

Towpath Haiku Reading Poets of the Chesapeake Watershed

Towpath is a local haiku poetry group in the US National Capital Area, including DC, Maryland, and Virginia. We meet regularly to workshop haiku, talk craft, and enjoy community with other haiku poets.

Towpath poets are an eclectic group of haiku enthusiasts who range from beginners in the haiku form to veterans who have published books, edited haiku journals, and play an active role in the English-language haiku community.

More information about Towpath and member work can be found at <https://www.towpathhaiku.com/> and <https://x.com/towpathku>. Note that an electronic copy of this hand-out where the links in the bios of today's readers are active can be accessed at <https://www.towpathhaiku.com/work/> (scroll down to Readings) or the QR code at right.



Today's Towpath Haiku Readers

Roberta Beary (they/she), the longtime haibun editor for *Modern Haiku*, identifies as gender-fluid and resides near Washington, DC. Winner of the Bridport Poetry Prize and multiple Touchstone Awards, their [books](#) include [Crazy Bitches: Selected Haibun](#) (MacQ Books); [The Unworn Necklace](#), [Carousel](#) (Snapshot Press); and, with Lew Watts and Rich Youmans, [Haibun A Writer's Guide](#) (Ad Hoc Fiction). A frequent global haiku and haibun contest judge, she volunteers as Roving Ambassador for The Haiku Foundation. Roberta Beary credits Michael Dylan Welch for encouraging her, via an AOL chatroom in late autumn 1995, to join a newly formed haiku group called *Towpath*. Visit robertabeary.com for more.

thunder
the roses shift
into shadow

war zone
a soldier unhands
the firefly

10th Kusamakura Taishou (Grand Prize)

28th Kusamakura Taishou (Grand Prize)

Anna Eklund-Cheong lives part of the year in Rockville, Maryland and part near Paris, France, but is originally from St. Paul, Minnesota. She has been publishing haiku since 2015 and joined the Towpath Haiku Group in 2025. Last year she gathered two-thirds of her previously published work into her first collection, [From Little Acorns: 101 Modern Haiku to Discover at Home and in the Classroom](#), a volume she hopes will help new haiku poets and teachers. She co-judged (with Scott Wiggerman) the 2026 HSA-sponsored Nicholas A. Virgilio Memorial Haiku & Senryu Competition for Grades 7-12. She loves teaching haiku to middle-school students. Anna is on Instagram as [@ParisHaiku](#).

November nightfall . . .
a wren and a mouse
also hurry home

yard sale . . .
Eeyore and Chewbacca
having tea

Seabeck Haiku Getaway 2026

Elizabeth Fanto joined Towpath in 2005. She and Cathy Drinkwater Better formed the Haiku Poets of Central Maryland and held an international contest for 10 years. She taught English for 25 years, retired in 1997 and taught writing classes another 25 years in elder programs. A member of *HSA* and *Haiku Canada*, she always wrote haiku but now has time to enjoy haiku and begin publishing. Most of her work is in anthologies, but she has had pieces in *Frogpond* and *Haiku Canada Review*. This is a new chapter in her life.

abandoned farmhouse—
the orchard still fills
with cherry blossoms

camping trip
the night sky filled
with myth

*The Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival
Honorable Mention (2007)*

Hauling the Tide: HSA Members' Anthology (2024)

Sean Felix is a poet and artist from Hyattsville, MD who discovered the world of haiku after stepping outside and following the seasons during COVID lockdown. Sean's haiku has been featured in *Human Obscura*, *tsuri-doro*, *Trash Panda Haiku*, *Prune Juice*, and *Pan Haiku Review* among many others. He also won 2nd prize in the 2024 Alexandria, VA haiku contest, and had a poem chosen in the [2025 Golden Triangle Haiku](#) contest. You can see some of his poetic and artistic work at his soon to be updated website www.sean-felix.com.

first snow
she realizes
how old I am

the crane
lifts its throat
a deep swallow

*Autumn Moon Haiku Journal
vol 9:1, Autumn/Winter 2025-2026*

*Wee Sparrow Haiku
Haiku of the Month - Nov. 2025*

Robert Forsythe took up haiku in 2007 for reasons that remain lost in the mists of time. In 2014 he discovered HSA and began submitting poems for publication. Since then he has appeared in the usual array of journals and anthologies, won recognition in the 2018 H. Gene Murtha and 2019 Golden Triangle contests, and become a regular attendee of HNA and Seabeck. His poetry crosses a range of styles but often betrays the bias toward senryu of someone who spends too much time indoors, or the ambivalent detachment of an imperfect Taoist.

the length of the train
the length of our silence
unprotected crossing

suburban darkness
only the rumble
of garbage can wheels

Last Train Home (2021)

*The Heron's Nest #17.4 (2015)
The Wonder Code (2017)*

Seabeck Haiku Getaway 2026

Julie Bloss Kelsey is the author of four poetry collections: *The Call of Wildflowers* (Title IX Press, 2020), the award-winning *Grasping the Fading Light: A Journey Through PTSD* (Sable Books, 2023), *After Curfew* (Cuttlefish Books, 2023), and *Purging the Monsters*, a collection of horrorku (Cuttlefish Books, 2026). Since 2020, Julie has served on the board of The Haiku Foundation, where she focuses on welcoming newcomers to the haiku community. She has been an editor at *Frogpond* since 2025. Connect with her on Instagram [@julieblosskelsey](#).

possession—
the child's toy speaks
to an empty room

falling cards the house panic built me

Scriptic, Issue 1.4, March 2018

Prune Juice Journal, March 1, 2022

Vera Kochanowsky, a resident of Falls Church, Virginia, is an early music specialist, harpsichordist, choral director, private music teacher, author, and poet. Her interest in poetry was ignited in 2024 by her first trip to Japan and this fascination has led her to an exploration of many forms including haiku, haibun, traditional, experimental, and narrative poetry. Her poems have appeared in *Modern Haiku*, *The Maryland Literary Review*, and *Ibbetson Street*. She joined Towpath in 2025. Please visit [booksbyvera.com](#).

dining alone
old wine stains
on the tablecloth

red leaves and yellow
falling on the woodland path
slow me on my way

The Haiku Foundation, June 2025 Kukai (2nd place)

*Runner-Up, The Society of Classical Poets 2025
Haiku Competition*

Kathleen O'Toole is a longtime community organizer and former Poet Laureate of Takoma Park, MD (2018-2022). Her haiku journey began under the influence of her friend Nick Virgilio in the 1980s. Her haiku and haibun have appeared in *Brussels Sprout*, *Frogpond*, *Heron's Nest*, *Modern Haiku*, *Nothing in the Window*, The 2012 Red Moon Anthology of English Language Haiku, and *The Wonder Code*. Her haibun are featured in her [two books](#), *This Far* (Paraclete, 2019) and *Meanwhile* (David Roberts Books, 2011). She wrote the Afterword for *Nick Virgilio: A Life in Haiku* (Turtle Light Press, 20212). Kathleen co-edited the 2010 Towpath Anthology *a few stars away*, with Ellen Compton.

rowing home
his oars dipping
into stars

mid July
two-bee harmony
in the lavender

Modern Haiku #43.3 (2012)

The Wonder Code (2017)

Seabeck Haiku Getaway 2026

Matt Snyder is a gardener, runner, poet, and uncle living in NC by way of DC from IN. He came to haiku by happy accident and found community and inspiration in groups like [Towpath](#) and [NC Haiku](#). Since taking up the pen, his work has appeared in a variety of journals, anthologies, and other places. Writing haiku helps Matt to be present, observant, and appreciative. See more of his projects at [Pittsboro Pine Press](#).

the quickening
of treetop ice melt
...sound of sun

hummingbird
slow morning
sip of coffee

Brillig Winter/Spring 2025

Something Left, Towpath Anthology 2025

Jeff Walthall is an artist and musician living in Fairfax, Virginia. His interest in haiku started in high school when an English teacher gave him *The Penguin Book of Haiku*. He was fascinated, being a songwriter, by the simplicity and beauty of these poems. A long silence ensued. When the pandemic came around, he returned to haiku. He began with revisiting the Penguin book, then others on haiku, senryu, tanka, and other short form poetry. He found that the more you read other people's work, the more you gain insight. While his poetry can go a little dark, he also keeps some poems in a lighter comedic vein. He is published in *Frogpond*, *Failed Haiku*, and *Prune Juice*, among others, and is working on a book combining his haiku with his illustrations (working title - *sketches from life*). He would suggest to anyone who wants to grow as a poet to join a group of like-minded poets for inspiration and needed criticism. The Towpath group has been that inspiration for him.

parallel universe
my garage band
still rehearsing

unforced error
the shortstop examines
his glove for a hole

prune juice, May 2023 Issue