

2022 Anthology

WRITING POETRY & JUSTICE

Foreword by award-winning poets-writers
Rev. Lynn Casteel-Harper and Dr. Ryan Harper
Edited by Luvon Roberson, Maitri Butcher
& Dr. Vernay Mitchell-McKnight



Riverside Writing Group

An Education Ministry Small Group of The Riverside Church

Messages from Clergy of The Riverside Church

Oh my! The Riverside Writing Group: 2022 Anthology/Writing Poetry & Justice is here, now, to fire up your spirit for truth and change and justice! And what a marvelous sequel to the 2021 offering. I've had the great pleasure to read just a few of the submissions and I'm deeply struck by the power of words and images conjured up by those who have made submissions to this edition.

You'll be invited to ponder where "equity concerns crave light" and to listen for "the sacred in the human." You'll encounter "covens of gents," and be thrilled by "justice poems for justice purposes." Perhaps like me, you'll feel outrage at the "virulent partisan politics" that poison our democracy and be moved to do something about it.

At our age, whatever that is; in this time, that means now; after all we've seen and heard, done and not done; we still have so far to go, so much to learn, in the words of one of our writers, so much to know so we "can't not remember."

That's the urgency of this moment, we can't afford not to remember, so we don't repeat the mistakes of the past, or permit new thinly veiled injustices to target the vulnerable while the already privileged continue to enjoy the fruits of the labor of all. We owe a debt of gratitude to all those who have submitted work, powerful and beautiful work, to this 2022 Anthology/Writing Poetry and Justice. They are a myriad of voices that give us the opportunity to "learn to love the cacophony where justice flows between the gift and the giving." May your reading of what lies within strengthen your resolve to live in the beloved community that seeks peace through justice with love.

*Grace, justice, peace,
Rev. Michael E. Livingston
Interim Senior Minister*



Messages from Clergy of The Riverside Church

Dear Readers,

I am so pleased that the Riverside Writing Group is publishing its second anthology focused on Writing Poetry & Justice. As Rev. Casteel-Harper said, in launching this series, “We all have different entry points into poetry” and what a blessing it is to see the different entry points the writers in our anthology have embraced. This anthology includes many powerful forms of poetry justice writing! I have the poem “Trees,” by Joyce Kilmer, stuck in my head, which Rev. Casteel-Harper opened this series with, and I think it is worth repeating in this anthology. Trees speak and if we would only listen! These beautiful justice poems in this anthology speak powerfully -- may we listen and learn!

Trees**

I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree.

A tree whose hungry mouth is prest
Against the earth’s sweet flowing breast;

A tree that looks at God all day,
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;

A tree that may in Summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair;

Upon whose bosom snow has lain;
Who intimately lives with rain.

Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.

A big thank you to Luvon Roberson, Maitri Butcher, and Dr. Vernay Mitchell-McKnight for organizing this excellent poetry and justice series. To our writers, thank you for sharing your writing. It has blessed me and will bless many others. Finally, as Vernay writes in her poem “Perfect Locations: An Ode to Justice Writing,” may justice get infused into all of our lives!

*Grace and peace,
Rev. Bruce Lamb
Minister of Education & Faith Formation*

** *Trees*, by Joyce Kilmer <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/joyce-kilmer>



A Message from 30-Year Member of the Riverside Poetry Group

“Do You”

As I rushed to an appointment, I observed the familiar shape of a guitar case strapped onto the back of a young man who rushed along ahead of me. As we waited at the traffic stop, I -- guitar music lover -- offered to him what I thought to be a compliment stating, “I wish I could do what you do.” With a quick glance and a slight smile, he responded: “Well, everybody has something to do.” His response landed with a wallop and launched my thoughts to Church School lessons from the days of my youth.

One lesson after another from Biblical teachings seemed to speak-up. There were excerpts from the *Parable of the Talents*, *Light on a Lampstand*, followed by *This Little Light of Mine*, one of the many songs Church School students were taught. Added to that curriculum were some of the messages from the Apostle Paul to followers pertaining to the distribution of gifts to all; gifts from The Creator to every individual for service to all. As the traffic light changed, truth realized, found voice; more to myself than to him, I exclaimed quietly, “Hey! That’s right!” The young man stepped off on his way and I sauntered, no longer rushing toward my destination, pondering my brief interaction with the young stranger.

Everyone has gifts and interests available for expression. We honor our gifts and show appreciation for them when we acknowledge, further develop, and use them. Embedded in the Biblical teachings were messages that as we serve others, we also serve ourselves, both extrinsic and intrinsic rewards not to be overlooked. This often-repeated reminder, highlighted in Church School as incentive and motivation for youth to learn, grow in faith, and develop the gifts of fertile young minds for service to expectant communities.

If nurtured and expressed, our gifts in use at any age, have the capacity to bring about joy and the discovery of additional gifts and talents. Comparing ourselves to others and using the typical “lack of time” excuse load denial and thwart effort. When we think our gifts are not good enough or ignore gifts “nudging” for expression, we deny ourselves and others both service and potential joy.

It is appropriate and important to recognize the gifts and talents of others. It is equally important to acknowledge one’s own gifts as valid and worthy regardless of starting point or level and to be about further development and expression. Moreover, engagement in efforts to make desired expression possible has potential while only watching and wishing has not. Indeed, the young stranger was right, his message to me was, “Do You.”

Likewise, to everyone whether writing -- as do we in Riverside Writing Group’s “Social Justice Writing” series-- or music, whatever the interest, we would do well to acknowledge our gifts with gratitude and to get busy; highly likely uncovering additional gifts.

This message from an anonymous Guitarist: “Do You.”

Hylde Clarke
Leader & Longtime Member, The Riverside Poetry Group
Member, Riverside Writing Group



About The Riverside Writing Group

For nearly two years, the entire world has been held hostage by the COVID pandemic, which has thrown a black light on all manner of injustice, illuminating with glowing light for all of us to see centuries-old realities of inequity, brutality, disparities in health and wealth at the same time calling us as never before to see how – literally – we cannot live in this world without affecting (or infecting) each other. Planet Earth is the one home we all share. Humanness is our irrefutable bond.

So as to offer one pathway for Riverside Church and Friends to help build community in the pandemic and in a world of heightened awareness of generations of injustice and oppression, Riverside Writing Group was created by Luvon Roberson, Debra Bracey, Dr. Vernay Mitchell-McKnight, and Maitri Butcher, with pastoral guidance from Rev. Charlene Wingate, Adult Education Committee. Rev. Bruce Lamb leads The Riverside Church Education Ministry.

Riverside Writing Group affirms our common human connection and invites all to join us in writing – in many different styles and genres – as a powerful tool for social justice: To write words that witness and speak truth to our shared humanness.

Each Riverside Writing Group series showcases a guest presenter -- well-known published writer -- who focuses on a writing genre in 40-minute presentation, followed by 20-minute Q&A from participants. Riverside Writing Group then invites participants to join in four weekly prompt-based writing sessions focused on the particular writing genre, after which they may choose to read their work at our OPEN MIC Night. When feasible, we publish an anthology of work submitted by writers who participated in any component of the writing series and we launch the anthology with a book party.

Our Mission

The mission of Riverside Writing Group is aligned with particular aspects of the following:

The Riverside Church | Article II Mission (excerpt):

Members are called to an individual and collective quality of life that leads to personal, spiritual, and social transformation, witnessing to God's saving purposes for all creation. Therefore, the Church pledges itself to education, reflection, and action for peace and justice and the realization of the vision of the heavenly banquet where all are loved and blessed.

Adult Education Committee of The Riverside Church | Mission Statement

The Mission of the Riverside Church Adult Education Committee is to collaborate in the learning and planning of programs in an inclusive, interactive environment of sharing, that fosters spiritual growth, strengthens faith identity, and promotes social justice.

The key objective of Riverside Writing Group is to provide a welcoming, supportive forum for participants through specific genre-writing focus so as to express ideas, as well as voice, create, and share writings that bring to life and strengthen The Riverside Church mission and the Adult Christian Education mission.

- Riverside Writing Group Co-Creators & Planning Team



About Our 2022 Anthology: Writing Poetry & Justice

Our anthology is a curated collection that showcases the work of writers who participated in any of the four weekly prompt-based writings sessions and/or registered for Riverside Writing Group's kick-off virtual presentation on "Writing Poetry & Justice" delivered on 1.6.22 by award-winning poets-writers Rev. Lynn Casteel-Harper and Dr. Ryan Harper.

We invited those writers to submit their poetry and/or lyrical prose. We looked for contemplative, globally aware, truth-telling, and apathy-busting works, based on the writing prompts provided in the four weekly prompt-based writing sessions (via Zoom on 1.13.22, 1.20.22, 1.27.22, 3.3.22).

We also invited the writers to join our private group page on Facebook, where they can find daily inspiration to write justice in the supportive community of fellow writers.

Each writer is the sole copyright owner of their entry/entries. The copyright in the Anthology as a curated collective work belongs to the publisher of the Anthology, namely TRC/Education Ministry/Riverside Writing Group.

You are holding their justice poetry/lyrical prose work in your hands.

-Riverside Writing Group Co-Creators & Planning Team

Foreword by Rev. Lynn Casteel-Harper & Dr. Ryan Harper

A teenage girl is driven up and down Riverside Drive. She travels between the Ethical Culture school she attends in the Bronx and her home in Manhattan, in which her parents, both Jewish, vacillate between silence, outright rejection, and assimilation of their religious identities. The city's next great bridge is going up -- to be named after the great man, over the great river named after another great man. The bridge promises connection, between Manhattan and...whatever else America is. She watches every day the giant slowly grows -- the towers, the cables, the spans straining across the Hudson.

If young Muriel Rukeyser turned the other way on her commute, she would have seen another work in progress: Rockefeller's church, modern religion in Old-World European masonry, the promise of special revelation on Standard wealth. The tallest tower, the heaviest bell -- a structure of superlatives rising, beam by beam, above the young poet-activist in commute.

"Outrage and possibility are in all the poems we know," Rukeyser would write, years later. On one hand, Rukeyser claimed, were the "poets of outrage," who named exploitation, identified the mendacity of the rich and powerful, expressed lament and anger over systemic oppression, brought the fierce hammer of language down on injustice. On another hand, the "poets of possibility" exalted the beauty and power of the invisible and marginal, championed the often-locked precincts of human imagination, and steered themselves and their readers down the often-hidden routes of actual and possible restoration and reconciliation.

Rukeyser speaks of these two species of poets as separate -- Melville being her model for the first, Whitman for the latter -- but one senses that she kept watch for poets who synthesized the impulses. Outrage and possibility: what else is justice work but holding, in partially-resolved harmony, the sigh of the oppressed and the proclamation of release to the captives? Did Rukeyser listen to the blues? Her own lamenting, hopeful poetry suggests she did.

It is fitting that the writers in this anthology, as individuals and as a collective, affirm and augment their historic Riverside Drive fellow poet. Many of the pieces assembled here rage and weep over personal, local, national, and global injustice -- often expressing the deep connection between individual suffering and structural exploitation. Some of the pieces traffic with the exquisite, inspirational practice and power of everyday heroes, everyday stories. A good many hold outrage and possibility in creative tension: hope, when it appears, grounded in the groan of creation.

What we appreciate about this collection is of a piece with what we appreciate about the people of Riverside Church, at our best. This anthology seeks to tell the truths about the world's great wounds -- naming the suffering of the wounded, and the guilt of the wounders -- without succumbing to despair. It locates and sings the world's blossoming and latent beauty without nullifying the horror -- without succumbing to those escapist, body-denying fantasies that plague many religious expressions of hope.

Think of Muriel Rukeyser looking upon this great work assembled on Riverside Drive, smiling, weeping, hopeful.

Rev. Lynn Casteel-Harper

Author. ON VANISHING: Mortality, Dementia, and What It Means to Disappear (2020)

Minister of Older Adults at The Riverside Church

Dr. Ryan Harper

Poet. My Beloved Had a Vineyard (2017)

Faculty Fellow, Religious Studies Department at Colby College



Introduction

What happens when we, Riverside Writing Group, gather to write poetry and justice with other writers and writers-to-be?

Intertextuality, that's what!

Or, as poet Kevin Young might say, when we gather together, we create poems or narratives that “talk to each other.” And, as I listen to his recitation via YouTube of two Lucille Clifton poems he selects to show us their being in-conversation with each other, showcasing their intertextuality, it strikes me that Mr. Young is also the editor of an anthology on *African American Poetry: 250 Years of Struggle & Song*, in which both those two poems appear, one atop the other.**

I then wonder: Is there something about anthology-making? Some kind of poetic alchemy or magic? And, what about being in-community with each other since January 6, 2022? That's when we gather via Zoom for kick-off of our second series on “Writing Poetry & Justice” with a presentation by award-winning poets-writers Rev. Lynn Casteel-Harper and Dr. Ryan Harper.

Or, is it the four weekly prompt-based writing sessions, bringing our justice writers in our Zoom space to write together, even to try their hand at writing *ghazal*, a non-Western poetic form, and then to share their writing, lifting voices in poetry and justice?

How about the two weeks our writers use to refine their poetry and lyrical prose or to discover and create a new poem or prose piece, before joining fellow writers for joyful, even boisterous celebration at OPEN MIC Night/Book Party?

Indeed, it is during this celebration that our justice writers of poetry, drawing on the words of their fellow writers, become co-creators of one communal poem, called *cento* -- a poetic form composed entirely of lines from poems by other poets -- which we name “A Communal Cento for Justice.”

We see, too, the legacy of poetry at TRC in The Riverside Poetry Group, which has gathered for no fewer than 30 years to focus on *reading* poetry together. We pay tribute to the constancy and leadership of Marjorie Horton and Joel Horton, as well as to Hylda Clarke, whose Message you will find in this anthology, entitled “Do You.”

Further evidence of intertextuality is seen in the lyrical prose of Rev. Livingston's Message, in which he calls forth words from works contained within these pages. So, too, Rev. Lamb's Message, talking to the texts cited by Rev. Casteel-Harper and Dr. Harper, who, in their Foreword to this anthology, not only talk to the texts created by our very own justice poets and writers, but also take us on a lyrical journey, centering poet Muriel Rukeyser in poetry and justice.

Texts talking to each other! That's the alchemy that happens when coming together in-community to write, to lift voice in justice.



Introduction

I'm so pleased that you get to read such poetry and justice, to see material evidence created by writing in-community, to find texts speaking to each other, and just as powerfully, to *hold* this anthology in your hands. In so holding, may you be fueled to do justice!

Luvon Roberson
Founder, Co-Creator, Planning Team
Riverside Writing Group

** Kevin Young (Ed.). (Penguin Random House, 2020). *African American Poetry: 250 Years of Struggle & Song*. Penguin Random House.

** Julia Kristeva. (1980). *Word, Dialogue and Novel*. L. S. Roudiez (Ed.), *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art* (pp. 64-91). Columbia University Press.



Messages About Anthology-Making

“Spinning Justice Poetry”

After an unsuccessful experience with poetry in college, I shied away from reading it for decades. A few months ago, I cringed when poetry was chosen as the writing genre for this anthology, but somehow, I participated in all the planning sessions, the initial presentation, and the four writing sessions, gaining new insights as we proceeded.

I read some poetry and lyrical prose on my own and I listened attentively as members of Riverside Writing Group read their work. I began to see that writing in this genre is all about taking rough mundane letters, syllables, and words and fashioning them into wonderful lilting language that creates in the reader a sense of enjoyment or delight or maybe a sense of dread and foreboding.

I opine that this process is similar to spinning straw into gold.

Similar to Rumpelstiltskin, the poet takes common, everyday raw material -- words, phrases, sounds, etc. -- and somehow organizes them into pieces of literary fabric that hope to be valuable to the reader.

But unlike the fairytale, where only one person has this uncanny power, in Riverside Writing Group a multitude of members of differing levels feel comfortable to spin language in many different ways to create new poetic imagery showing what social justice looks like, what injustice looks like.

For my initiation as a spinner of justice poetry, I attempted a simple haiku trying not to overthink it, just concentrating on what was at hand in the moment. I wrote:

“Justice needs actions:

PREACH, SHOUT, MARCH, VOTE, WRITE, ROAR, LEAD!

Like at Riverside.”

After this first rendering, I set to work writing an ode which is included in this anthology. The rhythm and rhyme are far from perfect, but I believe the justice sentiment is clear.

One last note: a most helpful clue I gleaned from this experience of reacquainting myself with poetry is that a poem needs to be read many times. The first reading, of course, lets you know where the poem is going and how it gets there. But all those subsequent readings allow you to savor more subtle morsels of thought and tantalizing kernels of meaning that enliven your appreciation much more than the first reading allows.

So, in this anthology, let's experience these expressive words and phrases that have the quality of gold. May they perpetuate your passion and my passion for poetry, lyrical prose, and justice!

Dr. Vernay Mitchell-McKnight

Co-Creator & Planning Team

Riverside Writing Group



Messages About Anthology-Making

Dear Riverside Justice Writers and Readers,

This past winter we endeavored on the risky journey of writing Justice Poetry/Lyrical Prose.

What is so risky, one might ask? The risk is letting loose one's command over grammar, punctuation, and even spelling. Let's not mention humility and exceptional community making, 'tis indeed radical action in a world of divisions.

In our weekly convenings we relinquished personal control to the rewilding of our hearts. In this great escapism (quite an accomplishment in our world of rational thought), the making of community was born out of relearning what is innate -- to sing the ballad, tell the story, engage in the truth no matter its "pretty" or "gritty" label, to experience the joy.

I watched and learned this is a community of listeners; closely and carefully we listened to one another.

And yes, the presence of laughter was the necessary fool! How many moments were we in the depth of diagramming what-needs-Justice, and spontaneously were gifted by the presence of laughter! Equally unexpected was the swift turn to complete silence of contemplation.

Thank you for sharing your gifts.

We have memorialized some of these moments. Turn the pages of this 2022 Anthology carefully, you are holding more than a collection of words assembled by brave-souls, you are now part of the Truth-telling, Global Awareness, Apathy-busting world of Justice Writing!

*In peace,
Maitri Butcher
Co-Creator, Planning Team
Riverside Writing Group*



January 13, 2022 Writing Prompts

Prompt 1: What do you want in leadership (e.g., US President, or any position of authority and power)? Write a poem or lyrical prose about the leader you want or envision.

Prompt 2: What do you want for the future of our society? Write a poem or lyrical prose about the society you want or envision.

Prompt 3: In poetry or lyrical prose, write about *harmony*. What does harmony mean? How is it related to justice? Has that relationship changed over time? If so, how?

For Kenyani, Class of 2065**

(For Kamala, 2020. For Ketanji, 2022.)

“Mama, tell me ‘bout what’s comin’,”

Daughter, her black and steady eyes fixed on Mama’s high cheekbones and the fleshy mole right next to Mama’s top lip.

“Girl, I been done told you all ‘bout that. And, mo’ than once, too.”

Mama busy, hanging Papa’s heavy wool shirts on the clothesline, pulling the line closer. Her hands move, feeling in the bag hanging from her left shoulder for the clothes pins, then sealing his blue and gray uniform tops, all shiny brass buttons, though some pewter, to the line.

“Well, tell me again, Mama, I wants to know so I can’t not remember.”

“What you mean, you don’t want not to remember? What? You done gone and forget already?”

“Just sayin’ I wants not to forget, tha’s all I’m sayin’, Mama.”

“Daughter, never time not to remember. That ain’t none our choice. Girl, we meant never to forget ‘bout time comin’, time ahead! Hear me?”

Mama look over her shoulder, the clothes pins in the bag rattle.

“Well, like I done told you

Fo’ Centries squat

Bends over Mississippi forest, peers over all its trees:

Lob-lolly. Oak-gum. Hickory. Magnolia. Cypress. Water Tupelo.

Tryin’ hard to breath. Not to holler in all the pain.

Tryin’ hard to see. Not to weep over all those dried up dreams.

‘Til it gets to where can’t tell

One tree fro’ anotha

Can’t tell tree from Shubuta bridge,

Can’t tell one from anotha.

Fo’ Centries squat

Flings treetops. Breaks tree limbs. Grinds tree leaves.

Crushes tree roots. Heaves tree trunks. Rips open dark earth.

Cleaves rocks. Topples Elmina Castle. Hurls mountaintops.

Lifts new darken sky. Troubles roiling oceans and seas and

The Chick-a-saw-hay River.

Sets fire to corded rope. Frees charred bodies.



For Kenyani, Class of 2065**

Fo' Centries squat
And, Kamala done come
And, Ketanji done come
And, Kenyani done come.”

Luvon Roberson
New York, NY (Harlem)

** For more about Kenyani and the 2060s, see, “From Then to Now,” by Dr. Vernay Mitchell-McKnight, in *Riverside Writing Group: 2021 Anthology/Social Justice Writing* (published by TRC/Education Ministry/Riverside Writing Group, December, 2021), p.10.

Untitled

Some aim for harmony
Some dissonance
In music and society.

Robert Renwick
New York, NY (Washington Heights)

Harmony's Loss

Many in this land dream of harmony --
Back in the good-old-days Harmony
When blacks were colored
When they knew their place
When they sat in the back of the bus
When they paid in the front
But had to enter in the back.

The good-old-days
The era of labels and signs
Not for the color of paint
But for the color of skin
FOR COLORED ONLY
FOR WHITES ONLY—
BY ORDER OF POLICE DEPT.

The good-old-days Harmony
When people of color were forced to
Drink water from colored fountains
When yellow buses became black buses
If you were labeled colored
Food was only carryout
If you were labeled white
You were always right.

In the good-old-days
It was against the law for colored
To spell, read, and write
To look someone straight in the eyes
To stand up for their rights
I don't want harmony
If I can't live where I want
If I can't be myself
If I have to bite my tongue
If I can't jog freely without being gunned down.

No, I don't want harmony—
If I don't have the right to an abortion
If I don't have equal rights
If I can't vote
If black lives don't count
No, No, No
I don't want good-old-days Harmony
I want liberty
I want freedom
I demand justice!

*Melva C. Lewis
Long Island, NY*



Leadership

Leadership is the art of steering the ship
The gift of people inspired to come with
That believe in the power and strength to shift
A culture, an idea, only believed to be a myth

Leadership transforms the world away from the norm
It perseveres through the brunt of every storm
Communication is key, even sharing vulnerability
Values wisdom in all forms, through acts of civility

Leadership is strong, with integrity, respect, and insight
Loves to educate, elevate, relate, and highlight
All of the flowers striving to bloom from a seed
Unaware of all the support that they will even need

Their vision is clear, their hearing astute
With compassion and courage they dare to seek truth
Unencumbered by fear leadership flies, at times fails
Yet, in quiet reflection, evolution avails

Leadership is sought by the big and the small
Those authentic in nature are the ones people call
May God's Divine hand anoint the whole journey
Of Leadership's call on all trustworthy

*Rev. Charlene A. Wingate
East Elmhurst, NY (Queens)*

Letter to the World from a Dark Sister

Part I: The War at the Front Door

“Freedom will always triumph over tyranny”- President Joseph R. Biden, President of the United States of America

“We shall overcome”- President Zelenky, President of Ukraine

On very nearly the eve of the Lenten season of the Christian calendar, Joseph R. Biden, president of the United States, presented himself before the Congress, the Vice President, members of the United States Supreme Court, and the American people, to give his state of the Union address. The world was watching.

He began his remarks with a salute to the people of Ukraine and spoke of the great courage of the Ukrainian people as they battle to preserve their hard-fought democracy in the face of a massive invasion of their borders by a Russian army. That army was directed to attack their country by the president of Russia, Vladimir Putin. The attack was unprovoked, and its undeclared goal is to crush the democratic government of Ukraine. The goal of President Putin is to show the world that democracy, if not protected, can be destroyed. He is willing to kill as many men, women, and children as possible to achieve his goal. The Congress received President Biden’s remarks with thunderous applause.

President Biden then spoke passionately of the goals that he believes are possible to make America a better country. He was greeted with loud and long applause from a Congress that is largely bipartisan. He was cheered when he praised the people of Ukraine for their refusal to surrender their democracy. However, he was also greeted with boos by some members of Congress who behaved like recalcitrant teenagers that happened to walk in on an adult event. Indeed, when he spoke of the need for this country to affirm its democracy, the response from many members of the Republican Party and their supporters was lukewarm and even hostile. He spoke specifically about our nation’s need to pass the Voting Rights Act to shore up our democracy so that the collective voices of the people can still be heard.

Many people still follow the lead of former President Trump. Mr. Trump came to power by stirring the racial divide in this country. Indeed, many people around the country believe, erroneously, that, in the face of a deadly pandemic, the government’s act of providing vaccines to American citizens is an attack on their personal liberty. They maintain this way of thinking even though millions of people have died of COVID around the world and approximately one million people in the United States have also died of this disease.

*Regina Tate
Brooklyn, NY*



Letter to the World from a Dark Sister

Part II: The War at the Front Door

President Trump, our modern “Wizard of Oz,” came to power by sowing seeds of unrest, stirring our racial divide, and telling more than 10,000 lies while president of this nation.** This modern-day wizard is working on the premise that a lie told a thousand times can become the truth. The fact is that a lie, told many times, no matter how loudly shouted, is still a lie. One such lie that he and his cohorts are telling is that the past election was rigged, that the majority of the public did not vote for Mr. Biden, and that our democracy does not work if he is not declared our chief executive. Moreover, many Republicans around the country have passed laws that limit the right to vote. In fact, the failure by the United States senate to ratify the Voting Rights Act has imperiled our democracy. Indeed, the vote, denying the passage of new laws to protect the right to vote was done on the eve of Dr. Martin Luther King’s birthday.

Thus, the questions that we are confronted with today are: What is a leader? How is a leader made? Are leaders simply people who are born to become leaders due to the era in which they are born? People who come into government service or professions that aim to assist the general public can become leaders as a career choice. However, many others become leaders because of the skills that they possess, and they are then met with a confluence of events that propel them onto a national stage. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. exemplifies the latter. He became a leader on international scale.

President Zelensky was offered safe passage out of Ukraine by President Biden, yet his response was that he did not need a ride, he needed ammunition. His response, this writer believes, was a nod to Dr. King when Zelensky said that the people of Ukraine would overcome the assault on their country by Russia.

Ironically, this same Congress, whose members were present in the nation’s Capitol Building, on January 6, 2021, and who therefore had real-life experience in being the victims of an assault on our democracy -- such that 5 people were killed, 140 Capitol police officers were severely injured, and their very lives threatened -- cannot accept the dangers of these acts of sedition that took place before their very eyes. The people of Ukraine have met the Russian assault with what Dr. King called “soul force.” The force that empowered them to stand in front of tanks with nothing other than their own bodies to stop the assault on their democracy.

The leaders that we all need are those who are committed to social justice for the people that they represent. Perhaps, the better questions are: Where is your soul force? Are you willing to become a leader to protect our democracy? If not, why not?

Let’s get to work.

*Regina Tate
Brooklyn, NY*

*** Glenn Kessler, Salvador Rizzo, and Meg Kelly. “President Trump Has Made 12,019 False or Misleading Claims Over 928 Days: Analysis.” The Washington Post, August 12, 2019*



HARMONY

He, struck a chord not knowing
How it would be heard by others.
Others, joined the chorus, believing they heard his intent.
Believing, he had their best ability at heart.
Oh, how harmony should now be defined, as
Someone who understands the needs of others,
The need for others to join in with their best chord,
With all accord.

*Evelyn Seabrook
Eustis, FL*

HARMONY II

He, struck a chord, not knowing how it would be heard by others.
Others, joined the chorus, believing they heard his intent.
Believing, he had their best ability at heart.
Oh, how harmony should now be defined as,
Someone, who understands the needs of others,
Someone, who will lead others in the echo,
The need for others, to join in with their best chord,
With all accord.

*Evelyn Seabrook
Eustis, FL*



Dear U.S. Department of Education

A 21st century leader breaks all the rules,
because we know that We the People
are marginalized and oppressed, simultaneously,
by multiple systems of domination.
We know that you can't address racism without revolutionizing
sexism, capitalism, and homophobia all at once.

We, are inclusive,
never leaving no brother behind,
or sister.

We, are the truest,
heart pure as gold,
a soul truly divine.

We, know when to take a step back,
and share our power.

Have you heard that our children are our future?

I take pride in knowing when to step back,
letting my bredren and sister lead me
to our beloved community.
Never letting my ego, prejudice, or pride,
stop me from trusting you,
always assuming the best.
After all ain't we all capable?

I take pride in giving you my time,
always making myself available.
I work in service,
so you can't ever pay me enough
to do any job, yet I'd be willing enough
to do any job that will uplift you.
Only a capitalistic mind believes
their money can transcend time.
When in reality only your sadhana
goes with you to your next lifetime.

Haven't you heard, our children harbor a revolution?

Dear U.S. Department of Education

I know enough, to know
that I don't know anything at all.
But one thing I do know for certain,
is our children are our future.
So we must actively listen to them,
regardless of their identities,
our children know all the equitable answers.

There's no need to tell an intelligent being what to do,
we only need to create fertile spaces and the rest will bloom.
We all learn best when we are happy,
And yet we work our children, and staff, to death
like we're in factories.
My mother taught me to never bite the hand that feeds you,
so I refrain from talking about the... conditions.

It is clear, to anyone that cares,
Nel Noddings, knows that
we must re-evaluate our aims of education.
How can we broaden our ideas of educational success?
Why do we relate rigor and high stakes testing to progress?
What is the most effective way to achieve social equality?

Did you know, that we're cosmic?

As celestial beings we all have a consciousness
with a potential as vast as the cosmos.
So it's about time our curriculum reflects that.
Every child deserves a right to
evidence-based spiritual practices,
like yoga and meditation.
Let's refine the minds of our future,
revolutionizing the world from the inside out.

Sincerely,
A Child of Our Future

Gary Bogle
Brooklyn, NY



January 20, 2022 Writing Prompts

Prompt 1: Write a poem or in lyrical prose about the poet as truth-teller, heeding James Baldwin.

“The poets (by which I mean all artists) are finally the only people who know the truth about us. Soldiers don’t. Statesmen don’t. Priests don’t. Union leaders don’t. Only poets.” -- **James Baldwin** *Quote from his Community Church NY talk, in September 1963 & broadcast on WBAI as “The Artist’s Struggle for Integrity”* https://americanarchive.org/catalog/cpb-aacip_28-959c53fb23

Prompt 2: Write a poem or in lyrical prose about how the poetic invites more than the mind/the rational; it invites a total response of all our emotions, our feelings, heeding Muriel Rukeyser.

“A poem invites you to feel. More than that: it invites you to respond. And better than that: a poem invites a total response. This response is total, but it is reached through the emotions.” -- **Muriel Rukeyser** *Chapter One: The Fear of Poetry, p. 8, The Life of Poetry (1949)*

Prompt 3: Some family experts posit that “sibling rivalry” is actually a struggle about justice/injustice. In poetry or lyrical prose, tell whether or not this is true.

Doxology

Every day, a thousand songs
fall silent on your desk.
You can't make meaning from the noise, can't
find the melody in this hymn you mouth and mangle, can't
scan the phrases fast enough to
sing your mournful praise.
This isn't church. You quit church
and told yourself the preacher didn't speak to you,
that you don't miss that God-awful organ bellowing
into an empty hall.

Now ask yourself if this is true.
Audience and author,
what you know about music is that
it's hard to hear. And here you are
grief-cleaning again, sopping washcloth in your fist,
weeping along to "Blue Danube,"
beauty made banal by Looney Tunes, Kubrick, Netflix --
which is to say, made commonplace.
Listen: it begins faintly and then builds, this
familiar anthem to your failure.

Stop searching for the perfect word.
Righteous words are granite walls that only
mute the roar.
To make music, you must listen for
the sacred in the human, the howl and thunder
that heralds change, chaotic chords that briefly yield to harmony.
You've always loved "Praise God from Whom." Now learn
to love cacophony, where justice flows between
the gift and the giving, in the moment
when the congregation stands to sing.

Elizabeth Mosier
St. David's, PA



Meeting Of The Cemetery Elders

Where is the Poetry in Justice?
Pock-marked time sequences feverishly out of joint
No one came looking for light without a fight
Don't tell yourself if you are wrong or right
That will be History's delight.

Where is the Poetry in Justice?
Let me show the way, you say.
If you are waiting for the future
You rest in vain.
History is always closing the books before you're ready.
No matter what you say, it don't matter anymore
History always sways its way.

Where is the Poetry in Justice?
Let us be Angels unto Another in Each Other.
In the cracks
In the crevices
In the crawls
In the creases
Stars in the sky...no folly fallen.

Where is the Poetry in Justice?
A plantation of prejudice won't counter-punch the Devil's
Confederate Charter
Montgomery. Selma. Tuskegee.
Know how it all began.
Believe how it will end.
You are the Love that can change the World.
You, alone, together.

Where is the Poetry in Justice?
Truth is too big to fail. Now and Forever.
History's command: Fly, Feather, Heavy
Dare dream above your weight.
Whilst sophist scholars wrestle with lies over truth
On an academic scaffold low-wired with performative
structuralists
Trapeze the tiniest triumph on the mat for the Ages.

Where is the Poetry in Justice?
Identity Olympians be all things to no one.
Footnote your place anonymously in history with a deft
dalliance
They say: Float matters more than reserve.
In the Matter of The Balance of Karmic Payments
The Meeting of the Cemetery Elders is hereby adjourned
Sine Die.

*F.E. Scanlon
New York, NY*

Empty Bottles

5¢ refunds for empty soda bottles.

And the girl counts her empty bottles.
5¢ refunds for empty bottles.
Bags filled with empty bottles.
Bags of so many empty bottles.
Van man counts her empty bottles.
Bags curbside filled with empty bottles.
No science class for her empty bottles.
No math class for her empty bottles.
No technology class for her empty bottles.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement
won't count her empty bottles.
ICE doesn't care a damn about her empty bottles,
But they let her collect her empty bottles.
Some cheap labor for empty bottles.
No legalized status for empty bottles.
Empty future for empty bottles.
Living on the edge for some empty bottles.

The guy in the beat-up van counts her empty bottles, takes her empty bottles,
for some plug nickels, for empty bottles, and leaves the girl holding
an empty American bag.

*Isabella Calisi-Wagner
New York, NY (Upper Westside)*



Constant Imperfection

It was July 24th of 1987, when my brother was born. I was brought to the hospital by my Uncle Hopeton. I was 2 years old at the time. So, I can't recall what was going on. All I knew was that my mother was in the hospital, and that going to see her was supposed to be a surprise for me. After we checked into the hospital, we went up to where my mother was. We entered the room.

"Come meet your brother, I had a baby," my mother said.

"Let's go, Hopeton," I said immediately to my uncle, pulling and tugging on his pants leg, while looking up at this tower of a guy, standing at about 6 foot 5 inches! "Let's go, Hopeton!" I repeated, this time with even more urgency.

In retrospect, I feel my response was an injustice to Baby Bro. I feared all the attention everyone showered upon me would disappear. It wasn't time for me to be an older brother yet. But once the hospital discharged my mother and little brother, I was concerned for my mother. I saw a need for justice, so I would help my mother with my little brother. I would give him his baby bottle, hand my mother the diapers, and make sure my brother was comfortable.

Yet again, deep down inside when my mother wasn't looking, I would sneak behind her back trying to sabotage my baby brother, intentionally making him cry. To me, it was tit for tat; in my mind, it was as if I was being erased from the picture. The only person I was truly doing an injustice, of course, was to myself. However, my realizing that truth at the time was the hard part. It's not easy to accept what you don't understand. So, we sometimes fight a losing battle.

*Joshua James Powell
East Orange, NJ*

January 27, 2022 Writing Prompts

Prompt 1: Write a justice-related poem or lyrical prose that you think should be posted in some location that is unusual or inadvertent. Make it plain where the place is.

In our 1.6.22 kick-off presentation, Rev. Lynn Casteel-Harper read a poem that is posted in an unusual place: In one of the service plazas on the New Jersey Turnpike. Surprised in this discovery, she tells us “Poetry is not the most publicly prominent art.” But there it is, a service area named for the poet Joyce Kilmer and displaying his poem, “Trees.”

Prompt 2: Drawing on Hylda Clarke’s poem “EXCOR!” what will be carried into the future based on the present? **

Prompt 3: What color is Justice? Convince someone who is blind to see/experience your color of Justice by inviting a “full response” and using “all the senses” in your poem or lyrical prose, heeding poet Muriel Rukeyser.

***For more see, “EXCOR!” the poem, by Hylda Clarke, in Riverside Writing Group: 2021 Anthology/Social Justice Writing (published by TRC/Education Ministry/Riverside Writing Group, December, 2021), p.27.*

Hidden Intent

Our wounded souls roll
through these precious days.
The past lies tucked away
in coal-blackened hearts
pressured into diamonds,
buried in our chests.
We play our hands like a card game,
close to our vests
of hidden intents.

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Port Royal, SC



To the Afghan Taliban Brutes 2021**

I knew your fathers, and your grandfathers
kohl-rimmed eyes staring me down
to the hard-crushed desert lane in Gardez.

Clad in light blue, scarf, long tunic, loose pants
costumed like the Mary I played in a Christmas Pageant
my last high school year,
I followed the hostess teacher to the mud-walled girls'
school.

Immobile as the bald mountains edging the valley
you squatted against the bazaar stalls, rusty antique
rifles under your legs,
breezy tan *perahan o tunban* encasing your bony forms,
knitted skull caps a deceptive rainbow, as wrapped
turban dangled,
collapsed across your faces.
You glared, turned heads in unison, and proudly spat
the green *naswar* at our feet.

New to your country, we'd flown over your village just the
week before,
paused in the already ruined carapace of the Kandahar
Airport,
an American failure along with Lashkar Gah's Kajaki Dam
from the 50s.

The sun scalded.
in dun-colored village, mirage of vacuumed dust
only the fly-swamped pile of melons, plums, oranges,
balanced over troughs of rice and grains
gave out any light.
So what color is justice
and over mauve and puce-hued eons,
decades, centuries,
for the thirsting ones
does it ever come?

Frances G. Connell
New York, NY

** *kohl*: black eyeliner made from soot and other substances; in Islam believed to help eyesight.

perahan o tunban: traditional loose Afghan pants and shirt worn by men.

naswar: dipping tobacco, snuff.

Kajaki Dam: massive dam project on the Helmand River built between 1951-53 by the US to irrigate and "modernize" southern Afghanistan; its irrigation potential became used for cultivating massive poppy fields for heroin production.

Kandahar Airport: USAID project built between 1956-62 to fuel cross-continental airplanes and for possible war with the Soviet Union, but which was already obsolete as a "pit-stop" due to advances in jets.

Journey to the Void: Part I

The Void surrounds me. I am trembling.
There is no sound. My heart beats. My breath holds still.

Tentatively my hand reaches forward.
I do not want to be touched by a creature.
I do not want to be bitten.

My hand moves in a circular motion. There is laughter.
My hand stops. The laughter stops.

What is happening? I begin floating between Earth and Sky.

“Hello?” My eyes open and I am surrounded by a gazillion Stars.
I question the Void, “*Is this where Justice resides? In a place with no people?*”

The Void begins to retreat. I try to put myself into its deep, rich darkness.
Instead of its embrace of knowledge and certainty,
There is music streaming into my mind.
I recognize it! A bird calls to me.
The chirp of life!

The fog of my mind begins to clear.
The chirping Bird has brought clarity to mind.

Gravity swift pulls me to reality.
My body collapses and I fall to the ground.
My knees have given way. In the prayer position I have fallen.
The ache of my bones. Pulled tenderly by Gravity this dull pain has reminded me to be present, always.

My voice asks, “*In what way has Justice shown up today?*”

Notice! There are no people, there are no colors.

Maitri Butler
New York, NY (Washington Heights)

Journey to the Void: Part II

Pain! My body is shivering.

There is no warmth without the sun. The Void lifts from its hovering presence over me.

Sunshine Rays flickering through the air, acting in its fiery way, licking at my flesh gently.

I lean into its warmth even further. I am momentarily the pet of Sunshine Rays. A kitten cared for by its mother. Simple caring is often ignored!

Hunger. There is no food and I have not eaten for a long time. I must fix what is important to me. Where is food? The food of spiritual freedom, movement, joy, dancing, where is laughter?

My hands move wildly in circular patterns, no longer am I afraid of being bitten by a creature, by the beasts which could lurk beyond.

My achy knees hobble up and down, arms flapping wildly, my fool self erupts in laughter. Joy has descended in place of Void. I embrace Joy! With Joy we, together, imitate and flap and squawk in imitation of Bird. My soul soars above my hunger. Laughter was my hunger, Joy the vital nutrient lacking. Movement brings nourishment.

People. Action. *“What action does Justice want me to take?”*

Just over there, over the Hill, people become visible. There are no bad people anywhere. The pain in this world is merely carried by us, but is not born within us.

Eventually we all get away from pain when we die.

That is how the Universe will do it for us.

Maitri Butler

New York, NY (Washington Heights)

Welcome Aboard

LOOK at the splashy advertisement on the side of a Jackson Heights, Queens Q47 bus!
SEE pictures of the smiling bikinied ladies and washboard-hard, tanned men lounging on a Central American beach with whiskey-filled crystal glasses in hand!

READ the tiny italicized text below:

“The U.S. Coast Guard looks for bodies floating in the water. Migrants look for homes, but find watery graves at the bottom of the Straits of Florida.”

When did we shut our doors to the desperation we ourselves created?

When did we shut our American hearts to migrants’ tragedy and suffering?

Then, straphangers, READ the signs at the back of the bus:

“Give up your seat to the elderly and disabled.”

“Welcome aboard.”

“Stop requested.”

“Buses only.”

“Do not enter.”

“Bless your hearts.”

And remember, folks --

“HAVE A NICE DAY!”

*Isabella Calisi-Wagner
New York, NY (Upper Westside)*

The New Colossus, v 2.0

Give us your tired, your poor,

your White, your Christian, your English-speaking.

Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free:

in gerrymandered villages and red-lined streets.

The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.

S***-hole countries need not apply.

I lift my lamp beside the golden door

to the land of the free, home of the brave.

*Mary Testa-Smith
Olympia, WA*



Perfect Locations: An Ode to Justice Writing

Do those on Wall Street think justice?
Do they ponder it at all?
Investments rise and fall for them,
What else do they recall?
Let's increase their concern for
Disadvantaged folks,
Those with no stocks and bonds,
Perk up the brokers sagging will.
Take all the justice poems in full,
And paste them on that big bronze bull!

What if justice poems were there
To decorate every toy box?
Children would see them day by day,
As they play with tablets and blocks.
Justice gets infused into their lives,
Spreading the word and living it.
Later their offspring just can't wait
They too become justice catalysts.
Wow, look what all this would create,
More generations of activists!

Brand new handbags and pocketbooks
All money holders as such,
Need justice-related writing and pictures
Not useless stuffing balled up.
Instead insert meaningful poems and pics
Reflecting social justice folks like these:
Kaepernick, Tutu, Tubman, Malala,
John Lewis, Sloan Coffin, and the Obamas.
These inserts compel all purchasers
To spend money on justice purposes.

What other locations come to mind
Where knowledge of justice is needed?
There must be a reprehensible place
With truth and fairness ne'er heeded.
Where do equity concerns crave light,
Integrity lacks, no knowledge of rights?
Of course there's a perfect place we know
Where thinking is painfully shallow.
Post justice writing high and low
On the walls of Mar-a-Lago.

*Dr. Vernay Mitchell-McKnight
Bronxville, NY*

Red, White, and Blue

Justice is red,
bloodshed,
dark thick, ushing, gushing
oozing out!
Get out, of there!
No longer let them lie to you.
Capital punishment
is the very
last
thing
to do.
So don't let them continue
to fool you, too.
Justice is blue.
eyes wide black, and blue.
Black they claim is less than,
inferior, than you,
yet they continue to profit
and capitalize off you,
your black beauty,
and soul-entertaining culture.
Justice is white,
50 stars bright,

13 red, white stripes.
If justice is
militarism,
racism,
and capitalism,
then I don't wanna be right.
You can keep your gilded democracy
and two-faced Statue of Liberty,
who never seems to shine her light
uplifting the marginalized,
while banishing the 1%'s plight.
Nonetheless, like Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.,
I pledge allegiance to the flag
of the United States of America,
and to the Republic for which it stands...
with liberty and justice for all,
and I'm damn sure gonna hold you to that.

*Gary Bogle
Brooklyn, NY*



February 3, 2022 Writing Prompts

Prompt 1: Write a ghazal poem on Virulent Partisan Politics

Prompt 2: Write a ghazal poem on Avert Climate Calamity

A Note About Ghazal

The ghazal (pronounced guzzle) is a poetic form that emerged in Persia in the 12th century and has roots in Arabic love poetry. Built on couplets, the form requires a rhyme scheme, refrain, meter and other elements.

In addition, each of the ghazal's couplets should stand independently as a kind of mini-poem. Agha Shahid Ali (1949-2001), the Kashmiri-American poet who set out the formal requirements of the ghazal in English, compared the ghazal to a beautiful necklace, each couplet like a bead that is beautiful unto itself.

The ghazal poets' mastery of this challenging form dazzled audiences, including the despotic rulers who were the poets' patrons as well as poetry students. (Rulers often aspired to write poetry to demonstrate refinement and impress lovers.) Poets used this dazzle to speak hard truths to absolute power, and survived. A ghazal poet once said that kings often aspired to be poets but no poet ever aspired to be a king.

About the Ghazal Poems in This Anthology

"Late Afternoon Ghazal" follows the traditional Persian ghazal form. "Bully" follows the Arabic form, which uses rhyming couplets. "Malignant Politics 2022" is an interesting variation on the traditional Persian form, which is what I introduced in our 2.3.22 prompt-based writing session. It's common for American English-speaking poets to "mess" with the form. American free verse prosody lends itself to it. The poet Jericho Brown, for instance, created a mash-up of the ghazal and blue forms that he calls the duplex. Like the ghazal, duplexes are maddeningly tough to write but are great for exercising a poet's creative muscle.

Eugene Melino

Poet. Published in Contemporary Ghazals, Poeming Pigeon, Poetry in Form (Medium), Blue Lake Review, Burningword Literary Journal, and Grape Press

Facilitator. Riverside Writing Group, prompt-based writing session on Ghazal Poetry, in our Writing Poetry & Justice series,



Bully

on 2.3.22

The bully seeks comfort, demeans others as weak;
Lacking courage and protected, he has a fearful streak.

The bully seeks comfort, demeans others as weak;
Finger pointing, calling names, spews negative speak.

The bully seeks comfort, demeans others as weak;
Lying, promoting evil, his ideas and his actions reek.

The bully seeks comfort, demeans others as weak;
Inveigles the gullible, inspires the malicious; off speak.

The bully seeks comfort, demeans others as weak;
Traps his minions in scorn and hell; sudden nonspeak.

The bully seeks comfort; demeans others as weak;
His crews found under bus, off deep end, up the creek.

The bully seeks comfort, demeans others as weak;
Back turned, ignores his caged; more pitiable to seek.

The bully seeks comfort, demeans others as weak;
Place a Bible in his hands, top side up; hoped newspeak.

The bully seeks comfort, demeans others as weak;
Read for him help him find the comfort he seeks.

The bully seeks comfort, demeans others as weak;
Perhaps fearing exposure of self-knowledge; weak.

Hylde Clarke
New York, NY (Harlem)

Malignant Politics 2022

Volcanic vomit of lies rain down, in virulent partisan politics.
Incompetence. Souls dent, in virulent partisan politics.

Covens of gents refuse consent,
Prayers spun in lent, do not repent, in virulent partisan politics.

They deny assent, refuse consent,
To what extent are wills unbent, in virulent partisan politics?

Malcontents spewing treasonous content, defy advent.
Spiraling rents become indecent presents, from virulent partisan politics.

Cemented spite seals ignorance from lights.
Dissent accents. Rebels don't repent, in virulent partisan politics.

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Port Royal, SC

Late Afternoon Ghazal

Food's gone up and rent soon will. You could be me.
All my savings now are nil. You could be me.

Con Ed profits rose again, as usual
Halve my meds to pay my bill. You could be me.

Too easy a mark for muggers and street thieves,
Otherwise invisible. You could be me.

A solid win on Powerball would save me,
End my shakes from winter chill. You could be me.

I'd buy new socks, an iPhone, and shop at D'Ag's.
Fresh fish. Fancy herbs like dill. You could be me.

The rest will buy shelter for my houseless friends
All their wishes I can fill. You could be me.

Reality's back... I'm old and cold and spent.
Hope's elusive. Life's uphill. You could be me.

Mary Testa-Smith
Olympia, WA

Our Cento

Created by poetry justice writers in our OPEN MIC Night/Book Party**
2.17.22, via Zoom.

“A Communal Cento for Justice”

Granite walls mute the roar

You could be me

I'm old and cold and spent

We must tell our stories

When did we shut our doors?

I am you, and you are me.

The Wizard was a fraud.

Hold us hostage to their fantasy of the past

They use their hearts, brains, and courage

In the end they all found their way home

We poetry justice writers created our communal cento by choosing lines from work of the following who read their work:
Connie Belton Green, Gary Bogle, Isabella Calisi-Wagner, Elizabeth Mosier, Regina Tate, Mary Testa-Smith.

***Katey Simetra, Connie Belton Green, Isabella Calisi-Wagner, Elizabeth Mosier, Mary Testa-Smith, Laurel Westhoven, Lea Williams, Gary Bogle, Sue Schaller, Regina Tate, Martha Wiggins, Rev. Michael Livingston, Nancy Rucker Livingston, Joshua James Powell, Verneda Lights, Edwina Thompson, Francie Scanlon, Luvon Roberson, Maitri Butcher, Dr. Vernay Mitchell-McKnight, Rev. Bruce Lamb.*

NOTES



Riverside Writing Group

The Riverside Writing Group is a small group of
The Riverside Church's Education Ministry led by Rev. Bruce Lamb

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