

## **Northfield Poet Laureate 2020 Annual Report**

“Northfield, Minnesota, a hotbed of poetry.”  
—the editors of *Third Wednesday Magazine*

### **Readings**

January 15. Joanne Esser. Content. Attendance: 6. In person.  
February 6. Rebecca Fremo. Northfield Public Library. Attendance: 15. In person.  
March 12. Larry Gavin. Northfield Public Library. Attendance: 40. In person.  
June 17. Becky Boling, Heather Candels, D.E. Green, Rob Hardy, Steve McCown. YouTube.  
October 29. Steve McCown. Facebook Live.

### **Public Poetry**

“Alloy.” 2020 Living Treasure Award.  
“Bloom.” State of the City Address and Northfield High School graduation.  
The Poet Laureate also read a poem in memory of Sarah Moyer (Greenvale Park Elementary educational assistant) at a school board meeting in January, and poems in honor of Teresa Jensen and Alyssa Herzog Melby at the December Arts and Culture Commission meeting.

### **Judging**

Red Wing Arts 2020 Poet Artist Collaboration.  
2020 Northfield Sidewalk Poetry Competition.  
2020 Minnesota State Poetry Out Loud Finals.

### **Workshops, Residencies, Classes**

Laura Baker Services Association poetry club. Aldrich House. January-February.  
Panel Discussion. Cannon Valley Elder Collegium class. Led by Jim Holden. January.

### **Miscellaneous**

- Facilitated the creation of a collaborative poem for installation on the Riverwalk steps.
- Determined locations for sidewalk poems as part of the 2020 east side street project.
- Attended several meeting on the future of the Poet Laureate program.
- Negotiated with COMPAS to book poet Danny Solis for a Hispanic Heritage Month virtual reading in September.
- Recorded videos of poems for Emily Lloyd to post on the public library’s Instagram during National Poetry Month (April).

### **Losses in the Northfield Poetry Community**

*Brent Christianson*. Died May 13, 2020. The author of several books of poetry; a participant in poetry workshops at 50North; and a reader at the 2019 Northfield Poetry Festival.

*Harold David Walters*. December 14, 2020. David was a member of a poetry group that started meeting at the public library in early 2019. He read at the 2019 Northfield Poetry Festival.

## Achievements by Northfield Poets in 2020

Five Northfield poets—Becky Boling, Heather Candels, D.E. Green, Rob Hardy, and Steve McCown—had poems published in the Summer 2020 issue of *Willows Wept Review*. Five Northfield poets—David Walters, Julie Ryan, D.E. Green, Rob Hardy, and Steve McCown—had poems, read by Cathy Wurzer, featured in videos as part of End in Mind’s Pandemic Poetry Project. Four Northfield poets—D.E. Green, Becky Boling, Steve McCown, and Rob Hardy—had work published in the September 2020 issue of *Lost Lake Folk Opera*.

*Steve McCown* published his first book of poetry, *Ghosting* (Shipwreck Books). Published poems in *Lost Lake Folk Opera* and *Willows Wept Review* (for which he received a Pushcart Prize nomination). He had two poems selected in the 2020 sidewalk poetry competition, and had a poem featured in End in Mind’s Pandemic Poetry Project.

*Becky Boling* published poems and prose in *Visual Verse*, *Persimmon Tree*, *Lost Lake Folk Opera* (short story) and *Willows Wept Review* (for which she received a Pushcart Prize nomination). She had a poem included in the Red Wing Arts 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Poet-Artist Collaboration, contributed to a collaborative poem curated by Kwame Alexander for NPR, and had a poem featured in End in Mind’s Pandemic Poetry Project.

*Susan Jaret McKinstry* had a poem included in the Red Wing Arts 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Poet-Artist Collaboration.

*Julie Ryan* had a poem featured in End in Mind’s Pandemic Poetry Project.

*Leslie Schultz* had poems published in *Third Wednesday*, *Naugatuck River Review*, *MockingHeart Review*, *Blue Unicorn*, *Mezzo Cammin*, *Poet Lore*, *North Dakota Quarterly*, *Hawai’i Pacific Review*, and *The Orchards Poetry Review*. She was the guest associate poetry editor of the Winter 2021 issue of *Third Wednesday*.

*Rob Hardy’s* poem “Letter” was chosen for the 50/50 Prize by the editors of *Third Wednesday* literary journal. He had poems published in *Third Wednesday*, *Willows Wept Review*, *Lost Lake Folk Opera*, *Poems from the Lockdown* and Red Wing Arts 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Poet-Artist Collaboration; prose published in *Critical Flame*; and a translation published in *Metamorphoses*. He had a poem featured in End in Mind’s Pandemic Poetry Project.

*Florence Dacey* had a poem included in the Red Wing Arts 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Poet-Artist Collaboration.

*Mar Valdecantos* was awarded a \$6,000 Minnesota State Arts Board individual artist’s grant. She plans to mentor and support immigrant and refugee poets and writers with public performances as a goal.

*Diane LeBlanc* won *Mid-America Review's* Fineline Competition with the poem "Possum," which appears in *Mid-America Review* 40.1. Her collection *Edgeless* was selected for publication by Terrapin Books in 2021.

*D.E. Green* had poems published in *Visual Verse*, *Willows Wept Review*, *Lost Lake Folk Opera*, and featured in a video created by the End in Mind Project. Doug also participated in several virtual readings.

*Heather Candels* had poems published in *Willows Wept Review*.

*David Walters* had a poem featured in a video created by the End in Mind Project.

I would like to extend my thanks to **Teresa Jensen**, the recently reitred director of the Northfield Public Library, for her crucial role in getting the Northfield Poet Laureate program off the ground, and for shepherding it through its first four years. Under her leadership, we received two SEMAC grants to support the program and gave poetry a newly prominent place in Northfield's civic life.

### **Looking Ahead to 2021**

Before leaving her position as library director at the end of 2020, Teresa approved a \$1,500 budget (\$125 a month) for the Poet Laureate. I would like to host at least two readings—either virtually or in-person, if possible—featuring poets who have books published in 2021: Diane LeBlanc (Northfield) and Michael Kleber-Diggs (Minneapolis). Michael read in Northfield two years ago, and his book *Worldly Things*, won the Max Ritvo Poetry Prize and will be published by Milkweed Editions. I would use some of the budget for honoraria for readings.