

Georgia Poetry Society

WELCOME SUMMER!



The Georgia Poetry Society is an active society, dedicated to the composition and appreciation of poetry across the state of Georgia.

In this issue . . .

Poetry News!

Member Spotlight!

New Website!

New Board Members!



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2023 OFFICERS

President: Lucinda Clark

President@georgiapoetrysociety.org

Vice President: George Hess
VP@georgiapoetrysociety.org

Secretary: *vacant*

Secy@georgiapoetrysociety.org

Treasurer: *vacant*

gpstreas@gmail.com

2023 BOARD

Sheema Kalbasi

Education Chair

Sharon Schroeder

CSRA Affiliate

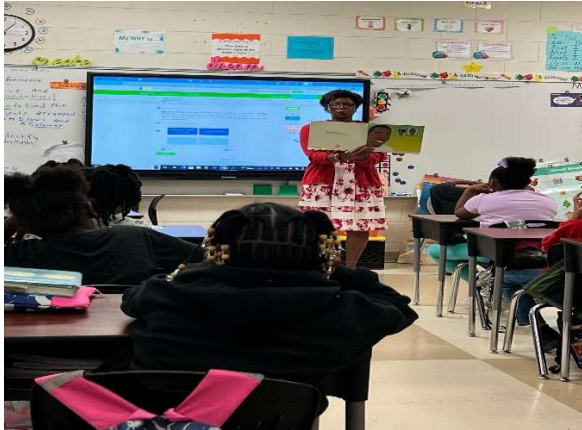
Elizabeth Van Deusen

Member at Large

Sa Jules

Member Outreach Chair

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



This is my last President's Message. Where did the time go?

My service as GPS president marks a major milestone in my life-- full of challenges that I could not have foreseen and collaborators I would never have met.

I find as I type this a new understanding of the meaning *To Serve, it has been an honor* and finally the answer to the question: "When is a good time to exit?"

The Georgia Poetry Society has much potential. In my time of service, your leadership team took on a big step, bringing us into the twenty-first century.

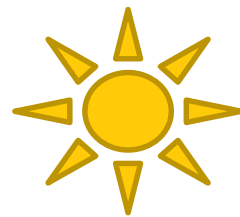
We learned much about our history as we turned our eyes to the future. In my exit I have only gratitude for the trust that has been placed in me and the board to move us forward. To the next president I leave these words: *Pick your contribution, focus on achieving it and exit with grace and gratitude.*

Here's to forty-four years of providing an outlet to the poetry community of Georgia. May we see at least forty-four more!

I leave you with this quote from Seth Godin: "When you get to where you are going . . . perhaps you should stop. Unless the going was the point."


[Lucinda Clark](#)


President, Georgia Poetry Society




POETRY NEWS

 Check out the new [GPS website](#). Let us know how you like it!

 GPS poets Sa Jules, Jill Jennings and Joe Crawford were featured on [Melodically Challenged](#), Georgia State University's poetry radio show.

 The annual Blackberry Peach Poetry Prize (BBP3) contest, sponsored by NFSPS, honors the experience of poetry as performance art. An anthology of the award-winning works is available through the [NFSPS website](#).

 The NFSPS 2023 Convention titled Catch Poetry: Stage and Page was held in Des Moines, Iowa. Share your experience; send your story to: newsletter@georgiapoetrysociety.org

 The GPS has four new board members:


Sa Jules: Membership Chair- Augusta

Marquice Williams: Savannah member at large

Jill Jennings: South Georgia member at large

Joe Crawford: North Georgia member at large

Here's what other GPS members are doing . . .

 **Karen Paul Holmes** was a prize-winning finalist in *Lascaux Review's* poetry contest. Her poems have been published recently in *Plume*, *Cultural Daily*, *Gyroscope Review*, *San Pedro River Review* and *One Art*. She also read at the PBJ Poetry Festival in Atlanta on April 22.

Remember to submit your news by September 10, 2023,

for inclusion in the Autumn newsletter.

Email: newsletter@georgiapoetrysociety.org

Mark your calendars! Summer Quarterly Meeting!

GEORGIA POETRY
SOCIETY

Quarterly Meeting

Online Zoom Meeting

July 15th @ 11 A.M.

Register Today!

<https://tinyurl.com/2p992fc5>



www.GeorgiaPoetrySociety.org



Agenda: Annual business meeting (virtual)
Membership status update
Introduction of new board members

Join us and share your craft in person or via Zoom!

Invite a friend, relative or neighbor!

MEET YOUR FELLOW GPS MEMBER

ROBERT SIMON



In celebration of poetry's universal AND diverse nature, we're going to feature a fellow poet in each quarterly newsletter. We come from all corners of the state, various professions and different generations. Our passion for poetry unites us. Robert Simon, Professor of Spanish and Portuguese at Kennesaw State University, has graciously agreed to stand in the spotlight.

E: Tell us about your earliest experience of poetry.

R: First, thank you for the honor of including my words in the newsletter! My earliest experience of poetry was a multifaceted one. Shel Silverstein's *Where the Sidewalk Ends* drew me in as a child with its rhythms, musicality and simple expression of complex themes. As my love of reading grew, so did my constant search for more and more complex verses, eventually taking me to Spanish language and verses (and, later on in adulthood, Portuguese song and verse). Weekly Shabbat services also introduced me to the beauty and rhythm of prayers sung in Hebrew. Despite and because of the combination of smoother, legato sounds and harsher, guttural sounds, the words presented themselves to me as magical, other-worldly, epic. (This also happened in Portuguese and Spanish later). Because I love to sing and listen to language sung, my earliest ideas of poetry came from written, spoken and musical texts.

E: Do you have a favorite Spanish or Portuguese poet? And your favorite poem?

R: Since I have studied and enjoyed the works of so many poets from Angola, Portugal, Spain, among others, this is a more difficult question than you may think! My favorite Portuguese poet has to be Joaquim Pessoa. He was a poet and pro-democracy activist in Portugal. His verses are both musical and mystical. As for Spanish, my absolute favorite poet has to be Clara Janés. Her verses combine the mythical and mystical with the struggle for women's equality and equitable treatment. I have published extensively on both writers' works, and at various points maintained a dialogue with each. From Pessoa, my favorite poem is XXVII in *Os Olhos de Isa* (1980-82), although the whole work is structured as one extensive poem. From Janés, her 1999 work

Arcángel de sombra, the final poem whose first verse is “grita una urraca” (which, again, is the end of an essentially single, extensive poem).

The truth is that I wrote my dissertation, first book and parts of my second and fourth books on these two authors. My analysis of their poems forms the basis of the first decade of my career as a scholar. Their work also heavily influenced my first two collections, *New Poems from the Airplane and Graveyard* (2007) and *Não Tirei Fotos* (2009), both published with Finishing Line Press.

E: With your knowledge of foreign language, which do you think lends itself more readily to poetry?

R: Each poetic tradition is borne from a longing-- a very desperate and very human need-- for a form of expression that you, your neighbors, your children, your people will understand. A poem in Yoruba may not make more than literal sense when translated for a speaker of Polish, but to another Yoruba speaker will mean more than the simple lexical choices. Billy Collins makes a lot of sense to those of us steeped in the symbolism of American poetry; for an Argentinean writer or reader, the symbols would take on different-- perhaps contradictory-- meanings. When I write in Spanish, my intended audience speaks Spanish, so I am writing to communicate with that audience. The same goes for writing in English or Portuguese.

Although not necessarily the case, this also may have to do with the idea, and ideal, of translation. Even translating my own verses between languages, I get caught up in an attempt to transmit subtle changes in meaning without losing the cadence.

E: Which of your works best defines you?

R: My most recent work, *Ode to Friendship* (2021, GWA Author of the Year nominee in 2022), best defines who I am *now*. It narrates how friendship, music and the presence of my daughter in my life helped me to survive a terrible moment of growth and change.

Each of my short and longer collections comes from a moment in my life. Some of these reflect personal evolution; others reflect self-evaluation. Some of my more recently published individual poems also help to express who I am, such as “Tefillin,” published in the *Jewish Literary Journal* (2023) and “Poços” / “Wells,” published in the *Last Stanza Poetry Journal* (2021).

E: As you are also a musician, how would you characterize the relationship of poetry to music?

R: Yes, thank you for asking! I both study music part-time and gig on oboe, English horn and saxophone in various groups in the area.

Poetry and music exist in the same literary space. Poetry began, and in many ways continues, as a vocalized mode of musical expression, and music itself uses extra-

linguistic sound and pitch to create verbal and extra-verbal aural poetic text. When performing on an instrument, I imagine myself singing the music; when writing or performing poetry, I take extra care to maintain the musicality, even (and especially) when overt rhyme does not enter into the composition.

E: As a GPS member, is there an outreach or initiative you'd like to see promoted by the GPS?

R: I would love to see more outreach, such as an even greater focus on poetry in the schools.

E: Is there anything else you'd like other members to know about you?

R: The Georgia Poetry Society was the first organization to give me a voice in the local community of poets, for which I am eternally grateful! Please feel free to reach out to chat, for ideas for collaborations: rsimon5@kennesaw.edu



After Words

Solstice has passed; the summer sun scorches our gloriously green state. The world is opening up. Now we can renew connections, get involved. We will have much to share at the Summer quarterly meeting on July 15th—news of past events and plans for the future.

We all have our individual successes. Collectively, we are capable of so much more—more influence, more awareness, more outreach! Our society is involved with the Poetry in the Schools Program, [Poetry Matters Project](#) and GSU's radio program, Melodically Challenged. Poetry offers a way to connect, not just in the enjoyment of craft but in the continuity of culture. Sharing our unique worldview may help expand the worldview of our listeners.

On July 4th, we celebrate our identity as a nation—our values, our music, our means of expression. As representatives of the poetic craft, we are ideally suited to ensure this part of our American culture lives on.

Laurie Jones, Newsletter Editor

