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If The Shoe Fits

Bradley Harper

Major Hendricks surrendered his sidearm at the desk before being buzzed onto the ward. Patrolman Wilson was in the last room on the right, and his head slowly swiveled toward the door as Hendricks entered.

“Here to formally discharge me?” Wilson asked.

“Why would I do that?”

“Because I’m broken.”

“It takes a lot of strength to pull a barrel out of your mouth and ask for help. People get hurt in our job. It’s sad, but that’s how it is. But I’d rather have cops who can feel, yeah, even cry sometimes, than a bunch of fucking robots.”

“What do you know about it, Major? You ever have a partner die because of your mistake?”

“It wasn’t your mistake, Wilson. Just bad luck. Not everything happens for a reason. You saw a guy with a gun and a mask. You took him down. You had no way of knowing his partner was coming out behind him. Rather than give up he tried to shoot his way out. It’s just random chance the bad guy didn’t shoot you instead.”

“That’s supposed to help? I’m alive and my partner’s dead because my luck was better than his? We’re supposed to look out for each other. I let him down.”

“Look, I can’t bring your partner back, but I can tell you why I keep going when the worst day of my life happens, like yesterday was for you.”

Wilson laid back; his eyes narrowed. “Okay, Major, let’s hear your pep talk. I hope it’s good.”



“I was a beat patrolman like you but wanted to be a motorcycle cop more than anything. Ride that big-ass Harley. And the boots. Those knee-high black leather boots? Man, I think anyone looks bad ass in a pair of those. I knew if I got into motorcycles, I’d have the shiniest boots in the department. Silly, huh? A grown man daydreaming about a pair of boots.”

Wilson cracked a slight smile. “Well, Major, they are kinda bad ass.”

Hendricks’ shoulders relaxed a tad.

“Glad we agree. Well, I had a buddy, Reynolds. We grew up in the same neighborhood. Went to the same Catholic school, even altar boys together. He wanted motorcycles as much as I did, and sometimes after work we’d have a drink together and brag about how tough we’d be once we got in.”

The Major looked down at his regulation black brogans for a minute. “You have to be a beat cop for five years with a strong record to even apply, and as we’d joined together, we both sent in our applications on the same day, the fifth anniversary of us signing up.”

“Go on,” Wilson said.

“We both got in on our first try, and we tied one on the day the letters came.” He sighed. “One of the best days of my life. The next day we went to the quartermaster to be measured for our boots. They’re special order, you see, made one at a time, and they’re supposed to last you your entire career.”

“How is a story about boots gonna help me?”

“I’m almost there. So, we get measured and then we wait. And we wait. Meanwhile, Reynolds was having problems at home. Gambling. His car got repossessed. His kids couldn’t do after-school stuff because he couldn’t pay the fees. One night he eats his gun, like you almost did, so the insurance would get his family out of debt. Least, that’s what I tell myself.”

“Gee, Major, what a wonderful story. I feel better already.”

“Shut up and listen. What I didn’t tell you, what I haven’t told anyone before now, was I was having the same thoughts. I told myself if I ended it no one would care. The insurance payoff would make it all better. I was assigned to Reynolds’ funeral detail and saw him in his dress uniform in that box. I saw his widow and his kids crying their eyes out, and I knew. By God I knew, that taking my life would be the dumbest, cruelest thing I could ever do, and I swore I’d never think of it again.”

“Yeah, you get a scare like that, and I guess it’d keep you straight for a while. So?”

“So, the next week I finally get my boots, and I’m feeling pretty good until I sit down to try them on.”

“What, they didn’t fit?”

“Oh, they fit all right. They fit perfectly, which was the problem.”

“How was that a problem?”

“Reynolds’ name had been scratched out, and mine was penciled in.”

The Major rose to leave. “Every time I put those boots on, I remembered whose name had been there first. Remember how I said that sometimes things happen for no reason at all? That’s true. But sometimes, some very special times, they do.”

Out of Tune

James Garrett

Public school music:
marching one-by-one
from classroom to music room.
What did he learn, Music Man?
That he couldn't carry a tune
from music room to classroom?

He should have been reading stories,
drawing pictures,
listening to music,
lying on the classroom floor daydreaming.
Instead, he sat in that cold room
trying to stay in tune.
His palms ruler-swatted
because he would think of things
that made him smile.

How could he be serious, Music Man,
when there was so much more?
So much more.

About Words Written in School Yearbooks

James Garrett

I feel the urge at times to look for you
between the covers of my old school book.
But mine was lost and your long missive, too,
and pictures showing how young we did look.

The thought that I still have some feelings now
of sadness, of remorse would just belie
the fact that I still care and must avow
those feelings that I had have long gone dry

like rain-deprived once fertile grazing land.
I have no recollection of your words.
Words on the barren fields of sifting sand
on pages of yearbooks are best interred.

Those thoughts you penned back then, I entertain,
are best forgotten down on mem'ry lane.

Postcard from Cody, Wyoming

James Garrett



The 1888
"Buffalo Bill's Hotel in the Rockies."
F.J. Nislock, Photo, Cody, Wyo., 1908.

I found a postcard from a friend
in W.S. Merwin's Selected Poems.
It had slipped from the pages
as if it wanted to extend
the opening of Buffalo Bill's Irma Hotel,
November 1902; as if to transcend the years.

The Rockies provided a serene backdrop
for the bustling and busy event
on that long ago opening day.
A large round clock had been stopped
at noon in the black and white photograph,
keeping time at bay.

The card was mailed July 2008.
After 106 years, those in the picture –
on foot, in carriages, on horseback –
are still, and still they celebrate.
He wrote he was looking forward
to running again in Florida with the pack.

See you soon, he wrote that day,
but soon doesn't hold time at bay.



Phoebe When the Wind Blows

Margie Gowdy

She looks confused, grey head twisting,
She searches for shelter,
my forsaken yellow chair,
last year's lantern.

When he lived here, she built her nest above his glass door.
In spring, I'd hear him curse her
when he watered
his new begonias.

But he never bothered the nest.
He'd close the door. She'd race back to her young.
A spring two-step
performed by just those two.

He left.
She's here, in autumn.
Alone for now, she seems to settle
in the browning leaves of his begonias.



back to school

Margie Gowdy

is charity a
virtue when the children die
does prayer block bullets

fiend's fire in fury
air disappears, scalded breaths
seared hands lock

The Cafeteria Lady

Margie Gowdy

She came to the funeral
explained she knew him when he was young and smart
that he talked to them like friends
(that he loved to eat, too)
But mostly that he protected the penniless
youth in lunch lines with pocket holes
youngsters bruised at birth
an old bean can, clean, filled with his dollars
promise of a sandwich on a cold coatless day.

APPOINTMENT



D M Frech

It had been too long since Fiona closed a sale. A year ago, her real estate license had been revoked on what should have been a prosperous spring afternoon. Spring, the peak season for buyers, the busiest time of year, and suddenly she was cut off. Still, Fiona couldn't stop thinking of herself as a realtor; professionally trained, licensed by the state; the title embedded like a permanent tattoo in the creases of her day.

Fiona jumped in the shower. Afterward, she put on a neat black pencil skirt with a white long-sleeve blouse, straightened her collar, and snapped on her nametag while words from past clients echoed in her head:

"Fiona, you were extremely thorough and informative."

"Your honesty and integrity put us at ease."

"Friends said their realtors were pushy, tried to make a sale. You never pressured us at all but made the process so easy."

Fiona slid fingers across her head, gently styling her hair with a fragrant gel as she inventoried her wardrobe. It had taken a lifetime to shake the cheap hand-me-downs of her childhood and replace them with designer clothes, outfits that reflected success. Success had abandoned her, like the evening rays of sunlight dropping into the ocean.

After primping, Fiona read the news on her phone, drank two cups of coffee, and proceeded with her unscheduled day. Anything could happen. She anticipated that 'anything' while reading periodicals, dusting shelves, and re-organizing dresser drawers. A routine she kept for twelve months—except on weekends, when she rested with several liters of Cabernet.

One year, one whole damn year of nothing. Not a single client or appointment. As a realtor everything had been an appointment.

"We can meet at twelve, after my morning appointment."

Grocery shopping. Or. *"I can't see you until four. I have an appointment until three-thirty."* Picking up her son from school. When talking to clients, it was always about them, never personal. Somewhere along the line, her personal life got buried; all she had was her business. She wanted that business back. Fiona was tired of sitting on her couch flipping through magazines. The sabbatical was over. She would make an appointment, an actual appointment with a buyer.

At ten o'clock, Fiona got in her Lexus and drove to Pinetree Mall; it had a glowing presence for anyone purchasing designer

clothes. Her planner lay open like a security blanket. The display of dates looked like a potential agenda. Who knows? She could call someone, or someone might call her like they used to.

At the age of fifty, Fiona might have enjoyed the change. She had been in the business twenty years, but after a year she realized she hadn't saved enough to retire properly. She needed a job. Real estate was all she knew, and she was good at it: research, numbers, advertising, computers, contracts, people. She had been like a celebrity coordinating and juggling the concerns of homeowners and buyers. Clients looked to her, and she took care to play the role, including dressing smart. Being well-heeled was part of the job; wearing the right outfit set a tone. Clothes weren't just coverings. Fabric had design, shade, and texture. The right fabric inspired confidence.

Fiona's hands felt clammy. She needed the anchor of being a realtor. Without it, she felt erased, a nobody, a zilch, a wisp of air that had been breathed into existence and then blown out like birthday candles. This was a travesty; an injustice that horrible people had done to her.

The buyers who destroyed her career had been clients for three miserable months. She put her life on hold for these morons who had one complaint after another. With their first offer, they claimed she failed to present it. That simply was not true. They put in a ridiculously low bid, despite her advice against it. She'd tried. She really had, but the condescending hacks didn't listen. They'd insisted they knew better. Why hire her if they didn't need help? They could have just called the listing agent and represented themselves. On the second house, their offer was accepted, but they pulled out before the property inspection contingency was removed. They created havoc, claiming Fiona omitted information about previous flooding. Absurd. Caveat emptor. Virginia is a "buyer beware" state. Buyers take their chances. She told them what she knew; it wasn't her responsibility to baby them and perform their due diligence.

Fiona had treated them like every other client; she even made them sign a Buyer Broker before she took them out, after which they presented a list of fifty homes. She should have walked. That was absurd; no one looks at that many houses. She wasn't a local tour guide. As if the long list wasn't bad enough, they brought their mangy dog and two screaming kids, all crammed into her SUV. They insisted they would be great buyers and decide quickly. They had to be in a house by June and had been pre-approved by a local lender. Fiona put other clients on hold to accommodate their juice cartons and dog hair.

Around the twentieth house, Fiona sensed something was wrong. The wife avoided eye contact and started speaking only to the husband. Being left out of conversations wasn't good. Maybe she considered Fiona a taxi service. It didn't help that Fiona did all the driving. After the thirtieth house and two failed offers, their complaining began to irritate Fiona, and she insisted they travel separately. It was the least she could do to stop herself from taking a knife to their throats.

In the DPOR, Dispute Resolution Court, the buyers accused her of being unethical by getting intimate with the husband and showing them *only* certain houses in certain neighborhoods. The latter, most definitely not true; the former, bad judgment.

Fiona should have known better, but she had grown indifferent to their search. It was a lot of mantels and parquet. With the last house, Fiona was ready for a change. Admittedly, she acted unprofessional; yes, the rendezvous was a mistake. But it wasn't a professional mistake; it was a personal faux pas. Fiona was one of the best who always made the Circle of Excellence; she knew what sold, what didn't, interest rates, market analyses, home conditions, short sales, and building issues like Chinese drywall. Fiona never made a mistake like steering buyers to a particular neighborhood only a newbie might, by accident. There was no reason for her to lose her license, absolutely no flipping reason.

The cowards who lynched her career should have bought the final house and moved on. Fiona overheard them say they loved it. In fact, Fiona loved it, and not because it was the last house on their list. The place was a historic Queen Anne Victorian with twelve-foot ceilings, Tiger Oak wainscoting, and dentil molding; the structure was exquisite, the turret poetic. The kitchen dazzled with granite countertops, ceramic Italian tile, soft Serengeti Beige Porcelain, Rocky Mountain hardware, and a deep farmhouse sink. The space flowed and breathed as though it had absorbed the hearts of its kindest inhabitants. Also, the listing agent mentioned no flood insurance required. Perfect.

Once the wife realized Fiona and the husband had slam-dunked the dwelling, well, case closed. The house was damaged goods. The wife wanted revenge. She should have divorced the player, but she kept the creep and bulldozed Fiona's career instead.

These buyers singlehandedly stripped her of her business.

Fiona wanted payback; lock them in a crawl until their faces ashened and their skin shriveled. They ruined everything.

Fiona lost what had been a good career, a great career. She hated *all* buyers and *all* sellers. No matter how much money a seller got, it was never enough and buyers were crooks that robbed her of hours, days, and valuable moments. Fiona might spend weeks showing houses to a buyer. Then, without warning, the buyer would stop all contact. She fumed about wasted time and resented every minute, every second, every nanosecond lost on curious imbeciles. She despised those selfish people. She wanted her pilfered time back. Time she could have spent with her son; they might have had a rapport if she had given him those stolen hours.

People were two-legged dirtbags clamoring to find shelter or sell their hovels. Spoiled, rotten beings, always wanting something else, something they thought would be better. Fiona wanted to

smash their brains and say, "Guess what? Better is not always better, fool."

The mall parking lot was hectic. Fiona watched people hustle to and fro like worms crawling in and out of an apple. "Maggots! Mangy, rotten piles of dog crap! Scum! You nasty, rotten..." She pounded the dashboard. Rich people, poor people, old, young, doctors, plumbers, all these 'bodies' lived somewhere or they were going to move somewhere or buy somewhere: buyer, seller, seller, renter. Renters were just wannabe owners. Everyone wanted their own place, natty squirrels rushing about, making nests, nuisances getting in the way. Those people ruined lives, good lives, her life.

She took her planner and banged it on the side window.

A suited man looked over. Fiona stared back. He kept looking. She wondered if he noticed her hair, a caramel brown, lowlighted in chocolate, or maybe her nametag: Fiona Fish, Sweet Home Realty. He needed his face punched. She clenched her left hand as she prepared to hit the glass. What was he looking at? She pressed the car horn and he flinched. A young couple looked over. Fiona had drawn attention and not the good type. She quietly moved her hands to her lap and noted a floral sweetness with a balsamic undertone, the car's air freshener. In gentle strokes, she used her fingers to fix her hair. In the rearview mirror, she noted her face had wrinkles and age spots. It surprised her. It didn't look like the face she kept in her memory. Even if her skin had changed, her figure hadn't; still a size four.

Fiona got out and walked into the mall.

Displays of trendy clothing hung artfully over mannequins as she meticulously reviewed the decor, eliminating possible ensembles. Anyhow, she couldn't afford a new outfit. Maybe a scarf. One would be nice for the weekend. Weekends are always busy. Realtors show property on weekends or hold open houses when 'nine-to-fives' hunt for utopia. Fiona wanted to find such a dreamer.

Then she noticed a woman staring at her. The young lady walked over. "Sorry to bother you, but are you a realtor?"

Fiona paused as though calculating a math problem then said, "Yes."

"Do you have a minute?"

Fiona glibly remarked, "I do, but just a minute."

"Thank you. I recently moved into the area, and I have some questions."

"Of course. What's your name?"

"Marley, Marley Daw."

"I'm Fiona Fish. Nice meeting you."

The young woman nodded her head as they shook hands.

"I'm in a rental right now, and I've been looking at websites. There's so much out there. It's overwhelming."

"It is." Fiona said trying to sound caring, "It's quite a task finding the right house. Are you working with an agent?" She pushed her words out as though syllables were made of gold.

"No, just looking at websites and wondering about the area. I've seen cute houses online, but I'm unsure if I should be thinking about schools. I don't have children, but if I have to sell, should I think about schools? You know, just wondering about stuff like that."

As Fiona listened she felt pleased she wore her Christian Dior dungeon black silk-cotton suit, edged with delicate ticking, complimented by a crisp blouse with tiny chiffon cuffs. It was stunning. Fiona looked like she had stepped out of a couture catalog. Though a bit wasted on this particular woman with canvas shoes that looked like favorites, the big toe ready to appear, and a shirt in swirls of primary color. Fiona guessed Marley didn't shop at Pinetree but worked there.

"I hope you don't mind me stopping you like this."

"No, not at all."

"I saw your nametag and it was like, a realtor, just the person I need. I mean, I don't know who to call and you look professional."

"Thank you. Here's my card." Fiona lifted her head slightly and noted Marley's loose strands of dirty-blond hair falling around her pointy chin. Fiona tried not to judge; earlier she'd felt unsettled about her own looks.

"Sorry, I don't have one, but here's my name and number." The woman scribbled on a napkin as Fiona kept herself interested. Then Marley smiled, revealing her teeth a shade of smoky grey.

"Thank you," Fiona said and nearly frowned from seeing discolored teeth.

"I'm not married, so it's just me. I don't care about the style of the house. Mostly I'm interested in..."

"Marley. Sorry to stop you, but I'm running to an appointment. Do you mind if I call you in the morning? We can schedule a time to go over what you're looking for, like how many bedrooms, baths, and so on. Information I'll need to know before we look at anything. Are you working with a lender?"

"No. Not yet. I was going to call my bank unless you recommend someone."

"I do. We'll talk about that as well. So, I'll call you tomorrow at nine. Will that work?"

"That'll be great, thank you," Marley said.

"You're welcome. Nice meeting you. I'll speak to you later." Fiona smiled sweetly. She was pleased she kept her old cards; it made her appear like she was still in the business. As she turned away, she tried not to look excited.

It took some research, but after a week Fiona found the perfect house. The morning of the appointment she kept smiling as she put on her Armani outfit. She looked at her exquisitely organized home, then laughed as though she had heard a joke.

She called Marley and gave her directions to a farmhouse. Upon arrival, Marley made the usual objections, nothing Fiona hadn't heard before; typical buyer; wanted something for nothing.

"The house looks small, and I don't see a garage. I did mention I wanted a garage. I see a barn, but not a garage. I think it's overpriced. What do you think?" Marley said.

"Let's just take a look. You might be surprised. We can discuss possibilities, as well. For example, a barn can be made into a garage."

"Oh." Marley's voice was unenthused.

"If you don't mind, we'll have to enter through the back," Fiona said and opened her hand to show Marley the way.

"Sure." Marley's attention was all over the place. Looking at bushes, trees, dirt, everything except the house, paying too much attention to unimportant details. This woman was a typical buyer. Worse, she hadn't been pre-qualified, probably had a low credit score, and no money. No doubt the woman was a thief, out to steal precious hours.

Fiona scooted past Marley, and they proceeded down a crude path with a stretch of thriving wisteria a few yards from a split rail fence.

"I like the older style, but I don't know about the tin roof. How old is it?"

"Good question. I can find out for you, but it could be fifty years old. They last much longer than shingles. Did you notice the rafter tails and brackets?"

"Oh yeah." Marley's voice was a drink of tepid water.

"It's charming," Fiona said as Marley sidestepped plants and swatted bugs.

"Marley, the path is to your right. Watch out for poison ivy and move to your right." Marley's mouth stayed open, and her head swung like the screws had fallen out.

"Marley, your right." Fiona wondered if this

buyer was too much trouble.

Then Marley sidestepped a vine and unwittingly plummeted into an old well. Fiona took a sudden inhale and her chest tightened.

Chirping birds harbored in overhanging trees while branches rustled from a gust of wind. Fiona looked over the countryside. A single house sat in the distance; the occupants hardly close enough to see what had happened. The only witness was barnyard hay scattered around the opening. Fiona cautiously leaned over and looked down. It looked like the earth had taken a swallow. The hole was black; only darkness could be seen. It appeared so deep Fiona wasn't sure anyone had fallen in. You couldn't see the bottom and there was no sound, not even a whisper.

"Hello?" Fiona said.

She kicked hay into the well, and a honeyed aroma reached up. Fiona stepped back, stretched her arms into the air, and arched her back ever so slightly. She took a deep breath and exhaled through her mouth. It didn't feel as good as she thought it might.

Maybe the next time it would.

An illustration of a person with a serene expression, eyes closed, holding a stylized Earth. The person has a light skin tone and is wearing a green long-sleeved shirt. The Earth is depicted with blue oceans and white landmasses. The background is a dark green gradient with a light green circular shape behind the person's head. The overall style is minimalist and modern.

Save Mother Earth Trilogy

Sharon Canfield Dorsey

WINTER IS FOR STORYTELLING...

...and remembering.

Nomadic Native American hunter/gatherers followed the game in spring and summer, setting up temporary camps where food and water were plentiful, moving on when necessary.

In fall, they would head for more permanent villages to hunker down with the elders by their fires and listen to stories – of creation, valor, great hunts, and always, tales of the land, of Mother Earth.

It was said that storytelling was for winter because the quiet time strengthened memories, created vivid reminders of connections to where they came from, who they were, and where they belonged.

The land was prominent in their tales—a stand of willows, stretches of purple needle grass, outcroppings of rocks on a hillside—were familiar pegs on which they hung their stories. The landscape was a sacred text.

As I memorialize my own culture bearer stories, I am reminded that the land also provided sustenance for *my* family, as long as we were willing to dig, plant, harvest. Respect, care for the land was essential to our survival.

Like my ancestors, I continue the storytelling tradition with my children and grandchildren—gathered in front of a winter fireplace—sharing stories of where they came from, where they belong, and why we need to save the earth.

WE, THE PEOPLE

Webster's Dictionary defines the word, *people* as...
"Any group, community, tribe, to which one belongs."
By that definition, there are human people, tree people,
animal people, and numerous varieties of plant people.

Scientists now tell us that plants talk to each other,
reacting in tandem to weather warnings, dangers.
Trees communicate through their roots, strengthening
baby trees and weaker members of their community.

Dogs protect their owners, but also, other animals.
My friend has two dogs. One is blind. The seeing dog
escorts his friend about the yard, protecting him
from coyote predators who search out the weak.

Websites are full of adorable pictures of a mother duck
escorting her line of babies across a busy city street;
of kittens curled up with horses many times their size;
massive elephants mourning for days beside their dead.

If nature's people instinctively know the importance of
unity for survival, where, in the evolutionary chain did
humans lose or choose to ignore that essential truth?

More importantly, what can we do to restore it?

It seems too late to stop humans from killing humans.
Is it also too late to keep humans from destroying the
tree people, the animal people, and the plant people?
Are there enough moments left to save Mother Earth?

LET'S BRING BACK REPAIRMEN

It all started the day my three-year-old printer went down.
When I called Staples to complain, their response was,
“They’re only built to last two years. You got three.”

Next, the DVR box died, necessitating a visit to Cox, a
new machine to install and master, amid some bad words.
My reward? A binge day of Hallmark Movies & Mysteries.

A few days later, strike three – cable and internet down,
on the night my favorite awards show, the Tony’s, was
to air. It took a whole cheesecake to drown my frustrations.

On Sunday, my plans were to spend the day venting in
meter and rhyme at my computer. Fickle Father Fate
decreed, “Not on my watch!” and murdered said computer.

All the king’s horses and my best *Obi Wan* repair genius
couldn’t put Humpty Computer back together again.
He’s now draped in black as I wait for his replacement.

All of this makes me long for childhood days, when the
TV repairman came with his suitcase of glass tubes and
patiently tried tube after tube till he finally found the *one*.

He was cheerful and bribed us with gum to sit quietly
while he sweated in his dark suit and worked diligently
to bring that black and white magic back into our lives.

In these days of environmental awareness, I appreciate
the fact that I didn’t grow up in a *throw-away* household.
We fixed and re-purposed and made things last.

Maybe it’s time to bring back those sweaty repairmen.
I think Mother Nature would approve and applaud.
I can hear her now – fix, repair, conserve, *save me!*



Imagine walking down the street and seeing a telephone booth repurposed to give messages of hope. This is what Hope Booth has been doing for the last year-and-a-half. Hope Booth is a three-minute immersive experience that combines art and technology to produce a message of hope in a poetic format.

This truly revolutionary project that began in 2021, was created by Gloria Umanah. Umanah states, “I started the Hope Booth because in 2020, I saw a problem. The average person living on the street goes three to six months without being looked in the eye.” This statistic led the Hope booth team to take on the tagline “where no one goes unseen” because even people who are not homeless still may be struggling with emotional issues.

Hope Booth

Lacroy “Atlas” Nixon



Hope Booth first debuted in London, UK in October 2021 at the Parallax art fair (The world’s biggest art fair). In winter 2021, Transformation Church pastored by Mike Todd heard about the project and donated \$50,000 to the cause. In March 2022, Hope Booth went on a 30-day, 19-city tour across the United States where more than 700 people experienced the booth. Since then, Hope Booth has traveled to many live events, and was featured on NBC News Now.

A Writers Guild Board member, Lacroy “Atlas” Nixon, has not only been a writer for Hope Booth the last two years, but was one of the pioneering members for the project.

Currently, Hope Booth is trying to raise funds for the final concept of permanent installations in Last year the team raised over \$150,000 toward the goal of \$865,000. The team is currently looking for donations to continue this important endeavor so “no one goes unseen.”

If you are interested in giving, please visit www.hopebooth.com/partner

We have links to the Hope Booth documentary on the following page.

Watch the Hope Booth documentary here!



Watch the NBC News Now feature here!







Bradley Harper

My life before becoming an author was as a board-certified Army Pathologist. I have performed over 200 autopsies during my 37 years of active duty as a pathologist, and my clinical years are interwoven with four stints as the commanding officer of various medical units. I was an Infantry officer before medical school, worked in the Pentagon, and learned to speak five languages. Yet, I also happily play Santa each Christmas (with my loving wife as Mrs. Claus). It is this juxtaposition of exploring the body, mind, and humanity that allows me share universal truths with my readers.

<https://bharperauthor.com>



James Garrett

Jim Garrett is a retired high school English teacher from Florida. He is a member of the Poetry Society of Virginia, the Writers Guild of Virginia, and the James City Poets. Jim is a former U.S. Marine and a retired marathoner. In his spare time, he enjoys reading, writing, and walking with his wife Suzanne.

Jim can be reached at jsgarrett70@gmail.com.



Marjie Gowdy

Marjorie Gowdy writes at home in the Blue Ridge mountains. Gowdy was Founding Executive Director of the Ohr-O'Keefe Museum of Art in Biloxi, MS, which she led for eighteen years. Now retired, she has worked in other fields that fed her love of writing, including as a grants writer. Gowdy is a summa cum laude graduate of Virginia Tech and has a master's degree in liberal studies from University of North Carolina-Greensboro. She is currently newsletter editor for the Poetry Society of Virginia. Gowdy lives in Callaway, VA, USA.

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DM Frech

DM Frech lived in New York City's East Village as a modern dancer for sixteen years, attended New York University, Tisch School of the Arts, and completed bachelors and masters degrees in dance. Later she moved to Virginia, worked at the Governor's School of the Arts, got married, had two sons, worked as a realtor, and embraced fiction at The Muse Writer's Center.

Finishing Line Press published her poetry chapbook, *Words From Walls*, June 2022 and will publish her chapbook, *Quiet Tree*, in September 2023. She writes poetry, children's stories, fiction, non-fiction, and screenwriting. Her photography is on *Streetlight Magazine's* website.



Sharon Canfield Dorsey

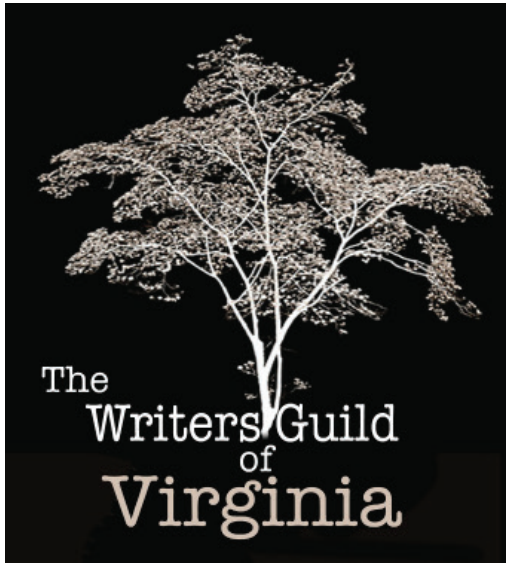
Sharon Canfield Dorsey is an award-winning poet and author. She has written four children's books, a memoir, two books of poetry, an anthology, and a travel memoir. Writing is like breathing for me – necessary for survival. It's the first thing I want to do in the morning and the last thing I want to do at night. I have been honored to have my work published in many anthologies and prestigious magazines like *The Pen Woman*, the publication of the National League of American Pen Women, alongside the work of such icons as Maya Angelou.

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Lacroy "Atlas" Nixon

Lacroy "Atlas" Nixon was born in Charlotte, NC and raised in Williamsburg, VA. He earned his bachelor's degree in graphic design from Liberty University and has been writing and performing spoken word poetry for seven years. He has a book available entitled *God and His Humor*, and is an artist with the Hope Booth Project. Lacroy recently founded Slam Connection, a slam poetry-based organization in Williamsburg created to help people of all ages express themselves through slam poetry while also connecting them to the community. He was an educator through the Child Defense Fund Freedom School program for two years as a servant leader intern and site coordinator.



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