



TEACHING POETRY WITH THE COLORADO POETS CENTER

BETH FRANKLIN KATHY WINOGRAD

COLORADO LANGUAGE ARTS SOCIETY OCTOBER 14, 2023



COLORADO POETS CENTER

Founded by Robert W. King and Beth Franklin, the Colorado Poets Center is a 501c3 non-profit and a directory of writers who have published poetry and who live and work in Colorado. This site contains Colorado poets' biographical and bibliographical material and selections from published work; videos of poetry webinars; issues of the *Colorado Poet*, with interviews of selected Colorado poets; a bibliography of K-12 poetry books about genocide, displacement, and the Holocaust; and names of high school students who have won the Robert W. King Poetry Awards.

THE COLORADO POETS CENTER

- What are the criteria that poets have to meet to be included on the website?
- Who are the poets on the website?
- What is the cost for poets?
- What are the benefits for poets?
- If you would like to apply to be on the site, contact Beth Franklin.

COLORADO POETS CENTER



<https://coloradopoetscenter.org/>

COLORADO POETS CENTER

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The Colorado Poet:

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Robert W. King Poetry Award

Sponsored by the Colorado Poets Center, the Robert W. King Poetry Awards will provide \$100 first place and \$50 second place awards for winning poems to Colorado high school in Greeley-Evans District 6. For more information about the award please contact Beth Franklin at franklinbeth1309@gmail.com.

[Poets of Color / Poems Celebrating Diversity](#)

2023 Robert W. King Poetry Awards

First Place

- Alexander Lazarov Calhoun, "Born," Greeley West, Jonathan Lothspeich (Teacher)
- Alexander Hernandez, "The World Is A Flower," Greeley West, Angel Flores (Teacher)
- Emma Nottis, "You," Greeley West, Angel Flores (Teacher)
- Magda Guadalupe Mendez Sarinana, "Father," Greeley Central, Tom Frasier (Teacher)

Second Place

- Kaylee Garcia, "My Experience As A Girl," Greeley West, Angel Flores (Teacher)
- Anazae Lara, "This Is Where I Want To Be," Greeley West, Angel Flores (Teacher)
- Juana Tomas Manuel, "La Promesa A Mi Abuela," Greeley West, Angel Flores (Teacher)



Poets : [A](#) [B](#) [C](#) [D](#) [E](#) [F](#) [G](#) [H](#) [I](#) [J](#) [K](#) [L](#) [M](#) [N](#) [O](#) [P](#) [Q](#) [R](#)

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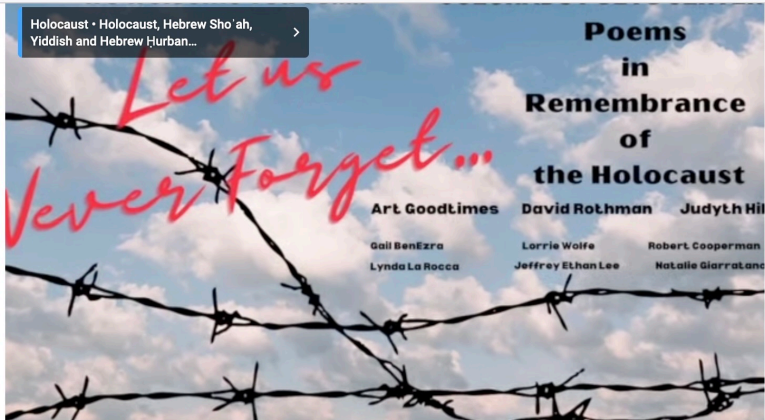
[Archived Issues](#)

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Recently Added Poets:

- Masino, Jason
- Surricchio, Maria
- Knorr, Alyse
- Partridge, Kate
- Kugel, Molly
- Coleman, Tameca L
- Lee, Sueyeun Juliette
- Leftwich, Hilary
- Tirado, Marisa
- Fischman, Eric Raanan

COLORADO POETS CENTER POETRY WEBINARS



Colorado Asians Poetry Reading,
May 15, 2021



Poets by Region

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LGBTQ Poetry Reading

Watch on YouTube

Poets Exploring a Multitude of Genres and Mediums

Vidlock Webinar #3: Poets Exploring A Multitude of Genres and Medi...

Using The Interviews at CPC To Better Understand the Poets and Their Poetry

And finding your own questions

Hedgehogs, Singing Fingers, and the Architecture of Deeper Truths: An Interview with Poet Emily Perez on her new book, *What Flies Want*, winner of the Iowa Poetry Prize.

<https://www.coloradopoetscenter.org/eWords/issue33/emily-perez.html>



Song for My Daughter

By Emily Perez

Because my father pushed me
down the path alone
Because my bridegroom marked the trail
with ash
Because a wolf in the woods
acts not from contempt
but takes what's his
Because every mouth satisfies
a body's hunger
Because when asked, I will say
it was a dream, my love
a tale I heard
Because the crone hushed and hid me
while tending her pot
stewed marrow they'd suckled since birth
Because she was once also a girl
but hands can form habits
and recipes spells
and good mothers feed even their raw,
wicked ones

Because with man as my savior
I was safest alone
Because the bird in the cage
sang words he had learned
from the previous girl
Because leashed as she was
she never said "no"
Because her finger, severed
continued to sing, and I wanted to use
its song as my proof
Because a woman's word
can never be proof
Because I had no wounds on my skin
when I stumbled home
Because my father slept sound
on a pillowcase filled
with dowry gold
and I would not wake him
from this particular dream

Because you've heard this before, where
boys will be
beasts and girls will be
cloth, torn to ribbons
tied tightly in knots or in bows

QUESTION BY KW

In your collection, *House of Sugar, House of Stone*, you use Grimm's folktales, especially the tale of Hansel and Gretel, as a metaphoric groundwork. Reading *What Flies Want*, I get "wisps" of mythology and folktale. Your notes allude to Grimms' "The Robber Bridegroom" and Hans-My-Hedgehog. The poem, "How I Learned to Be A Girl," has shades of Beauty and the Beast! Obviously, myth and folktale rock your boat. Talk about the role of mythology and folklore in your poetry. How do poems benefit when myth and folklore become vehicles for metaphor?

ANSWER BY EP

I love using myth and folktale because they provide both architecture and associations, thereby saving me time and space. If the story is well known, as in “Hansel and Gretel,” I can jump right into the meditations without spending time on narrative. Also, tales facilitate the use of persona which provides a productive distance. Writing from the point of view of the step mother or the witch in “Hansel and Gretel” allowed me to explore feelings I had without the exposure of using a present day “I.”

When I wanted to explore parents abandoning their children, “Hansel and Gretel” supplied a model. And when I wanted to explore misogyny, “The Robber Bridegroom” provided a map of archetypes, complete with the patriarch, the groom, and even the woman who enables the robbers by feeding them. Add to that the magical elements—the singing finger!--and you have a mix of realism and strangeness perfect for a poem.

...In many drafts in my notebooks, I play with the story but haven't found the present-day hook

YOUR TURN

What Questions might you ask the poet after reading this poem that would help you understand it?

TEN YEARS LATER MY HUSBAND WALKS OUT OF THE WOODS

after "Hans My Hedgehog"

In one version you remove your coat
of quills at dusk, drape it by the hearthside.
My father's bravest men then burst
into our room and net the carapace, fling
it in the waiting blaze, burn the thorns
that stippled you. The hollow spires
in the fire sing like copper smelted,
the slag amassing on the flagstones
cooling to a twisted fist of all that had you
hinged. Unmasked at last you stand
before me, born anew: not a monster, not
a man, but a fledgling flayed. Oh husband,
what soulbrave bargain have you made
that leaves you so tender, and how
am I to salvage you?— just wife, not
witch, not doctor.

QUESTION BY KW

KW: I've come to learn that the big issues in creative nonfiction are truth and ethics. [Philip Lopate](#) writes a good essay on "[The Ethics of Writing About Other People in Creative Nonfiction.](#)" But poetry is so often about "making the world new," "writing through intuition, metaphor, image, symbol," and the poet as "speaker" in the poem—that truth and ethics figure differently. *What Flies Want* is a powerful, but not an easy book to read, nor, I imagine, to have written. [In an earlier interview about *What Flies Want*](#), you discuss the difficulties during the time you wrote this book: familial mental illness, depression, marital disharmony, and crises in self-identification. Light and lyrical is not this book. One of your poems, "After Watching the Vampire Movie," warns the reader against that misbegotten expectation. From your experience, how does a poet maneuver through the perilous switchbacks of writing about those they love?

ANSWER BY EW

- Writing about people you love is tricky ethical territory, for even if I, to quote Dickenson, “tell the truth but tell it slant,” moments in these poems map onto events in my real life, and readers may choose to read this as autobiography instead of art, no matter what the truth is.. .
- I’ve come to value openness about mental illness. Shame impedes treatment. More recently, I felt very isolated navigating mental health issues as a wife and mother. These poems are only a slice of my life during that period, yet they represent what has been hardest to talk about. My hope is that someone who needs this book will find it and know they are not alone. These ideas, I hope, are not just moments of domestic drama, but connect larger explorations: how does mental illness intersect with violence? When raising children, how do parents undermine their own ideals? A recurring desire of the speaker in the book is to present a harmonious front through well kept secrets. And yet the book undermines that desire.
- Through therapy and medication, my family moved through these crises. I would not publish anything I could not share with the people I love. My husband read the whole book a couple of times and really liked some of the most difficult poems. My children are trickier, as they were not old enough to consent to these poems. I conflate the two of them and events they experienced to veer away from their real lives. Someday when they read this I hope they will see truths about motherhood, marriage, and family, even if they don’t see the exact truths of their childhood.

YOUR TURN

What Questions might you ask the poet after reading this poem that would help you understand it?



FINAL THOUGHTS