

# Georgia Poetry Society

## FEATURED READER CHELSEA RATHBURN GEORGIA'S POET LAUREATE



The Georgia Poetry Society welcomes Chelsea Rathburn to read from her many collections of poetry at our next quarterly meeting on **Saturday, January 22, 2022**. In March 2019, Rathburn was appointed Poet Laureate of Georgia. For more information on the poet laureateship and literary arts in Georgia, visit the [Georgia Council for the Arts](http://www.georgiacouncilforthearts.org)."

For more on our featured reader, see 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)

### 2022 OFFICERS

President: Julia Knowlton  
Vice President: Lucinda Clark  
Secretary: Michael Diebert  
Treasurer: Donna Rose Mulcahy

### 2022 BOARD

Angela Washington  
Ashley Rainge  
George Hess  
Kathy Ellis



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## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

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Dear Georgia Poetry Society members,

I am honored to have been elected the new GPS President. Thank you for your support. I am writing this on a cold winter morning (January 13, 2022) waiting for the sun to rise.

Sitting in darkness and clinging to the power of words/language strikes me as metaphoric, an apt description for many of us as we continue to grapple with the ongoing pandemic.

We are lucky to be writers, because writing requires very little in the way of material support, money or physical space. We can practice our art with nothing more than the stub of a pencil and a piece of paper. Dancers, theater actors and all other stage performers have had a much harder time of it during COVID. Through poetry, we can experience the book as "frigate" or sailing ship, in the words of Emily Dickinson. We can sail away in thought and imagination, build our own ship, put the breath of scrolling waves and foam on our own seas. Such liberty!

My immediate goal as your new President is to "learn the ropes" and to listen attentively to your thoughts, needs and hopes. Please don't hesitate to write to me at [jknowlton@agnesscott.edu](mailto:jknowlton@agnesscott.edu). One of my broader-reaching goals includes increasing membership among younger poets and diverse populations across Georgia.

I welcome Lucinda J. Clark as the new GPS Vice President and look forward to working with her. Lastly, I would like to extend heartfelt thanks to Steven Shields and Alyson Shields, who have gone out of their way to welcome me.

with gratitude,

Julia Caroline Knowlton

## MEMBER NEWS

**Duane Kaiser** recently published a new chapbook through Amazon's Kindle Book Publishing. "Pop's Road Into the Open Field" is available on Amazon.

**Dr. Emory Jones:** "Playful Spring" won Third Place in Category 20 (Two Rivers' Poets of Fort Smith Award) of the Poets' Roundtable of Arkansas 2021 Poetry Day Contest.

"The Funeral Parade" won Third Place in Category 26 (The Miriam Strauss Memorial Award) of the Poets' Roundtable of Arkansas 2021 Poetry Day Contest.

"Sacred Music" was published in the Indiana State Poetry Society's Members Poems for October 2021.

"Divine Sculpture" was published in *Route 7 Review 2021 Poems*, November 2021.

**Kathy Ellis** is hosting a poetry column for the monthly national newsletter of the [Society of Intercultural Education, Training and Research \(SIETAR\)](#). Kathy's first issue focused on applying the intercultural lens to Amanda Gorman's "The Hill We Climb".

**Randy Mazie's** book *A Year of Encouragements Because Life Doesn't Come With an Instruction Manual* is available in both e-book (<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B09NLCCJLL>) and paperback form (<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B09NR9NSZ2>) on Amazon. A paperback edition soon will be available through Barnes & Noble. Describing the book, Randy says "Cast in first person, it offers musings about reactions and perspectives to various life struggles. It's a quick bowl of chicken soup for those who don't want to read long stories or chapters to feel inspired. It's more of a slight nudge or fast 'nosh' to start the day off right." For more information, check out the website:

[www.ayearofencouragements.com](http://www.ayearofencouragements.com)

**Steven Shields** gave a virtual reading for the Oceanside Library in upstate New York last month. The video can be viewed on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dz5uNn7X7es> Steven Shields was one of two featured readers on a Zoom presentation titled "Poetry Near and Afar", sponsored by the Oceanside Public Library in upstate New York. The video can be found on YouTube [here](#).

**\*Call all newsies!\*** We know you love poetry, but if you have a secret journalistic bent, we have a great opportunity for you to practice your skills. **Strophes** is the quarterly newsletter of our parent organization, the National Federation of State Poetry Societies. You can see the latest issue of **Strophes** [here](#). In the state news section, you'll notice Steven Shields wrote up the Georgia Poetry Society news. We need a new reporter for this-- someone who comes to meetings and can make a brief report to this newsletter. Email [President@georgiapoetrysociety.org](mailto:President@georgiapoetrysociety.org) to volunteer.

**Send your news items to**  
[newsletter@georgiapoetrysociety.org](mailto:newsletter@georgiapoetrysociety.org)  
**by March 12<sup>th</sup> for inclusion in**  
**the Spring newsletter.**

## A BIT OF CHAT WITH CHELSEA

We are honored to have Georgia's Poet Laureate as featured reader at the Winter Quarterly meeting. Chelsea was kind enough to engage in a brief interview so we could learn a little more about her before the meeting. You may also visit her website: [Chelsea Rathburn | poet and nonfiction writer Chelsea Rathburn](#)

### ***1. Please tell us about the genesis of Poetry in the Parks.***

As Poet Laureate of Georgia, my general goal is to increase awareness and appreciation of poetry, so the idea behind Poetry in the Parks, which is a collaboration with the Georgia Center for the Book and the DeKalb Library Foundation, is to place poems in the path of ordinary Georgians who visit local parks. I've always loved encountering poems in public places, but the project really came about through the pandemic. In the early months of lockdown, I was struck by how many of our neighbors moved outdoors, as we did-- walking, biking, roller-blading, and so on-- to escape the isolation they were experiencing while working from home. When the Academy of American Poets solicited poets laureate for proposals for civic projects, I thought this was a great opportunity to connect Georgians with poetry in COVID-safe outdoor spaces.

### ***2. As a poet, are you more interested in your readers feeling or learning?***

That's a great question, and one I'm going to cheat on slightly by saying that I think that we can learn by feeling. I'm thinking of Emily Dickinson's definition: "If I read a book and it makes my whole body so cold no fire can warm me I know that is poetry. If I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off, I know that is poetry." The earliest poets I fell in love with entranced me through sound (Edgar Allen Poe as a child, and T.S. Eliot as a middle schooler – I certainly didn't understand Eliot then, but the language surprised and spoke to me), and they were followed by poets like Sharon Olds who communicated intensely personal stories. I still find that the poems that teach me the most about life or art or what it means to be human are those that resonate with me on a gut level. I feel them physically and then intellectually. In turn, I communicate – or hope to do so, anyway – via sound, via story and image, via intimate connections with the reader.

### ***3. Just for fun, what is your earliest memory of or experience with poetry?***

My mother was a preschool teacher and a devoted reader. We spent many happy hours at the library and reading aloud to one another, so I was introduced early to the power of language. I think there are earlier tape cassettes of me creating little rhymes, but my earliest poem that I remember writing at age six is, in its entirety, "The mice they are scurrying / from the rain that is hurrying."

### ***4. Are there any future projects you'd care to share with our readers?***

I'm working on a new collection of poems about home and the foundations, both physical and metaphorical, stable and unstable, that shape us. I am working on poems that consider, among other subjects, dollhouses, architectural blueprints and model homes, ruins, and natural disasters.

## WINTER QUARTERLY MEETING

The Georgia Poetry Society welcomes Chelsea Rathburn to present from her many collections of poetry at our Winter Quarterly Meeting on **Saturday, January 22, 2022** via Zoom. Refer to the link on the website.

### Schedule of Events

- 9:30 **Call to Order and Announcements:** Steven Shields, outgoing GPS President
- 9:40 **Open mic:** contact Alyson Shields at VP@georgiapoetrysociety.org to sign up
- 10:00 **Reading:** Chelsea Rathburn, Georgia Poet Laureate
- 10:45 **Inauguration** of incoming President, Vice-President and Board members
- 11:00 **Contest winners announced:** Julia Caroline Knowlton, incoming GPS President
- 11:15 **Welcome from the incoming President and Announcements**
- 11:30 **Adjournment**

### REMEMBER YOUR DUES . . .

Dues expired on December 31 (except for Life Members), so be sure your membership is current. You can renew online or mail a check to the Treasurer, Donna Rose Mulcahy. Her address is listed on the [GPS website](#) Membership page as well as the Reach Us page.

### SUBMIT YOUR WORK . . .

The National Federation of State Poetry Societies began accepting submissions on January 1 for the annual contests. Deadline for entries is March 15. Because we are members of an affiliated state society, entry fees are reduced. The Georgia Poetry Society sponsors Contest #6, so be sure to participate in this one.

### SHARE YOUR EDITING SKILLS . . .

If you have editing skills, GPS needs volunteers to assume the production and publication of the winning chapbook from our Fall contest cycle and *The Reach of Song* anthology. Please indicate your interest by emailing President@georgiapoetrysociety.org

### VOLUNTEER . . .

If your New Year's Resolution includes volunteering, see the GPS website for opportunities to serve as Historian, Reporter, Committee Member and so much more.

## A WORD WITH LUCINDA CLARK

Our incoming Vice President engaged in a brief but enlightening question and answer session with your newsletter editor.

**1. *What are some favorite topics or sources of inspiration for your poetry?***

Personal reflections, family, other poets

**2. *Do you have plans to expand the scope of the Poetry Matters Project?***

Of course! We currently work with poets and organizations globally. We would love to expand our internship program.

**3. *Just for fun, do you prefer paper or digital format for reading?***

Digital in the form of audiobooks, if that counts

**4. *How do you choose artists for collaboration?***

We have procedures to query all we work with. Sometimes we select based on the project(s) we or they are working on. When we were actively going into the schools and hosting monthly open mics, the process was easy because we could have the extra element of face to face interaction to decide if personalities are a fit.

**5. *What are your priorities as Vice President of the GPS?***

Making sure our meeting exposure expands throughout the state, meaning more Georgia poets involved with group

**6. *What else would you like to tell our members?***

[Poetry Matters Project](#) turns 22 this year! We could use help with some of our upcoming programs. For more check out our Instagram and [Facebook pages](#).



*Note from the Editor:* For those of you unfamiliar with Poetry Matters Project, click the link above to find out more. You may also want to refer to [the Project blog site](#). The Project supports poetry as an important form of cultural communication. We members of the Georgia Poetry Society also believe in cultivating appreciation for poetry, so if you are able, please get involved with Poetry Matters Project.