

# The Journal

## Summer 2023

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Rebecca Day  
Marjory Gowdy  
Sharon Canfield Dorsey  
Cindy L. Freeman  
Peggy Newcomb



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# REYN KINZEY

## ANTIGUA

Columbus named the island:  
Antigua,  
for Santa Maria Antigua,  
a church in Seville,  
popular with sailors,  
a superstitious lot.  
The Spanish never colonized it.  
It became an English sugar plantation,  
money-maker powered by slavery.

All that history  
means nothing to me now.  
I watch, I hear the pound of sea on rock.  
We hear it as we sleep,  
an ancient sound,  
an ancient mystery:  
Antigua.

## ANTIGUA 2: BETTY'S HOPE

Not much left now:  
a restored windmill;  
a museum recording  
the horrors of slavery.

A prosperous sugar plantation  
for over 250 years.

Who was Betty?  
A prosperous English wife?  
What did she hope for?  
The wealth of the Caribbean?

I don't know.  
She could probably be recovered  
in histories of the island.

But she's as lost to me  
as are the nameless Africans  
forced to give their lives  
for nameless English masters.

### ANTIGUA 3: DEVIL'S BRIDGE

A wind-swept, forlorn place,  
but not without its own beauty  
and sad history.  
Escaped slaves came here  
to end their imprisonment  
by leaping to their deaths.

What did they think  
in those last moments?  
Could they rid their minds  
of Betty's Hope?

Did they remember Africa?  
Did they appreciate the beauty  
of an island never their home?

We'll never know  
or appreciate  
the limits of man's cruelty.

The feast of Saint Gabriel, 2023



Antigua: The view from our room Photo Credit: Rebecca Day



Antigua: English Harbor Photo Credit: Rebecca Day



Antigua: Antigua, floral life Photo Credit: Rebecca Day

## VISTA DOME

Boarding.

Porter, cufflinks golden, waves us inside,  
directs us to the sleeper car.

We leave behind a railroad town  
with cleft bathrooms for  
skins of many shades.

Not new to trains, I skip between cars.  
Balance easily as engines start.  
Suck in my tummy to let folks by.  
Rub the red leather of tall seatbacks,  
see trees trot by slowly then swiftly  
then fast into a wire brush of blurred green.

In the sleeper, Granny runs a pink nail along  
her felt cap. She changes out of  
heels. Admires crop-haired  
granddaughter in Villager blouse  
buttoned to the top.  
New sterling necklace neatly arranged.

Off to Union Station in Chicago-land,  
where the dome of glass called Zephyr awaits.  
In loo nearing Louisville, I place my necklace on the sink.  
Scrub my face. And, following the sign's instructions,  
pull the sink up and into the wall.  
The necklace rides a wash down to waiting tracks.

MARJORY  
GOWDY

## FIRST SONGS

Mom dances in the linoleum-brick kitchen  
to Patsy Cline.

Dad, a glorious bass, sings  
gospel in the high school gym.

Billy, younger, loves cowboy laments  
and *South Pacific*.

I sit by the James and hear Dusty Springfield  
coo before she cries.

## QUAKE

Blood splatters pink pillbox  
Motionless November

Rumors in late December  
Rumbles across the sea

January. Not the Viscose plant  
Nor the bitter wind

Instead, air undefined, lifted  
A tempest a magic whirlpool shot to the sun

Four lads  
45s play in every girl's room

## TINY OYSTERS

Monday morn before sun piques  
ripe buds, we leave. Ruth drives her Skylark,  
bordering on fushia,  
north.

The time was, in Tidewater,  
you could walk through the marsh  
and eat fat oysters  
fresh from the shell.

Evening with Ruth, Granny trip-weary,  
we crest a hill straight up then down,  
the bay peppered with restaurants built  
in low-slung style.

I cradle the doe-eyed doll of silk  
from Grant Avenue. Trolley, magic lanterns.  
Fabled Ferlinghetti read in a shop nearby.  
Fried oysters, Miss. Why are they so small?

## WHITE CADILLAC

She met Svend in '70.  
Rode to her mother's in a white Cadillac.  
Granny died the autumn before.  
Svend took Ruth to Denmark every summer,  
to Virginia in the spring.  
He fed her smoked salmon and caviar.  
They ran his business down Anaheim road  
and built a ranch house.

They're here!  
He pulls up in pearl-rimmed glory,  
Champagne  
and bubbles spill from the trunk.  
Ruth's smile shines like lemons,  
reflects from chrome.  
She smooths her smart dress.  
Svend takes Ruth for hot dogs.

I AM WOMAN  
(A Tanka)

A puzzle to solve.  
Angelic and devilish.  
Charming and cunning.  
A smile to warm coldest hearts.  
I make the wild ride worthwhile.

SHARON  
CANFIELD  
DORSEY

A MAGNIFICENT RUIN

In her later years, Academy Award-winning actress, Katherine Hepburn, was once described by a now nameless journalist, as a *magnificent ruin*.

She wore her wrinkles proudly, scoffing publicly at Botox or cosmetic surgery, allowing those sexy cheekbones and blazing eyes to speak for themselves.

Clad in a man's collared shirt and wide-legged pants, long before pants on women were chic, her long, lanky body draped itself over a loveseat like no other.

Now, when I see white hair and my mother's face staring back at me from a betraying mirror, I will no longer lament, "Who is that aging woman?"

I'll congratulate myself on being a magnificent ruin!

## THE SOUNDTRACK OF MY LIFE

Days dissolve into months, months into years,  
years march down the rabbit hole into oblivion.  
Memories keep lost loved ones alive, remind us of  
adventures that brought us joy or sometimes, pain.

But nothing stirs our emotions and carries us back  
in time like music—the soundtrack of our lives. I love  
'40s music because it brings back images of scratchy  
78s spinning on my dad's old console record player.

I recall my grandma tapping her feet and clapping her  
hands to a rousing chorus of "That Old Time Religion."  
Chords from those songs bring faces and voices to  
life again better than any photograph album could.

My forty- and fifty-something children appreciate  
'50s and '60s music because I played it constantly when  
they were little. Their dad and I jitterbugged to "Blue  
Suede Shoes," and the Beatles sang them to sleep.

I have been stitched together by the drums and flutes of  
powwows; the commanding tones of church choirs; the  
a cappella of barbershop choruses; mellow jazz saxophones;  
and the haunting harmonies of the Moody Blues.

Music therapy is being used more and more to pull  
Alzheimer's patients back from the shadows into the  
light for brief moments. If I ever slip into that sad place,  
just play some Elvis, any Elvis, and I'll back!

# CHARLIE



I was drawn to Charlie because of his humility and gentle manner. He would stop by my office after finishing his volunteer shift at the Respite Care Center housed in the same church building where I worked. He often mentioned his wife, whose unrelenting back pain etched worry lines on Charlie's face. She had seen doctor after doctor and undergone myriad treatments with no relief. One day, Charlie told me she could no longer sit in a pew at church and had to stay home on Sundays. He said she had given up hope of ever experiencing relief and prayed daily for the Lord to take her home. I promised to continue praying for her healing, but mainly that she would find strength and peace. We both assumed she would go first—that Charlie would be able to care for

her lovingly until the end. His voice never hinted of resentment, only frustration that he couldn't relieve her pain. Our brief encounters always ended with a warm hug.

# CINDY L. FREEMAN

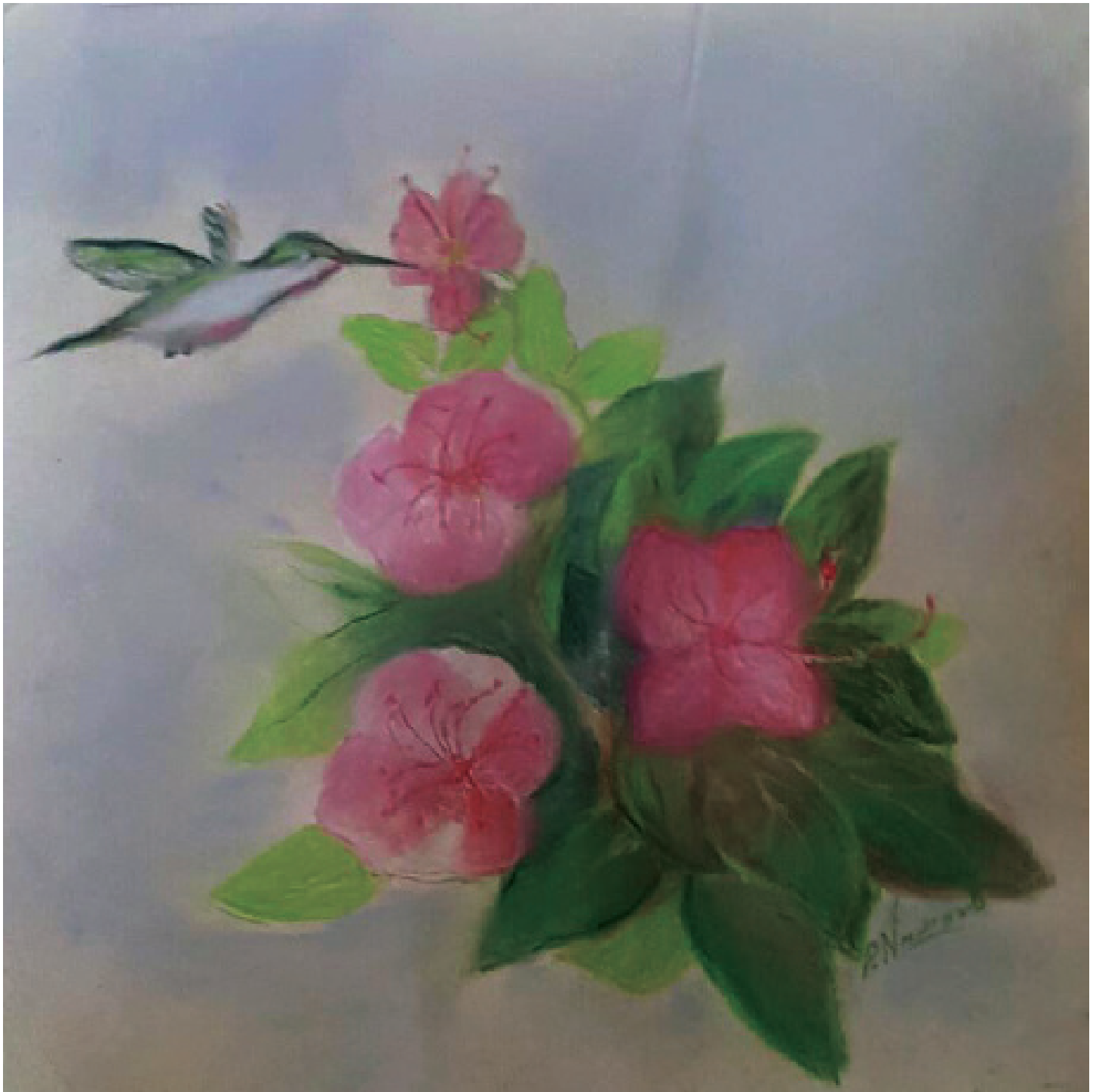
That was the extent of my relationship with Charlie. After a few years of his "stop-bys" I noticed he was slowing down. He developed a shuffle and began walking with a cane; but he never considered discontinuing his volunteer job. I learned from the Respite Care manager that Charlie loved his work there, and the clients adored this man of few words, who had more than enough compassion to go around. But the day came when he could no longer drive.

Charlie ended up in hospice care and eventually passed away at the age of eighty-three. His obituary comprised only two paragraphs, referring to his sixty-three-year marriage, two daughters, one grandson, and some nieces and nephews. That was it.

At his memorial service, I learned that Charlie's life's work was one of quiet service. The pastor mentioned that a mission trip to Latvia had greatly influenced Charlie, shaping the remainder of his days. After that trip, Charlie continued to support the home for unwed mothers and their children in Latvia that our church had helped to establish. As a member of the church's "Tool Guys" team he accomplished odd jobs around the building and helped people in our community and beyond who couldn't afford to pay for home repairs. His service to Respite Care was never mentioned. While the omission surprised me, I knew that's how Charlie would have wanted it.

On the surface, Charlie's life seemed to have little significance. He lived an existence devoid of fanfare. According to his obituary, his accomplishments were few...or were they?

Rest in peace, Charlie. You've earned it.



*Spring Arrives on Hummingbird Wings*  
painted by Peggy Newcomb

# PEGGY NEWCOMB

## CONFLICT

Conflict, aggression...  
take more land, annex your neighbor.  
Why? Greed? To prove what?  
Is it needed? Is it worth the waste  
of lives of the country's young men,  
of the women, the babies, the little children,  
the elderly...all shot down or blown up?  
Why?

Can this be judged as a good thing?  
Mass graves of people tortured...  
before they were murdered.  
This is my question...Why? Why? Why?  
So, some deranged man can say proudly:  
"Look what I did!"  
Was this to feed his ego?  
To make him feel all-powerful?

What about the average citizen?  
What happened to "live and let live?"

That brings me to another question:  
How long has humankind been on Earth?  
Google says 300,000 years...and in  
all that time we have not learned to get along.

A sad commentary for humankind!

# MY SIXTY-THIRD REUNION

Holy cow! An hour's drive to Richmond...  
to go or not to go? I debated.  
A friend from Oregon, one from Richmond.  
I shouldn't let them down. I had committed  
days before. Okay, okay...I'll go!

As I hobbled into the restaurant,  
I said, "I'm with the reunion group."  
"They're over there." The hostess pointed.  
"I recognize no one" was my response.  
"They're passing out name tags."  
(She must have hosted reunions before)

How can I chat with people I no  
longer know or recognize?  
Oh, John, I need you  
(my social butterfly).

"Hello, my name is Peggy."  
"Oh! I have your book!"  
I smile and feel good inside.  
"I forgot to bring it so you  
could sign it, but am I the  
Bonnie in your book?"  
"Yes, you are!"  
I recognize her voice.

Slowly the girls I played basketball  
with...their voices, their mannerisms,  
cut through the fog of years gone by,  
of heads now gray or white. I never  
did recognize the bald-headed men.

I wondered about the ones not present.  
I learned of the ones who had passed.  
I began to appreciate the classmates,  
now grown mature and wise, and  
forget the awkward memories of our youth.

Today was a blessing in disguise.  
I felt acceptance, love, and a kinship  
formed over sixty years ago...  
despite my apprehension, my creaks,  
and my groans.



**Marjorie Gowdy** writes at home in the Blue Ridge mountains of Callaway, VA. Her poetry has been published in several journals, including the international *Friends Journal*, *Artemis*, *Streetlight*, *Dead Mule School of Southern Literature*, *Roanoke Review*, *Clinch River Review*, Moonstone Arts Center anthologies, and *2023 Centennial Anthology of the Poetry Society of Virginia*. She has three chapbooks: *Inflorescence: The Pasture at Rest*, from Finishing Line Press; *Cowgirl by Choice*, an online microchap at origamipoetry.com, and coming soon, *Horse Latitudes*, from Moonstone Arts Press. Her essays are included in *Katrina: Mississippi Remember* (2007).



**Cindy L. Freeman** - *Writing is one of my passions, along with singing, teaching, playing the piano, and choral conducting. My publisher calls me a “literary late bloomer” because I didn’t get around to writing my first novel until after retiring from a long career in music education and music ministry. But I’ve been writing poems, stories, and journal entries since I was knee-high to my elementary school librarian. I also edit for High Tide Publications and The Writers Guild of Virginia. So, I’ve worn many hats in my career, but “Author” is one of my favorites.*

*I write about women who find the strength to overcome adversity. My novels tackle challenging social issues like child abuse, domestic abuse, substance abuse, and homelessness. But ultimately my novels are about hope, help and healing. In addition to blogs and award-winning essays, I have written two non-fiction books.*

*I live in James City County, Virginia with my husband, Carl, who spoils me. We have two amazing children and five favorite grandchildren.*

<https://www.cindylfreeman.com>



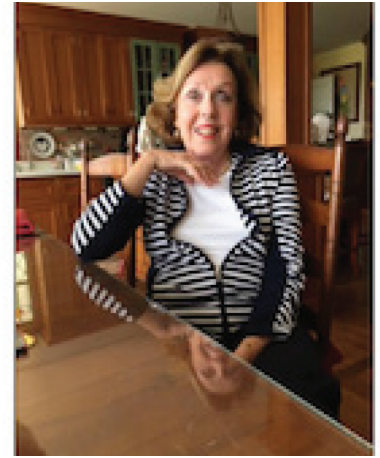
**Sharon Canfield Dorsey** is an award-winning poet and author. She has written four children’s books, a memoir, two books of poetry, an anthology, and a travel memoir. *Writing is like breathing for me – necessary for survival. It’s the first thing I want to do in the morning and the last thing I want 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.*

<https://www.sharoncanfielddorsey.com>

**Peggy Newcomb** was born and raised in Chester, Virginia. She graduated from Mary Washington College of the University of Virginia (UVA) with a BS degree in Chemistry. At the time of her graduation, women were not allowed to attend UVA unless you were in the nursing program. She taught Chemistry and Science at York High School, Yorktown, Virginia.

She wrote for several newspapers and has been published in numerous venues including *The Poet's Domain*. She was awarded first place in non-fiction by the Chesapeake Bay Writers. She is a member of the National League of American Pen Women and the James City Poets.

A portrait artist, her art has been displayed in several local galleries including Arts on Main in Gloucester, Virginia and The Bay School in Mathews, Virginia. She has published two books - *I Used to Wear Shoes Like That* and *The Curtis Letters - A Cat's Eye View of Life*.



**Rebecca Day** - *I was born and raised by wonderful parents in Richmond, Virginia. They enrolled me in ballet lessons when I was very young. By the time I turned 16, they enrolled me in a professional children's school in New York City. I stayed in the National Academy of Ballet through high school and then entered American Ballet Theater. A severe back injury ended my dance career, so I had to find something else to do. I moved back to Richmond and went to Virginia Commonwealth University. I got a B.S. in Business with a concentration in marketing and an M.S. in Marketing with a concentration in marketing research and group dynamics.*

*I drifted into a career of marketing research, which led to owning Kinzey & Day Qualitative Research with Reyn Kinzey for 25 years. It was a good leap from ballet since focus groups and in-depth interviews are choreographed, conducted in front of a mirror, and attended by an audience of clients. I am a self-taught amateur photographer. I love photographing nature, our travels, and underwater coral reefs. I am an avid kayaker and quilter. I believe naps are an art form.*



**Reyn Kinzey** - *I was born and raised in Richmond, Virginia. I went to UVA, and having no idea what I was going to do with my life, I hung around and got an MA, an M. Ed., and even finished the course work for a PhD. But I never finished my dissertation (actually, I never started one: my attention span isn't that long).*

*Still not knowing what I wanted to do with my life, I took a job at Virginia Commonwealth University, where I taught for twenty years, both full time and in the night school.*

*I also started a rugby career of playing and coaching for over twenty-five years. I wasn't much good, but I loved the game.*

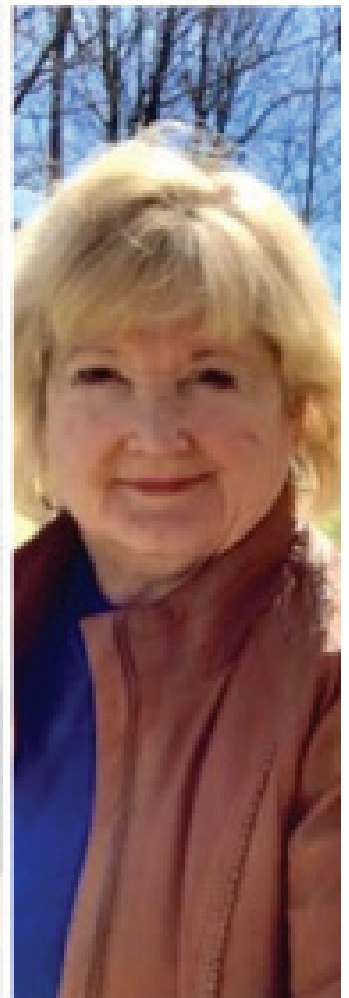
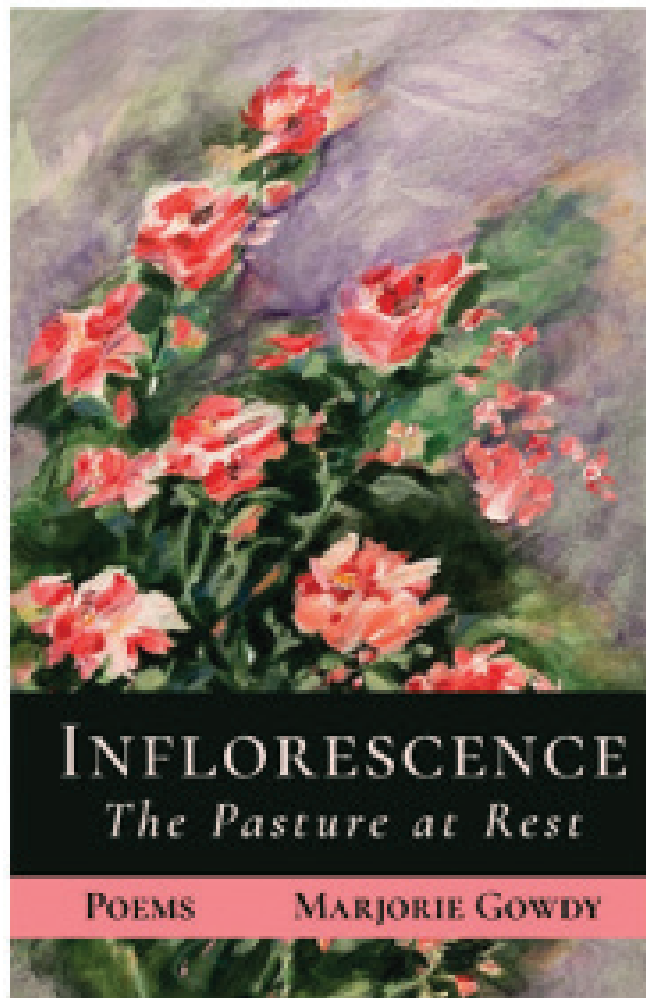
*From academia, I drifted into market research, which proved a good fit. For twenty-five years, Rebecca Day and I ran Kinzey & Day Qualitative Research. We had a good run, working for clients such as Hilton, McDonalds, Anthem, and various hospitals and universities.*

*The poems in this book were written during the 70th year of my pilgrimage on Earth. I hope I have a few more years left. I know I have to go home at some point, but for now, I'm still enjoying the traveling.*



NEW RELEASES  
BY OUR  
MEMBERS  
FEATURED  
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EDITION  
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THE JOURNAL

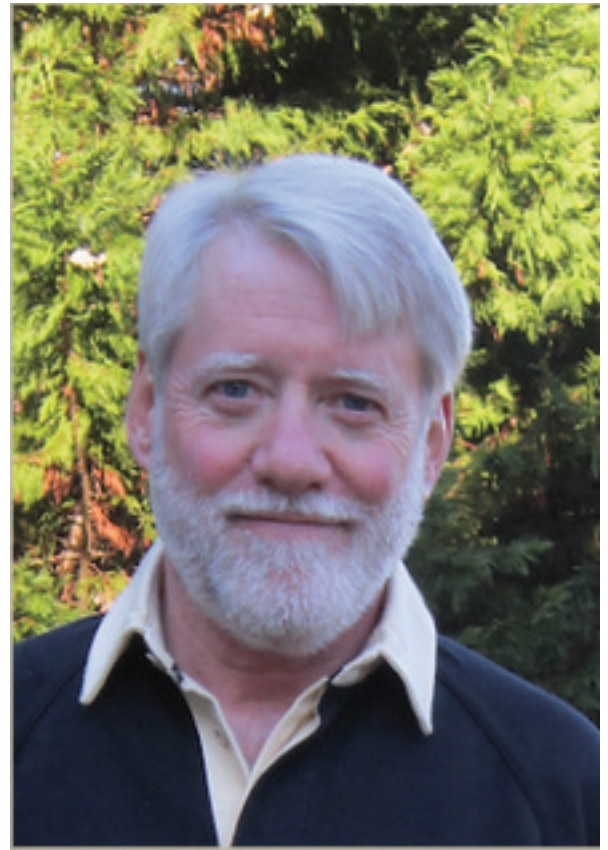
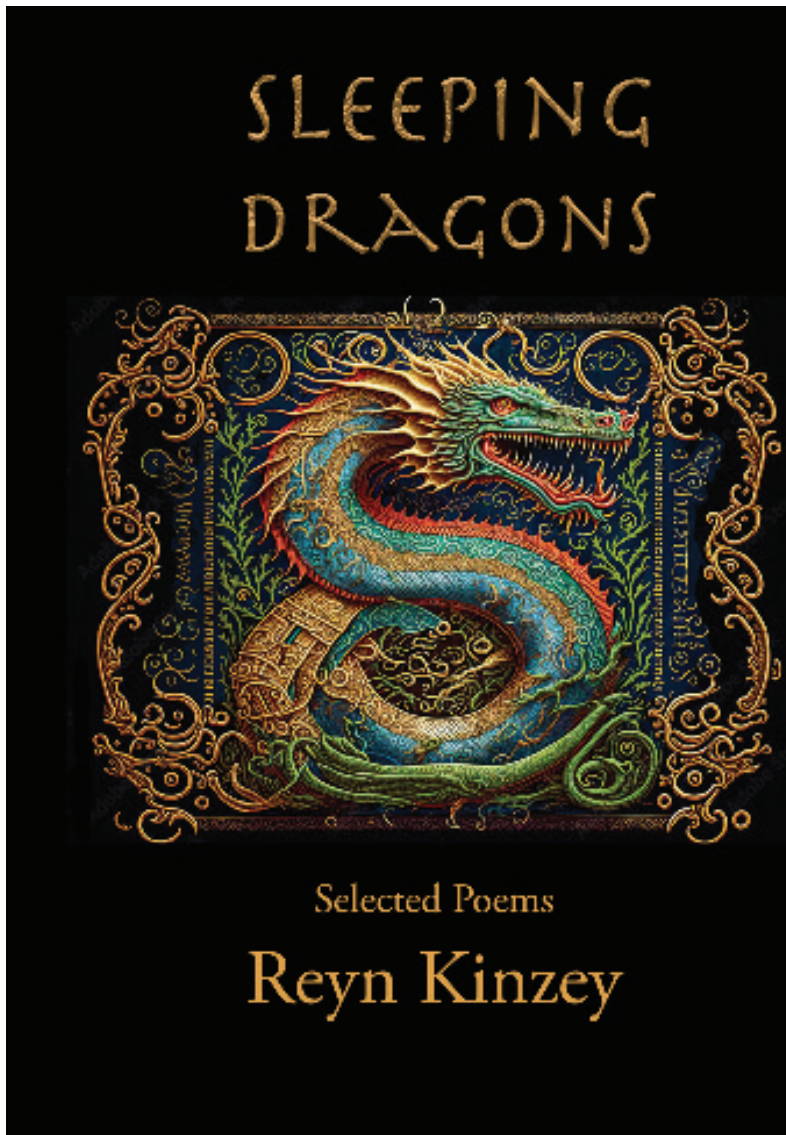




In *Inflorescence: The Pasture at Rest* Marjorie Gowdy immerses us in farmland and mountainside, with images and patterns timeless as the land itself. As she ambles “among the chest-high Susans,” or smells the “flattened streams of smoked ham reach toward the vale,” she pulls us along with her. Marjorie writes the tender side of life, from bees and barn swallows to hands touching “beneath the ivy tree, years wrapped around a patient poplar.” Listen, too, for her condemnation of “Man’s callow disregard,” both for the Earth and for each other. In “A Murmuration” Marjorie writes “’Tis not wit nor skill that keeps me alive,” but wit and skill are certainly alive in her writing. I for one, dear reader, am grateful Marjorie Gowdy is sharing her wit and wisdom in these poems.-**Pamela Brothers Denyes, Author, *The Right Mistakes* and *The Widow’s Lovers***

What a marvelous poet. Marjie Gowdy reminds me of the great Romantic poets, especially John Clare, for she can name every flower and tree around her. She paints an indelible stamp. Only a seasoned florist and botanist could write powerful nature poems like these. She can be succinct and terse as Emily Dickinson. In thinking about her father in “Inflorescent,” she laments “Flowers return. He does not.” It reminds me of Emily who said “I heard a fly buzz before I died.” Buy this chapbook. It is worth far more than its listed price.-**Maurice Ferguson, Poetry Editor, Artemis**

This book reflects the beauty of the natural world based on the knowledge and experiences of a seasoned gardener. The author treats every element of nature as though they are old family friends. There is a kindness and appreciation of both the flora and fauna in the author’s world that is captivating and inspiring. The writing is beautiful and takes the reader into a world rich in complexity and subtlety that makes this poetry compelling.-**Peter Haslett Kelly, Poet and Composer**

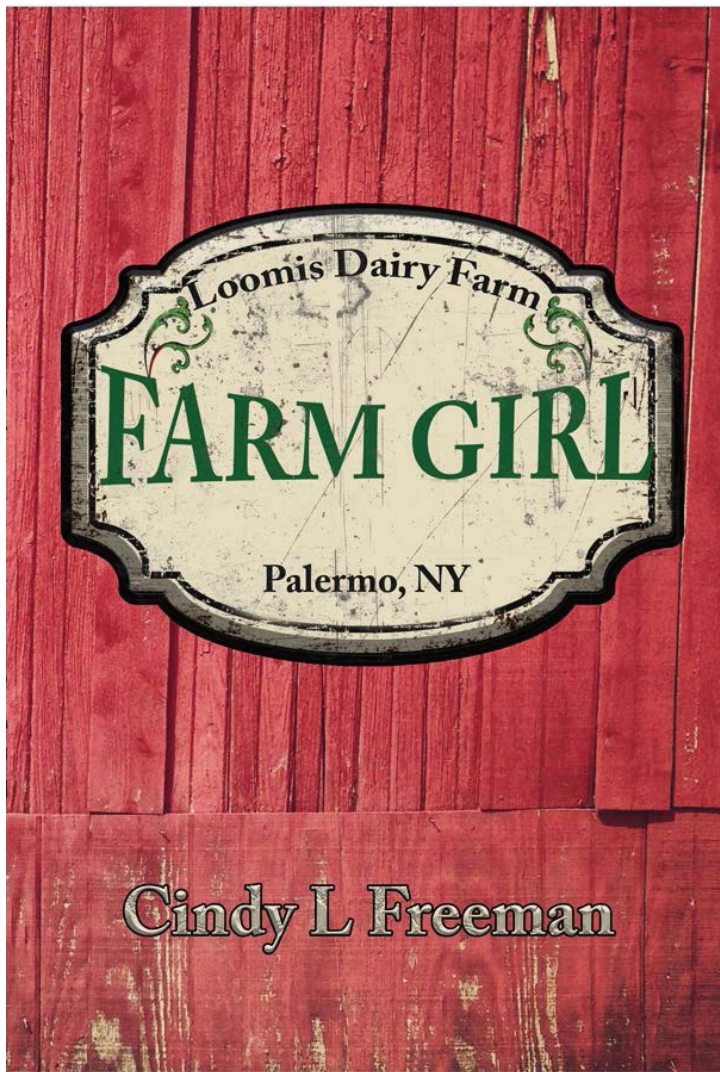


*Sleeping Dragons* is Reyn Kinzey's second book. Like the first one, it holds you enthralled from start to finish. As a matter of fact, I immediately went back and read it all the way through again.

Reyn has a unique style, chooses interesting subjects, and interprets life with a poet's voice all his own. The poems beautifully share his love of kayaking and his respect for the natural world; his search for ancestry and self in his travels to Ireland; touching family stories of life and death intermingled with spiritual tales of the saints – each poem a commentary, some moving, some biting, of life, today and yesterday.

The stories reflect his wry humor and empathy as well as sharp observances of a man who seems to believe in wringing every ounce of life from each day and isn't afraid to reflect back to the reader what he has seen and experienced – the beauty, the misery, and always, the truth. *Sleeping Dragons* is an intriguing book you will enjoy and want to share with your friends.

Sharon Canfield Dorsey  
Award winning author and poet



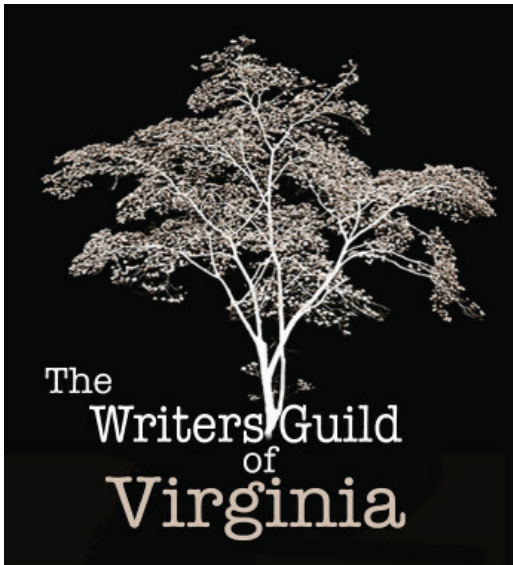
*Farm Girl*, a memoir by Cindy L. Freeman, was a revelation to me. Although I wasn't a "farm girl" myself, I related to much of Cindy's story. My father and mother both grew up on large family farms, in Orange County and in Henry County, Virginia. Mother hated the isolation of farm life, but Daddy enjoyed it. He became a farm implement dealer and truly thrived on driving with me along the curving back roads of the countryside, pointing out along the way pieces of equipment he had sold. He said the John Deere tractors were "green with envy" for his International Harvester products.

As a young child, I spent most weekends at my aunt and uncle's farm in Orange. It had no electrical power and an outhouse, reached by hurrying down a long, weed-lined pathway. My relatives had a well that was hand-pumped to draw water and a wood-burning kitchen stove for cooking. Cindy's descriptions of the farm equipment on her New York farm, as well as her kitchen, reminded me of my visits to the farm.

Her story about two baby robins she rescued resonated with me as well because I once found a baby bird fallen from its nest. I was about four years old and devastated when the little bird did not survive my waiting with it, on a hot cement stairway, for its mother's return.

Cindy describes the [state] fair with her favorite ride, the ferris wheel. That was my favorite, too, when the fair came for a brief stay at the local airport. The bright lights were thrilling to see and to remember for the fair's next visit. I had never thought of memoirs as anything but a nice read about the memories of someone else's life experiences. This one is different. It helped me recall my own memories of days gone by on the farm and in the country. I hadn't thought of any of those happenings until her book reminded me. Thank you, Cindy L. Freeman, for a book well-written, stories well-told, and memories well-remembered.

Mary Montague Sikes, Author, Poet and Artist



The Writers Guild of Virginia is a 501(c)3 organization.

Our mission is to nurture writers of all abilities in the crafts of writing, publishing, and marketing their work. We offer a series of programs throughout the Northern Neck, Middle Peninsula, and Williamsburg areas.

We hope you will visit us on our website to learn more about our organization and join us at one of our events.

Thank you for your support!

How to Reach Us

email: [wgvirginia@gmail.com](mailto:wgvirginia@gmail.com)

website: [www.wgvirginia.com](http://www.wgvirginia.com)

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