

BACOPA

LITERARY REVIEW

2026



WRITERS ALLIANCE OF GAINESVILLE

Bacopa Literary Review 2026 Prizes



FICTION

Award

Mango Season /42/ Bethany Bruno

Honorable Mention

10,000 Hooves Beating /14/ Janna Moretti

Best of Writers Alliance of Gainesville

Possum /88/ Charlotte M. Porter

CREATIVE NONFICTION

Award

Burn 'Em Up Barb /51/ Chris Gallagher

Honorable Mention

On Sir Simon, with a Nod to My Father /64/ Elizabeth Bird

Best of Writers Alliance of Gainesville

The Sleeper Car /30/ Michelle Dunlap

FREE VERSE POETRY

Award

Warm Hours /25/ Kathryn Napier Stull

Honorable Mention

Farming as Explained to a Child /109/ Travis Stephens

Best of Writers Alliance of Gainesville

We Were Heroes /72/ Hugh Edward Suggs

FORMAL POETRY

Award

Sestina in Snow /3/ Jonathan Wolf

Honorable Mention

Directional After the Turn of the Year /87/ Jen Karetnick

Best of Writers Alliance of Gainesville

What I Learned at the Art Institute of Chicago /140/ J. Nishida

VISUAL POETRY

Award

Sphinx /97/ Mark Wyatt

Honorable Mention

This Fasnra Ad Was Hiding Some Advice About Sex /59/ Mary Christine

Delea

On Sir Simon, with a Nod to My Father

Elizabeth Bird



Sir Simon is my most daunting project yet. His flat brass effigy, set in the stone floor of the ancient Yorkshire church, is life-size at just over five feet. His eyes are closed, his hands folded peacefully, and a chalice rests on his chest, cradled among his ornate priestly vestments. Curls frame his face and angels perch on his shoulders.

I carefully brush dust from his head to his feet, which rest on the backs of two stoic dogs, facing opposite ways for eternity. I nod to my father, wandering nearby; he smiles in encouragement. Then I roll my white paper over the effigy, fastening it to the floor with masking tape. I'm ready.

Capturing his image will take a while. I will kneel on the cold floor, then use my "heelball," a black stick of wax, to rub across the paper, revealing him inch by inch. Like putting paper on a coin and scribbling over it—but so much bigger. I must keep the paper still, feeling for where metal touches stone, so as not to smudge the edges. Wondering if it's blasphemous, I reach for an embroidered hassock from an adjoining pew to cushion my knees. Sir Simon de Wensley, rector of Wensleydale, departed life in 1394 and will now be the jewel of my collection.

It was the early 1960s, when hobbies like trainspotting and model building were all the rage in England. Brass rubbing, which required scouring the countryside for brass effigies marking the graves of long-dead rich folk, had devoted aficionados but was not known for its appeal to fourteen-year-old girls.

I was communing with Sir Simon because a year earlier my best friend (my only friend, actually) had talked me into signing up for the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme. The program, under the patronage of then Queen Elizabeth's husband, required us to complete goals in volunteering, fitness, outdoor adventure—and hobbies. We stuck together for the active components, choosing lifesaving and hiking, and each found an appropriately worthy volunteer opportunity. She, a more sociable girl than I, selected acting as her hobby. I'm not sure how I came up with brass rubbing, but there are clues. I was always a touch morbid for a middle-class child with a perfectly normal life. I found cemeteries fascinating. I loved

Wuthering Heights and the novels of Thomas Hardy, agonizing with their doomed heroes and heroines. When assigned to choose an artist for a school project, I picked Hieronymus Bosch, that medieval chronicler of Hell. Add a love of myths, legends and fairytales, and perhaps it's no surprise that funerary effigies enticed me.

I quickly discovered a major flaw in my plan. Of the over five thousand surviving English brasses, most reside in the churches of the affluent South. Northumberland, in the far north, was pitifully lacking. It had one right there in my hometown of Newcastle. Ironically, it is the nation's largest, close to ten feet tall—a magnificent etching of a medieval merchant, his wife, and an impressive brood of children. Brass rubbing was forbidden. Neighboring Durham had a couple of dozen, while Yorkshire, a few hours away, offered a richer selection.

I'm sure my parents would have preferred I rethink. Couldn't I take up stamp collecting or macrame? But I had invested in a guidebook, rolls of paper and heelball, and I promised to take responsibility for obtaining permission from the appropriate clerics. Seeing my determination, my father agreed to drive me to a couple of churches in County Durham. His spare time was precious; he was a busy doctor and enjoyed his occasional weekends of golf, refereeing rugby, and hiking. But he was also a history buff and was mildly intrigued. I assured him we could get one done in a morning.

He probably thought I'd lose interest in short order, but off we went, me in the front seat, navigating like an adult with our giant road atlas. I soon bagged some nice brasses in Durham, diligently rubbing while my father explored the churches or nearby villages. My favorites were matching male and female skeletons, identity unknown. The elite who commissioned brasses usually preferred noble portraits, but the Black Death of the mid-fourteenth century inspired the tradition of the *memento mori*—"remember you must die." Medieval churches across Europe are full of such reminders—skulls, rotting corpses (complete with worms), dancing skeletons and the like. Instead of paying for noble monuments in armor or regalia, some penitents chose depictions in the throes of death. My pair, a convenient eighteen inches in height, were wrapped in shrouds, knotted at the feet and head, and opened to show their grinning skulls and defleshed ribs. Delighted, I mounted them on my bedroom wall, over the antique drop-leaf desk where I did my homework. My dad, a pathologist by profession, helpfully pointed out anatomical inaccuracies, but admitted they were striking.

Most of my prizes were numbered, rolled in tubes, labelled with name, location, death date, and date of visit, and stacked in the drawers of

that very desk. I took snaps of each church and pasted them in a notebook, with details about each figure. I presented the book and rubbings to the required “expert”—my school history teacher, for want of an actual authority on brasses, lacking in my neck of the woods.

With most of Durham picked clean, I was at a turning point. Trips to Yorkshire would be a commitment. Long car trips—which for our family of four kids and two dogs meant anything over fifty miles—were never taken lightly. Such expeditions might involve sandwiches, frequent toilet breaks, juddering stops to accommodate my car sickness, and occasional reversals to collect a dog left by the road. A venture into Yorkshire was a lot to ask.

But it wouldn’t be the whole family, would it? For somewhere along the country roads of Durham, a magical thing happened. As I worked, Dad began lingering and commenting on the finer points of each trophy. He proposed longer journeys—just the two of us. Why not make a day of it and plan for two or three in one trip? We could pack a picnic or even stop for a pub lunch.

So the next phase of my brass-rubbing journey began. It lasted little over a year, but it’s etched in memory. We roamed the Yorkshire Dales (known as the land of TV vet James Herriott and his creatures great and small). Aysgarth, Topcliffe, Cowthorpe, Kirby Malzeard—the haunting names that conjure up the green and rolling dales, each yielding another image for my collection. On sunny days, we put the top down on his little Morris Minor, relishing the breeze of the countryside. We discussed the artistry of the various etchings, the architecture of the churches (we loved gargoyles), and the snacks we’d packed. We wandered among gravestones and noted the sad stories they captured. How fortunate we were to know so little of death. . . He crawled on the floor with me to find brasses located under pews and climbed on chairs to reach wall-mounted images. Best of all, we talked—about anything and everything. Any child with siblings understands how priceless this is.

The north has no life-size knights, like the classics found in the south, but I collected smaller versions, as well as ladies, priests and merchants. The best was Sir Simon de Wensley. A mere parish rector, he was from a noble family—probably a younger son who took the cloth while older brothers crusaded for Christ. He was wealthy enough to commission his memorial from a talented Flemish craftsman, making it one of the finest continental brasses anywhere. And he had dragons on his robes and angels on his shoulders.

My father even indulged me when I discovered the latest innovation in brass-rubbing. While purists still preferred black wax over white paper, mavericks had invented a new technique—gold colored wax over black

paper, producing a striking, realistic image. Really—you want to go back to Wensley and do Sir Simon again? Oh yes, Dad, I do.

Our trips continued long after the requirements of the award were met, but eventually other interests intervened. By fifteen I finally had a social life, more alluring than country drives with my father. I stacked my rubbings and equipment into the drawers of my desk and became a real teenager for a while.

But the golden Sir Simon and the skeletons stayed on my bedroom wall. And when I traded that room for a university dorm in 1970, they came along. Wary of being labeled weird, I was hesitant, but up they went alongside my James Taylor and Cat Stevens album covers. And they were a hit—I was finally almost cool. People were suitably impressed when I explained I made them myself. Who needed interchangeable psychedelic posters when you had Sir Simon?

But even he was stored away when I graduated and married a man who only occasionally finds me weird. Sir Simon stayed in the drawer when my parents moved across the country and I across the Atlantic. But he joined me in Minnesota when my widowed father, accepting I was not coming home, shipped my desk over. Then on to Florida, where I have lived for thirty more years.

Sometime in the 1990s, after visiting my father in the English Lake District, I spent a week in the Yorkshire Dales with my husband and sons. “Going to Wensley?” my dad asked with a conspiratorial grin. Of course we were. As we made our way down the narrow road to pay homage at the little church, memories trailed me at every turn. I’m not sure my family were quite as excited, but they indulged me.

Sir Simon, in both black and gold, ended up in the attic of my Florida garage, although many others in the collection had vanished. When we cleared it out one day, I spent a happy afternoon unrolling him and others that survived, including my skeletons. My son touched my heart when he chose a small priest to frame and hang in his house, my handwritten label affixed to the back.

Recalling my brass-rubbing odyssey after sixty years, I ponder why it stayed with me when so much of my childhood has dissolved into the ether. I undoubtedly learned things, esoteric as they are. Show me a medieval lady in a butterfly headdress and I know the date she was engraved; ask me how English style differs from Flemish and I will expound. And it wasn’t just about the brasses. Meandering through ancient churches left me, a devout atheist, in love with stained glass, intricately carved choir stalls, and mysterious stone carvings. Like my father, I do not believe. But I cherish the knowledge that generations of English feet trod

those cold flagstones and gazed on Sir Simon long before me. He has lain there for seven centuries, and he's not going anywhere. These days tourists visit commercial brass-rubbing centers, where they rub downsized replicas without the hassle of traveling to the originals, creating "beautiful home decorations in less than an hour." I feel a little sad for them.

But most of all, with my parents long gone and my children eyeing middle age, I recognize the gift my father gave me: his time, his attention, his love. At first, I suspect he would have preferred to be anywhere rather than tooling through the countryside with his awkward daughter. By the time it was over, I think he treasured the memory too.

A few days ago, I unrolled my golden Sir Simon from his resting place in my study closet and hung him on the door. He's intact, except for some fraying at his feet. I thought about tidying him up and finding somewhere to hang him, but there's nowhere he would quite fit now. With a nod to my father, in his frame on my wall, I carefully placed him back on the shelf.

Bacopa Poets and Writers

2026



Samarth Agarwal is a poet currently living in London, UK. His work has been featured in *Ceraus*, *The Poetry Habitat*, *Nova Literary Mag* and *Porridge Mag*. In his free time he participates in writing workshops, volunteers at his local charity shop and attends to his cat.

A.J.M. Aldrian is a graduate of Hamline University with a BFA in Creative Writing, and a minor in History. She loves many genres including fiction; horror, sci-fi, literary, and fantasy, as well as poetry and non-fiction, historical, and nature and memoir. She can also be found on her podcasts *Thinking on the Air* and *Reading on the Air* on Spotify.

Erin Arata's writing has appeared in *Prism Review*, *The Briar Cliff Review*, and *The Rumpus*, and been recognized as a part of the Austin Film Festival. They live in New York City with their partner, two cats, and a number of houseplants they haven't managed to kill (yet).

Chris Bailey teaches English at a liberal arts university. Her stories have appeared in *Big Muddy*, *Flyway*, and *Press Pause*. She's also published academic articles and five YA novels. Her latest, *Burning Little Lies*, is a Moonbeam Award winner. She's the 2024 recipient of the Rick Bragg Prize for Nonfiction.

Devon Balwit edits for *Asimov Press* and *Works in Progress* when not making art. When not doing either, she broods. For more of her work, visit: pelapdx.wixsite.com/devonbalwitpoet

Les Bares lives in Richmond, Virginia. He was the winner of the University of Virginia 2023 Meridian Journal Short Prose Prize and the 2018 Princemere Poetry Prize. His work has or will appear in *The Midwest Review*, *The New York Quarterly*, *Spillway*, and other journals.

Stephen Behrendt presently lives and writes in De Pere, Wisconsin, overlooking a nature preserve, following a long career as teacher and scholar

of British Romanticism at the University of Nebraska. His widely published poetry includes four book-length collections.

John Bing, is an emeritus professor at Heidelberg University in Ohio. He writes articles for Substack and consults in higher education.

Elizabeth Bird, a retired Anthropology Professor, turned to personal writing in 2022. Her essays appear in *Under the Sun*, *Consequence*, *Cleaver*, *Orange Blossom Review*, and elsewhere. Her work has been recognized through three Pushcart nominations, a Best-of-the-Net nomination, and a Notable in Best American Essays. Her website is: www.lizbirdwrites.com.

John Brantingham is the recipient of a New York State Arts Council grant and was Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks' first poet laureate. His work has been in hundreds of magazines and *The Best Small Fictions* 2016 and 2022. He has twenty-two books of poetry, nonfiction, and fiction. Check out his work at johnbrantingham.com.

Bethany Bruno is a Floridian author whose work has appeared in more than a hundred literary journals and magazines, including *The Threepenny Review*, *The Sun*, *McSweeney's*, *River Teeth's Beautiful Things*, and *The Huffington Post*. Her writing has won contests from *The Saturday Evening Post*, *the Key West Art & Historical Society*, *Inscape Journal*, and *Blue Earth Review*. www.bethanybrunowriter.com

Alexandra Burack, a Pushcart Prize-nominated poet and editor/writing coach, has recent poems in *Pangyrus*, *Metphrastics*, and *The Ekphrastic Review*. She serves as a Poetry Editor for *Iron Oak Editions* and *Poetry is Currency*, and a Poetry Reader for *The Adroit Journal*, *The Los Angeles Review*, and *West Trade Review/Trill*. <https://www.alexandraburack.com>.

Lori Anne Butler is a multi-disciplinary artist and illustrator. Her picture book *Beneath the Turtle Moon* received a PBParty 2025 Author/Illustrator Honorable Mention for the Illustration Showcase. Lori's work was featured on the 2025 cover for *Bacopa Literary Review* 2025 and visual poetry. She has portfolios on SCBWI and loriannebutler.com.

Wes Civilz lives next to a dusty cactus in Tucson, Arizona. His writing has appeared in journals such as *Ploughshares*, *The North American Review* and *The Threepenny Review*. He posts writing-oriented videos on Instagram under the handle [@wes_civilz](https://www.instagram.com/wes_civilz).

Carol Church's poetry has appeared in many publications, including *DMQ Review*, *Mothering* magazine, and *Literary Mama*. She lives in Gainesville, Florida with her family.

Josephine Clark is a native Floridian, from the gulf coast of Homosassa. They are a poetry enthusiast, currently studying English at Santa Fe College. As a poet, they find inspiration in the natural world and its animal inhabitants.

Austin Costenbader has been writing short fiction for over a decade. He enjoys gardening and fishing.

Kristine Crane is a writer and writing instructor at the University of Florida in Gainesville. She is originally from Iowa City. She holds a doctorate from UF, an MFA in non-fiction, and a BA from Northwestern University. She lived in Italy for a decade and teaches there in the summer.

Paul Davis is a prize-winning journalist, a former board member of the Historical Writers of America, and an advisor to the South Carolina Writers Association. He is also a three-time winner of the Porter Fleming Literary Competition. His nonfiction has appeared in *The Petigru Review*.

Darius Degher's poems have appeared in various American and European literary magazines, including *Measure*, *Think*, and *Agenda*. His collection *To See the Sound* was published in 2014. He's a native Californian but lived in Sweden and taught at Malmö University for many years. He's also a singer-songwriter.

Mary Christine Delea has had poems published in one full-length collection (*The Skeleton Holding Up the Sky*), three chapbooks, numerous journals, and various anthologies. Delea is a former university professor, social worker, retail manager, and improv performer. She now volunteers for various organizations.

Darren C. Demaree's poems have appeared in *Hotel Amerika*, *Diode*, *North American Review*, *New Letters*, *Diagram*, and *The Colorado Review*. He is the author of twenty-three poetry collections, most recently *So Much More* (November 2024, Harbor Editions). He is the Editor in Chief of the *Best of the Net Anthology* and Managing Editor of *Ovenbird Poetry*. He currently lives and writes in Columbus, Ohio with his wife and children.

Michelle Dunlap is an author, editor, and speaker focusing on writing, children and families, racial issues, and effective community engagement. She consults for educational institutions, corporations, social service agencies, and healthcare providers. Her latest book is *Retail Racism: Shopping While Black and Brown in America*. More information is at DrMichelleTeaches.com.

James Ekenstedt (he/him) is a poet based in Brooklyn, NY. His work appears or is forthcoming in *The Arkansas International*, *Folly Journal*, *Kitchen Table Quarterly*, *The Under Review*, *After Happy Hour Review*, and *Sea to Sky Review*. Read more at jamesekenstedtpoetry.com.

Cal Freeman is the author of the books *Fight Songs*, *Poolside at the Dearborn Inn*, and *The Weather of Our Names* (Cornerstone Press 2025). His writing has appeared in many journals including *Commonweal*, *Willow Springs*, *The Oxford American*, *New Ohio Review*, and *Terrain*. He serves as Writer-In-Residence with InsideOut Literary Arts Detroit and teaches at Oakland University.

Chris Gallagher holds an MFA in Creative Writing from the University of Florida and a BA in Journalism from Temple University. Her poetry and fiction has appeared in a variety of literary journals. She has taught creative and technical writing at UNC Charlotte and the University of Tennessee.

Jennifer Grant resides in Newberry, Florida. Her third collection of poetry, *Flower of Life in Three Movements*, is forthcoming from Kelsay Books. Her first collection, *Good Form*, was published by Negative Capability Press (2017). She received the 2021 Blue Light Press Book Award for her collection of persona poems, *Dangerous Women*.

Sarah Hoffmeister is a poet from upstate New York whose work often focuses on finding meaning and beauty in the mundane.

Megan Hoolihan-Dalziel is a multidisciplinary artist and RN based in Florida. Her work explores the intersection of nature, temporality, and resilience through writing and art, which she has exhibited internationally. She is a mother of seven and works in clinical research while pursuing doctoral study in psychiatric nursing at UF.

Carolina Hospital's collections include *All Roads Lead to Here*, *Bamboo Ghost Notes* and *Key West Nights*, plus *Myth America* and *How to Get into Trouble*,

collaborations with Maureen Seaton, Holly Iglesias, and Nicole Hospital-Medina. She wrote lyrics to the song-cycle *Greetings from Florida: Postcards from Paradise* by composer Scott Lee.

Melissa Hughes is a poet and biology professor at the College of Charleston in Charleston, SC. Her writing explores the spaces and connections between our humanness and those who share the world with us, and has appeared in *Wild Roof*, *humana obscura*, and *The Shore*.

Karl Hyppolite is a Haitian-American writer based in Gainesville, Florida. His career began in journalism before transitioning into creative copywriting and ghostwriting. He has ghostwritten several novella-length memoirs through StoryTerrace and continues to develop original work rooted in mythmaking and grand narratives with a human focus.

Jen Karetnick is the author of thirteen collections of poetry, including *Inheritance with a High Error Rate* (January 2024), winner of the 2022 Cider Press Review Book Award. Forthcoming books include *Organ Language* (Lit Fox Books, September 2026) and *Domiciliary* (Sheila-Na-Gig Editions, October 2026). See jikaretnick.com

Taria Karillion grew up in a tiny cottage in the grounds of a Welsh castle and is descended from an infamous pirate (much to the amusement of her fencing coach). Her stories appear in a Hagrid-sized handful of anthologies and have somehow earned enough awards to fill his other hand, as well as sufficient shortlistings to fill his trouser pockets and earn him Odd Looks at the pub.

Diana Lueptow is author of the chapbook *Little Nest* (Kent State University Press), poems in many journals, and two plays. She has received Individual Excellence awards from the Ohio Arts Council and holds an MFA from the Program for Writers at Warren Wilson College.

Clif Mason, a Pushcart and Best of the Net nominee, is the author of *As Jaguars Dreamed on the Earth's Dark Face* (a magical realist novel in verse, Cathexis Northwest Press) and *Knocking the Stars Senseless* (Stephen F. Austin State University Press), as well as three chapbooks.

David B. Maas is a former math teacher who currently works in health care. When not hosting or attending open mics, he is often at a workshop or

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Qiang Meng is from Changchun, China. His poems and translations have appeared in *Poetry*, *Electric Literature*, *The Texas Review*, *Salt Hill Journal* and elsewhere.

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Arman Nabatiyan is from Tehran, and currently lives in Chicago where he writes with a modern poetic voice following an Eastern style of poetry and English poets of the Cambridge tradition. His works include: Poems: *Love and Yore*, *The Hours of Youth*, *The Flowers of Albion*, *The Fields Abound* and *Love's Quietus*.

Richard Newman's most recent book is *Blues at the End of the World*. His work has appeared in *Best American Poetry*, *Bacopa Literary Review*, *I-70 Review*, *Rattle*, *Tar River Poetry*, and many other magazines and anthologies. He currently teaches Creative Writing and World Literature at Al Akhawayn University in Morocco.

J. Nishida is a Gainesville local poetry organizer & teacher, editor, and writer.

Charlotte M. Porter is a member of the Writer's Alliance of Gainesville. She lives and writes in an old citrus hamlet on the other side of the tracks.

David B. Prather recently won the Arthur Smith Poetry Prize from Madville Publishing for his forthcoming fourth collection, *A Heart that Stretches the Length of the Body*. His work has appeared in many publications, including *New Ohio Review*, *Colorado Review*, *Poet Lore*, etc. Website: www.davidbprather.com

Michelle Acacia Raine is a queer, disabled, neurodiverse writer from Seattle. She is an emerging voice that weaves the mystical and natural world with the hard truth of reality as we know it. Her poetry explores the intersections of violence, mental illness, grief, death, ageism, and ablism.

Thomas Rist is a widely-published academic and occasionally-publishing poet. He has won and been a runner-up in previous poetry contests. He lives in northeast Scotland.

Rob Rogers is a writer and attorney from Orlando, Florida. His first book, *Finding My Way Home: Fighting Depression Backpacking in Central Florida*, won the Bronze Medal for Autobiography/Memoir at the 2025 FAPA President's Book Awards. Rob's essays have been published in *Ponder Review*, *Four Tulips*, and *Thorn & Bloom*.

Allan Scherlen is a poet and has been a social science librarian at Appalachian State University in North Carolina over the past twenty years. His poems have appeared in many journals including *Azahares Literary Magazine*, *the Appalachian Journal*, *As the Crow Flies*, *Progenitor*, *Vermilion of the Catholic University of America*, *The Hong Kong Review*, and *Galway Review* in Ireland. Some poems can be seen at <https://scherlen.squarespace.com/>

Karl Sherlock's work appears in journals and anthologies such *Broken Lens*, *Limehawk*, *Neologism*, *New Feathers*, *RockPaperPoem*, *Stoneboat*, *Third Street*, *West Trade Review*, and many others. A queer and disabled professor of English, Karl lives in El Cajon, California with his husband, for whom he is a round-the-clock palliative caregiver.

Jon Shorr's fiction and essays have been published in *The Examined Life*, *The Write Launch*, *Chicago Story Press*, *The Bookends Review*, *Pangyrus*, *Cagibi*, *Tricycle*, and elsewhere. Several years ago he won an award from the Writers Alliance of Gainesville. A retired teacher and writer, he still teaches and writes... and currently produces a weekly podcast for *Passager Books*.

Shannon St. Armand lives in the Pennsylvania town in which she grew up and writes poetry in-between reading and painting sessions with her four young children. Her work has appeared in *Relief Journal*, *Dappled Things* and *Appalachian Review*. She loves black tea, her husband's cooking and the rain.

Travis Stephens is a tugboat captain who lives with his family in California. His book of poetry, *skeeter bit & still drunk* was published by Finishing Line Press.

Jennifer Fair Stewart is the author of the chapbook *Marginalia: An Interactive Book of Hours* (The Orchard Street Press). Her poetry has won

multiple awards, including the 2024 Rhina Espaillat Poetry Award with *Plough*, and appears widely. Find her at <https://jenniferfairstewart.carrd.co/>

Kathryn Napier Stull is a writer living in Southern California. She holds an MFA from Mills College and her work has appeared in *Scrivener Creative Review* and the anthology *Sierra Songs and Descants*, among others. She is currently working on a collection of poems about death and the dreaming body.

Hugh Edward Suggs was born to nomadic farming folk in Ocala, Florida in 1959. He has a Bachelors In Elementary Education from Saint Leo University, but a log truck ran him over on a sidewalk In 2011, leaving him legless. He resides in Gainesville, Florida's historic district.

P. J. Szemanczky is author of *Metareal and Surreal Life Players*, *Synthelytic Spacetime Motion*, and *The Hurtgen Forest Vampires, 1944*, all full-length poetry collections. His poems appear in *Soundings East*, *Stone Poetry Quarterly*, *The Burningword Literary Journal*, *Long River Run-CT River Review*, *Pace Literary Magazine*, *Balance Magazine*, *Raven's Perch* and many other journals.

Caroline Taylor grew up in the north of England and now lives in Hamburg, Germany, where she works as a translator and editor.

Jonathan Chibuiké Ukah is a Pushcart-nominated poet from the United Kingdom. His poems have been featured in *Propel Magazine*, *The Journal of Undiscovered Poets*, *Two Third North Magazine*, *Tab: The Magazine of Poetry and Poetics*, *The Silk Literary Magazine*, *Sublimation*, and elsewhere. He won the Poet of the Month Award for December-January 2025 from *Literary Shark Magazine*, was the third winner of the Poetry Contest at *The Hemlock Magazine* in 2025, and *The Pierian's* Alexander Pope Poetry Award 2025.

Giovani Vignati is a writer and student at Florida International University working towards his BA in English with a specialized track in creative writing. Gio is extremely passionate about writing poetry and continues to hone his craft with the help of an amazing team of professors at FIU.

Donald Wildman is a retired English Instructor, having worked most of his career at Wake Technical Community College in Raleigh, NC. His poems have appeared in the *Atlanta Review*, the *Bedford Competition Anthology* (UK), *Pinesong*, the *Tulip Tree Anthology*, the *Tulip Tree Review*, the *Comstock Review*, and *Tar River Poetry*.

S.E. Wilson lives with his family in North Carolina. His work has appeared or is

forthcoming in *Chiron Review*, *The Berlin Literary Review*, *Bright Flash Literary Review*, *Louisiana Literature*, *Arkansas Review*, *The Louisville Review*, *New World Writing Quarterly*, and *The Saturday Evening Post*, among others.

Jonathan Wolf is a writer, musician, and educator from Ames, Iowa. In 2025, he won the Ploughshares Emerging Writer's Contest in Poetry, and he was runner-up for the Boulevard Poetry Contest for Emerging Writers. His poems appear or are forthcoming in *Ploughshares*, *RHINO*, *Boulevard*, and *like a field*. He is a 2026-27 Fulbright Scholar and holds an MFA from the University of Florida. www.jonsharpwolf.com

Mark Wyatt now lives in the UK after teaching in South and South-East Asia and the Middle East: Pushcart Prize-nominated, his pattern poetry has appeared in *Dust Poetry*, *Full House Literary*, *Ink Sweat and Tears*, *the Journal of Mathematics* and the *Arts*, *Osmosis*, *Streetcake Magazine*, and elsewhere.

Margaret Young is the author of *Willow From the Willow*, *Almond Town*, *Blight Summer*, and *How Else Can We Know What's Beautiful?* She has also translated two books from the Spanish by Sergio Inestrosa. Young is on the faculty of the Global Center for Advanced Studies and lives in Beverly, Massachusetts.

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FREE VERSE POETRY

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Diana Lueptow
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Qiang Meng
David B. Prather
Allan Scherlen
Karl Sherlock
Shannon St. Armand
Travis Stephens
Kathryn Napier Stull
Hugh Suggs
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