

April is National Poetry Month, and this year, the timing couldn't be better. Over the next few issues of Lowcountry Weekly, we'll feature the work of 14 local poets.

Quiet Tide

Oh Quiet Tide

Your surface ruffled by the morning breeze

Ripples dazzle and dance

Marsh grass bows to you with grace

while floating leaves and things submerged

slip by secretly in the power of your flow.

Oh Quiet Tide

Rushing rivulets purge rich clouds of softened silt

into your lazy lingering current

blending life and death

in the broth of new creation.

Life seethes along your edges as you recede

Sunlight warms busy fiddlers' backs

Pluff mud pops and oysters squirt

a juicy succulence shorebirds savor.

A world of air and wind and sun and sky,

a world of water, dense and deep,

share a surface as they surge.

Two worlds that thrive in parallel

abiding by their separate laws

With give and take between the two

in balance and respect.

Oh Quiet Tide

a gift to me.

The wisdom that comes with the knowing

that the cycle begins again.

The back and forth and back again

The in and out and in again

Water shares the rhythm of my breath

a second chance

a fresh start

a return home

in the soft surrender to each Quiet Tide.

– Carolyn S. Jirousek

Carolyn Jirousek grew up in Cleveland, Ohio. She and her husband, Bill, divide their time between Cleveland, Ohio, and Beaufort. She is a Registered Nurse and Lowcountry Master Naturalist, and has a Masters Degree in Art History from Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland. In retirement, she is letting her inner child guide her back to the joy of writing she felt as a teenager.

Ecstatic Query

What amount of courage will it take

To appear in my own skin

Even if I'm in company,

Company so sure of itself

That its trumpet drowns my silvery flute,

Even though my flute is in tune and knows

The music and has played with symphonies

And speaks with clear, true notes

Emerging from its heart?

What amount of courage can I tap

From a heart bound by tradition

That served generations of women

With thoughts worth thinking,

Words worth writing,

Love worth feeling.

Instead they said, "Yes, sir,"

Let their light shine behind closed doors,

Kept their opinions to themselves,

For fear of losing the anchor

That kept them safely moored

In the harbor of the past.

– *Katherine Tandy Brown*

Katherine Tandy Brown is a longtime freelance travel writer, workshop leader & writing coach. She has led writing workshops at USC Beaufort, Tech College of the Lowcountry, numerous area retreat centers, & homes in Hawaii, Kentucky & her cozy cottage in Beaufort. Founder of Sea Island Spirit Writers (SISW), Katherine, who hails from Kentucky, is writing her first novel, *One to Go: An Equine Thriller*.

Spanish Moss Trail

The fiddlers lift their glasses,

which is the sea, "Tchin, tchin!",

or claws, as wrens and cardinals

declare spring from Paul's woods

to here where I watch the pull

of that toast through a culvert,

one side of an old rail line,

gone to pleasure, to another.

Such force defies the fact,

whether the pipe was laid right

or not. Tide will pour and it will roar

in and out from all over the world.

– *Quitman Marshall*

What Love Is

I am pulled toward all your pixels,

but with a Jamesian nuance,

for which, alas, I don't have the words.

You don't know, but I see you always

in my dreams, and what you do there

is also what love is.

– *Quitman Marshall*

Quitman Marshall's book of poems, his fifth, *You Were Born One Time*, won the SC Poetry Archives Book Prize in 2013. A founding host of the Literary Series at Spoleto Festival USA and a winner of the Writers Exchange Award (Poets & Writers), he is presently sailing three manuscripts:

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(fiction);

The Bloody Point

(novel); and

American Folklore

(poetry). Since 2001 he has lived in Beaufort, SC, with his wife and now three children.

Swampit
(no

The Shadow's Truth

She used magic potions, prayed before the window facing east, and walked counter clockwise
three times under the full moon

Still she knew the rhythm of their hearts were out of tune,

And their breaths, which once rose and fell in sync no longer did

In the village's center she sat with the woman who had long ago stopped bearing children,
whose

husband had left her by way of death, and her children, now grown, had wandered away

What will they think of me, if I leave she asked?

What will you think of yourself if you stay, the old woman said.

What will you tell your wings when they ask you why you didn't let them fly away,

How will you pacify your heart when it wants to love again one day,

Which knot will you use to anchor your spirit to keep it from soaring and twirling and playing with
joy,

How will you mask the stench that comes from failing to live?

They sat still in the village's center without words,

When sun disappeared behind the distant hills the old woman spoke once more,

You can be right, or you can be well.

– *Susan Madison*

Susan Madison is a published author, poet, visual artist and workshop facilitator. She lives on St. Helena Island with a variety of song birds where she watches the ebb and flow of the tidal creek. Madison is currently working on a nonfiction book on the feminine aspect of the spiritual nature.