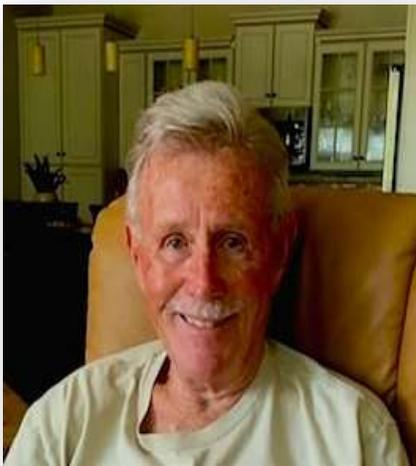


Georgia Poetry Society

FEATURED READERS



doris davenport, phd, will read selections from her latest work, *dancing in time*, and a work in progress, titled *and another thing*.



Lou Jones will read selections from his work, *Of Poetry and Poets*, winner of the 2021 Charles Dickson Chapbook Award.

Please see pages 3-4 for more on our featured readers.

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Greetings to all GPS members,

I hope these words find you doing well and staying safe. Since my last column, Spring has begun to warm the earth, and flowers are showing vibrant colors in Georgia like so many strokes of a painter's paintbrush. Yet despite this natural beauty and the relative relief of decreased Covid infections, we have heavy hearts because of the Russian invasion of Ukraine and many ongoing individual struggles. We have health problems, we feel depressed and/or anxious, we have financial worries and our personal relationships need emotional repair.

My message in this column is to praise the power of poetry as a vehicle for release, if not healing. Poems release thought and emotion that might otherwise rove around the restless mind with no "exit ramp." When frustration, sadness or even joy overtake us, we find a turn of phrase, a symbol or an image to convey what is in our hearts and minds. Poetry has been and can continue to be a vehicle of protest and resistance. We need not be prize-winning or even published poets. What matters is that we take our twenty-six letters, like a painter's palette of colors, and create a representation in language of our innermost experience.

The brilliant poet Ilya Kaminsky wrote the following in the NY Times: Another friend, who remains in Odessa, tells me he just got back from the store: "People are grabbing any food they can find. I'm trying to do art. Read out loud. To distract myself. Try to read between the lines." I ask how I can help. Finally, an older friend, a lifelong journalist, writes back: "Putins come and go. If you want to help, send us some poems and essays. We are putting together a literary magazine." (March 13, 2022).

Poems do not require a band of musicians, a lot of money or space on a wall in an exhibition gallery. Poems can "go viral" in the positive sense, as Kaminsky's masterful poem "We Lived Happily During the War" has done since Russia invaded Ukraine. The "poetry virus" is the opposite of the coronavirus, bringing creation rather than destruction.

For the 2022 National Poetry Month, I encourage us all to catch and spread "the poetry virus" of creativity. I have been gratified by the turnout for our two monthly open mic events, one of my new initiatives as the new GPS President. The next GPS OPEN MIC will take place **Saturday, April 16 at 7 pm**. This month, we also have our quarterly meeting on **Saturday, April 23 at 9:30 am**, on ZOOM. Poets Lou Jones and Doris Davenport will be our featured readers.

Please refer to the GPS website for Zoom links for the April 16 open mic and the April 23 quarterly meeting.

with a heart of thanks,

Julia Caroline Knowlton
President, Georgia Poetry Society



In depth with doris davenport, phd

doris diosa davenport is a visionary 73-year-old LGBTQ+ educator, independent scholar, literary and performance poet, born and raised in traditional Cherokee Homelands, colonized as Northeast Georgia. doris has published 12 books of poetry, most recently, *dancing in time: poetry, monologues, stories, lies* (2019). doris holds a BA from Paine College; an MA from SUNY/Buffalo, NY; and a Ph.D. from the University of Southern California.

doris was kind enough to engage in a virtual interview with your GPS newsletter editor.

E: Will you tell us about your past and how it's shaped your writing?

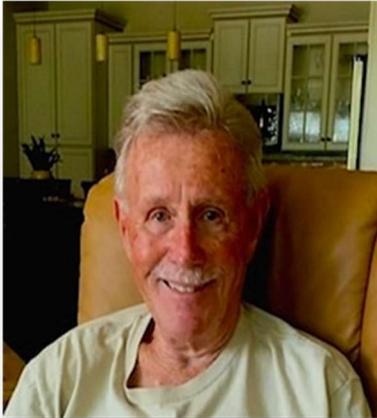
d: When I read this question, I immediately smiled, thinking, “Which past?” At age 73, I seem to have lived several overlapping past lives or concurrent alternate realities. Very recently, I was awarded the [Lillian E. Smith Writer in Service Award from Piedmont University](#). There are no words to say how much that means to me, but I do know my past is one reason I received the award. Because I was born and raised here in the Cherokee Homelands, known as Northeast Georgia, I have always known a space of beauty, richness and possibility. My communities in this area, especially Cornelia, shape my writing and the kind of poetry I write. For example, my poetry is very vernacular, accessible, rhythmical and narrative. It emphasizes the aural-oral qualities of call and response and is meant to have an interactive impact on readers or listeners. And my book *Soque Street Poems* (SNCA 1993) is a testament to my early communities, a kind of literary museum of African American culture. And that book is one of the main reasons I won the LES Award.

E: For you, is poetry more exhibition or communication?

d: Poetry is both exhibition and communication. When I do performance poetry (which I have done all my life-- learned during my childhood in Cornelia in the 1950s) I combine both exhibition and communication for maximum impact. Communication is a main value in my poetry and all of my writing. Possibly because I taught literature and composition for so many years, I highly value shared interactive communication. When I overtly address the numerous socio-political oppressions in the world, my poetry is totally honed on honest communication. As I wrote about the LES Award: “Based on my own experiences, I truly know that art, specifically written and performance art, is a catalyst for change.”

E: Would you tell us about your motivation, inspiration and current projects?

d: Inspiration can be anything and everything. A friend of mine shared a photo of her seven-month-old baby girl, and that photo started a poem. It's really windy outside right now - that's a poem. My two foremost current projects are Ra Malika Imhotep's virtual [Charis Porch Sit](#) on April 12 and editing ROS 2022. A new book, *and another thing: poems, photos and more lies*, is next in the projects lineup. And when I do the LES residency, I hope to revise a final updated version of *Soque Street Poems*.



Meet Featured Reader Lou Jones

Marine Corps Veteran, retired Caterpillar Inc division manager and accomplished poet **Lou Jones** will read from his award-winning work, *Of Poetry and Poets* at our Spring Quarterly meeting.

Let's start with a little background.

Lou has published four works of poetry-- *From Microbe to Consciousness* (2009), *After the Blast* (2016), *So You Want to Be a Poet* (2019), *Of Poetry and Poets* (2022)-- and one work of fiction, titled *And Then the Monarchs Flew Away* (2011).

Lou started writing poetry later in life, composing his first poem at the age of 72. His first submission to *Reach of Song*, titled *A 93rd Christmas Eve*, won a Member Excellence Honorable Mention in 2008.

Lou graciously agreed to share a little more information with your GPS newsletter editor.

E: How do you determine a topic for a poem?

L: Many topics come from my life experiences and observations. Some are pure fiction. Some poems touch on the lives of well-known poets and writers from the past, such as William Carlos Williams, Ray Carver, Mary Oliver, Langston Hughes and Allen Ginsberg. Some topics are based on news stories, such as the Lost Malaysian Airliner MH370 and the bombings in Aleppo.

E: Is your poetry more other-inspired or self-inspired?

L: Other and self. As both participant in and observer of life, I am fascinated by the human experience. I have a curious nature. I ask myself over and over — who, why, how, what if, why not? Of course, reading the works of other poets inspires me.

E: What's next for you?

L: I've submitted a 46-poem manuscript, titled *Captured Within the Flow of Time*, to the NFSPS Stevens Poetry Manuscript Competition. I've submitted a 100-line poem for the NFSPS Founders Award contest.

E: Just for fun, who is your favorite poet from the past?

L: Raymond Carver. I admire the unaffected real life wisdom, clarity and honesty of his writing. He makes the ordeals of everyday living resonate with truth, beauty and compassion. His blunt free verse portrayals of human frailty frequently end without resolution, affirming many of life's episodes do not close with clarity.

MEMBER NEWS ITEMS

Congratulations to our members on their recent publications and awards!

Julia Caroline Knowlton, our own GPS President, has published a new chapbook, *Poem at the Edge of the World*, (Alice Greene & Co).

Mel Ruth, our own GPS secretary, has published a new chapbook, *A Name Among Bone*, winner of the 2022 Winner of the Cow Creek Chapbook Prize.

Ed Nichols of Clarkesville, Georgia, has published another fiction book, titled *We'll Talk Some More: A Collection of Southern Short Stories*.

doris davenport received the *Lillian E. Smith Writer-in-Service Award*.

Join doris and company for a Charis Books virtual event *Gossypiin: A Porch Sit with Ra Malika Imhotep, doris davenport and Aurielle Marie* on April 12 from 7:30-8:30pm. This event is free and open to all people. See flier on page 7.

Kathryn (Kit) Schmeiser's nature poetry and photography book *Love of Nature* is available in several formats through *Blurb*. The title is a quote from Kit's favorite artist, Vincent Van Gogh. She combines poetry and photography to show her love of nature. Kit is donating all sales profits to the Western North Carolina Chapter of Arts For Life, a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting pediatric patients and families through arts education and engagement. After all, she said, "What better way to honor the memory of Vincent Van Gogh!"

Reminder: deadline for Summer newsletter is June 11. Email newsletter@georgiapoetrysociety.org

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

GPS President Knowlton announces the opening of two very important volunteer positions: **GPS Historian** and **GPS Parliamentarian**.

The **GPS Historian's** main task will be to organize all paper documentation of the GPS and to propose a physical home for them. The Historian will also be asked to consider digitizing all paper documentation.

The **GPS Parliamentarian** will have the important task of ensuring that Board Meetings and all other business meetings run smoothly, in accordance with Sturgis's *The Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure*.

Per the GPS by-laws, these volunteer positions will be appointed by the GPS President.

If interested, please email Julia Knowlton at President@georgiapoetrysociety.org with a brief letter of interest and qualifications by April 15.

April is National Poetry Month! 🌸



**The Georgia Poetry Society Spring Quarterly Meeting will be held on
Saturday, April 23 at 9:30am ET**

The meeting will be virtual.

Click here to join:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83535253298?pwd=QzdYUklGcXltMnFoanRMcW41Q2tuZz09>

Meeting Agenda

- 9:30 Call to Order and announcements**
- 9:40 Open mic**
- 10:00 Reading: Lou Jones, *Of Poetry and Poets***
- 10:30 Reading: doris davenport, *dancing in time***
- 11:00 Closing announcements and adjournment**

Future quarterly meetings in 2022: July 23, October 22

Charis Books & More presents

a porch sit

commemorating the publication of Ra Malika Imhotep's gossypiin



featuring: dr. doris diosa davenport & Aurielle Marie

Tuesday, April 12 7:30pm EST

A Charis Virtual Event

This event is co-sponsored by The Auburn Avenue Research Library and ZAMI NOBLA

A Little Woolgathering

Why *do* the myriad inklings of Spring surprise me so, year after year? Decade after decade, really. I'm glad to mark my time by tens—makes me a survivor. Spring reminds me Nature is a survivor, too, especially in regions that do experience four real seasons.

Growing up in Pennsylvania, I noticed the seasons were utterly distinct. No ambiguity. Summer was hot, stifling at times, with endless sun. Autumn brought a hint of chill, but—oh, the colors! Winter was dark, deep, silent and weighted with snow. Ours was a happy snow—we talked about it as Inuit people do; we understood their need to have more than 40 different words for snow.

Then out of the stillness came Spring. The weather was there as it is here, variable and unsettled. Here in the South we have real Spring, a gradual thaw. Breezes, seemingly from some distant Xanadu, arrive unheralded. Then the emergence of every green thing begins, as it has for eons.

Yet this Spring feels different. As Frost's first green, the golden joy of being human is returning to us. We are in a social thaw, ready to rejoin communities we thought we'd lost. I encourage you to make your voice heard. Get *your story* out there. Submit your work. Participate in poetry readings. Channel your inner beatnik, if it feels right. Absorb the poetry in Nature; make it your own. Emerge.

Laurie Jones, GPS newsletter editor

