

Georgia Poetry Society

FALL CONTESTS NOW OPEN: SEE PAGE 7!

GPS October Meeting Featured Readers



Atlanta-based poet **Julie E. Bloemeke**, native of Toledo, Ohio, and author of *Slide to Unlock* (Sibling Rivalry Press, 2020), a finalist and semi-finalist for multiple book prizes, including the 2016 May Swenson Poetry Award, will be the featured guest reader at the GPS Quarterly Meeting on Saturday, October 24, 2020. Her poems have appeared in numerous anthologies and literary journals. Bloemeke’s ekphrastic work won first prize at the Toledo Museum of Art (displayed with the Claude Monet collection) and her work on Philip C. Curtis was selected for a limited-edition chapbook anthology collaboration between the Phoenix Museum of Art and Four Chambers Press. Julie will also be the judge for the GPS 2020 Byron Herbert Reece International Award. For more information, please visit her website at www.jebloemeke.com.



Featured GPS member reader Laura Johnson, author of *Not Yet* (Kelsay Books, 2019), leads the poetry workshop “Lines Between the Wines” at Warm Springs Cellars in Warm Springs, Georgia. Since 2014, she has also co-sponsored a creative writing club

at Fayette County High School, where she teaches English and ESOL.

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2020 Officers

Steven Shields, President
Alyson Shields, V. President
Ann Gillespie, Secretary
Lyn Hopper, Treasurer

2020 Board

Kristin Gorell
Edward Hall
Andrea Jurjevic
John Ottley
Ann Willis

From the President



Those of us who are long-time GPS members knew the late Ron Self, Ira E. Harrison, and Bob Lynn, and we mourn their loss.

Ron Self became GPS president immediately after my first tour of duty, and I will never forget his first official meeting as president, for which he obtained a horse-drawn carriage to take members from our meeting site to his lovely residence in Columbus. I got to know and appreciate Ron's work by spending many hours perfecting and producing his chapbooks *Art of War* and *Requiem for the Unconvinced*. Ron was a consistent winner of our contests and was also featured in our sole Edward Vickers memorial chapbook, *Under a Hundred*. I'm really pleased memorial funds were gifted to GPS to make the new chapbook competition in his memory possible. This gives GPS an annual chapbook contest, the Ron Self award alternating now in opposite years with our already-established Charles Dickson chapbook contest.

Ira E. Harrison, whom Henrietta Andrews described so warmly in her tribute in our summer newsletter, was a magnetic, unforgettable poet. His notable academic career went largely unnoticed at GPS, and few members realized that behind the frequently showstopping open mic performer in the kufi cap was an anthropologist and social activist with a deep interest in public health issues. [Alisha Winn's tribute](#) to Ira on the *Anthropology News* website, June 12, 2020, mentions his research on "migrant farm workers, religion, African Americans and race relations, medical and applied anthropology, public health, and Africa." He also cared about poetry and served GPS ably and well as its president. Our contest in his name this year furthers the fusion of poetry and social conscience that characterized Ira E. Harrison.

And Bob Lynn—I wish I had an hour to share the many stories I have about Bob. It was at his suggestion that he, John Ottley, and I started a poetry critique group that met at the Johns Creek Spruill Oaks library; today the group stands as the Johns Creek Poets (sponsors and supervisors of the Ron Boggs contest we are publicizing this year). Bob was a former college president with a talent for setting an example that inspired and brought out the best in others. Like Ron and Ira, Bob was also a gifted writer and keenly interested in the work of other poets. I remember riding with him to Poetry at Tech once to hear Billy Collins. After the reading, we worked our way through the book signing line. When we finally got in front of the Poet Laureate of the United States, Bob thought nothing of getting Billy up on his feet for a quick grip-and-grin picture that for all the world looked like they were long-lost buddies. Such was the charisma of Bob Lynn.

And so goodbye, old friends. Thank you for your wonderful service to poetry and to the Georgia Poetry Society. Thank you for your friendship, your mentorship, your good humor, your ready smile; thank you for your leadership and stewardship and untiring support of our Society. In whatever Valhalla poets move on to once they depart from us, we expect we will one day hear you singing. Until then, hail and farewell.

Steven Shields, October 2020

GPS Member News

We regret to announce the passing of **GPS Past President Ron Self** on July 3, 2020. Please see John Ottley's tribute to Ron in this issue.

Rest in peace, also, **Dr. Robert L. Lynn**. Bob Lynn, former member and active and generous volunteer with the Georgia Poetry Society, author of the internationally known poem "Cancer is So Limited," passed away September 8, 2020.

Diana Anhalt is the finalist in the Georgia Author of the Year 2020 Award for Poetry in the chapbook category with her collection *Walking Backward*.

Kathy Ellis will be the featured poet at the October "Wine, Cheese & Spoken Word" evening at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Atlanta, 1190 W Druid Dr NE.

Jill Jennings's poem, "A Tribute to Henrietta Lacks, The Hero in the Laboratory," appears in the latest edition of *Please See Me*, a literary journal addressing doctor/patient relationships. Jill's poem "Once This Thing is Over" and prose piece "Dear Friend in Christ" will appear in the December issue of *Gather Magazine*, a national publication for Lutheran women. Her letter "Dear Loneliness" has been picked up by an artist and will be included in an art installation.

Randy Mazie's latest poem, a political satire entitled "A Message from Homeland Security to all Neighborhood Homeowners," has been published online in the *Dissident Voice Newsletter*. His poem "Cervantes' Straw" was featured as poem of the day on September 14, 2020, on www.YourDailyPoem.com.

Maren O. Mitchell will have two poems in an upcoming issue of *Cider Press Review*: "Depression, Viewed Objectively" and "Fecundity." Two other poems, "Gray," and "Pale first cousin to red," will be published in a forthcoming issue of *The Antigone Review* (Canada).

Clela Reed won the Georgia Author of the Year 2020 Award for Poetry in the chapbook category with her collection *Silk*. Her poem "Women's Hands: A Primer" won second place in the National Federation of Poetry Societies 2020 Contests, Power of Women Award.

DON'T MISS THE OCTOBER QUARTERLY MEETING!

FEATURED READERS! SOCIETY UPDATES! MEMBER OPEN MIC!

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2020 AT 10 AM

TUNE IN VIA ZOOM FROM THE COMFORT OF YOUR OWN HOME!

FOR INFORMATION, GO TO THE MEETINGS PAGE ON OUR WEBSITE

www.georgiapoetrysociety.org

GPS Members only for Open Mic. Please email vp@georgiapoetrysociety.org no later than Tuesday, October 20, to sign up.

**VISITED THE GPS WEBSITE RECENTLY?
TIME TO TAKE A TOUR!**



**HOME*ABOUT*MEETINGS*BOOKSTORE*CONTESTS
MEMBERSHIP*NEWSLETTER*VIRTUOSOS*REACH US**

If you haven't checked in at www.georgiapoetrysociety.org in the last few months, you might not recognize it next time you do. Steven Shields, our GPS president, has been working to freshen up our look and add more information for members.

What's new?

The Bookstore page now includes member publications as well as GPS books. Members can notify Steven at president@georgiapoetrysociety.org if they would like their work to be featured.

Charter member and past president Ethelene Dyer Jones's fascinating history of GPS, which she penned in 2000, is found under the History sub-tab of the About tab. Also under History, you will find a list of our past presidents.

Virtuosos page features links to recordings of readings by members.

Most important this time of year, the Contests page details our various contests.

Coming soon to our Home page: button links to our GPS social media.

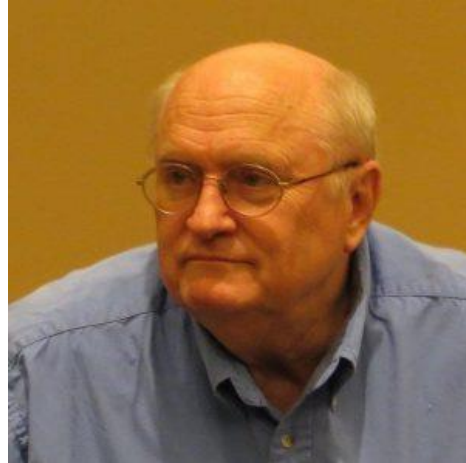
These are just a few highlights. Do check them out and explore further! And please let Steven know if you have any feedback or suggestions.

GOT NEWS?

Submission Deadline for Winter Newsletter is December 9th

Share your poetry news with fellow members!

Send to Ann at newsletter@georgiapoetrysociety.org



Ronald Self, past president of the Georgia Poetry Society, passed away July 3, 2020. Fellow member, past president, and friend, John Ottley Jr., shares these thoughts on Ron:

Ron was a gentleman as well as a gentle man.

His poetry was kind, yet he saw through to the very marrow of life and wrote of it incisively and without bitterness, hopelessness, or vengeance. His work had a way of sneaking around behind you and conking you in the back of your head just when you thought it might not be important, except that, after reading his work often, you knew it was going to be important.

I remember especially his loving written remarks about his son and his observations on war—particularly the Civil War and Vietnam. He served in the latter. Unlike many veterans, he was able to write about it with feeling but also objectivity.

His home always was open to poets as was his heart. I remember his unfailing hospitality and support when he was GPS president. I agreed to go through the brown cardboard boxes of records which inevitably accompany each new GPS leader into office. I holed up in a downtown Columbus hotel two days and nights, earning the ire of the poor persons who had to clean my room and throw away mountainous stacks of files deemed superfluous or repetitive.

We were two somewhat dissimilar personality types who, through the magic of poetry, found harmony and mutual respect. I never could, or will, write to his level of scholarship and veneration for classical poetry, but he helped me be content with my limitations.

All too often, we like the poet, but never have an opportunity to like the man. My life was immeasurably enriched by knowing Ron the man.

A new chapbook competition has been set up with donations given in memory of Ron Self. Please see details in this newsletter and under the [Ron Self Chapbook Award](#) tab of the Contests section of the GPS website.

Georgia Poetry Society Needs You!

Nominations Needed for the GPS Board for 2021

One of the most meaningful ways to support your poetry society is to volunteer to serve on the GPS board. We are still seeking nominees for the 2021 board.

The current board is grateful that Steven Shields and Alyson Shields have graciously agreed to join the slate for a second term as GPS president and vice president, respectively.

Other positions to be filled for 2021 are: secretary, treasurer, three at-large board positions.

Thank you to our nominees so far: Michael Diebert, who has stepped up to stand as secretary, and Lisa Allender, who will be on the slate as a board member.

More volunteers are needed, please!

If you are a member with bookkeeping or accounting skills (including QuickBooks), please consider the GPS treasurer role, which is a key officer position.

Lyn Hopper, who has served for several years as GPS treasurer and now needs to step down, will happily provide details. Email Treasurer@georgiapoetrysociety.org if you would like her to share with you what is entailed.

The slate will be presented in the coming weeks for approval and for a vote by the membership. Our aim, if possible, is still to conclude the process by or close to the fall meeting date. This allows time for the new officers and board members to move smoothly into position when they are initiated at the January meeting to begin their term(s).

Being a board member gives you an opportunity to have a voice in how the Georgia Poetry Society moves forward.

Please consider taking your turn and volunteering!

Interested members, email President@georgiapoetrysociety.org

GPS 2020 FALL CONTESTS NOW OPEN

SUPPORT YOUR POETRY SOCIETY BY TAKING PART!



Time to get out your poet's pencil and hone those pieces that you've been working on to submit to this year's GPS fall contests!

The board paid close attention to the feedback in this summer's contest survey responses, and changes have been made. We are excited about the fall 2020 contest lineup and hope the variety in categories, the increase in number of awards, and the emphasis on providing more member opportunities inspire every GPS member to submit poems to one or more GPS award contests.

Two of the award categories honor past presidents who passed away this year: the Ira E. Harrison Social Issues Poetry Award (judge, Barry Marks) and the Ron Self Chapbook Award (judge, James Green). These are open to members and non-members.

The Byron Herbert Reece International Poetry Award (judge, Julie E. Bloemeke) will this year include prizes for first, second, and third places. Open to members and non-members.

Two of this year's contests have new themes intended to inspire the ingenuity of our members and are for GPS members only: the Nonce-sense Poetry Award (judge, Jeff Hardin) and the "Reigning Cats and Dogs" Award (judge, Marissa McNamara).

All of the above have a deadline of November 15th.

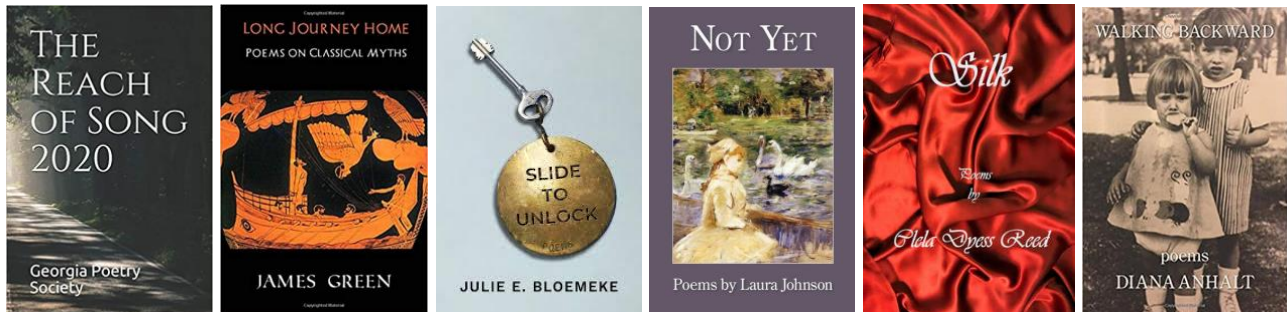
All of the awards are listed under the Contests tab at www.georgiapoetrysociety.org. Each competition has its own rules. If you enter more than one competition, you must send them in on separate emails. *Please read and follow instructions very carefully as some rules have changed this year and they can vary between competitions.*

In early spring of 2021, there will be an opportunity for members to enter poems in the Reach of Song Member Excellence Award. Watch for more information closer to the time.

While notifying our members about our annual fall contests, we are taking the opportunity to post a reminder about a couple of other contest opportunities that have a connection to the Georgia Poetry Society. A benefit of GPS membership is automatic membership of the National Federation of State Poetry Societies. Check out the many contests on their webpage: www.nfsps.com. Most are open between early January and mid-March each year, and one of them is sponsored by GPS. We also remind members that one of our local Georgia poetry groups, Johns Creek Poets, has an annual contest in memory of Ron Boggs, who was a GPS member; it is open mid-October to December 5, 2020.

If you have been putting off entering a poetry contest, now is the time to set that caution aside. Give it a try, and know you are supporting your Georgia Poetry Society as you do so. Good luck with your submissions!

THE GPS BOOKSTORE



A new feature on our website is the [Bookstore](#) page. This is where you find listings of our most recent GPS publications, including *The Reach of Song* annual anthology and the Charles Dickson Chapbook Award winner, *Long Journey Home* by James Green.

Look there as well for information on how to get copies of books by our featured readers at the upcoming quarterly meeting: *Slide to Unlock* by Julie E. Bloemeke and *Not Yet* by Laura Johnson. Also listed are titles by several members, including the Georgia Author of the Year 2020 Award for Poetry in a chapbook format winner and finalist: *Silk* by Clela Reed and *Walking Backward* by Diana Anhalt.

We do not have room for all of our GPS publications on the website, but the GPS book order form lists what is available, including some great bargains on older titles. You can view (and print) it from the website by locating the most recent *The Reach of Song* in the bookstore section and clicking on the “GA Poetry Society” button beneath it.

Or just click here: [Georgia Poetry Society Book Order Form](#)

WINTER QUARTERLY MEETING

JANUARY 2021

Though it seems likely we will have to meet again via Zoom in January 2021, an announcement will go out to members via email.

Please also keep an eye on the main page of the GPS website closer to the date.

www.georgiapoetrysociety.org