

Our Poets in Song:

John Newell, *Everything Has a Heart*

John Newell is a contemporary classical composer whose objective is to create works that reflect his personal sensibility, and that are inspiring and rewarding for performers and listeners alike. Since completing his doctorate in 1979 John has pursued an independent path, finding inspiration in the beauty and wonder of nature, in poetic and visual imagery, and in what he learns from the world's sacred traditions. John's works have been noted for their originality, clarity, and expressive power. His work has received support from the American Music Center, the Massachusetts Cultural Council and Meet the Composer. His works are self-published through Abierto Music. John is also an accomplished pianist and conductor. He enjoys the process of working with musicians who have an interest in presenting new works, and welcomes inquiries about opportunities for collaboration. He has participated in a number of premiere performances, including the solo part in his Concerto for Piano and Orchestra. John was the founding director of [Quoddy Voices](#), a choral ensemble based in Eastport, Maine.

Poets:

Sidney Wade (*Boulder*), Professor Emerita at the University of Florida, has published eight collections of poetry, the most recent of which is "Deep Gossip: New and Selected Poems." She taught poetry and the translation of poetry at UF for 21 years. Her heart's home is at her camp on Loon Lake in Rangeley, ME, where she spends half her year.

Betsy Sholl (*Gulls in the Wind*) served as the Poet Laureate of Maine from 2006 until 2011. She is a cofounder of Alice James Books, a nonprofit poetry press meant to provide women with great access to publishing. Alice James Books published Sholl's first three poetry collections, *Changing Faces* (1974), *Appalachian Winter* (1978), and *Rooms Overhead* (1986). She is the recipient of an AWP Prize for Poetry, a Felix Pollak Award, the Maine Arts Commission Chapbook Competition, two Maine Artists Fellowships, and a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts. Betsy was born in Ohio, grew up in New Jersey, and now calls Portland, ME home.

Gary Lawless (*Some Clear Night*) is a Maine native, born in Belfast, now living in Nobleboro. He and his wife Beth Leonard own Gulf of Maine Books in Brunswick. He has published 19 collections of poetry in the US and 5 in Italy and has given poetry readings and workshops in over a dozen countries. He has been artist in residence at Isle Royale National Park, the Island Institute in Sitka, Alaska, the Emily Harvey Foundation in Venice Italy, and at Beech Hill in Rockport Maine. He and his wife have two rescue donkeys: Clementine and Mavis.

Kate Barnes (*Why Do You Ask? & In the Pasture*) Was Maine's first official Poet Laureate, a gifted artist, a maker of handmade books, and a singer. She spent summers in Maine throughout her childhood and made the state her permanent home from the 1980s onward. For 30 years she called Appleton, ME her home, where she ran a blueberry business with a dear friend and enjoyed the company of her horses and dogs.

Deborah Cummins (*Everything Has a Heart*) was the award-winning author of three books of poetry (most recently, *Until They Catch Fire*) and a collection of essays (*Here and Away: Discovering Home on an Island in Maine*). She has served on multiple non-profit boards including Haystack Mountain School of Crafts and as board chair of the Poetry Foundation in Chicago. Most recently, Deborah served as the board president of Maine Writers and Publishers Alliance. She shared her life with her husband in Portland and Deer Isle before passing away suddenly in August of this year. www.DeborahCummins.com

Erica Ball, *Songs From Here - Suite No. 2*

Translating everyday life into music is at the heart of Erica Ball's whimsical and playful works. Inspired by the natural world, a childhood spent dreaming of becoming a ballerina, and studies of 20th-century American avant-garde music, Erica is equally at home writing lyrical melodies that sweep across an orchestra and collaborating with animators and circus dancers. Erica resides in Portland, Maine where she is active as a violinist, pianist, and educator with a special interest in bringing contemporary music to new audiences. www.ericajball.com/

Poets:

Mary Sheeline (*My love is a mountain*) was born in 1957 in Long Island, NY, but made it a priority to spend time at her family property on Vinalhaven, Maine. She dedicated her life to the service of others, first as a special education teacher in California and later, returning to the embrace of her mid-coast roots, as a massage therapist in Rockland, Maine.

Mary sang in various groups for most of her life, most notably with the Down East Singers in Thomaston, with whom she traveled to Europe to sing the music of Rachmaninoff. She also loved to write, sprinkling her musings, memories, and poetry around her house in notebooks and journals. Among other things, she enjoyed writing about the strength of self, women, and nature. Mary died on December 12, 2022, from complications from breast cancer. She is remembered fondly for her gentleness, her profound love of people and nature, her desire to heal those around her, and to leave the world a little kinder.

Cornelia "Fly Rod" Crosby (*Fly Rod's Notebook, All dry walking*) was an iconic figure in American outdoor culture (1854-1946). Born in Phillips, Maine, her childhood adventures in the wilderness ignited a lifelong passion for nature and fly fishing. She became the first registered Maine Guide, renowned for her unmatched fishing skills and deep knowledge of the state's wilderness. Crosby's influence extended beyond angling. She was a gifted writer and passionate conservationist, using her work to advocate for preserving Maine's natural beauty. Her commitment to sustainable conservation practices and responsible outdoor enjoyment made her a trailblazer in her time.

One of her most significant achievements was breaking gender barriers in outdoor sports. Crosby hosted fly fishing clinics and exhibitions, encouraging women to embrace the sport. Her legacy lives on as an enduring symbol of inclusivity in outdoor recreation.

Edna St. Vincent Millay (*Searching my heart for its true sorrow*) was born in Rockland, ME in 1892 and spent her early years living and writing in nearby Camden. She achieved literary fame, shared her talents internationally, and made a home in New York, but always wanted to return to her home state. She and her husband later purchased Ragged Island off the coast of Harpswell and it became her refuge for many years.

Our 2023 Songs From Here Readers (ongoing updates):

Sanford, October 22:

Mike Bove is the author of four books, most recently *EYE* (Spuyten Duyvil, 2023). His work has appeared in journals in the US, UK, and Canada. He was winner of the 2021 Maine Postmark Poetry Contest and a 2023 finalist for a Maine Literary Award in poetry. He is Professor of English at Southern Maine Community College and lives with his family in Portland, Maine where he was born and raised.

Sampson Spadafore (they/he) is a white, neurodivergent, genderqueer person living in Portland, Maine. He's a poet and currently works at the Maine Humanities Council. He was the recipient of the 2022 Bodwell Fellowship through Maine Writers and Publishers Alliance and Hewnoaks. They're also a theatre artist with a degree in Musical Theater from Nazareth University. samspadaforeofficial.com

Bangor, October 29:

Sarah Carlson combines her unique poetic voice with photography of scenes from her outdoor adventures in her home state of Maine and other wild places. She has published three books that interweave her love of nature, journey toward wellness, and over 30 years of experience in the field of education. Her work is full of grace, hope, and healing. Information about her books - *The Radiance of Change* (2018), *In the Currents of Quiet* (2020), and *Tender Light Softens* (2022) - along with ongoing work can be found at <https://meanderingsoftheheart.blogspot.com/>.

Annaliese Jakimides's prose and poetry have been published in many journals, magazines, and anthologies, including *Beloit Poetry Journal*, *GQ*, *Utne Reader*, and the 2022 award-winning *Breaking Bread: Essays from New England on Food, Hunger, and Family*. Cited in national competitions and nominated for the Pushcart Prize and Best of the Net, her work has also been broadcast on Maine Public and NPR. Jakimides is the cowriter of the musical *Love Affair*, premiering in 2024. After decades raising a family on forty acres in Mount Chase near the north entrance to Baxter State Park, she now lives in downtown Bangor.

Waterville, November 3:

This performance will feature student poetry, and to maintain their privacy, we will not be publishing their names – we encourage you to come see the show and hear them in person!

Camden, November 12:

Laura Bonazzoli's poetry has appeared in dozens of literary magazines, including *Connecticut River Review*, *New Plains Review*, and *Northern New England Review*, as well as in several anthologies. She has also published personal essays and fiction. Her short-story cycle, *Consecration Pond*, published by Maine indie press Toad Hall Editions in 2022, was praised by *Publishers Weekly* as haunting and poetic. She is online at laurabonazzoli.com.

Margaret Haberman lives and writes in Belfast, Maine. She is, by profession, an American Sign Language interpreter. Her poems have been published in the *Island Journal*, the journal *Spiritus*, and selected for the Maine Public Radio program *Poems from Here*.

Yarmouth, November 19:

Mary Dowd an accidental physician wife and mother. She is always wishing she were somewhere else, but, in fact, never wants to leave home. In her next life she would like to be able to carry a tune and hit a baseball. In this life she hopes to die laughing.

Sarah Hyde, grandmother and honey farmer, is inspired by the magnificence and beauty of the natural world and the people in it. Writing and reciting poetry to bees, trees and barred owls is her daily ritual on her farm in Pownal. Her joy comes from laughing with and being present to her grandchildren.

Melissa Mirarchi was born and raised in a small coastal town in Massachusetts. She moved into a hundred-year-old farmhouse in Portland nearly forty years ago, and has been planting and tending perennial gardens for almost as long. When she moved to Maine, she was an award-winning advertising copywriter. Since then, she has transitioned to a new and more satisfying career as a dog walker. Dogs? Gardens? Life is good in Maine.

Marita O'Neill lives in Portland, Maine with her 10-pound dog Sweetpea. She received her MFA in Poetry from Vermont College of Fine Arts. She teaches English at Yarmouth High School. She has had poems published in the Portland Press Herald's "Deep Water" series, *The Cafe Review*, and *Smoky Blue*, LEON Literary Review as well as an anthology of poems about the pandemic, called *Wait: Poems from the Pandemic*, published by Littoral Books.

Nick Stone lives for most of the year on the small island off the coast of Maine where he spent all his childhood summers. After graduating cum laude in English from Princeton and getting his law degree from Harvard, he practiced law in Boston for many years. After retiring he began the serious writing of poetry, publishing FRAGMENTS in 2017, SEAWARD in 2022, and A DISTANT SHORE in 2023.

Maureen Thorson is the author of three books of poetry, *Share the Wealth* (Veliz Books 2022), *My Resignation* (Shearsman 2014), and *Applies to Oranges* (Ugly Duckling Presse 2011), and a collection of lyric essays, *On Dreams* (Bloof Books 2023). She lives in Falmouth, Maine. Visit her at maureenthorson.com