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Celebration Poetry

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are
we
watching
now?**

**INTERVIEWS WITH
AMAZING AUTHORS**



WELCOME TO THE OPENDOOR POETRY MAGAZINE DECEMBER ISSUE!

Welcome to our 'celebration' issue of OpenDoor Poetry Magazine! We hope this finds you and your family healthy and that you enjoy all our features in this issue as much as we have.

We have introduced a new feature 'Mel and Kassie Recommends' where we share what brilliant books, shows and podcasts we have indulged in this month. This is replacing our Bios... because you can find anything you want about us straight on our website!

This year celebrations are going to be very different. We may not be with the people we want to be with for several different reasons. So, wherever you are during the festive season, we are sending you a virtual hug and I think it is safe to say we are all looking forward to seeing the back of 2020...

- Mel & Kassie



IN THIS ISSUE

THE CELEBRATION ISSUE

5 AND STILL WE
CELEBRATE ON
By Laura Ferries



8 DECEMBER THEME:
CELEBRATION

18 HOLIDAY
SHOPPING LIST
Books to Buy



23 SONG OF
CHRISTMAS
Joanne Bowles



IN THIS ISSUE

THE CELEBRATION ISSUE

26 FEATURED POETS
& AUTHORS



49 MISTER JOHN
And the Poetry Cafe

52 UPCOMING VIRTUAL
EVENTS



60 CO-CREATORS
And what has
captured our
interest lately

47 CALL FOR
SUBMISSIONS
For January!





And Still We Celebrate On

Celebrations in the times of Covid-19

By **Laura Ferries** @lauraferrieswriter

New Year's Eve, 31st December 2019. The world held its breath in giddy anticipation of not only a new year but a new decade. There was a ring to it: the new '20s. It evoked parties, celebrations, prosperity. I sat by the fire in my new pajamas, opened a good bottle of red and eagerly awaited the strike of midnight to usher in this sparkly new decade of promise.

When the Covid-19 virus hit the world at the turn of this new decade, the 20s, the one that was supposed to be full of renewed glamour, excitement and razzle-dazzle, the world came to a pause. It slowed down to a new-found peace in some corners, while in others it dragged on under a slow and heavy pressure. The skewing of time disoriented us and bred anxiety and confusion. Uncertainty is the root of anxiety; anxiety is the fear of the unknown and uncontrollable.

Births, birthdays, religious festivals, graduations, engagements, weddings, various cultures' new years and so many, unnamable more celebrations felt like they were being robbed from us, but we learned to adapt and craft new methods in the madness of our new circumstances.

We are habitual creatures who mark our lives by the calendar. It helps us move through the seasons and orients us: Easter traditions are so closely married into the spring while Diwali lights up the darkening evenings of autumn.

Celebrating the good things in life is a part of the ecstasy of being human. It marks triumphs and successes, connects us to others and reminds us of the great possibilities of people and the world.

Like observing a Roman sundial cast light and shadow through the passing of time, we gauge where we are in the rotation of the years by what celebration or festival we are preparing for.

Suddenly, we weren't allowed to see each other in person anymore. We collectively discovered Zoom and vouched to stay connected in virtual realms until the day we would be reunited. We found novel ways to bond when feeling isolated. We became gameshow hosts and quizmasters; my cousin Luke even became our family's own celebrity chef, hosting guided 'Cook-a-thons'. We became more familial.

Music is and always has been a sensory medicine; an aural shot of serotonin. Songs, secular hymns that praise what it is to be human in this topsy-turvy world, became daily sermons that kept us going when faith waned. Not much, not even a virus can keep music out of the home.

Birthdays, meanwhile, had to take on a whole new format: like a paradoxical trip back to the late 90s, our video calls became cyber cafés where we relied on bandwidth and pixelated faces while we clinked glasses to screens to toast one another's collective orbits around the sun.

We sent Moonpigs and parcels to each other's addresses, little uplifts of light on our doorsteps; gestures that reminded us we are not alone. Remember you are thought of in the minutest of reminders and someone is always missing you, somewhere. We delved deep inside ourselves and the kindness of strangers prevailed even when the political powers above were a tide pulling against us, threatening to drown us in the mire.

“Celebration is my attitude, unconditional to what life brings.” - Osho

Many people will have sadly felt robbed of their due celebrations. University graduates watched their names spool across YouTube video roll calls from home instead of shaking hands with robed and mortar-board bedecked academics. Year 11 and Year 13 students left school sans-prom night with only WhatsApp group emojis and transient Snapchats to bid their farewells. Weddings had to be postponed but love prevailed in the outpourings of gestures from well-wishing relatives and friends.

As the earth breathed, we took to our daily walks and discovered the ancient yet perpetual beauty and medicinal properties of oxygen, water and trees. We celebrated this earth of ours in our art, music and poetry in our private moments and we also shared it online in collective ceremonials.

Conversely, our gained time drew our attentions and opened our eyes, ears and minds much more acutely to the injustices of the world.

The battle cry protest against the unlawful and barbaric murder of George Floyd sparked a new surge in the Black Lives Matter movement. We celebrated black music, art, literature, film and the kaleidoscopic facets of black culture. We learned to celebrate it and not appropriate it and we learned to check our privileges and become not only not-racist but anti-racist. This overdue learning and reflection brings hope which is cause for some celebration in itself.



In a time of introspection, we turned to the arts as a mirror for our lives, experiences and our world. People used paint, ink and instruments to honour what they love, lament the things they missed and illuminate the vital things we need to cling on to in such unprecedented times of uncertainty.

In the often-harsh face of turning inwards, we learned to protect ourselves by establishing our own private ceremonials that preserved our health, happiness and sanity. The fragility and the resilience of the human body was juxtaposed and highlighted under the destructive glare of the Coronavirus and we were reminded to seize and cherish life. When you can't do much else other than work and/or stay home, the little rituals we form in protecting our physical and mental selves become sacred.

Whether for you it is painting your nails, spritzing your favourite perfume on yourself even though you aren't going anywhere, lifting weights in your back garden, evening runs, late night baths, lighting candles, burning incense, reading books, meditation, listening to music into the deep early hours... these are all the self-preserving self-celebrations that we have relied upon to keep going even when the external world felt a bit bleak.

As we inch closer to winter celebrations: Christmas, Hannukah and myriad others, we will be true to form and we will be innovative in how we mark them in a manner that is socially distanced, safe yet celebratory. It will be different, that's for sure, but in our newly clarified ability to look on the bright side, at least it will be unique.

When we watch the clock tick towards midnight on the 31st December 2020, we will all hold hopes and desires for the new year ahead. The virus won't magically disappear because it isn't 2020 anymore but we will be inching closer to its diminishing and to being able to be together freely again.

Despite the hardships and challenges that the pandemic has brought, we will have a lot to celebrate on that evening. I will be sitting by the fire, a good bottle of red open, raising a quiet glass to the reflections of the last year and celebrating a new dawn, a new year and the new times ahead.

Find more from Laura in her poetry books:

'Somewhere Between Roses & Oranges' is available to buy at [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

'Give Poetry a Chance! The Anthology' is available to buy at [Lulu.com](https://www.lulu.com)

'Lucid Dreamscapes' will be published with [Lulu.com](https://www.lulu.com) end of 2020/early 2021

December Theme: Celebration

MULTIPLE AUTHORS

Winter's Healing Music

Noor Nedal

Palestine

[Instagram.com/noorpoetica](https://www.instagram.com/noorpoetica)

Solemn times and harsh truths
A spreading virus without a cure

But the first rain of the year
And the children's winter cheer

Defy this somber weather
And kill the impending premiere

We smile in gayous joy
And dance our souls free

To the beat of raindrops
And the mellow blows of a breeze

We dance and dance
Drenched in soft melodious glee

Celebrating a life well lived
As it should be

Celebration!

Kathy Bryant

United States

It's celebration time again...
Snow on snow is here!
Don your woolen caps and gloves...
Sing bright songs of cheer!

Hang the baubles from the tree...
Reflecting joy inside...
Ride the sleigh with jingle bells..
While frosty breath is spied!

Warm your toes beside the fire..
While sipping chocolate, hot!
Revel in pure pleasure with friends..
Happy times just can't be bought!

The Warmest Feeling

Colin Butcher

United Kingdom

When loved and loving, we sit by each other,
The warmest feeling comes.
We celebrate our growing love
and kiss, under the mistletoe.
Glances and whispers, growing content,
we need not hurry now.
For our love, is love for ever more.
We both know that this is how we wish to be
forever.
Our union is complete, our love is growing fuller,
our life together begun.

On a Tuesday

Jerrica Magill

United States

[Instagram.com/NicoletteSoulia](https://www.instagram.com/NicoletteSoulia)

[TikTok.com/seekthefire](https://www.tiktok.com/seekthefire)

[Twitter.com/NicoletteSoulia](https://twitter.com/NicoletteSoulia)

I busted open my best wine this week.
On a Tuesday.
To sit and watch Monty Python.
And it felt fucking amazing.
I stretched my limbs across my mattress,
munching on caramel rice cakes between sips -
a classy couch potato with all the time in the world to be
anxious -
choosing to laugh the stress away from my day.
I like to think that I understand British humor,
but most of it goes over my head.
Wine makes everything hilarious, though.
I bought that wine in between about
four visits to the hotel room of a man
who was always polite,
even when not nice.
We had a whole weekend of coffee
in cafes, tiny museums,
and crossing state lines to find that -
surprisingly -
Kentucky makes fucking excellent wine.
I'd always saved it for some special day,
but the world seems up in flames,
and I don't know if I even deserve special days -
occasions where I feel special.
Then again, this -
Tuesday date with myself and Monty Python -
seems just as well.
Even swell.

Christmas

Blanche Brickman
England

The season of good cheer they say,
to me, it just seems manic.
Everyone begins to rush
and calm turns into panic.
Global warming, guns and hate,
doesn't make the greed abate.
People starve and babies die,
whilst Santa flies across the sky.
Let's show our love a different way,
with things we do and what we say.
Try to stretch it though the year,
instead of just one day of cheer!

Wear Your Colors

Tara Aryan
United Kingdom

[Facebook.com/PersonalAboutPoetry](https://www.facebook.com/PersonalAboutPoetry)
[Twitter.com/Aryan_Tara](https://twitter.com/Aryan_Tara)
[Instagram.com/Mrs_Tara_Aryan](https://www.instagram.com/Mrs_Tara_Aryan)

I emerge from the river dripping in technicolour,
I am myself, not a version of another.
Waist deep as I waded in the marble waters,
Encased in love, so many supporters.
As I wear my colours with great pride,
I refuse to shy away, I won't run or hide,
As I display my cascade of feathers for all to see,
The person seen flourishing, exposed, this is me,
An array of striking colours breaking down those walls,
The paint brush stroked as with my colours they fall,
Onto the canvas that claimed me to become a shade,
The mixture enriched as I am portrayed,
A portrait of my own true self I see in reflection,
A gallery of pieces, my own collection.
Transmitted from palette to brush, onto paper,
'Wear your colours' – they say, it will only shape her,
Int the woman I am, pigments so fluorescent,
Lustrous rainbow tones, so iridescent.
'Wear your colours,' shine bright like a precious jewel,
Bursting at the seams they'll never ridicule,
The contrasts that will encase, know that they will never fade,
And you'll eternally wear your colours, your favourite shade.

Live to Celebrate Another Day

Kassie Runyan

United States

KassieJRunyan.com

Celebration with a sad heart;
families staying far apart
for the safety of the whole.
Only the selfish look for a loophole.

We remember the years that came before
and pray and hope for many more.
So here we stay alone in our homes;
to the kitchen and back we continue to roam.

Eating our own leftovers from the fridge.
Oh, the pie, I suppose just a smidge.
and another smidge and just a smidge more
until I have trouble fitting through the door.

'Cus when I'm sad I eat until I full
and this fridge has more than a spoonful
of the holiday meals that I made myself,
before shuffling over to the bookshelf.

To look through the photos of the years past.
Remembering the times, oh what a blast.
I comfort with the reminder this sacrifice
that we choose to pay is well worth the price.

Because in just a year from this very day
we will celebrate all together and be able to say,
"We did what was right and stayed tight,
so Merry Christmas to all and to all a good night!"

Let The Celebrations Commence

Colin Butcher

United Kingdom

Clang Clang,
The Christmas Bells, as we do each year,

Clang Clang
The Christmas bells, fills us all with cheer.

Clang Clang,
The Christmas bells let us know it's near,

Clang Clang
The Christmas Bell, make us lose our fears.

Clang Clang,
The Christmas bells, gayly deck the halls,

Clang Clang,
The Christmas bells, hanging shiny balls.

Now's the time for Celebration, now be hale and
hearty,
Now's the time to shed our woes, now's the time to
party.

The Lady from Down the Lane

Genevieve Ray

England

[Facebook.com/GenevieveRayPoet](https://www.facebook.com/GenevieveRayPoet)

One cold day this month,
I walked my two cockerpoos
They were lively and silly,
I was feeling lost and sad.
The weight of a disconnected world,
a universe made of gaps,
was dragging me forward.
I was lashed to their leads,
as my puppies kept moving.
They stopped all at once,
as if signaled by an old god.
Going about their business.
I heard gentle whispers.
The rasps of soft singing.
I turned towards,
the left of my world.
Moving slowly,
with hands on a steel walker,
There was an elderly lady,
wrapped up in delicate purple.

She was looking downward,
blue eyes gazing outward,
and, she was singing,
singing the happiest songs on Earth.
She sang of happy days,
she sang of memories.
Songs I know well.
Sung so joyfully.
To no one at all.
Others might be perturbed by this,
she was what I needed most.
She carried on, past and was gone.
My heart was lifted by the spirit,
by the energy of a heart full of song.
The fact she was celebrating her existence.
The fact she was grateful for everything.
The dream eyes of a childlike heart.
And dear lady that was enough,
To get my own heart singing.

The Dancing Women

Sister Lou Ella Hickman, I.W.B.S.
United States

the dancing women who celebrated
with miriam, david, and judith

“The truest expression of a people is in it’s
dance and music. Bodies never lie.”
anges de mille
dancer and choreographer

theology of the body’s wisdom
retold in stories like a string of echoes

freedom so real so gift
only dance could signal its arrival

Celebration

Maia Khawer
United Arab Emirates
[Instagram.com/mypixelpatch](https://www.instagram.com/mypixelpatch)

Souls of all shapes and size;
Feel joy at their own guise

Some blow candles and cut the cake;
With big bashes their thirst for merriment they slake.

Celebration of a new life, new beginnings, new year;
Even when some things end, we cheer.

An athletic triumph, a commemoration, the blush of a bride’s
The desire to rejoice, at no time, subsides

The world unites in jubilation;
Drinking in the euphoria, sharing a sense of elation

THE WHISPER OF THE FIRST SNOW

Lesya Bakun

Ukraine

<https://linktr.ee/Chytanyky>

[Youtube.com/c/LesyuasHowTos](https://www.youtube.com/c/LesyuasHowTos)

Catching wind with my palms
Listening closely to
the whisper of the first snow:
Where are you rushing, young girl,
Not stopping to admire me –
The first one, untouched,
On a dance – or on a date,
Carefully selecting
Every layer of clothing,
Covering yourself with it,
As the ground gets covered with snow,
With the thought of the New Year –
Will it be snowy this year,
Or will the soil stay
Naked again,
And the snow will be only make-believe,
on synthetic fir-tress?
Well, keep running,
You, inspired girl,
But guard the virginity
Of the first snow
Let me be admired
By someone less busy.

Ловити вітер долонями
І прислухатися
До шепотіння першого снігу:
«Куди ти так спішиш, дівчино,
Не зупиняючись,
Щоб помилуватись мною –
Першим, незайманим, -
На танці – чи на побачення,
Ретельно підбираючи
Кожен шар одягу,
Вкриваючись ним,
Як земля покривається снігом,
Із думкою про Новий Рік –
Чи буде він цьогоріч сніжним,
Чи знову земля залишиться оголеною,
А сніг буде лише синтепоновим,
На синтетичних ялинках?
Що ж, біжи далі,
Натхненна дівчино,
Але бережи незайманість
Першого снігу,
Хай мною помилується
Хтось не такий зайнятий...»

Celebration

Pankhuri Sinha

India

[YouTube Link](#)

[Facebook.com/pankhuri.Sinha.56](https://www.facebook.com/pankhuri.Sinha.56)

India, a land of festivals
Colours and culture
Fragrance and beauty
Ethnic and diverse
Pluralist and tolerant
Where every harvest
Has a festival
Every festival a song
All lips know
How to sing
Why then,
There remains
A deafening silence in the lives
of half of its people?
Divisions divide
Demarcate, separate
The rich from the poor
Religions from each other
How does a nation
With a broken soul
Ruptured heart
Pull all that's apart?
And join together in a thing called celebration?

PEACEKEEPER

Brittany Benko

United States

Celebrating freedom
Celebrating life
Cherishing the day I became a law enforcement wife
It taught me many lessons I once did not know
Giving me strength and lots of room to grow
Blessings flooded my home, although I could not see
My life is calm yet dangerous
Just like the God made sea
Making new enemies and shaping new friends
Understanding this balance helps me to comprehend
Honoring my husband and his brothers of blue
The world can sleep at night because of what they do
The world is dark, but there is light
Open your eyes
It's a pleasing sight
I'm gratified to be called a peacekeeper
It's not an easy role
I am soft but hard as a bullet
I hold this line together when the world is out of control

Fairies in flight
Neil Saltmarsh
England

Going into my garden
A heavy snowfall has blown,
And before my own eyes
It takes a life of its own...

How wonderful this winter air is
When it fills with floating, frozen fairies.
Falling, feather-like, fluttering around
Gently settling upon the ground
Then lifting again, upon the breeze
And drift, and dance, on pure white seas.

Swooshing, and swirling,
Twisting, and twirling,
Ice crystals cascade from the sky
Such dazzling whiteness
Increases the brightness
And brings a new light to my eyes...

I NEVER took chances, I stayed safe and warm
And didn't go out if there was a storm
But the beauty and magic of this fabulous scene
Made me throw a coat over my jumper and jeans...

...Braving the bitter cold wind in my face
I stepped out into the white kaleidoscope
Slipping and sliding all over the place
I trudged on down the slope...

I went into battle with the frozen fairy folk
Their berserkers came at me so fierce
Biting at my skin, and my eyes they did poke
'Til I burst out laughing, through my tears

I made some Snow Angels, to fight on my side
I skipped and rolled like a madman
Till my heart was full of childish pride
The years fell away. I was Glad man!
An old man like me ought to be Gentle
And Careful, and Sober, and Wise
But, once in a while, it's good to go Mental
And fight fairy folk from the skies!

In just thirty minutes I'd run out of breath
That was definitely enough for me
If I stayed out much longer I'd catch my death
So, back to the real world, slippers, hot tea

Sit by the fireside, dry out my clothes
And laugh, that I'd been such a clown
It's back to Normality, I suppose
Back to the Covid Lockdown.

Donna di Ferrara
Mike Ball
United States
[Facebook.com/harrumph](https://www.facebook.com/harrumph)
[Poems](#)
[Twitter.com/whirred](https://twitter.com/whirred)

We visit this town to taste, smell and see
The hallmark meal at Quattro Angeli.
Shadowed table under the beige canvas
Means wine and orders of cappellacci —
Pumpkin dumplings sauced in butter, fresh sage.

The tastes, smells and sights of tans and dark green
Include a view of the Este Castle,
Its looming towers no longer hide lords
And its broad, murky moat protects no one.

The real view, the theater, is transient.
There is no poster, playbill or cover
For the intermittent daily parade.
Look up from your plate and be sure to see.
Local ladies *in bicicletta* pass.
One from the left, the left, then the right.

They sail. They float. *Donne di Ferrara*.
Each on bicycle. Each her own journey.
Fluffing and floating on their fabric clouds
Billowing skirts printed in brash florals,
Donne di Ferrara gently bouncing
Over round white or gray piazza stones

Where do these graceful, floral women go?
One surely sails and floats to a grandson.
Another to her favorite baker,
Still one more to a long lunch with a friend.
Could one head toward an assignation?
At least one must cycle to a dress shop.
Such striking women can never possess
Too many full, fluffy, floral garments.

NOUVEAU HOLLIFICATIONS
Comrabai Dumbuya
Sierra Leone

Anew in augustness,
the colours bloom prefiguratively.
Leotarded ballet dancers pirouette in joyance.
Aerialists mount trapezes, auguring a jubilee.
Streetlights extol festive stars,
remarking an earthshaking momentum
and pullulating a colourful neighbourhood.
Like the feast of trumpets,
a professing feast of love, peace and unity
quenches the apparel of tsoris.
So cozy new dawns awakened,
inflaming thirsts of relief.
Yes, it is a New Year jubilee,
excogitating scads of joyous scenarios.
Even the smiles of the peasants' harvests
please the mountain dwellers on high.
All collide to earnest conviviality.



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HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE!

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HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE! something for everyone on your list

The Samurai

Fall into *the samurai*, a chapbook by Linda M. Crate, now available for purchase! This collection of poems speaks of rebirth, reincarnation, and lessons from the past as a means to a better future. For the author, this is through a past life discovered in a very vivid dream that had both awed and confused her.

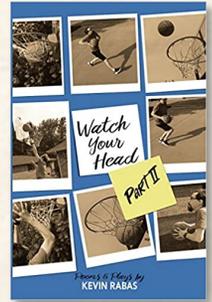


Within this dream, the author was visited by a strong, courageous woman—a samurai—who showed her how to listen to her past, learn from her mistakes, and inherit the future she deserves.

[Purchase Here](#)

Watch Your Head Part II

I wrote these poems in 1999 and 2000, while I was going through a divorce and recovering from a head injury. (I was in a pick up basketball game and got knocked down.) I was also unemployed and living with my parents again.

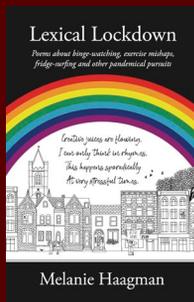


With the help of Linzi Garcia, I excavated these poems and revised them. They have a kind of simple, raw power, so I wanted to share them with others.

[Purchase Here](#)

Lexical Lockdown

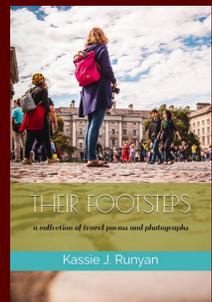
It's the year of 2020
Which no one will forget,
When we fought a deadly virus
That posed a deadly threat.
Mel rhymes her way through
lockdown,
It enables her to cope,
And in her witty verses
Spreads positivity and hope.



[Purchase Here](#)

Their Footsteps: a collection of Travel poems and photography

This poetry collection follows Kassie through her own travel adventures. Written in the moment and on the road so that the experiences wouldn't be forgotten. Combined with a few of her favorite photos from those travels to further drive the imagery that is created with the words. Follow Kassie, from the coast of Oregon to the Himalayan Mountains, as she shares her experiences in the same way she fell in love with it; through the written word.



[Purchase Here](#)

HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE! something for everyone on your list

Séance

Séance is a collection of poetry written in April of 2020. It delves deep into the mind of a poet in quarantine. Subjects include Covid-19, mental illness, nostalgia, and the occult.



[Purchase Here](#)

Open Book

An inspiring collection of poetry exploring a range of themes including love, abuse, depression, parenting and loss. Open Book is a raw and emotional glimpse into the life of an ambitious single mum faced with heartbreak, depression and grief.

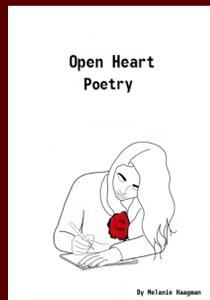


As well as tackling the more serious subjects, you'll also find uplifting and positive poetry within this collection, and also a small number of love poems of a sensual nature.

[Purchase Here](#)

Open Heart Poetry

Open Heart Poetry is filled with poems about pain, determination, hope, anxiety and humour. Part One delves into my daily battle with OCD and the impact this has on my life. It encourages others to speak out about invisible pain and spread the word. Part Two contains light-hearted, humorous poems about relatable experiences.



[Purchase Here](#)

This is 2020: a poetry collection

Explore the moments of 2020 as we pass through each month together. Kassie paints the world as it happens through poetry and provides a perfectly biased view into some of the impacts across America and beyond. The widespread effects of Covid-19 and the continued fight against racism are rhymed hand-in-hand with the SpaceX rocket launch and the passing of time in quarantine.



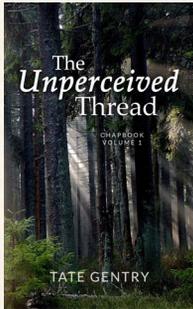
Watch for Part II – coming early 2021.

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HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE! something for everyone on your list

The Unperceived Thread

"By observing the world I perceived an oft unperceived thread." With these words Tate invites us on a journey. A journey that challenges us to see the marvelous and the mundane for the miracle they are. To see the landscape as a work of artistic beauty, and an invitation to grace. To see people as wonderful additions to the story of life, without whom our own story would be incomplete.



[Purchase Here](#)

Rafa and the Real Boy

Rafa and the Real Boy is a Young Adult novel about seventeen-year-old Rafaela Torres, who is forced to move to the middle-of-nowhere, Minnesota after her parents' separation.

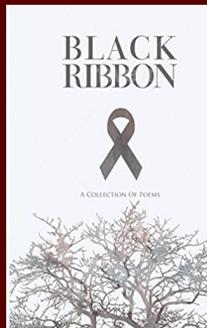


This book combines mystery and confusion into a YA love story. Great read for any young adult in your life.

[Purchase Here](#)

Black Ribbon

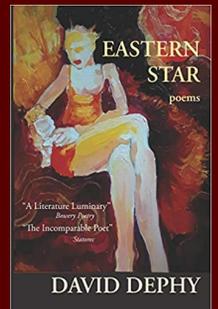
Black Ribbon is a collection of poetry that ventures through Love, Healing, and Purpose. It is split into three chapters The Bond, The Chaos, and The Still. Each Chapter serves a different purpose and intertwine the meaning of a Black Ribbon which is mourning. And through mourning do we learn to let go. It is letting go that makes way for what is needed for clarity. It is letting go that makes way for forgiveness. It is letting go that brings us together.



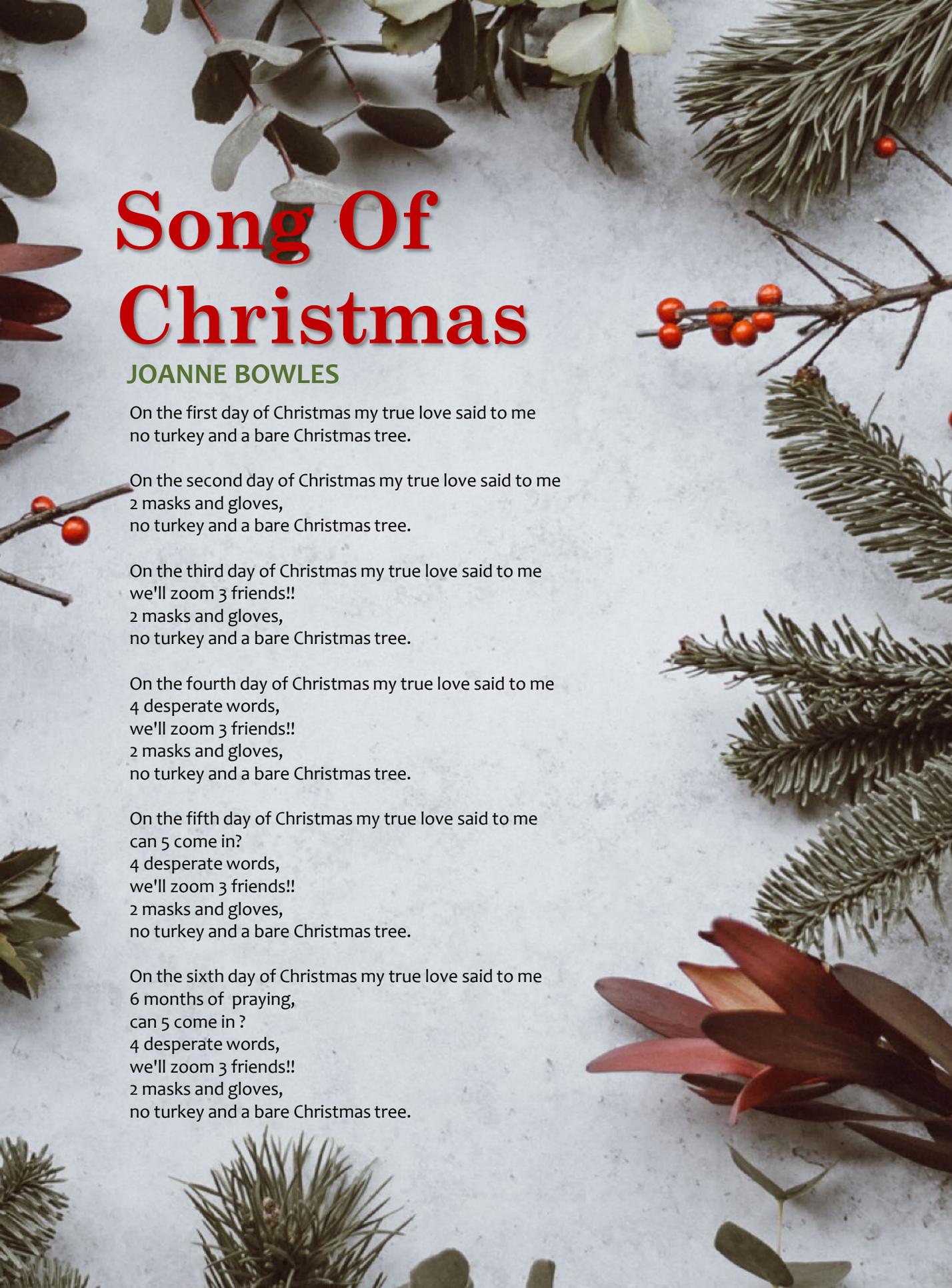
[Purchase Here](#)

Eastern Star

David Dephy's exuberant poems shout from the streets of Georgia to New York City. His work is honest and returns again and again to the idea of eternal hope, and freedom, despite the circumstances. When he writes, "The trust is the heart of prescience," the reader is reminded that there is something eternal for Dephy and at the heart of everything, there must be acceptance.



[Purchase Here](#)



Song Of Christmas

JOANNE BOWLES

On the first day of Christmas my true love said to me
no turkey and a bare Christmas tree.

On the second day of Christmas my true love said to me
2 masks and gloves,
no turkey and a bare Christmas tree.

On the third day of Christmas my true love said to me
we'll zoom 3 friends!!
2 masks and gloves,
no turkey and a bare Christmas tree.

On the fourth day of Christmas my true love said to me
4 desperate words,
we'll zoom 3 friends!!
2 masks and gloves,
no turkey and a bare Christmas tree.

On the fifth day of Christmas my true love said to me
can 5 come in?
4 desperate words,
we'll zoom 3 friends!!
2 masks and gloves,
no turkey and a bare Christmas tree.

On the sixth day of Christmas my true love said to me
6 months of praying,
can 5 come in ?
4 desperate words,
we'll zoom 3 friends!!
2 masks and gloves,
no turkey and a bare Christmas tree.



On the seventh day of Christmas my true love said to me
7 carol singers singing,
6 months of praying,
can 5 come in?
4 desperate words,
we'll zoom 3 friends!!
2 masks and gloves,
no turkey and a bare Christmas tree.

On the eighth day of Christmas my true love said to me
8 candles twinkling,
7 carol singers singing,
6 months of praying,
can 5 come in?
4 desperate words,
we'll zoom 3 friends!!
2 masks and gloves,
no turkey and a bare Christmas tree.

On the ninth day of Christmas my true love said to me
9 celebs still dancing,
8 candles twinkling,
7 carol singers singing,
6 months of praying,
can 5 come in?
4 desperate words,
We'll zoom 3 friends!!
2 masks and gloves,
no turkey and a bare Christmas tree.

On the tenth day of Christmas my true love said to me
10 months of sleeping,
9 celebs still dancing,
8 candles twinkling,
7 carol singers singing,
6 months of praying,
can 5 come in?
4 desperate words,
we'll zoom 3 friends!!
2 masks and gloves,
no turkey and a bare Christmas tree.



On the eleventh day of Christmas
my true love said to me
11th hour.... we're all waiting,
10 months of sleeping,
9 celebs still dancing,
8 candles twinkling,
7 carol singers singing,
6 months of praying,
can 5 come in?
4 desperate words,
we'll zoom 3 friends!!
2 mask and gloves,
veggie or turkey?
and a bare Christmas tree.

On the twelfth day of Christmas my true love said to me
12 Amazon parcels coming,
11th hour... we're still all waiting,
10 months of sleeping,
9 celebs still dancing,
8 candles twinkling,
7 carol singers singing,
6 months of praying,
can 5 come in?
4 desperate words,
we'll zoom 3 friends!!
2 masks and gloves,
stuff that turkey
and time to decorate our Christmas tree!!



OUR FEATURED

»» → *December writers* ← ««

“EVERY DAY OF YOUR
LIFE IS A SPECIAL OCCASION.”

- *Thomas S. Monson*

DAVID DEPHY

Author Feature



Artistic Freedom Initiative Bio

The trilingual Georgian/American award-winning poet, novelist, multimedia artist. The winner of the 2019 Spillwords Press Poetry Award and the finalist of the Adelaide Literary Award Anthology 2019 for the category of Best Poem.

An active participant in the American and international poetry and artistic scenes, such as PEN World Voices, 92Y Poetry Center, Voices of Poetry, Brownstone Poets, Lit Balm, Spectrum Reading Series, Long Island Poetry Listings, New York Public Library, Starr Bar Poetry Series, Poets in Nassau, Poets in Massachusetts, Columbia University – School of the Arts in the City of New York, Great Weather for Media in New York City, New York City Voices, Bowery Poetry Club which named him a Literature Luminary as well as the Statorec Magazine named him the Incomparable Poet.

His works have been published and anthologized in USA, UK and all over the world by the many literary magazines, journals, and publishing houses.

He is an author of fifteen books of poetry, eight novels and three audio albums of poetry. His first book-length works in English, a poetry *Eastern Star*, have been published in USA in October 2020 by Adelaide Books New York, also his book-length work in English, a novel *A Mystiere*, and a poetry *Lilac Shadow of a Tree* are forthcoming in USA in spring / fall 2021 from Mad Hat Press.

He lives and works in New York.

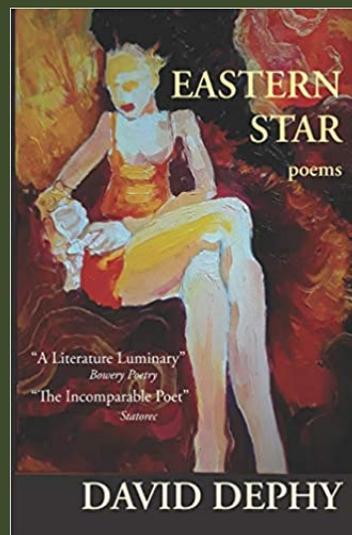
DAVID DEPHY – AUTHOR FEATURE

How did you get involved in writing poetry?

I build a text by breath and heartbeat. I called this process architecture of feelings, sounds and visions and by the way I earned my undergraduate degree MFA from the Faculty of Architecture at the State Academy of Fine Arts in Georgia. I can feel the words and I can see the words as a breath and heartbeat of language – of Georgian language, and of English language. I am a Georgian/American poet. I understand, it may sound strange, when Georgian language and English language meet each other in your consciousness and find a forever home there, but this is love and expressing it, especially in the language which lives inside your heart, is a supreme achievement of poetry to me, because for me poetry itself is a native language of humanity and a constitution of all mankind. Yes, spirit of us is poetry.

What is one of your favorite poetry experiences?

Unexpectedness is the way. Moving forward and trusting the flow, that is the main thing. Poem knows what to do with you, you must trust your own heartbeat. All the mysteries of the world are dwelling beyond fear to continue the path. Breath after breath, word after word, line after line, trusting the flow you navigate your ship of narrative across your own self, with a sound and image simultaneously. I feel something and I know the time is near. For me, a poem most often begins with the vision's luster and sound at the same time in a particular linguistic stream and its music and silence as well. In all honesty the image of scene does not exist separate from its expression. Silence is a clue.



David Dephy's exuberant poems shout from the streets of Georgia to New York City.

His work is honest and returns again and again to the idea of eternal hope, and freedom, despite the circumstances. When he writes, "The trust is the heart of prescience," the reader is reminded that there is something eternal for Dephy and at the heart of everything, there must be acceptance.

Purchase your copy of Eastern Star [HERE!](#)

TIME SHALL BE NO MORE

Our home is present. Our heart is present.
The only time where we are breathing.
The only time where miracles happen.
We place past and future into breath.
Time shall be no more.

We will be one day fully in present,
at home. Without obsessing about past
or future, or memories. Mirages of clear water
across dusty horizons, ripe expectations just
over the rise, right there. An old photograph

makes us chuckle, but now your smile
has such a glare, I just can't tell.
The journey keeps me turning back
to something forgotten, to something
misplaced, keeps me turning back

toward you. There is virtually no sound,
just a receding distant noise, a single wave
pulsing at its very end. Alive here, steeped in
disquieting thoughts trying to burst into song,
fumbling to utter a single word, any word.

THE TRUTH GLOWS

The truth glows.
Hot in here. Right here.
Deep in our minds.
Words always have
a double meaning.
We may not know
on whom they could depend
nor second to seek calmness
beyond our own. We are sliding
on the other side of alone.

DRAPES

It hardly matters
what stands in the corner,
who stands in the corner,
hidden by drapes.
My heart is calm.
My mind resounds
with a melody, only drapes rustle.
No one dares to appraise silence
and expectations, like that drapes,
bare my breath in a soul
at each encounter.

WINDOW IN MY SOUL

Time would come to pass.
Window in my soul.
Shadows of stones
at dawn are slowly
getting longer.
Dew of morning slides
on the grass. It seems to me
mind plays a game
without a score.
I sit by the door.
I loved.

TATE GENTRY

Author Feature

I have always been a writer of sorts, especially when you consider the prevalence of music in my family. I learned to write crafting songs, which I think led naturally to other forms of writing. I found that I could say more with a poem than I could with some songs. Of course the opposite is true as well, some themes translate to songs better than poetry. To me that is the beauty of it. Learning how to piece something together, and serving the work until it becomes this beautiful work of art. I've learned when you serve the work well, the writing usually shapes the writer more than the other way around. Which is exactly what keeps me writing. When I look at people, and places and faith, I can't help but want to explore how they weave together into this beautiful tapestry we call life. I see the whole world as this invitation into something greater, and I only hope to be able to show readers as much as I can.

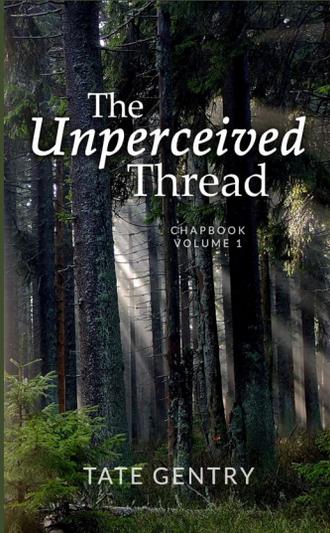
- *Tate*



[Typicaltate.wordpress.com](https://typicaltate.wordpress.com)

[Instagram.com/typical_tate](https://www.instagram.com/typical_tate)

TATE GENTRY – AUTHOR FEATURE



"By observing the world I perceived an oft unperceived thread." With these words Tate invites us on a journey. A journey that challenges us to see the marvelous and the mundane for the miracle they are. To see the landscape as a work of artistic beauty, and an invitation to grace. To see people as wonderful additions to the story of life, without whom our own story would be incomplete.

Purchase your copy of *The Unperceived Thread* [HERE!](#)

All the Good We Left Behind

I watched the mountains be blasted
And the fields go barren.
Lush greens fading
Now sickly black.

We have long forgotten
The feel of hand to plow-
The slow work of the land
Left behind in favor of expedient progress.

We industrialized the farm
Applying to it concepts
Of manufacture and production
Better left in the realm of textiles

Living ground knows no hurry,
Yet, we somehow convinced ourselves
We could master the land, bending
seed, time, and harvest to our wills.

Never did we realize
We mastered nothing
But our demise,
Killing the economy of small farms.

Now I weep,
For all the good we left behind,
Chasing a taste of something we thought better
But, oh if only we had known.

TATE GENTRY – AUTHOR FEATURE

Worn

I step up to the sink,
Plunging my hands beneath the flood
Letting the dirt of my day muddy the cleansing water.
The evidence of my efforts carried off,
Down the drain.

Clean hands, I splash my face,
My arms shake with the memory of my labors.
For once my body feels,
As weary and worn
As my soul.

Closing my eyes I hear the silence.
Is that my heartbeat?
Or is it the passing of time pounding at my soul
With a hammer, heavy as a dying star
Effecting gradual, imperceptible changes?

Yet when stacked up these subtle changes are seen,
I know that.
I know that I am not the same man I was,
Nor am I the man I will be.
I can't figure out if that is for good or ill.

Yet for all this toiling
I long to find rest,
A way to refresh
To somehow ease,
This bitter burning in my chest.

This constant roiling of emotion
Spilling out in hot tears
Down my cheeks.
I just want to rest.
To find a way to not be so worn.

The Writer's Blood

One hundred years from now
When everything has changed,
I wonder if anything
Of my life will remain.

Will my words die,
And return to dust with me?
Or will they be hung on walls
In halls for all to see?

I'll never know the answer,
But I keep hearing the calling page,
So I'll keep writing
Even if you never know my name.

Even if I write in vain,
I'll keep bleeding words on the page
As surely as an open vein,
Even if you never know my pain.

My only hope, dearest reader,
Is that I make you feel something,
Make a fleeting moment feel more real,
To remember love and forget the reckoning.

And if I make you feel anything at all
Know that it is because I felt it first.
If I made you feel lonely, it's because I was,
If I made you feel happy, joy had slaked my
thirst.

These words are how I bleed,
How I heal,
How I cry,
These words are how I know the world is real.

And long after you have moved on
Eyes closed, no longer reading
I'll be here at my desk,
Still bleeding.

JUSTIN GOODE

Author Feature

My poetry is inspired about the things that surround me. Relationships, politics, and environment of a young man in Atlanta, GA. I started writing in 2009 and doing open mics at Savannah State University. I graduated in 2014 and began doing shows in Atlanta. In 2016 I was booked for my first show and have been performing and writing ever since.

- Justin

Justin Goode is a poet from Clayton County, GA. His writing focuses on realism, colloquialism, and abstract writing. Ranging from social issues to love Justin displays his writing techniques in his first book *Black Ribbon: A Collection Of Poems*. Justin Goode brings a different aspect to his writing by incorporating a seven page comic strip in this book that displays the current state for young African Americans during the 2020s with the *Adventures of Cootie Brown*.

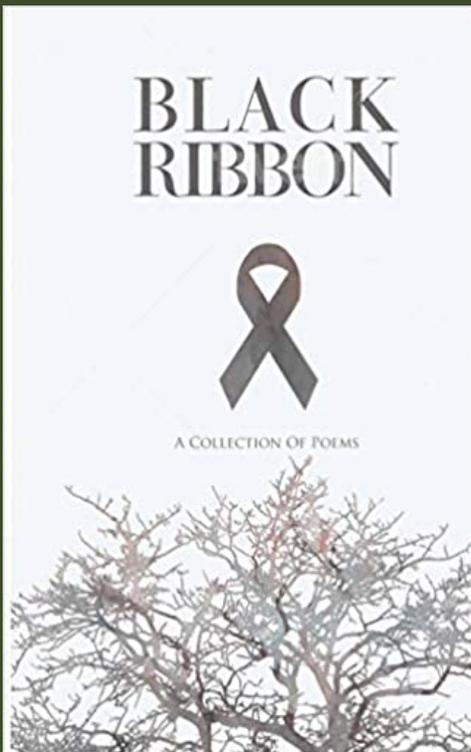


1of1global.com

[youtube.com/channel/UCzMCscQjc
TTj6U9qQANDeYg](https://youtube.com/channel/UCzMCscQjcTTj6U9qQANDeYg)

Instagram.com/JuiceBoomin

JUSTIN GOODE– AUTHOR FEATURE



Purchase your copy of
Black Ribbon [HERE!](#)

Black Ribbon is a collection of poetry that ventures through Love, Healing, and Purpose. It is split into three chapters The Bond, The Chaos, and The Still. Each Chapter serves a different purpose and intertwine the meaning of a Black Ribbon which is mourning. And through mourning do we learn to let go. It is letting go that makes way for what is needed for clarity. It is letting go that makes way for forgiveness. It is letting go that brings us together. Black Ribbon takes readers through a journey and reality many Americans today past through when seeking inner peace. And finds purpose in that peace. Because there is purpose everywhere. If you are willing to look.

JUSTIN GOODE – AUTHOR FEATURE

T.T.T.C. – [YouTube Video](#)

They say
black boys are made men on the streets
and born from hoes
and fall in love with each others success
until a woman is chose
but baby I chose you
and look
I made a throne of thorns
is that what Jesus did?
My grandma told me we are all God's children
well maybe he's black too
because I feel like he don't cheat
see his kids
but look
these rose petals look
just like teardrops
I brought a fountain for you
it came from the same river
twenty aunties eyes
when their nephew died
this will move mountains for you
hold on
is this not enough?
Do I have to say I hate you
for you to love me first after
take it away for you
to know your worth after
pretend I was never a slave
to free this curse
why don't you love me
like your mother never did
disappoint and disappear
and come back every couple years
but I understand with some people
they got to see if that shit
is really everlasting
but when the tables turn
it's fine to sit back
and throw another tantrum
I might turn another tassel
graduate from success
and find your happiness to be another hassle
hold on
maybe I'm hurt too



T.T.T.C.

to the point that it feels
my voice and my spine
to the point that I can't walk away
or say what's on my mind
to the point that that I'm blind
so it's frustration
not love in my eyes
so I only see your shortcomings
not the blessings in disguise
shit maybe I'm wrong too
well tell me
who was right about you
was it everybody else
nah there's so much conviction
in my point of view
maybe it's us
maybe our two wrongs can make it right
if we discussed it with trust
maybe we can move forward
if we stop looking back at all the lies
maybe we should just take it in pride
you know that one sin that we both love
maybe humility is the soil that's gonna
help us to grow love
maybe we just shouldn't fuck with maybe
and just keep it black and white
There's no reason to be color struck
we can set our own tone
and know that we can't go back
so the past is no home
hold on

JUSTIN GOODE – AUTHOR FEATURE

Dear Bestfriend: A Mental Health Awareness

Poem– [YouTube Video](#)

Before I heard the term mental health
I fell in love with contradictions
made love to split decisions
if the evens turned odd
I would split legs to new division
all my standards came in doubles
anxiety kept me rushing
my life was a puzzle
of 100 missing meanings
incomplete
and complete
as I compete for some virtue
kindhearted and hot tempered
too cordial and too dismissive
focused on everything
while trusting losing something
is losing nothing
even something is some structure
you know, fear none
love less
it would be easier for me to function
before I heard the term. It was...
you trippin'
ease your mind get some pussy
ease your mind pour some henny
ease your mind roll them woods up
ease your mind nigga hold up
before I heard the term. It was...
you think you trippin?
you ain't trippin' like that nigga
you think you got it bad?
I got a cousin that can't walk with you
I got a sister that can't talk with you
nigga even I got a condition
and I can still kick it wit you
before I heard the term.
I thought you stayed healthy by running
at least three times a day
two steps towards conflict
one step towards peace
and then you walk away
just like everybody else

I thought you stayed healthy
by running
cause it helps you breathe
by thinking about something else
I thought you stayed healthy by
takin' your mind off yourself
not in
just out
cause what's out
now belongs to somebody else
before I heard the term.
I can't lie
I thought about it first
it was too easy to roll of the tongue
like it seemed familiar
like I seen it before
in driveways
in uncles
in siblings
like I seen it before
in friends
in family
in commitment
like I seen it before
in my own eyes
in my own pride
I can't lie
It's like,
like I had thought about it before
it was too easy like...
this definition crosses my mind in real time
with real whys
a real guide
not illness
just the result
when your existence starts to peak
cause really it's the duality of niggas
look inside
see the calm
and the wildness in niggas
look in time
you can see the conflict in niggas
environment vs self
ego vs self
protection of oneself

→

JUSTIN GOODE – AUTHOR FEATURE

before I heard the term mental health
I knew I could change the world
after I heard it
I knew what was healthy for me comes first
no matter what
you have to do what's best for you first
no matter what
cause it's your point of view on issues
I can never look at you different
the same way you might see a man
with principles in prison
the same way you may see idols
mix wisdom with liquor
the same way you may see the brave
take flight as a decision
the same way your ego might ask you
to swap out money for morals
and my instincts never hesitate
but nigga really what's the issue
lately, my lady is my justice
and she talkin' like she can't find peace
like there's some kind of conflict goin' on
like if it ain't
then why am I never coming home
silence is golden
as my eyes drift to a gaze
and my hand finds a pencil
and the pencil finds it a page
and I realize
maybe it's me
I'm tripping
so times like this
remember
don't forget to be your own best friend
so today
I give you my mantras
and my positive affirmations
as i...
forget my past flaws
and move forward in progression
I see my life's passion
has forced me to face a past trauma
that I two time neglected
so this is my word from saviors
that will help my people

who suffer from depression remember
it's how you talk to yourself that defines you
be your own best friend
best friend
please tell the truth
even
when your voice shakes
don't
forget
what a village
looks like
don't
forget
what your village
looks like
don't ever forget about your family
from blood to sand
from friends who memories
date back farther than calendars can
learning to never
put bad energy on bad energy
learn
before you mention hurt
remember peace
learn
that you have to take time for yourself
learn
to keep everything in place
earn
the truth in every statement that you make
turn
to new leaves and new pages
never your back on your own patience
burn
bad ideas not bridges
learn
to take fake forgiveness
fall into the pleasure of forgiveness
Vick's for hard decisions
Psalms for repentance
gossip less enjoy your space
talk to God walk with faith
weigh your options not your problems
as you travel from worry to work
redefine it

JUSTIN GOODE – AUTHOR FEATURE

travel between your position
and your title
travel to new beaches
remember
there's time for solace
but no man is an island
it's always time for confidence
but pride can be a problem
wait best friend
don't forget what you came for
what you woke up for
what you need more for
what you see when your eyes are closed
the spaces and places to unlock doors
to empty rooms
that look long left abandoned
and when the time comes
don't forget to speak
and when you speak
see who is surrounded
it's the brave faces that bring you peace
the same peace that's inside you
it's always what's inside you
but wait
listen
best friend
your voice didn't shake



[Dear Bestfriend: A Mental Health Awareness Poem](#)



[Dogs&Birdds](#)



[The Fifth Amendment The Right of Persons](#)

BILLY HARRINGTON

Poet Feature

Like being on a bus driven by Sandra Bullock, Billy is hurtling towards middle-age, leaving behind a trail of regrets and carnage in his wake. Dressing like he has been dragged through a hedge backwards with a hairstyle that yells; "Help, I'm being held hostage!" Billy has been writing poetry seriously since the tender age of 3 years ago.

His inspiration for his work is based on something someone said, the ragged streets of Bristol and situations that he can get a unique perspective and/or twist like a M Night Sha..., M Night Shall...like the bloke who directed The 6th Sense movie. His writing influences are John Cooper Clarke, Philip Larkin, Leonard Cohen, David Bowie, Ray Davies, Douglas Adams and Charlie Kaufman.

Even though he is as "Street" as a muddy path in the woods, he has had one poem published in an American magazine called Urban, two poems read out on radio and was on TV everyday for a year as the face, (well the back of him), of unemployment for the South West of England.

He loves performing his poetry at open mic nights and is looking forward to getting back onstage once it is safe to be round people again. He has plans to publish a collection of his poems in the next year or so, (if he gets his backside into gear), but in the meantime his poetry can be found on his Instagram page.

He also thinks swearing is funny and clever and loves life. Life doesn't feel the same way and has told Billy to back off or they'll get a restraining order.

BILLY HARRINGTON – POET FEATURE

IF WAR WAS FOUGHT WITH CAKES

If War was fought with cakes not guns
Could the French disarm with cream choux buns
Will Germany go and use their scruples
Invading Europe with apple strudel
The Americans, with their do or die
Target the Middle East with apple pie
Of course you won't hear the British grumble
Defending the realm with rhubarb crumble
With its infantry armed with the latest rifles
Laser-scoped custard topped sherry trifles
Can you call it an armed contest
When the world's been bombed with Eton mess?
The news reports from far flung places
About custard pies thrown in enemies' faces
And hundreds and thousands will face death
By chocolate, that way is the best.
So, if war was fought with cakes not guns
Our waistlines lose, but it was yum.



[Instagram.com/
Thepoetbillyharrington](https://www.instagram.com/Thepoetbillyharrington)

[Twitter.com/thepoetbillyhar](https://twitter.com/thepoetbillyhar)

BILLY HARRINGTON – POET FEATURE

HEROINE

Through fears come tears that fall
Forsaking me was all in vain
When pain comes back a creeping
Weeping eyes cries out my name

I'm there for you when crisis rise
I'll prise away that pain for peace
For you light that fire for desire
I give to you that sweet relief

And when life's toll takes hold of you
That vice-like grip that pulls you down
Suffice to say I'll rip it's grasp
And stamp your problems underground

My love runs true inside of you
I'll stick with you and we will win
I'm your love, your saint, and saviour
Your one and only heroin

TOMORROW

She hides herself around the corner
I'm told she is brighter, better
And that should save myself to her

But Present is a jealous bitch
Knocking at my door at midnight
Bringing her friends

She tells me to fully embrace
Both the Here and Now
And that I should be in the Moment

Present slyly whispers into my ear;
"You can always wait for her
But Tomorrow never comes."

MARLENE PARMENTER

Poet Feature

I have always from a child enjoyed writing poetry. My poems are like me, not deep complicated, but easy reading and undemanding. I pick up on people's idiosyncrasies and the way they may think. Looking at life as I see it. Enjoying the beauty of nature.

I feel lost when I have no thoughts of a poem and on cloud nine when I have finished one. As long as it is good! With four grandchildren and being married for 45 years gives me a few ideas . I have never had a book published, but have had a few poems in the local papers, I have a web page on Facebook called "Poetry From Mars", which has about 1500 followers, more would be welcome.

As always, I will be celebrating any thing I can, but I did celebrate my 65th birthday in September!

- Marlene



MARLENE PARMENTER – POET FEATURE

Far from the Maddening Crowd.

Delve deep into my soul,
I think this is where I'd be,
Sitting on a rock
Looking out to sea.
The water shines and glistens.
The waves wash gently to the shore.
Such peace and such beauty
I could sit for evermore.
The faces in the rocks
Stand guard over me,
Allowing me to share the magnificent
Of this coast so wild and free.
With the breeze on my face
The sky darkens all around
To enhance another scene.
Different colours to be found .
The sea turns to dark silver.
The rocks a menacing grey,
But it still holds a splendour
That makes me want to stay.

Are We Nearly there yet?

Are we nearly there yet?
Says the voice in the car.
“It’s been taking ages.
Why is it so far?
Can we stop soon?
I do need a pee.
My bum’s gone numb.
How much further can it be?
Are we nearly there yet?”
“We’ve only done another mile!”
His fingers clutch the steering wheel,
I can see he is getting hostile.
“But I really need to go “
Says that little voice once more.
His mouth moved without sound ,
I’m pretty sure he swore!
Then suddenly he turns,
And halts, making noisy skids.
“Next time I’ll leave you at home,
And just bring the bloomin’ kids

MARLENE PARMENTER – POET FEATURE

Grumpy Old Men

Another new day
Of sunshine and laughter,
Now we are retired
It should be happy ever after.
It starts off so quiet.
Our life is complete,
But it begins to kick off
As soon as he gets to his feet!
"Where are my glasses?
What have you done with my phone?"
The hunt then begins
Like a dog digging for his bone.
Cushions are thrown.
Clothes fly in the air.
"Here they are dear"
"Who put them there?"
Breakfast is done
Its time to go out.
So its "Where are my keys?"
Of that I've no doubt.
Through all the pockets,
Jeans, jacket and coat.
"Ooops they're here in me bag'
Now don't jump down me throat".
When he is driving,
He swears and he curse,
As every driver
Is clearly the worst.
"What are they doing?
Shouldn't be allowed on the road.
Just get a move on
Don't you know highway code?"
Next, it's horse riders and cyclist,
That come under threat.
Trying to get past
He breaks into a sweat.
"Shall we go home?
Feet up and unwind."
I'm sure that would be best
For the welfare of mankind.
Let's calm and destress.
Slouch on the settee.
Then he can moan
About the rubbish on T.V.

Don't dance with the Devil.

Don't dance with the Devil
If you wanna be good,
But if you wanna be bad
Then maybe you should.
Start with a Jig
He'll be watching you,
Rubbing his hands together,
"I've got someone new"
And if you enjoy it,
It makes you come alive.
You can always progress
To a full on Jive.
Once he has your interest
He'll let you Rock n Roll.
Then before you know it
You have sold your sole.
There's no turning back
When you've got this far.
You are now his disciple
Progressed to a lively Cha Cha.
You will never know a Heaven,
It will be hot where you dwell.
Once he has your soul
You will forever burn in Hell.
So don't dance with the Devil
If you wanna be good.
But if you wanna be bad
Then maybe you should.

BILL STEEN

Poet Feature

Hi! I'm Bill Steen. I live in Spokane, Washington in the beautiful Pacific Northwest with my sweetheart of nearly 44 years. I happily take credit for our 10 amazing children even though my wife did almost all the hard work of raising them. So far, those children have blessed our lives with 19 of the ugliest grandkids you would ever hope to see.

I am about a year away from retiring as a service technician for a soft drink distributor where I have been employed for over 42 years. That job constantly has allowed me to drive through some of the most beautiful and inspiring country on earth.

I am without a doubt one of the most boring men on the planet. I was born without a sports gene, so I do not play, participate in, follow, or stay awake for any type of sporting event or recreational activity. I have no hobbies other than writing bad poetry. I do have a large garden. On the entry gate to my garden is a sign which reads, "Grandpa's Therapist." That is the truth. It keeps my fingers therapeutically grounded in topsoil and my mind weeded.

I also keep the garden for the enjoyment of the 19 pillagers inflicted upon me by my children and children-in-law. The grandkids raid the grapes, 6 kinds of berries, and anything else they fancy. They also break some eggs, as I keep a couple of hens to enhance their faux rural experience. In case you hadn't guessed, my family is the center of my universe.

In my early years I moved often. In my first 18 years I attended 10 schools and moved over 50 times. Most of my time was spent living on or near my maternal grandparents' farm. It was my grandad who developed my love of poetry. I still have fond memories of listening to him recite long portions of Robert Service's humorous poems while milking cows by hand. He loved the classic poets who wrote in meter and rhyme. That is probably why I write almost exclusively in meter and rhyme.

I have written poetry for as long as I can remember, but I will admit that most of it was not very good or varied until my oldest son set up my IG account for me a few years ago. Since joining IG I have been instructed and inspired. I have learned new, exciting, and challenging poetic forms. I have also been inspired by the writing, photos, and art shared by my friends on social media. As a result of this daily influence, I now write in a wide variety of styles and a broad range of topics. I try very hard not to be a "one note" poet.

A side benefit of my social media experiment is that I now have friends I will never meet in person, scattered all across the globe. They are wonderful, kind, and supportive folks who tolerate my teasing and weird sense of humor and encourage my writing efforts. I like them and care about them. I like to think some of them even feel the same way about me.

I have been asked if I have any books. No I do not. The type of poetry I write is not popular enough to generate sufficient sales. While I am content to share my art on social media with those few who enjoy what I write, I am actually writing for my posterity, many of whom are not yet born. It is my sincere hope that some of what I write will have a quality and appeal which will outlive me. I hope some of my grandchildren, great grandchildren, and great great grandchildren will read my poems. I hope they giggle at my silliness, weep for my sorrows, and smile when they feel my love for them. Even though I will never know them, I hope that they will learn to know me through my poetry. If I can achieve that, I will feel like a successful poet.

BILL STEEN – POET FEATURE

The Game of Chess

I feared him most while still a child.
As youth, I taunted, I confess.
But now the fear and loathing gone,
We often play a game of chess.
I always win, at least so far.
I oft suspect he throws the game,
So I will stay, and play, and learn,
He's not as fearsome as his name.
Companions in the fading light
As sunlight paints the western skies,
We share the beautiful, but brief
God given gift when daylight dies.
There in the dim, we silent play.
To lose a piece, now has no sting.
For I no longer fear that game,
When Death shall gently take my king.



[Instagram.com/flipstork](https://www.instagram.com/flipstork)

I Cannot Go Down to the Sea Today

I cannot go down to the sea today, a landlocked prisoner, I,
To see the wild gulls circle round white sails which brush the sky;
And the gull's cry, and the ebb tide, and the salt breeze blowing,
And walks along the endless beach with time and trouble slowing.

I cannot go down to the sea today. I cannot feel damp sand
Caressing bare feet lovingly as I stroll along the strand;
And the smooth shell, and the rough shell, and the kelp frond twining,
As the small waves soothe the large sighs with reflected sunlight shining

I cannot go down to the sea today with its slightly fetid air;
Where that fresh breath in a brisk gust, frolics through my hair.
I cannot go down to the sea today to lull my load of care,
But with eyes closed, I will breathe deep, and dream that I am there.

The Bachelor Cantaloupe

Upon a rocky garden slope
There lived a lonely cantaloupe.
Without romantic horoscope,
True love is hard to find.

Too round to love and then elope,
This melon sat alone to mope
Until he felt a sexy grope
He really didn't mind.

He thought it love, but sadly nope.
Reality then shattered hope.
A knife was his brief gastroscope,
And now he's just a rind.

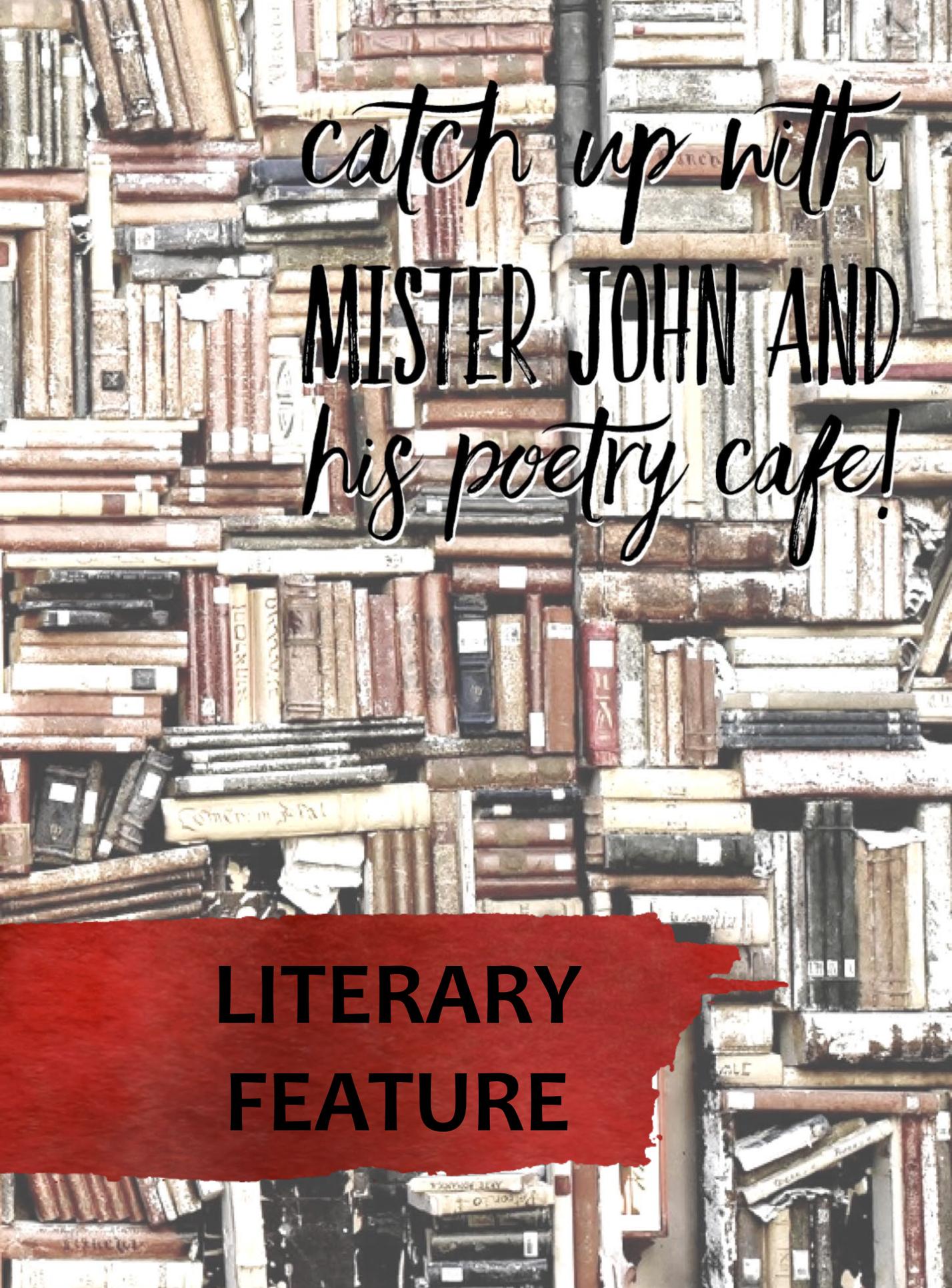
What is True Love?

What is the sound of my true love?
Is it a giggle or a sigh?
Is it a crooning soft and low;
A steady heartbeat which I know;
A silent smiling by and by?
What is the sound of my true love?

What is the length of my true love?
Is it a brief flirtatious fling;
A wink, a kiss, a quick caress?
Or bulwark of life's long duress
Withstanding all the fates may bring?
What is the length of my true love?

What is the face of my true love?
Is it young, taut, and blemish free?
Or worn with work and sacrifice
Reflecting Hell and Paradise?
What is the face I hope to see?
What is the face of my true love?

True love is youth worn wise with age,
Beyond young giggle quickly gone.
No longer pretty, fleet, nor fair,
True love, grown beautiful, smiles there
While waiting on beyond eon.
True love is youth worn wise with age.



catch up with
MISTER JOHN AND
his poetry cafe!

**LITERARY
FEATURE**

POETRY CAFÉ – MISTER JOHN

MEL HAAGMAN

This month Mel caught up with Mister John who runs the Poetry Café. A platform for local poets to present their work to an appreciative audience, in a relaxed café environment! Here's what she found out! Why not check out the poetry café on Facebook to keep up to date with events!

facebook.com/poetrycafeugt/

Mel: Can you tell us a little bit about yourself?

John: Mister John is of course my stage name and in real life I am John Myers, retired social worker and very amateur poet. I am 82 but luckily still fairly fit. Lived in Warwickshire for 36 years and moved to Eastbourne 7 years ago

Mel: How did the poetry cafe start?

John: It started 5 years ago under the aegis of the community run Underground Theatre as part of its spoken word strand with the ethos of being open to all without an entrance fee

Mel: Why did you want to create this group and event?

John: I had a bucket list on our move to a new place far away. On that list was to find a poetry Open Mic and if I failed then to start one. I also belong to a poetry group as I did before, but I feel there is something special about an Open Mic. Every session is unpredictable and unique and often dynamic, and, as someone said last night, you get to air your poems but there is no discussion or criticism just applause

Mel: How would you describe your own style of writing?

John: A mish mash, objets trouvés, unpolished, different styles, forms, freeform, genres but always something of myself except perhaps when writing for an occasion

Mel: Who is your favourite poet?

John: In view of my last answer it will be no surprise that it varies from time to time and mood to mood. Today I will go for Homer

Mel: Have you written more during lockdown? Not really and not so well when I have, though the BLM movement has been spurring

Mel: Best show you've been watching during lockdown?

John: I have watched a lot of theatre and films that I would not have done otherwise. "Small Axe" looks like being really good

"Every session is unpredictable and unique and often dynamic, and, as someone said last night, you get to air your poems but there is no discussion or criticism just applause"

Mel: What is your favourite poem that you've written?

John: A verse play about Theseus, The Minotaur, and Ariadne. That was an undertaking!

Mel: Do you have any upcoming events?

John: Yes, once a month and maybe some online additional events during this age of covid constraints

N.B. The Underground Theatre folded, sadly, 18 months ago, but it has re-opened under new management as The Grove Theatre and we have been welcomed back there



UPCOMING VIRTUAL

EVENTS FOR DECEMBER!

PIER POETS

1ST FRIDAY OF EVERY MONTH

Pier Poetry gets together on the first Friday of every month. At present we're meeting on Zoom. You can find all the details of how to join us on our Facebook page. Our next open mic is November 6th.

Pier Poetry is an open mic night run in association with New Writing South. We offer five-minute slots for poets of all different styles and levels of experience, especially those getting behind the mic for the first time. We love seeing people trying out new stuff and taking risks. As the Pier Poetry community has grown over the two years we've been running, we've also loved hearing about regular attendees' pamphlets, publications, prizes and projects. Pier Poetry puts equality at the heart of what we do, and we strive to make the night a welcoming space for all.

facebook.com/pierpoets



FLIGHT OF THE DRAGONFLY

BI-MONTHLY – DECEMBER 8TH

There are three of us in our little collective - Barbera, Sam and Darren. We have been going since January 2019. Guest poets have included John McCullough, Matt Duggan, Naomi Wood and Nigel Kent.

The next session will be the 8th of December via Zoom. There is room for a dozen or so other readers; we welcome poetry, prose of flash fiction and ask that anyone who wishes to read submits in advance (up to 750 words or 5 minutes, as a word document).

We ask readers to submit so that we can confirm with them that they will be reading and so we can organize a running order.

To read or request the Zoom link to just listen on the night please email:

flightofdragonflyspokenword@gmail.com

[facebook.com/dragonflies-spoken-word](https://www.facebook.com/dragonflies-spoken-word)

[Twitter.com/DragonfliesSW](https://twitter.com/DragonfliesSW)



RUN YOUR TONGUE

December 10th

We've been going since 2012 and were based in Kettering until lockdown; now we are running two regular open mic events via Zoom, where we are attracting performers from all over the world, including the USA, Morocco and Australia.

You can find a list of previous headliners here: <https://www.robreeves.co.uk/runyourtongue>

[Facebook.com/runyourtongue](https://www.facebook.com/runyourtongue)
[Instagram.com/runyourtongue](https://www.instagram.com/runyourtongue)



SOUNDBITES

MONTHLY – THIS MONTH: December 14th

Join Soundbites each month for a poetry open mic event that started live in Leeds in March 2019 and moved to Zoom in April this year following lockdown.

The format is simple – a different guest poet joins each month followed by 5-minute open mic slots. You can check out the guest poets' sets under Soundbites on our website heartlines.uk.

This month, James Nash will be the featured guest!

To take part in the Zoom sessions either in an open mic slot or as an audience member, please sign up [here](#)! Closing date is Saturday the 12th of December.

[Facebook.com/SoundbitesPoetry](https://www.facebook.com/SoundbitesPoetry)



HUDSON VALLEY WRITERS GROUP

December 18th

Our Open Mic Nights are held from 7:30-9:30pm on the 3rd Friday of each month. Virtual doors open at 7:20 for event starting at 7:30 pm EST. Due to popular demand to participate, we've had to limit the amount of readers to 20. Your donations are welcome during this difficult time for so many, including arts nonprofits.

All genres welcome – fiction, non-fiction, poetry, music, comedy, storytelling, other. OpenMic will give you an opportunity to share your talents in a nurturing, comfortable space with some great people. Bill Buschel is your host.

Readers and FREE audience members all – please register on writerscenter.org to join!

Facebook.com/hudsonvalleywriterscenter

APPLES AND SNAKES

READ. WATCH. LISTEN.

Apples and Snakes is England's leading organization for spoken word with an international reputation for producing engaging and transformative work. Since 1982, the organization has advocated for artistic and social change through the power of performance poetry working with artists including The Last Poets, Billy Bragg, Lemn Sissay, Francesca Beard, Kae Tempest, Charlie Dark, and Polarbear.

Apples and Snakes supports and champions poets and poetry in performance, amplifies unheard voices and challenges expectations of what poetry is and can be. Spoken word trailblazers, the company commissions and produces events, develops artists and runs participation programs across the country.

**APPLES
AND
SNAKES**

facebook.com/applesandsnakes

Instagram.com/applesandsnakes

Twitter.com/applesandsnakes

ApplesAndSnakes.org

ROCKPORT POETRY OPEN MIC

ONGOING OPEN MIC

Rockport Poetry hopes to encourage the writing and reading of poetry as an actively supported art form in the Rockport, Cape Ann, North Shore community... and beyond.

This will be a comfortable forum for connecting with kindred spirits, as well as sharing poems and ideas.

In addition will it also serve as a reference source for events and workshops and writer's resources.

Rockport Poetry is intended to be a safe space for the development of strong voices and poets of all ages and backgrounds.

Watch for our upcoming Open Mic Nights and more at
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1295270703870830>

PANTISOCRACY POETRY

[Facebook.com/pantisocracypoetry](https://www.facebook.com/pantisocracypoetry)

[Mixcloud.com/pantisocracypoetry](https://www.mixcloud.com/pantisocracypoetry)

We are Pantisocracy Poetry: a Newcastle based open-mic poetry night.

Just before the UK lockdown was imposed, we celebrated our one year anniversary. Happily, we were able to host an anniversary event to reflect fondly on our growth throughout the months. From humble, word-of-mouth beginnings, we have grown to a bustling community of passionate poets and poetry fans alike.

The name of our event says it all about our ambitions, which haven't changed a bit since the first event: just like Coleridge and Southey's intentions to build a brand-new society, one free of prejudice and difference (which were trashed when Southey asked his partner how they should transport the slaves there...), we strive to create a safe space where poets, both novice and experienced, feel confident enough to share their own amazing work with fellow performers against the backdrop of the toon. In keeping with this, the events always have been and always will be completely and utterly free.

In order to get yourself on the bill for any of the events, there is no screening process or, in fact, any foresight required at all - you simply turn up on the night with your poems in hand and a fire in your belly.

Whilst being unable to run live events, we have turned to social media to maintain contact with our community. We have run a number of live 'events' over Facebook and have been blown away by the willingness of local poets to roll up their sleeves, adapt, and get involved once more! More recently, we have begun a podcast, tackling the big issues, such as "What's mightier, the pen or the sword-throat? Do you prefer spoken or written poetry?"

We're very proud of the community that we have brought together over the past year and a half, but we are always looking to grow, so if this all sounds like something you'd like to be a part of, then give us a like, a follow or even a message to ask us any questions, or to just say hello.

Stay safe,
Pantisocracy Poetry, Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Meet our co-creators!

AND CHECK OUT WHAT
THEY ARE WATCHING &
READING!



KASSIE J RUNYAN

Co-Creator



Well this is the time of year that I pull out the Christmas movies and tv shows and that is about all I watch... or listen to. With this year being the year of Covid and the year that we stay home the majority of our days, I anticipate watching (aka listening) to more movies than EVER. Beyond that... here is my list of recent finds

Kassie Recommends...

Book – Lost Girls by Ellen Birkett Morris

I am so happy I ‘found’ this book through one of my groups that I joined to learn more about social media management. It’s full of short stories that are completely stunning as it explores the experiences of women and girls as they grieve, find love, face uncertainty, take a stand, find their future and say goodbye.

TV Show – Ted Lasso

This show is on AppleTV where a Kansas (feels like home after living there for 9 years) Football coach is hired to teach a Soccer (football to anyone outside of the US) team in England. It’s absolutely delightful and I honestly feel better after watching it. Just got two more seasons too!

KassieJRunyan.com

Facebook.com/kassiejrunyan

Instagram.com/kjrunyan

Twitter.com/kassandrerunyan

youtube.com/playlist?list=PLvSEcLEfE196OE_Ya2LNNN3kjFp82Ktt2

KASSIE J RUNYAN – CO-CREATOR

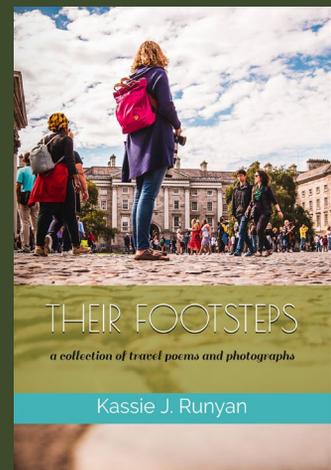
When I was a Child

When I was a child
they would often say,
you should be seen
and not heard.
And I would think,
someday
I will grow into a woman.
And people will listen
to my words,
just as they ignore them now.
I will not be told to
be silent
or that I'm too abrupt
or emotional
or be laughed at
because my big words
seem precocious
in such a small girl.
I will stand
and they will listen
to the thoughts in my head.
I will be heard
and acknowledged
for what is in my brain;
not just my silence.
When I am a grown woman
I will be able
to use my voice
without judgement
or looks of annoyance
or a shush.
I would close my eyes
and dream of being grown
and of all the things I would think
and of all the things I would learn
and of all the things I would say.

But then I grew up
and I was still
just a girl.



Purchase your copy of *This Is 2020* [HERE!](#)



Purchase your copy of *Their Footsteps* [HERE!](#)

KASSIE J RUNYAN – CO-CREATOR

the song

they sit around the fire
as it burns to ash
the light dimming
now shining in the eyes
of the people sitting around
the fading warmth
strangers before tonight
a finger strums a guitar
and they begin to sing
in a rhythm
they all seem to know
as they croon into the
deepening night
the last light falls to sleep
behind the turning globe
and the strangers...
or the used to be strangers...
at least before tonight
watch the stars start to shine
as they sing as one
to the beat they didn't know
now the only song remembered
before they follow the sun
into the ground

GREEK SOUL

No phone screens
No distractions
Everyone lost in conversations
Laughing
Smiling
Halfway across the globe
people rushing and sweating
but here that's never a thought
Sit
Relax
Converse
Let the air thick with fish and salt
fill your lungs
Breathe in the lingering odors
of fresh coffee and crisp cheese
Let the noon drink flow down your throat,
stinging so sweetly
A cat brushes past your leg
A donkey whinies across the
cobblestone path
No cars
No pollution
Everyone is your friend
If they aren't, they soon will be
Feel as every muscle relaxes
The sun warms your soul
and the seat you are in
as it lowers behind the hill
The ancient buildings climb the hillside
The fishing boats roll in
Everyone yelling greetings
in this daily life
built on a rock
sticking out of the sea
Do I belong here?
I think so.

MEL HAAGMAN

Co-Creator

Mel Recommends...

Book - **The Confession** by Jessie Burton

I couldn't put this book down, so much so I gave myself a migraine because I had read for such elongated periods of time. It was worth the pain! A deeply moving novel about self-discovery and unearthing the truth. It's a story about three women Elise, Constance and Rose who are all united by love, betrayal and self-understanding. The book jumps from different times in a coherent and intriguing way. This a story you won't forget in a hurry. I am now about to read Burton's 'The Muse.'

TV Show - **Love life.** BBC Iplayer

Anna Kendrick stars in ten episodes as Darby Carter, a quirky, relatable character who has a string of failed relationships throughout her 20s and 30s. It is light-hearted, funny and just what we need right now to switch off to. It had me both laughing out loud and in tears. I couldn't recommend it more.

Podcast - **The High Low.**

Dolly Alderton and Pandora Sykes make my Wednesday a day of the week that I look forward to. The podcast is based on the founding message that life is best consumed with a mix of the trivial and the political. The two writers and friends delve into topics that cover highbrow and lowbrow culture. They are witty, intelligent and captivating to listen to. Every recommendation from Dolly and Pandora has been brilliant.



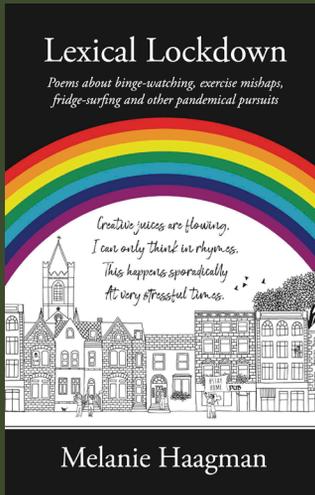
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[youtube.com/channel/UCjh8b4Y7gSF
GKewzPKZH8lw](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCjh8b4Y7gSF GKewzPKZH8lw)

MEL HAAGMAN – CO-CREATOR



Purchase your copy of
Lexical Lockdown [HERE!](#)



Purchase your copy of **Open
Heart Poetry [HERE!](#)**

Girl on the Edge 90

Welcome to Girl on the Edge,
I'll provide you with rhyming verse,
About a variety of topics.
Where we can poetically immerse
Into the beauty of sharing thoughts,
About the world's goings on,
Highlighting what's going right
And of course what's going wrong.
We are a community bound by words,
We've shared so much to date,
We have spread positivity
And tried to eradicate the hate.
We are strong, like-minded people,
With creative outlets of expression,
And together in our little group,
Our insights we can freshen.
So I'll continue my writing journey,
With sharing my dialogue inside,
So take a seat on my rollercoaster,
And I'll take you on a ride...

MEL HAAGMAN – CO-CREATOR

Present

Today I'm really struggling,
But trying not to show,
I need to have a good old cry,
If I could just let go...
But something inside fights it,
And I know I'm not alone,
Whilst we battle loneliness,
Stuck inside at home.
No end in sight or time frame
That will cease this whole ordeal,
I want to write so positively
But I've got to keep it real.
So, if you feel the same right now
Have a virtual hug from me,
And tomorrow will be easier,
Fresher outlooks you will see.
Not thinking too far in advance,
We'll take it day by day,
So you'll find me in the present,
The safest place to stay...

A Reverse Poem

You are not enough today
Don't ever say that
You are trying your hardest
You can always do better
Stop thinking that
You will get there
Without punishing yourself
You have to find the power to succeed
You are not loved
You are not important and
You must stop thinking that
You are doing your best

(Now read bottom up)



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**CREATED BY MEL HAAGMAN AND KASSIE J RUNYAN
DESIGNED BY KASSIE J RUNYAN**