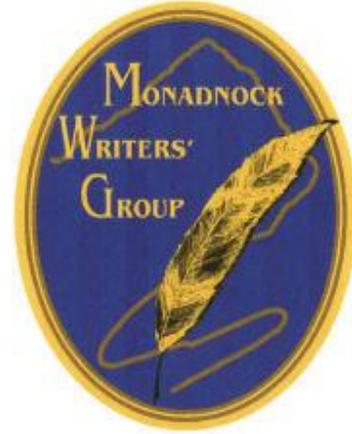


# The Quill



March 2020:  
Monadnock Writers' Group  
Supporting Writers Since 1984

The Monadnock Writers' Group is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization.

Mail - PO Box 3071, Peterborough, NH 03458  
Website - <http://www.monadnockwriters.org/>  
Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/monadnockwriters/>  
E-mail- [info@monadnockwriters.org](mailto:info@monadnockwriters.org)  
[president@monadnockwriters.org](mailto:president@monadnockwriters.org)  
[treasurer@monadnockwriters.org](mailto:treasurer@monadnockwriters.org)  
[webmanager@monadnockwriters.org](mailto:webmanager@monadnockwriters.org)

---

## General Meetings

The **Monadnock Writers' Group** meets every month from September through June, **9:45 to 11:45 a.m.** Beginning in October, we meet at the **Peterborough Town Library** in the lower level meeting room. The Speaker Series is open to the public and free of charge. Our speakers are instructive and inspirational for writers of all literary forms, genres, and levels of experience.



### March 2 Writers' Night Out

Writers' Night Out is the first Monday of each month, 7:00 p.m. to about 9:00 p.m., except July, September, and January (when the first Monday often conflicts with holidays). This is a social gathering of writers at **Brady's**

**American Grill** in Peterborough, located a mile north of Peterborough center on U.S. 202 (Concord Street) in Brady's Plaza.



### March 21 Rachel Sturges and Falon Smith

**Rachel Sturges** and **Falon Smith** headline readings by teenaged poets from the Monadnock region. A juried panel of New Hampshire State Council on the Arts selected Rachel, a student at ConVal, and Falon, from Littleton, as the two Youth Poets Laureate this year. As the letter of appointment states in part: "Your superior, crafted poetry contains imagery with emotion embodied in it, rather than simply talking about feelings; in other words, it looks outward from the self rather than simply at the self."



**April 18**  
**Patrick Donnelly**

**Patrick Donnelly**, director of The Frost Place Poetry Seminar, is the author of four books of poems and numerous poems published in journals. He has taught at Smith College, Colby College, the Lesley University MFA Program, the Frost Place, the Bread Loaf Writers' Conference, and elsewhere. He lives in Western Massachusetts with his spouse Stephen D. Miller, with whom he translates classical Japanese poetry and drama. Their translations were awarded the 2015-2016 Japan-U.S. Friendship Commission Prize. Donnelly's other awards include a U.S./Japan Creative Artists Program Award, an Artist Fellowship from the Massachusetts Cultural Council, the Margaret Bridgman Fellowship in Poetry, and a 2018 Amy Clampitt Residency Award.

---



**May 9**  
**Jack Hitchner**

**John T. "Jack" Hitchner** is a graduate of Glassboro State College and Dartmouth College, and has studied at the University of Bath in the United Kingdom. For over 35 years he taught English in New Jersey and New Hampshire public schools. He is retired from teaching Creative Writing and Coming of Age in War and Peace at Keene State College. His poetry appears in the collections *Seasons and Shadows* and *Not Far From Here*; his short fiction in *How Far Away, How Near*.

---



**June 20**  
**Read-Around and Annual Meeting**

Members of the Monadnock Writers' Group read excerpts of their own work up to ten minutes each. The public is welcome to attend.

We also hold our annual meeting and election of officers on this day. We will not meet again until September.

---



On February 1 the Monadnock Writers' Group sponsored a preliminary round, open to all, of the statewide 3-Minute Fiction Slam competition. Some of the entries appear at the end of this newsletter.

Bill Doreski will represent us at the state finals sponsored by the New Hampshire Writers Project. This is always an engaging event with winners from eight preliminaries around the state. The finals will be held on Thursday, March 12, at the IAD/NEC French Auditorium, 148 Concord St, Manchester, at 7 pm.

The **Monadnock Writers' Group** is pleased to announce a high school essay contest established to honor the memory of George Duncan. George was an award-winning marketing copywriter and author, and an avid writer of political commentary. He served as President of the Monadnock Writers' Group (MWG) and was a long-time board member.



MWG will award the contest winner a prize of \$100.00 and invite the winner and any runner-ups to read their essays at our group meeting in May 2020. *The Keene Sentinel's ELF Magazine* and the *Monadnock Ledger-Transcript* will publish the winning essay.

The announcement of the winning essay will be in April 2020.

**Eligibility:** The contest is open to students in grades 9 through 12 who attend public, private, and home-schools in the following towns:

Chesterfield, Harrisville, Keene, Marlborough, Marlow, Nelson, Westmoreland, Stoddard, Surry, Winchester, Acworth, Alstead, Walpole, Charlestown, Langdon, Fitzwilliam, Gilsum, Richmond, Roxbury, Swanzey, Troy, Sullivan, Antrim, Dublin, Peterborough, Francestown, Greenfield, Hancock, Bennington, Sharon, Temple, Jaffrey, Rindge, Greenville, New Ipswich, Mason, Wilton, Lyndeborough, and Milford

**Essay prompt:** *Select a political issue that is currently in the news. Write a persuasive, fact-based analysis of the issue using a civil tone. Write it in the style of an op-ed piece.*

**Submission instructions:**

- Essay length should be at least 500 words and no more than 800 words.
- Submit your essay to [gduncanessay@gmail.com](mailto:gduncanessay@gmail.com) from January 15, 2020 to March 15, 2020.
- Include your name, school, email address, and your essay in the body of the email.

**Judging:** *Please note that writers' names will be removed from essays prior to review by the judges.*

MWG member Linda Thomas and Keene State College professor Jeff Halford will judge the essays.

Jeff Halford teaches communication and philosophy at Keene State College. He holds an M.A. in Speech Communication from Oklahoma State University and a Ph.D. in Communication from the University of Arizona.

Linda Thomas is a freelance writer and editor. She holds an M.Ed. from Rivier College and an M.S. in Technical Writing from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.

For any questions, please visit <http://monadnockwriters.org> or email [gduncanessay@gmail.com](mailto:gduncanessay@gmail.com).

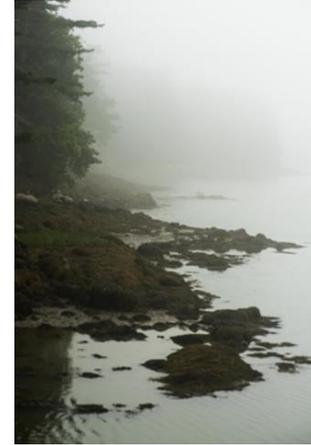
“...what is written is often confused with what, having been experienced, gave birth to it, therefore one does not ask the poet what he thought or felt. It is precisely to avoid having to reveal these things that he composes verses.”

- Jose Saramago in his novel *The Year of the Death of Ricardo Reis*

***Smoky Quartz:*** Published by the Monadnock Writers' Group, *Smoky Quartz* is an online journal of literature and art, named after New Hampshire's state gem. Writers and artists with ties to New Hampshire are featured in each issue. We publish poetry, short fiction, and creative nonfiction, and a diverse selection of art and photography.

Please submit poetry, short fiction, creative nonfiction, art, and photography for the Fall 2020 issue of *Smoky Quartz*. We welcome submissions from new, emerging, and established writers and artists with ties to New Hampshire. Please send us your best work! Note: we now accept prose pieces up to 3000 words. Visit our website for complete guidelines and to submit your work: [www.smokyquartz.org/submissions](http://www.smokyquartz.org/submissions) See the Fall 2019 issue at – <https://smokyquartz.org/2019/11/23/fall-2019-issue/> .

The next *Smoky Quartz On The Road* will be at the Jaffrey Library at 6:00 p.m. on April 2nd.



*Misty Shore*  
by Jeffrey C. Dickler

***New England Memories:*** *New England Memories* shares your memories about life in New England through creative nonfiction, poetry, photography, and artwork. Linda Thomas, founder and editor, welcomes submissions year-round. Accepted work is also published on a rolling basis. Please see the submission guidelines at: <https://newenglandmemories.com/submissions/>



*New England Memories* began 2020 featuring a memoir essay titled "[Gertrude's Gifts](#)" by Jennifer E. Tirrell. This lovely essay about family and belonging is Jennifer's first contribution to *New England Memories*. We would like to see more submissions in essay form about childhood memories. What favorite memory of a family member, childhood friend, or pet could you share with *New England Memories*?

If you'd like to receive an email when new work is published at *New England Memories*, please subscribe to the Editor's blog at: <https://newenglandmemories.com/category/from-the-editor/>

"To be a serious writer requires discipline that is iron-fisted. It's sitting down and doing it whether you think you have it in you or not. Every day. Alone. Without interruption."

- Attributed to Harper Lee by Casey Cep in *Furious Hours*

***Monadnock Pastoral Poetry Retreat:***

For over a quarter of a century this group of writers has gathered annually to celebrate new work and publications as the New Pastoral Poets and Writers. They have spent decades staying true to language written beneath the shadow of the mountain Emerson, Thoreau and Kinnell made famous—Mount Monadnock.

**Monadnock Pastoral**  
*Poets & Writers*

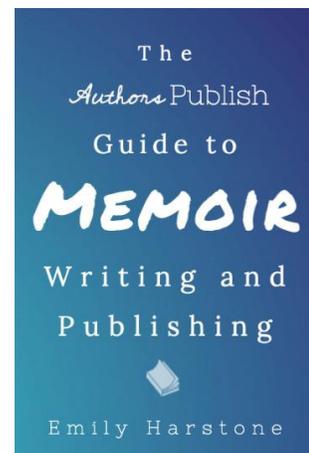
Please join us for the annual gathering of the Monadnock New Pastoral Poets & Writers as they host their weekend poetry retreat at the Barbara C. Harris Conference Center in Greenfield, NH. The weekend will be low-key, and collegial, but full with small group (6 maximum) workshops, an individual conference with mentors, readings by participants, writing time, social time, optional activities such as Saturday night acoustic folk music by *The Grumbling Rustics*. The conference concludes with the 30<sup>th</sup> annual reading of mentors followed by a closing banquet.

There will also be opportunity to enjoy the almost 350 acres of hiking trails at the Harris Center on Otter Lake. Registration is limited to maintain small workshop size. Deadline, March 13, 2020.

**April 24-26, 2020**, Barbara C. Harris Center, Greenfield, NH. For further information, E-mail [rodgerwriter@myfairpoint.net](mailto:rodgerwriter@myfairpoint.net) or go to [www.monadnockpastoralpoets.org](http://www.monadnockpastoralpoets.org)

### **Free Book - The Authors Publish Guide to Memoir Writing and Publishing**

The most popular non-fiction writing over the past decade has been memoir, or contained an element of memoir, such as *H is for Hawk* by Helen Macdonald. Even serious works of non-fiction, such as *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* by Rebecca Skloot, often contain memoir elements. This book guides authors in crafting a story that meets the needs of today's publishers and connects with the right readers, in order to maximize the chances of publishing success.



Get your free copy at <https://www.authorspublish.com/the-authors-publish-guide-to-memoir-writing-and-publishing/>

**Nine Ways to Promote Your Writing for Free:** Get a copy of this essay by Emily Harstone at <https://www.authorspublish.com/nine-ways-to-promote-your-writing-for-free/>

**Free On-line Writers' Weekly:** Have you seen *Authors Publish* at [www.authorspublish.com](http://www.authorspublish.com)? It has articles on how to write and how to publish in addition to free downloadable books.

**Marketing outlet for your work:** The Marketing Team of the New Hampshire Writers Project will post your information for free to their platforms (FB, Twitter, IG with pictures), as well as their website. Send a blurb to "[Marketing@nhwritersproject.org](mailto:Marketing@nhwritersproject.org)".

**New Hampshire Writers Project:** Stay up to date with NHWP online: [www.nhwritersproject.org](http://www.nhwritersproject.org). See them on Facebook: "The New Hampshire Writers' Project." Follow them on Twitter: [nhwritersproj](https://twitter.com/nhwritersproj).

## **More from the Monadnock Writers' Group**

**Resources for Writers:** Go to the MWG website <http://www.monadnockwriters.org/> or Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/groups/monadnockwriters/> for numerous ideas on writing, reading and publishing.

**Get something into the Quill:** If you would like to submit to our monthly newsletter please send your information to Carl at [info@monadnockwriters.org](mailto:info@monadnockwriters.org) at least four days before the end of the month. As a member, you may include your author events and announcements.

**Monadnock Writers' Group Dues:** Membership dues may be given to our treasurer by mail or at our general meeting. Details are at the end of this newsletter.

**MWG Bloggers:** Let us know if you would like your blog to be listed on the MWG website and Facebook page. Send your details to [monadnockwriters@gmail.com](mailto:monadnockwriters@gmail.com).

**Who are we at MWG?:** Established in 1984, the primary mission of the Monadnock Writers' Group is to offer fellowship and support to professional writers and to those actively engaged in developing their writing skills. For more about us and to say something about yourself, see the Monadnock Writers' Group Members page (<https://monadnockwriters.org/membership/our-members/>) where you can read short biographies of our members and you can get in touch with someone doing work related to your own or just to share work that is interesting.

### **Monadnock Writers' Group Membership Information:**

- Program year membership - September through June
  - Regular membership \$30
  - Students and seniors \$25
  - Patron \$50
  - Benefactor \$100
  - Corporate \$250
- Individual members are encouraged to announce their own projects such as workshops, social gatherings, group support sessions, or whatever the writing-related endeavor. Feel free to take the floor at the monthly meeting, or contact the newsletter editor [mabbszenoc@yahoo.com](mailto:mabbszenoc@yahoo.com) to send an announcement to the membership in the monthly newsletter.
- Bring a friend to one of our monthly meetings, and if they join MWG, you will receive a \$20 gift certificate for the Toadstool Bookshop!

**2019-2020 Board of Directors:**

President: Sara Miller; Vice President: Rodger Martin; Secretary: Carl Mabbs-Zeno; Treasurer: Denny Caldwell; Members-at-Large: Louise Werden, Maura MacNeil, Ann Day, Jesseca Timmons.



### Some of the Three-Minute stories read at the Peterborough preliminary round

#### **The Brakes Are Shot by Brenna Manuel**

“The brakes are shot. You need to get those linings replaced,” he said. I knew that it was true—that jaw clenching screech of metal molars was enough to make me wince. This skinny, 20 something, self-pronounced mechanic stood with his hip ajar to give me the news. He was one the myriad young, muscular, natural, hanger-outers around the Pacific Northwest who had a specialty trade and a friendly, “I can help out” sign around his neck. There were others, mostly fishermen, who swarmed the hippie town and surrounding rural county, like minnows swimming under a submerged tree stump.

I walked in from the carport to think about my options.

I flopped down on my overstuffed Goodwill chair that I had lugged from rental to rental. This little house had loads of windows in the main room- my arboretum. Plants became a wallpaper backdrop of deep pink and verdant green pop art shapes, like a 1950s window drape. I obtained the first Angel-wing Begonia at a yard sale, and the seller showed me how to slice a leaf off and plant it into a new pot of soil. This became my pass-time of fecundity on a budget. The heart-shaped leaves grew large and optimistic.

My chair became a regal nest below the canopy as I delved into *Even Cowgirls get the Blues* or contemplated that Mexican coyote that turned circles on the porch, over and over and over. I had seen dogs do that too. They are searching for the exact point of longitude and latitude that connects them with the earth’s vibration for that dotted moment in time. Their canine antennae record the sounds of train crashes on wobbly bridges in Katmandu or the thunder of invading horsemen trampling a sleeping tent in the Sahara. Even a whispered decision could be enough to jar the animal out of good snooze. The dog will get up and circle again to re-align. The canine world is always on the alert for possibilities of shifts of movement or states of mind.

I read, and the begonia plants began to quietly quiver and lift off the floor. They pressed their leaves softly down and breathlessly up, and then they hovered above the chair for hours before they floated serenely through rafters on the house. They created a slight tropical breeze above the rooftop that swayed in synchrony with the conifer limbs.

#### **NFL Playoffs, 2019, by Ann B. Day**

I’m in my PJ’s in my favorite chair watching the NFL playoffs on the big screen in the living room, Tennessee Titans vs Baltimore Ravens. My wife is gone for a couple of days. She’ll never know how much I put into the office pool, I am sure the Ravens will win. We all know that.

By the half I am not so sure. By midnight I am devastated. I can’t believe it. Oh God, the money I lost.

I go into the bedroom and turn on the radio. Announcers are going over and over the game. My head is spinning. How could they lose? I crawl into bed and pull the blankets up over my head.

The next thing I know the radio is blasting out my name.

“John, hey John, get up out of your bed. It is snowing like crazy. ...”

“Snow....what snow” I blurt out

“There’s a huge snow storm” yells the radio. “Get up you crazy goat, we’re coming up from Boston to collect the \$8,000.” It’s the guys from the office.

“No I put in \$800,” I gasp. “There’s a mistake.”

“There’s no mistake, John.”

I sit up. Try to turn off the radio. ...It keeps right on blasting. "Get your shit together, John.... We're on our way."

I put my pants on over my pajamas, pull on my boots and gloves, go get the snow shovel where it's been stored in the garage. "I didn't hear about snow," I mumble.

I open the front door. Oh my God, the snow is packed up against the house, its over my head. A big chunk falls inside on the carpet..

I start shoveling. Before long my arms, my whole body aches. The snow keeps falling back into the house. All I can see is snow., I am standing in 3 feet of it, inside the house. I don't even know if I am inside or out. Oh, man, now I can't even shut the door.

I jam the shovel into the snow and go back to the bedroom. I can barely move. I fall onto the bed. The radio clock says 4:00 AM.

Next thing I know my deer-hunting friend, Charlie is yelling at me. "John It's 7:30, wake up. Need to get ready to go hunting"

I'm so groggy I can barely see Charlie standing in the bedroom doorway.

"So how come you're in bed with your boots on?" he says.

"Yeah, so, how are we gonna go hunting in all this snow?" I counter.

"What snow?? Can't you see the sun is out?"

"Oh" I mutter. "Well, how did you get into the house, Charlie? I locked the door."

Charlie grins.

"John, the front door is wide open and how come your snow shovel is leaning against the screen door?"

I pull the blanket back over my head.

### **Time by Carl Mabbs-Zeno**

10:30 am... That's the scheduled time. He wrote it on a post-it he kept in his pocket so he could look at it from time to time. Check the proper time. Dozens of times before the interview. He really wanted, really needed, this one.

He sat in his car until 10:15, looked at the slip of paper one more time and walked over to the building: corporate headquarters. He had rehearsed the drive here to be sure he knew the route from home and how long it would take.

From a moment after he pressed the button for the fifth floor, he felt his temperature rising faster than the elevator. It had been ten years since he did a job interview. Would it help to take off his tie? Was it pretentious to wear a tie for a job at his level? Was it disrespectful to dress down at an interview? Without turning his head, he studied the reflection of the two men in the elevator with him and saw their stylish suits with coordinated neckties would not be compared to his own shabby outfit. Too young to be vice presidents or something like that. Probably just regular guys for this place.

"So you worked in small engine repair for the last five years?"

"Just the last three years."

"Well, that should be enough to learn the job. But about the five years... am I allowed to ask what you were in for?"

"Ask me anything you like." He thought: *This is where it all goes south... Unless he had a kid with an opioid problem. Some chance of that. Maybe he knows how that starts. Maybe he knows how far outside yourself it can take you. Five years without them should prove something. If he believes I was clean the whole time.*

*He did five years for something. Violence? Five years doesn't seem long enough for anything like that. Internet fraud? I wish they gave out five-year sentences or more for those bastards. Couldn't be a sleazy accountant or lawyer if that's the best tie he's got. Thief? He could be taking this job just to see into our security. What do we have to steal? Corporate spy? He wouldn't tell me if he was in for something clever. Wonder what scams he learned in prison... And where oh where do I find someone to do this lousy job?*

The interviewer stood up and held out his hand signaling the interview was over. “OK. I guess the government has figured you deserve to be out now. Let’s just go with that. Wear some clean work clothes. Be at the side door by 8 am on Monday.

## **Summer Salt by Ronnie McIntire**

**Characters: grandfather and granddaughter**

**Time: summer at sunset**

**Setting: seaside camp, somewhere in coastal New England**

**Circumstance: GD’s Mom died early; GF is a widower. They sit alone on a deck overlooking a wave-lapped shoreline.**

**Mood: Waning light; hypnotic sound of water; distant loon cries**

“Grandpa,” she asked, “how did you know you were in love with Grandma?”

He blinked, as if blinded by the setting sun. He was buying time. Breathe in, breathe out. Repeat. It still cut deep—recalling her death. He slapped at a mosquito.

“You’re asking a grownup question there, Sweetie,” he managed.

“Well, you did love Grandma, didn’t you?”

He felt miscast. Playing the sage elder was tough. He was unsure of his lines. He coughed into his hand and made a production of clearing his throat to buy more time. The crescent of the sun hung like an eyebrow on fire above the darkening rim of the earth. He stroked his grizzled chin and stared out across the open water.

“It’s complicated,” he said finally. “When you’re in love, you feel it more than know it. When love bites, there’s no way in the world you’re going to reason your way out. And know this: love is like sailing. If we live in fear of running aground or sinking, we’ll never haul anchor and cast our fate to the wind. Getting from here to there always involves risk. Same with love—you’ve got to be willing to take a chance.”

“So, you took a chance with Grandma?”

From the bay the call of a loon broke the silence.

“A huge one—that a woman like that could love me back. I loved her when I met her. I’ll never stop.”

“Do you think Mom loved Dad?”

“Well, that’s an easy one, Chicken. You’re here, aren’t you?”

Her elbow parted his ribs. He yelped.

“Come on. You know what I mean,” she protested. “Why did Dad and Mom split up? Maybe I was too young to understand when it happened, but not now.”

“And you know that their divorce was never about you?”

“Yeah, I’ve like pretty much heard that all my life, but at the time, when I was like six, it sure didn’t feel that way. Even now it hurts to think that having me wasn’t enough to keep them together.”

He nodded. The tide was heading out, and his heart was heavy. From somewhat further offshore, the loon called again.

“Come on,” he said, “the Sox are playing tonight! Let’s go make some popcorn before your Dad gets back.”

He took her hand. They rose together and went into the house. It’s hard to talk about what love is, but when it’s there, it’s hard to miss.

***THE CENTER FOR THE ARTS, LAKE SUNAPEE REGION***

**A CELEBRATION OF POETRY MONTH  
POETRY CONTEST CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS  
“SNAPSHOTS IN TIME”**

**RULES FOR SUBMISSION:**

**Compose a poem on the theme of “Snapshots in Time.”**

- New Hampshire Poets may submit one (1) original unpublished poem inspired by the theme.
- Poems should be typed in a 12-pt, or larger font.
- Poems should be no longer than one, “8.5 inch by 11 inch,” page.
- Poets should submit by mail (address below). Send two (2) copies of your poem: one copy including your name, address, telephone number and e-mail address. The second copy should have no identifying information.
- The winning poets will be notified (by telephone or e-mail) by March 20<sup>th</sup> and will be invited to read their poem at the April 3<sup>rd</sup> event described below.
- Contestants who want to receive a list of contest winners should also submit a stamped, self-addressed envelope with their entries. There is no fee for submission.
- Submissions should be **mailed by March 10, 2020** to Dianalee Velie, PO Box 290, Newbury, NH 03255, (603) 938-2734, [dianaleevelie@aol.com](mailto:dianaleevelie@aol.com).
- Members of the Center For the Arts’ Literary Arts Guild are not eligible for this contest.
- There will be 3 winners in the adult category: First, Second and Third.
- There will be one winner in each of the following categories: High School, Middle School and Elementary School.
- The judge for the contest will be Alexandria Peary, our newly appointed Poet Laureate of New Hampshire.

**The winning poets will be honored and invited to read their poems in a public celebration  
of poetry at**

**The Meeting Room of the Newbury Town Offices, 937 Route 103, Newbury, NH 03255**

**Friday, April 3, 2020**

**5:30 to 7:30 p.m.**

Public invited ~ Refreshments served ~ No charge for admission ~ Donations welcome!

---

**Our newly appointed New Hampshire Poet Laureate, Alexandria Peary, will do a poetry  
reading and book signing immediately following the Awards Presentations.**