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## FEATURE

### 2019 Conference Wrap-Up

*Contributed by Shanee Stepakoff, PhD*

The 39th annual NAPT conference, “Beacons and Safe Harbors: Navigating Personal and Societal Challenges Through Poetry Therapy,” took place April 10–14 in Baltimore, Maryland. On Wednesday, April 10, we began with a pre-conference workshop, facilitated by Gina Campbell, CAPF. This day trip went to two inspiring sites near Baltimore’s Inner Harbor: Fort McHenry and the National Aquarium, with time for writing and sharing among participants. On Thursday morning, there was a second pre-conference session, facilitated by Diane Allerdyce, PhD, CAPF, titled “Breath, Image, Rhythm: A Somaesthetic Approach to Facilitation, Life and Art,” in which participants had an opportunity to combine the writing and workshopping of participants’ poems with exercises to enhance the ability to listen to the rhythms of the body. Thursday afternoon featured a third pre-conference workshop, co-facilitated by Jenna Robinson, MA, and Zachary Katz, MS, in which participants utilized techniques from poetry, drama, and dance/movement therapy to create and perform a spoken word poem in a group. Later that afternoon, Karen (Ren) vanMeenen showed a documentary film, *Voices Beyond the Wall*, which focuses on orphaned girls and young women who had been living on the streets of San Pedro Sula, Honduras, and who found their voices in poetry as they sought to address their past trauma and cope with an uncertain future. After the film, Ren facilitated a discussion about the issues raised in the screening.



*Zachary Katz, Gayle Danley, and Barbara Kreisberg;  
Photo by Laura Santner*

On Thursday night, the conference officially opened with a “Mix and Mingle” led by Conference Chair Barbara Kreisberg, MS, CPT, during which attendees had a chance to practice their creativity while also renewing old connections and building new ones. For example, there was a warm-up exercise in which small groups had to each think of songs that contain the word “love.” The night culminated with Gayle Danley, who shared her experiences using poetry writing and performance poetry to cope with past traumas and challenges in her life. In addition to describing her work and her life’s journey, Danley also shared some of her original work with the audience in a manner that was brave, powerful, and moving.

Friday in the early morning was the first session of a three-day morning workshop. This was a special opportunity for participants to have a direct experience of participating in a poetry therapy peer group. Friday morning also featured keynote speakers

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## FROM THE EDITOR

Contributed by Karen (Ren) vanMeenen, MA, MA, CAPF

NAPT's annual conference, held in April in Baltimore, Maryland, was a stellar opportunity to reconnect with old friends, learn from new ones, and share ideas and practices. The coverage of the conference in this *Museletter*, including the reflections and poetic expressions of participants, brings us back to that special weekend and also propels us forward into our creative futures.

Do explore the rest of this issue's offerings and save the date for our next gathering, in Albuquerque, New Mexico, April 2-5, 2020 (initial information can be found herein and more will be posted on our website at [poetrytherapy.org](http://poetrytherapy.org) as plans progress).

Enjoy your summer, and remember Walt Whitman's poetic invocation of summer to "Prepare the later afternoon of me myself—prepare my lengthening shadows. / Prepare my starry nights."



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## MUSELETTER SUBMISSIONS DEADLINES:

November issue: September 1

March issue: January 1

July issue: May 1

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## FIND US HERE!



It was a pleasure to welcome our participants to the 39th annual National Association for Poetry Therapy conference, “Beacons and Safe Harbors: Navigating Personal and Societal Challenges through Poetry Therapy.” I asked our participants to write a six-word story about what coming to this conference means to them. The stories (written during the course of the conference) were collected and posted by the registration table. Below is a sampling of the stories that appeared to capture the pulse of the conference.

Words A Light Into One Olympic Torch  
**Cultivate Clever Words That Bring Joy**  
 Old Friends Gather Beckoning Young Hearts  
**Pain Brings Wisdom. Words Bring Peace.**  
 Build Bridges Between Our Sparking Hearts  
**Hidden Gem Needs Polishing To Shine**  
 A Warm Welcome A New Beginning Seed Full Of Poetry. Seeded Sap. Giving Voice Back To My Community  
**New Seeds Planted. Let Go! Accept!**  
**Poetry ~ We Need You Now! Now!**  
 Gathering Kindred Spirits. Embracing Our Journey.  
**Ready (or Not) A New Road**  
 After That She Wasn't The Same  
 Met Peggy Life Changed Thank God!

The above stories speak to the growth and healing we receive from poetry therapy and share with others. It was truly wonderful to see the enthusiastic interaction of long-time NAPT members and those new to our field. Indeed, we are all involved with poetry therapy on a shared journey. Of course my brief comments about the six-word stories are simply my reactions. All poems, stories, and conferences are unfinished, waiting to be completed over and over again by your responses and actions.

This conference proved to be indicative of the wide range of poetry therapy methods being used by individuals from various disciplines across the world. Our keynote speakers, Peggy Osna Heller (who received the Lifetime Achievement Award from NAPT this year) and Wendi Kaplan, set the stage for the convergence of the history of poetry therapy, its current state, and its bright future. The power of poetry and performance was demonstrated through special guest artists Meccamorphosis and Gayle Danley (check the NAPT website and Facebook for videos). I was more than pleased to provide some closing remarks at the end of the conference pri-



or to the outstanding performance of Dance Exchange, truly a symbolic/ceremonial element of poetry therapy.

At our annual Board of Directors meeting prior to the conference (we also have bimonthly board meetings via conference call), we thanked the board members who completed their dedicated term of service: Nicole Duenow, Alison Johnson, Gwyn Knauer, and Alice Thompson; and welcomed our new members: Cynthia Hallowsay-Kelvin, Jazmin Hamilton, Lisa Haversack, Robin Rosado, and Catherine Tanguis.

We are continuing our work to increase our membership, update our website, enhance our relationship with the International Federation of Biblio/Poetry Therapy (IFBPT), the National Coalition of Creative Arts Therapies (NCCATA), and the National Organization of Arts in Health Care (NOAH). Academic/Educational Outreach is also a priority as we seek ways to address the needs of educators at all levels. Our publications, notably the *Museletter* and the *Journal of Poetry Therapy*, remain on solid ground as we continue to seek your contributions. Our social media also remains on solid ground as we continue to “get the word out” about poetry therapy and draw interest in our organization and the field. If you are able and willing, NAPT also welcomes your charitable contributions (see website) toward scholarships and programs.

Please continue to check our website, Facebook page, and print materials. Now more than ever, poetry therapy is needed to meet “personal and societal challenges.” Thanks in large part to Past President Geri Chavis’s initiative with regional representatives, NAPT membership is growing both nationally and

## MESSAGE FROM NAPT'S PRESIDENT

internationally. Please check out the regional representatives on the NAPT website or in this *Museletter* and reach out to learn how you can become more involved with NAPT.

I hope to see many of you next year at the 40th annual NAPT conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico. In the meantime, let's stay together, shine a light, and make a difference!

Take care,  
Nick

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## REGIONAL GATHERINGS GRANTS NOW AVAILABLE!

### OVERVIEW

The grants will help current NAPT members defer costs associated with hosting regional meetings and conferences. These regional events offer presentations designed to further and/or discuss the use of language, symbol and story in therapeutic and educational capacities and promote the general activities of the National Association for Poetry Therapy. This support is both monetary and in the form of promotion of events to the general membership.

These grants are designed to provide necessary support for events that might not otherwise be able to be held. Attendance fees should be minimal, or even admission provided at no cost.

Regional conferences should provide an atmosphere where individuals can share information, learn about the field, present research (proposals and complete projects) and network with others in their region.

These grants are available for travel costs and speaking fees of presenters, room rentals, print materials, publicity, and refreshments. NAPT will also provide informational materials about the Association upon request as well as books for resale at events.

### GRANT CRITERIA

Each grant application must demonstrate that the event is related to the field, provide a budget that is specific and appropriate, and indicate that other

funding sources have been investigated. Proposed matching funds must be clearly delineated in the budget and might include earned income from attendance fees, in-kind speakers, in-kind rental of meeting space, and donated printing and/or refreshments (with the exception of alcohol). Events that appeal to students and diverse audiences (through special sessions or reduced registration fees, for example) are especially welcome. The NAPT grant will not comprise more than 50% of the program budget. A brief final report form will be supplied with your grant confirmation and must be completed and submitted within four weeks of your event's conclusion.

Currently, grants are being awarded up to \$500 per approved regional event. Consideration will be given to trying to spread out the grants geographically. We hope they present opportunities for building the community of our organization as broadly as possible.

### TO APPLY

Email a one-page statement of your purpose and proposed activities, including region, venue, schedule, and speakers, along with an itemized budget of projected income and expenses and full contact information for the lead organizer of the event, to Karen vanMeenen at [naptpublications@yahoo.com](mailto:naptpublications@yahoo.com).

This application cycle is ongoing, with applications considered in the order they are received each calendar year until that year's funds are depleted.

*continued from page 1*

Peggy Osna Heller, PhD, MSW, PTR-M/MS, and Wendi Kaplan, MSW, CPT-M/S, LCSW. Peggy, one of the earliest pioneers in poetry therapy, shared her experiences and insights from nearly forty years in the poetry therapy profession, and showed a series of slides that featured the faces of many of the people who have worked as poetry therapists during the past four decades. Wendi shared some of the insights she has gained as Poet Laureate of Alexandria, Virginia, and described an experience she had in which reciting poetry aloud fostered connection among a group of strangers. [Ed. note: See this issue for edited transcripts of both presentations.]

The first series of workshops (Friday morning) was full of innovative work including sessions on the following topics/themes: Processing Racist and Sexist Experiences in Education Through Poetry; Bibliotherapy Activities for Working a Twelve-Step Program; Writing with Plants; Listening for Connection; and The Poetic in Career and Personal Development. Friday afternoon we had the next series of workshops, with more opportunities for learning, sharing, and personal and professional growth.

2019 Award winners Barbara Kreisberg, Peggy Osna Heller, Shanee Stepakoff, and Steffani Fletcher; Photo by Laura Santner



Mecca performing at the NAPT conference; Photo by Laura Santner

These included the topics Exploration of Genealogy and Lineages through Poetry for Healing; Trauma Narratives with Inner City Youth; Poetry as Mask to Discover Voices; Applying the Ceremonial Modality of Poetry for Welcoming Rituals; and Poems and Stories in Addiction Treatment and Prevention.

Friday afternoon featured an International Federation for Biblio/Poetry Therapy credentialing information workshop to support current and prospective trainees in understanding the IFBPT training process. Also on Friday afternoon, IFBPT-approved Mentor/Supervisors gathered to share ideas and perspectives. In the evening, there was a powerful open mic poetry reading with a mixture of participation by newcomers and old-timers, leading to later distribution of an anthology of the poems that had been featured at the open mic. This was an exciting opportunity to experience the range of creativity, talent, and gutsiness that exists within the NAPT community.

On Saturday morning, NAPT's annual honorary awards were presented. The winner of the Public Service Award was Steffani Fletcher of Florida's Hope at Hand. The winner of the Morris Morrison Outstanding Educator Award was Shanee Stepakoff. Peggy Osna Heller was given the Luminary Award for Lifetime Achievement. Barbara Kreisberg was awarded for her five years as Conference Chair. Following the



NAPTers exploring Baltimore's Inner Harbor; Photo by Lorieanne Geyer

awards presentation, we had an inspiring, uplifting presentation and poetry reading by this year's Keynote Poet, Meccamorphosis (Mecca Verdell), an award-winning spoken word artist who has been a Baltimore youth poet for the past two years. Mecca gave an engaging and stimulating reading, sharing with the audience several examples in which she used poetry writing and poetry performance to bring about healing and empowerment for herself and others.

Saturday morning we had the next series of workshops, full of enriching experiences and new ideas for poetry therapy practice: trauma-informed poetry for healing youth impacted by adverse childhood experiences; brief therapeutic poetry writing intervention for older adult survivors of abuse; using a movie as literature in order to shine a light on beliefs about manifestation; writing and publishing to fight invisibility and isolation while creating community; and poetry to guide us through life transitions.

Following the presentation of credentials to the newest poetry therapists and certified applied poetry facilitators, the fourth series of workshops took place. The topics/themes addressed included healing the wounded womb through poetry and rhythm; navigating toward safe spaces through co-facilitation in poetry therapy groups; peer group experience on personal identity in the context of family; poetry therapy for the young child; and navigating with nature.

At the conference's closing event, President Nick Mazza offered some final remarks, and then facilitators from the Dance Exchange led a celebratory event to end the weekend. Conference Chair Barbara Kreisberg did an outstanding job ensuring that this year's conference was meaningful and uplifting. The President of NAPT and the NAPT board, the proposal review committee, the scholarship review committee, workshop presenters, volunteers, and keynoters all helped to make NAPT's 2019 conference

particularly rewarding and rich. The mixture of long-time NAPT members and newcomers was invigorating. We left Baltimore refreshed, renewed, and empowered to continue our work bringing the healing power of poetry to individuals, families, and communities throughout the United States and around the world.

## SEEKING WRITING PROMPTS

The "Poems as Process" column of *The Museletter* takes poems from the "American Life in Poetry" series, adding writing prompts (written by NAPT members) that promote writing for personal growth and healing.

Would you like to contribute writing prompts for recently posted poems?

Email [naptpublications@yahoo.com](mailto:naptpublications@yahoo.com).

At this year's NAPT conference, we were privileged to have two keynote speakers, both leaders in our field. Peggy Osna Heller, PhD, MSW, PTR-M/MS, is a renowned poetry therapist, clinical social worker, educator, and an international workshop leader and lecturer, as well as former president of the NAPT and the National Federation for Biblio/Poetry Therapy. Wendi R. Kaplan, MSW, CPT-M/S, LCSW, is a psychotherapist specializing in relational and biblio/poetry therapies and is the current Poet Laureate of Alexandria, Virginia. As a poetry therapist and mentor/supervisor, Wendi also teaches the theory and process of biblio/poetry therapy, journaling, and word arts. In this issue of *The Museletter*, we are printing slightly edited versions of both keynote presentations so that those of you who were there can revisit Peggy's and Wendi's engaging remarks and those of you who were not able to join us can get a taste of the rich offerings of our annual gatherings. Enjoy!

## Words, Sacred and Profane

By Peggy Osna Heller

My name is Peggy and I'm a word nerd. Are you one too? Well stay tuned, because I have another name for us, which I'll reveal. But first, an example of the word that defines what was spoken by both Hamlet and Eliza Doolittle, "words, words, words": *epizeuxis*: the repetition of any word for effect. This presentation is about words, the substance of our work as poetry therapists, poetry facilitators, and other word artists here with us for our annual gathering. I'll divide my talk into three parts that I will call the "Three I's": Imagination, Improvisation, and Imperative.

### Part 1: Imagination

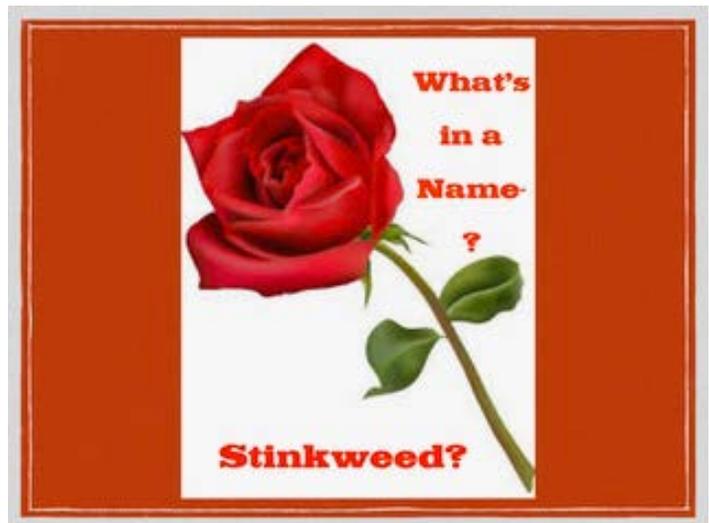
Using your imagination, come with me and meet or revisit some people who are my luminous beacons. People I've learned from, like Arleen Hynes, Art Lerner, Jack Leedy, Rosalie Brown, and Ken Gorelick, and people I've learned with including Nick Mazza, Kay Adams, Sherry Reiter, Geri Chavis, Alma Rolfs, Steve Rojcewicz, George Bell, Ren vanMeenen, Perie Longo, Jennifer Bosveld, and my students like Wendi Kaplan, Ingrid Tegnér, Evi Beck, Jim Coakley, Rosanne Singer, Gina Campbell. Do you remember this from *The King and I*? "It's a very ancient saying, but a true and honest thought, that if you become a teacher, by your pupils you'll be taught." Yes, these are true and honest words.

I will tell you some stories about these word heroes who were all my mentors, and I'll punctuate my stories with images and poetic lines about words. Like this: "The difference between the right and the almost right word is the difference between lightning and the lightning bug" (Mark Twain). The right word is the right name of a



person, place, or thing, or action or description. As Juliet struggles with her love for Romeo and the feud between her Capulet family and his Montague family, she says, "What's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet." Really? Juliet's famous question expressed her wish to transcend the strictures of names but also lamented the reality, as she knew all too well, that words matter very much.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge taught us that poetry is made of "the best words in the best order." And from Anu Garg, "A right word is the most direct route between two minds." What's in a word, with its little squiggles that excite brain activity we can now detect with PET scans, tantalizing in their grammatical constructions? The word grammar has among its origins the Scottish word *glamour*, meaning a spell, casting enchantment. Our words are the containers,

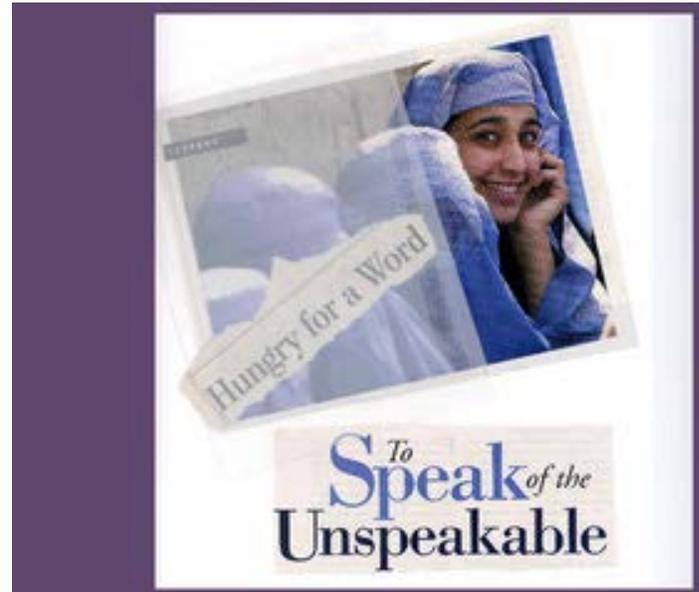


smokescreens, and bridges we send from our imaginations out into the world.

Thinking about my luminary mentors, I am reminded that my words matter. So words that are sacred and profane are what I'll share with you today. Sacred, not in the religious sense, but nevertheless transcendent: dedicated, deserving respect or reverence, bearing responsibility and sensitivity for others.

It was that statement, "words matter," that I heard from Arleen Hynes at the start of my bibliotherapy training at St. Elizabeths Hospital in 1979. Words of the chronically mentally ill patients at the hospital, many institutionalized for decades and sitting silently or babbling incoherently in blue-fluorescent lighted, smoke-filled day rooms in what I came to call "tandem isolation" were the treasures that mattered to Arleen. She was the patients' librarian, and their words are what she sought and taught us, her students, to evoke.

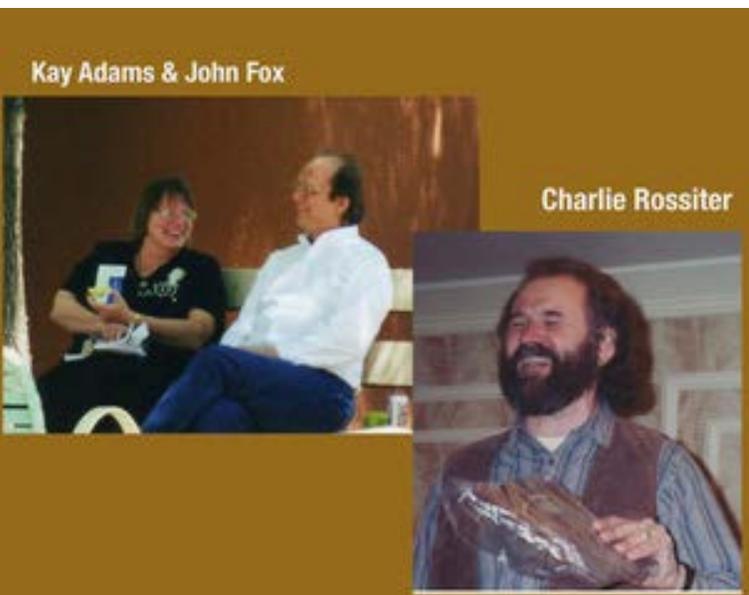
The patients' words, Rosalie Brown would say, are the clues and bridges to the stories of their lives, long-hidden or lost. "I have forgotten the word I wanted to say, and my thought, unembodied, returns to the realm of shadows" (Osip Mandelstam). The patients' words are the guides for the literature we will choose for them. "Listen to their words and to the spaces between their words," Rosalie taught. Listen with what Theodor Reik called your "third ear."



All this made perfect sense to me, as one who had read others' words voraciously and gathered my own in poems and journal entries from when I was little. The learning experience was exquisite, growth-promoting in every way. Little had I imagined that this precisely structured training program would also encourage bold innovation which, for a gutsy girl like me, was license for daring adventures with words.

The training program met two days a week for two years. It comprised the bibliotherapy classes taught by Arleen and Ken, group therapy training workshops, psychology and psychiatry lectures at the hospital and our supervised group work with patients. Our classes consisted of training in the types and uses of literature, setting relevant goals for our population, and devising strategies for facilitating. The basic goals of our work were to (a) improve the capacity to respond; (b) foster self-understanding, recollection of past, statement of opinions; (c) increase awareness of relationships; (d) promote realistic orientation, and, also important for Arleen and Ken, to awaken a sense of beauty for its powers of liberation, integration, and appreciation for life. And it was not the literature or writing alone but the dialogue, the interactions that could be cultivated, the relationships, and resonances.

For me, it was a time of concatenations, syzygies, coincidences. Inexplicable occurrences of synchronicity fueled much of my work in those days. Everywhere I went, everything I read, everyone I met all seemed to conspire, illuminating the creative intensity in all I was







that skill,” she said, “but also encourage patients to find and use words to express themselves and interact with each other.”

My group began, and at the first session I initiated a process that I have incorporated into every group I’ve led and every class I’ve taught. I invited each person, addressing each as Mr. or Mrs. or Miss LastName, to say their first name and a word I asked everyone for, that related to the theme of our work for that session. The word I would ask for was one everybody could know that would get the voices started. So a theme like color or weather or clothing or food would work just fine. Say your name and a food you like, I said, and I modeled: “I am Peggy ice cream.” And I’d go around the circle inviting responses. Mr. Brown, who are you today? “Michael hot dog,” he’d answer. Miss Wilson, who are you? “Amelia cake.” And we’d be off and running. Then I said, “I’ve brought a poem for us.” And I read the Bashô haiku and introduced discussion questions like: What do you eat for breakfast? Where do you sit? Who else is there? Whom do you see? Is there anyone in this group you might like to eat breakfast with? Like that.

Supervision with Rosalie was an adventure. She would read my pre-session plan and discuss it with me, then read my post-session report and listen to the cassette I had handed in with it two days earlier, then meet with me. Here’s an example of listening with the third ear: Rosalie asked me what I thought was happening at the 20-minute mark on one tape. I said I had no idea

and wondered why she asked. “Because I heard your chair scraping backwards, and I know all the patients on that ward are in wheelchairs, so what do you think happened?” Indeed, I had been unsettled by what I had perceived as an angry look on a group member’s face but needed to forge ahead with my agenda and had let it pass, but evidently my body hadn’t. Rosalie had heard and responded to that sound as well as to the patients’ sacred words, holy treasures that honored whatever life force remained in these often-forgotten people.

Poetic language speaks to us on many levels, and it’s a universal. We are all poets, I was learning. We students worked with our two or three groups weekly for up to two years as part of our 440-hour program. When I completed my training, I received my certificate and was told I was authorized to work but only under supervision of a mental health professional. I couldn’t work independently? Nope. So because I thought I was so old at 45, and had better hurry, I decided on a social work degree, and enrolled.



LOTS OF US

I loved everything about that educational process, so different from what I had experienced in Brooklyn College at ages 16 to 20 in my most immature unreadiness. I was now fairly confident and adventuresome, fortified by the poetic license my St. Elizabeths training had engendered in me and inspired to imagine myself in new ways.

## Part 2: Improvisation!

This was a time for jazz. A time for unbridled freedom to experiment in how and what I learned and how I spoke my words and could inspire others to speak. Improvisation. Playin' it by ear. Listen to Stephen Nachmanovitch from his 1990 book *Free Play: Improvisation in Play and Art*: "We are all improvisers. The most common form of improvisation is ordinary speech. As we talk and listen, we are drawing on a set of building blocks (vocabulary) and rules for combining them (grammar)... The sentences we make with them may never have been said before and may never be said again. Every conversation is a form of jazz. The activity of instantaneous creation is as ordinary to us as breathing" (p. 17).

When I was required, for an excellent course called "Problems in Living," to write outlines of the major psychological theories, I did it with poetry forms that echoed the ideas. When, for a class in social policy, instead of doing the assignment to give a verbal report of attendance at a congressional budget hearing, I wrote a play and enlisted my classmates as actors to portray the polarized senators and congressmen who took sides over what the government should and shouldn't do about funding social programs. I didn't care about my grade. I was learning and doing, and I was also determined to bring my bibliotherapy training into my social work practicum. That is, I wanted to do poetry therapy in my field training internships. Hadn't been done before? No matter. I found these lines and shared them with my professors, most of whom were blessedly open to new ideas:

*Poetry is the way we help give name to the nameless so it can be thought.* ~Audre Lorde

*Words could be wounds or the scars from old wounds. They could resemble a rotten tooth in the smile of pleasure. . . . Words could become monsters . . . the SS of the unconscious driving back the thought of the living into the prison of oblivion.*  
~Marie Cardinale

*Words can be guides, too; escape routes marked on tattered old maps . . . towards a language that is sane and shared.*  
~Michael Wood

*Poetry is above all others the most daring form of research.*  
~Wallace Stevens

*Sticks and stones can break my bones but words can break my heart.* ~Unknown

Those who weren't open were another story. One fieldwork supervisor in a hospital program I was assigned to was an old-time social worker with whom I had lively heated arguments, making impassioned pleas to do my poetry therapy group work. She called it "new age caca." Among her arguments was that it was elitist, and that only certain, literate, highly educated people could relate to poetry. No, I said, explaining that I thought everyone was a natural poet. I pleaded that we human beings language our world, that words are the heart of human-ness, that poetry is the concentrated heart of language, and that the poet is that part of everyone that must speak when the heart is too full or too empty or at war with itself.

She hmped. I read her this excerpt from a Mark Van Doren poem:

This is the first poem. There was none  
Before it.  
... nothing to start from  
Except the silence,  
... a strange need  
To be there with words when the heartbeat happened

And I finally prevailed. Not only that, but the staff nurse who had been my assigned group co-facilitator continued with the group when my internship ended.

Also, having advocated unsuccessfully for my St. E's bibliotherapy training to be credited towards the Catholic University School of Social Service Social Work degree, it was approved the year after I graduated, and I was invited back to teach.

There was a professor who scoffed at bibliotherapy as play rather than social work that was real. I recited for him Helen Harris Perlman's impish poem, "A Person's Id." The humor shifted his perspective to a willingness to consider.

I never saw a person's Id.  
... But I can tell you, if I did  
I'd clamp an Ego as a lid upon the Id to keep it hid,  
Which is, I gather, what God did when first he saw a free one.

But more persuasive for this professor was this report I made about my field work in a group with a new patient, an elderly woman who had become psychotic, was mostly inarticulate, and had been hospitalized in the psychiatric ward for observation. She had attended my group and had written a poem that described every noun as something that had an odor. At the staff meeting when I shared my experience, the neuropsychiatrist opined that the woman might have a tumor in her rhinencephalon, her nose brain. That awareness led them to additional meaningful diagnostic work.

Just improvising, making it up as I went along. And then I went out into the world. And here is where part 3 begins.

**Imperative** or what I consider is our responsibility for what we do with our training. In addition to teaching some social work classes at Catholic University, I went to every institution I could think of to offer my work. At several, after providing a staff training sample, I was hired and paid.

At a class I taught for the University of Maryland School of Social Work continuing education program, there was another doubter, this one pretty aggressively antagonistic to expressive therapies. OK, here comes the profane part I promised. Parental guidance is recommended. What is profane language? Well, it can be deeply offensive, disrespectful, morally corrupt. Profane words are the kind that get bleeped on TV. And they can also be words that are worldly or earthly or ordinary as opposed to sacred.

A social worker who had come to the class to get some required CEUs, a little bored, said, "What do you do with your poetry therapy if you've got a group of locked ward smartass adolescents who will say nothing in response to your introduction or your poem but 'FUCK!'" I knew, from his tone, that he meant his statement as a put-down, but I decided to reframe it. Yeh, I said, I've worked with kids like those who try to push your buttons. Well, that is a word, I said and asked if anyone there had never said it. All heads shook. So I adventured into action poetry therapy mode. I asked them take the rôles of these kids and walk around the room and make eye contact with anyone they came close to. Then I asked them what that word means, and they answered with the angry, sexy, and expressive usages we all know. Next, I sent them walking again

5 NAPT PRESIDENTS



and saying FUCK to anyone they passed, expressing it with any of the meanings they had stated. Having readied them for more personal awareness, I had them identify a person whom they might want to say FUCK to and write a letter to that person, but without using that word. They shared their writings first in role and then with their clinician hats back on. One person said, "That was useful and so fucking fun."

I was invited to work on the expressive therapy staffs at three area psychiatric hospitals with adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse. I wrote this piece about it for the 1992 NAPT newsletter:

As I look forward to our 12th annual NAPT conference and its theme of "words that teach, words that heal," I am reminded of Marge Piercy's powerful poem, "Unlearning to Not Speak." Its double negatives, suggesting a double bind, make it so appropriate for use in poetry therapy with survivors of childhood sexual abuse who heeded the toxic lesson, "Don't know what you know, and don't tell."

As poetry therapists, we work to evoke the poet in our students, patients, or clients who will remember and speak out the words that redeem the past and honor resilience. The patient who quoted the toxic lesson is in recovery from severe, prolonged childhood abuse. We might expect such a person to be embittered and humorless, hardened against any lighthearted fun, but no. In response to a creative process in a poetry therapy session, she quipped with mischievous delight, "Didn't your mother ever tell you not to play with ... words?"

One of my favorite action poetry therapy techniques, and those who have known me a long time know I call these “wordscapes,” is the one I call the Speak Out. At the beginning of a “speak out” session, I tell the group that I have brought a soapbox for us to use later. I tell them it’s in the middle of the room and they can’t see it because it’s invisible, but it’s right there and ready. I tell them that at the end of the session, after they have written, whoever wants to can come and stand on the soapbox and read in as loud a voice as they want. I also call it “hurling invectives,” for those who want or need to do that. Formerly grievously silenced people would come to the soapbox, pretend to climb up on it, and orate at stentorian decibels their precious words.

One woman, though, did what I now know to call “an Emma Gonzalez.” Like that brilliant young Parkland High School survivor who presented at the March for our Lives, this woman stood with perfect posture in utter silence, tears streaming down her face. We all sat caringly and respectfully with her.

It’s imperative for us to bring experiences like these to our communities. Ken Gorelick said in his 1991 NAPT keynote address, “I just don’t like the term ‘poetry therapy.’ It doesn’t work. Poetry, we don’t use just poetry. What do we use? You call out: story, myth, cartoon, film, plays, journal, Yeah, like that. And therapy, no, only the mental health people are doing therapy and so many of you are doing your great work that is not capital-T therapy. How about we call what we do ‘Word Arts in Community Service?’” And he added that whenever anyone asks you to do something for poetry therapy, say yes.

Arleen Hynes was a model in other remarkable ways. She was able to reinvent herself repeatedly as life threw her curveballs. When her husband died, and she still had a few of her ten children at home and needed an income, she got a job as the librarian at St. Elizabeths Hospital, and seeing the silent loneliness of the patients, imagined the formation of a program that could meet some of their cognitive and social needs. She improvised the creation of the bibliotherapy training program, then made it her imperative to have it accepted and funded. She dreamed it into being, just as she dreamed herself into becoming a nun in 1981 at age 65 after a period of intense discernment. She moved back to Minnesota, her childhood home, and into the convent of St. Benedict. This was not a retirement from the world by any means, but another

way to honor her commitment to social justice. Arleen, with her daughter Mary Hynes-Berry, wrote the first major text for training bibliotherapists, *Biblio/Poetry Therapy—The Interactive Process: A Handbook*, published in 1994 and respected as vital today. She participated in the organizations she had founded, the Bibliotherapy Roundtable and the National Federation for Biblio/Poetry Therapy. She continued to facilitate bibliotherapy groups, some with Geri Chavis, and became fervently interested in the work of Richard Sipe, a Benedictine monk, who was writing and speaking about sexual trauma in religious institutions. In 1994, she invited me to teach and lead groups with her at St. John’s Abbey in Collegeville, Minnesota, for a presentation titled “Biblio/Poetry Therapy, A Healing Modality for Clergy Abuse Victims & Perpetrators.” I lived at the convent for a week and continued to learn with and from her. She sent me off with this imperative: keep taking our work into the world. We miss her and celebrate her.

So one more thing. There is a better word than the term *word nerd* to describe those of us with our healthy addiction, and I was so sure I had made this up, just as many of us thought we had made up poetry therapy. The word is *wordie*. I am, and maybe you are, a *wordie* with an *ie* at the end, not a *y*. Well, it’s already a word, right there in the urban dictionary:

What a foodie is to food, a wordie is to words. A wordie appreciates the nuances, subtleties and power of words and enjoys learning new words and studying the intricacies they offer. Also probably has a large vocabulary.

Are you with me?

## Words: The Girders of Our Bridges To Each Other

By Wendi R. Kaplan

"Your word is the power that you have to create; it is a gift."  
~Don Miguel Ruiz

Let us begin with the word "Gratitude."  
Breathe it in.  
Let it fill you.  
Sit with you.  
Notice where gratitude resides in your body.  
Notice if it has a color,  
A taste, a smell, any sensation.  
Whatever comes to you is Gratitude in this moment.

As you notice gratitude in your body and heart and mind you have found a bridge to yourself. And gratitude dear friends, is a wonderful word to begin with.

Gratitude for those who walked before. Gratitude to Peggy Osna Heller, an extraordinary teacher and mentor who illuminates the history and the practice of biblio/poetry therapy. Gratitude for her ability to bring her light, her delightful, depthful, breadthful healing, to so many.

And gratitude to all of those who forged the paths that have brought us biblio/poetry therapy, or as our dear Ken Gorelick calls it, "Word Arts in Community Service"—this most elegant form of connecting, creating, clarifying, cleaving, and inspiring process. Welcome to this tribe of word artists, healers, activists. Poetry therapists welcome all.

As the Poet Laureate of Alexandria, Virginia, I began my tenure with my poem entitled "The Welcoming Sky" and here is a part of it:

All are welcome.

The sky does not exclude.  
The sky embraces us all.  
The sky reminds us that  
we are small,  
that we are connected,  
that we are a part of something  
so immense that  
we can barely glimpse it  
and yet it lives in us,

reminds us that we all are light  
that we have a place, here  
in this cosmic dance.

All are welcome.

Poetry therapists begin with "Welcome" and then we share who we are. As in Basho's "I am one" haiku and George Ella Lyons's poem "Where I'm From." Here is a bit of my response:

I am a woman, a wife, a mother, a writer, a healer, a seeker,  
Sometimes serious, sometimes silly, most always curious.

I come from Kentucky bluegrass and lower, slower Delaware.  
I come from a family of cornstalks in a soybean field.  
I come from a mother who read me A.A. Milne and Edgar  
Allen Poe since forever,  
and a father who sang Irish pub songs and beautiful ballads.

Poetry is part of my blood, my bloodline, and is a lifeline for me. As a clinical social worker, community activist, and lifelong learner, I have loved studying the creative arts including dance therapy, art therapy, and psychodrama. Before I knew there was something called poetry therapy I combined each of these creative arts with poetry, my first language.

Many times, many people would say, "Do you know Peggy Heller? She kinda does what you do only differently!" So the pull to Peggy was inevitable. Peggy brought me home to poetry therapy.

Another home is in Alexandria, where I have lived for over 37 years. Five years ago, I joined two other poets and we took a trolley ride in our town. This particular trolley is free and runs from the Metro station in Alexandria directly to the Potomac River on which our city sits. Because it is free and in an area that tourists and locals alike use, many different people ride this red trolley. On this particular day in April, with a gorgeous azure sky, and spring daffodils and tulips blooming, the trolley was filled to the brim. Mercedes, Miles, and I introduced ourselves and began reciting poetry. People looked confused at first and yet most listened. At one point I asked if anyone on the trolley would like to share poetry. A woman from Scotland began reciting Wordsworth by heart in her lovely brogue. An old African American man in ragged clothes followed her with lines from Shakespeare, also by heart. Two young

women found poems on their phones and shared those with us. By the time we reached the end of this ride, people were sharing and exclaiming at the poetry. No one wanted to disembark but we did, staying to talk some more. The Scottish woman told us this was her first trip to the United States. She had come to see the memorial for the Lockerbie air crash victims and had never expected America to be so warm and friendly. And so filled with poetry.

Suffice it to say that this trolley ride led me to be named the Poet Laureate of Alexandria three years ago. And, in part due to that trolley filled with such an array of humanity, I began my tenure with the theme of “Building Bridges and Creating Community.” Little did I know how important this would be when six months later a new and very unexpected president was elected and we needed community and connection more than ever.

I turned to poets to hear what they said about building bridges. Here are some of their words.

In “The Bridge,” Octavio Paz writes,  
Between now and now,  
between I am and you are,  
the word bridge.

In Nan Cohen’s poem, “Girder” she writes,  
The simplest of bridges, a promise  
that you will go forward,

that you can come back.  
So you cross over.

In the poem “The Book of Camp Branch” Wendell Berry writes,  
How much delight I’ve known  
In navigating down the flow  
By stepping stones, by sounding  
Stones, by words that are  
Stepping and sound stones.

I have a history of bridges. Walking them and building them. Seeing need and creating connection is an imperative. I have worked for many years with people who have been impacted by gun violence. In 2001, I was instrumental in manifesting The Million Mom March for Sensible Gun Laws in Washington, DC. I met many moms and others who had been affected by gun violence. Over the years I have shared poetry with families who have been affected by the rising gun

violence in our country. When no words seem to help, somehow poetry often can.

Then, gun violence struck Alexandria in 2017, a few blocks away from where I live. At a baseball field two congressmen were shot along with three other people. We organized a poetry reading at a local café so that we could share what we needed. I asked people to walk the neighborhood and write with chalk on our sidewalks “Love Lives Here” to remind each other that indeed love lives here and we are here for each other. Someone created buttons with the same line, “Love Lives Here,” and we shared them, knowing that love triumphs over guns. The power of words to heal is not to be underestimated.

After 9/11, when the Pentagon, which is three miles away from us, was hit, I organized a nightly meeting for any neighbors who needed community. We shared poetry and often meditated, and shared ways to help each other. For years, I have worked with medical students to teach them to have relationships with their patients. Of course, I use poetry to help them see from different perspectives and to deepen their own sense of self as a healer. I have worked with physicians, nurses, and counselors who work in palliative and end-of-life care, guiding them to tend to themselves as well as their patients.

My work with therapists and other healers has been such a gift and honor. I have done workshops and groups with therapists and healers to help them to examine their greatest tool, the use of Self in their work. We hone this tool by knowing ourselves, by expanding our awareness using words and poetry. We take care of this tool, the Self, by employing self care for ourselves and for each other.

One group I facilitate for therapists has been ongoing, on a weekly basis, for 23 years. They have found a safe harbor. We have created important and vulnerable connections and poetry has been integral in the development of our group. Another group I facilitate for therapists, doctors, acupuncturists, and other healers is called “Awakenings.” We use meditation, journaling, and poetry to pause, listen, reflect, write, and connect.

There are countless ways to use words for good as poetry therapists and facilitators. Words can be the building blocks on bridges. When you cross the bridge from your thinking to your visceral body and heart, a new world

opens to you. The bridge from your thinking to the transcendent, the divine. We often use mantras to help us, as mantras are words that enable us to travel bridges to deeper states of consciousness. The Sanskrit word “mantra” means a sacred message, charm, or spell. Words like “shema,” which in Hebrew means “here” or “listen,” call us to attention and awareness.

Repeating mantras, words, or logos quiets our beehive minds and allows us to find a quiet inner harbor. When you use words to communicate to others, to speak and to listen, you are creating bridges between you and the other. As the Sufi teacher Hazrat Inayat Khan said, “One word can be more precious than all the treasures on earth.”

Words are the precious paint of poets. Poets approach a poem with an observation, a story, an awareness that we want to convey. We construct the poem with words and these words create a bridge. The bridge from myself to myself and then from myself to you. The sharing of these words becomes the bridge between us.

How we place the words. How we place the white spaces in between that guide us to pause. The word gives us a place to step. The space between gives us a chance to stop. And in that stop the word deepens, our awareness widens, we ride the word as if it were a surfboard or a star to see where it will take us. And it will take us somewhere.

Mary Oliver contemplates in her poem “The Sun”:

Do you think there is anywhere, in any language,  
a word billowing enough  
for the pleasure

that fills you, as the sun  
reaches out,  
as it warms you

“Words have a magical power.”  
~Sigmund Freud

Words can bring clarity. They can also create mystery. Alfred Lord Tennyson said, “Words, like nature, half reveal and half conceal the soul within.”

As a poetry therapist I often will hear a simple word that a person will say repetitively, in an unconscious

way. When I point it out to them there is a moment when that person will pause to ponder this, which causes them to listen with more attention to themselves. I am their mirror and in it they can see the self they are revealing. Often I will ask them to write about that word, find associations, create acrostics, mind maps, and simply be playful with the word. It creates a bridge into themselves in that moment. A bridge of self-awareness.

In the Fall of 2018, I was invited to do this talk. I wrote and researched some ideas for about two months and then set them down to marinate until January. In January, I was unable to find the document, most of which was written by hand on legal pads. I searched for them without success. As time was pressing, I began with where I was in the moment. I wrote:

I have lost my words.  
I have no words.

Start from where you are. That is where we begin. It reminded me of a woman in one of my groups who exclaimed at one session, “I have lost my words,” as she stamped her feet and pounded the table we sat around. “Start there,” I suggested. “Start writing: ‘I have lost my words.’” And she wrote those words over and over again until other words began to show up on her page. She found a poem in her anger and frustration. The next week, she had found even more words, and then, performed them for the group in a spoken word moment.

When I think of the sentence “I have no words,” I am reminded of the people many of us work with daily. The people who have no words. Those who have not had words, not been allowed words, or even to speak.

Certainly the children. Children who have been hurt, abused, and stolen.

No words.  
Certainly the women who have been raped and beaten.  
Certainly the men who have been victimized.  
Certainly the African Americans who were brought here against their will and not allowed to learn to read or write.  
The elderly who often literally cannot find words.  
Immigrants who are forced to leave their homes and countries and are met at our doorstep in the United States with walls and words that tell them they are unwelcome.  
The mentally ill who are judged rather than listened to.

The homeless who struggle to find a safe place. Who walk invisible and silent among us and who we choose to not see or hear.

Poetry therapists help these people to find their words. We find our ways into the places where those who do not have, have not had, voices—and we share words of poetry. We listen to them and help them to listen to each other. We listen to the words they find and we ask more about those words, about what those words mean to them.

Words like “teeth.” I work, for instance, with women who have been incarcerated for non-violent crimes, who come from poverty and addiction and abuse. These women often are missing teeth. So the word “teeth,” the meaning of teeth, the stories of teeth are weighted with untold tales. Stories of teeth being punched out by the people who love them, stories of teeth rotting before they ever had a chance because they were given Mountain Dew instead of milk in their bottles because it is cheap. Stories of not having good food. Stories of not having health care or dental care. Suddenly teeth take center stage. And for women who do not have front teeth it is challenging to speak their words and for others to understand their words. They are ashamed and embarrassed and often speak with their hands over their mouths. But they must use their words in order to tell their truths and to find their power again.

Rudyard Kipling spoke to the Royal College of Surgeons in London in 1923. He said, “Words are, of course, the most powerful drug used by mankind. Not only do words infect, egotize, narcotize, and paralyze, but they enter into and color the minutest cells of the brain. . . .” He is clearly using the metaphor of words as being as powerful as drugs and even more so. Kipling was reminding them then, and now us, that words have influence, can change a person, can impact a person’s thoughts and feelings. It is surmised that he was also delivering a warning about using words to harm as the Nazi Party was rising to power during that time. Emily Dickinson seems to concur when she writes: “I know nothing in the world that has as much power as a word.” Ah yes, words are powerful beyond measure.

Poetry therapists create safe harbors all over the world. We create harbors for people to rest, to share, to find their words about the seas that they have traveled. And in these safe harbors we help people to find their words. We help them to put the words together in ways that tell their stories. When they can tell their stories and be heard and

affirmed and validated they can listen to others stories and be the ones to hear and affirm and validate. Then more magic happens because they also learn that they are the authors of their stories. They get to choose the words, to highlight what they want to highlight, to create the arc of their stories. And they, in learning that they are authors, begin to understand that they can use their words to create their stories and the stories that they are living into. The possibilities are vast and the world opens up, their worlds open up. Our worlds open up.

Poetry therapists help others locate the authors in them. And in doing so we can provide a perspective of seeing that they have authority within. To be an author, an authority of yourself, is to be empowered and words empower us. Think of the words that you carry with you as friends, talismans, and guides. The words that bring you into yourself, into providing you perspective, into holding you when you need to be held. Think of the words of poems that we, as poetry therapists, as word arts people, carry with us to share with others.

I am Nobody/ Who are you?  
~Emily Dickinson

You do not have to be good.  
You do not have to walk on your knees  
for a hundred miles through the desert, repenting.  
You only have to let the soft animal of your body  
love what it loves.  
~Mary Oliver

When despair for the world grows in me ...  
I go and lie down where the wood drake  
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.  
I come into the peace of wild things  
~Wendell Berry

Before you know what kindness really is  
you must lose things  
~Naomi Shihab Nye

May you experience each day as a sacred gift woven  
around the heart of wonder.  
~John O’Donohue

These are the words we play with, work with, touch, sleep with, walk with every day. And we are generous in sharing them because we know that they might speak

## NAPT 2019 CONFERENCE KEYNOTE ADDRESSES

to someone. They might warm them, allow them to feel connected, to feel less alone, to be aware that we share pain and joy and life.

We use words to build bridges. Words are the girders of the bridges we build in order to know ourselves, to know from where we have come and how that has formed us and shaped us and the way that we form the words can change the color of that story. It can give us the strength to build bridges to others and to the new stories we want to create in our lives.

We are Poetry Therapists and Word Artists, and we are so needed in this world. Right now!  
Start from where you are.  
Welcome people.

Go find them. Everywhere!  
Find words.  
Listen.  
Build bridges with words.

And as Gregory Orr reminds us:

Let's remake the world with words.  
Not frivolously, nor  
To hide from what we fear,  
But with a purpose.

For all of us, we must rise to the challenge, we must remake the world with words and help others to find their words. Let us go forth with words in hand and build the bridges we need!

### REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

We want to thank our Regional Representatives who are helping to raise NAPT's visibility and promote membership in NAPT by disseminating information on the richly varied field of poetry/bibliotherapy.

Regional Representatives network with individuals, organizations, and/or institutions that are engaged in the areas of education, mental health, health care, creative arts expression, spiritual development, and/or social justice advocacy.

Please contact a representative in your area if you have questions and/or wish to get more involved. We welcome you!

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## Thoughts from first-time conference attendees

At first I could not figure out why I was so eager to get back home after the NAPT conference, since I was neither tired nor homesick. Later, when I reflected, it was clear that the conference created a new energy within me. Starting the NAPT experience with Diane Allerdyce's pre-conference workshop on "Breath, Image, Rhythm" was the perfect way to begin this new venture. In her session we were exposed to an awesome collection of poetry, engaged in a variety of activities, and taught how to read—first with our brains and then with our hearts. What a great beginning to a life-altering conference.

Throughout the conference, I was exposed to many heart-wrenching as well as mind-expanding sessions, speeches, and performances. The conference journey left me with a better understanding of the profession of poetry therapy, lessons about various forms, and enhanced skills. Furthermore, there were opportunities to perform poetry and to fellowship with each other. Personally, one of the most meaningful aspects of this conference was having theorists and practitioners guide us through therapeutic experiences. Whereas I had practiced poetry therapy for years, unknowingly, at the NAPT conference, I became the client or recipient of this gift.

By the end of the conference, I was eager to get busier than ever working on poetry therapy because I had concluded that, "These NAPT people are serious about the BUSINESS of HEALING."

Submitted by Nanthalia McJamerson (Ruston, Louisiana)

As a first-time attendee, who has been writing poetry since seventh grade, I especially enjoyed presenting at the Open Mic. The poem I presented was entitled "I Remember Mama." I had written it as a doctoral student, shortly after losing my mother. I included this poem in the dedication of my dissertation. Writing this poem was very therapeutic for me and sharing it in different venues since I wrote it has been therapeutic for others. It is one of my poems that has been published as a poetry bookmark, presented at events at churches, universities, and school settings in several states. Presenting this poem at the National Association for Poetry Therapy Open Mic was very special because I felt connected with like-minded

individuals in a way more incredible than any of my previous presentation experiences.

I received very positive feedback when I shared this poem at the conference. However, what was amazing was the response I received later from one of my freshman composition students at Grambling State University. I shared it with him when he told me about his struggles resulting from the loss of his dad. This is an excerpt from his essay entitled "Reflections on 'I Remember Mama' by Doris Williams-Smith":

After hearing the poem "I Remember Mama" by Doris Williams-Smith, I was able to compare the feelings expressed in the poem to my own feelings. This poem actually helped me handle the loss of my dad. I was able to reference back to good times I had with him before he passed. After reading this poem, I found a sense of joy I haven't felt in a long time. . . . I believe that poetry like this is beneficial for the healing process of those who lost someone they dearly care for . . . You can certainly tell the author uses writing poetry as a therapeutic method, and it definitely works.

Submitted by Doris Williams-Smith, PhD (Ruston, Louisiana)

As an educator who has been in the classroom for over 20 years, I was looking for some new inspiration when I registered for the NAPT conference. I have used poetry in my lessons before, but I had never attended any Open Mic events much less an entire conference devoted exclusively to poetry, so I was not sure what to expect. In addition, I am still recovering from the effects of Hurricane Harvey, which flooded my house in August of 2017. This storm left me extremely emotional and in certain situations where I once felt comfortable, I now feel like an outsider. I no longer fit in because I am too full of emotions and tears. Therefore, I was amazed by the raw honesty with which the presenters and attendees expressed themselves through poetry. It was liberating to witness others courageously articulate their emotions and experiences and reveal their vulnerabilities so freely. I no longer felt like an outcast and for that, I am truly grateful. I hope to attend more NAPT conferences in the future and continue experiencing poetry on a deeper level.

Submitted by Sharon Bippus (Houston, Texas)

## Poems written at the conference

### At the Roots

By Juhani Ihanus (Helsinki, Finland)

At the roots of myself,  
sands of gloom,  
at the low spots,  
visions ended—  
how low can you go?

Compiling my dossiers  
of associations and  
dissociations,  
sharing the corridors  
of mute statues.

Was I sleeping or reviving  
the sounds of the roots?  
Should I stand stuck  
in the same sand,  
define the already defined?

No—affirming the reverberation  
of the lived memories,  
hearing the voices  
of the vital sources,  
I jump

arching over  
the downcast echoes  
and the big egos,  
the lowered eyes  
reaching out for

my last, no, the latest, sun,  
almost blinded,  
the flowers speaking  
languages better  
than my barren tongue.

*Written in the pre-conference workshop "Acting Out: How to Use Performance Techniques to Enhance the Poetry Therapy Process," facilitated by Jenna Robinson and Zachary Katz*

### Untitled

By Sharon Bippus (Houston, Texas)

We are petals in a dish  
Take one of us and make a wish  
Use our magic to realize your dream  
We are not as fragile as we seem

*Written in the workshop "Writing with Plants," facilitated by Juhani Ihanus*



Photo by Sharon Bippus

## Four Directions Collaborative Ceremony

*By participants in the workshop "Navigating with Nature,"  
facilitated by Laura Santner*

Southern Air,  
This body comes from a place that meets the sea and sky,  
The thick trembling air dusty with pollen  
From the South not to be confused with coming from below,  
Where earthworms dwell  
Where the air is thick  
Melon and tea wet the tongue  
Coming from all the buzzing  
Shades of green  
To a place where the air is thick and pigeons fly  
The path I choose is a dance of connection  
To that place of wildness.

Setting in the West,  
I know beauty must ail and die  
That wisdom to be appreciated  
I feel myself variegated  
I come in attracted to the East  
And then settled back into the West  
North to West to East to West again  
This place now home.

North of Silence  
Clouds are kissing  
Waves of land  
The sky selects you  
I'm exhausted  
But I can't stop  
Funny how I use words to capture silence.

To the East  
Like I hug ancient trees  
In Valamo Cloister  
The trees so wide  
That my arms cannot reach around  
I want to go where the wildflowers grow  
And the mountains beckon me  
To walk on their trails  
Hearing the calls  
Not to frame my thoughts and walks  
I am coming from the concrete  
That was born of soil and Earth.

## Through Words

*By Alma Maria Rolfs (Seattle, Washington)*

Words spoken and not  
Have kept me small,  
Thorny hedges around  
The pond of my life.

But here I am expanded.

Through words  
and love of words  
that small pond has grown  
and may yet grow.

Through words  
I have been known.

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**SAVE THE DATE!**

**NAPT 2020 conference  
Albuquerque, New Mexico  
April 2–5, 2020**

Contributed by Barbara Kreisberg, MS, CPT  
Conference Chair

The most recent NAPT conference, held at the Embassy Suites Inner Harbor & The Grand in Baltimore, Maryland, was filled with energy and excitement. The ambiance of Baltimore and all its historic sites reminded us of the struggles and hardships people went through to create our nation. The theme of our conference, “Beacons and Safe Harbors: Navigating Personal and Societal Challenges through Poetry Therapy,” served as a jumping off point for all of our special event presenters as well as our workshops. Many of us were invited to take steps toward self-exploration and self-examination of our own values and goals, both personally and professionally, using the written and spoken word. We hope our attendees were able to take back some newfound tools learned at the conference, to help them when working with their clients, students, and/or community groups. The poems and stories shared during our Open Mic as well as the amazing performance poets Gail Danley and Meccamorphosis, were a good example of how powerful our poems and stories can be and how they can be the impetus toward change.

The highlight of the conference for me was the Thursday Meet and Greet where we broke into small groups and used the poetic form of the acrostic poem as a way of getting to know one another in preparation for the conference to come over the next few days. It was heartwarming to see all the sharing that went on, and the laughter and connection that took place.

A special thanks goes to one of the keynote speakers, Peggy Heller, who in her brilliant, charming, and humorous way, gave us a historical perspective of her journey as a poetry therapist, and the passion she feels about our work. I also want to thank Wendi Kaplan, our other keynote speaker, for sharing all of the work she has done in her community as Poet Laureate of Alexandria, Virginia. Her passion for poetry used for healing is very powerful. [Ed. note: Read transcripts of these presentations in this issue of the *Museletter*.]

**SAVE THE DATES!** We are pleased to announce that our next conference will be in Albuquerque, New Mexico, April 2–5, 2020. This desert setting will serve as an excellent venue for some outdoor poetry writing as well as some stimulating workshops and special events. The theme of next year’s conference is “Land of Enchantment: Exploring and Embracing Diversity through Poetry Therapy.” Our Keynote Poet will be Jimmy Santiago Baca.

We will be working on shaping the new program around the conference theme toward the end of the summer. We will be asking for proposals that relate to this theme in early September. I look forward to being in touch during the year, either by e-blast or on the conference website: [www.poetrytherapy.org](http://www.poetrytherapy.org). If anyone wants to be a part of the conference committee or serve as a volunteer at the conference itself, I would love to hear from you. Volunteers are always welcome and receive a discounted conference registration rate. Please contact me at [bkexpres@aol.com](mailto:bkexpres@aol.com) if you are interested. Have a relaxing summer!

### SEEKING BOOK REVIEWERS

*The Museletter* and *The Journal of Poetry Therapy* are seeking reviews of contemporary titles in writing therapy and related fields, as well as of poetry monographs and collections. [Note: *Museletter* contributors must be current members of NAPT, and neither publication reviews self-published books.]

Interested? Email [naptpublications@yahoo.com](mailto:naptpublications@yahoo.com).

## Journaler's Corner

### Celebrating Thirty with One Hundred

*Contributed by Beth Jacobs, PhD*

As I started writing this Journaler's Corner, I realized from my computer files that it's the thirtieth one that has appeared in the *Museletter* and that made me feel like celebrating. The first thing to celebrate is a long and fruitful collaboration with Karen (Ren) vanMeenen, who suggested I write something for the *Museletter* so long ago and who has only continued to encourage me ever since. Thank you so much, Ren.

Journalers celebrate with writing and for this column I turn to Kay Adams's beautiful idea from the seminal book *Journal to the Self*. We can celebrate thirty columns with A List of 100.

#### 100 Gifts Your Journal Gives You

1. Liberation from wherever your mind was before you opened the page.
2. Storage for your memories.
3. The diving board into emptiness.
4. A dance floor for nibs or fingertips or graphite chips.
5. A ground of transformation for your emotions.
6. A ground of transformation for experience.
7. A ground of transformation for your self.
8. Black dirt for planting.
9. A playground.
10. The absolute unerring companion.
11. A secret garden.
12. A storage locker for your emotions.
13. Time that is only yours.
14. The twang of a sitar.
15. Patience to endure life's hardships.
16. Strength to endure life's hardships.
17. A lens to view life's beauty.
18. A joy jar.
19. An embarrassment eraser.
20. An ice pack for emotional inflammation.
21. A savior.
22. A magic rectangle.
23. A garbage dump.
24. A judgment-free zone.
25. A zone for developing discernment.
26. Water when your heart is thirsty.
27. Open space.
28. A mirror into your soul.
29. A laboratory for self experiments.
30. A dress rehearsal for confrontation, life, and poetry.
31. Fluffy slippers for poetic feet.
32. A shawl for the burdens you shoulder.
33. Soothing.
34. Little noises of taps or scrapes of writing implements.
35. Quiet.
36. Privacy in an overly imposing world.
37. Humanness connecting you in an overly mechanized world.
38. Jokes only you will ever get.
39. A wishing well for as many wishes as you wish.
40. A hidden palace.
41. A drug that won't wind you up in rehab.
42. A connection to every journaler there ever was or ever will be.
43. Power for your voice.
44. Practice and automatic improvement in the skill of writing.
45. A handkerchief for tears.
46. Transporting trances.
47. A kindly receptacle.
48. Tons of files or notebooks or paper to wonder how to manage.
49. A neighborhood that is very familiar.

## JOURNALER'S CORNER

50. A dressing room where you are the star of the show.
51. A uniqueness observer.
52. A factory for reality.
53. The best friend you can invent as you go along.
54. A hiding place.
55. A seed for polished writing.
56. A seed for grace.
57. A seed for self knowledge.
58. A seed for confidence.
59. A changeable wallpaper for your life room.
60. A flower to put in a vase.
61. A vase to put your flower in.
62. A dial up on awareness.
63. A priest for confession.
64. A Bodhisattva for compassion.
65. A shelter for the wild mystic inside.
66. A gentle rain for a parched day.
67. A final benediction for parts of you that have died.
68. A tree that is completely unique in a forest.
69. A frustration sponge.
70. Glue for the broken pieces.
71. A customized dialect.
72. A butter knife that spreads out richness.
73. A rake that brings in colorful fall leaves.
74. A receptor site as soft as the petal of a tulip.
75. A secret stash of freedom.
76. A thermometer to see if you have a fever.
77. Your lucky number in words.
78. Your favorite color in words.
79. A view through a lead-paned window.
80. A place where floating clouds can land.
81. A solution to your problem.
82. A cave for meditation.
83. Satisfying moments of clarity.
84. Digestion enzymes for life's bulk.
85. A breeze.
86. Scuba tanks when you dive.
87. A feather mattress when you need to rest.
88. A vault for secrets.
89. A place to savor what is delicious.
90. Something to do when you're lost.
91. A literary test tube.
92. The eye of the hurricane.
93. The wisdom of ancient ferns.
94. Support while you are wading through complexity.
95. A flint to strike the match of creativity.
96. A well of acceptance.
97. A reprieve from hesitance.
98. Jewels of observation.
99. A cheer waiting at the finish line.
100. Your muse's warm home.

*The Journaler's Corner discusses personal writing as a therapeutic and artistic process. Please write with comments or suggestions: [jacobsbethpen@gmail.com](mailto:jacobsbethpen@gmail.com).*

## MUSE REVIEWS

**Set the Page on Fire: Secrets of Successful Writers.**  
Steve O'Keefe. New World Library.

**Transformative Words: Writing Otherness and Identities.**  
Juhani Ihanus. Nova Science Publishers.

*[NAPT members interested in reviewing any of the titles listed in Media Received or other books or media that might be of interest to readers of The Museletter are requested to contact the Editor at [naptpublications@yahoo.com](mailto:naptpublications@yahoo.com). Note: We list, but we do not publish reviews of, self-published books.]*

## EVENTS

## MARYLAND/DC AREA

NAPT's next annual conference will take place in Albuquerque, New Mexico, April 25, 2020. The conference theme will be "Land of Enchantment: Exploring and Embracing Diversity through Poetry Therapy." See this issue for details and check [www.poetrytherapy.org](http://www.poetrytherapy.org) later in the year for mitupdates on the program and to register.

## CLASSES / WORKSHOPS / PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

## CALIFORNIA

The Southern California Poetry Therapy Network offers peer/supervision training hours for those working on their CAPF, CPT, and PTR in Santa Barbara or Los Angeles. Others interested in the process are also welcome. Facilitation practice, group supervision, skill building, case studies, and literature review are offered, supervised by Master Mentor/Supervisor Perie Longo, PhD, MFT, PTR. Open to all—writers and non-writers, educators, students, therapists, young professionals, and facilitators alike—whether looking to acquire new tools for teaching poetry to adults and children, or simply wishing to deepen your artistic self-expression. Call Perie at (805) 687-1619 or email [perie@west.net](mailto:perie@west.net) for further information and/or about the next scheduled meeting.

Jennie Linthorst, MA, CAPF, of **LifeSPEAKS Poetry Therapy** offers year-round private and group expressive writing workshops in her practice in Manhattan Beach. Jennie facilitates a monthly writing group open to the public through UCLA Arts & Healing in the Los Angeles area on Thursday evenings. Information on all of her workshops can be found on her website at [www.lifespeaks-poetrytherapy.com](http://www.lifespeaks-poetrytherapy.com) or through email at [Jennie.Linthorst@gmail.com](mailto:Jennie.Linthorst@gmail.com).

## FLORIDA

**Reflective Writing: A Women's Writing Group** meets on Monday evenings, facilitated by Barbara Kreisberg, MS, CPT. Through spontaneous guided writing experiences designed to awaken and nurture the self and through the reading of selected poems, participants will discover the process of personal growth and healing by using the written word. Participants are given the opportunity to be moved by their own writing as well as others, with the emphasis on gaining a deeper understanding of life events, obstacles, and opportunities. Please call (305) 975-3671 or email [Bkexpres@aol.com](mailto:Bkexpres@aol.com) for further information and registration.

## KANSAS

**Caryn Mirriam-Goldberg**, PhD, facilitates ongoing **workshops for people living with or recovering from serious illness**, including cancer, at Turning Point of Kansas City: A Center for Hope and Health; workshops on the craft and passion of poetry and prose; online classes through the Transformative Language Arts Network (<http://TLANetwork.org>) and The Loft (<http://Loft.org>); and workshops on writing and healing through many venues. She also offers talks and readings, including on the writing life, the Holocaust and Polish Resistance, mythopoetics, and bioregional writing. With singer-songwriter Kelley Hunt, Caryn leads an annual Brave Voice: Writing & Singing for Your Life retreat each May in the Flint Hills of Kansas (<http://BraveVoice.com>). Her blog can be found at [www.CarynMirriamGoldberg.com](http://www.CarynMirriamGoldberg.com), and she writes regularly for the *Huffington Post* at [www.huffingtonpost.com/caryn-mirriamgoldberg](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/caryn-mirriamgoldberg).

## MARYLAND

Internalized metaphors that encode a client's experience and learned strategies for meeting the world are key players in his/her process of inner

healing and growth. Mining Your Metaphors offers trainings in **Clean Language and Symbolic Modeling**, cutting-edge techniques for working therapeutically and experientially with these internalized metaphors. Director and lead trainer **Gina Campbell**, MEd, CAPF, is the author of the workbook series *Mining Your Client's Metaphors: A How-To Workbook on Clean Language and Symbolic Modeling*. For more information visit [www.miningyourmetaphors.com](http://www.miningyourmetaphors.com) or email [gina@miningyourmetaphors.com](mailto:gina@miningyourmetaphors.com). Approved for credit by NFB/PT for those training in poetry therapy, with Mentor/Supervisor permission.

## MASSACHUSETTS

**Cheryl Buchanan** is offering a new creative writing workshop at St. Francis House in Boston, a center for the poor and homeless that provides housing, medical care, clothing, meals, counseling, vocational rehabilitation, and programs in expressive art. The workshop is called "**Survivor Stories**" and aims to help improve insight and cooperative communication skills while sharing and creating poetry and literature for purposes of connection, support, and development of one's own voice. For more information email [CherylBuchanan@yahoo.com](mailto:CherylBuchanan@yahoo.com).

## MICHIGAN

**Nessa McCCasey**, CPT, PTP, Mentor, is **accepting trainees** for the Poetry Therapy Practitioner credential (through iaPOETRY). Nessa has worked as a poetry therapist since 2006. She has served NAPT as a board member (Membership VP) and as Administrator and received awards from NAPT (Distinguished Service and Outstanding Achievement). Now Nessa is Director of the credentialing organization ia-POETRY. She brings acceptance and openness to the process of training (and believes in the value of diversity

in skills and abilities). Contact [poetnessa@gmail.com](mailto:poetnessa@gmail.com) for more information. Further information about the credential process through iaPOETRY is found at [www.iapoetry.org](http://www.iapoetry.org).

## MINNESOTA

**Geri Chavis**, LP, CPT, PhD, periodically facilitates a poetry therapy **supervision group** in Minneapolis. Since the early 1980s, the **Minnesota Poetry Therapy Network** has been meeting six times a year and is going strong. This peer experience poetry therapy group focuses on a particular theme, reading and creating together and sharing resources. We meet every other month on Saturdays from 10:30am to 2:30pm. For details contact Geri Chavis at [ggchavis@stkate.edu](mailto:ggchavis@stkate.edu) or at (651) 690-6524.

## NEW ENGLAND

**Playback Theatre Troupe, True Story Theater** offers a variety of training and performances in Playback Theatre in the Boston area. For information contact Christopher Ellinger, Artistic Director, at [christopher@truestorytheater.org](mailto:christopher@truestorytheater.org) or visit [www.truestorytheater.org](http://www.truestorytheater.org).

## NEW YORK CITY/ NEW JERSEY/ LONG ISLAND

**The Kint Institute** is pleased to announce that we are currently accepting applications for the fourth cohort in our post-graduate certificate training program in the Creative Arts Therapies and Trauma. The program meets four weekends per year in a convenient location in New York City. The first of these weekends takes place in September every year. Explore [www.kintinstitute.org](http://www.kintinstitute.org) for more details, including training curriculum, application, and information about our cutting-edge faculty. Faculty include Dr. Shanee Stepakoff and Nancy Scherlong, both of whom are registered poetry therapists and NFBPT-approved

mentor/supervisors in poetry therapy. We welcome applications from clinicians (with at least a Master's degree) who are interested in the uses of poetry and expressive arts (music, drama, dance, visual arts) in trauma treatment. CEUs are provided for psychologists and other professionals. The portions of the program that focus on poetry therapy and are facilitated by Shanee or Nancy can be applied toward certification as a poetry therapist or certified applied poetry facilitator, in both the "peer experience" and didactic categories, and possibly also in the supervision category. Our past three years of graduates of the program have now formed a supportive, vibrant community of like-minded colleagues in the NYC area. Please consider joining us, as well as sharing the website with others who might be interested. For more information email [info@kintinstitute.org](mailto:info@kintinstitute.org).

The **Creative Righting Center** meets the first Sunday of each month from Oct. through June. Join a beautiful community of writers and therapists, librarians, chaplains, and educators for a year of Story and Poems of Presence with a focus on Mindfulness. Learn methods of growth and healing as we fire, wire, and inspire! For more information contact **Dr. Sherry Reiter** at [sherryreiter@yahoo.com](mailto:sherryreiter@yahoo.com) or (718) 998-4572.

**bridgeXngs Poetry Center, Inc.**, is a state-of-the-art not-for-profit comprehensive poetry center and intentional community pioneering online courses for poetry therapy trainees and others, directed by Lila L. Weisberger, a New York State Licensed Creative Arts Therapist. Lila is Founder, Creative Director, and a Master Mentor with the International Academy for Poetry Therapy (iaPOETRY) and she offers training in poetry therapy to earn the credential of Poetry Therapy Practitioner. Training in poetry therapy is available for both long-distance and local trainees, in individual and small group supervision. Lila is an experienced, award-winning teacher, school psychologist, poetry therapist, and creative arts therapist. Monthly peer

groups are offered in Manhattan. Online courses are offered twice a year and include a peer group for long distance trainees; topics include a didactic and experiential course based on the text *The Healing Fountain: Poetry Therapy for Life's Journey* by Geri Chavis and Lila Weisberger; Words on a Hat—Learning Abnormal Psychology Through Literature; as well as study groups of major poetry therapy texts. Special programs include poetry with altered books and creating three-dimensional poetry dolls. For information contact Lila at [bridgeXngs@aol.com](mailto:bridgeXngs@aol.com) or (917) 660-0440.

## UNITED KINGDOM

**Lapidus** is the UK's national organization for Creative Writing for Health and Wellbeing. It publishes the online Lapidus Journal ([www.lapidusjournal.org](http://www.lapidusjournal.org)) three times a year (a benefit of membership), in which practitioners of therapeutic writing, writers, and others working in fields where narratives or poetry are linked with well-being share their experience and ideas. Lapidus has regional groups across the UK and holds regular events, meetings, and professional development opportunities. Visit [www.lapidus.org.uk](http://www.lapidus.org.uk) to see more about the organization, or join the thriving Lapidus page on Facebook, which is full of interesting posts and links.

**Metanoia Institute offers courses in Creative Writing for Therapeutic Purposes** (CWTP), including an MSc degree, in Bristol, UK, for those with an interest in literature and how it might be used to assist those experiencing life problems and for those currently working in the helping professions who seek a comprehensive training to prepare them for working in the field of creative writing for therapeutic purposes. For information email [mandy.kersey@metanoia.ac.uk](mailto:mandy.kersey@metanoia.ac.uk) or see [www.metanoia.ac.uk/msccwtp](http://www.metanoia.ac.uk/msccwtp). Metanoia is sponsoring a conference July 13–14: Creative Bridges. NAPT's Geri Chavis will be facilitating along with speakers from

Australia, Africa, France, and a range of UK practitioners. For information see <https://creativebridgesbristol.com>.

## ONLINE / VIRTUAL / REGION-FREE

**Caryn Mirriam-Goldberg** is now offering a limited number of **coaching opportunities**—custom-designed one-on-one programs in writing (editing, revising, publishing, and more), workshop facilitation, and related topics—face-to-face, or by phone or video conferencing. If this speaks to you, please contact her at [carynmirriamgoldberg@gmail.com](mailto:carynmirriamgoldberg@gmail.com) to set up a free 20-minute visit to discuss your interests, how she can help, and best next steps. For more information visit <http://carynmirriamgoldberg.com>.

As well as her regular teaching and courses in therapeutic writing, **Victoria Field**, Mentor-Supervisor, is now bringing together her poetry therapy work under the umbrella of **The Poetry Practice** ([www.thepoetrypractice.co.uk](http://www.thepoetrypractice.co.uk)) and always welcomes comment and contact. Vicky is also now a tutor at the Professional Writing Academy. In the course **Running Writing Groups**, you can discover how to design, launch, and facilitate your own writing group. This 6-week online course will furnish writers, academics, and counselors with the skills and confidence to run writing workshops. As you work through each weekly session, you will explore what makes an effective writing group environment, gain the tools and resources for designing a writing group of your own, and devise a strategy for delivering workshops. The course is led by experienced practitioners **Victoria Field** ([www.thepoetrypractice.co.uk](http://www.thepoetrypractice.co.uk)) and **Anne Taylor**. The start dates are in Jan., April, and Sept. each year. For more information and to register go to [www.profwritingacademy.com/courses/running-writing-groups](http://www.profwritingacademy.com/courses/running-writing-groups). In the 8-week online course Introduction to **Therapeutic**

**and Reflective Writing**—the first of its kind—participants explore the ways and range of contexts in which this type of writing can be used and experience its value directly. The course provides skills, techniques, and valuable resources for both personal exploration and for use with clients and groups. The course is led by experienced practitioners **Victoria Field** ([www.thepoetrypractice.co.uk](http://www.thepoetrypractice.co.uk)) and **Anne Taylor**. The start dates are in Jan., April, and Sept. each year. For more information and to register go to [www.profwritingacademy.com/courses/therapy-and-personal-development-writing](http://www.profwritingacademy.com/courses/therapy-and-personal-development-writing).

**Writing for Life: Creating a Story of Your Own** by **Sandra Lee Schubert**. The journaling and scrapbooking techniques taught in this course provide a creative way to connect with the inner self and heal emotional wounds while documenting your story, your life, in a fun and unique way. For more information and to sign up visit [www.selfhealingexpressions.com/courses/writing-to-heal](http://www.selfhealingexpressions.com/courses/writing-to-heal).

**The International Academy for Poetry Therapy** (iaPOETRY) offers training in poetry therapy to earn the credential of Poetry Therapy Practitioner (PTP) and is currently accepting highly motivated people for training. Mentors are available internationally and use technology to bridge distances. The curriculum is adapted to meet the learning style of each trainee while covering all the material that leads to excellence in the field. Mentors teach in a supportive (and often collaborative) environment. There are offered both in person and through online peer groups. Mentors collaborate and cross-train to best meet the needs of all trainees. See the iaPOETRY website ([www.iapoetry.org](http://www.iapoetry.org)) for details about the training process and a list of mentors.

## GRADUATE EDUCATION

**Goddard College's Transformative Language Arts (TLA) Master's Program** allows students to pursue social

and personal transformation through the spoken and written word through a deep exploration of your personal TLA practice (as a writer, storyteller, etc.) as well as the social and cultural picture informing your particular focus of study (a focus you choose!). TLA students may also fulfill many of the poetry therapy certification requirements through this degree. TLA criteria include a community-based practicum, thesis project of your own design, and a balance between theory and practice in your study and art of words. Students also have opportunities to shadow poetry therapy and related practitioners around the world. TLA is available as a concentration in the Individualized MA, Health Arts and Sciences, and Social Innovation and Sustainability programs, all of which are part of the Goddard Graduate Institute. For more information visit [www.goddard.edu/academics/goddard-graduate-institute](http://www.goddard.edu/academics/goddard-graduate-institute) or email Caryn Mirriam-Goldberg at [caryn.mirriamgoldberg@goddard.edu](mailto:caryn.mirriamgoldberg@goddard.edu).

**The Transformative Language Arts Network** offers online classes as well as the first certification in Transformative Language Arts. The TLA Network Foundations certification is an introduction to TLA in theory and practice with opportunities for reflecting and acting on ethical work, community networking, and TLA in action. The certification covers TLA in theory and practice, ethics and values, TLA in action, community and networking, and an introduction to right livelihood. Learn more at <http://TLANetwork.org>.

**Pacifica Graduate Institute's accredited MA/PhD program in Mythological Studies** cultivates the mythic imagination through a strong grounding in a variety of mythic narratives and religious traditions. Students discover recurring mythic themes in classic and contemporary literature, theater, art, and film, while recognizing cultural and historical contexts. Fostering the confluence of scholarship and imagination, the program invites students into the art of writing. The program especially emphasizes the interpretative modes of depth psychology, par-

ticularly the influences that derive from Sigmund Freud, C.G. Jung, Marie-Louise von Franz, and James Hillman. Joseph Campbell's groundbreaking work and insights also inform the program. Pacifica has developed educational formats that are particularly well suited to individuals who wish to pursue graduate education while continuing their existing professional and personal commitments. When students begin their studies at Pacifica Graduate Institute, they join a cohort of like-minded students who are also enrolling in that particular degree program. A very real sense of community is soon established as students collaborate within their cohorts and share the intense experiences that are part of graduate-level work at Pacifica. The MA/PhD Mythological Studies program is currently accepting applications. For more information visit <http://pacifica.edu> or call (805) 969-3626 x305.

## CALLS FOR WORK/ PAPERS/ARTICLES/ PROPOSALS/ PRESENTATION

**The Museletter is seeking writers of book reviews; "Profiles" of organizations and individuals; "Poems as Process" writing prompts; "Happenings" reports on conferences and other creative arts therapies events; "Chapbook" poems of up to 20 lines (with 150-200 word accompanying narrative about the therapeutic aspects of writing the poem); Good Works (essays on particularly effective poetry therapy projects you are facilitating as part of your volunteer, in-service, or professional endeavors); interviews with NAPT's Muses, poets and creative arts therapies practitioners; and other feature articles. The Editor welcomes proposals three or more weeks in advance of submission deadlines from current NAPT members. As we are unable to publish all the submissions we receive, please refer to issues of the Museletter for general style and content or query the Editor before submitting a proposal or article. See this issue for**

**upcoming deadlines and email [napt-publications@yahoo.com](mailto:napt-publications@yahoo.com) for more information or with your ideas.**

**The Journal of Poetry Therapy: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Practice, Theory, Research, and Education** (Promoting Growth and Healing Through Language, Symbol, and Story) ([www.tandf.co.uk/Journals/titles/08893675.asp](http://www.tandf.co.uk/Journals/titles/08893675.asp)) is an interdisciplinary journal seeking manuscripts on the use of the language arts in therapeutic, educational, and community-building capacities. *The Journal* purview includes bibliotherapy, healing and writing, journal therapy, narrative therapy, and creative expression. *The Journal* welcomes a wide variety of scholarly articles including theoretical, historical, literary, clinical, practice, education, and evaluative studies. All manuscripts will be submitted for blind review to the JPT editorial board. Maximum length of full-length articles is 30 pages (typed, double-spaced, nonsexist language). Style should conform to the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). All articles must be original material, not previously published or soon to be published elsewhere. Manuscripts should be submitted in electronic format (MS Word) as an e-mail attachment to Nicholas Mazza, PhD, Editor, *Journal of Poetry Therapy*, at [nfmazza@fsu.edu](mailto:nfmazza@fsu.edu). For book review inquiries, please email Ren vanMeenen at [naptpublications@yahoo.com](mailto:naptpublications@yahoo.com).

**The Canadian Journal of Counselling and Psychotherapy** intends to publish a special issue on Research in the Creative Arts Therapies. One-page proposals for manuscripts are requested addressing the research and practical issues in creative arts therapies such as original research; case studies; the challenges of doing research in this field; qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods, and arts-based methods of research; applying brain research to practice; meta-analysis of the evidence for this practice; and partnering with other disciplines as a means of research. Other topics related to research in creative arts therapies are encouraged. The proposals should be submitted by June 30, 2019. The

deadline for manuscripts of accepted proposals is November 30, 2019. Publication is expected to be in the July 2020 issue. Email proposals to guest editors Melody Newcomb, Isabel Centeno, and Ingrid Wissink at [cjpartsresearch@gmail.com](mailto:cjpartsresearch@gmail.com) with "Manuscript Proposal" written in the subject line.

**Call for Narratives in the Reflective Practice section of the journal *Patient Education and Counseling*.** This section is comprised of selected narratives reflecting on healthcare practice. Reflective Practice provides a voice for physicians and other healthcare providers, patients and their family members, trainees and medical educators. The title emphasizes the importance of reflection in our learning and how our patient care and self-care, like other healthcare provider skills, can be improved through reflective practice. We welcome personal narratives on caring, patient-provider relationships, humanism in healthcare, professionalism and its challenges, patients perspectives and collaboration in patient care and counseling. Most narratives will describe personal or professional experiences that provide a lesson applicable to caring, humanism and relationship in health care. Submit manuscripts through the *Patient Education and Counseling* online electronic submission system at [ees.elsevier.com/pec](http://ees.elsevier.com/pec). *Patient Education and Counseling* is an international journal indexed in Medline and thirteen other related indexes. Manuscripts, including narratives, are peer reviewed. We aim to publish one narrative in each monthly issue of the journal. If you would like an electronic copy of the editorial describing the Reflective Practice section, "Sharing Stories: Narrative Medicine in an Evidence-Based World," please e-mail David Hatem, MD, at [HatemD@ummhc.org](mailto:HatemD@ummhc.org) or Elizabeth Rider, MSW, MD, at [elizabeth\\_rider@hms.harvard.edu](mailto:elizabeth_rider@hms.harvard.edu).

**The Canadian Art Therapy Association Journal**, which publishes on a variety of subjects relevant to Art Therapy and Expressive Arts Therapies, is seeking submissions. For more information visit <http://canadianarttherapy.org>.

## RESOURCES

The website of the National Association for Poetry Therapy has resources on events, training, and more, including a new bibliographic resources section. Visit [www.poetrytherapy.org](http://www.poetrytherapy.org).

The Transformative Language Arts concentration at Goddard College has extensive resource pages on poetry therapy, poetics and poetry, expressive and creative writing, drama therapy, education and development, facilitation and leadership, journal writing, literacy and linguistics and language, memoir and life stories, mythology, and more. The resource pages include thousands of weblinks and extensive bibliographies. You can click and visit many sites of people doing all kinds of poetry therapy-related work around the world! Please visit the TLA Resource Page at [www.TLAresources.wordpress.com](http://www.TLAresources.wordpress.com) and if you have any additions, please contact Caryn Mirriam-Goldberg at [mirriamgoldberg@goddard.edu](mailto:mirriamgoldberg@goddard.edu).

## NETWORKING/ GET INVOLVED

*Ed. Note: This section of PoemNation provides a forum for NAPTers to exchange ideas and contact information pertaining to specific work being undertaken outside of the realm of NAPT proper. Please send your text of 150 words maximum to [naptpublications@yahoo.com](mailto:naptpublications@yahoo.com) with the subject line: PoemNation Networking.*

## RESEARCH PROJECTS

*Ed. Note: This section provides students and researchers a forum for obtaining information from and establishing connections with the poetry therapy community. Send information about your research projects, including what information you are seeking, from whom, for what purpose, and by when (maximum of 200 words) to [naptpublications@yahoo.com](mailto:naptpublications@yahoo.com) with the subject line: PoemNation: Research Projects.*

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**Literacy and social justice.** Our research project refers to the outstanding potential of poetry to enhance social spaces where people come to their voice, diligently reveal and conceal, are heard and listen to each other, argue their positions and assumptions—in short: *find themselves in language*. Schools and universities are supposed to provide equal learning opportunities for everyone. Simultaneously they tend to establish legitimate, authorized language, following traditional perceptions of knowledge and modes of decoding spoken/written texts, thus strengthening or weakening the position of particular individuals and groups. The research project reconceptualizes literacy focusing on social justice. It develops a concept where the writing of poetry offers equal learning opportunities for everyone as their experiences and perceptions codetermine what is considered as knowledge. Teaching artists will work with this concept with students in the elementary school affiliated to our University of Education, teaching and encouraging students to write poems. Our questions to the NAPT community are: Would you please share your experiences about the effects of teaching students (age 5 to 9) to write poetry? In which ways did the teaching affect students? Thank you so much for your support. For more information contact Andrea Bramberger, Prof. Dr., University of Education Salzburg, [andrea.bramberger@phsalzburg.at](mailto:andrea.bramberger@phsalzburg.at), or Sabine Seichter, Prof. Dr., University of Salzburg, [sabine.seichter@sbg.ac.at](mailto:sabine.seichter@sbg.ac.at).

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR CREDENTIAL HOLDERS

The International Federation for Biblio/Poetry Therapy (IFBPT, formerly NFBPT) is seeking new members for its Board of Directors. As the Federation continues to expand its outreach global-

ly we are excited to welcome credential holders to support our mission of setting and maintaining standards for practice and training. Board service will enhance your understanding of IFBPT policies and your connection to our professional community. As a board member you will help to strengthen the public perception of Biblio/Poetry Therapy as a credible creative arts therapy. If you would like more information about this opportunity, please contact Elaine Brooks and Nancy Scherlong at [president@ifbpt.org](mailto:president@ifbpt.org). We look forward to talking with you.

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR TRAINEES

*Ed. Note: This section of PoemNation provides a space to spread the word about opportunities for trainees to become directly involved in poetry therapy work and practice. Please send your text of 100 words maximum to [naptpublications@yahoo.com](mailto:naptpublications@yahoo.com) with the subject line: PoemNation: Trainees.*

## PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

Videos of NAPT conference keynote poets, including Rafael Campo (Miami, 2003), Li-Young Lee (Costa Mesa, 2004), Lawson Inada (Portland, OR, 2007) and Patricia Smith (Minneapolis, 2008) as well as Ken Gorelick (Keynote Speaker, 1998) are available on DVD for \$12 each, which includes priority mailing, or receive three for \$25. Also available for \$12 is the 2007 Rattlebox Open Mic session. The three LaperTapes documentary DVDs on poetry as healing are \$20 each, including priority mailing. These are "The Truth About Ourselves: How Poetry Heals," "Tell All the Truth: How Poetry Heals A Multicultural Society" and "Moving Towards Truth: Poetry, Motion and Wholeness." As a package, all three are specially priced at \$40 (one free!). Please email orders or requests for further information to [jennylaper@yahoo.com](mailto:jennylaper@yahoo.com).