

# Georgia Poetry Society

**NEW ONLINE BOOKSTORE! SEE PAGE 9!**

## Meet Our Featured Spring Meeting Poets!



**Sandy Hokanson**, 2012 and 2013 Georgia Poetry Society president, will read from her new poetry book, *The Surprising Language of Doves Held Up to the Light*, at the spring quarterly meeting, which will be held via Zoom on Saturday, April 24. The collection of poems looks both backward and forward and includes her experiences during the Covid-19 quarantine.

Sandy’s first book, *Snow on Stone*, was a memoir of raising her two girls in an antique, New England farmhouse. *South of the Ordinary*, winner of the 2013 Charles Dickson Memorial Chapbook Contest, chronicled her move and early years in Georgia, during which she was editor of *The Reach of Song* in 2010 and president of the Georgia Poetry Society. She and her husband are now back in Massachusetts with their children and grandchildren. She has another book coming soon, *Three Years on Emily Place*, which is a collection of poems and reflections about the three years she and her husband lived in the inner city of Atlanta, their ministry, perspectives on the people who live there, and the racial issues that continue to affect our nation’s history.



Photograph courtesy of Trent Moorman

**Patricia Percival** will read from her 2020 Ron Self Chapbook Contest-winning collection, *Awake with Low Slung Moon*. Trish is also the author of the chapbook *Bargain with the Speed of Light* (Kattywompus Press, 2015).

For more about Trish, including her thoughts on the chapbook-writing process, please see the article on page 4.

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## Contact Information

[www.georgiapoetrysociety.org](http://www.georgiapoetrysociety.org)  
[president@georgiapoetrysociety.org](mailto:president@georgiapoetrysociety.org)  
[newsletter@georgiapoetrysociety.org](mailto:newsletter@georgiapoetrysociety.org)

## 2021 Officers

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Alyson Shields, V. President  
Michael Diebert, Secretary  
Donna Rose Mulcahy, Treasurer

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John Ottley  
Ashley Rainge  
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Ann Willis

## From the President



Dear Members,

How things have changed since our recent January meeting. How they've changed from a year ago, which seems another lifetime in many respects.

Looking back at this time a year ago, you'll recall we had to cancel our April 2020 quarterly meeting because a pandemic had begun, and we were unsure at the time exactly how the virus was being spread. You may recall washing down your groceries after picking them up remotely for the very first time. Or some tired soul handing you a shopping cart that had been dutifully wiped down. Masking? Gloves? PPE? Working from home? Remote learning? Virtual poetry? *How on earth is all THAT supposed to work?!*

But it did, because in the end we are resourceful, resilient people. And as you know, since our January meeting, we have had a change in federal administrations and the very active rollout of a vaccine that was nothing short of miraculous in its development. The speed of its arrival has led to uneasiness in some quarters about its efficacy, need, or safety—and of course a certain segment of our population never will be inclined toward vaccination. Still, as I write this, I have been fully immunized against this coronavirus and hope when an appointment becomes available that you, too, take advantage of that opportunity.

Looking ahead, whether and when we can meet again in person has naturally come up, and the Board and I are discussing it. We agreed that our April 2021 meeting would still be virtual but that we would check in again around June 1 to see if any venues were open to allow us to meet in person for our July 24 quarterly meeting. We are hopeful, but uncertain. The October meeting looks more definite, but we will keep you posted. As we used to say to radio listeners, "Stay tuned!"

In the meantime, despite the pandemic, the Georgia Poetry Society continues to function, and function well, and poetry amongst our members is flourishing.

Proof of that is evident in our April program, which features two well-known and talented member poets. Although Sandy Hokanson has relocated with husband Dale to Massachusetts, we're pleased to have Sandy present to us from her recent work *The Surprising Language of Doves Held Up to the Light*. Trish Percival, winner of our inaugural Ron Self chapbook competition, will read to us from Florida from a work so hot off the presses that a copy is literally steaming on my desktop as I write. I'm looking forward to both, and to greeting each and every one of you on Saturday, April 24 to hear some marvelous poetry—perhaps your own during our open mic.

Until then, I hope that you and yours stay healthy and safe.

Steven Shields, April 2021

**JOIN US FOR THE SPRING QUARTERLY MEETING!**



**SATURDAY, APRIL 24, 2021**

**10 AM–NOON ON ZOOM**

Members and Non-Members all welcome

April's Featured Readers **Sandy Hokanson** and **Trish Percival**

Open Mic for GPS Members

GPS Updates from the President

**The Zoom link will go out by email to members a few days ahead of the meeting. It will also be posted on the Meetings page of the website.**

**[www.georgiapoetrysociety.org](http://www.georgiapoetrysociety.org)**

**BOOK YOUR OPEN MIC SPOT!**

*Email Alyson at [vp@georgiapoetrysociety.org](mailto:vp@georgiapoetrysociety.org) by Tuesday, April 20, to sign up.*

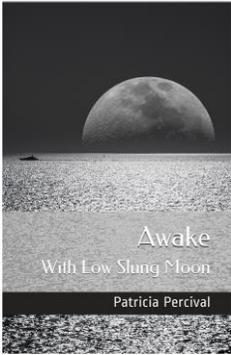
**GPS Newsletter Editor Needed!**

Love words? A bit of a grammar nerd? Know your way around MS Word? Got an eye for page design and content?

Want to support the Georgia Poetry Society by giving some of your creative time four times a year to keep us all in touch?

Our current newsletter editor will be relocating overseas, and we need to fill this key position in the coming months.

This is a fun volunteer role. If you are interested, please contact Ann at [newsletter@georgiapoetrysociety.org](mailto:newsletter@georgiapoetrysociety.org) for more information.



### Q&A with Trish Percival, 2020 Ron Self Chapbook Contest Winner

**Patricia (“Trish”) Percival** is the author of *Bargain with the Speed of Light*, published by Kattywompus Press in 2015. A former attorney, she came to poetry in middle age, read it alone for ten years and might never have ventured into the light if not for Tom Lux’s belief that poetry belongs in the community as well as the academy. Her poetry life is supported by the friendships with other poets she met through Poetry@Tech workshops while Tom was Director there. Her poems have appeared in *Sixfold*, *Eyedrum Periodically*, *Town Creek Poetry*, in the anthologies *The Southern Poetry Anthology, Volume 5: Georgia*; *Stone, River, Sky, An Anthology of Georgia Poems*; and *Stonepile Writer’s Anthology, Volume II*, and in several volumes of *The Reach of Song*, the annual publication of the Georgia Poetry Society.

**Q. What motivated you to enter the Georgia Poetry Society’s Ron Self Chapbook Competition?**

**A.** I entered because I admired Ron’s work tremendously and wanted to contribute to the success of the contest in his honor.

**Q. How many chapbooks have you written and on what topics?**

**A.** My only other book of any kind is a chapbook, *Bargain with the Speed of Light*, which came out in 2015. I worked on it over several years, really from the time I began to write poetry. My motivation was to write about my brother and mother, who had both died. The very reason I wrote poems at all was a strong urge to put something of their stories onto paper, to memorialize them. That book has some weak poems that are there to advance the narrative and were the best I could do at the time. I thought I might never publish anything else. But along the way I met some wonderful poet friends who encouraged me, and after a while I just kept writing because I enjoyed it.

**Q. How and why did you decide on your theme for *Awake with Low Slung Moon*?**

**A.** The poems in *Awake with Low Slung Moon* did not begin life together. The title poem is 8 years old, written on a night when the moon came historically close to the earth and I just happened to wake up in the middle of the night as it was rising over the roof of my neighbor’s house, huge, practically blotting out the sky. Most of the book looks back at a disintegrating marriage, and those poems were written more recently, some only last year, but a few go back a decade or more. I suppose if there is a theme for the book, it might be loneliness and moments of overcoming it.

**Q. What was your process for writing this collection of poems and how long did it take?**

**A.** When I was selecting poems for the collection, I tried to pick what I thought were some of my stronger poems that related, at least tangentially, to marriage and divorce or to losing my home and garden of 30 years. I tried to balance the sad poems with some humorous ones. It didn’t take me long to put it together, just a couple of days, because I didn’t decide to do it until I got a reminder about the looming deadline from GPS! I’m glad you sent that out!

**Q. Do you have a new poetry project in the works?**

**A.** Nothing I’m actively working on, other than individual poems. I’d like to write a full book sometime, which could perhaps be made up of these poems and unpublished poems moldering in my files. The process of submissions never seems to rise to the top of my “to do” list. This contest has given my motivation a boost, so maybe I will get the book together sometime this year.

**Q. What appeals to you about the chapbook format?**

**A.** I tend to write narrative poems sparked by memories or events, and putting those together into a longer story is satisfying. I also love sitting down with a new chapbook because I can savor the whole thing in one afternoon or evening. I hope readers will approach this book that way because I think the poems build on their relationship with each other.

## **Congratulations to the 2020 Fall Contest Winners!**

### **The Ron Self Chapbook Competition**

Judged by James Green

**Winner:** Patricia (“Trish”) Percival, *Awake with Low Slung Moon*

### **The Byron Herbert Reece International Poetry Award**

Judged by Julie E. Bloemeke

**1st prize:** David Hutto, *The ocean of that night*

**2nd prize:** Lynn Farmer, *Surely I heard it*

**3rd prize:** Kimberly J. Simms, *Route one memories*

**HM 1:** Clela Reed, *White cotillion*

**HM 2:** Jill Jennings, *Shoot me early on*

### **The Ira E. Harrison Social Issues Poetry Award**

Judged by Barry Marks

**1st prize:** Clela Reed, *To open: A user’s manual*

**2nd prize:** Donna Rose Mulcahy, *#metoo*

**3rd prize:** Nancy Cook, *Season of the moon*

**HM:** Lou Jones, *Movin’ toward tomorrow*

**HM:** doris davenport, *trigger: early notification of auto insurance payment due*

### **The Nonce-Sense Poetry Award**

Judged by Jeff Hardin

**1st prize:** David Hutto, *The elderly monk explains to his pupil five paths to enlightenment*

**2nd prize:** Robert Wyatt, *Last lay for Sylvia and Ted*

**3rd prize:** Jill Jennings, *Parallel lines*

**HM:** Randy Mazie, *The discussion of nonce at the poetry roundtable*

### **The Reigning Cats and Dogs Poetry Award**

Judged by Marissa Simone McNamara

**1st prize:** Lynn Farmer, *Rescue*

**2nd prize:** Ann Willis, *Greyhound sonnet*

**3rd prize:** Laura Johnson, *Old dog*

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**Winning poems will be published in *The Reach of Song 2021*, coming out summer 2021. Our sincere thanks to all who entered. We will return in Fall 2021 with another contest cycle.**

**Thank you, too, to those members who have sent in submissions for the Member Excellence Awards. They are being judged this spring, and those chosen will be featured at the July quarterly meeting.**

## GPS Member News

**But first ... A Reminder to Renew Your Membership!  
It takes but a moment with PayPal on the GPS website  
(click on this link below)**

**[Membership | The Georgia Poetry Society](#)**

**Thank you for your support!**

**Michael Diebert** has had three poems accepted by *Another Chicago Magazine*: “Thrash,” “Our Twenties,” and “Into History.”

**Jill Jennings** has had two poems, “Going Through Her Clothes” and “The Last Visit,” about her parents’ deaths, accepted for *Voices of the Grieving Heart*, an anthology edited by Mike Bernhardt. Her poem “A Life In Tempo: For Woody Bates, In Memoriam,” about her stepfather’s life, will be published by North Carolina–based Old Mountain Press in *The Unforgettables*, a poetry and prose anthology about unforgettable people or characters.

**Steven Owen Shields** had a poem appear in a recent issue of the *Sublunary Review*, “Moon, June and Spoon Walk into a Bar.” <https://www.sublunaryreview.com/home/moon-june-and-spoon-walk-into-a-bar>

**Ann Willis** had her poem “Knowing” accepted for inclusion in the upcoming Old Mountain Press anthology, *The Unforgettables*.

## Georgia Virtual Poetry Events

Poetry@Tech Virtual Poetry Event: The Spring 2021 McEver Poetry Reading featuring **Maggie Smith, Arthur Sze, and Bruce McEver**, will be held virtually on **Wednesday, April 7, 7pm—8:30pm**. [The Spring 2021 McEver Poetry Reading | Poetry @ Tech \(gatech.edu\)](#). No RSVP or registration required. Virtual “doors” open at 6:45pm.

Georgia Poetry Circuit presents **David Kirby**. Two virtual events on **Thursday, April 8. Q&A 2pm–3:15pm; Reading 6:30pm–7:30pm**. Georgia Southern University. Details and connect from: [Georgia Poetry Circuit presents David Kirby on April 8 | Writing and Linguistics | Georgia Southern University](#)

Agnes Scott College 50<sup>th</sup> Annual Writers’ Festival April 5–11. Virtual Events include:

**Rita Dove**, 1991 archival footage, **Wednesday, April 7 at 2pm**; Q&A **Thursday, April 8, 1pm–2pm**; Keynote Speaker **Thursday, April 8, 8pm–9pm**.

GA Poetry Circuit reading **Tiana Clark, Wednesday, April 7 at 6:30pm**.

**Memye Curtis Tucker**, 1993 archival footage, **Friday April 9, 2pm–3pm**.

For information on these and other virtual Writers’ Festival events, here’s the link:

[50TH Annual Writers’ Festival Events on March 27 - April 25, 2021 - Agnes Scott College Calendar](#)

**DO YOU HAVE NEWS TO SHARE FOR THE NEXT NEWSLETTER?**

Email Ann at [newsletter@georgiapoetrysociety.org](mailto:newsletter@georgiapoetrysociety.org)

Deadline for submissions is Friday, June 11, 2021

## Help Save Our Georgia Poetry Society Archives!

Over the years, older copies of our Society publications have disappeared. We contacted Mercer University in 2020, for example, trying to track down a collection of books deposited by GPS (then GSPS) a number of years ago in their Special Collections and were notified that the collection was no longer in existence.

We are reaching out to you, our members, for help in capturing some of those older published materials to reestablish an archive. Can you help?

Do you have any **GPS newsletters from 1979–2000**? We would borrow them to scan and place on the website for all members to enjoy. They would be returned to you after scanning.

We are also looking for donations of early books published by GPS. Of particular interest are *A Book of the Charter Year 1979–1980*, *A Book of the 10<sup>th</sup> Year 1988–1989*, and editions of *The Reach of Song* published between 1989 and 2001. We have only two **chapbooks from between 1989 and 2005**, so are seeking twelve others from that sixteen-year period.

Please contact Steven Shields at [president@georgiapoetrysociety.org](mailto:president@georgiapoetrysociety.org) with any information or if you would like to help with this archiving project.

**National Poetry Month** April 2021  
Celebrating 25 years

There is nowhere else I want to be but here.  
I lean into the rhythm of your heart to see where it will take us.

Artwork by Bao Lu. Lines excerpted from the poem "The Ranger" by Jay Hariss, from Creative Foundation for Rudy Rucker (© St. Norton & Company, Inc., 2011). For more free poetry resources, visit Poets.org/national-poetry-month.

Logos for sponsors: academy of american poets, ALA, NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS, CIMITELLA BARRETT, ABA, National Endowment for the Arts, Make It Your Year, P.O. Box 1111, Chicago, Illinois, VERISIO, poets.org, Betsy, sappi, Miami.

## Support National Poetry Month!

To find out more about events and suggested activities, and to get a copy of the National Poetry Month 2021 poster, go to <https://poets.org/national-poetry-month>

### Announcement from the Academy of American Poets:

**On April 29, to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of National Poetry Month, join us for the 18th annual Poetry & the Creative Mind at 7:30 pm EDT.** The event, typically held in person in New York City, will be presented virtually for the first time ever, making it available to poetry readers and lovers everywhere.

[Poetry & the Creative Mind | Academy of American Poets](#)



## Nancy's Gift

Enforced isolation over the past year has been difficult for many. GPS member Nancy Kollock has been fortunate in being home and having the support of three caring daughters. For Nancy's 92<sup>nd</sup> birthday, her second in "pandemic captivity," daughter Meg wanted to come up with a special gift.

Nancy, whose failing eyesight prevents her from being able to read, has been tuning in to online poetry segments and listening to poems on audio tapes from the library for close to two years. In this pandemic year, it has become a sustaining daily routine, expanding her world and providing new discoveries and pleasures. Her joy in life has always been an inspiration to her daughters; they have been thrilled anew at how enthusiastic she is about rediscovering poetry in her nineties. And so, Meg's birthday gift idea started with a plan to record some poems that her mother had mentioned she had not been able to find on tape.

After Meg began her recording, she decided she needed to add a few different voices. She contacted close family and friends, asking them to record themselves reading a poem for Nancy. The response was immediately enthusiastic, though there were some who panicked upon receiving her call or email: What was this thing she referred to as Voice Memo, and was it really on their phone? Meg spent hours on email and on the telephone helping those who needed it. Nancy's birthday was only three weeks away. Meg decided to widen the net, not confident she would get enough poems.

Then, the little, imperfect, homemade recordings started coming in. Touched and overwhelmed, she realized, as she started patching them together, that this had grown into something extraordinary.

On Nancy's birthday, the first full day of spring 2021, her family fêted her with a small outdoor celebration at which Meg presented her mom with an "album" of over a hundred poems and accompanying greetings. The contributors ranged in age from three months to ninety-eight years, people from across Nancy's life, "the long, wonderful life you have lived," Meg told her. There were favorite poems read from books and odd lines or two remembered from school days and recited from memory. There were birthday songs and shared recollections. Some contributors had composed their own poem for Nancy. Determined not to be daunted by technology, some had sought help from children and grandchildren. Some of those children and grandchildren had decided to record a poem, too.

Since then, Meg has reported that poems have kept coming in. It has been revelatory, this sharing of poetry as an expression of love for her mother: "It was not just a gift for Mom. It became something much larger. A gift that manifested in so many ways for the participants. Reconnection with old friends, people rekindling their love of poetry, communion with beauty, nature, singing, laughter ... the list goes on and on." She describes how some had told her they had pulled out their old poetry books and realized how much they loved and missed poetry, and that others said they had been moved to spring-clean, dust, and reorganize entire bookshelves.

It has been a gift as well for Meg, who was overjoyed at the response: "It's been an amazing ride."

As for Nancy, who has been encouraging housebound friends in the past year to read or listen to poetry, even to try their hand at writing poems: "She is so happy," says Meg. "And every time she hears a new poem, it multiplies the joy. In a time when we have witnessed our worlds shrinking, this gift was a way to expand her reach far beyond what was physically possible."

*Ann Willis, March 2021*

**HEAR YE! HEAR YE!**  
**THE GPS ONLINE BOOKSTORE IS OPEN FOR BUSINESS!**



No more having to print off a form, fill it in with a pen, send it with a check to GPS, wait for the mail to get it there....

Yes, fellow members, GPS has dragged itself into the 21<sup>st</sup> century with a new online book ordering system.

Just go to [www.georgiapoetrysociety.org](http://www.georgiapoetrysociety.org) and click on the Bookstore tab to explore and shop.

At the moment, there are four sections:

**The Reach of Song** and **Award-Winning Chapbooks** sections list books that we hold in stock at GPS. These are in small quantities. You can still go to Amazon for large orders or for those titles we don't have in our store.

**Discover What Our Members are Publishing** is where you will now find our listings of member publications. You cannot buy them from GPS, but this is our service to our members to showcase their recent publications and provide a link to a seller, either your own or your publisher's website or Amazon, for example. If you are a current GPS member and would like your publications to be included on this page, please contact the Bookstore Coordinator at [bookstore@georgiapoetrysociety.org](mailto:bookstore@georgiapoetrysociety.org) to get information on what you need to provide.

**Books by Featured Guest Speakers and Readers** will display the featured book(s) of our reader(s) for the upcoming meeting and (as we move forward) for the last three meetings, in case you need to catch up. Again, we do not hold these in stock and provide this listing, with a link to a seller, as a service to the guest speaker and to our members who want to buy a copy.

A huge thank you goes to our webmaster, Marion Owen, who has spent a lot of time putting together such an attractive and user-friendly shop within the limitations of our current website. Steven Shields and Ann Willis worked closely with him to provide content and suggestions.

There will likely be some growing pains with this, but we're happy to have taken this step. Our goal is for you to be able to get books in hand much faster. It also opens up our list of publications to a much wider audience.

Have feedback? Please email [bookstore@georgiapoetrysociety.org](mailto:bookstore@georgiapoetrysociety.org)