



WRITERS FORUM & NIAGARA ARTISTS
**8TH ANNUAL
POETS & PAINTERS
COLLABORATION**

April 2021

How It Was Done

Twenty-two people (11 writers and 11 painters) started the fun in November 2020 by exchanging their writing and artwork with one another.

This year, the exchange was done virtually. Names were drawn twice, so that the exchange was not automatically back and forth between the same two people.

The goal was to create pieces of poetry and art, directly inspired by the poetry and art each participant received.

We are unable to gather indoors at the Niagara Falls Public Library's Rosberg Gallery as we have in the past, and are therefore planning an gathering at Woodend Conservation Area in the summer. This will be a celebration to share the new creations and the individual thought process that brought them about.



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PART ONE: PAINTINGS AND POEMS



Contemplative Retreat

D. Rose

Never Gone

G. Dubay-Naipaul

My visage is not what you knew,

traces may appear, if but a few.

An eye, lip, nostril you perceive,

only the mind's aim to deceive.

My new form is all enveloping

of all you sense, your very being.

The ancestors, the gods, we all exist

within everything, as one we persist

The journey to another dimension

not far away, is but an expansion

of tangible beauty, the trees, Earth,

ever present, ever absorbed in rebirth.

Emerging from form into formless,

to be embraced, from senseless to sense.

Be wary of entrapments, ignorance blinds,

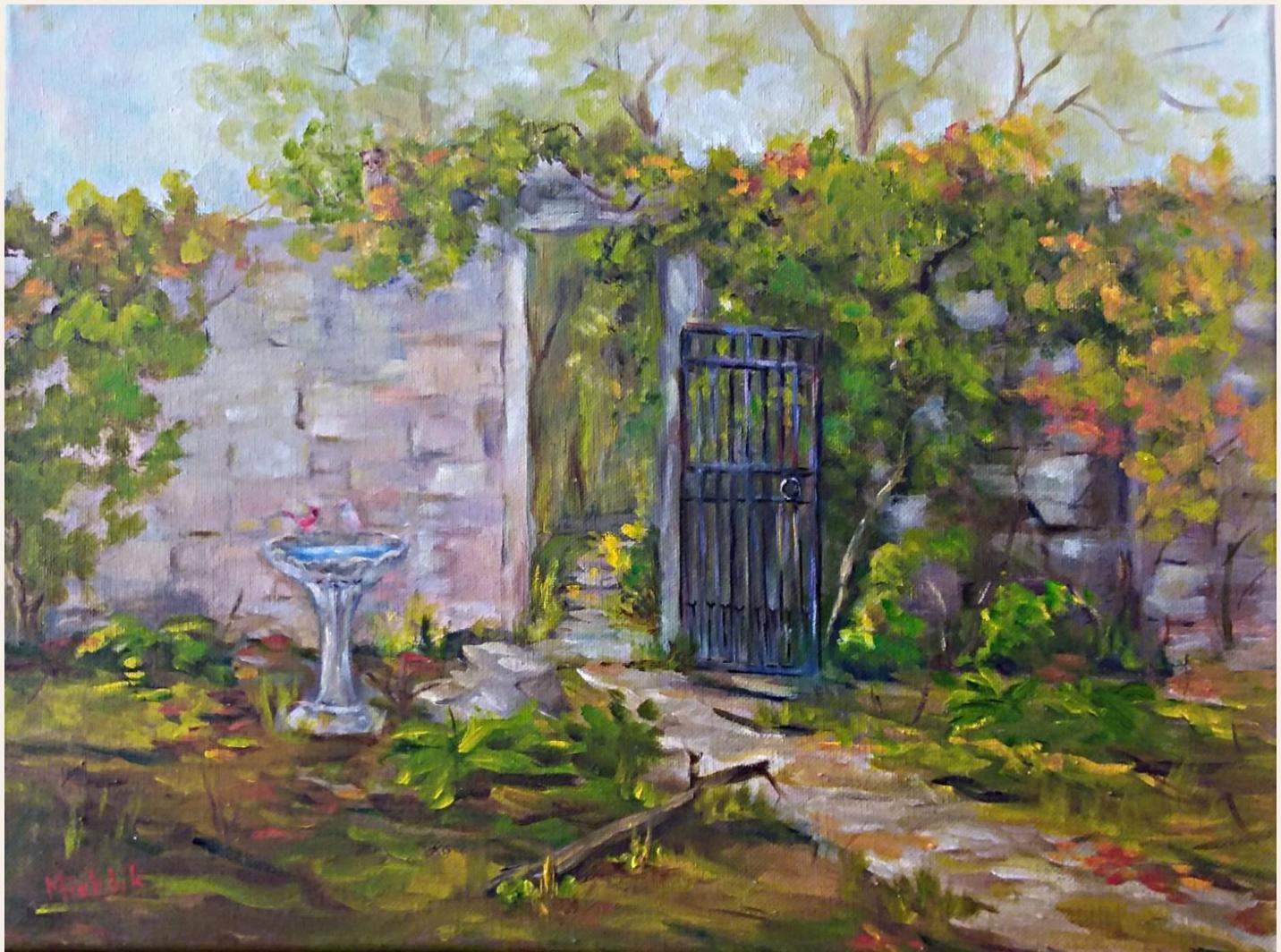
misleads, blurs the beauty of real Sight.

From knowing real from unreal,

look, smell, imbibe all nature offers.

I am water, the sun, clouds, no doubt.

Your breath is part of me, I am That.



Forgotten Garden

H. Michlik

The Hidden Garden

R. Evans

The worn iron gate stands open.

An invitation.

Stepping inside, I am engulfed in green.

Maples and Ironwood join forces
to filter the meddling rays of the sun.

Unruly branches obscure the way,
but I know the hidden path.

I bend to softly brush my fingertip
over the Mayflower's delicate white petals.

A late twinleaf winks at me from beyond.

Faithful Bloodroot waits patiently
knowing I'm saving the best for last.

Chaotic vines reach out from arbours.

I step carefully over protruding roots.

Ah, my bench, worn like the gate,
nestles among the juniper and holly crowding the wall.

Am I the only one who knows it's here?

This dense, dark green is not so old.

Once, the wind stirred long grass
as I walked through an open field.

A sturdy stone wall appeared
and calmed the passing breeze.

An iron padlock secured the heavy gate.
A wizened man, bent yet steady,
carried his rake and hoe.
I looked at him beseechingly.
Silent, he eyed me, then stood aside.
Swaying grass surrendered to tidy saplings, lilacs and hyacinth.
Clematis tendrils reached to find their first hold.

That gate, my gate, has aged.
Its sheen has worn away.
At times I long for the brighter green,
the sun and summer blossoms.
But the tangled growth protects me,
and the familiar soothes my soul.



Northern Vista

J. Low

In the Winding of Us

K. Inman

the road rivers
past the dogs
of winter attrition

bowed to the plow
that trucks the valley
to its roots

the trees wracked
with humanity



Between Two Moments

T. Junkin

Gaia

N. Bector

A flame

A light

Something to walk towards

Where hope is an alias, a crystal glass

Full

Fragile

Was I broken!

Shrapnel everywhere

I run

I fall between the lines everytime

Wishing

Laughing

Crying

Madness

We pick up the pieces

Reinvented

Sharp glass

Stronger

Faster

Better

Nothing's perfect

I come back

I take a breath

Re-VITAL-ized

Back into the thick of things

Re-wind

A fairy tale

A home

Something to look forward to

The affliction of mankind



Blood Flows In Crocodile Creek

P. Crabtree

A Question

K. Laufman

Here is my question; I wonder if the wise among us can reply.

Why does one sock from all the pairs go missing?

Does it grow weary of being walked on?

Has it tired of bad odorous smells and long days in the cramped workspaces of shoes and boots?

Is it disillusioned by the freedom offered by the flip-flop only to find itself stretched in ways it was never meant to be?

Is a plan hatched while churning in hot soapy suds and the drying tumbling rotations?

Without the aid of a witness protection team it evaporates.

Maybe it finds refuge in the world of hand puppet retirement?



Tiger Lilies

A. Wildman

O Lily

R. Baird

O Lily are you moving?
Are you sidling to your right?
Do you really want to leave us...
or is movement in your soul?
What irony, being rooted
When we footloose are so free.

Please, stay awhile with me

O Lily, thanks for stopping
And for blooming time with me.

You wonder, see me footloose;
That's my nature, which you long for,
But you are rooted in the ground.

And that's how I would like to be
With no more flights of fancy
In the life I'd like to lead.

Can you dream of footloose freedom?

Well, Flower, now's the hour.
Come, take my erstwhile ankles
Run and jump, yea travel far.
Give me your roots.
Let me take anchor
In the soil of your soul.



Afternoon Leisure
N. Haskell

Blue Unclouded Weather

D. Junkin

I've had enough of quarantine- My patience is gone. And I feel mean
My partner keeps quoting poetry- And I'm about to Burst
Working from home. Shopping from home. I am ready just to run from home.
How did we ever earn this curse?

"You know, we could get away. At your friend's cottage we can stay.
Leave in the morning, if you say." And so, we packed our bags.
At the cottage, graciously lent. My partner seems, so content.
But my tolerance is spent. And I pace around the cage

"Do as I, and read a book. These poems are lovely take a look"
But my mood it cannot be shook. By the "Lady of shallot."
My partner is now droning on. About the works of Tennyson.
"Oh joy, an English lit lesson." In this web I'll not be caught"

Their smile cracked from side to side. As I slammed the door and went outside.
And though my nerves are sorely tried. I am grateful for this break
It's warm, no need for my coat. I think that I will take the boat.
And In the sunshine I will float. Down the river unto the lake.



Tree Of Jewels

N. Audit

The Bequeathing Tree

L. Taylor

Once upon a time
There grew a tree, a secret tree,
As it was known to all,
All its special forest friends.

Living deep in a dense forest, hidden from all human seeing.
It was small amongst the other trees,
Old, gnarled oaks, branching beeches;
But its roots reached in amongst theirs, to give and receive tree comfort.

Those others loved and supported it. For it was there tree of a difference.
Each late spring it sprouted blossoms.
Small, of pale yellow and indifference.
But in the August to follow fruit formed
Unknown anywhere else in evertime.

Fruit of pearls, gems and mineral drops
As it was the BEQUEATHING TREE,
Bejewelled,
The only one upon this live planet.
This fruit ripening over long months
Becoming brilliant in rainbow colors,
For a November harvest.

And harvested it was, by rodents forest friends-squirrels
The both harvested and bequeathed

The glowing jewels.

To all the angels flying heaven's route.

Whose purpose was to light the way.

Then in winter came tree-hibernation. The little tree slept deeply,

For 'forty days and forty nights' (bible)

Recharging itself for the coming season, again to yield its annual splendour.

THE BEQUEATHING TREE was of no age

As it was of all time;

Never to die or even falter,

Being born with the world,

Growing in continuation.



So Hott

R. Rojik

Hugs

G. Gibbons

Years ago I wrote a poem about my mom.
She was ill and we thought we might lose her.
The poem was based around the last autumn leaf I saw fall.

Then she recovered as winter turned to spring.
The greens of the season informed another poem.
This one was about renewal and recovery.

For almost ten years we have had my mom again.

Last April she began to show signs of dementia.
Thanks to Covid, she lost all her friends at church,
She lost most of her family, except my dad and me.

Now my dad has become her nurse.
I am the only one allowed to visit.

I can't write a poem. I just can't.
But see how the petals embrace the stamen?
That's all I think about when I see this tulip.
Every chance I get I embrace my mom.
She is now small and scared and confused.
She says she feels safe with my arms around her.
It's my way of returning the favour half a century later.



Romantico

M. Livesey

Venice and Venus; The Most Romantic City in the World

D. Einhorn

A young couple hits the streets in Venice, the city often described as the most romantic in the world. After a \$30 cocktail, they hail one of the 400 remaining gondolas. The standard fare for such a tour is in the range of \$250 Canadian per hour. The gondola is an EXPENSIVE ride, man, kind of like love and marriage. The gondolier steers them beneath the Bridge of Sighs. Legend holds that if the couple kisses as their gondola passes under the bridge at sunset, just as the bells of St. Mark's toll, then their love will last forever. That's what *legend* says. What history tells us is that prisoners were led across that bridge to be taken to their cells, many of them never to see daylight again. Those sighs were not about romance but instead the loss of freedom, dignity and quality of life. Is that also kind of like love and marriage?

In addition to lifetimes imprisoned in darkness, Venice is also about death and eternal punishment. The Inquisition is part of Venice's history, although local authorities limited its power somewhat in comparison to other locations. Those limitations resulted in a lower number of executions than it carried out in other regions, but the standard sentence was death by drowning in the Adriatic. The convicted was rowed into the open water and dropped into the sea, with a stone weighing him down, while a priest prayed for his immortal soul. The meeting place of the Venetian Holy Inquisition was ...the Church of St. Mark, the bells of which are today said to be that harbinger of everlasting love for our young couple who have shelled out the cash for a gondola tour and are passing under the Bridge of Sighs, the bridge that once led to lifelong imprisonment in darkness.

The city's past also includes the loss of one third of its population during the Plague and a quarantine island, Lazzaretto Vecchio, rife with mass graves, as well as stories of witchcraft and possession, and being both the perpetrator and target of invasions. One currently finds

sewage smells during summer months, huge cruise ships arriving, the sheer weight of which can jeopardize the city's historic structures, and one ends up walking shoulder-to-shoulder with gawking tourists from those ships who frequent and support commercial rather than local or historic interests. The gondola tour sees someone else steering your course through the crowds as they grab very expensive mementos. That is kind of like love & marriage some would say.

The most romantic city in the world? Katherine Hepburn lived the entire second half of her 96-year life with an eye infection she contracted while filming a movie scene in which her character fell into one of Venice's dirty canals. The possible metaphors for love and clarity of vision that incident generates are almost endless. Perhaps Shakespeare said it best in *The Merchant of Venice*, "But love is blind, and lovers cannot see the pretty follies that themselves commit."



Locked Out of Paradise

J. Robinson

Life... As We Now Know It... Is A Paradise Lost

J. Gates

September 15, 2020, our Poets and Painters group met at WOODEND Conservation Area due to the latest COVID-19 restrictions. I had never been to WOODEND even though it is a 10 minute drive from my home. As my mother and I drove down the long and narrow yet picturesque driveway to the inner open gated entrance. We were enchanted by the peaceful scenery. It truly was like a hidden green grass and treed oasis. Our group arrived with chairs, paintings and poems in hand. Mother Nature cooperated with us as there was just a hint of chill in the air. We socially distanced in a semicircle, some wearing masks, some not. This was a new outside experience which was quite enjoyable and also necessary because of the world's new reality, COVID-19. We presented our creative works to each other and embraced the togetherness before parting an hour later. Retreating to our separate vehicles and homes; thereby honoring the current color code procedures. Not long after, WOODEND had new signage stating 'Closed Due to COVID-19'. The inner sanctum gates were securely locked. No more hikers, painters, birdwatchers or anyone unofficial allowed.

Since then several months have passed and we are now in March 2021. The virus COVID-19 has been joined by variants of itself as we humans and non-humans are awaiting being inoculated by various vaccines. In Canada we change month-to-month or day-to-day from varied color codes as the virus increases or decreases. There are five stages of colour codes I have learned, the lowest being green then yellow, orange, red and lockdown grey. As I sit in the car in the mall parking lot, I watch as masked people line up to enter stores based on the new maximum capacities. Employees push piled high carts to waiting curbside pickup clients. Friends meet in their separate vehicles at take out restaurants or empty parking lots and converse through distant car windows. Hospital and doctor visits whether for surgery or emergency care are now feared more than ever before. When you do go on these visits

you may be alone. A silent hospital ward in the time of COVID-19 is an eerie place. I speak from experience.

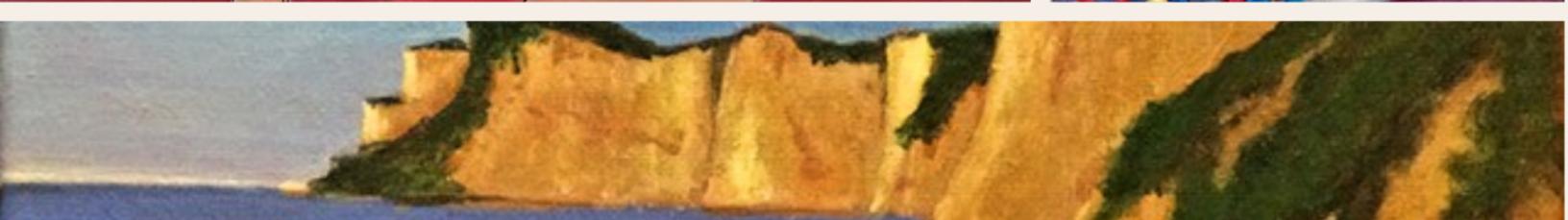
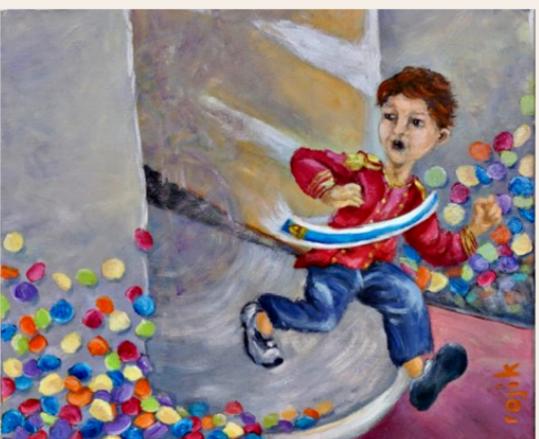
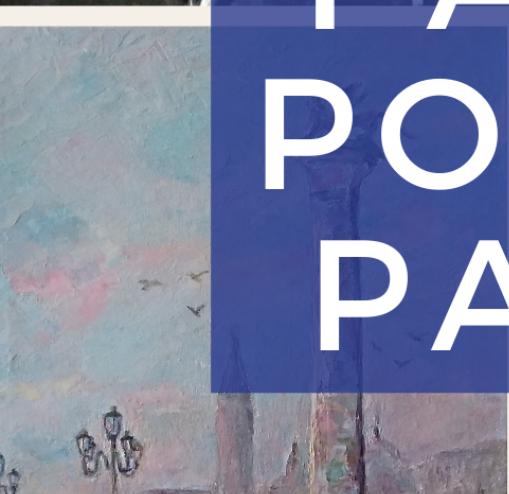
The Poets and Painters are evolving like many other groups to utilize the current technology on line, such as What's App, ZOOM, DUO, SKYPE etc.. Whether we are outside with nature, on a computer, tablet or phone we will survive.

I don't know about you but doesn't the entire world seem like it is embroiled in all of the worst science fiction contagion movies ever seen. The only difference being that movies end after a couple of hours.

In the meantime let's send out positive thoughts for those who we have lost during these turbulent times. Until we are all together again in the new normal, I bid you all Adieu.



PART TWO: POEMS AND PAINTINGS



Hot Yoga

K. Laufman

Hot Yoga, can I do that?

I want to do that.

I rarely sweat, will I explode?

A mindful art, can I commit
to loving myself enough to go to my mat.
Too receive this time for myself.

A cubby woman that sits on a forklift all day.
Ready for the change to strengthen her being.

The hot room expects much. Welcoming, unjudging,
Inclusive, supportive.

Each teacher bringing their light to the room.
Grace, humor, direction, leadership.
Calm dictation flows from movement to action.

I will try, apply, and just Be.
With every inhale and exhale.
Remembering to take my breath with me.

Namaste.



My Time

N. Haskell

Innocence

R. Baird

"J'Accuse" Accusation: "Canada in 2020 is replete with racist bigots, an unworthy fulfilment of "Champlain's Dream."

But I plead" "Innocent" for the million or so Canadians who hold to the vision of their nation's founder, and insist that theirs is the real Canada, the beloved country.

Champlain, however, deplored "ni foi, ni roi, ni loi".

A thorough reading of Champlain's Dream may show this conclusion, which he made about some tribes that he thought to be poorly led, having no faith (like his own Christianity), no king (in the sense that his kind of Frenchman offered his life in service to The King) and no law (in the sense that France was a police state under cardinals and aristocracy) to be as close as he came to allowing Champlain to be accused of bigotry.

When Champlain got Frenchmen to live with the tribes and tribesmen to go to France, it was for learning each other's languages. He dressed them as princes, not caged curiosities, when they went to France. His language expert was DaCosta, a black African.

Early Canada was not founded to take over the land or the people. Skillful diplomacy, and respect for requests, was followed by Champlain who, for example, put off travels to places he wanted to explore and map, till he got permission from chiefs. These same Chiefs and others, who got near him, would touch the arrow wound on his neck from his first battle on their behalf, a sign of great admiration and respect. Tribes that got him to be their secret weapon in their wars against the Iroquois loved him. He was shocked however when he risked his life, and saw tribesmen walk away from battles where they started losing, and that they were free to do so. No law, no king.

Could we ever be free of bigotry? Eternal vigilance is the price of freedom. That includes freedom from bigotry. Almost no one considers himself a bigot, having some justification for any bigoted opinion he may hold. Bigotry against bigots is justifiable, but to carry it all the way to the point of stamping out the last bigot, would possibly do more harm than good. Yes, it is possible that some good comes from having an opposition out there for prevailing ideas.

It could be argued that we have already become so vigilant against bigotry, that we have brought western democratic society very close to what Champlain deplored "ni foi, ni roi, ni loi". I plead "innocence" for myself, and for those who choose to uphold Champlain's Dream, the dream of our founder.



Cap-Bon-Ami

J. Low

One

N. Bector

The snow melts
The water swells
And the land's thirst is quenched

The dark night
Must give rise
A reset world in tow

We gaze on
With hope
Yet we don't know

Eyes closed
We truly see
There is no you and no such thing as me



We Are One

D. Rose

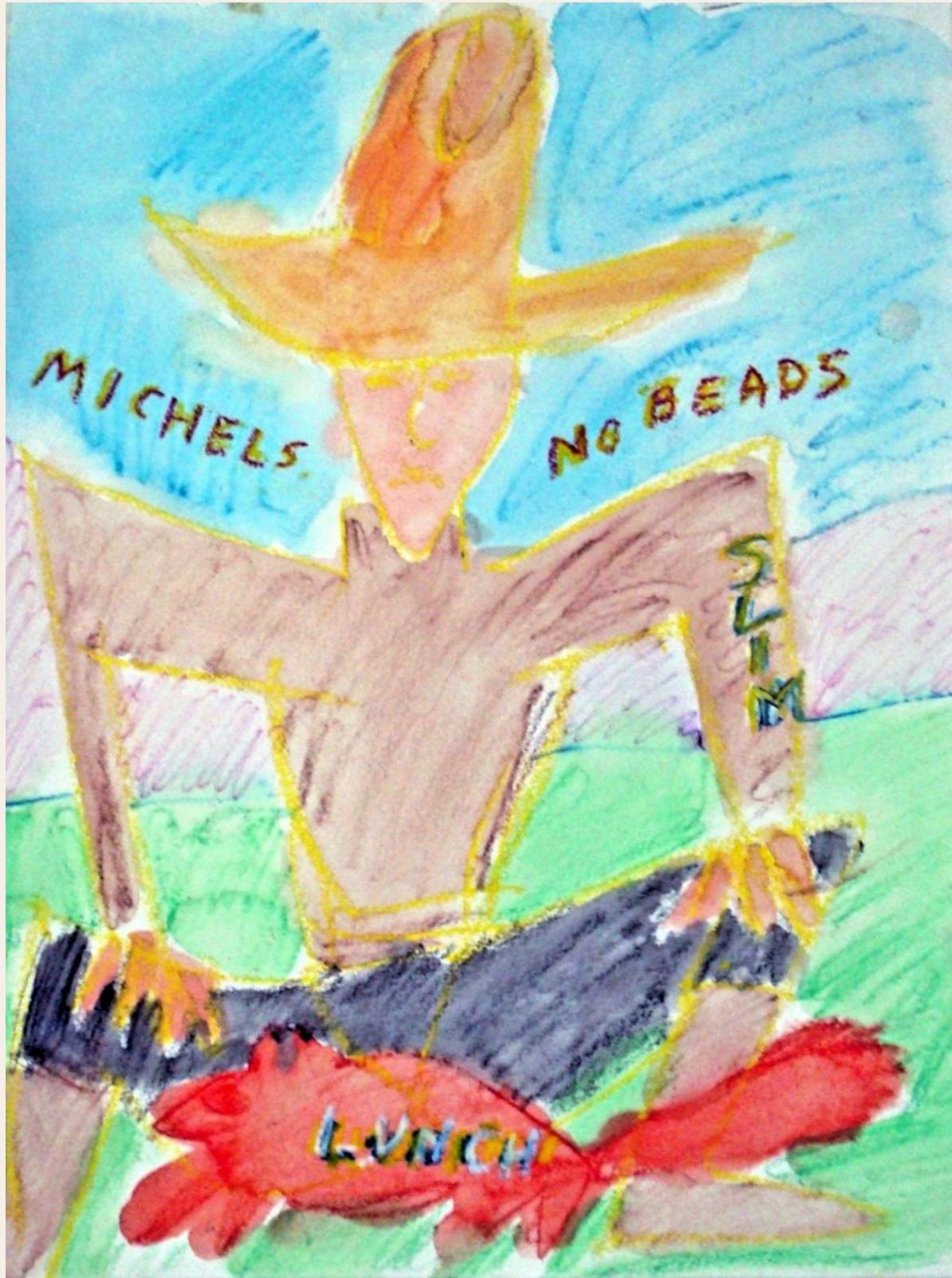
The End Is A New Beginning

J. Gates

March 2020, I remember it well. It was the last time that I took a beading class. I had just gotten back into one of my creative loves, making jewellery. The five of us laughed while we beaded, discussing the craziness of hoarding toilet paper. When did toilet paper become more precious than food? One of my classmates showed us a picture from Google of a pair of beaded earrings in the shape of a roll of toilet paper. It had the year 2020 beaded into the last square which hung from the exquisite pearl encrusted roll. So cute, and how innovative since they were now selling on ebay. It was so nice being with everyone, each of us creating a unique bracelet which combined fabric, semi precious stones and a curved piece of copper to give the bracelet stability. Everyone's work was so unique. Three of us had signed up for the workshop at the beading store next weekend where we would be making meditation necklaces.

Then it happened. A customer walked in to pick up some beading supplies. We could hear him talking loudly about his experience at the grocery store. He had arrived at the mall parking lot at 7:00 a.m. and it was packed. There was a lineup of people stretching around the building. He left and came back 3 hrs. later and entered the store to find the shelves mostly bare. There was no water, eggs, bread, milk, flour, dried beans of any kind or you guessed it, toilet paper. The place looked like a tornado had whirled through. He asked a worker who was clearly frantically attempting to restock the shelves what had happened. He was told that people had been lined up outside the store 2 hours before they opened. Most of the perishable stock was sold out. Some goods would not be restocked before the next week. Limited quantities per person were now being placed on certain goods. There was even talk of a lock down of stores and places where people gather by our government.

As we listened, our exuberant group was now somber and silent. Inwardly I wondered if I would see these guys next weekend. Three days later in the last week of March 2020 we went into lockdown. The bead store closed and all classes were cancelled until further notice. It's almost a year later now and not much has changed. Except we now wear masks and hope that the several vaccines for the COVID 19 virus which are being released, will help in lessening the infections and deaths. For someone like myself who doesn't mind being an introvert if need be, I find that I am craving the interaction of being with people again and going out and about for no reason at all.



Cowboy Peter, Ex Beader

P. Crabtree

Cycledelic Experience

D. Einhorn

When does childhood end? Is it a gradual process like learning to figure skate or does it hit us like that unexpectedly subjugating wave that knocks us off of our feet when we're wading into the ocean? It could be that it is a series of such waves, a number of transformative events that press the first lines into our faces, the first trepidation into our steps, that spark the misgivings about what kind of world we live in that lasts the rest of our lives. It could be someone else blowing out the candles at *our* birthday party, the first time someone steals from us, the first time we are cut from a team, our first kiss and the first time we had our heart broken. For me, one such transformative event took place when I was in the sixth grade.

I was walking back to my elementary school, along Mountain Grove Avenue in Burlington, after performing in a play at the middle school down the street. I had three male friends from my class with me and we were exhilarated by the performances we had given and the reception the play had received. Trouble appeared on a ten-speed bicycle. An eighth grader, who was closer in size to a high school senior, rolled up beside us and began to jeer and taunt us.

In the politically incorrect jargon of the time, he asked us if we were walking because we had missed the short bus. I replied that he needn't worry because we wouldn't take his usual seat. The laughter of my friends heightened the tension rather than easing it. We were still in partial costume and he asked if we were waiting for Mr. Right to ask us to the Ball. When he was informed that we had just acted in a play he asked if that kind of activity wasn't mostly for homosexuals. I asked him if that was why was there because he was hoping to meet somebody. He was still on the bike when he grabbed for me.

The school seemed within reach when I took off running down the sidewalk on Mountain Grove Avenue with him roaring after me on his bike. I had good speed for a kid. I was always the last one out in dodgeball. I had already spent several years running down fly balls and ground balls in tee ball, softball and baseball. I could hear my friends yelling behind us, exhorting me and rooting for me to make it to the school.

When I began tearing across the lawn towards the front doors of the school, he was right on my heels and gaining on me. By the time I was halfway across the lawn, I knew that I was within his reach again and veered off to the right. He turned to follow me as I ran in a complete circle and resumed heading for the school doors. In attempting to follow me, he came off his bike and slid so hard and so far on the lawn that it seemed as though there had been ice rather than green grass beneath us. He got up and started chasing me on foot. I reached the door with a few seconds to spare, turned and, although I can't remember precisely what I yelled, I taunted and insulted him one last time.

I turned and pulled on the door only to discover that it was locked. My heart sank all the way into my shoes and, in desperation, I yanked on the door handle again with the same result. Another door that was unlocked was only seconds away, but my margin of safety had fully evaporated by that time. I turned around just in time to be greeted with a rain of blows from a kid so much bigger than me that he might as well have been Arnold Schwarzenegger. I huddled against the door, crouching in desperation and fear in the defensive turtle position. I felt his knee rising past the protection of my elbows into my face and head. I heard the next door down (the *unlocked* one) open and the authoritative voice of an adult male telling my adversary to stop what he was doing. Within seconds, he was back on his bike and fleeing the scene.

When I was sitting in the main office and talking with school administrators, I felt that an undue amount of their inquiry revolved around the extent to which I had been an *agent provocateur* in the incident. The kid's brother was in my class and informed me that he had told his parents, so that's at least something.

I have been tempted, at times, to look at the incident as an extended metaphor for my life, being locked out of where I belong and taking hard knocks as a result, but I have never really done that. You get up, you dust yourself off and you keep going. There will be more birthday candles next year. There will be bigger and colder waves striking you in future. Whether you get hit by fire or ice, your skin thickens and you grow up just a little.



Slice Of Life

R. Rojik

A Moment in Time

R. Evans

I was jostled down the stairs by the throng of commuters clambering to get off the early morning bus. I rode the wave forward, while scanning the crowd to locate my family. As the passengers hurried off to their jobs, a space cleared in front of me. I stopped dead, barely feeling the man behind me slamming into my back, muttering "what the heck are you doing?" I had found my husband. Still frozen in place, I realized I was holding my breath. As famous as Venice was, nothing had prepared me for the enchantment I was stepping into.

I was travelling with my husband, son and younger daughter. We had spent the night on the mainland just over Liberty Bridge from Venice. It was a long vacation, and we were trying to save a few pennies. Our accommodations were more primitive than they had appeared online. The room was good sized, but afforded very little privacy. The shower was simply a corner of the room with shower head coming out of the wall surrounded by a curtain hanging from a rod attached to the ceiling. After showering, we scurried towel-wrapped to the bathroom to dress. No one wanted to be last; they had to wipe up the floor.

We had gone to bed early the night before, anxious to be on our way to Venice the next morning. No one had slept well, and we couldn't find a place for breakfast near our lodgings. By the time we boarded the bus we were all a little disgruntled. We rode with the locals, their noses buried in their cellphones. Even in these mundane circumstances, I felt an undercurrent of anticipation. Venice! I tried to curb my excitement. I didn't want to be disappointed.

I needn't have worried.

There was nothing before me that I hadn't seen in print or movies – the shimmering water, bright blue canopies covering docks and stalls, Venetian Gothic buildings sinking helplessly into the sea, rows of stalls displaying brightly coloured Venice T-Shirts, morning papers and miniature replicas of St. Marks' Basilica. Black and white clad gondoliers wiped down their gondolas as tourists watched from their breakfast tables.

It was just so . . . alive. Tour Boat Captains called out orders, motors sputtered to life, the sea rhythmically slapped the wooden wharfs. A cool morning breeze delayed the discomfort we knew would engulf us later. It was June - too early for the unpleasant stench that developed in the hottest months, so I could smell the flowers, fresh pastries and petrol, all encompassed in a subtle scent of seaweed. Coffee wafted past with a group of bantering businessmen, who expertly dodged handsome browned vendors laden with vegetables and bread.

As I took a hesitant step toward the Grand Canal, my son's voice jarred me back to reality, "Let's get breakfast. I'm starving."



Un Momento Nel Tempo

H. Michlik

Staycation

G. Gibbons

I sit at my desk in the Reservations Office,
Waiting for a travel agent who's put me on hold.

At first I just want to finish the call.
I'd like to hang up, but I'm not that bold,

And the hold music is a man singing,
"Well the last time I saw Count Basie
He was standing on Eighteenth and Vine."

This song ends and I'm still on hold, but now
A woman sings with him another dreamy song
That uses the word 'Enchanted' many times.

We're not supposed to be on hold this long,
But for a moment I hope this hold never ends.
I'm lost in the music of another time and place.
When the travel agent comes back on the line,
The interruption is ice water in my face.

Such a melodious oasis
In this odious place is

A gift from heaven.

My coworkers already think I'm nuts,
So swaying to the music in my ear causes no comment.
They don't know that for six minutes,
During my 7-3 shift,
I was on vacation in Kansas City with Tony Bennett.



18th & Vine

J. Robinson

Roman Road

K. Inman

Bright evening spilled
over her shoulder, the river
reflecting wheat and low-trees

of birdsong skirting
her hill fort's slow
swirling dance of shade

the white horse waiting
in a scrub field, the road
punching up

toward a broken bridge
of limestone blocks lying
in ruin

above a pool
trapped in shadow ~
the way history dries



They Future Is Now

T. Junkin

The Field

L. Taylor

Brilliant hot sun, bathed that lone field.
Golden yellow with deep purple
Its Iconic yield.

An ocean of goldenrod flowers
With Michaelmas daisies peppered in,
Showing as a Van Gogh masterpiece,
Floating in the wind.

Floating, rippling, washed
In an unseen current;
Begging my admiring self
To be sole entrant.

So entering into the far middle
Of this regal field of purple- yellow
I made a nesting spot,
Laying down, resting in a mellow.

I saw strong, straight stems
Hiding there unseen creatures,
Grasshoppers, spiders and webs, buzzing bees
Living in this world of straw-like features

A fan-eared mouse, saw me, stopped then scurried
Deep into the vegetation thicket;
In its path something old and buried.

Laying in this other world
With time for meaningless thought,
Warmed by a late summer sun
I found the solace I had sought.

So I lay there awhile
Bathed in a magic purple-yellow ocean
As slowly the sun rode away.
Rising reluctantly I left this notion.

And now as 60 years have passed by
I've returned to the field.
No regal yellow and purple magic now,
Only red brick houses the yield.
But my soul cries out for that field of my dreams.



©Fabianna Skoab Wildman

Michaelmas Daisies

A. Wildman

The Viewing

G. Dubay-Naipaul

Being led into the small viewing room

The petite form was hard to miss

Standing in line at the far end

Looking sad and alone among relatives

Receiving visitors from near and far

Her frame seemed smaller in grief

As if withdrawn to fit a safe shell

Only, there was none to be seen

The little girl lost a precious doll

Unable to understand it is gone

Eyes met, we rushed to greet

Relieved to see a familiar face

Eager to breathe in comfort

To cry, speak, share thoughts

On the beautiful smiling boy doll

I am looking for my brother

The eyes seem to say

But he lays there, in slumber

Come, look, let's view together

No, that's the doll, it moves not

My brother and I, we play and giggle
He thinks grownups are funny
He whispers something to me
I do not hear, I laugh anyway
Because I must, because I love him

I want to hear that voice again
Have that smile brighten my world
Come and visit, much to share
Time did not allow more play
I want to thank him, for my doll

That doll, my dear loving sister
You thought was lost forever?
Hear this, hear my whisper
I am there, safe in your heart
Where I have always been.



Home
M. Livesey

Leaves

D. Junkin

These leaves, those leaves, so green and so fine.

They nourished and protected. Those leaves that were mine

They talked to the wind. They made the sun play.

A part of a soul that was out on display.

Something that defines you, but sets you apart.

Also can tie you, to those of same heart.

Now just dry bark, gray arms, cold and bare.

The things most valued had been openly shared.

The thoughts, the ideas, the wordless ideals.

The shape of the things that everyone feels.

Held until they were crimson and gold.

Believed to be the shield, from the wind and the cold

These things that to me, were prized above all

I never expected would eventual fall

Now stark in the cold, alone in the wind

Hidden all hope, somewhere within

Realizing the truth, but only too late.

Observing the rest, who have come to this fate.

Stripped of our truths, we all stand the same.

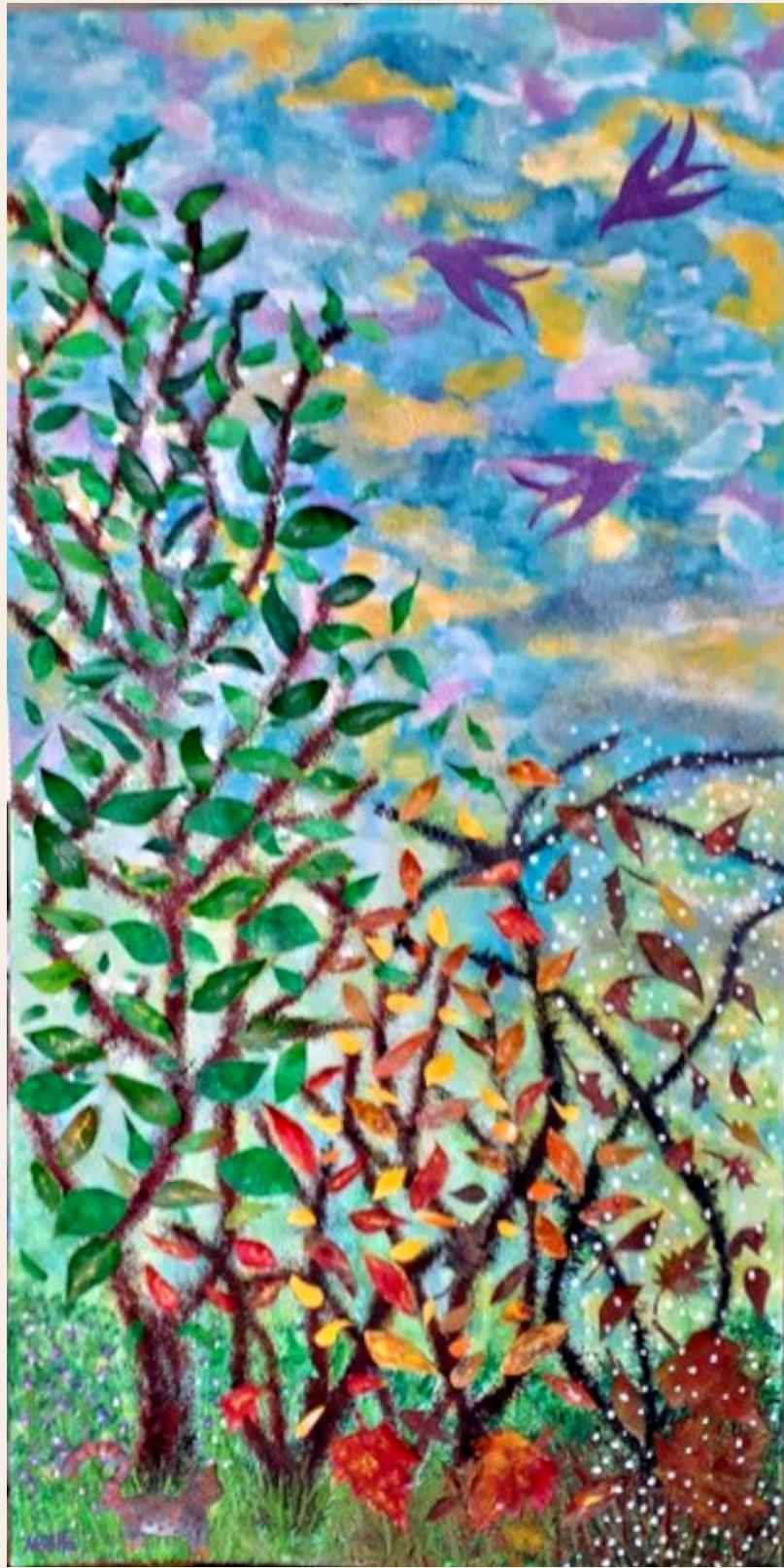
A quiet skeleton dance, is all that remains.

As the sun briefly lingers, the day slowly dies

Cold silhouettes cut, a late autumn sky

This is what is. Because nothing is sure.

Small solace is found, just to know we endure.



Leaves

N. Audit

Biographies

Noella Audit

Noella is a St. Catharines-based artist who has studied fashion design, photography, and jewelry making, as well as painting and drawing. Her main interest is integrating found and discarded objects into the creative process of her painting, jewelry, and fabric art. Noella enjoys experimenting with different mediums and unusual, non-traditional subject matter.

Peter Crabtree

Peter has always enjoyed painting, especially landscapes and life drawing. Creating new imaginary and exciting scenarios has been important to him, and that's why he has such fun with Poets & Painters.

Gita Dubay-Naipaul

Gita is a mental health worker and volunteer. She has been participating in Poets & Painters since 2015.

Randi Evans

Randi enjoys travelling, gardening, classroom volunteering, and being a grandma. She has always enjoyed writing, but for years found little time to do more than edit or write an occasional article for the company newsletter. In retirement, Randi has written a few picture-books for her grandchildren and is now experimenting with other genres, including memoirs, short fiction, and poetry. She lives in St. Catharines.

Nancy Haskell

Nancy's mediums are oil and pastel, and her subject matter is a combination of still life with movement. She very seldom paints from a subject in front of her, but rather a subject projected from memory and imagination. Her experience in the photographic business certainly plays a large part in her composition, colour, and subject matter.

Keith Inman

Declared a 'people's poet' for his blue collar style, Inman's work has won a variety of small press awards, peer reviews, and grants from the Ontario Arts Council. His latest *The Way History Dries*, Black Moss Press, was released last fall. He lives in Thorold.

Denis Junkin

Denis is very lucky to be in a family of four artistically talented siblings, but he, for the most part, has always taken after his parents. He found a lifelong love of reading and writing at the age of eight, and has written mostly for his own enjoyment. Denis and his wife now spend a great deal of time passing their love of reading on to their four year old daughter.

Tracey Junkin

Tracey Junkin lives in Hamilton with her fiancé and fat black cat. She has always been interested in art

and being creative. Among her pursuits are photography, painting, and needle felt.

Facebook:

facebook.com/Tracey-Elaine-Photography-206018562942265

Instagram: *@light_harvester*

Kimberley Laufman

Kimberley is a self-taught writer and artist who serves as coordinator for the Writers Forum in Thorold. Born in Oshawa, and having lived in a variety of communities across southern Ontario, she now makes her home in St. Catharines with her family. Her writing is mostly poetry with some focus on short form prose fiction. An enthusiastic hiker, Kimberley draws inspiration for her painting from the natural beauty of the Canadian countryside. This will be Kimberley's third year organizing and fourth year participating in the Poets & Painters event.

Mike Livesey

Mike has been painting and sketching for 50 years, primarily with acrylics and watercolors. His paintings are a unique travelogue: a record of places he's visited and enjoyed over the years. He always carries a sketchbook during his travels.

Mike has had exhibits and installations at Ryerson University, The Junction Art Shows, and venues in Bloorwest Village, as well as the Niagara Pumphouse Arts Center in Niagara-on-the-Lake. He's a member of the St. Catharines Art Association, a plein air group, and has participated in Poets & Painters since 2016.

Janice Low

Janice's interest in nature, science, photography, and painting fuel her artistic endeavours. She has participated in visual arts events for the cities of Niagara Falls and St. Catharines, and has provided paintings for RiverBrink and the Dundas Valley School of Art fundraising events.

Janice's work is available around the Niagara Region including Objects to Desire in Grimsby, the RiverBrink Art Museum in Queenston, and the Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre. She participates in many local exhibitions throughout the year.

Janice is a member of the Niagara Falls Art Gallery, the Parkway Artists Guild, Niagara Poets & Painters, Niagara Plein Air Artists, the St. Catharines Artists Association, the Niagara Nature Club, the Castellani Art Museum in New York State, and the Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

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Helen Michlik

"A picture is a poem without words." Horace For the most part, Helen is a self-taught artist working in pastels, watercolors, acrylics, oils, and encaustics. She has always had a passion for art--drawing and painting daily. Eager to pass along her knowledge and enthusiasm for art, Helen gives private lessons, art classes and workshops and regularly volunteers at schools and in the community. A resident of St. Catharines, Helen has exhibited her works at various venues in the Niagara area, and is an active member of the St. Catharines Art Association

and the Niagara Pumphouse Arts Center. Since 2013, she has organized a group of local artists and writers for an annual Poets & Painters event.

Her primary interests lie in portraiture and life drawing, and she has illustrated two children's books. Along with a group of plein air painters, she explores and captures the beautiful Niagara Region in her art.

Jared Robinson

Jared's paintings have been called eclectic in that he has many different subjects, using varied media: acrylic, watercolour and pastel. His landscapes have the feeling of seclusion, while other works have a more human touch. Jared tries to give the viewer a place to go and reflect.

Jared is a regular member of a life drawing group, a plein air group, and is a member of the St. Catharines Art Association and a lifetime member of the Niagara Pumphouse Arts Center. He has had exhibits at Keith's Restaurant, Kennedy Art Gallery and The Niagara Pumphouse Arts Center, and outdoor exhibits with the Parkway Artist Guild, the St. Catharines Art Association, Niagara Pumphouse Art By The Lighthouse, Kacaba Winery, and Pelham Art In The Park.

His art is currently on display and for sale at the Wine Route Gallery, Vineland, and the Log Cabin Inn and Restaurant in Parry Sound, ON.

Roma J. Rojik

Roma is an accomplished artist who has worked in a variety of media: acrylics, oils, photography, and

stained glass. Be it feathered, furry, or even a flower, Roma loves to expose features of common subjects unnoticed by most and give them visual importance by painting them larger than life. The viewer is lured into the painting, looking at the subtle nuances of colour dancing across the canvas, evoking emotion and awe. Even the simplest piece can be powerful, expressive, and beautiful at any moment in time.

Roma excels at capturing the essence of clients' cherished companions with personalized pet portraits. Her artwork is found in private collections in Canada and the United States.

David Rose

Born in Toronto, David studied at the Ontario College of Art, and later received a diploma in fine arts at St. Lawrence College in Kingston, Ontario. He also has a Master's degree in Canadian Art History from Concordia University in Montreal. Since 2003, David has concentrated on painting primarily urban scenes and rural landscapes. His preferred technique is acrylics on canvas or Masonite board. As a low-vision artist with macular-degeneration, he uses his own photographs as source material, and employs visual aids when creating his pictures.

David has exhibited work in solo and group exhibitions in Ontario and Quebec. He is a member of the St. Catharines Art Association, the Parkway Artists Guild, and the Visual Artists of Welland. He lives in St. Catharines, Ontario.

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Lesley Taylor

Lesley Taylor was born in war-torn London, England, and immigrated to St. Catharines where she became a Canadian citizen in 1962. She graduated from Brock University with a B.Sc. Geology, and worked for 10 years for the Ministry of Natural Resources. Subsequently, she consulted for some local pits and quarries. Since retiring, she does mosaic art as a hobby, and also writes poems. Her poems embrace everyday events/interests for the everyday person.

Adrianna Skaab Wildman

Adrianna graduated from McGill University and then taught art and drama for 3 years in Montreal before moving to Manhattan. There, she worked for fifteen years as a graphic designer for the art book publishing house Abbeville Press, and The International Center of Photography. She won the Arliss Award for Best Museum Poster in NYC, demonstrating "a sophisticated and effective example of graphic publicity."

She then went north to Connecticut for the next 18 years, where her passion for gardening was prompted, in part, as a rebellion against the size of her Manhattan apartments. In 2005, Adrianna moved into a downtown Toronto condo but, in 2010, after becoming lost in St. Catharines, she saw a For Sale sign and found the property of her dreams--because of the space for a garden.

Nicknamed "The Garden Gnome" by her neighbours, Adrianna began painting the flowers she planted. In winter, she continued indoors with orchids and cyclamen and, by the time Spring arrived, she had fallen in love with portrait painting, as well. "Because my flower paintings are often an impulsive choice, I try to achieve a feeling of happiness, of contentment, and yet, a sense of energy. I am reacting to that special excitement I feel when I see something beautiful in my garden."

Adrianna is a member of the Grimsby Art Gallery, the KUMF Gallery, Toronto, the Niagara Artists Centre, the Parkway Artists' Guild, the St. Catharines Art Association, and the Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre.