



# Tiferet

FOSTERING PEACE THROUGH LITERATURE & ART

SPRING/SUMMER 2023



COLORED DESIGN BY RICHARD STOCKER

# Tiferet

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FOSTERING PEACE THROUGH LITERATURE & ART

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# Tiferet

SPRING/SUMMER 2023

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Through his intricate ink designs, Richard Stocker explores movement and balance. His art is influenced by over thirty years of experience as a body worker, as well as his fascination with the dynamic rhythms of nature. After losing his young son to Leukemia in 2005, he travelled the world introducing families to the healing benefits of coloring. He lives in northern Michigan and devotes much time to helping people find solace and joy through creativity.

Richard's work has appeared on the cover of Tiferet Journal, at Art Prize 2015, in the art collection of Detroit Receiving Hospital, and in the homes of private collectors. In the spring of 2016, he was a featured artist at The Detroit Institute of Arts and The University of Michigan Museum of Art for his innovative work creating community through coloring.

Richard invites those interested in learning more about his projects and artwork to email him directly at [partlycloudy@rstocker.com](mailto:partlycloudy@rstocker.com).



# Tiferet

FOSTERING PEACE THROUGH LITERATURE & ART

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"Thank you for this journal which combines spiritual issues, imaginative issues, esthetic issues. All of those, I think, need to be in the mix for the richly lived life, the richly observed life."

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## HOW APRIL COMES

*Alfred LaMotte*

Outside the window  
in the hollow of your spine  
on a long black twig  
still cold with night dew,  
plum blossoms silently  
burst open.

When you can see things  
that happen within you  
out there,  
and things that happen  
out there within you,  
you know how a breath  
of wonder

pries open the tomb.  
How a savior walks  
barefoot through  
the disheveled garden,  
his voice whispering  
"Mary"

almost like a prayer.  
How the woman cries  
"Rabboni!"  
and drops her weighty  
urn of tears,  
shattering the darkness.  
How April comes,  
and all the juices  
in these earthen jars  
turn to wine.

POETRY

THE GARDEN WHERE NOTHING WENT WRONG

*Alfred LaMotte*

*This poem is based on the lost version of Genesis,  
a cave painting in the grotto of my missing rib.*

This sense that something  
went wrong.  
The sense that we have fallen  
and taken the world down with us.  
The sense that all  
might have turned out better  
had she not made some  
colossal mistake  
in the beginning.  
The sense that nature  
disapproves, and every  
flower is shouting about  
the impending cataclysm  
because a dark mother  
tasted the fruit of  
unbearable joy.  
Dear friend, don't you know  
that humans hesitate and  
cower before uncertainty  
age after age, inventing  
the same story again?  
It's how we feel when we  
don't know how to breathe,  
when we don't know how to  
pause between heartbeats,  
to savor the delicate bouquet  
of this moment.

# *Tiferet*

Some say heaven will appear  
when this tribulation is over.  
I say heaven is an infinitesimal  
grain of silence  
at the tip of your exhalation,  
just before you receive  
the gift of another breath.  
Meet me here.  
We'll dance barefoot  
in the garden where nothing  
ever went wrong,  
and there was only  
one tree, whose roots  
went deep into the loam,  
whose branches bent down  
with clusters of ripening  
sweet stars,  
and a sparkling serpent spiraled  
up the spine of the Goddess.  
The serpent was Wisdom.  
The Goddess was Eve.  
She marveled at the dust  
in the palm of her hand,  
blew upon it,  
and created a Man.

NONFICTION

## Return to Joy

*Andrew Harvey & Carolyn Baker*

Nothing is more important for the future of humanity than a global return to joy. At a moment of profound sadness regarding the state of the world, Andrew Harvey, in a dream vision, was given a message that changed his life. A golden banner was unfurled in the sunlit sky above, and on that banner were written these words: *Joy is the power*. Immediately he understood, viscerally and cellularly, that the tremendous challenges we all face at this time cannot be met by grief or heartbreak or despair alone. What is needed for all of us is to find the way back to what all spiritual traditions know as the essence of reality—the simple joy of being that is the indispensable foundation for all meaningful living and all truly effective action.

We live in a civilization that has lost the essential truth of reality as it has been known in all the mystical and indigenous traditions. In the third decade of the twenty-first century, civilized humans are madly engaged in what is portrayed to them as a pursuit of happiness, but in most cases, they have little experience of joy as the ultimate nature of reality. The obvious question that arises from this statement is: What is the difference between happiness and joy? Part two is an attempt to discern the difference based on the fundamental assumption, derived from the

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great spiritual and mystical traditions, that joy is the ultimate nature of reality. Happiness is circumstantial; it is a state that, as everyone knows, comes and goes. The joy of which we speak is not predicated by shifts of fate or the play of emotions.

Knowing this makes clear to everyone that the true task of life is to uncover this primordial joy in oneself and then live from its peace, energy, radiant purpose, and embodied passion. This of course demands a lifetime commitment to working with all the forces in oneself that occlude the sun of this joy and becoming clear about all the forces in the world – and especially within our culture – that do not believe this joy is real and sometimes have a conscious agenda to destroy its manifestation.

Living in sacred joy not only reflects the truth of absolute reality but is the ultimate achievement a human being is capable of and the ultimate sign that someone has awoken to their fundamental divine nature and its responsibilities in the world. When asked what the true sign of a great teacher or an authentically awakened person is, His Holiness the Dalai Lama replied, “He or she radiates joy in whatever circumstances arise.” This radiation of joy has nothing to do with our current banal understandings of happiness, but has everything to do with a rigorous discipline of seeing through the illusions that govern and distort human behavior – and seeing through even the illusion of

death, because what is revealed in awakening is the inner divine self that no defeat or ordeal or even death itself can touch or destroy. True joy is born from this realization. Reading about this or even thinking deeply about this is just the beginning. What has to be undertaken is the challenging and demanding journey toward knowing this viscerally and beyond any doubt.

If you want to live in the joy that is actively creating all the universes and is your own true father/mother, then you have to undertake the journey of allowing the illusions that prevent you from living in the constant sun of your real nature to die.

We see the reality of this awakened condition emanating from the presence of the Dalai Lama, shining in the noble face of Nelson Mandela, vibrant in the witness and grace of Jane Goodall, and radiating in the patience and compassion of hundreds of thousands of nurses, doctors, aid workers, environmental activists – ordinary, extraordinary beings of all kinds who have turned up in often very difficult circumstances to commit themselves to the work of love and justice. These are examples that anyone can relate to, and it is very important to understand that if joy is the ultimate nature of reality, the journey toward it can be undertaken by anyone, whatever they have done and however dark with despair their lives may have become. For example, Milarepa became the greatest saint of Tibet after being a black magician who caused the death of 150 people. Luis Rodriguez, former gang member

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and prison inmate, is today an award-winning poet on a spiritual path, an urban peace activist who ran for California governor in 2014. Andrew has worked with men recently released from prison, gang members and murderers who have decided to transform their lives and serve. Is this not the essence of the story of Jesus, who associated with criminals and prostitutes? No one shows this more clearly than Jesus himself, who scandalized the hypocrites of his day by surrounding himself with those whom society had condemned or rejected. Horrific experiences need not annihilate your opportunities to live in joy. In fact, for some human beings, they can be the crucible in which a commitment to live in embodied joy is made final. If you want to live in the joy that the great teachers and servants of humanity have lived in, then four things are required:

- First, you must accept at the deepest level possible that ultimate reality is sourced from a boundless joy.
- Second, you are called to do the rigorous work of understanding the shadows of your past and the psychological labor of clearing the clouds from your essential sun.
- Third, you cannot avoid that to which all spiritual traditions call us: uncompromising and calmly relentless spiritual work to align yourself, in all circumstances and as much as possible, with the powers of divine light.
- Fourth, one must commit themselves to the amazing and dangerous task of embodying and enacting divine truth in the world, as, as all

spiritual traditions know, the greatest joy is only known by those who have not merely tasted divine truth but who have pledged themselves thusly.

As you embrace these words and take them to heart, dear reader, our desire is that you will experience the essence of the poet Rainer Maria Rilke's beautiful declaration of joy:

"Joy is inexpressibly more than happiness. Happiness befalls people; happiness is fate, while people cause joy to bloom inside themselves. Joy is plainly a good season for the heart; joy is the ultimate achievement of which human beings are capable.

*Excerpted from Section 2 "Return to Joy" in Radical Regeneration: Sacred Activism and the Renewal of the World (Inner Traditions: November 29, 2022)*



## Counting Blessings

*James Crews*

I'm stringing together my gratitudes  
like these unruly pre-schoolers I see  
crossing the street in a snaking line,  
tethered to each other by a strong  
neon-green rope, protected from traffic  
as they shout and strain to break away.  
I count my blessings to keep them close:  
this body, this house, this one heart  
creaking open to let in the spring sun  
as I say thank you to the black-capped  
flashes of chickadees at the feeder,  
to sudden sleet, and stones half-buried  
in our yard, having melted the snow  
from around their mossy skin, each one  
now somehow warmer to the touch.

POETRY

We Are Miracles

*James Crews*

It's not easy becoming  
something new. Look at the leaves  
locked tight in their buds  
which form long before spring,  
waiting out ice storms and snowfall  
to unfurl the flags of their  
true selves into a roof of green.  
We think it must be simple,  
changing with each new season,  
yet fear and doubt still fill  
even the widest leaves of the maple,  
at last learning to turn light  
into sugar, unaware as they shiver  
there at the tip of a branch  
of the miracles they've now become.

NONFICTION

## Interview with Penny Harter

*Alice Roche Cody*

Penny Harter's poetry is a gift. One that invites us to delight in nature, perhaps a *sacred muskrat waddling on the driveway* or the wonder of *turtles sunning on logs* or the boldness of a strawberry moon. At 83, she has amassed a prolific writing portfolio, penning more than 15 collections, as well as *The Haiku Handbook: How to Write, Share and Teach Haiku* (Kodansha America, 1989), co-authored with her late husband, William J. Higginson. Her work has appeared in journals and anthologies worldwide, and she received three poetry fellowships from the New Jersey Council on the Arts as well as a teaching award from the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation.

Yet just as important as these literary accomplishments is the healing role she played during the pandemic. To soothe her own sadness and angst, she posted frequent poems on Facebook, engaging regularly with her growing audience. In the process, she gave her readers hope, a balm to ease fear and a hand-up from everyday doldrums. Drawing from these poems, she published three collections: *Still-Water Days* (Kelsay Books, 2021), *A Prayer the Body Makes* (Kelsay Books, 2020), and [\*Keeping Time: Haibun for the Journey\*](#) (Kelsay Books, 2023), a collection of haibun – a combination of prose and haiku – released this spring.

Recently, I re-connected with Ms. Harter, my high school English teacher, on social media. In our telephone interview, we discussed how nature infuses her latest poetry book, her uniquely empathetic teaching style and how, throughout her life, she has overcome challenges through creativity.

\*\*\*

**Alice Roche Cody:** Congratulations on your two poetry books released during the pandemic. How was this time for you with the lockdowns? Did you find it daunting or a boon to your creativity?

**Penny Harter:** I got very depressed in the beginning, so what I did during the first Covid-19 time and with Delta, is that down in South Jersey there are a lot of winding, country roads. I'd go for rides and look for deer in the later afternoon, at twilight, which is deer time. Something to get out of the house. I didn't want to go anywhere. I was ordering my groceries from Walmart; they were brought to my car. I was vulnerable. I'm a cancer survivor, and my oncologist said to play it safe. So, I decided to pull myself up. I saw deer, wild turkeys, snakes, whatever wild life I could find. Then I started writing. I wanted to offer hope and calm, with the political climate and the fear and frustration from the lockdowns.

I spent 10 years running a grief support group for spousal loss called H.O.P.E. (Helping Other People Evolve), based in Moorestown, NJ. At that time H.O.P.E. was in-person. Now with the pandemic, it expanded nationwide via Zoom and has since resumed meeting in-person. At the time it stopped meeting, I decided I'd had enough. I was good at it, I cared for elderly people who had lost a spouse. Everyone was dealing with grief. I decided I'd had enough time dealing with grief and hearing about grief. I recovered from hard grief long ago from losing my husband, Bill. I thought, *I need to move on and find a new way to use my talents*. Of course, writing is one of my talents. I had used H.O.P.E. as a ministry, and I decided writing daily poems would be my new ministry, on Facebook. I didn't care that some journals would consider anything posted on social media to be previously published and therefore wouldn't consider it. I also knew journals that would. Reaching out and writing these poems created calm for people. I started posting daily poems in 2020. That's the genesis of *Still-Water Days* and before that, *A Prayer the Body Makes*, poems toward beginning pandemic. I was offering hope, and people responded.

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**ARC:** My favorite poem in your recent book is the title poem, *Still-Water Days*:

*I row out on still waters to gather clouds,  
net them in my old fishing seine and stow  
them in my trusty canoe for when I might  
need them on a day too bright to see.*

*I gather clouds from the blue waters, fill the  
chambers of my heart with gentle murmurs,  
find comfort in their slow shape-shifting  
that mirrors my own, these still-water days.*

Can you talk about this poem?

**PH:** That began with a woman on Facebook. I've made so many poetry friends I've never met. Cristina Raskopf Norcross posts writing prompts with photographs, and she writes an example. I responded to a photograph of a boat out on the water, with clouds and shadows. The second stanza grew out of my feelings, "slow-shape shifting," Everything slowed down during the pandemic, plus the echo of changes in daily habits and aging. Still-water days, growing older and sifting through what really matters.

**ARC:** Nature plays a big role in your poetry, animals such as hawks, blackbirds, cows, deer and bees. In the poem *Symbiosis*, the last stanza reads, "Becoming oak, becoming lilac bush, / we join the greater family of those who / speak tree, those who can blossom." How does nature influence your writing?

**PH:** I've always been connected to nature. The trees are connected to each other and talk underground through their roots. A long time ago with Bill, we talked with a Native American Indian chief, and I told him I had dreams of a bat that had given me an extra ear, hidden in my hair.

We were visiting Santa Fe at the time, before we moved out West. The chief didn't know what it meant. Bats use radar, they are extrasensory. He said to find an oak tree and sit with my back against it and listen. I did in an earlier poem in *Turtle Blessings* (La Alameda Press, 1996). My poems are connected as well, and still evolving.

**ARC:** Your poems have been described as intensely spiritual, like prayers to the universe. Do you see your poetry in this light?

**PH:** Interesting question. Is each poem we write a prayer? Each poem we write, for me, is a connection to the larger world we are all part of. Poems from the earth, poems that affirm and point out that all beings are interconnected. Yes, in that sense, my poems certainly do reach out to the universe and thank it, even though it's in trouble at times. What I do in all my work is probe my connection, our connection, to the whole.

**ARC:** Back in the late '80s, you were my creative writing teacher at Madison High School. You played an important role in my life; you were instrumental in me becoming a writer. Your presence offered an alternative, how to seek an artistic life. How was this balance for you, serving as a teacher and a writer?

**PH:** Some of the things I brought into the classroom were unconventional. We had journal days, and if we were studying Edgar Allan or Emily Dickinson, we'd analyze their style and write a mystery story or poem to share. Everybody has the capacity for creativity. I felt it was important to bring that out in all my students, to open up possibilities. There's a quote that you can't teach anyone anything, but you can help them find it in themselves. What I was trying to do paid off strange ways. One time in Whole Foods in Madison, a man approached me, an older man with his son. He called me by name and reminded me who he was and said, "The only thing I ever wrote was for you." It was a short story, and he still remembered it. That's my reward. That's what matters.

**ARC:** As a teacher, you were so calm and gracious. You gave poetry readings and invited your students. It gave me a glimpse of an artist's life I didn't otherwise have access to.

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You were also my study hall teacher. At the time, I was struggling with a tough homelife. You let me sit and talk, the only adult who really listened to me. Many times, I've said to my husband that I never would have gotten through high school without you.

**PH:** Oh, Alice. We're all in it together. When I was working with a class or a study hall, I felt that we're all humans in this big soup. I never had to be a teacher, I just had to be me. I hope all my students felt valued with who they were and who they'd become.

When we are creative, not just with poetry – you can do it with art or music – it's a way of finding out how we feel before we can voice it, what you need to process. All my books dealt with major life processes, with me writing my way through. What I wanted to encourage with my students was to write their way through. It's important to get out in front of you what you're feeling and name it. I remember one time I was in a hard life passage, before Bill. I was writing nature poems only and not dealing with my troubled marriage. A fellow poet said to me, "Where is your life in your poems?" I said, "I don't know what I'm going to do," and she said, "Your poems will know before you do," Which is true. We use art as means of revealing to ourselves what is in us and hope other people will find community and it will benefit.

It's so important to have people in education you can trust. I brought that capacity for empathy and listening with the work I did in my support group. To say: *I've been through it, here I am, you can make it.* I was able to give back. In the same way, I learned from my students as they learned from me.

**ARC:** In that same study hall, we got notice from the office that the Challenger had exploded and you read the announcement. Everything stopped. Then you showed us how to grieve. You made sense of the moment by writing a poem about Christa McAuliffe's blue socks.

**PH:** That's what I'm talking about – there has to be a way to translate our experiences back to ourselves, to name them, to own them, one way or another. If a person is not a poet, they can be a novelist, composer, storyteller or an artist. Write a journal. One of the things I said in my H.O.P.E. group: *If you have unfinished business with your spouse who is now gone, write them letters.*

**ARC:** You're still doing that, making sense of your life through poetry.

**PH:** Absolutely. A recent poem I posted on Facebook was a downer, and I wrote myself up out of it. I started out feeling blue and wrote to come up out of it. A lot of people responded to it. Not everything is Pollyanna. I wrote to lift people's spirits during the pandemic and to lift my own. *Still-Water Days* isn't all *rah-rah*. The poems are topsy-turvy. A lot are sad, they start in the present and bring us up. In the lockdowns, I ventured to practice and see gratitude. It made my day, knowing how much I meant to you.

**ARC:** Is there anything else you'd like to share?

**PH:** I certainly feel most days that all these life experiences are behind me already. I find myself thinking about what really matters and what doesn't. Creativity and giving to others. Loving matters, affirmation, celebrations. What we do matters. Recently, I was getting rid of some stuff, and as I was chucking folder after folder, files and news clippings, all I've lived through, your life flashes before eyes. Whoa! I found I can let things go. There's more I want to let go of. I have a cancer history; it has been quite a rough journey. It gives you perspective. To say, *What am I going to do with the time I have left?* Give back to the world as much as I can.



## New Year's Resolutions

*Tom Plante*

Awakened early in the new year  
by dim light and the sound of fog,  
I read two passages that offered  
conflicting approaches to life. One advised  
we burn our calendars and become water;  
the other that we adopt a record-everything  
strategy as we pack our travelogue.

I chose to walk in Forest Road Park  
to seek advice from birds and trees.  
The breeze was stronger than expected,  
so I retreated to a warmer spot.  
At home, I opened *Thirty-Two Words  
For Field*, a book I got for Christmas,  
and continued to search for resolutions.

POETRY

St. Nicholas Orthodox Church, St. Petersburg,  
Russia, 1992

*Karen Paul Holmes*

I light the candle in memory of my father.  
Petersburg has reclaimed its name from Lenin,  
the cathedrals and churches –  
like this wooden one snug behind a square –  
have opened Communist-closed doors  
to breathe again the call-response of clergy and choir.

Perhaps because I grew up in a St. Nicholas –  
Flint, Michigan, where Father Znamensky  
immersed me in baptism,  
and Father Raphael married us with crowns,  
and where last prayers swirled  
over my father –  
the melody of *Vechnaya, Memory Eternal*  
begins to hum inside me.

We had let ourselves in, the nave echoing empty,  
dome streaming light,  
*like heaven coming down*, I thought as a child.  
Pine walls exhale the resin scent of frankincense  
imbued for 300 years.  
A few stern chairs dot the periphery:  
Except when stone floors imprint praying knees,  
Russians stand for the Divine Liturgy.  
The eyes of Theotokos and Jesus follow us  
kindly from their candle-flicked icons.

I cross myself. Slip two rubles in the box,  
light a beeswax taper – thin as a reed – from another,  
then plant it in the sand-filled brass stand.  
The lithe candles bend with their flames' weight.

# *Tiferet*

In Sunday School we learned,  
*The pliancy of wax speaks of our readiness for God.*  
I feel the tremor of illness in my father's hand,  
hear the soft jingle  
of our priest's censer, see and taste the fragrant smoke  
beckoning the Holy Spirit,  
a current feathering my neck.



POETRY

On a Blue Ridge Lake

*Karen Paul Holmes*

The male goose leads a line of nine,  
his black neck and face dignified,  
white chin-band like a smile.  
Canada geese mate for life, but here,  
a trio of wives: Have they agreed  
to share child-duties for these grey goslings,  
having softened the twig bed with grasses  
and their own down, kept eggs safe and warm.  
The father pulls his beloved cord across  
the sky-mirrored lake.  
The last mother keeps the end taut, not curved  
with the current, even when waves pluck.

Bach glides through screen doors to the deck  
where I sit – a *viola d'amore*  
with its twin set of strings,  
one bowed, the other vibrating in sympathy.  
Right now, I'm like that second set,  
resonant with sonata, house sparrows claiming joys  
or perhaps grievances, the geese beelining  
to an important place.

Cloud shadows make puzzle shapes of forest green  
on kelly hills – an undulating swath of trees  
the only thing separating sapphire  
from sapphire, sky from water.  
How can I not credit all this to an omnipresence:  
not in human form, but  
painter, musician, magician.  
How did I ever see God as a question mark?

## TRUTH AND BEAUTY

*Jon Pearson*

What if beauty is the way you get to know someone? What if you got to know your father, your mother, your husband, your wife, your kids, your neighbors through beauty? Not normal beauty, but a deep-down-can't-put-your-finger-on-it beauty. What if everyone were a poem? Not a story – a poem. A story has a plot, characters, conflict, suspense, resolution. But a poem is a little diamond of a thing, an attempt to say the unsayable in an unforgettable way. And still, it's just a poem. Like a red wagon is a red wagon. Only it's not. It's the wagon you maybe got as a kid one Christmas, the *American Flyer*, that was so shiny and new that the red of it, the fire engine red of it, rhymed in your brain with every red thing you ever saw or would ever see, ever again. Poems deepen us. Good poems do. So why not be deepened by everything? Isn't everything secretly a poem?

A horse is a poem, the way it stands in a field with the hills in the background. Maybe horses don't make me believe in God. But they make me *want* to: their strength, their beauty, their ease, their grace. If that isn't a prayer, I don't know what is. I wish I could have gotten to know my father as a poem – the mystery and paradox of him – to know him as someone stranger and more familiar than just a man. I wish I could have unraveled him like a ball of string all the way to the end. But that would have required not *wanting* something from him. And not being in a hurry. But I was young and in a hurry. And who isn't in a hurry, these days, with the world, itself, in a hurry.

But without pausing and wanting nothing at all, there is no beauty and no wisdom – nothing to deepen, broaden, and connect us. Which, to me, is what God or faith or love are meant to do. What greatness can there be without wisdom and beauty? Even though pain and suffering seem so much more “real?” There is truth and beauty in the pain and suffering, in being mad or sad or scared. Fear shows me the edges of my faith, anger the depth of my values, and despair my shared humanity. Cleverness and cynicism show me nothing.

*Tell me your beauty, father, I would have said. And start with your hands. My father had beautiful hands. Tell me the truth of you.* The honest, vulnerable truth. Because that’s all I want to know – and all I want to be – and all I want to give. For as the poet said, “Beauty is truth, truth beauty – that is all ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.”

# *Tiferet*

POETRY

## Litany

— Where Our Hand Meets God's

*Bernadette McBride*

A cathedral of pines  
adjoining a stone-laid chapel

A November moon coasting  
among amber-lit clouds  
caught on film

Holiday firs, their limbs  
fairy-light strung

The purple in winter trees  
along the asphalt interstate

April's infant leaves  
dappling the post and rail fence

The Burren's flowering  
— the joys of hiking boots

The green-tunneled road  
— that hitch of breath as we drive

The ocean's roll,  
white sails lucent on the horizon

The sea birds vaulting  
above the lighthouse

Our hands curved in prayer  
over the canyon's handrail.

POETRY

Stonehenge

*Nancy Lubarsky*

As if time and the  
sun could be  
harnessed, held  
back by huge,  
heavy stones,  
carved and  
balanced with  
bones and antlers,  
dragged and pulled  
in a circle, placed  
there by the ancients,  
millennium before  
metal and machines.  
Today's calendars  
are soft pages,  
digital pulses—light  
and fleeting. Now time  
travels at high speeds  
away from us.  
It's captured in gray  
hairs, frail bones  
and friends passing.



## POETRY

### Why Do I Feel Rocked Over an Ever-Expanding Ocean?

*Hedy Habra*

Have you ever lost track of time stuck  
    in an unending present, felt swayed over  
        a plateau of wisdom away from what  
lacerates us the most?

And should we keep our thoughts  
    to ourselves, let them resonate, the way  
        atoms, caught in double-binding  
molecules, dance under pressure,  
    restructure themselves as words, lest we'd be  
        walking on eggshells  
    or over an electric wire, careful  
not to trigger the wrong chord?

And don't think it's easy to modulate  
    such closeness. It took me a lifetime  
        to reach it with my mom. Ever since  
she left us I hear her whispering in  
    the nape of my neck, my voice merging  
        with hers at times, as if I'd slipped  
into an ethereal garment.

As I begin to understand the strength  
    of her silences, I feel rocked over  
        an ever-expanding ocean  
with a constantly receding horizon.

POETRY

[Sijo]

*John Timpane*

Moon sets afire widespread stratus, a glowing screen marbled with stars.  
Maybe that's all we can get: glimpses through fleeting cloudscapes.  
If I say to myself, *You there!* and reach out, I grasp mist.

One star stayed still. I saw. The other slid. I saw it slide nightwise.  
My dark brain, sliding away from home into No Man's Mind ...  
A passenger on one rushing star, gazing at another.

No trees in words, no flower fields. Words, denatured words.  
Words are nature. Lips rainy, throat gritty, tongue as late light.  
To say things, I—open as fields, throaty as grit—mouth the world.

Dusk underlights a seahawk trolling the estuary.  
Osprey strikes, struggles to rise with catch. Heron rows, sky-steady.  
Earthquake or silence: I, they, unlikely, impossible, lovely.

All the beautiful human minds that change self and all else.  
All the minds that radiate throughout our shaggy galaxy.  
All—beyond nowhere, like and unlike—the unknowable knowers.

## Haiku and Related Forms

*Adele Kenny*

### Haiku

Haiku, a minimalist form of poetry, has been popular among contemporary poets since the 1960s. Haiku (the word forms its own plural—*haikus* is incorrect) are the springboard for related forms.

Allen Ginsberg and Pulitzer Prize winner Paul Muldoon wrote collections of haiku, and haiku-like poems are found in the works of such literary greats as Ezra Pound, Amy Lowell, Richard Wright, and Gary Snyder. Perhaps because of its brevity, conciseness, and image-centered focus, the form is enthusiastically embraced by many poets.

Although something other than "mainstream" poetry and very much their own genre, haiku are compact and direct, and are usually written in the present tense with a sense of immediacy and of being "in the moment." While haiku appear to be light and spontaneous, their writing requires profound reflection and discipline. Haiku are about spiritual realities, the realities of our every-day lives, and the realities of the natural world.

Despite the brevity of their form, haiku inspire detachment as well as relationships without self-interest or self-absorption but, rather, with a sense of inward and outward direction. The best haiku are life-affirming and eternity-conscious, spontaneous and unpretentious and either gently or startlingly profound. Through haiku, both the writer and the reader are invited to reflect upon minute details that lead them to larger realities.

Haiku describe things in a very few words, they never tell, intellectualize, or state feelings outrightly.

They never use figures of speech (similes, metaphors, etc.) and should not rhyme. Some haiku poets feel that one measure of a haiku's success is its ability to be read in a single breath.

Most haiku are characterized by the juxtaposition of two images or ideas and a *kireji* ("cutting word") between them. The *kireji* is a kind of verbal punctuation mark that signals the moment of separation between the two images or ideas and adds meaning to the way the juxtaposed elements are related.

Traditional haiku consist of 17 Japanese sound symbols (mistakenly translated as syllables) and appear in a single line. Most have nature-inspired content. Modern haiku are increasingly unlikely to follow the tradition of 17 sound symbols (or syllables) or to take nature as their subject, but the use of juxtaposition continues to be honored in both traditional and modern haiku. Most appear in three lines (which do not, correctly, follow a pattern of 5,7,5 syllables).

A *kigo* (seasonal reference) is usually included (this needn't be the name of a season, although it may be). A *kigo* may be some element of a season, even the smallest detail commonly associated with a particular time of year.

### Haiku Sequences

Haiku can be linked together to form a sequence that moves from moment to moment in a remembered experience. A good haiku sequence is built on an idea that underscores the sequence and becomes a longer poem. That is, haiku sequences contain haiku (or haiku-like verses) fused to form an integrated whole. Depending upon the content of the individual haiku, it's important to have a central idea or theme in a haiku sequence: nature in general or something specific in the natural world, love (or another emotion), a season, a journey (actual or spiritual), or any part of life that is common to each haiku in the sequence.

# Tiferet

A great way to begin experimenting with sequences is to think in terms of a narrative approach in which order of the haiku follow the chronological arc of the event: beginning, middle and end.

## Senryu

A senryu is a poem, structurally similar to haiku, that highlights the foibles of human nature, usually in a humorous or satiric way. In senryu, human nature is more essential, and the poem itself is more playful, humorous, or ironic. A senryu may or may not contain a season word or a grammatical break. Many so-called "haiku" in English are really senryu. Loosely defined, senryu are haiku-like poems that deal most specifically with human nature.

## Tanka

Tanka, the 5-line Japanese poem, is like haiku, its shorter relative, in that they are grounded in specific images. Tanka are also typically characterized by lyric intensity and intimacy that comes from the direct expression of emotions, implication, suggestion, and nuance. The tanka aesthetic, however, is broader than that of haiku. You can write on virtually any subject and express your thoughts and feelings explicitly.

Note that tanka do not subscribe to a 5,7,5,7,7 syllable pattern (as often taught). Haiku doesn't technically subscribe to a 5,7,5 pattern, and tanka needn't be restricted to 5,7,5,7,7. The third line of a tanka may be a "pivot line" or turning point similar to the shift in a haiku. To simplify the form, think in terms of a short-long-short-long-long line structure or even just a free form structure using five lines.

## Haibun

A haibun is a terse, relatively short *prose poem* that typically ends with a haiku. Most haibun range from well under 100 words to 200 or 300.

Some longer haibun may contain a few haiku interspersed between sections of prose. In haibun, the connections between the prose and any included haiku may not be immediately obvious, or the haiku may deepen the tone, or take the work in a new direction, thus redirecting the meaning of the prose. Japanese haibun apparently developed from brief introductory notes occasionally written to introduce individual haiku, but soon grew into a clear genre. The word "haibun" is sometimes applied to longer works, such as memoirs, diaries, or travel writings.

**Writing haiku and related forms can inform and enhance your writing. They:**

1. increase your sense of imagery,
2. broaden your awareness of – and attention to – details,
3. teach you about compression, conciseness, and clarity,
4. help you understand the importance of removing unnecessary words,
5. develop your ability to write poems that are efficient and clear, even when their meaning and message are complex,
6. show you how to create line breaks that have a clear and non-intrusive logic,
7. illustrate ways in which you can achieve clarity with just a hint of being on the edge of understanding,
8. form the basis for longer poems. That is, a haiku may be extended into a longer work of poetry; it may become the opening, closing, or “somewhere inside” part of a longer poem,
9. work toward your understanding that the best poems show rather than tell,
10. improve your ability to connect, reveal, and surprise.

If you haven't experimented with haiku, haiku sequences, senryu, tanka, or haibun, a good way to begin is to read a number of them. There are many examples online to enjoy and to help you get started.

## Dress Codes: Meanderings on Masquerades, Self-expression and Clothing

*Tamar Reva Einstein*

"Fashion should be a form of escapism, and not a form of imprisonment."  
– Alexander McQueen

With the scent of the lemony- minty olive-green toned lentil soup I cooked wafting in my direction towards the turquoise velveteen couch last night, my daughter in law described how strange it felt to be told she would have to wear a skirt at that school for her workshops. The principle of the Ultra-Orthodox girls' high school had called her in for a talk after the successful first meeting. If it was up to her, it wouldn't be such a big deal..., "But the parents, you know", she said. There had not been any mention of how to dress prior to arriving yesterday; I know they forgot to tell her, they usually do in my experience. Hadar was actually very modestly dressed, in her words, long loose pants, long tunic like sweater; but, not a skirt. As a young Israeli woman, one who had amongst many other things, served in the army, and is currently studying education, she had recently discovered her own feminist beliefs in college. Some strengthened and were honed as the wedding approached, no veil for example, and she was thrilled to hear stories about my late, very missed, very feminist mom. Stories about how I was raised. She was very moved by the equality upon which our synagogue community is based; men and women read from the Torah, and are welcome to wear all ritual garb; all are welcome to pray with us, all religions, genders, disabilities, etc. So, this was an upsetting experience for her as her passion to teach teen age girls about their identities, strengths, untapped potential, and empowerment, was colored by being challenged to cover up and change her own authentic way of dressing. She probably will not go back after this series.

I shared my own complex feelings about the 13-year-old weekly ritual of “dressing up” for my students in Bnei Brak. Long black skirt, long tunic or sweater, black sneakers, lots of silver ethnic antique jewelry, my regular make up. If I were in Manhattan or London, you might see me and think, “Cool, chic, unusual, interesting”, but really, it is just a masquerade. We knew when we opened this satellite art therapy Masters program, through Haifa University, that there would be rules about attire: skirts at a certain length, no bare legs, no low-cut shirts, no elbows. I will say that my two tiny *hamsa* tattoos peep out between where the skirt ends and the sneakers begin. The other bigger inked art is hidden from view. A personal gallery. I still wear my red lipstick, as I have for over 45 years with matching nails and lots of silver bracelets, earrings, and necklaces. I am visually not Orthodox to them, though modest. At some point the clothes and what it all symbolizes is brought up in class; usually when I discuss multiculturalism and the arts therapies; my doctoral passion.

There have been both students and staff called out for immodest dress; there are cameras in the corner upperpart of each classroom. The students often cover them, lately with paintings! Creative rebellion. Before class in the teachers lounge there often is a scramble for a safety pin, a shawl, a need of stockings, when a teacher realizes too much is exposed. I worked for 30 years in the Arab sector in Jerusalem, and was never asked in any way to alter the way I dressed. The women with whom I worked were sometimes very observant Muslims or Christians, including Catholic nuns and dressed accordingly. Some of the clients, wore a *hijab* and arrived covered completely to our therapy sessions; at times removing the outer layer of long non body clinging coverings to expose skinny jeans, sparkly stockings and skirts, and then transformed again to go home. To be asked by Jews to dress a certain way has at times felt angering, annoying, and confusing; the male teachers are not asked to wear a *kippah* on their heads, which my dad had to do in the 70s to teach at a religious University here. Hmmmmm.



# *Tiferet*

I tell my daughter in law that I made a hard, well thought out decision; that I want to reach this population. I had to make a daily, once a week change, a strange sacrifice. I cannot wait to get home and take the skirt off each Tuesday; I always wear black tights underneath before donning the slip and skirt. I might be on my way to walk, dance, exercise; I am me underneath it all. I never wear skirts, except to teach, they feel too movement confining to me.

The dress code issue is not just here, or religion based, I know that friends and family in the USA, and other countries live by such regulations and socially conforming rules as well. In the States, I have always found the “suggested dress”, for jobs, and more so weddings absurd. Here, at rites of passage celebrations the clothing is much more welcoming, you wear what you want. This was confusing to family and friends when my son and Hadar’s September wedding was approaching. I received at least 20 texts and emails about what to wear to each celebration, the Yemenite Henna, the outdoor wedding, the outside sunset synagogue blessing, the Old City dinner at an Arab restaurant, and the back yard brunch. Words, foreign to me were used: Casual, Sporty, Formal, Semi Formal, and Cocktail. A lexicon I do not speak or understand. I gave creative, hopefully, helpful answers. Some replied that my “weird” way of dressing made it easier for me. They love me and find my clothes interesting. Always in black, lots of hand embroidered international handcrafted pieces. This is steeped in my childhood, an upbringing of free choice, welcoming, acceptance, broad views, and self-expression in all realms of life.

A favorite family photo is one in which we are at my first cousin’s Bat Mitzvah in Atlanta, we flew down from Manhattan. We were about to move to Israel, so this must have been in 1971 or 1972. I was 11 years old. Against a background of lofty white curtains, and banistered stairways, and a breakfront of crystal treasures, we stand out in this frame: my mom, short brunette pixie hair do, in a floor length black velvet hand embroidered Bedouin dress, long dangling silver Bedouin or Yemenite earrings, my dad in a dark sports jacket and pants, a purple silk shirt and silk colorful cravat tucked in and another in the breast pocket,

me, in an Indian green silk top and skirt with gold and red embroidery, and gold ballet slippers, my little brother in a small suit and a clip on bow tie. The others are all in suits, vests, ties, lace, florals, pearl, diamonds, gold, high heels. 51 years later, I just wore a gold embroidered Indian jacket and pants to my son's wedding.

I think if I was younger and asked to wear or not wear something to work, I too would rebel. So much sociopolitical inferences and influences. Now, at 61, I can play dress up once a week knowing it allows me into a world otherwise inaccessible to me. A world that wants art therapy and needs healing as we all do. So, tomorrow morning I will don the outfit I lay out tonight and will get transported by cab, train, then bus to a different universe for some hours. And the wigged, and scarf-headed women will paint, cut, glue, sculpt, play, imagine, create, write, learn, and question theories and therapy foundations. And I hope to continue the minty discussion began last night with my daughter in law, as we both traverse and explore our new roles and all women's roles and rules in a complex world.



Reflective writing after balloon painting in Bnei Brak

# *Tiferet*

POETRY

## Song of Being

*Jude Rittenhouse*

When the dark stone of struggle  
presses against and threatens  
your hard-earned purple,  
draining and fading  
what you believe

you are made of,  
any choice leads to a place that waits  
for excavation. Exploration.  
I, too have felt confused. Too small.  
Misshapen. Scarred. Discarded.

Life's seas. We may resist  
what is  
or release empty shells  
of beliefs, break dams  
built to fight life's currents and eddies.

Perfectly calm  
was never a goal. Never a raft  
of possibility. Return again  
and again  
to here. Now. Every movement

an entry into being's spiral  
flow. We  
and history are made of each other's  
continuous change.  
Made from multitudes

of minor and major chords, silences,  
ripples, waves. No landing place.  
No simple origin or ending.  
Pulsations. Star songs humming  
within the sea of being.



# *Tiferet*

POETRY

## ROSH HA SHONAH

*Bob Rosenbloom*

This is how I welcomed in the New Year:  
now I don't do anything special except  
think about when I used to dress up in  
a suit my parents bought at a clothing  
factory in downtown Manhattan, one  
made of mohair, which was ultra itchy;  
wear sneakers because God told us  
to lay off cowhide and those poor dumb  
brutes who made it for a week or two;  
take the day off from work, like it's the  
plague, which it is; and play touch football  
in the street, since we already had on  
sneakers, because this is what the  
children of Israel would have done,  
before they were locked up by the  
Egyptians and forced to work in mud  
pits. And, to top it all off, we'd drop  
off bread crumbs in the nearest body  
of water along with our sins, a river,  
pond, lake or the deep blue sea,  
the sins of our forefathers, as if my  
mother could ever sin.

POETRY

## Seeing and Believing

*Edwin Romond*

The girls giggled  
but the boys laughed right out loud  
when Mrs. Stone raged crimson  
holding my eighth grade project:  
“The Map of New Jersey.”

“Get up here, boy!”  
and I had no choice  
but to walk the gangplank to her desk  
where my map choked in her fist.

“What’s this jazz? Huh?  
The ocean is not green, Bub, it’s blue.  
Ya’ get it? Blue, blue, blue, blue!”  
punching my map with each word into my chest.  
My classmates roared a chorus  
of “Green ocean! Green ocean!”  
their voices rising in waves of laughter

as I carried the wrinkled and ripped map  
back to my seat through their sneers.  
Soon, all their maps perimetered the room  
leaving me adrift in the memory of a Sunday

when, in the October air,  
my father and I walked over seashells  
and I, only nine,  
remarked that the ocean looked green.  
My father, peering out from beneath his cap,  
said, “Yes, it does,” and his fingers swam  
through my hair.

## Mathematical Creation

*Glory White*

Where do we come from? What happens after we die? Religions have been answering these questions - and many more - for millennia. But while most of us are familiar with the answers of major world religions, answers from lesser-known or historical religions are often overlooked. "[50 Answers](#)", a new book by Glory White, explores 50 distinct answers a wide variety of religions provide for our biggest, most compelling questions. The following excerpt provides a sneak peek into an intriguing ancient cult's creation narrative.

—

While the ancient Greek philosopher Pythagoras is doubtless best known for his eponymous geometric theorem, few schoolchildren who regularly use it are aware that Pythagoras founded and led one of the most fascinating religious cults in antiquity. His followers, the Pythagoreans, settled in Southern Italy in the early 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE and established one of the earliest known vegetarian societies. In addition to abstaining from meat, the Pythagoreans avoided drinking wine and eating beans for reasons that remain unclear. Members of the cult were also expected to never pick up objects that had fallen, never eat from a whole loaf of bread, never walk on highways, and never use a mirror beside a light. Women in Pythagorean communities were considered equal to men, and all property, including intellectual property, was communal. Cult initiates were selected for their merit and discipline, and had to spend five years listening to Pythagorean teachings in complete silence before taking a test to officially join the cult.

Over time, the Pythagoreans became considerably influential in aristocratic social circles and turned their attention to politics, perhaps attempting to impose their ways on others. This led to various deadly attacks on Pythagorean communities,

culminating in many Pythagoreans being driven out of Italy. While individual cult members may have continued to practice their unique lifestyle, no organized communities appear to have been established elsewhere. The Pythagoreans seem to have died out in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE, before making a comeback with Neopythagoreanism in the 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE.

But what does any of this have to do with right triangles? The answer is that Pythagoras and his followers were, at their core, number-worshippers. When Pythagoreans observed the world around them, they reached the conclusion that the objects inhabiting it could be differentiated by various qualities. For example, different objects are characterized by different sizes, weights, textures, colors, shapes, smells, etc. But none of these qualities are universal! A book, for example, might smell moldy if you store it in a damp place, but many things lack any discernable smell, which means they couldn't possibly be defined by smell. This led the Pythagoreans to realize that the only quality necessarily defined for all things is that they can be counted. In other words, while the world could at least theoretically exist without smells, moldy or otherwise, the world couldn't possibly exist without numbers. Consequently, numbers should be seen as the very essence of reality! For the Pythagoreans, this meant that mathematical knowledge is fundamentally different from and superior to all other forms of knowledge. Mathematics is therefore more than just a bad childhood memory; it was a way for humans to interact with the transcendent.

The Pythagoreans drew upon the importance of numbers to develop a number-based theory to explain the universe. 1 represented *reason*, 2 represented *opinion*, 3 represented *harmony*, 4 represented *justice*, 5 represented *marriage*, 6 represented *creation*, 7 represented *wisdom*, 8 represented *love*, and so on. Odd numbers were considered masculine, while even numbers were considered feminine. The Pythagoreans' extreme devotion to mathematics led to genuine scientific breakthroughs: they were the first to adopt the spherical Earth model, and one of the last Pythagoreans is credited with formulating the heliocentric theory - roughly 1,700 years before Copernicus!



## *Tiferet*

Needless to say, the Pythagorean creation narrative was delightfully on-brand. It was said that the universe was once unstructured and chaotic. A point then appeared, and when it moved, it beget lines, which moved to beget surfaces, which moved to beget all of the three-dimensional bodies in the universe. This elegant theory linking the creation of the world to mathematical dimensions was undoubtedly intuitive for the Pythagoreans, for whom mathematics was the ultimate truth.

## ESSAY

## I'm a Scientist. Here's why I wrote a book about religions.

*Glory White*

As a biologist, I understand how habitat destruction pushes wild species into closer proximity with humans, resulting in the transmission of zoonotic disease such as COVID-19. It all makes perfect sense to me, down to the molecular mechanism by which viral RNA mutations occur. But when the pandemic first broke out, I was reminded of something decidedly unscientific – a Cherokee myth. You see, the Cherokee believe that long ago, humans and animals spoke the same language and lived together in perfect harmony. The animals knew that the humans depended on them for survival, so they selflessly gave of themselves to feed, clothe, and shelter the humans. The humans, recognizing the sacrifice of the animals, never took more than they needed, and thanked the animals for their generous gifts. But then the human population grew, crowding out the animals. The humans forgot their place in the Web of Life, proudly declaring that they were the masters of the world. They killed more animals than they needed to eat, and forgot to give thanks. Alarmed, the animals gathered to discuss ways to protect themselves from the increasingly hostile humans. After carefully weighing their options, the animals created diseases to weaken the humans.

This beautiful myth had been passed down for many generations before Dmitri Ivanovsky discovered viruses in 1892. And yet, it captures the essence of the modern scientific explanation for the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. As I marveled at the elegance of the Cherokee myth, I began to think of it as a semi-scientific model – a conceptual representation of reality that helps us understand the world we live in. What other “models” do religions offer to make sense of the universe, I wondered. And what wisdom can we glean from them? I decided to write a [book](#) to find out.

## *Tiferet*

Each chapter would be dedicated to one of life's biggest questions and filled with answers, or models, provided by a wide variety of religions, including little-known and historical religions.

The first step was defining my research questions clearly and concisely. To choose the most compelling models, I spent months reviewing the literature. I then filled endless spreadsheets with scientific rigor and ranked models by their capacity to explain natural phenomena. I took pains to include models from diverse geographical regions to produce a representative sample. I resisted the temptation to "improve" my findings. And I had many eureka moments with particularly insightful models. By the time my thesis was complete, it included everything from ancient wisdom to ideas espoused by UFO cults, and I had gained a newfound respect for our ability to be inspired – both inside and outside labs.

POETRY

The Third Surgery

*Yvonne Zipter*

They cut me open like a handbag—  
two quick slashes to my belly—  
as though they'd find something

worth filching there. Only there was  
nothing but two small packets  
of poison, one the size of a garbanzo,

the other the size of a quarter.  
The skin around the slits blooms  
purple to black like the satin lining

of a purse turned inside out.  
They glued me back together  
like a vase clumsily knocked

to the ground and shattered.  
In Japan, broken pottery is mended  
with gold-dusted lacquer to mark

its history—*kintsugi*—finding  
beauty in damaged things.  
I am marking my resilience

with lines of cinnabar, a map  
of adversity overcome, triumphant  
borders between the countries

of Life and Death, the River Styx,  
a crude mark on the trunk of a tree  
to help me find my way back to me

# *Tiferet*

POETRY

## Skill Sets

*Yvonne Zipter*

I am the last person  
on the Western Express

bus, which the bus driver  
pointedly points out,

calling back to me  
in my seat somewhere

near the middle  
of the bus. So I move

forward, to the seat  
across from him.

He clearly wants to chat.  
Lucky for him, the older

I get, the chattier I am.  
*How are you?* he asks,

and I return the serve.  
He says he's good.

Today is Friday, and he  
is off for the weekend.

Barbecue, beer, family –  
a summary of his

two laborless days.  
Then he asks what I

did before I retired.  
*Manuscript editor,*

I tell him. *University  
of Chicago Press. Ooh,*

he says. *That's smart  
people's work. I could*

*never do that. Only hours  
later do I think, I should've*

told him I couldn't do  
what he does either.

POETRY

Madonna of the Veil  
c. 1591 Raphael

*Frances Richey*

Her veil seems to float above the child, who's just awakened. He follows its subtle sway with his fingers the same way my son reached up for all those little planets on the mobile above his crib. You can almost see it tremble like the song of a red-winged blackbird, sheer rings of amber smoke on chilly air —  
Even their haloes have more heft.

POETRY

**Madonna of the Candelabra**  
c. 1513-14 Raphael

*Frances Richey*

Something isn't right, this odd juxtaposition—  
The tondo holy family flanked  
by flaming candelabra, symbols  
of the Roman world.

Even the two boy-angels  
look disaffected, as if pulled in on either side,  
at the last minute,  
to balance the picture  
and give it cred.

I can almost see a dinner table  
spread out before them  
in a lavish apartment on the Upper East Side.  
The boy, well fed, gives the dinner guests  
a snickering side-eye,  
while his mother,  
in her demure blue cloak,  
looks down

at nothing we can see, detached  
from the steady buzz  
of chi-chi conversations—  
far from the desert,  
far from straw  
and sleeping lambs,  
and Roman soldiers kicking down doors.



Sitting on a Bench in the Hall of Madonnas

*Frances Richey*

A feather  
so small  
I think,  
at first,  
it's a dust mote,  
escapes  
from inside  
my down  
jacket,  
disappears  
into light,  
then rushes  
back, like a  
frightened  
child  
to my sleeve.

POETRY

Ukraine Ginko

*Susan Rogers*

grieving in the park  
I'm lost among the flowers  
yellow and blue

branches of yellow  
blossoming in blue sky  
my blue heart

green grass at the curb  
signs of life everywhere  
despite the war

Oh Kyiv  
in dreams I bring you the peace  
of sacred mountains

March chill  
remembering grandma's stories  
leaving Kyiv

evening prayer  
I light a yahrzeit candle  
for unknown cousins

at the train station  
a river of lost people  
with nowhere to go

apples left behind  
jars of beets in the fridge  
your orchard in Kyiv

# *Tiferet*

Trader Joes' morning  
needing to feel hope  
I buy peace lilies

plastic sunflower  
bright as sunlight on my dash  
my fathers' smile

Ukrainian spring  
no sound of morning  
from the bomb shelter

cliff's edge  
a wild sunflower in wind  
holding on



POETRY

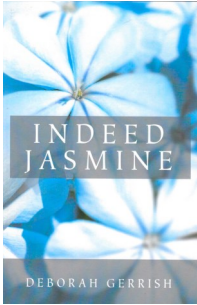
Reaching Kyiv

*Susan Rogers*

The light that reaches  
from your corner  
carries Buddha  
into me, warmer  
than a million bonfires  
or a thousand suns.  
It brings the peace  
that heals and breaches  
where the cold and dark conspires.  
The light that reaches  
from your corner  
let it reach as far as Kyiv.  
Let white flowers rain there.  
Let pure love be prayers that flame there.  
Let all rancor be rewritten,  
all need for conquest done.

## **A Review of *Indeed Jasmine***

*By Adele Kenny*



**INDEED JASMINE**

By Deborah Gerrish

Resource Publications

(An Imprint of Wipf and Stock Publishers)

\$12.00 U.S. Paperback

75 Pages

ISBN: 978-1-666-4277-0

To order: <https://www.amazon.com/Indeed-Jasmine-Deborah-Gerrish/dp/1666742775>

In her latest book, *Indeed Jasmine*, Deborah Gerrish takes her readers on a vivid journey. In poem after poem, Gerrish skillfully merges herself and her words with the natural world while incorporating a spiritual gravity that takes each poem beyond its obvious meaning. She titles one poem “The Whole Earth is Like a Poem,” (p. 53) and the entire book engages in this motif through a brilliant series of reflections on life.

In “The Maple Tree,” Gerrish speaks to a squirrel that “collects acorns and buries secrets.” As she notes in an introductory quote, “Squirrels fail to recover up to 74% of the nuts they bury,” and her conversation with the squirrel in this poem addresses that fact and more. The closing, implied comparison between squirrel and acorn and between poet and poem is unexpected and effective.

... I tell him, take another look.

Maybe you should write them down, carve your hiding places in the bark of the old maple. More than that, I tell him *the poem is smarter than the poet.* (p. 12)

In another poem, “A Secret Correspondence,” she writes about taking a wintertime walk in deep woods at midnight. Here, she is enwrapped in the natural world through her senses as she hugs the trees and brushes snow from their “weary” branches.

She goes on,

... Tall oaks lean close as lovers – listen  
for harmonic whispers, I could swear

I hear them sigh. I know these woods  
like an old friend. In the icy wind,  
the nearly frozen oaks gesture. While

the world sleeps, limbs wave, signing  
their language – their heart-secrets  
in the stiff morning air. (p. 16)

In this poem, as in many of the poems in this collection, Gerrish becomes part of the fabric that includes *all* of life. This is a poet whose words are crafted with abundant feeling as she honors the immense beauty of nature, as she praises creation, and as she looks toward light.

Gerrish, in rich imagery and with lyrical attentiveness, brings her readers to the inner spirit of immediate reality. The poem “Everywhere, Everywhere” begins with an epigraph from Psalm 46:10 (“He says . . . I will be exalted in the earth.”) This line from Scripture (which begins “Be still, and know that I am God”) resonates with belief in God for the poet as she views various natural and human-made wonders and brings her readers to stunning closure:

... Listen. Be still.  
It [the Psalm] echoes, as I breathe the salt-sky and waves,  
everywhere that silkaline silence  
of greatness bundles eternity. (p. 23)

Each poem in this collection is compressed and compelling and has a rich emotional center that takes Gerrish’s readers to the core of the experiences it describes. There is always clarity of form, style, and expression as she looks through the fissures in everyday events to show the universal abundance of life as it is.

## *Tiferet*

When writing about grief in the poem of that title, she describes the most challenging aspects of grieving but still finds hope as she concludes:

... All I see is a block  
of obsidian, mirroring a deeper darkness there, an unexpected  
tomb of discovery, unguarded, assailing. Pain, fierce and continuous,  
like an amputated wing, wounds buried in its mud-soaked secret:  
anger, a glint of light. (p. 34)

A keen observer, and a master of simile and metaphor, Gerrish writes about growing up in “Another Spring” and closes the poem with this:

... One day we stopped coming  
  
out of our houses to do what kids do, emerged bright-new  
into another spring like a tripped switch—  
  
Not yet knowing how the dusky light unspools into a peony  
the shape of love. (p. 48)

In this multidimensional collection of poems, Gerrish explores her journey (which is universal) toward the unity and wholeness of all created things. She gives full weight and measure to each carefully worded reflection, blending intelligence and compassion and giving full attention to the spiritual and to the temporal. She achieves a musicality in these poems that is both lyrical and elegiac, communicating deeply felt and strongly assessed emotion. These poems are profound in language and sensibility and in their mindfulness of the extraordinary mystery of the ordinary.

The last poem in the collection (“Talking to God”) is a sparsely worded and perfectly phrased, testament to faith:

You are the Gardener, the Governor,  
the Architect. I am a blue glass roof  
  
that shatters at the slightest,  
a red bird storm-swept

in a scrap of nest. You  
are the magnolia, the entire

poem. And I? The em dash—

the unspoken heart-skip,  
the unfinished line (p.74)

This is the kind of special collection that happens when life is reflected upon and translated into written language. Each of these poems is defined by accessible wisdom and the wonder of life.



## **A Review of *The Animals of My Earth School***

*By Adele Kenny*



**THE ANIMALS OF MY EARTH SCHOOL**

By Mildred Kiconco Barya

Terrapin Books

\$17.00 U.S. Paperback

96 Pages

ISBN: 978-1-947869-63-5

To order: <https://www.terrapiinbooks.com/store/p57/animals.html>

Terrapin Books, noted for quality of content, elegant design, and extraordinary covers does not disappoint in *The Animals of My Earth School*, and this book by Mildred Kiconco Barya is both unique and exceptional in its devotion to some of the non-human species with which we share life on our planet.

This collection is a celebration of life that focuses on creature qualities as well as on the compassionate constructs of the human heart. Throughout the book, there is an ongoing sense of kinship between humanity and other species. In these skillfully crafted and richly imagistic poems, Barya writes with the deepest respect for the sanctity of all life and for the dignity of non-human beings that are not subjects to be dominated, exploited, or abused.

Masterfully using enjambments and figurative language, Barya infuses language's natural music with alliteration, assonance, and consonance. These poems are lyrical in their movement away from the linear progression of strictly narrative poetry. Each poem is compact, direct, and carefully structured – specific and striking.

Barya has created an ark for her readers to reflect upon. While Noah's Ark in the Genesis flood story sees God sparing Noah, his family, and examples of all the world's animals from a worldwide flood,

Barya's ark extends the salvific meaning of the Biblical ark and works toward raising consciousness and understanding of the creatures too often called "lesser." Barya's ark metaphorically floats her readers into the "creature world" that lives outside of and within humanity. Enriched with the gratitude and praise that never "get old" in poetry, Barya's poems are characterized by finely crafted language, elegance, and meditative beauty. She writes attentively and gracefully in both lineated and prose poem forms.

Barya masterfully divides her poems into five seamlessly ordered sections: "Insecta," "Mammalia I," "Aves," "Reptilia," and "Mammalia II."

In the first section, "Insecta," ants, locusts, and mosquitoes (among other types of insects) are addressed as fellow-creatures to which the poet relates. She writes:

When cicadas sing  
do they know  
I am listening  
  
to the silence of  
what could become  
the future? (p. 10)

In Mammalia I, readers encounter such poetic gems as one in which a hedgehog, an unattractive little creature at Barya's side, is elevated to the status of the anointed:

Timid ugly body  
covered with spikes  
and stiff to the touch,  
sits by my side,  
anointed (p. 19)

She goes on to say that as much as she tried to ignore the hedgehog, she grew "fond of its ways," and that in her "longings" she "sought airborne symbols" instead of paying attention to the hedgehog that was noticing her.

## *Tiferet*

Again, the motif of the poet's relationships with animals and other creatures becomes the force that drives the poem.

In "Moon Dog," Barya speaks to wolves and the intensely felt sound of their howling that brings, surprisingly, human renewal:

When you howl into the moon's belly,  
timbre across the hills and valleys causes our  
tired bones to rise. To pick up hoes, hunting  
bows, and carpentry tools. Knowing too well  
our primal fears, and bringing us renewal. (p. 23)

In the poem "Guilty Tenderness," a newly born calf is unable to feed and Barya states, "A wave of compassion washes over me. We / were all once like that, newly born and helpless." (p. 30)

The middle section of the book, "Aves," further observes and celebrates relationships among humans and other creatures through Barya's tender hearted sense of kindred being. The word *ave*, is defined as a word of greeting or goodbye. In this section, Barya finds herself thinking about paradise and "wishing that chickens would be in it." All the poems in this section are thoughtful reflections on how the poet extends generous greetings to the various creatures that lead her to fundamental insights and deeper understanding.

"Reptilia," which might suggest creepy-crawly things, does anything but. Barya calls lizards her friends, an alligator is seen as graceful, and snakes are acknowledged as having a deep knowledge of the earth:

... The snakes glide ahead  
with a confidence that comes from bellies aligned  
with the beating heart of earth, and in touch with  
all the wisdom of the land unknown to my feet. (p.55)

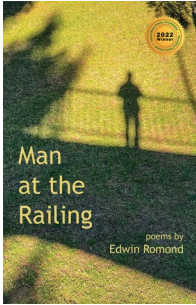
In the last section of the book, "Mammalia II," Barya continues her understanding of relationships with animals. She asserts that she loves a doe, "Pure, crystal love."

In another poem, she states that God and Dog share the same letters and, when the dog in the poem worries about a diet of greens, “God pulls his tail and assures him / Paradise belongs to those like him.” The book closes with “The Ineffable,” a poem in which the poet is visited by a large, white dog that reminds her of a childhood dog named Francisco, and how the “possibility of transmigration” fills her “with quiet joy.”

The name of that dog called to mind the particular spirituality of a well-known saint, St. Francis of Assisi. St. Francis is the patron saint of ecology and is closely associated with animals. He welcomed all creatures into the circle of his immediate family, and he called them his sisters and brothers. Like Barya, St. Francis was also a poet whose famous poem “The Canticle of the Sun” has also been called “The Canticle of the Creatures.” This collection of poems is a very special canticle to (and of) the creatures—a blessing and a gift from a profoundly perceptive and accomplished writer.

## A Review of *Man at the Railing*

By Adele Kenny



MAN AT THE RAILING

By Edwin Romond

NYQ Books

\$18.95 U.S. Paperback

93 Pages

ISBN: 978-1-63045-105-9

To order: <https://www.spdbooks.org/>

[Products/9781630451059/man-at-the-railing.aspx](https://www.spdbooks.org/Products/9781630451059/man-at-the-railing.aspx)

Edwin Romond's recently published poetry collection, *Man at the Railing*, is the 2022 winner of the Laura Boss Poetry Foundation's Narrative Poetry Award. Every poem in the collection is a "winner" in terms of image, line, and sound. Note the perfect scansion, use of enjambment, and sonic impression in "May 3, 1975" when Romond writes about the end of his first day without a cigarette.

I will never again  
inhale what subtracts  
even one future chance  
to walk this beach,  
see these waves,  
and feel my heart beat  
to the music  
of this boardwalk  
carousel turning  
like the earth  
where tonight  
I live. (p. 34)

Romond's poems are compressed, compelling, and masterfully crafted. Touched with both sadness and joy, these poems reflect the hard-learned wisdom of a realized life. In "*Seeing Our Town In Our 70s,*"

We are ages away  
from our high school class  
where we first walked  
the streets of Grover's Corners  
and have lived decades and  
decades of important days  
writing our own scenes  
along the way. ...  
In our 70s *Our Town* brings us joy  
and also breaks our hearts.  
Now we know. (p. 35)

Characterized by profound interplays of darkness and light these poems speak to the immediate and to the remembered. Tenderness, pathos, accessible wisdom, and uncompromising sincerity are this poet's touchstones. He writes often and lovingly of his only son, Liam. On his son's prom night, he thinks of *Fiddler on the Roof*:

... I wish  
I could sit with Tevye and  
ask him what to do now  
  
to be a father to my son  
in his beginning manhood years  
certain to be laden with happiness  
and tears. But maybe wise  
  
old Tevye would just shrug  
his milkman's shoulders,  
pour us both some vodka,  
raise his glass and say  
  
the only words a parent can say:

## *Tiferet*

*“L’chaim to life!”* and wherever  
it takes our children  
between sunrise and sunset. (p. 49)

This is just one of many examples of the way Romond brilliantly achieves true poetic sentiment without stumbling into sentimentality as evidenced as well in poems about his mother and father.

Romond writes from the perspective of one who knows what happens when the world doesn’t tilt in your favor, and one who understands that struggling with life is part of being human. He understands sadness and loss, but he also embraces joy. His poems are graceful and giving, filled with gratitude and appreciation for the people who have been part of his life. In “Flower for a Teacher,” he returns to the classroom where a beloved teacher taught sophomore English, and he takes with him a rose.

So I’ve come to this room 50 years later to thank  
with a flower the soft spoken priest who asked  
almost as much of us as he did of himself and  
gave me the model of English teaching excellence  
I could only strive for but never attain.  
I leave a rose here in memory of Father Carlton,  
who stirred in me a passion for literature and writing,

who every day in this classroom quietly changed my life. (p. 63)

A teacher himself for 32 years, there can be no doubt that Romond has changed many lives and is spoken of by his former students with the same respect and gratitude he expresses in this poem.

Romond takes as recurrent themes the conditions of change and the emotional centers in which he has lived. When he translates these into written language, he reminds his readers that they are not alone. The details of his experiences may be different from theirs, but every reader has been faced with decisions and alterations in their life plans – beginnings and endings – and Romond deftly creates a spiritual kinship between poet and reader through his poems.

When he left the seminary at which he trained to become a priest, Romond describes the preface to leaving as “what had been / for seven years a gnawing question / had now become a galloping doubt.” He goes on to write:

... I could not unring the bell  
tolling me to a different life of love.  
“You can always have it back.”  
the priest said kindly when I turned in  
my Roman collar. But it was time

to tell myself it would never fit me again. (p. 79)

The real genius of Romond’s poetry is that, as one who is a deeply imbedded correspondent in humanity, he writes from the heart—a large and generous heart that he shares with his readers. He invites them into his life and takes them back to their own special people and experiences.

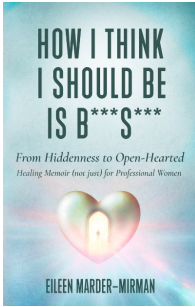
One comes away from this collection with a deep feeling for Romond’s thoughtfulness and intelligence. He leads readers toward a deeper understanding of self and spirit. In the title poem (p. 11), “Man at the Railing,” the reader instinctively feels that the man at the railing is actually Romond as he stands back, sees himself as someone else might see him, and reflects upon his life. Still teaching, still learning, he says that he wants to meet the man at the boardwalk railing: “Maybe he could teach me about love / in this world...”

It’s as if Romond looks increasingly inward as he opens himself to his readers and finds through these poems portals of hope that move toward understanding “... why joy / and loss join hands across / our lifetime.” Throughout *Man at the Railing* the reader is held in the sustaining warmth of this poet’s inspiring compassion and love.



**A Review of *How I Think I Should Be  
Is B\*\*\*S\*\*\****

*By Maria Tegzes*



HOW I THINK I SHOULD BE IS B\*\*\*S\*\*\*

By Eileen Marder-Mirman

IndyPub

\$13.99 U.S. Paperback

236 Pages

ISBN: 978-1088064320

To order: <https://www.amazon.com/How-Think-Should-Hiddenness-Open-Hearted/dp/1088064329>

Within these pages, we witness the richness of a life, beautifully lived and still unfolding. In language both down-to-earth and poetic, with syntax both plain and esoteric, Eileen Marder-Mirman shares her formidable journey. Her healing intention is apparent in every syllable. From her upbringing by parents descended from Eastern European--and specifically Jewish--traditions, to conscientious student in higher education, pursuing a degree in psychology and anthropology, to "soul-searching hippie," political activist, devoted wife, mother, family member, spiritual seeker, and dedicated professional, Eileen Marder-Mirman's memoir is honest and vivid, pulling no punches, revealing her heart in toto.

In the chapter, "Presence," Marder-Mirman describes how, as a child, she felt a connection to "the Presence of the night sky." And, as a little girl in the sanctuary of the synagogue, she experienced that same Presence or holiness. It seems to this reader that such experiences lay the groundwork for Marder-Mirman's path of mindfulness, spiritual awakening, and healership.

This is a book for anyone who is curious about—or is drawn to explore—their own inner territories, as well as for those who believe there truly is more richness and vibrancy in being alive. It is for all who desire a connection with what Marder-Mirman describes as our “true, authentic nature.” While the subject matter is decidedly profound and intense, there is also humor in these pages. There is something of every flavor and color of life.

I felt I was a participant traveling the phrases and pages of this book rather than a passive reader. Although there are plenty of ways in which Marder-Mirman’s life experience and mine do not intersect, there is such freshness and immediacy in her words, that many times I felt I was right there with her. One example of this immediacy is in the chapter, “Lineage.” In the beginning of the chapter, she, her husband, and son have arrived in Israel to visit family. She writes: “When I stepped off that EL AL flight and took a breath of that fresh desert winter air, I felt I had come home. Home to a place I had known deep inside my consciousness somehow.” She goes on to describe “narrow, winding cobblestone streets, lined with cafes, ancient homes, and galleries.” Taking in her words, I could smell the desert air and feel the sun on my skin. I could hear the sounds of children (her son with his cousins) laughing, as they ran and played in those ancient lanes. The manner in which she imparted this combination of deep cultural history with the joy of family was utterly stirring. I almost sensed the cobblestones beneath my own feet!

Each chapter can practically stand alone as a compellingly insightful essay about the terrain of the human heart. And in subsequent readings, I know I will return to individual chapters. However, by reading the book in sequence, I felt thrilled and grateful to be able to relate deeply with the author. The way I see it, this book is a gesture of love and healing. There are times when I felt Marder-Mirman was speaking right to me. Such is the directness with which she communicates.

There is a distinctive beauty and naturalness in how Marder-Mirman acknowledges and honors what we consider our darker emotions.

## *Tiferet*

She offers illuminating perspectives about some of our most difficult emotions like hatred, aggression, alienation, and terror. She illustrates how, if we can awaken to such emotions, which are inherently human, we can develop a relationship with them as they exist within us, rather than being controlled by them—or blindsided—when they arise.

With vulnerability and grace, the author also shares with us her struggles and suffering. There is no sanctimony here, as, rather than speaking as someone who has “arrived” or has overcome all obstacles, she acknowledges that her path is an ongoing one. And she entreats and encourages us to walk our paths: to stumble, pause, weep, resume, rejoice—and to keep going. To embrace our own open-heartedness and awaken to the fullness of ourselves and life.

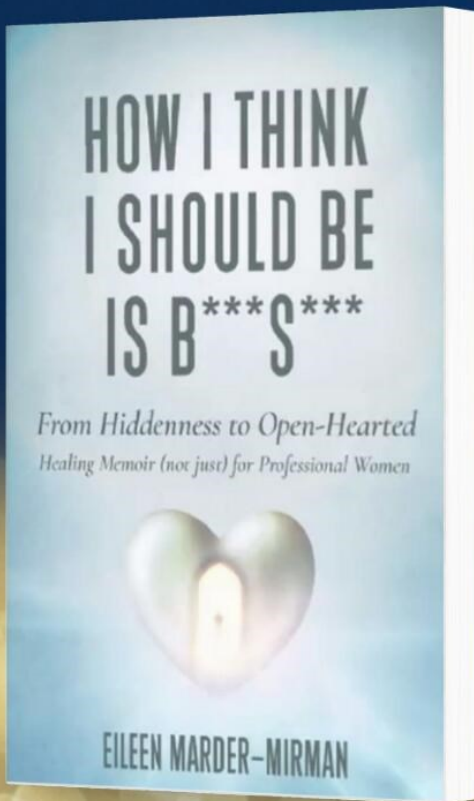
Eileen Marder-Mirman calls upon her considerable scholarship and expertise, graciously and respectfully informing, instructing, and guiding the reader through each chapter. I find the ordering of the chapters to be of particular note. Since the book does not follow a strictly linear format, one can imagine that there was some flexibility in choosing the order. The first several chapters have an expository nature, which serves to allow the author to fully introduce herself to us. As the chapters progress, I felt that she delved ever more deeply into the mindfulness and spiritual awakening practices to which she dedicates her life as a human being and healer. The middle of the book ushered me into a place of intensity and splendid density of information about the inner workings of the mind-body-spirit-heart. Again, it felt like Marder-Mirman seemed to be walking with me each step of the way, as she invited me to walk with her. Truly, this is powerful stuff.

There is an arc to this marvelous memoir—a superb gesture, as in music, which is comprised of smaller gestures, all existing in time-space as something that is at once complete and ongoing. The arc of this book fittingly rounds out with the chapter titled, “It’s All About Love.”

From the beginning, including the author's Dedication and the Forward, to the ending acknowledgements, love is potently present. And in these volatile times, when unconscious fear and confusion can loom large, eclipsing our "true, authentic natures," Eileen Marder-Mirman presents us with a gift in book-form – an invocation of and an invitation to choose love.



AS WOMEN REACH A CERTAIN AGE, WE ARE FREQUENTLY SEASONED BY A MYRIAD OF LIFE EXPERIENCES. THE WISDOM GAINED ALONG THE WAY CAN ENABLE US TO INHABIT OUR TRUE SELVES MORE AUTHENTICALLY.



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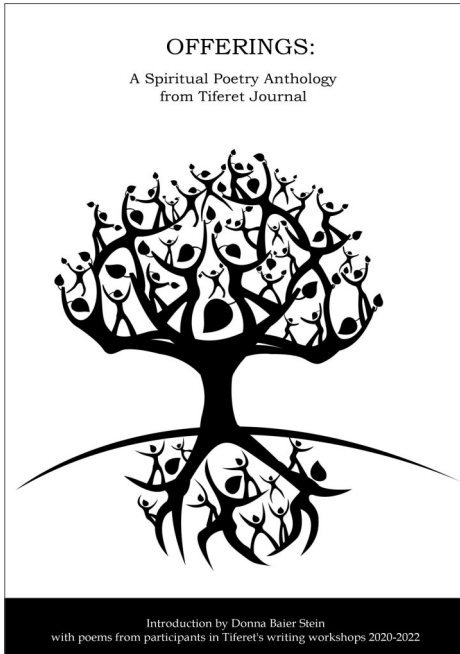
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This memoir describes one Jewish woman's journey as she weaves spirituality into her daily life. It may reflect your own experiences or help you avoid the pitfalls so often encountered as we learn to love our real selves.

# Offerings: A Spiritual Poetry Anthology

*From Tiferet Journal*

Published: December 13, 2022    172 Pages    ISBN: 978-1734894080



Introduction by Donna Baier Stein  
with poems from participants in Tiferet's  
spiritual poetry writing workshops 2020-2022.



This collection of poems shares a common theme of the peace found in solitude, in nature, and in stillness. It explores the human experiences of struggle and doubt, while offering healthy doses of hope and humor. In a world that increasingly promotes isolation, this collection of poems is offered as a gift, a connection to readers, a companion on the journey for seekers.

AVAILABLE IN PRINT AND DIGITAL FORMAT

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# Contributors

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Carolyn Baker, Ph.D., is a former psychotherapist and professor of psychology and history. The author of several books, she offers life and leadership coaching as well as spiritual counseling and works closely with the Institute for Sacred Activism. She lives in Boulder, Colorado.

## **JAMES CREWS**

James Crews is the author of the essay collection, *Kindness Will Save the World*, and editor of several bestselling poetry anthologies: *Healing the Divide*, *The Path to Kindness*, and *How to Love the World*. He has been featured on NPR's *Morning Edition*, *People Magazine*, *The Boston Globe*, and *The Washington Post*. For more information, visit: [www.jamescrews.net](http://www.jamescrews.net)

## **TAMAR EINSTEIN**

Dr Tamar Einstein, (Tammy), is an Expressive Arts Therapist, writer, jewelry designer, dancer ,artist, gardener, and mom in Jerusalem. Her love of writing began in early childhood in a Manhattan. Public school intriguingly named "The Emily Dickinson School". Her immersion in the arts is a daily part of her spiritual, professional, and academic life. Her doctoral research and lifelong passion: culture and Expressive Arts Therapy in Jerusalem are at the heart of her work.

## **DEBORAH GERRISH**

Deborah Gerrish is the author of three books: *Light in Light*, *The Language of Paisley*, *Indeed Jasmine*, and a chapbook *The Language of Rain*. Her poems appear in many anthologies and journals. She received an EDD from Rutgers University where she was awarded the Edward Fry Fellowship. She also holds an MFA from Drew University. She teaches poetry workshops at Fairleigh Dickinson University and organizes readings for the Visiting Poets Program.

## **HEDY HABRA**

Hedy Habra is a poet, artist, and essayist. She is the author of three poetry collections, most recently, *The Taste of the Earth* (2019), Winner of the Silver Nautilus Book Award and Honorable Mention for the Eric Hoffer Award; *Tea in Heliopolis* Winner of the Best Book Award and *Under Brushstrokes*, Finalist for the International Book Award. Her story collection, *Flying Carpets*, won the Arab American Book Award's Honorable Mention. She is a twenty-one-time nominee for the Pushcart Prize and Best of the net.

<https://www.hedyhabra.com/>

## **PENNY HARTER**

Penny Harter's newest book, *Keeping Time: Haibun for the Journey*, joins her most recent collections *Still-Water Days* and *A Prayer the Body Makes* (Kelsay Books, 2023; 2021; 2020). Her work appears in *Persimmon Tree*, *Rattle*, *Tiferet*, and *American Life in Poetry*, and in many journals, anthologies, and earlier collections. She has won fellowships and awards from the Dodge Foundation, the NJSCA, the PSA, and VCCA. To access her books and more, please visit [pennyharterpoet.com](http://pennyharterpoet.com).

## **ANDREW HARVEY**

Andrew Harvey is an internationally renowned religious scholar, writer, teacher, and the author of more than 30 books. The founder and director of the Institute for Sacred Activism, he lives in Chicago, Illinois.

## **KAREN PAUL HOLMES**

Karen Paul Holmes has two poetry books, *No Such Thing as Distance* (Terrapin, 2018) and *Untying the Knot* (Aldrich, 2014). Her poems have been featured on *The Writer's Almanac*, *The Slowdown*, and *Verse Daily*. Publications include *Diode*, *Plume*, *Valparaiso Review*, and *Prairie Schooner*, and she was named a best emerging poet by Stay Thirsty Media. She is also a freelance writer, living in Georgia, who has taught writing workshops at various venues and conferences.

## **ADELE KENNY**

Adele Kenny, author of 25 books (poetry and non-fiction), is widely published in the U.S. and abroad and in books by Crown, Tuttle, Shambhala, and McGraw-Hill. Her awards include first prize in 2021's Allen Ginsberg Poetry Awards, NJ State Arts Council poetry fellowships, and Kean University's Distinguished Alumni Award. She has been poetry editor of *Tiferet* since 2006, is founding director of the Carriage House Poetry Series, and has twice been a featured reader at the Geraldine R. Dodge Poetry Festival.

## **MILDRED KICONCO BARYA**

Mildred Kiconco Barya is from Uganda, currently living in North Carolina. Her publications include three earlier poetry books, as well as prose, hybrids, and poems published in various journals. She is a board member of African Writers Trust and Story Parlor. She coordinates the Poetrio Reading events at Malaprop's Independent Bookstore/Café and teaches creative writing and literature at UNC-Asheville.



## **ALFRED LAMOTTE**

Alfred LaMotte has authored three volumes of poetry with Saint Julian Press, including 'The Nectar of this Breath,' and co-authored three coffee-table art books with Hawaiian artist and eco-activist, Rashani Réa. With degrees from Yale University and Princeton Theological Seminary, Fred is an interfaith college chaplain, instructor in World Religion, and meditation guide. He lives on the shore of the Salish Sea near Seattle WA with his wife Anna.

## **NANCY LUBARSKY**

Nancy Lubarsky writes from Cranford, NJ. Nancy has been an educator for over 35 years. A retired school superintendent, she holds a Doctorate from Rutgers University. She's been published in various journals including *Paterson Literary Review*, *Edison Literary Review*, *Silver Birch Press*, *Exit 13*, *Lips*, *Tiferet*, *Poetic*, and *Stillwater Review*. She's authored two books: *Tattoos* (Finishing Line Press) and *The Only Proof* (Kelsay Press).

## **EILEEN MARDER-MIRMAN**

Eileen Marder-Mirman's passion is to help people be free. Throughout her entire life, having the normal experiences of grief, loss, and celebration, she has always stayed aligned with knowing she is part of a larger reality and is committed to help others feel guided, and on the path to healing and authenticity. As a New York State Licensed Mental Health Counselor and a spiritual healing teacher for more than 45 years, Eileen specializes in integrating psychotherapy, spirituality, meditation, and various forms of alternative healing in her private practice. For the past 20 years, she has been a senior teacher and supervisor at A Society of Souls, The School for Nondual Healing and Awakening. [www.eileenmardermirman.com](http://www.eileenmardermirman.com)

## **BERNADETTE MCBRIDE**

Bernadette McBride, a multi-genre editor and author of four poetry collections, taught creative writing and literature at Temple University, served as poet-in-residence at DeSales University and as poetry editor for the *Schuylkill Valley Journal*. A Pennsylvania Poet Laureate Emerita for Bucks County, her writing honors include winning second place for the International Ray Bradbury Writing Award, recognition in the UK, Canada, and on PRI's The Writer's Almanac, and three Pushcart Prize nominations.

## **JON PEARSON**

Jon Pearson is a writer, speaker, and artist. He was once a cartoonist for the *Oakland Tribune*, an extra for the New York Metropolitan Opera, a college professor, a mailman, and a piano mover. He has been published in numerous journals and nominated twice for the Pushcart Prize. He writes now for the same reason he played with his food as a kid – to make the world a better place. [www.jonpearsoncreative.com](http://www.jonpearsoncreative.com)

## **TOM PLANTE**

Tom Plante studied Geography at the University of California (Berkeley) and worked as a writer/ editor for several newspapers and the County of Union, NJ. His poems and essays appeared in *Berkeley Poetry Review*, *Journal of New Jersey Poets*, *LIPS Magazine*, *Ireland of the Welcomes*, *Edison Literary Review*, *US1 Worksheets*, *Poets of the Palisades*, and *Atlas Apothecary* (Finishing Line Press). He lives in Fanwood, NJ, and publishes the annual *Exit 13 Magazine*, "Crossroads of Poetry since 1988."

## **FRANCES RICHEY**

Frances Richey is the author of two poetry collections: *The Warrior* (Viking Penguin 2008), *The Burning Point* (White Pine Press 2004), and the chapbook, *Voices of the Guard*, (Clackamas Community College 2010). She teaches an on-going poetry writing class at Himan Brown Senior Program at the 92NY in NYC. She is Poetry Editor for *upstreet literary magazine*, and an Editor-at-Large for *Plume Poetry Journal*. Her work has appeared in or is forthcoming from: *The New York Times*, *The New York Times Magazine*, *O*, *The Oprah Magazine*, *Plume*, *Gulf Coast*, *Salamander*, *Blackbird*, *Cortland Review*, *Nimrod*, *The Night Heron Barks*, *The Common*, and *Tiferet*, among others. Her poems have been featured on NPR, *PBS NewsHour* and *Verse Daily*. Her manuscript, "On The Way Here," was a finalist for the National Poetry Series in 2019.

## **JUDE RITTENHOUSE**

Jude Rittenhouse, award-winning poet, short-story, and creative non-fiction writer, is also a teacher, speaker, and mental health professional. Her poems, essays, and articles appear in *Nimrod International Journal*, *Tiferet Journal*, *Narrative Northeast*, and *DoveTales*, among others; and she was included in *The Tiferet Talk Interviews* (2013, Tiferet Press). Awards include a Writer's Grant from the Vermont Studio Center and multiple designations as finalist for *Nimrod's Pablo Neruda Prize* and the *Tiferet Poetry Prize*. Founding co-editor for the feminist literary magazine *Moon Journal* (1995-2009, archived at Smith College), Jude has spent decades helping people use their creativity to transform and grow.

## **ALICE ROCHE CODY**

Alice Roche Cody began her career as a reporter and has written for *The Star-Ledger*, *NJ.com*, *The Rumpus*, *Black River Journal*, *The Record* (Hackensack, NJ) and *Columbia Journalism Review*. Her personal narrative, "A Sacred Gift," was one of 60 essays selected from more than 100,000 submissions for inclusion in the book, *This I Believe: On Motherhood* (Wiley & Sons). Currently, she is writing a childhood memoir and a middle-grade novel about a baseball travel team.

## **SUSAN ROGERS**

Susan Rogers is a practitioner of Sukyo Mahikari – a spiritual practice promoting positivity. Her work appears in numerous journals and anthologies. In 2013 and 2017 she received nominations for Pushcart Prizes. She’s co-editor of *A Sonic Boom of Stars* and was one of four international judges for the 8th Rabindranath Tagore Award.

## **EDWIN ROMOND**

Edwin Romond’s most recent collection, *Man at the Railing* (NYQ Books), won the 2022 Laura Boss Narrative Poetry Award. He has received fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and from both the New Jersey and Pennsylvania State Arts Councils. His poem, “Champion,” won the 2013 New Jersey Poetry Prize and his work has twice been featured on NPR’s *The Writer’s Almanac*. He lives in Wind Gap, PA.

## **BOB ROSENBLOOM**

Bob Rosenbloom lives with his wife in Bound Brook, NJ. He’s a Certified Civil Trial Lawyer and practices personal injury law. He has a Master’s Degree in Creative Writing from The City College of New York. His poems have appeared in *Tiferet*, *Paterson Literary Review*, *US 1 Worksheets*, *LIPS*, *Edison Literary Review*, and *Exit 13*. He was awarded first prize in the Allen Ginsberg Poetry contest in 2018.

## **MARIA TEGZES**

Maria Tegzes (MM with Distinction in Performance from New England Conservatory: Voice) is a vocalist, composer, and lyricist, whose performances have received critical acclaim throughout the United States and Europe. She has been described as: “a singer of superb musicianship and compellingly assured dramatic presence.” As a music instructor and vocal coach, she has given numerous classes and talks at universities in the United States, Spain, Mexico, and England, as well as masterclasses and private coaching sessions. A graduate of A Society of Souls, the School for Nondual Healing and Awakening™, Ms. Tegzes is also a nondual healer.

## **JOHN TIMPANE**

John Timpane is the former Commentary Page Editor and Books Editor for *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. His work has appeared in *Sequoia*, *The Fox Chase Review*, *Apiary*, *Cleaver*, *Painted Bride Quarterly*, *Schuylkill Valley Journal*, *Vocabula Review*, and elsewhere. Among his books is a chapbook, *Burning Bush* (Judith Fitzgerald/Cranberry Tree, 2010).

## **GLORY WHITE**

Glory White is a writer and lecturer whose interests include religion, history, and science. She lives with her husband and two mischievous children and eats way too much sushi.

Glory's new book, [50 Answers: How World Religions Grapple with Life's Biggest Questions](#), is available on Amazon.com.

## **YVONNE ZIPTER**

Yvonne Zipter is author of the poetry collections *The Wordless Lullaby of Crickets*, *Kissing the Long Face of the Greyhound*, *The Patience of Metal* (Lambda Literary Award Finalist), and *Like Some Bookie God*, the Russian historical novel *Infraction*, and the nonfiction books *Diamonds Are a Dyke's Best Friend* and *Ransacking the Closet*. Her individual published poems are being sold in two repurposed toy-vending machines in Chicago, the proceeds of which support a local nonprofit organization.

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