



*Townships Life and Culture,  
Past, Present and Future*

## **Ebony Jewelwing**

*by Tanya Standish McIntyre*

**Our mother tongue did not have a word  
for how the river wore away the stone  
without meaning to;**

**for the shadows made when August  
fell through the leaves; for the dirt - the taste  
of it, that home was built on;**

**for the one small handful of words  
that make a stranger not a stranger;**

**for the shattered emerald  
body of the ebony jewelwing,  
born only a fortnight past; for  
the memory of a memory;**

**for how we long to come to a full stop  
that is not  
death.**



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***This year, we celebrate the 50th Anniversary of The Townships Sun! We invite submissions for the...***

- ♦ **June 2022** issue, on the theme of *Music* or *Theatre* in the Townships. **Deadline: April 23.**
- ♦ **July-August 2022** issue, on the theme of *Tours* or *Tourism* in the Townships. **Deadline: May 24, 2022.**
- ♦ **September 2022** issue, on the theme of *the culture of schools* or *innovative learning opportunities*. **Deadline: August 3.**
- ♦ **October/November 2022** issue, on the theme of *Townships tales, legends, witches*. **Deadline: August 31.**
- ♦ **December 2022/January 2023** issue, on the theme of *Townships architecture; buildings*. **Deadline: October 31.**

**How to Contribute.** Thoughtful articles, stories, poetry, artwork and photos on Townships life and culture are always welcome. Before submitting, please request **CONTRIBUTION GUIDELINES** from [editor@townshipssun.ca](mailto:editor@townshipssun.ca).

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## FRONT COVER

**Ebony Jewelwing**, by Tanya Standish McIntyre



Poem, artwork, and photo by visual artist and poet, Tanya Standish McIntyre, born in Way's Mills, Quebec.

Her first book, **The House You Are Born In**, draws upon her experiences growing up on an ancestral farm. It is to be published in McGill-Queen's University Press's Hugh MacLennan Poetry Series in Fall 2022.

An early review calls it "a stunning debut by a promising new poetic voice, haunting and uplifting in equal measure."

[tanyastandishmcintyre.com](http://tanyastandishmcintyre.com)



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**Community Forum**

Do you have a comment? Send us a letter, email ([editor@townshipssun.ca](mailto:editor@townshipssun.ca)), or post on our Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/TheTownshipsSun/](http://www.facebook.com/TheTownshipsSun/)). Comments may be published in print or on our Facebook page, and edited for length, clarity, and accuracy.

**Letter to The Townships Sun**

*Happy equinox!*

*I just discovered your fine publication yesterday, on a visit to the Jewett Store in Potton. (I was unsuccessful in finding a Montreal Gazette, but the Sun was an excellent substitute.)*

*The map on the cover drew my eye, and has led me to an exploration of the NYPL's [New York Public Library's] extensive digital archive. Well done!*

*Could I make a minor suggestion for improvement? The inside front cover lists locations where single issues may be purchased. Since the Magasin Jewett's is not technically in Mansonville, perhaps you could add (Vale Perkins) beside it, similar to what you have done for the Stanstead outlet.*

*Thanks to your magazine, I will plan to spend some time visiting museums in the Townships this spring.*

*Best wishes,  
 Mike  
 - Michael Attas, Potton (Vale Perkins), Quebec*

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# Shortages

by R.A. Garber

As my eyes adjust to the gloom in the grocery shop, I see the shopkeeper standing solemnly at the counter. Behind him, the shelves are bare, except for a stack of jars near the ceiling.

"Waxaan rabaa inaan iibsado bariis," I say in my stunted Somali. I want to buy rice.

He bends down, and from under the counter retrieves a piece of newspaper twisted into a cone. It contains about three cups of rice.

Wanting variety in our diet, I point to the jars. What is it? He gets one down. Plum jam from Bulgaria.

At home, I open the jar. The jam is not very sweet. It's mostly plum stones and skins.

The year was 1973; Somalia teetered on the lip of a maelstrom of fighting and famine. Still, many in the capital city were able to eat everyday, even if our diet was desolate.

I lived in Somalia close to three years, an experience that prompts me to look with a pensive eye on the various shortages that have accompanied our pandemic. Toilet paper, for example. (Let us use bidets.) Soup in cans. (Have fresh veggies? Make soup.)

Other shortfalls are more serious: Masks, sanitizers, vaccines, health care workers, hospital beds. Rational thinking. Caring behaviour.

Now the war in Ukraine has transfixed us. Most of us in North America seem of one heart, at last, eager to help the Ukrainian people. Putin is so clearly the aggressor; our heartfelt actions in support of the people of Ukraine seem natural. Most of us in the Townships can likely ride out the high price of gas. (Go electric.) As well, we will probably survive the predicted scarcity of wheat. (Try rice.)

About 3,000 kilometres south of Ukraine lies another small country unjustly invaded by a large neighbour. Saudi Arabia has bombed Yemen to shreds over the past seven years. The war has displaced millions. Nearly 400,000 people have died; many were young children. The pandemic struck there, too, and Yemen's currency was sharply depreciated in fall 2021, intensifying the already raging famine. The United Nations has described Yemen as "the world's worst humanitarian crisis."

And yet, the Government of Canada sells weapons to Saudi Arabia. Where is our pity for Yemen?

Our shortfall of caring behaviour makes the world ever uglier for ourselves and our children. To paraphrase a poem by John Donne, the Eastern Townships is not an island entire of itself. Every child's death in Ukraine and in Yemen diminishes us, because we are involved in humankind.

This is why we need poetry—to teach our hearts to love.



## Errata

**Eaton Corner Museum.** A typo in the March issue led to printing the wrong phone number. The correct number is 819-875-5256.

There's more. Sharon Moore clarified the mysterious connection between lost luggage and the amputation of Mr. Stone's foot: There was none. In fact, Dr. Worthington (from Sherbrooke) was called to assist Dr. Rogers and Dr. Andrews to amputate his foot using ether as anaesthesia. Also, the lost luggage belonged to Mr. Foss, who was not a doctor. It is true that he was so taken with the area that he settled in Eaton Corner.

**Copp's Ferry Museum.** Mr. Jacques Valiquette of the Copp's Ferry Museum has kindly written to correct the facts about his steam engines and the McCord collection

of his negatives. As it turns out, the engine in the Maritana steamboat transported King George V. on the Thames, not on Lake Memphremagog. Later, two steam engines from the Maritana and Hibernia boats were transported from England to Georgeville by Mr. Murray to become part of his collection. Mr. Valiquette also noted that the 400 negatives donated to the McCord Museum were scenes from the Montreal area.

**Angela Lehman.** Here is the complete bio of the reviewer of *Peacekeeper's Daughter* by Tanya Bellehumeur-Allatt: **Angela Lehman** is a writer and educator in Richmond, Virginia. She travels frequently to Israel and the West Bank, most recently as a Fulbright Scholar in Nablus, Palestine.

# Stephanie Wells, a Townships Sun Pioneer

by Melanie Cutting



Stephanie Wells

Say hello to Stephanie Wells, the peripatetic former Townships and graphic designer responsible for the layout of *The Townships Sun* WAAAY back in 1977, and up to 1980. Always a free spirit, “I embraced whatever fell into my lap,” she notes. Work at *The Townships Sun* definitely fit that niche.

Stephanie, who now lives and works on Hornby Island in British Columbia, has the added distinction of being the designer of *The Townships Sun* logo that was first published in October 1975 and is still in use today.

It was the view from her bedroom window in Scotstown, where she lived. At around the same time, her friend and neighbour, well-known Townships author Bernard Epps engaged Stephanie to do the illustrations for his serialized novel, *The Outlaw of Megantic*.

What was the spirit that characterized this era in the Townships? Stephanie said *The Townships Sun* was an important ingredient in blending back-to-the-landers with the residents who had been there for generations. “It was one more tool that brought us together; definitely happy days for me.”

Self-taught in many fields, she had two years of graphic arts training in California. This came in very handy when she signed on at *The Townships Sun*, where she put the paper together using scissors, paste and wax (before computerized programs took on that task). She also designed many of the ads, crafted the illustrations, and determined where the various articles should go.

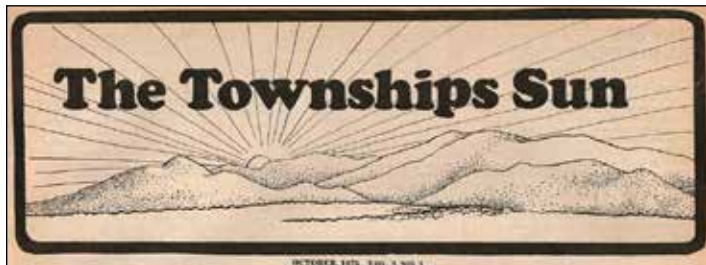
In addition, she frequently filled in as a writer. Among her favourite topics was waste reduction; her column, “Garbage,” became a regular feature. Many newcomers to the Townships were famously environmentally conscious, and their interest in recycling and sustainability was shared with the local folk, providing a solid basis for mutual support.

I’d known Stephanie casually some years ago, and was looking forward to picking her brain regarding those heady days when *The Townships Sun* was a fresh, new arrival. We ended up having a delightful Zoom conversation, and she filled me in on her early life, both as a Townships and as a *Townships Sun* employee in the always-interesting 70s.

Lured by old friend Doug Menzies (my old friend as well as hers), who seemed to be a jack of all trades at the paper, Stephanie worked very closely with Charles Bury, who had taken over as editor following Bob Dawson’s departure.

Charlie Bury was an excellent journalist, and he and Stephanie became great friends and colleagues, weathering many a storm. They worked together on serious issues, community challenges—and delightful whimsy. One of Stephanie’s favourite projects with Charlie was a big spread on the migration of garden gnomes.

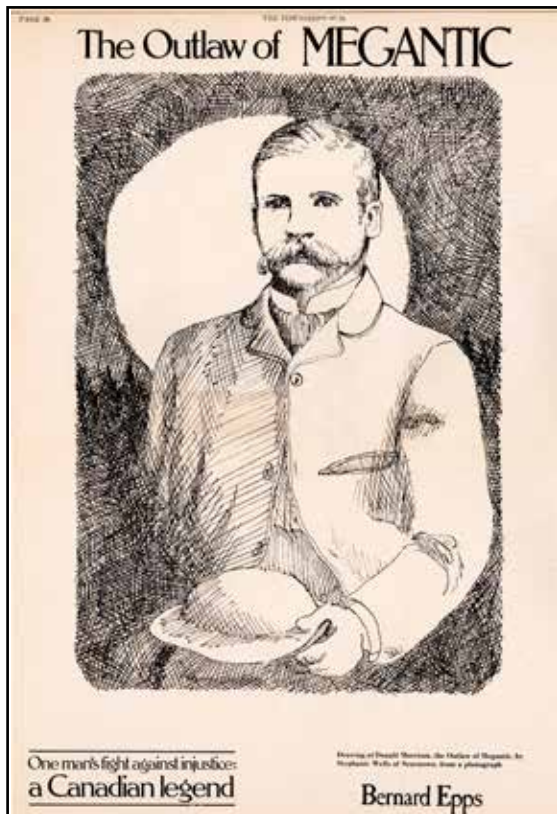
Once a month, they would put the paper together, cloistering themselves with a large pot of coffee in the *Sun* office, first in Waterville, and ultimately in the basement of the Lennoxville Elementary School.



Original *Townships Sun* Logo designed by Stephanie Wells, first printed October 1975.

Stephanie left *The Townships Sun* in 1981 and moved to Ottawa to be the production manager at Canadian Renewable Energy News. But she missed the Townships and moved back here, where Peter Scowen hired her to be production manager at the Stanstead Journal, which he had just purchased. But by this time, the layout was being done on computer. Mastering the brand-new Quark Xpress program was definitely an uphill struggle, but the new technology eventually made the work easier.

In 1987, Stephanie returned to Ottawa with her children, Phoebe and Jason. She had been offered an



Drawing by Stephanie Wells for the first installment of Bernard Epps' serial "The Outlaw of Megantic" in *The Townships Sun* (November 1975).

editing and layout job with a start-up news agency based in Zimbabwe, working online. The agency worked closely with Ottawa-based non-governmental organizations that had development programs in southern Africa.

Stephanie eventually returned to the Townships in 1996, and began to work in the organic sector. That work took her to a conference in Victoria, BC, and the Gulf Islands. Attracted by the scenery and climate, she moved to British Columbia in 2007. She now does home care work for seniors and is in the throes of renovating her island home.

As a U.S. Marine Corps brat, Stephanie was accustomed to frequent moves, but she said that even though she was a city or military base kid, "All I wanted was dairy goats and chickens." She found them here in the Townships. Even today she acknowledges that her deepest roots are in the Townships. "As wonderful as life on Hornby Island can be, I would return there in a minute if I could."

Our stroll down memory lane left me eager to find out more about those who had brought *The Townships Sun* to life all those years ago, and what accounted for its uncharacteristic longevity as a community magazine over the past 50 years. Stay tuned...



**Melanie Cutting** is a long-time Townships resident, retired educator, and layout supervisor for *The Townships Sun*.

# The Townships Moon

Surfing *The Townships Sun's* issues during its early years, I came upon a novel feature inaugurated in June 1977: The Townships Moon.



"A prize will be awarded to a person or group in recognition of a statement or action that in our view is completely ridiculous. The prize can be one of the following – Quarter Moon, Half Moon, Full Moon, Harvest Moon."

Readers were invited to contribute suggestions, and the first award went to "whoever decided to put signposts every 100 metres along both sides of the Eastern Townships Autoroute. At 121 kilometres long, this represents 2,420 signs. At ten dollars each, that's about \$25,000, plus labour, maybe another \$25,000."

A Full Moon was thus awarded to the "Quebec Autoroutes authority."

Hmm. Surely the *Townships Sun* of 2022 has a sense of satire romping among its rays. Why not give it voice?

Right on cue, John Mackley offered this first candidate for a new Townships Moon award, in recognition of a statement, action, or situation that is, in our view, lunatic.

## Pay to Park at the CHUS

This month's Townships Moon goes to whoever is responsible for the fact that parking at our territory's university hospital is not free. Sick patients, their family members, and visitors are still required to pay substantial fees for extended parking, regardless of whether they are at the hospital for time-consuming tests, surgery, or palliative care. Veterans and disabled persons also must pay, despite the fact that the City of Sherbrooke and most other urban areas offer free parking for veterans and disabled persons ([sherbrooke.ca/en/population-services/parking](http://sherbrooke.ca/en/population-services/parking)).

We must mention that the parking information is available online in French only. Check it out at [santeestrie.qc.ca/en/care-services/services-specialises/sejour-hopital/parking](http://santeestrie.qc.ca/en/care-services/services-specialises/sejour-hopital/parking).

To those responsible for this lunatic (inhumane?) policy of paid parking at the Centre hospitalier universitaire de Sherbrooke (CHUS), The Townships Sun bestows a Half Moon award.

## More Moons?

Do you know of a candidate for a Townships Moon award? Please send your suggestion to [editor@townshipssun.ca](mailto:editor@townshipssun.ca).

- R.A. Garber, John Mackley

## 62 Poets of the Eastern Townships ❁ Pathfinders of a New Land of Song

- ❁ Helen M. Johnson, 1834-1863, Magog. *Give me the dark, the dark green woods*
- ❁ William Henry Drummond, 1854-1907, Lennoxville. *De win' she blow, blow, blow*
- ❁ Minnie Hollowell Bowen, 1861-1942, Sherbrooke. *Eternal vistas opened, life beyond breath!*
- ❁ Frederick George Scott, 1861-1944, Sherbrooke. *All the future lies before us*
- ❁ Louise Morey Bowman, 1882-1944, Sherbrooke. *But it all lies written / Between the lines*
- ❁ Florence Hamilton Randal Livesay, 1874-1953, Compton. *Songs of Ukania*
- ❁ Frank Oliver Call, 1878-1956, West Brome. *A thing of beauty...will never / Pass into nothingness*
- ❁ Maude Gage Pellerin, 1884-1958, Hatley. *The song of the crystal sap drops*
- ❁ F. R. Scott, 1899-1985, North Hatley. *Watching the whole creation drown / I muse, alone, on Ararat*
- ❁ A.J.M. Smith, 1902-1980, Lake Memphremagog. *slim white birches / curved by the south-west wind*
- ❁ Neil Tracey, 1905-1986, Sherbrooke. *Time surveys Armageddon through the skull of the dead derrick*
- ❁ John Glassco, 1909-1981, Foster. *Where the stone wall is haven for snake and squirrel*
- ❁ Ralph Gustafson, 1909-1995, Lime Ridge. *It snows on this place / and a gentleness obtains*
- ❁ Louis Dudek, 1918-2001, Way's Mills. *The leafless tree / laughs / with shining branches*
- ❁ D.G. Jones, 1929-2016, North Hatley. *At a certain age / one rejoins the company of animals*
- ❁ Leonard Cohen, 1934-2016, North Hatley. *Silence / and a deeper silence / when the crickets / hesitate*
- ❁ Richard Sommer, 1934-2012, Abercorn. *funny how it's just as the light is perfect that it's gone*
- ❁ Lynn Wolf, 1935-2003, North Hatley. *Remember the day / you walked over to say, "When you hear the robin"*
- ❁ David Solway, 1941-2021, Pinnacle Mountain. *There's a power here, up in the gable / of our myth*
- ❁ Avrum Malus, 1943-1995, North Hatley. *What kind of houses we are raising around here?*
- ❁ Robert Allen, 1946-2006, Ayer's Cliff. *quiet snarl of smoke*
- ❁ Susan Briscoe, 1966-2018, Sutton. *The world is a smaller circle*
- ❁ Noni Howard, 1949-2012, Sherbrooke. *The woman who talks to tortoises*
- ❁ Ian Stephens, 1955-1996, Lennoxville. *Diary of a Trademark*
- ❁ Ian Tait, 1946-2005, Lennoxville. *Spirit of the axe...chopping*
- ❁ Tanya Bellehumeur-Allatt, North Hatley. *Loose tension / I believe / is the knitterly term*
- ❁ Marjorie Bruhmuller, Milby. *Part of me is still waving from the cabin*
- ❁ Munira Judith Avinger, Brome Lake. *Lifting the Veil*
- ❁ Heather Davis, Lennoxville. *God in in the teenagers / so why fret?*
- ❁ Pamela Dillon, Stanbridge East. *Just for today / can I be your miracle?*
- ❁ Antony Di Nardo, Sutton. *headstones and the question / of a personal deadline*
- ❁ Jan Draper, Brome. *And one thin beam of light / from the palest crescent moon*
- ❁ Gillian Eastley, Knowlton. *Maybe there was rain, but I only remember sun*
- ❁ Kathy Fisher, Gibraltar Point. *You want the heart of this house / to beat / forever*
- ❁ Eleanor Gang, Lennoxville. *Her cursing is the song line of canaries*
- ❁ R.A. Garber, Maple Leaf. *Each from the other / begging a blessing*
- ❁ Ellen Goldfinch, Baldwin's Mills. *Our mothers come back to haunt us*
- ❁ Sue Goyette, Sherbrooke. *With my daughter came promises and vows*
- ❁ Michael Harris, Waterville. *the sky-high howl of the hungry / and the silence of the prey*
- ❁ Jacqueline Korschun Hyman, Sawyerville. *only my hat / keeps my thoughts / from shattering*
- ❁ Janice LaDuke, Upper Bulwer. *Her voice can be black / her laughter red*
- ❁ Angela Leuck, Hatley. *Those words from a boy / soon bound for eternity*
- ❁ Steve Luxton, Hatley. *Here at the trail's top, finally, / my mind rests*
- ❁ Carole Martignacco, North Hatley. *Silence / becomes / so familiar*
- ❁ Kathleen McHale, Stanstead. *The cap in the coffin / is the same as my son's*
- ❁ Tanya Standish McIntyre, Stanstead/Ogden. *The women stood / with their hands in the water*
- ❁ Carole Melançon, Sherbrooke. *I am also killing you / child of Bangladesh*
- ❁ Michael Ondaatje, Lennoxville. *There's a trick with a knife I'm learning to do*
- ❁ Rebecca Păpucaru, Lennoxville. *mourning age spots on lettuce*
- ❁ Elizabeth Paulette-Coughlin, Vale Perkins. *Witch woman with wondrous wool*
- ❁ Trisha Pope, Sutton. *Enter a song's house / respectfully*
- ❁ Carolynn Rafman, Lake Memphremagog. *how a woman needs sanctuary / to give birth*
- ❁ Carolyn Rowell, Baldwin's Mills. *Your past comes back to either / reward you or / make you pay*
- ❁ Esther Saanum, North Hatley. *seas have been rough*
- ❁ Gabriel Safdie, Stanstead. *unrelenting hard rain falling*
- ❁ Ann Scowcroft, Kingscroft. *Carrying the weight of his life / with a cry of joy*
- ❁ Phyllis Sise, Foster. *Erasing minutes as they occur*
- ❁ Bernice Sorge, Dunham. *I remember the crow / that hit my windshield*
- ❁ Maria van Sundert, Sherbrooke. *from the window / we wave / one goodbye*
- ❁ Derek Webster, North Hatley. *how long the albatross will soar*
- ❁ Zoe Whittal, South Durham. *The Best 10 Minutes of Your Life*
- ❁ Rod Willmot, Sherbrooke. *the bell I heard / a bowl receiving / Cheerios*

# Hatley Writer and Poet: Maude Gage Pellerin

by Steve Luxton

In the agricultural Canadian communities of the 19th and early 20th centuries, cultivating the mind and fostering literacy were primarily the job of the minister, the schoolteacher and interested local women.

Many of these women, dynamic and committed, were remarkable figures. Quite a few wrote for periodicals, for other publications, and on occasion creatively.

Maude Gage Pellerin (1884-1958) was one of them. Born in Granby, she moved as a child to the village of Hatley where she spent all her very active life. Having graduated from the Charleston Academy on the Hatley common, she taught there for many years and also held prominent positions in community organizations such as the library association.



Maude Gage Pellerin, c. 1902.

Along with writing a column for *The Stanstead Journal* entitled "Forests and Clearings", about a favourite interest, Eastern Townships history, plus articles for *The Sherbrooke Record*, she authored three books. The first of these, *The Trail of the Broad Highway* (1929), co-written with her friend Bertha Weston Price, is an enthusiastic early Baedeker of the region. Pellerin's third, *The Story of Hatley* (1951), narrates its tale with an eye and a mind for unearthing intriguing detail that confirms her fascination with the village's past. Another volume published between these two, however, is of a quite different kind. *Songs of Old Quebec* (1949), a volume of her poems, was self-published (and can still be purchased online).

*Songs of Old Quebec* is an interesting collection, praising her home province in lyrics about iconic rural activities and scenes like maple sugaring, apple blossom time, and bucolic interludes with beloved others. The verse is very much of its time and sort—a popular echo of 19th century Romantic poetry with soothing or stirring language, throbbing rhymes and ideal subject matter. It is also influenced by the work of that popular poetic phenomenon, Eastern Townships physician William Henry Drummond (1854-1907), the world-famous author of *The Habitant* (1897).

Like Drummond, Pellerin writes with affection and admiration of her French-speaking neighbours. This is apparent in her poem, "The Spirit of Quebec":

*Je ne parle pas français.  
He speaks English not so good.  
Yet between us there's existing  
A strong bond of brotherhood,  
For he is a good neighbour,  
I have known him sixty years.  
He has shared with me his pleasures.  
I have shared with him my tears.*

In the early 20th century (and later), almost every small-town newspaper had a corner for such conventional and popular verse.

Pellerin's pieces are different: While often equally sentimental, they can also be very skillful. She was obviously a well-read woman. By the 1920s and 30s, modernist innovators like Ezra Pound and T.S. Eliot had shown the literary future's path with their unrhyming, unmetrical free verse, but there were still some accomplished and respected rhymesters. Many of them were women: Edna St Vincent Millay, Sarah Teasdale and Elinor Wylie. Pellerin very likely read these because her poems share their musicality, sensuousness and eye for precise, telling observation.

From "Song of the Sugar Bush:"

*When the sap is running free,  
With the buckets brimming over,  
As you pass from tree to tree  
The song of the crystal sap drops,  
As they fall from the spout's curved tip.  
Drip, drop, Drip-drop, Drip-drop, Drip.*

"The spout's curved tip" is a sharp, enhancing physical image here, rhymed with the musical and cleverly elliptical "drip."

Maude Pellerin had a fine eye and sensitive ear. At her best, she was a poet.

**Steve Luxton** lives in Hatley, Quebec, and is currently Writer in Residence at the Lennoxville Library.



(Photo courtesy of the poet's granddaughter, Linda Pellerin Cass-Jones.) Source: Huenemann, Karyn. "Maude Gage Pellerin." *Canada's Early Women Writers Project, 2018-2021*. Canadian Writing Research Collaboratory. [cwrc.ca/islandora/object/ceww%3A8a585c4f-562b-4545-b0ed-73ab7cfc1819](http://cwrc.ca/islandora/object/ceww%3A8a585c4f-562b-4545-b0ed-73ab7cfc1819). Accessed 2022-02-26.

# Poetry in the Third Age

by Angela Leuck

These days, as we live longer and stay healthy and active, “retirement” is being re-envisioned. This newly coined “Third Age” is rapidly becoming one of continuous learning, a willingness to embark on transformative adventures, and even the launching of new careers. In this month of April, National Poetry Month, here are four Townships women who in their own Third Age have found their way into the stimulating world of poetry.

## Jan Draper



I have loved poetry since I was a kid, so after high school I studied English literature at Bishop's. When I began my Master's degree, I was lucky to be hired to teach a poetry course. I loved the experience. Since then, encouraging people

to read and write poetry has been a constant in my life. Later when I taught at Champlain, my students and I gave writing workshops in local elementary schools. That was fun for everyone.

I began writing when I taught creative writing at Champlain and Bishop's. I developed a manuscript, *Ravelled Sleeve*, which I have never published.

Now I write everyday with a group from Write Here, Write Now. Often I end up last thing at night with no poem. It is a trick to find inspiration. One night I write about my philosophy of life and the next night about the sump pump. Beings from mythology make cameo appearances. My pets star in some poems and places I have worked in others.

After years spent correcting sentence fragments, I like to shatter ideas into their component parts and break all rules of syntax, experimenting with structures and sound. For me, poetry is like a prism showing the colours present everyday.

For five years I have offered writing workshops in the Eastern Townships. Our Stories sponsored by Townshippers' Association began in 2016. Some participants are still part of WHWN. The WHWN writers only need support, encouragement and some gentle feedback. They have great ideas and effective ways of capturing them. In our workshops we play with images and techniques. “Show. Don't tell.” and “Take out any extra words.” are my refrain.

Part of Bishop's University Lifelong Learning Academy (BULLA), WHWN is free and will stay on Zoom because we have writers from across Canada, the US and other countries as well.

Working on WHWN gives me the chance to bring writing and poetry to many people...and just maybe someday I will think of publishing a book, too.

## Gillian Eastley

I've always been interested in poetry. My father read to me, and I still remember word for word “The Fairies,” the story of the “Ancient Mariner” and the “Highwayman.”



I loved the images, the romance, and the words, even if I didn't understand them all. That enjoyment of the sound and rhythm of words has never left me.

In a sense I have written all my life. As a teacher of very young children, I adapted stories into plays for them to act, created dialogue, and rewrote the lyrics to songs. All of this was very enjoyable and some of it was poetry, but very little was self-generated. I wrote for a specific reason, not for myself. What did I have to say that others hadn't already? The very idea felt vaguely pretentious.

About four years ago, out of curiosity, I went to a WHWN poetry workshop at our local library. I got hooked and that's where it all started.

I read a lot of poetry but had no idea how to write it and will always be learning. Every poem is an experiment and some days I write complete rubbish. I also paint and have found writing to be a very similar process. Both are an attempt to capture an image, a thought, a memory, the only real difference being the medium. The only way to learn is to do it.

Several poets have influenced the way I write. However, it is the warm friendly community of writers I met through WHWN who actually inspired me. For about six months in 2020, Jan, Phyllis Sise and I wrote and shared a poem a day. The pressure was just what I needed. I still exchange poems with a group of friends.

What do I write about? Everyday happenings, a random meeting, a rainstorm, the natural world, every creature that has ever visited my garden, an anomaly, a contradiction, something out of place that makes me ask, “Why?” I like to play with rhyme and rhythm and always read aloud to adjust the balance. Some poems are ironic; others much more lighthearted, such as a series about a dragon told in rhyming couplets.

Over the last two and a half years, poetry has become a hugely important part of my life and a very welcome mental challenge, particularly during the restrictions imposed by Covid. I have become more aware, more

observant, more curious, and, perhaps most important, have made new friends.

### **Phyllis Sise**

I came at poetry by the back door, uninvited. My husband was a poet so I never really felt I should or could put words together and make sense. I did edit an in memoriam of his work when I first came to the Townships. In 2000, I was led to the Sheffington Writers group with such esteemed writers as Nick Fonda, Winona Matthews, Meredith MacKeen, Munira Avinger, Burn Purdon and other interlopers. I loved the weekly deadline that went on for 17 years. I wrote short - did I say short stories? Brevity has always appealed to me rather than using more words to say less.



At the beginning of the pandemic Robert Lee Brewer from *Writer's Digest* proposed poetry prompts for the month of April. I challenged writer and publisher Angela Leuck to a poem a day, then it just kept on going. I challenged Jan Draper and Gillian Eastley, so it just went on. Angela reduced my words further into another challenge of writing a haiku a day. With only 17 syllables, choosing words had now become even more important. If I entered through the back door, she forced me to climb out the window, publishing a book of my best 100 haiku in *Spring to Lips* (Yarrow Press, 2021).

My brothers were friends with Leonard Cohen in Montreal; at boarding school he was my god for whom I would wail with angst. Then in Toronto my construction company Marchant Restorations renovated Margaret Atwood's bathroom, allowing me to soar in her adoration.

As with any art form, it is the seeing that inspires, usually we spend our time just looking. So whether it is tardigrades, politics or passion, they often need thought, a little research and absolutely just the right words of praise or derision. I can't say I get it right all the time, but I certainly love the process. I no longer need to challenge others; I provide more than enough for myself.

Now my brevity has become blather with far too many syllables, so before the door closes in my face I shall end here.

### **Carole Martignacco**

From early on, words were like playthings; always this visceral fascination for language. A new word was pure joy, feeling its shape in my mouth, tasting it. I could play with its sound, try it out loud, observe its effect. I'm told as a toddler my endless strings of words often didn't make sense, as much sung as spoken. And words had power! Memorization came easily. My first

poem was about snow, written as a middle school assignment while studying Robert Frost. And I was off as if on skis, chasing metaphors. I've kept a small notebook of typed poems from my teens, celebrating an almost mystical sense of the sacred in a voice I still recognize as my own.



How did I learn my craft? Creative writing courses at the University of Minnesota and Loft Writing Center in Minneapolis where I attended weekly readings, met and befriended

so many local poets. Visiting international writers would give workshops. I directed a writing program for a local arts organization, pairing teachers to work with writers in the classroom; it was great learning. Here in the Townships, Bishop's University (BULLA) and WHWN workshops, and recent conferences on Zoom have transformed this pandemic into a kind of renaissance of creativity.

The hundreds of books on my study shelves are my mentors. An early favourite was Emily Dickinson. Later Natalie Goldberg, Gary Snyder, Wendell Berry, Billy Collins, the Sufi poets Rumi, Kabir, Hafiz and Mirabai. Auden, Mary Oliver, Yeats, Eliot, Mark Nepo, David Whyte —all for different reasons. Robert Bly — the depth of his teaching serves as a kind of poetic compass.

The main themes in my writing are the sacred in the ordinary, reverence for nature, music and the arts, a passion for beauty and a love of mystery. I like to get inside things and explore where they take me. The motif "orange" has been a kind of unifying thread, an endless source of inspiration.

Now that I am retired, poetry has given me the chance to reinvent myself all over again! I'm so grateful to have the time to go back after a busy, demanding life and revisit the playfulness of my earliest years. As a life-long learner, poetry and the arts are my brain gym. Covid has given permission to focus on the creative life; I can write every day. I aim to keep a beginner's mind till the very end.



**Angela Leuck** is a poet and publisher. She is the editor of *Emergence: Contemporary Women Poets of the Eastern Townships of Quebec* (Studio Georgeville, 2021).

# Nina May Owens: A Townships Artist Rediscovered

by Gérard Coté, Jean-Marie Dubois & Monique Nadeau-Saumier



Nina Owens, c. 1946.

This is the story of Nina May Pickel, born on a farm in Bolton-Centre, June 16, 1869. Her parents were Anna Eliza Harvey (1846-1894) and Jay Theodore Pickel (1842-1914), married in Shefford in 1867. Their homestead, next to St. Patrick's church, was a former inn, a scene that Nina will make a painting of in 1891.

Her artistic production, safely kept by her family, was totally

unknown until the 1992 exhibition of her works at the Musée des beaux-arts de Sherbrooke, researched and curated by art historian Monique Nadeau-Saumier. A catalogue, containing important biographical notes compiled by Margaret Nina Owens, granddaughter of the artist, was produced with the exhibition.

From 1875, she was a student at the Bolton Centre Parochial School where she studied drawing under the Reverend Francis H. Clayton. Around 1886, she was enrolled in the Knowlton Academy. She received her Model School Diploma in Sherbrooke in 1888. Her father then presented her with a paint box that she would use all her life.

Nina taught in Danville for a year, then in Montebello. There, she furthered her art training and received her teacher's certificate from the Teachers Institute of Quebec in 1891.

That same year, in Bolton's St. Patrick's church, Nina married Owen Ernest Owens (1862-1910), owner of a general store and a lumber merchant in Montebello. The couple had four children: two daughters who died in infancy; a son, Owen Norreys Harrington (1895-1991); and a daughter, Carolyn Miriam Nina (1904-1988). The family settled in Montreal to provide a better education for the children, while still keeping their home in Montebello for the summer holidays and Owen's business activities.

From 1909 to 1921, encouraged by her husband who was proud of his wife's talent, Nina enrolled in art classes

at the Art Association of Montreal (today the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts), where she studied with the well-known painter William Brymner (1885-1925). From 1910 on, she exhibited regularly in the Spring Salons of the AAM and began to illustrate articles and books. She drew or painted mostly landscapes; also still-lives and portraits of family members.

The Eastern Townships, the Knowlton region in particular, were a source of inspiration for the majority of her landscapes. From 1922 to 1926, Nina attended the newly-opened École des beaux-arts de Montréal, where she studied modelage under the well-known sculptor Alfred Laliberté.



Nina May Owens and her children, Carolyn and Norreys, Christmas 1909

In 1942, Nina moved to Rosemere, where she lived with her daughter Carolyn in a house in the countryside and enjoyed gardening. She continued to paint until 1957, by then practically forgotten. Although still active in household tasks, she nevertheless realized some 80 paintings, watercolours and sketch books, including some she had created during a trip in 1925 throughout England and Europe.

Nina May Pickel died in Montreal on June 1959. She is buried with her husband and children in the Owens family plot in the Mont-Royal cemetery of Montreal.

In 2018, to honour the memory of this too-long-forgotten woman artist from the Eastern Townships, a street named after her was opened next to Lionel-Groulx Boulevard in Sherbrooke, at the corner where it makes a 90-degree turn.

**Jean-Marie Dubois** (Université de Sherbrooke), **Monique Nadeau-Saumier** (art historian) and **Gérard Coté** (Lennoxville-Ascot Historical and Museum Society). Photos courtesy of Margaret Nina Owens, Sherbrooke, and Lennoxville-Ascot Historical and Museum Society. An earlier version of this article was published in the Record in January 2019.



# Yarrow Press, Poetry Imprint

by R.A. Garber

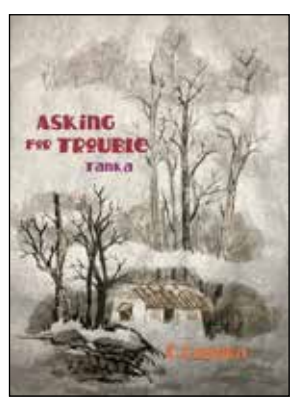
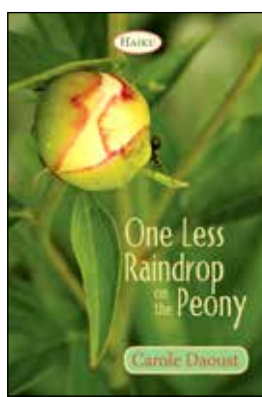
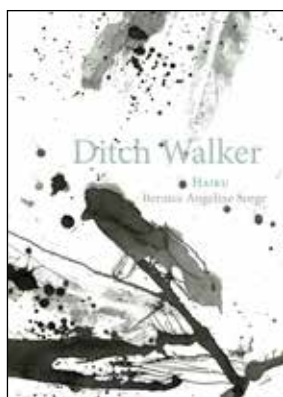
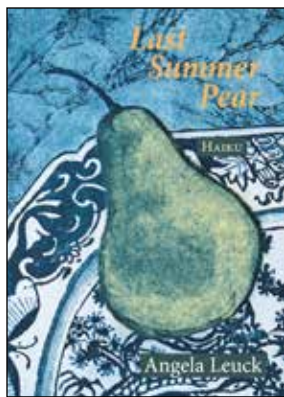
She thrust five petite books in my hand, hot off the press. I recognized them immediately as gems of haiku and tanka, two kinds of Japanese short-form poetry. Gems, I say, because their colourful, distinctive covers proclaimed their glory.

Haiku is a short poem, usually three lines, about observations of nature. Tanka is five lines about a personal emotional experience.

Three of the poets are Townshippers. All of the books are published by Yarrow Press, a new imprint of Shoreline Press.

"Yarrow Press specializes in Japanese short-form poetry written by Canadians. This is a national press as opposed to Shoreline, which focuses on Townships authors and issues," explained Angela Leuck, the Shoreline publisher in Hatley. She is also a poet and the Quebec representative of Haiku Canada. (*She reminds us that the Haiku Canada Weekend of readings and workshops in May is free to attend via Zoom.*)

"I've been writing Japanese short-form poetry for 20 years," said Leuck. "I started collaging words. In collaging, I found I was writing poems. That led to writing haiku, the simplest form."



Haiku is tricky, but easy – children can write it. But mastery is more: "If you can write five good haiku, you can call yourself a haiku poet," she said. "If you write five great haiku, you are a haiku master." So far, there are only five recognized haiku masters: Basho, Buson, Issa, Shiki, and a woman, Chiyo-ni.

What is a great haiku? "One that makes you go 'Aha!' A physical response. It works on many different levels. Some poems are so good that you read them again and again, looking for the different levels; they're much richer. The poems are so small, it's hard to get at more levels than one. It's a challenge!"

In November 2020, Leuck and about a dozen other Townships poets took on the challenge of writing a haiku

a day and sharing them with each other by email. Her book and two others in this collection were crafted using poems written during that experience.

**Last Summer Pear** is a book of haiku by Leuck herself, 87 pages of delectable tidbits of nature, one or two haiku to a page. The title poem goes like this:

*tossed into  
his Red River cereal  
last summer pear*

**Spring to Lips** by Phyllis Sise of Foster is 85 delightful pages of haiku with often quirky, even humorous, imagery:

*bare back trees  
against a pink sky  
fishnet stocking tan*

**Ditch Walker** is an 87-page book of haiku by Bernice Angeline Sorge of Dunham, a painter, printmaker and poet. Her agile haiku, anointed by gestural artwork, voice her ardent engagement with nature as she walks the road and works in her garden:

*take off from my left foot  
landing on my right  
the indolent flight of the cicada*

**One Less Raindrop on the Peony** by Carole Daoust of Verdun offers 89 pages of keen observations of tiny happenings in nature. The title haiku is: *an ant quenching its thirst / one less raindrop / on the peony.*

**Asking for Trouble**, the final book, contains 115 pages of tanka by Czandra, a poet in Rigaud. It is a bit larger than the four 5 x 7-inch haiku paperbacks. Czandra expresses emotion with delicate restraint: *when I get wordy / my alter ego / reins me in / thank the goddess / for 5 lines.*

All five Yarrow Press books are to be launched this spring. For information, visit [ShorelinePress.ca/Yarrow](http://ShorelinePress.ca/Yarrow), or contact [acleuck@gmail.com](mailto:acleuck@gmail.com).

# The Life and Times of Smith's Mills

by Marguerite Dunlop

Once there was a Smith's Mills in Stanstead County. You will not find it on a modern map, but you will find it in the pages of the old Stanstead Journals.

The title *Mills* gives the story away. Smith's Mills is the home of a saw/shingle mill, a grist mill, and a woollen mill. These are important sources of income but they are not the only ones.

Agriculture, including animal husbandry, crops, and maple syrup production, also contributes to the economy. A specialty of the area is dairying. Cream is much in demand by such companies as Hood, which sends agents all the way from Boston. Some towns establish their own cheese-making factories. The one in Smith's Mills is called Eureka. During the quiet winters, lumbering occupies the farmer. The wood is marketed not only locally but to Western Canada and the U.S. as well.

Farming is hard work and not everyone is capable of it. At one point, in 1882, there is a boom in farm sales. The going price is around \$2,500, though no mention is made of how much acreage this includes. By 1892, however, the boom dies down and many farms remain unsold.

Smith's Mills became a community in 1802. "If the surveyors for Putnam and Gray were reasonably accurate, then Smith's Mills was significantly smaller in 1863 than in 1913, and the 1870 arrival of the railroad was the likely catalyst for its growth," wrote Jeff Packard of Heritage Ogden. In 1898, Smith's Mills had a population of 150, per Lovell's Business and Professional Directory.

The name change to Tomifobia in 1918 eliminated confusion with other railway towns with a similar name: Smith's Falls in Ontario, for example. Today, Tomifobia is part of the Ogden Municipality. Source: Heritage Ogden, [heritageogden.ca](http://heritageogden.ca). All photos are courtesy of Heritage Ogden.

For a small town like Smith's Mills, there is quite a bit of industry. The wool factory offers fifteen cents for unwashed wool that will be turned into tweeds and blankets. Two factories make beds and mattresses. Cottage industries flourish, including dressmaking and millinery establishments, which provide employment for women.



*Fairview Hotel in Smith's Mills, 1925 (heritageogden.ca). It was built for William T. Knight around 1860 or 1865 as a railroad inn, the current owners wrote in a message to the Townships Sun. "It was a popular hotel then and famous for its oyster suppers and weekend dances. By the 1960s, it was no longer a hotel – just a small farm. My parents bought it in 1970."*

There is little tourism, but summer vacationers stay at the hotel, first known as Doran's Riverview and then O'Leary's Fairview. The hotel also acts as a restaurant for groups, and as a venue for entertainments such as concerts and plays, put on both by local talent and by traveling troupes. The hotel hosts a regular schedule of dances, often for a special occasion.

The construction business prospers, building houses, churches and a school. Commercial businesses also become prominent, selling everything from food to tools, to patent drugs. Many locations provide a cozy atmosphere, mostly for men, to sit around a nice fire and talk business and politics.

By 1877, Smith's Mills' most valuable asset is perhaps the Railroad Station. So important is it, that the position of Station Master is highly desirable and much care is taken in choosing him. He is responsible, not only for the daily schedule, but for handling emergencies such as engine breakdowns, flooded tracks, and animals that wander onto the rails.

The railroad carries not only cargo but passengers. However, the train is not the only means of transportation: the stagecoach, sleighs, and wagons also serve this purpose. The position of Stagecoach Driver is as coveted as that of Station Master. However, would-be candidates must bid on, and pay for, the position.

Sleighs, actually, are used more for pleasure than for business, and for that reason good snow conditions are welcome. Neighbors to the south, however, are not so fond of snow and a complaint is reported that "[they] are advertising a stricter watch on the frontier as they think that too much Canadian weather is being smuggled in" (Feb. 3, 1881).

With more land transportation comes a greater need for roads and bridges. Council meeting notes mention a lot of “praying” for a new road here or there. Men are hired to look after the infrastructure, and a driver is employed to “roll” the roads in winter. Bad conditions often lead to the cancellation of church services and social events. Some complain about potholes and mud, mostly the postmen. Still, there’s many a story of how these carriers overcome weather and road difficulties to deliver the mail to each town’s post office, often located in a store.

Doctors, especially, rely on good roads. They often visit patients in their own homes, taking care of accident injuries, and illnesses such as measles, mumps, and the more deadly small pox and diphtheria.

Education and religion are both essential to a good life in such a confined community. The teacher, in a one-room schoolhouse, is responsible for students from grade one to grade six or seven. She not only teaches the ABC’s but produces a “Christmas Tree” in which the children put on an entertainment. She also arranges a picnic for the end of the year. Since she is often not a resident of the area, she is boarded out to a private home.

Religion permeates most people’s lives. When a new Methodist Church is built, there is much fundraising



*Railroad washout in Smith's Mills, August 9, 1916 (heritageogden.ca)*

to pay for it. Groups such as the Ladies’ Guild arrange chicken pie suppers, oyster suppers, and strawberry and ice cream festivals. In Smith’s Mills, an attempt to establish a Sabbath school does not appear to meet with much success. Keeping a permanent minister is also a challenge, and at many a farewell party a “purse” is given as thanks. Quite often a lay minister serves in the pulpit, or a traveling evangelist. The Adventists are very active and hold a camp every year, which is attended by most congregants of other churches.

In addition to becoming members of focused groups such as the Ladies’ Guild, the Homemakers’ Club and, during the war, the Red Cross and the Patriotic Club,



*Map of Smith's Mills in 1863 (heritageogden.ca)*

there are many other opportunities for socializing and entertainment. Fishing and hunting, lake excursions to Magog and Newport, and land excursions to the White Mountains are popular.

Politics, taken seriously, also provide occasions to get together. The Council has no shortage of volunteers, who discuss everything from taxation to promulgating laws, such as requiring that a sleigh have bells at night. The two main federal parties, the Liberals and the Conservatives, mostly get along with each other, to the point of having meetings and dinners together.

Life remains the same for a long time and then come changes. Cars appear on the streets, telephones invade the railroad station, the post office, the stores, and eventually private homes. Rather than a live band, a gramophone provides dance music, and “flashlight” pictures commemorate the occasion.

The young folk, including the “returned” men, become restless and leave to seek their fortune in western Canada or the U.S. They will, for a time, return to their hometown to visit relatives. But when the Stanstead Journal of July 21, 1918, reports that “Tomifobia is the name by which the village of Smith’s Mills will henceforth be known,” the old name will disappear from the railroad station, the post office, and from the map.

*An earlier, more lengthy, version of this article first appeared in the Stanstead Historical Society Journal, Vol. 28 (2018).*



**Marguerite Dunlop** is a retired Montreal teacher who, with her husband, purchased a small farm in Stanstead County 50 years ago and has lived there permanently for 20 years. As an historian, she has become very interested in local history.

# Making Maple Syrup, Part Two

by Bob Miller

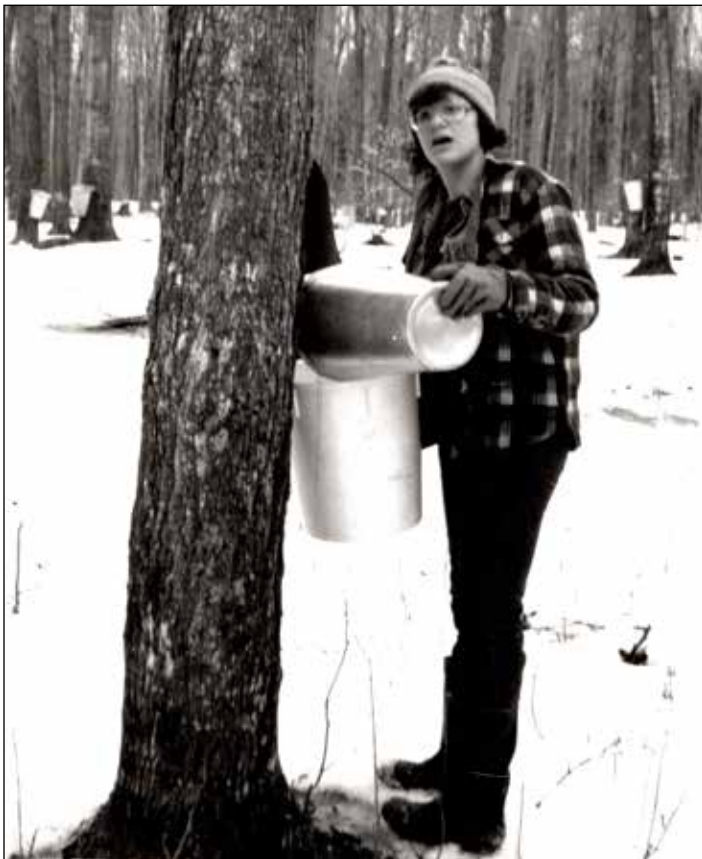
## Sugaring as Our First Job: Brome Heights Farm

When Kaye and I were first married, we managed a farm for a Montreal businessman, just two miles from my home. This farm had a very large sugar bush where we hung over 4,000 buckets. We occasionally hung two or even three buckets on a large tree, but mostly one bucket to a tree. Kaye's dad, Grandpa Miltimore, was a skilled syrup maker and we hired him to run the sugar house while I managed the tapping and sap gathering. The first year was among the worst snow years anyone could remember. Over 200 inches fell, and we had a terrible time getting the trails through the woods into shape for tapping and gathering. To pack the trails enough so the team could finally pull a sled along them, we spent two full days with two teams of horses just traveling those trails with no sled hitched to the team. Then we pulled an empty sled along the trails a couple of times and finally we could pull a lightly loaded sled.

Trees were tapped with a hand gimlet pushed against your belly or thigh. When sugaring was over and the snow had melted, some of the buckets were so high we could barely reach them because the snow had been so deep



*How sugaring was done long ago: in a cauldron. Photo by Norman Edson, from the Townships Sun files.*



*At the Rhicard's farm in Stanbridge East. Photo by Gillian Lortie, 1983, from the Townships Sun files.*

when we tapped the tree at thigh height. Because of the excess snow and a long season of moderate temperature, that year produced an exceptional syrup harvest. We averaged about four pounds per tree; in a normal year, it's about two pounds per tree. After sugaring was over, we bottled all this syrup, over 15,000 pounds, into "fifth bottles" (1/5th of a gallon), put our *Brome Heights Farm* label on each bottle, and packed them all into boxes of 12. This took us many, many days to do all by hand. The farm owner had connections with a big chain store called Steinberg's. They marketed all this syrup, and I am sure he got two or more times the bulk price most farmers got.

We rented an additional team of horses and had four extra men at sugaring time, and still it was hard to keep up. Kaye's dad sometimes boiled all night to keep ahead of the sap flow. Kaye brought his meals to the sugar house, where he often slept. The big evaporator at this farm was rated to evaporate 350 gallons an hour. We could never achieve quite that capacity. A little over 300 gallons per hour for a 24-hour-day was the best day I can remember, and that was only once.

In most years, the season lasts 2 to 4 weeks, but crazy weather can upset the best plans. Occasionally, if it turned cold for a couple of weeks, with no run, the holes dried up and the trees had to be tapped again. Sometimes you just gave up for that year. In this maple syrup area of Quebec, sugaring was our busiest time of the year and it was heavy, strenuous work, carrying pails of sap through deep snow. If it warmed up quickly, the sap ran fast and it was rush, rush, and long days to keep it gathered before the buckets ran over and wasted the sap. It was also very hard work for the horses pulling the sap sled. We always took hay and oats in bags (we did not yet have baled hay) to the woods and when we stopped for lunch, the horses munched on oats and hay.

Then, when sugaring was over, all the spouts and buckets had to be gathered, washed, dried and stored for the next year.

### Maple Syrup Delights

**Sugar on Snow.** One of the delights for children (and children at heart) is “sugar on snow” candy. To make this, you simply boil maple syrup until it becomes thick enough to harden when it is poured on snow. To test when it is ready, one has a pan of snow on hand and pours a small spoonful on the snow. If the syrup melts right into the snow, it’s not ready. If it hardens on top of the snow, it is ready. Then you pour the boiling pan of syrup on the snow in thin strips, and the feast begins. You just pick the thin strips off the snow.



*At the Rhicard's farm in Stanbridge East. Photo by Gillian Lortie, 1983, from the Townships Sun files.*

If the sugar on snow is just slightly underdone, it becomes very sticky. We loved to make some of this kind on purpose and give it to the dogs, who always begged for sugar on snow. Dogs can bite down with tremendous power, but have very little muscle to open their mouths. When they would bite into a wad of this sticky stuff, it

would stick their mouths shut and we kids delighted to see the poor dogs try to get their mouths open. Usually in two to three minutes, their warm saliva would melt the sugar and the dogs would be back for more. They never seemed to learn or care, and were always willing to take another bite.

**Soft Sugar.** Making “soft sugar” was particularly common during World War II, when cane sugar was rationed. Folks used this soft sugar for everything from a spread on toast or sugar muffins, to stirring into cereal, to cooking. Soft maple sugar was made by boiling the syrup a little past sugar-on-snow stage. To test if it is ready, you put a spoonful in a cold saucer and stir vigorously for 20 or 30 seconds; if it is ready, it will quickly turn into a thick product about the consistency of peanut butter. You are now ready to vigorously stir the whole kettle of syrup until it cools. Using a long wooden paddle works best, and putting the kettle in a large pan of snow helps cool it more quickly. This product keeps without sealing or refrigeration for very long periods. Ants love soft sugar, so we kept it ant-tight.

**Maple Butter.** We often made a spread of one cup of butter and one cup of soft sugar. You warm both until soft, but not melted, and whip together with a spoon, then put into a jar. This makes a delicious spread for biscuits, toast, muffins, and pancakes. If you keep it more than a couple of weeks, it needs refrigeration because the butter will become rancid.

**Sugar Cakes.** Another use for maple syrup was making “sugar cakes.” If the syrup was boiled a little past the soft sugar stage, and poured into muffin tins or molds, it would harden into delicious sugar cakes. This was an art that not everybody did well. If you did not boil it long enough, the cakes would become sticky and lose their shape. If it was boiled too long, the cakes would harden like a rock. The art was to get it to just the right consistency so the cakes would be solid but not too hard to bite easily. People made art exhibits with sugar cakes molded into just about anything: whole farm scenes with buildings, livestock, and poultry, and exquisite church and nativity scenes. Most fairs in Eastern Canada had major prizes for these maple cake scenes. Most were made by pouring the syrup into molds, but some were carved from a block of sugar cake. Our family did not have any artists; we usually just made sugar cakes in muffin tins that were stored in a big candy jar. During World War II, due to sugar rationing, this was about the only candy we had.

**Bob Miller** was born in Brome Center, where he lived for 21 years. He moved to Illinois in 1955, but has vivid memories of the Townships.



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## Five Herbs and Spices to Reduce Inflammation

by Anita Duwel

*What is inflammation? Is it good or bad for you? Well, it's both.*

**I**t's your body's natural immune response against injury, illness, toxins, infections, and more. Once your body recovers, the inflammation should go away. Which is a good thing!

However, if it's not managed, it can cause chronic inflammation which overloads your immune system. This can lead to serious health issues such as heart disease, rheumatoid arthritis, autoimmune diseases, irritable bowel syndrome, and some cancers.

The good news is you can fight inflammation. One of the ways to do so is to incorporate herbs and spices into your daily routine. Why herbs and spices? Because they have important anti-inflammatory properties.

**Basil.** Basil is quite delicious in pasta dishes, soups, salads, sauces, or pesto. We don't tend to think of basil as a medicinal plant. However, basil has a specific compound called (E)-beta-caryophyllene (BCP), which has been shown to reduce inflammation. It has been useful in treating rheumatoid arthritis and inflammatory bowel conditions.

Holy basil is important to the culture and religion of India, and is the powerhouse species most commonly used for medicinal purposes. A strong anti-inflammatory effect is one of its many, many health benefits.

*the tantalizing taste  
in the potluck salad  
purple basil! (Angela Leuck, Last Summer Pear)*

**Ginger.** This popular spice has been around for centuries and is known for its many medicinal benefits. As far as inflammation goes, it is considered a potent anti-inflammatory. Eating ginger can help reduce inflammation in your intestines and it may help relieve the symptoms of gastrointestinal issues such as Inflammatory Bowel Disease.

You will get the most benefit from eating fresh ginger. It can be steeped in hot water. You can add it to your smoothie or to your stir-fry. It can also be frozen for future use; just peel it and freeze it.

*teatime  
that soupçon of ginger  
approaching my lips  
(Carole Daoust, One Less Raindrop on the Peony)*

**Garlic.** You probably have a bulb or two on hand, or a bottle of garlic powder in your pantry. Not only does this spice add flavour to your dishes, but it also has plenty of health benefits. The best way to eat it is raw; just ask everyone around you to eat it as well.

Studies show eating garlic on a regular basis may help decrease the risk of developing cardiovascular diseases caused by chronic inflammation. Garlic may even help lower your body's levels of homocysteine, a protein byproduct that leads to inflammation. This delicious vegetable is also great for swollen joints or sore muscles; you can treat aches by rubbing them with garlic oil.

**Cinnamon.** Cinnamon is more than just a spice to add to pastries and muffins. Its anti-inflammatory properties help your body manage headaches and pain, repair tissue damage, and fight infections. Research shows adding cinnamon to your daily diet can significantly reduce systemic inflammation and lower your risk of disease.

Try sprinkling cinnamon in your coffee or tea to add flavour and reduce swelling. Or put a cinnamon stick and some apple into your water to flavour it...delicious!

**Turmeric.** Turmeric has amazing health benefits; researchers have named it one of the most potent anti-inflammatory spices, mostly due to curcumin, the antioxidant found in it. This brightly coloured spice has been proven to help against chronic diseases such as diabetes and cancer; lessen pain, improve your mood, and boost your immunity.

You can add turmeric to smoothies for breakfast, soups for lunch, and vegetables for dinner.

*an assembly of women:  
one gathers guns  
another defends herself  
with tumeric  
a third with love  
(Czandra, Asking for Trouble)*

These five herbs and spices that lower inflammation are easy to find in most grocery stores. Get them fresh, dried, or powdered.

They're also available in essential oils which you can find in your local health food store. Some of these oils can be consumed, applied topically, or used for aromatherapy

*Embracing Aging, cont'd on p. 21*



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# Prophets and Poets

by Kathleen Y. Rattigan

*"Poetry, like meditation, allows us to slip into the gap between thoughts and get in touch with the karmic software of our souls." – Deepak Chopra, **Raid on the Inarticulate***

I am going to share with you a poem that I wrote and then explain the context within its writing:

*Sacred light of eternal life*

*Blessed are we your children of light*

*With diamond light seal – I invoke your protection*

*We give thanks for our life so filled with your love  
& perfection.*

I created this as a teaching tool to help people ground and center themselves in a sacred space as they were learning to meditate. The power of words creates the feelings within, and as we learn to choose our words – thoughts, spoken and experienced – this realization changes our life!

Prophets and poets have learned to use the power of words in a profound manner that can impact and even change our prior beliefs. Let us now turn to our prophets. Nostradamus (1503 to 1566) is perhaps the most well known and his quatrains have been studied and interpreted since their creation. Their accuracy, however, is open to interpretation and is difficult to verify due to his vague language. He had to be careful as his works were scrutinized by the Roman Catholic Church, and in that era trying to predict the future could lead to persecution at the hands of the Church. Prophecy was considered to be heresy and the work of the devil.

Can the future be predicted? I like what Abraham Lincoln once said: "The best way to predict your future is to create it." I do study our prophets with interest, but with a big grain of salt! As an aside – although I have been doing Tarot readings for over 35 years, I refuse to work with those who ask me to read their future. There is an unwritten cosmic law that forbids us to do this, because of the influence of a negative interpretation. I have personally heard of people who had a reading and were warned of things to come – things which usually never happened, but were very upsetting for them and caused unnecessary stress. My question to those who ask to have their future read is what they would like to create in their life. Could they work on that? Abraham Lincoln and I certainly agree.

The poetry page in our *Townships Sun* is my first go-to page when I receive each edition. Reading their words

opens up new worlds for me as I look out through the eyes of their soul – so beautiful. How many different kinds of poetry are there? Here are just a few examples: Blank verse is poetry written with a precise meter—almost always iambic pentameter—that does not rhyme. In contrast to blank verse, rhymed poems, by definition, rhyme, although their scheme varies. Then there is free verse. Epics. Narrative poetry. Haiku. Pastoral poetry. Sonnets, and more. I leave you to investigate if you are interested.

The first poet I ever studied was Edgar Allen Poe, who was assigned to my high school class as a literary project. The poem was "The Raven." Looking back as an adult I find that this was a rather macabre project; the teacher might have thought it would capture the attention of restless teenagers. Well, it worked for me! I truly believe this was one of the works that helped awaken within me an appreciation of the vast and diverse number of literary geniuses, and opened my heart and intellect to explore these boundless worlds.

*Yesterday is history*

*Tomorrow a mystery*

*Today is a gift.*

- Eleanor Roosevelt



**Kathleen Y. Rattigan** has been a counselor and motivational speaker for over 30 years. She lives in the Chateaugay Valley (Ormstown). (Photo courtesy of author)

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## Embracing Aging (CONT'D FROM PG. 19)

treatment. Check with your health professional or coach who can advise you on what's best for you.

If you would like your own anti-inflammatory Food Guide to help guide you on which foods are good for you, and which ones to stay away from, just click on the following link. [anitaduwel.com/anti-inflammatory-guide/](http://anitaduwel.com/anti-inflammatory-guide/)

If you have any questions or comments, feel free to reach out to me. I would love to hear from you.



**Anita Duwel** is owner of [Love the Life You Live/ Aging with Vitality](http://Love the Life You Live/ Aging with Vitality). She is a Certified Holistic Nutrition and Health coach, Workplace Wellness Consultant, and helps people who struggle with weight and low energy to feel healthy and vibrant so that they can live a life of quality and vitality.

Learn more at [AnitaDuwel.com](http://AnitaDuwel.com).

# Who dislikes poetry? Hands up.

by Jan Draper

*Do you turn the page fast when you see a poem? If poetry is part of a course, do you avoid it? If so, read on. Poetry might not be that bad.*

A student's nightmare has to be an English teacher's asking, "What does this poem mean?"

The student wants to say, "I have no idea." Not a good plan, so the student hurriedly concocts a response. Relax. There are easy and enjoyable ways to approach poetry.

Most poems include images; descriptions of what we can see, hear, taste, touch or smell. Let the words create a movie in your head. Imagery can form a 3-D picture for the five senses. You can imagine not only the sights and sounds, but the tastes, smells and textures. Of course, everyone sees, hears or senses a different movie. Also, the images might create a mood and sometimes bring up memories.

Poets can create lines that sound like their meaning. W.B. Yeats wrote, "I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;" (*The Lake Isle of Innisfree*, [poets.org/poem/lake-isle-innisfree](https://www.poets.org/poem/lake-isle-innisfree)). The sounds suggest a still day on one of our lakes with the water just lapping quietly. I can hear it as I read.

Elements in a poem may symbolize abstractions and might lead the reader to see a theme. Poems are not like fables that tell the reader the moral. Readers of a poem are free to interpret it as they will, as long as they follow the words of the poem.

Is it necessary for a reader to see a theme? No. Poetry can be appealing just because of the images.

Matsuo Basho, a Japanese poet born in the 1600s, wrote many haiku (a 3-line poem traditionally including a reference to a season). One of my favorites is:

*in the abandoned boat  
the hail  
bounces about*

Pretty simple, right? What do you see? Is the boat on a lake, a river or the ocean? Is it fall or spring? Can you see and hear the hail? Does it remind you of something?

This is a poem I used for many years in my classes at Champlain College. No student ever said, "Huh?"

What is it about?" I find it peaceful - an image of an old gray boat that has been well used. In my "movie" it is not hailing heavily, so I can watch and listen to the hail and enjoy the solitude. This poem reminded some students of forgotten events from their childhood.

Does this poem express a general theme? I don't know. I just like it...and it's fine to "just like" a poem.

Maybe next time you see a poem, you will not turn the page!

*Jan Draper grew up on a dairy farm in Brome, Quebec. She has taught English at Champlain in Lennoxville and for College Marie-Victorin in Asia, and has implemented education projects in the Townships, South America, Europe and Asia.*



## The Webfoot in Ocean Park, Maine

Do you have great memories of staying at the Webfoot in Ocean Park, Maine? Sadly, the Webfoot grew very old and was demolished in October 2020.

**Sharon (Patton) Merchant** is working with the archivist of the Ocean Park Association to preserve its place in the rich history of the oceanfront town. We are collecting memories from folks who loved the Webfoot, and photos of their good times there. Dig out those photo albums, jot down some of your favourite memories, and send them to:

Sharon at [slpm81@gmail.com](mailto:slpm81@gmail.com).

Your memories will become part of the collection. Thanks for helping! Happy Memories!



Photo by Bruce Patton, 1977

# Poetry Page

## Missing - A School

by Lynette Enevoldsen

Bright and chatty,  
She came with me to find her school,  
Or where it had been.

A one-room school at the crossroads:  
Sutton behind us, West Brome to the right,  
And Dunham straight ahead.

She and her brother walked the mile to school,  
Past the cows in the green roadside pasture,  
Spring and fall.

Later there was a younger sister to take by the hand.  
In winter her dad took them with the horse and buggy,  
Or the teacher would pick them up in her pung\*

Sisters and brothers together, learning and teaching;  
Winter warmth welcomed from the stove,  
And parents arrived with a pot of steaming soup at noon.

We see the wooden remains of a building.  
Is it here? No. Further over.  
Tussocks of coarse grass, bushes, a tiny stream...

New curve of the highway cuts off the crossroads.  
This corner forgotten.  
Memories locked away somewhere, hidden,  
Behind the patch of day lilies and the big rock.

Go and listen on a quiet spring morning.

*\*Two-person sled*

*Lynette Enevoldsen lives in Sutton and enjoys historical research projects. She is currently completing a book based on memoirs of being an evacuee from Guernsey in World War II.*

## Thoughts on Turning 70

by Susan C. Mastine

When I get old and feeble...  
I will still savour the sounds of  
children laughing, birds singing, crickets and frogs  
chirping,  
sap dripping into an empty bucket, wind rustling  
through the leaves, the gurgling of a brook...

As I begin the final lap...  
I fancy myself  
feeling the breeze in my hair  
smelling roses, freshly cut hay, lavender, boiling  
syrup, mayflowers  
jumping into or, more realistically, strolling through  
puddles  
having adventures in our calm surroundings of  
rolling hills and vales, sparkling waterways,  
intriguing forests, farmland...

Always...  
I will be delighted by  
flowers, peacocks, fireflies, rabbits...  
and will cherish hugs from and the voices of my  
loved ones.

*Susan C. Mastine, a life-long Eastern Townships resident, lives in Kingsey Falls, where she thrives on family love and her natural surroundings.*

## Write Here Write Now

### WHWN @ BULLA - Schedule for April & May

Hi Everyone,

Here are the times for our upcoming workshops. They will be on Zoom as usual. For more information or the Zoom coordinates, please email Jan at [jandraper@yahoo.com](mailto:jandraper@yahoo.com), or check the WHWN Facebook page. Remember that our workshops are free and everyone is welcome.

Best wishes, Jan

- ≈ **Beginner Blogging for Authors** ≈ Rebecca ≈ April 7 & May 12, 1:30-3:30 p.m.
- ≈ **Editing and Giving Feedback** ≈ Rachel ≈ April 19 & May 17, 10 a.m.-12 p.m.
- ≈ **Through a Glass Darkly: Poetry** ≈ Jan ≈ April 21 & May 26, 1:30-3:30 p.m.
- ≈ **Fantasy Fugue Forum** ≈ Etienne ≈ April 25 & May 30, 7:30-9:30 p.m.

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