

Nature Poetry & Prose

Friday, September 27, 2019

Location: Nature at the Confluence, 306 Dickop St., South Beloit, Illinois

For more information and to register:

https://www.naturalland.org/event/nature-poetry-prose-3/?instance_id=2649

Writer Biographies

Katie Andraski will be reading from her novel, *The River Caught Sunlight*, a book that is based on her work as a publicist in Christian publishing. Frank Schaeffer says, "This book has a piercing insight at its heart as humane as it is damning of religion gone off the rails." She regularly writes Perspectives for Northern Public Radio, and blogs at <https://katieandraski.com>. Recently she was named a semi-finalist in the Soon to Be Famous Illinois Author Project. She lives with her husband on a farm in Northern Illinois, taking care of two horses, two dogs, six chickens and two cats.

Carolyn Bailey was born in Southern California, but moved to the Mid-West when she married a man from Rockford, Illinois. Sixty years of living in the Mid-West have taught her to appreciate its gifts of the seasons.

Mary Bartlett Caskey, a former Trustee of Natural Land Institute, has found inspiration in nature since childhood. She is author of a book of poems called *Where Roots Echo* and is currently working on a new book of poems. Her poetry has been published in *The Christian Science Monitor*, *Snowy Egret*, *Moon Journal*, *The Mid-America Poetry Review*, *Prairie Wind*, *The Rockford Review*, *Powhatan Review*, and in a *Milkweed Editions*, *Stories from Where We Live-The Great Lakes*. She has won honorable mention prizes in three national poetry contests. Her poem, "A Message to the United States", was nominated for a Pushcart Prize. Mary is a retired college administrator and a public school teacher.

Carol J. Fox is a retired teacher-librarian who has been sustained and calmed by nature throughout her life. For her, finding words to express her love of nature is the joy in writing poetry. Carol lives in Loves Park, IL with her husband, DeLon.

Don Miller has been getting people outside for the past four decades. He spent almost 30 years in the position of Director at Severson Dells Nature Center. He has received the distinguished "Atwood Award," has been named "Illinois Environmental Educator of the Year" and was honored with EEAI's, "Lifetime Achievement Award." He loves and lives in Winnebago County a place he has called home all his life. His favorite honor however is being called "grandpa" by twin 3 1/2-year-old girls, and smiled at by a 14-month-old grandson. He looks forward to seeing the County and beyond through their eyes.

Wilda Morris was introduced to the beauty and healing qualities of nature by her Uncle Norman, who raised goats and chickens on a very small farm in Iowa. She loves to walk in the wetlands near her home, and along the DuPage River Walk. She is a widely published poet, and serves as Workshop Chair of Poets & Patrons which meets in Chicago.

Lani Richardson grew up in the country and has returned there with her family to live where she now serves as support staff for her dad, husband and sons, including www.skysthelimitinc.net, deconstruction services, www.therockfordbrand.com artisan furniture, and www.snapshotmusic.com live performance recording and archiving services. Lani harvests fruit in the summer and wood in the winter. Most of her poems are found in the prairies and woods while walking with her quadruped companions.



Dr. Karen Blake Ruffner grew up on a farm in McHenry County and spent time outside which grounded her and made her value the importance of taking care of the world around us. When she and her husband first moved to Rockford in the 1970's, they helped organize the first Rockford chapter of the Sierra Club. As a former English and literacy teacher and later as a university professor, she tried to share her love of the land and nature with her students. In retirement, one of her volunteer commitments is to Anderson Japanese Gardens where she renewed her interest in writing by crafting her own haiku to capture the ideas she learned as a docent there. This writing experience has led to trying to capture the essence of Nygren Wetland using the haiku format which is a unique way to combine her interests in the environment, writing and learning new things.

Christine Swanberg's books include TONIGHT ON THIS LATE ROAD, INVISIBLE STRING , BREAD UPON THE WATERS , SLOW MIRACLE , THE TENDERNESS OF MEMORY, THE RED LACQUER ROOM , WHO WALKS AMONG THE TREES WITH CHARITY, THE ALLELUIA TREE, and WILD FRUITION:SONNETS, SPELLS, AND OTHER INCANTATIONS. Her poems appear in SPOON RIVER, WIND, LOUISVILLE REVIEW, GARDEN BLESSINGS, BACK TO JOY, GRATITUDE PRAYERS AND POEMS, and EARTH BLESSINGS. Love and appreciation of nature informs much of her work.

Kaitlyn Tibbetts is a homeschooled high school student with a passion and desire to write. She was a winner in the Gwendolyn Brooks Youth Poetry Awards 2017 and previously read at the Nygren Wetland Preserve. Poetry to her is a way to describe not just what she sees but also the glorious work of God.

