

[View this email in your browser](#)



NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2020

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 3

OUR PURPOSE

The Poetry Society of Tennessee-Northeast chapter represents a group of authors dedicated to excellence in poetry writing. We strive continually to perfect our craft and welcome all those who share our desire to develop as poets.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Our Lives They Are a-Changin'

In 1964 Bob Dylan released an album with the title track song "The Times They Are a-Changin'." It became an anthem for the shambolic changes shattering the established order of that time. The first verse sets the tone:

Come gather 'round people
Wherever you roam
And admit that the waters
Around you have grown
And accept it that soon

You'll be drenched to the bone
If your time to you is worth savin'
Then you better start swimmin'
or you'll sink like a stone
For the times they are a-changin'

Little wonder his song struck a chord with American audiences. Those of us around then can pull up mental images of civil and political turbulence: black batons striking and dog teeth snarling, city buildings in flames protesting Americans dying on Southeast Asian soil. By one account between 1964 and 1971, there were 752 riots and 15,835 cases of arson (*Wall Street Journal*; June 5, 2020; A17).

We're now engaged in another tumultuous crisis. COVID tsunamis half a mile-high crash countries and communities across the globe with lethal force. Racial unrest persists in an apocalypse of long repressed truths about us and our society. While we wait for large scale scientific and political solutions, each person faces an existential question: "What of me now with macro social and microscopic powers threatening my accustomed order, my money, and my breath-by-breath life itself? With demons grinning-in all around, how summon my higher angels?"

I want to point to three persons with cogent commentary. First, is Peggy Noonan. In an essay entitled "A Plainer People in a Plainer Time" she surveys the pandemic assaults. She then writes, "As the lockdown forces us to turn inward, we rethink what's important and what we were meant to do." She continues, "Here is what I am certain of. We will emerge a plainer people in a plainer country, and maybe a deeper one. Something big inside us shifted." (*Wall Street Journal*, May 23-24, A15) Noonan mentions the editor of Vogue magazine who commented that for the first time in ages no high fashion model is on the cover of Vogue. It's simply a rose.

Next, I cite Mary Oliver, Pulitzer Prize winning poet. From your own meanderings in poetry, you likely have read her "Instructions for living a life" in her poem "Sometimes" (*Red Bird* [2008] 37):

Pay attention.
Be astonished.
Tell about it.

If ever a time called for our poetic impulses to pay outward and inward attention, to be astounded whenever our eyes dilate in delight or danger, to hear metaphors whisper images for our iambic pentameters, and to write about it, that time is now.

Finally, I return to the lyrical insights of Bob Dylan. In the second verse of his signature song, he calls upon writers to prophesy with prudent imagination. It's a verse to print, to read and re-read for its rhyme to artistically anchor in our literary unconscious:

Come writers and critics
Who prophesize with your pen
And keep your eyes wide
The chance won't come again
And don't speak too soon
For the wheel's still in spin
And there's no tellin' who that it's namin'
For the loser now will be later to win
For the times they are a-changin'

In a world-wide pandemic riddled by multi-sided frustration and uncertainty loosening fears of loneliness and death, how shall we live? Peggy Noonan, Mary Oliver, and Bob Dylan hold high a banner. Its message: *Turn Brokenness to Blessing*. Let COVID's storms of incessant lightning illumine pathways to a simpler, more graceful, authentic life.

What shall we write? Put your epiphanies on paper. With ears to hear, listen to seasoned writers, including our 2020-21 carefully chosen program presenters. Write deeply. Find your clearer voice. Your poems of particular importance to you will have the most profound meaning for others. Now is a once-in-a-lifetime season to compose refrains around the compelling theme: Our Lives They Are a-Changin'.

Calvin Ross

MEET A MEMBER



Lisa Kamolnick

Lisa Kamolnick will lead PST-NE's communications function this membership year. She served a similar role as communications chair for United Way of Greater Kingsport. Her relevant professional experience includes developing and executing communications strategies for executives.

Lisa joined PST-NE last fall. She has enjoyed meeting members and participating in programs and critiques. She appreciates the talent, knowledge and generosity of fellow members and is often moved and amazed by their shared work. She looks forward to getting to know members better ... and experiencing more of their work. She reflects, "It's a highlight of my day to hear fellow poets' creations, and it's an honor to share with them and learn from them."

She discovered her love for poetry in childhood, but her work at the craft has been sporadic. She was sparsely published on emerging digital-only venues in the early 2000s. She resumed poetry writing in 2019. Lisa is still finding her voice as a poet. Her work often reflects her interest in humanity and nature, especially what happens at their intersections and in their interactions. She enjoys exploring diverse forms of poetry.

A Brief History

Lisa was born in Texas and grew up on Air Force bases in the U.S., Canada and Germany. This instilled in her a deep appreciation for military service and an avid interest in humanity and culture. Lisa pursued a broad-based liberal arts education that fed her curiosity and fueled her love of language. She earned her Bachelor of Arts in English from the University of Florida, where she was inducted into Phi Beta Kappa.

Storytelling for business results is a thread that runs through her career tapestry of diverse industries and roles in northwest Florida and northeast Tennessee. While in Florida, Lisa also built a side career as a lyricist and vocalist and gained experience as a voice actor. In 2007, Lisa relocated here to work for Eastman. She recently started a business, Kamolnick Kreative, which provides voice acting, writing and editing services for businesses and creative artists. You can learn more at kamolnickkreative.com and on [Facebook](#).

In 2014, Lisa married Paul, a sociology professor, and became stepmom to his three grown children. Their eldest (and only son) lives in Oregon and currently works in the food industry. Their middle child will complete her Bachelor's degree in Communications this August and plans to continue work in hospitality. Their youngest recently earned her Bachelor's degree in Psychology and plans to enter graduate school. Former foster parents, Lisa and Paul remain in close contact with their last placement, a group of four siblings then aged 4 through 9. They also have a dog and two cats.

Living the Pandemic Life

Lisa has been deeply moved by the scope and stories of the pandemic the world over and by the recent unrest over racial injustice sparked in America. While her day-to-day life has not changed much, she has felt a shift in the fabric of her life. She misses in-person connections with friends and family. She started her business mere weeks before the shutdown began. Frequent visits to her parents (and a few other family members) in Florida are on hold. Traditional graduation ceremonies for her stepdaughters were cancelled, as was a family reunion. On the upside, she's carved out more time to write poetry.

Lisa was saddened that COVID-19 put a damper on PST-NE's 10th anniversary celebrations; however, she remains excited about the year. Reflecting on leadership response, she notes, "Foremost on everyone's minds was the well-being of others," adding "Rose, Calvin and the rest of the leadership team recognized the need to cancel meetings. As part of leadership transition, the team quickly pivoted to a virtual meeting strategy to ensure people could reconnect and receive member benefits." She's enjoyed working with and getting to know the leadership team better.

Lisa helped her professor husband transition to online classes using Zoom. His students repeatedly told him how thrilled they were to have something that felt like a real classroom experience. This year Lisa has participated in team meetings, critique group sessions, and a poetry workshop using Zoom, and all have been positive experiences. She anticipates PST-NE Zoom meetings will be positive, too, especially as people get used to the technology. Still, she looks forward to in-person meetings.

Lisa Not Writing Poetry

When she's not writing poetry, Lisa can often be found working on her business or on PST-NE business, exploring the beauty of the region, experimenting with recipes for her blog, or writing blog posts. Much of the photography featured on her online venues is her own. She might also be found happily making art or music, reading, streaming movies or shows, keeping in touch with friends, gardening, or visiting with family. You can follow her adventures and musings on [Instagram](#) and [Food Passages](#).

WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST MEMBERS

As we continue to grow as a society, we would like to take a moment to say we appreciate every member and everything they bring to our community. Join us in welcoming our newest members!

J.B Baxley	Michael Broderick
Jerry Buchanan	Nancy Jane Earnest
Heidi Ehle	Matthew Gilbert
Isabel Gomez Sobrino	Cecilia Gunnell
Joel Hillhouse	Rieppe Moore
Mara Torok	Emily Williams
Seth Grindstaff	Sam Campbell

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Recently, The McKinney Center and PST-NE hosted the Try-It Challenge - Eye Poem, which invited poets to use "found" words and images to create poetry for submission. Winners of the challenge were announced on June 16th.

Currently, PST-NE is campaigning a Persona Poem challenge through Facebook as an incentive to encourage local youth to stretch their voices by taking on various perspectives across academic disciplines. While the campaign aims to encourage local youth writers, we also encourage our members to try these challenges as well.

Some of our members are working on the *Tennessee Voices* anthology. It is an anthology of The Poetry Society of Tennessee. It features poems that have won monthly contests, winning poems from the Annual Mid-South Poetry Festival, and student poetry contest winners. This year the anthology committee is being chaired by Matthew Gilbert. Information for previous volumes can be found at <http://www.tnpoetry.org/publications.html>

Our goal is, first and foremost, to spread the word of poetry through appreciation, creation, and sharing. As we continue to grow, we hope to mark new milestones for our chapter and grow as poets and a community.

PST-NE VITAL STATISTICS

MEMBERSHIP

27

FULL
MEMBERS

2

ASSOCIATE
MEMBERS

0

STUDENT
MEMBERS

TREASURY

CURRENT BALANCE:	\$ 1,245.56
OUTSTANDING CHECKS:	190.00
OUTSTANDING DEPOSITS:	25.00
EFFECTIVE BALANCE:	\$1,080.56

FACEBOOK



PAGE VIEWS:	52
PAGE PREVIEWS:	-
PAGE LIKES:	12
POST REACH:	93
POST ENGAGEMENTS:	98
PAGE FOLLOWERS:	12

REPORTED FOR MEMBERSHIP YEAR 2019-2020
MAY 2020

CHAPTER BUSINESS

We have recently sent out an email with our proposed budget for 2020/2021 year. Be sure

to review the budget and be ready to vote. We will vote on approval of this budget during our June 27th online zoom meeting.

As a reminder, if you will be unable to attend our June 27 Zoom meeting, please respond to that email before the 27th to register your vote of (YES) or no (NO) of the proposed budget.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Do you often wonder about what makes a poem a poem or a song a song? Consider the musical qualities of form. In what new ways can you make music poetic or poetry into a song?



Don't miss the chance to find out in July!

APPLAUSE FOR

Harvey Stone on his awards for NFSPS contests: His poem "Winter's Call" took The NFSPS Board Award 6HM, and he was awarded 3rd place for The Power of Women Award for his poem "Sexual Syntax."

Nancy Jane Earnest whose poem "Roan Mountain Rain" in ETSU's *Mockingbird* literary journal.

Lisa Kamolnick whose poem "Breaking Bread," will be included in *Pivot and Pause*, an anthology from the TELL(h)ER Summit #tellher1for30 Instagram challenge issued by Azure Antoinette (known as the Maya Angelou of the Millennial generation).

Matthew Gilbert whose poems "On the Original Face," "Just Desserts," and "Pilferer" appear in the current issue of UV-Wise's *Jimson Weed*.

CONTESTS

August - Road Trip: my favorite vacation, any form, 40 lines max

Send all entries to the Monthly Contest Chair: Ann Carolyn Cates, 7471 Greenbrook Pkwy, Southaven, MS 38671 by the 15th of the preceding month (7/15). Good luck!

DON'T FORGET!

Poetry Society of Tennessee celebrates its 64th Annual Festival and Contest. Entry deadline for contests is August 10, 2020. Check out the details

at https://www.poetrytennessee.org/uploads/1/2/4/7/124779620/contest_brochure_2020_rev_1.pdf

Do you know any young adults who want to try their hand at contests? Encourage them to check out the NEW

for 2020 young adult contest sponsored by Margaret LoBue. The contest is open form and focuses on social issues facing the youths of 2020. This is a great opportunity to bring new or developing voices out through poetry.

SUBMISSION DEADLINES

Got a story, bio, or update to share? Deadlines for member information submissions are as follows:

- Newsletter: 25th of each month to [Matthew Gilbert](#).
 - Web: 15th of each month to [J. Michael Ramey](#).
-

