhead leaves.  
That trail – cut by game, trod by the Indigenous, then settlers, and finally, the hikers and  
treehuggers.  
Other paths led deeper into the woods, to the river, to the old stagecoach route, to nowhere in  
particular.  
But our trail spooled from the Nature Center, out along the ridge, then downhill to the stream.

For months we worked on weekends,  
our mentor a lank-haired, Lincoln-esque college boy with an axe as long as his arm.  
Brenda and I chopped saplings, tugged up roots, moved stones, raked dirt.  
He hewed away the bigger obstacles.

On Saturdays, we wore flannel shirts, corduroy pants, sheath knives on our hips  
and worried about poison ivy  
as we scraped away the impediments opposing us.

On Mondays, we pecked away in typing class,

imprisoned in girdles, garter belts, slips, petticoats  
and worried about the Sadie Hawkins Day Dance.

In the headiness of spring, our byway reached the stream.  
Clear waters tumbled down toward the river, too busy for tadpoles, shallow enough to wade.  
An amphitheater of flat stones edged the water, beckoned wanderers to rest, to contemplate, to  
open themselves up.

We had earned our Scout badge and moved on,  
hewing and hacking other paths through other woods for those who would come after.

Big-trunked deciduous trees still widen, add age rings, freefall, crash with a lightning strike or a  
windstorm.  
Seedlings and saplings sprout at their feet, anxious to take their place in  
the never-ending rising and falling.  
Our trail remains in the forest,  
nameless,  
with no bronze plaque like the boys had for their Eagle projects

Yet, the path is a success.  
Feet of every color, every size pad down our pathway, enough footsteps to keep the deadly yet  
delicious mayapples at bay, enough travel to keep the trail open.  
They follow its gentle meandering down to the stream.  
The only named wanderer is my child.  
I don't know the others.  
I never will – who they are or what they think  
as they follow our trail in the woods  
and the other paths we cut through our time.



**Artwork: *The Last Leaf* by Beamie Young**

**Poem: *The Last Leaf* by Linda Dutrow (aka Mimi Linny)**



## The Last Leaf

As twilight waned, a gentle breeze brushed  
Softly through the mighty oak  
Exposed, its barren branches longed  
For what had been its golden cloak  
But one last leaf detached and lone  
From high above while floating free  
Embarked in thoughtful conversation  
With the naked, aged-old tree  
"Why the sigh?" the leaf did probe  
In undulate descent  
While taking care to listen close  
And comprehend the oak's lament  
"I'd love to hear your stories  
As I frolic up and down  
For dare I have but just a while  
Before I light upon the ground."

"I'm musing all my seasons past  
Their splendors tucked in memory  
And Mother Nature's brilliant plans  
To show them off so poignantly."  
"I long to feel the Robin's nest  
Tucked snugly in my shelt'ring boughs  
Until their tiny eggs do crack  
And springtime baby birds arouse."  
"I thirst to taste the drops of dew  
That blest the early morning rise  
And hear the buzzing honey bees  
Encircle round their busy hives."  
"I yearn to feel the summer heat  
Laze heavy through my verdant leaves  
While shielding sweet young couples  
As they picnic 'neath their shaded eaves."  
"And when at last the basking sun

Wanes slowly into autumn's blush  
When cooling winds and harvest mark  
The soon-to-come of winter months,  
I'll miss the glow in fiery show  
Of color spread throughout my girth  
Til one-by-one my patches gold  
Submit their hold and fall to earth."  
"Oh Mighty Oak, how proud I've been  
To share with you the season's past  
And as I reach my final rest  
Beneath your stately frame, at last  
Though only one en-masse to fall  
I'll gather with my brothers, too,  
In hopes to blanket round your bark  
To help protect and shelter you."

"For this, my precious drifting leaf  
I tender thanks and humbly yield  
That time has come for Mother Nature's  
Winter land to be revealed.  
And though she'll bare a bitter cold  
And storm her winter's angry moan  
Upon my limbs, she'll grace with snow  
Revealing calm her gentle tone."  
Then as the last leaf touched the ground  
The Mighty Oak had near succumbed  
To passive sleep and dormancy  
For winter-seasoned months to come  
When sudden round the aged-old tree  
A dauntless gust of wind took wrath  
And seized in hold the mound of gold  
It found to be within its path  
With one last sigh, the Mighty Oak  
Swayed gracious towards the leaf's new flight...  
"Til Mother Nature blooms next Spring...  
Goodnight Last Leaf, Goodnight!"

**Artwork: *Flags, Puddle* by Julie Byrne**

**Poem: *SKY STORY* by Roderick Deacey**



## SKY STORY

I first connected to this mystery when I was six—  
I already loved to stare into the brilliant blue of the day sky,  
and at night the swathe of stars called the Milky Way  
spoke of faraway worlds just ripe for dreaming.  
We lived deep in the country, embedded in fields and woods,  
so I wandered locally but went where the world took me.  
One morning I was checking for jackdaws' nests  
in the hollow walnut trees that dotted the hayfield  
when I saw something blue along the hedgerow,  
maybe water? But it hadn't rained for a while...  
I climbed down the ancient walnut to take a closer look—  
and then it was obvious what it was.  
It was a slab of sky, with a few clouds  
and a flying bird or two, plus some tree branches.  
Seems that stupid chicken may have been right—  
the sky was falling, or at least some pieces of it were.  
Looking more closely, the big chunk had brought  
a few small fragments along for the ride.  
I was only six years old and had no idea  
how impossible this whole situation was!  
Just then, my mother called me for lunch—  
"Cooooee" in the distance—I had to leave.  
If I missed lunch, I would have to wait until supper to eat—  
I pocketed a golf-ball-sized piece of sky and ran for home.  
When I came back in the afternoon,  
the fallen sky was gone, leaving a patch of flattened grass.  
All of the pieces had vanished, with one notable exception—  
the lump in the pocket of my shorts, bouncing against my leg.  
I thought fast—inside my pocket, I wrapped the sky fragment  
in my handkerchief (we all carried handkerchiefs back then).  
I didn't want the piece to be accidentally exposed to sunlight  
in case that was what had caused the other bits to disappear.

I decided I would examine my strange fallen treasure

in my bedroom later, safely beneath my blankets.  
The rest of the day dragged but finally it was suppertime.  
Then we listened to the radio until I escaped to bed.  
Under the covers, I unwrapped my piece of sky.  
It was egg-shaped with a stony skin and flattened ends.  
One end was black and opaque like a piece of flint  
but the other was dark blue—and what a wonder!  
Holding it to my eye like a telescope, I had a panoramic view  
of the night sky, complete with stars, tiny clouds and an owl!  
It gave me an immense feeling of peace and calm.  
I fell asleep looking at the whole night sky.  
When I woke, sunlight was streaming in—I checked  
the sky stone, saw blue sky and felt peace and calm as before.  
I realized this treasure must be kept secret—or I would lose it  
to grown-ups, or maybe it would vanish like the other pieces.  
So began my time with the magical sky stone.  
Ostensibly, it never offered more than views of the sky  
but the feeling of calm it brought to me was the true treasure.  
The sky stone soothed me all through school and college.  
I kept my personal mood therapist on my person at all times,  
secure in my father's old drawstring watch bag.  
And so the years passed, until one day I was teaching a class  
of ten-year-olds some rudimentary chords on guitar.  
I felt for the sky stone but its reassuring presence was gone!  
I pulled out the black bag—it was empty.  
Apparently, the sky stone had finally disappeared  
like the other pieces of sky—but twenty years later.  
I was devastated—the feelings of loss and sadness  
that washed over me were overwhelming,  
and, of course, I no longer had the soothing properties  
of the sky stone to keep me calm.  
I decided I would use the rest of my time on the planet  
to track down another piece of sky.  
After fifty years and counting, I was beginning to think  
I was fooling myself, that I had dreamed the whole episode.

Then I saw this recent photograph...It clearly shows  
a teenage child skirting a piece of fallen sky

just like the one I had found all those years ago! I know  
it is labeled a puddle—but what else would they say?  
Now I am filled with hope again!  
I know it was not a dream.  
My thanks go to the photographer!  
I rise each morning saying, “Today is the day!”  
Today, I’ll finally find another piece of sky  
and tonight, I’ll fall asleep at peace,  
holding all the stars in the universe  
in the palm of my hand.

**Artwork: *Untitled* by Carol A. Jason**

**Poem: *Wooden Flight* by Joni Youse**





## Wooden Flight

I want to soar.

So I crawl,  
walk

run away  
from a life almost done.

The past is solid,  
strong with cracks  
built from  
discarded hopes,  
dreams no longer realized  
or wanted.

This is not what I see  
in the blueprint of my mind.

What will it take  
to rise above,  
spread my wings  
and safely land again?

**Artwork: *Self Portrait* by Carol Meisner**

**Poem: *Why Does She Paint?* by Pamela S. Brunell**



## Why Does She Paint?

How do we fully behold  
Grasp  
Let go of  
the thoughts, the words  
Swirling  
and allow the spirits,  
the ancestors  
to channel through us?  
How can we become  
open to the flow  
the universal harmony?  
She is here now  
for in her is a spirit  
unique, subtle, certain, tranquil  
She embraces the spectrum of  
line, color, value, shape  
She searches for balance and patterns  
to capture the moment.

She wanders the summer paths  
and ponders the milk weed pods  
popped open with  
white silky fluffiness  
spurting out from the inside  
umbrellaed tiny seeds  
The milk weed beckons  
the monarch butterflies  
flapping orange wings  
floating onto wildflowers  
gracing the silent space

She walks through the prickly  
wild vine berry thorns

They cling to her legs

She takes a picture  
to celebrate their existence—  
She ventures into a  
field of yellow flowers  
and purple bergamot  
honeybees drink in the nectar  
perhaps a painting will emerge  
She paints to bring them into being  
these daily miracles—  
to birth them  
to witness them  
to behold them  
She paints to  
awaken  
the splendor of light within  
she lives in the rainbow of existence

**Artwork: *Waiting for Dinner* by Robert LeMar**

**Poem: *TRAINING THE LADY NEXT DOOR* by Roderick Deacey**



## **TRAINING THE LADY NEXT DOOR**

Time to feed me! You've been told, I'm sure.  
You're new at this so I won't make a fuss  
but bear in mind that I'm a carnivore.

There's no meat in that bag by the door—  
just lumps of cardboard sprayed with protein dust—  
I need real meat—you understand, I'm sure.

The dog wolfs down that fake crap, begs for more!  
My stomach craves flesh—do you get my gist?  
Goes along with being a carnivore.

I don't need ribeye when you hit the store,  
I'm fine with liver or the cheaper cuts.  
I just need meat—that's crystal clear, I'm sure.

Or I'll take tuna—I like albacore.  
Raw and fresh is best—canned if needs must;  
fish make a nice change for a carnivore.

Wait! You're the one who feeds the birds next door!  
I don't hunt birds—I don't like feathers much  
so I won't eat your feathered friends—I'm sure.  
Now, please find meat to feed this carnivore!

**Artwork: *To Gather, To Retreat* by Bob Haxton**

**Poem: *To Gather, To Retreat* by Bill Haxton**



## **To Gather, To Retreat**

pulse echoes in the shadows between  
the shouts of the lighted world

things come, things go

quiet, you can almost hear them  
there where they fall inward

the space between breathes

in, out, then out and out and out



## Biographies of the Poets:

**Nicole Abuhamada** is an interdisciplinary artist specializing in painting and poetry. Nicole became internationally known as a winner of America's Next Top Model, going on to work with clients like Paul Mitchel, Pepsi, and the Marvel Avengers; her filmography includes Ashley, Paradise Club, and The Last Survivors. Nicole wrote, illustrated, and published *Lipton Loves* in 2021.

**Pamela Brunell** writes as Pamela Smith. She recently published a book of poems centered on the 17 years she spent with her husband and two sons in Africa and Vietnam as well as her farm in Maryland.

Her book, "Beloving," is an autobiography in poetry form. The stories include her reaction to seeing new worlds and meeting memorable people. You'll discover over 100 poems and stories and 70 images about the African bush, elephants, love, yoga, nature, family, friendship, the chakras, a meditation, and prayers.

Pam lives on a farm and nature sanctuary in Middletown where she cavorts with honeybees, wildflowers, butterflies, and her tomato gardens.

**Roderick Deacey** worked as a professional editor and writer for many years, first for the Chicago Sun-Times Syndicate, then for News America Syndicate and The Times of London Syndicate. He says, "Editing daily newspaper columns trained me to quickly identify where writing of all genres can be improved. These days, poets frequently send me their work for critiquing and polishing prior to publication." He is co-editor of Pen in Hand, Maryland Writers Association's literary journal.

Deacey is also a performing poet in the DC area, based in Frederick, Maryland. He regularly performs with drummer and bass player, presenting "neo-beat" poems inspired by the Beat Poets' poetry and jazz forays of the nineteen-fifties. Deacey was awarded the 2019 Frederick Arts Council Carl R. Butler Award for Literature. Crossing genres, he won the Gold Award for Best Lyrics in the 2020 Mid-Atlantic Song Contest held by the Songwriters Association of Washington. Many of his contemporary poems have been published in literary journals and magazines. This year, one of his beat poems was included in New Generation Beats 2022 Anthology published by the National Beat Poetry Foundation, featuring beat poets from all over the world.

**Linda Dutrow**, aka Mimi Linny, is a 73-year-old grandmother who has always enjoyed writing poetry, a passion she re-kindled after retirement. She enjoys creating lyrical stories with the use of humor, irony and life journeys. Her first picture book, "My Favorite Shoes!", is in illustration.

**Bill Haxton**: Proof you do not have to die to be reincarnated, Bill's career--if you can call it that--lurched from Air Force pilot to route gardener to furniture designer to construction laborer to radio producer to college administrative consultant to classical chamber music director. Somehow in that span, he and his wife Anne spent seven years sailing the Pacific Ocean on their 41 foot sloop Sendaya.

**Diane Helentjaris** likes to write about overlooked, uncelebrated people. She thinks of it as treasure hunting. She's had an appreciation of history and the visual arts since childhood. Diane writes nonfiction and historical fiction; and her fiction and poetry have been published in various anthologies. She earned a BA cum laude in Humanities and an M.D. from Michigan State University as well as a Masters in Public Health from the University of Michigan. Diane, her husband, and son have made Leesburg, Virginia their home for decades. You can follow her shenanigans at her website [www.dianehelentjaris.com](http://www.dianehelentjaris.com).

**Kari Martindale** is President of the Frederick Chapter of Maryland Writers' Association. Her words have been published by a variety of journals and anthologies and nominated for several awards, including the Pushcart Prize. She has been featured in poetry and spoken word events across Maryland and can be found at [www.karianmartindale.com](http://www.karianmartindale.com). She dedicates this poem, "Road Trip," to Alyssa.

**Joni Youse** is a long time resident of Maryland. Her poetry has appeared online at the Washington Writers' Publishing House, [washingtonwriters.org](http://washingtonwriters.org) and the Adirondack Center for Writing, [adirondackcenterforwriting.org](http://adirondackcenterforwriting.org). Joni's interests include reading, hiking and collecting vintage paperback books.