

Acknowledgements

The poems that comprise this issue were written this past year by students in the Creative Writing: Poetry classes, both online and face-to-face, and also students in the literature course Survey of Poetry. For some students, these represent their first poems. For most, this is the first time they have seen their writings in print. I want to thank all the students who submitted work. Their poems exude a wide range of emotions and experiences. Working with students as they explore their innermost hearts and minds and foster the courage to write and share their poems is not only a pleasure but a privilege.

The poems selected for this edition were those that reached beyond the scene setting and storytelling that often characterize personal narrative, those poems that found magic in language and images, enough to contain mystery. Now that is poetry. As Emily Dickinson wrote, "If I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off, I know that is poetry."

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Professor Joy Lyle

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Daniel Alkmim

Rio de Janeiro

I live in Brazil, Rio de Janeiro is the name--
one city that has beautiful things,
one city that has hidden treasure,
one place that has a lot of positive vibration,
one place that makes you feel peaceful
but can make you feel the opposite.
Slums are the names,
places that contain poor people,
places that most of the time are dangerous,
places that have police all the time,
people dying for drugs,
people dealing drugs to survive,
people dealing guns,
but outside of this dark world,
one city with the amazing beaches,
one city with your tourism places,
one place that has mountains,
mountains with perfect views,
views that you've never seen.
Rio de Janeiro is the name.

Bittersweet

I remember tooth pain.
I remember my big sister telling me to lie for her.
 I remember feeling alone in a crowd.
 I remember being afraid of my father.
 I remember the phone call late at night.
 I remember being in love.
I remember learning that love was not enough.
 I remember building washing machines.
 I remember going on strike.
I remember when the economy was booming.
 I remember feeling like I had done it all.
 I remember a carefree lifestyle.
 I remember standing tall and proud.
I remember feeling like I could do anything.
 I remember her when I am alone.

Kile Andeway

Snowbirds

It is almost cold enough
for you to fly away again
to live in your tuna can until Spring.
You will be drinking margaritas on the beach
with new old friends that may outlive you.
You will plan to leave again before the chill sets in
your weary bones.
It is another golden year for snowbirds
who have worked so hard almost all their lives.
They deserve to leave for Brownsville, Texas,
the day after Thanksgiving.
“What About Christmas?” selfish Kile will inquire.
The sun will shine upon your faces
as tears run down your children’s.
A dark day will present itself
one golden year.
Cancer will return and the birds will tweet
“As long as we can make it down there.”
You will be too racked with pain to drive home.
I will fly down and bring you home when
your wings will no longer carry you away.

Vicki Bredemann

Alpha-Omega

I'm suffocating;
I must dig myself out of this hole.
I strain and push with all my might;
I have got to be free;
I need sunlight!

It takes a while,
but finally I'm there.
I did it;
I can taste air!

Before long,
I'm at my best
and standing tall.
I feel proud!
I am admired by all!

I reach toward the sun
and stand in pride.
Soon my reign will be over,
and I must once again hide.

The air gets cooler,
day by day.
Soon I will go away.
I start shrinking
and crawl back in the earth
and wait for the season of my rebirth.

Soon I will be gone,
hidden back in the ground.
I hope I brought a smile to your lips
during the short time I was around.

You called me nice things
yet picked on me too.
Do not feel saddened,
as I will be back to visit you.

Snuggled in the comfort of this nourishing soil,
I shall rest until I get my fill,
and then I'll return.
You can't hold down this Daffodil!

Vicki Bredemann

Tustin

You lost the ability to live one more day;
oh how I cried when they told me you had passed away.
Your life was so short on this earth,
but now you will live forever in the land of rebirth.
My son, I miss you more than words can say,
feel an aching void every night and day.
Only the knowledge that you're free
and your pain is all gone
gives me the will to go on.
I know you're still with us even though we can't see you here;
every time I see your children, I know you are near.
They say the pain will lessen
but never go away; I know in my heart
my love and pride in you will always stay.
One day when my journey on earth is done,
I will hold you again, and together
down the streets of gold we will run.

Hailey Brown

Don't Shoot the Messenger

Your eyes are beautiful, by the way.
The way they light up our pictures together,
like windows into a Christmas-time living room,
doesn't even begin
to describe the magic of what they can accomplish when they're
closed
and our lips find each other out of the disarray of our imperfect
faces.
But somehow, interlocking,
they are more magnificent than they ever could've been by
themselves.
And maybe that is what bonds souls together.
Or maybe it is what tears them apart.
Regardless,
right now it is free and shameless,
and right now it is light and pure.
But I'm just the messenger.
Your hands are beautiful, by the way.

Hailey Brown

Moonlight Sonata

Lying under you for five and a half years,
(and that's what I did)
felt amazing.

You would think that all of that dead weight for so long
would have crushed the life out of me.

But two lonesome bottles of wine on Christmas Eve,
a sonata in the moonlight of an empty house
out in the frozen countryside, waiting
for you to come home...

worked well.

Then a couple Xanax on New Year's Eve
numbed the pain again,
of your body pushing down
into mine for more than half a decade.
Even when I laid there alone.

Courtney Clement

New Spring

A stone in the tundra, isolated and cold,
Lost in the never-ending abyss that was my night,
I was frozen, scattered on the permafrost;
All hope had vanished with no end in sight.

Then all at once radiant light filled the horizon
Vanquishing the dismal existence that I had become.
No longer was I frozen in a desolate wasteland;
You melted me, like icicles in the sun.

Now the forest of my heart teems with life,
From the trees which grow tall, reaching for the sky,
To the tiny insects in the moss waiting on time--
Soaring like the blue bird and monarch butterfly.

Pumps

They catch my eye
Sitting there alone in the window
A metallic blue
Sleek and shiny
They call out to me
Needing me
Praying someone will break them out
Their temptation is too much
I walk inside
Promising myself that I'll just look
I touch
Put them on
Big mistake
I must have them
They are mine
My chic blue pumps

Sandra Day

The Bird

One lonely bird flies high in the sky
For it is free, I only wish
That lucky bird was me

Soaring high above the clouds
Looking down amongst the crowd

Yet it is only a dream
That shall never come to be
So again I wake up to the cruel world
Of reality

Maybe to dream that I am a bird
To some sounds quite absurd

To be my own person
Is a dream come true
Without others telling me what to do

So soar bird
Fly high
Your only limit
Is the highest of
The sky

Pick out a star
Make it your own
For you can never be too far away from home...

Sandra Day

Winter

Nature is waiting, silent to you and me
 Just beyond the frozen glass
As dormant as a solid snow-tipped sea
 Whispering hints of life gone past

The brown tries hard to break through the white
 Endless days wondering “How long ‘twill last?”
Soft white flakes whisper “No end in sight”
 Only the bitter wind sprints sharp... and fast

The branches of the Maple strain beneath the burden of ice
 Like old bones they’re brittle and break
Snap just once, forbidden the chance for twice
 Scars that adorn her bark do her character make

Sleep lies just beneath the blanket of the season
 Green life banished for a long, long time
Does truth know to understand reason?
 Between slumber and death lies a very fine line

For now, Winter’s grasp will slowly fade
 The Spring sun will return to shine
The ice-ridden branches will again offer shade
 And life again shall be yours and mine

Deana DeJong

The Crash

That night...jarringly dark and soaking wet,
Your fate fell down in each perfectly formed raindrop
Like a crying child from the infinite obscure sky.
Even your strong, loving hands steering could not hinder
The inescapable deathtrap on the other side of the bend.
I slept like a baby, blissfully innocent
That you had kissed me goodnight for the last time.
Your exuberant life came to a screeching conclusion
In a solitary heap of metal and rubber.
My life, so cruelly interrupted by death.
Daddy's little girl unintentionally deserted,
Left to decipher memories that never were.
Now strength must mop up my tears,
Each one overflowing with your love,
Reminding me that I must steer through life without you.

Kendra Dorn

The Day I Lost You

When I lost you
With no hope left in the world,
I was a door mat.
Tortured me for years,
A sickness that would never leave.
I dreamed I lost you every night.
Dreams haunted me.
That may or may not have happened to you.
My heart hit the floor.
I would never be in your arms again.
Never kiss you again.
When I answered the phone,
My heart stopped.
Just for an instant,
Long enough to realize you were gone forever.

Carrie Fogle

Thrown Away

As I open the lid, your scent hits me.
What once was sweet is now turning fowl.
I see inside of you, what's left of you.
You used to be so appealing and bright, like the sun.
Oh, but that was before you were tossed away so uncaringly.
Someone stripped you down, taking only the part of you he
desired.
What's left of you is bruised and exposed.

Carrie Fogle

The Sunflower

Your boisterous green stem stands erect.
Your long leaves hang down like limbs,
Yellow petals flowing and enticing.
The black of your eye beckons, "Come closer."
I walk over to you uneasily.
Something catches my eye, and I look upward.
The sun shines down and showers us with its rays.

Ray Gonzalez

Love Poem #∞

Love is the Beast of Blood and Darkness
A dark sepulcher in which to hide our hearts
Devouring voraciously, it sets its teeth in us
And shakes us violently, snapping our necks
Like a dog who has hunted down the barn's last bedraggled rat
Love swallows us whole
We kick and scream as we plunge down its gullet
It whispers to us of dark desires while dancing away
 in fading shadows
Love drags us down into rain-soaked gutters
Where it promises to wash away the last vestiges of its past debris
It fills our cups with vagaries and half-truths
Bidding us drink until we have had our fill
Love never dies
It simply lies in wait for new prey
It sucks the marrow from our bones
Hungriily lapping like thirsty wolves
It leaves us then lying to fester
As the sun bleaches our bones
Love crawls through our minds and lies curled in our hearts
Its claws grabbing hold of our souls
Never letting go
Love never listens to reason
It is never calmed by music
It attacks at random
Always unexpected
Letting itself in through doors often times best left closed
Jamming its foot into the threshold
Demanding at gunpoint to be let in
Love does not kill
It destroys

Ray Gonzalez

Alone In Shadow

Sitting wrapped here alone in shadow's cloak
The cold comfort of darkness replaces your warm embrace
Wrapped in eternal solitude, pain of dark centuries breaking my
 resolute heart
Falling up means only a higher plateau from which to descend
And drifting back to the hungry maw of shadow's grip
The masticating ever present shadow tears my soul
Leaving me stripped and begging for release
Kneeling like the priest at the altar of sacrifice
I offer my lonely soul
Ejected from the bosom of my savior, the blood congeals
 at my feet
And still the shadow creeps in

Stephanie Gross

Long-Awaited Kiss

Eyes shine expressed desire

Ecstasy years soft touch

Hesitate...

Exposed dismay – your reserved determination

Neglect throng, gesticulate envy

Youthful lips savor remembrance

Jessie Hampton

Some tea

What to say, “I’m still here waiting” no call, no text, nothing!

Drink some tea, tap my foot, I wonder if
holding on to memories is all I have left,
knowing what was will never be again.

At times feeling pains so great that I’d wish for death,
and in others an immense joy as though I had died
in this forever we spend apart.

A bus passes, a dog barks.

“I’m sorry I’m late.”

It’s okay, you’re here now.

Jessie Hampton

Lighthouse

Listen to the chimes and whistles as the wind kisses the skin,
pecks the backs of the hands, snakes up the arms, and curves
around the neck.

See the color change and flow, as the sunlight washes over
the warmth that travels from the hairline down, over the eye lids, to
the tip
of the nose, and crosses the lips.

Feel the waves as they rush back into the depths of the ocean,
sweep the body up into near weightlessness, lift the legs, and tug at
the toes.

Shoshannah Harwell

Beach Seduction

Eyes glistening,
Twinkling with laughter,
Shine in the summer moonlight.

Skin glowing,
Shimmering against the sand,
Playing against the stars.

Curves of the body, well-proportioned,
Alluring the spectator, sensuous and seductive
While the waves splash against the shore.

Mike Kaleponi

Hidden Beneath the Beauty

Tall apartment buildings line either side of the street
while impeccable snow covers everything.

A tunnel appears to form from the naked trees,
the cars and the buildings.

Crystals of frozen water glisten like glitter
sprinkled across the street.

Branches reach lazily down, straining
under the weight of the snow.

How beautiful this is,
such a magnificent death trap.

Donna J. Leedall

Fear Of Not Finding Love Again

Since becoming a widow, I have traveled so many different roads.
I sometimes wonder if this is really me.
I was devastated at the loss of my love.
To look back and see all I have endured, I am proud of me.
Fears that haunt me, I can't seem to shake them.
Fear that I will never find love again.
I have the love of family and friends.
I don't know how I would have made it without them.
It's just not the same.
Fear of not being able just to hold hands.
Fear of not sharing the good and the bad.
Fear of not caring for someone again.
Fear of being alone.
Fear of filling my heart with bitterness instead of love.
I feel I have more to learn, and then maybe I will find love again.

Sandra Lopez

Friends

Friends are like heartbeats
They keep you alive
The real ones stay beating
They're by your side
Sometimes the beat is a steady rain
Sometimes it's as wild
As a runaway train
Friends give meaning
And purpose to life
The beats go on
From morning till night

Sandra Lopez

The Last Day

Who knew the last time I would see you would
Be the last time I would see you take your last breath
We would have our last conversation without saying our goodbyes
The sound of your voice would slowly fade away
As it soon would become an echo in my head
It would be the last time your smile made me smile
The color you once had would turn pale
And slowly fade away as if you were just a dream
Those beautiful bold eyes would be lost
Never again would they stare at me the way they once did
They would close away forever
There would be no more tears from your eyes
As they would become raindrops falling from the sky

Brandi McCarty

Cold Goodbye

A cold breeze blows in
Leaving frost on what it touches,
Death in its wake.
Every cold season
A reminder that you're gone.
Snow falls deep outside the door,
Not the same effect
As eight years before.

Seth Moore

A Boy's Dream

As a young boy he watched his father
work on cars from the garage door,
always wanting to step through the door
to spend time with his father and learn,
so one day he could be like his father.
He then turned fourteen years old;
his father taught him how to do basic repairs;
he caught on very quickly.
His dad and he worked night and day
to get his father's pride and joy running;
his father passed away
not being able to finish his pride and joy.
His son took over his project;
he began to work night and day
until that final day
when he started the car and drove away.

Kayte Mosher

Where I Find the Line

Take me away from this painful place!
Give me time, give me space...
Trapped in this hell is too much to take!

Let me go...
Let me be free...
When all I can't touch, is all I can see.

Stuck in a maze...
That's all in my mind.
Running in circles...
I'm falling behind.

When it isn't real,
It's not a dangerous fix
Till your heart weeps
And your eyes play tricks.

I ache for you, for all I need.

This life is fiction; it's fantasy.

I'm never safe from my own desire.
Time, make this go away.
This dream...
This lie.

Tommy O'Leary

The Dog

He was covered in mud when I found him at my door
As if he had been playing in mud, but as I looked closer
I could see lashes and bruises along his side. The dog
Looked in pain and his eyes were about to cry.
I picked up the helpless dog and told him we were going for a ride.
As we were driving to the vet, the dog kept moaning; as soon
As I picked up the dog to take him into the vet I realized
He was no longer here. I don't know what ever happened to that
Dog and I don't believe I want to know; all I know is
I will never forget that dog, the dog that didn't have a home.

Tommy O'Leary

Time Runs Out

Days go by
Not realizing there isn't much time
You think they'll be around forever
You don't think that this could
Be the last time you see them
Before you know it time has run out
You wish you could go back
Say things you wish you would have
Told them and do things that you never

Trisha Poole

Believing the Fairytale

Words frozen on a page

A story unfolds

Escape the world you

Are living in

Fiction is so much better

You can put yourself

In someone else's shoes

Live someone else's life

You can live in England or France

You can be a Queen or a Vampire

At least for one hundred and eighty pages

Life

Life,
Beautiful, fast-moving life,
Life,
Precious, meaningful life,
Life,
Loving, ends in a blink of an eye,
Life,
July, the hardest month of my
Life,
I survived, he didn't,
Life,
In a way I died too,
Life,
Love, ended too soon,
Life,
Continued around me,
Life,
I wanted it to stop,
Life,
Was difficult to move forward,
Life,
Ends all too soon.

Kagan Post

Today

Today is the day

Today I realize who I am

Today I make decisions

Today I could change everything

Today I realize everything

Today is just another day.

Brooke Six

Beautiful Bare Naked Tree

Sitting outside the window looking at me,
Your leaves have come and gone,
And yet your will remains strong.
You look so cold in your naked bliss,
But you sway back and forth as you wave goodbye or blow a kiss.
A few short months and the sun shall shine on you again,
Providing shade and comfort to all my friends and me.

Jamí Sibaja-Toledo

Eve Speaks

As I sit and gaze at your flawless form, outlined in the midnight breeze

My mind slips into a satisfying daze of warm thoughts of a luminous tomorrow.

I marvel at how gracefully your colors flow, like a ballerina on the dance floor.

My tongue drools for the taste of you; juices flow down my mouth. Oh how I freeze in awe of your angelic wonder.

What can just one bite hurt I say underneath my breath.

No, no I can't; the gloom cascades over me as darkness penetrates the night.

For I know with one bite of you, your abundant knowledge will flow;

I will be doomed forever, without the possibility of forgetfulness.

You're screaming come and get me from the bottom of your gut.

Oh how the naturalness of your refuge draws me in, unbelievably fixed;

My heart pounds with fear of rejection.

What if the genuine sincerity I feel is imaginary?

So terrified to seize the opportunity of your undeniable affection,

For fear of yet again the pain of my past haunting me from within,

Sprouting like an immensely black cloud on a raining day.

But why now do I remember pain

When all seems to be so true, so harmless?

Cameron Steinbach

Hair Conditioner by uNcLE cAM

I think my hair conditioner is a depressant
Because every morning I wake up feeling pleasant

I take a shower and off to work I go
But at my job I feel low Low LOW!

I thought it was work but now I think it's my conditioner instead
Every day before I leave it's the last thing through my head

Last after realizing I don't have my own house or a wife
And that I have a dead end job to match my dead end life

I put the conditioner in and it spreads its sorrow
I felt like this yesterday and I'll feel like this tomorrow

It's not the shampoo and it's not the soap
It's that damned conditioner which robs my hope!

So tonight I'll dream and lie in bed
And in the morning I'll wake and scrub my head

I don't know why I do this every day
When it seems there could be an easier way

I know! I'll stop bathing from here on out!
I'll quit scrubbing all my little ins and outs

Maybe my amount of joy will get higher
And perhaps if I stink I'll get fired

Barry Surber

Heartland

I ask myself time and time again when this war will end.

Nine years ago I sat there in sixth grade with my eyes glued to the
screen

in a state of confusion; I did not understand what was happening.

I was not aware that I was witness to the most horrifying act of
terrorism in American history.

I never could have imagined how the tragic events
on September 11, 2001,

would affect a nation for a decade to come.

Now a college freshman, I believe that if four American passenger
planes

can transform into terrorist-guided missiles, anything is possible.

Barry Surber

Darkest Lit Path

In life you'll make mistakes, everyone does
At times it will seem like you don't have enough to break even
Your faith may be low, and the tide may be high
You cannot keep your head above water no matter how hard you try
Your journey will be full of twists and curves
But if you hold on tight you can make it through the swerves
If you stay on course when you're down and out
You may be amazed at how quickly things can turn around
Don't give up before the finish line
The end is near though it appears to be far
You'll be surprised to know how close you are
Here's something to recall when your path is darkest lit
It's always darkest before dawn
And you can make it if you just don't quit

Deonna Troxel

The Gynecologist

You have spent years
Studying the female body.
You have spent years
Looking for her flaws:

Cervicitis, salpingitis
Hysteratresia, dysmenorrhea.

The speculum is cold to her warm body,
While you study her.
Pictures and biopsies
Are all you see?

Is her body no longer magical?
Are you only rational?
Can you see her beauty?
Or is she merely duty?

Snake Eyes

The two small dark eyes
Staring deep at me.
My heart races fast;
My palms begin to sweat.
I step back as far as I can--
Back, back, back until I'm up
Against the wall.
You move in such a way that
Puts you and me into a panic.
Even though you are behind glass
My mind still races with thoughts
Of how you desperately want to escape.
Escape back into your world, not mine.
Your long thick body coiled up so tight,
Just makes me cringe with fear.
Now sweat is running down my brow, please
Someone, please get me out of here.
Keeps on reigning.

Cara Waller

The Penguin

I watched through the large glass window
With a huge smile; I could not frown.
A sea of black and white everywhere I looked;
They slid on their bellies, like greased pigs escaping
the clutches of a small child at the rodeo.
Diving and swimming, jumping and waddling
on the frigid cold ice, OOO slip plop
into the water they escaped, diving deeper
down to the bottom of the tank. Rocketing up
out of the water onto their slippery feathers
sliding into one another.
Their coal black eyes glistened with joy as they swam past
me in the tank. I stared into the glass
as if it was a mother's first sight of her newborn child.
I didn't want to leave.

Tales of Dusk

Sullen sun, somber sky
a wisp of vermilion
mirrors onto the creek bed
ripples a boy's aspirations
and calms soon after
rubbing granite below
as he nearly
does slip.

The priceless pillow,
cushioning him with ache
as he stares up at the dots
and around to the aging foliage
alone.

The makeshift swords
and ever-formidable enemies
in a serene scene of imminent death
all a lonely crutch

as he soon found the brook; a faucet
the sun; a light bulb
the dirt; a carpet
the friends; non-existent.

The city killed tonight,
and the body of Dusk was never found.

The Secret Signal

Living in a dark room,
let me develop you
and show you the path to salvation.

Come brethren, bathe in light,
etch your hearts into the soil,
and let them grow and shrink as they follow.

Drown in your shallow ways,
let your conscience betray
what you want and what you are now.

Fault myself, zealous for pain,
not to reveal, but to bandage away
for masked men wear exotic clothing.

I must encipher our love,
encode it in 4.5 megabytes,
conceal this second life.
Lock it away and seal it tight.

Do you act the same when no one's around?

Swear to anonymity
as the doppelganger prepares alone
to be more prominent than you.

Hang your head and don that cloak.
Drink the velour, and gaze outside.
You wipe your brow as the sun sets.

Do you act the same when no one's around?
Because if you do, I wish I were you.

Dwell in your shame for days.
Hark! Was there another near?
People are unsettling.

Leave it all behind you now.
The weight pushes against the door.
Bones, flesh, and blood.

Contributors

Daniel Alkmim is from Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. “I came to the U.S. to study and learn English and play soccer. Back home, I love to surf and enjoy my family and friends. All of my poems were inspired by my experiences of life in Brazil and the U.S. I am living a dream with a heart and soul experience with sports. There were moments in Brazil when I was sitting on my surfboard alone in the ocean, listening to the waves and birds, with the wind coming and going through my hair. Those poems were written from inspiration and sacred feelings.”

Kile Andeway was born and raised in Iowa. His father was a pole barn builder and his mother a nurse. He is a middle child raised between two sisters and is now a father to three children. He spent fourteen years building washing machines at Maytag and was there when the factory closed its doors. Since then, he has continued his life journey as an electrician with hopes of someday owning his own business. His hobbies include hunting and fishing, camping, riding motorcycles, and traveling. He also enjoys writing poetry.

Vicki Bredemann was born and raised in Southern California and has also lived in Las Vegas. She currently lives in Ottumwa. She raised four kids and has sixteen grandchildren. In her free time, she does volunteer work at the Outreach Center in downtown Ottumwa. After finishing her degree, she would like to pursue a career in Social Work.

Hailey Brown is a sophomore and Resident Assistant at IHCC and plans to transfer to William Penn in the fall to major in Journalism. She is inspired by Mozart and Anne Rice. Hailey spends a lot of time playing Plants vs. Zombies, doing things outdoors, and relaxing with her Lab/Pit bull mix, Link. Her favorite poem is “The Tyger” by William Blake, and her favorite author is Kurt Vonnegut.

Courtney Clement is inspired by her family, which consists of her husband Jacob, two-year-old terror Rosalynn, and five-month-old chubby boy Cirdan. “We live a hectic life, but my husband and I have two pretty happy kids on our hands. I started at IHCC Fall of 2009, and I will

graduate Spring term with my AA. My family and I are moving to New York this summer, and I plan on attending SUNY. They have a great art program I am very interested in. This will be the first time I have ever lived outside of Iowa, so I am both excited and scared.”

Sandra Day believes that poetry speaks from the heart; this is not to mean that it has to be about love – but LIFE. Poetry should come from either our personal experiences or our dreams-- of what we want to experience. “I have enjoyed poetry my entire life, reading it and writing it. I love a poem that makes you catch your breath at the end. Poetry should not speak to the reader, but with the reader; it should include the spectator. As a rule my poetry reflects the darker side of life, the sad parts.

I have enjoyed every minute of the online poetry writing class, and it has made me contemplate the idea of becoming an instructor. I would love to share poetry with new people every year and to read the thoughts and ideas of new people. I think it would be a continual learning experience for all involved.

Apparently, I have just turned forty years old. I am a divorced single mother with three beautiful children (two of them teenagers!) and a terrific boyfriend. Last year I returned to college, more than twenty years since my last academic experience. I intend to go on to obtain my Master’s Degree so that I may teach Literature. I have always loved to read and write, and I believe to share it with others would be a very enjoyable vocation! Soon my children will see me receive my Associate’s Degree, and right now they are seeing my words in print. Thank you!”

Deana De Jong was born and raised in SE Iowa. “I have lived in St. Louis, MO, as well as Des Moines, IA. I have been married for twenty-two years to the most wonderful man, Mark. Together we have four children. Fortunately, I have been able to be a stay-at-home mother for most of this time, which has proven to be the best career I could have chosen. During ten years of this time, I operated a home daycare business when my children were very young. Over the last ten years I have been able to concentrate on family life, which has been a great joy. Personal interests include writing, home decorating, sewing, shopping, traveling, and spending time with family and friends. Real life experience is my inspiration. After completing my AA degree at IHCC Winter term 2011, I will be pursuing a Bachelor’s Degree. I have

thoroughly enjoyed the online poetry writing class and the continued unearthing about myself and life around me through the writing process. Moving on, I look forward to continuing the journey of the words within.”

Kendra Jean Dorn was born on August 24, 1992, in Oskaloosa, Iowa, where she grew up and went to school. She plans to begin the Early Childhood Associates Program Fall term.

Carrie Fogle is a mother of three wonderfully ornery boys. She works full time in a nursing home and is a full-time student at Indian Hills. After graduation, she plans to attend Buena Vista University and major in psychology. She would like to become a counselor or psychologist and specialize in counseling single moms.

Ray Gonzalez was born in the Bronx, New York, and started reading when he was two years old. He reads voraciously and is dedicating his life to teaching, once he graduates from college. He has four beautiful daughters who mean everything to him: Rachel Catherine Prettenhofer, Carolyn Cecelia Gonzalez, Ivy Maxine Crosby-Gonzalez, and Immoria Charlene Gonzalez.

Stephanie Gross is nineteen and currently studying Natural Resources at IHCC in hopes to pursue a career rescuing and rehabilitating wildlife. She has been writing poetry since the age of thirteen and has two turtles, Rutherford and Speedy, to keep her company while she writes.

Jessie Hampton was born in St. Louis, Missouri, and lived there until age twelve. He then moved to St. Joseph, Missouri, to attend high school. He is currently in the renewable energy program.

Shoshannah Harwell has lived most of her life in Iowa, but she was born in Tucson, Arizona, and lived there until she was four. “Although I was young, I remember almost everything about Arizona: the mountains, the pool in our community, our old house, and even the preschool I went to. Moving away from the mountains and my family was hard for me, even at a young age, and I still long for the mountains.

After the move, I settled down and made a couple of friends who helped me adjust to life in Iowa. I finally started opening up in eighth

grade. All of a sudden, “different” was cool and reading books during recess was awesome, so I fit right in. I started entering into writing contests the school sponsored and also sang for our District competition and received good scores all the way through. I continued to sing all through high school, and even made the elite choir at Central College the first year I was there. I have been singing since I was three, and it has always been a passion of mine and still is today.

Life hasn’t always been easy, but it rarely is. There have been many struggles in my life that have impacted me today. Through deaths, loss of friends, depression, and separation of parents, there have always been things to keep me going: God, my close friends, and music. While friends have come and gone, there are things in my life that I will cherish forever. Music, books, and certain special moments are some of those things. Although some people like to run from the past, I think it is important to focus on the past because it guides you to your future.”

Michael Anthony Kaleo O’ Kalani Yee-wah Kaleponi is twenty-three years old and was born in Honolulu, Hawaii. “I was raised mostly between Hawaii and Oregon but have lived all over the mainland. I lived in Eugene and some of the surrounding areas for the significant portion of my education. Before graduating high school, I attended five different high schools: two in Iowa, one in Oregon, and three in Hawaii. I am currently finishing my A.A. from Indian Hills and am not entirely sure where I will go from here. I enjoy the outdoors. I like fishing, swimming, camping, surfing, diving, really anything involving the ocean or a good mountain. I love to spend time with my family. I have a twenty-two year old fiancé that I plan to marry this summer and a magnificent son who will be turning two later this month. His name is Michael Jay Parker Makoa Yuen Kaleponi, but we call him Makoa.”

Donna Leedall was born in Ottumwa, Iowa. “At birth, I was two months premature; due to my early arrival, I was born with cerebral palsy. My grandparents raised me until I was twelve; then my mom and three brothers and one sister moved back to Iowa, and I went to live with them. College was a real worry for me; it has been better than I could ever dream. Don’t waste what time there is here on earth. We only get one chance to live life to the fullest.”

Sandra Lopez comes from a culture where everything is a secret; it's always held inside. "I believe I have become a strong woman; I have accomplished many things that make me proud; from a small young girl growing up, I have had a lot of obstacles. One was understanding death and another huge one was being taken away from my family. I was confused. I have learned little by little to put it behind me. Now I'm turning nineteen and life seems to be looking up for me. I have a wonderful daughter whom I love with all my heart. I work and go to school to know she will have food on the table. Together we will make it, for 'Each day is like a dream.'"

Brandi McCarty is in her last term at Indian Hills. "I only had to take electives this term, so I figured that I should take a class that I would really enjoy and that could also teach me some things. I also liked that it worked with my schedule. I am a stay-at-home mom and was placed on bed rest with my current pregnancy. I really like poetry, so the online poetry writing class was very enjoyable for me. I am currently enrolled to start Buena Vista University in a few months. I will major in both Psychology and Human Services. I look forward to all the ways that life is changing and also to the new challenges that this year will hold."

Seth Moore is a first year student at Indian Hills. He likes working on cars and having a good time.

Kayte Mosher is twenty years old and is currently an Arts and Sciences major at Indian Hills. She enjoys writing and traveling and her greatest passion in life is helping animals. Kayte's goals for the future are to get a B.A. in Sociology or Business and someday run an animal rescue shelter.

These poems are **Tommy O'Leary's** first attempts at writing poetry. "I liked the challenge of writing these poems. I had a hard time expressing what I was feeling the first few weeks of class. The writing process was tough at first because I had no clue how to even begin to write a poem, but as time went on and I read poems out of the book and read other students' poems, it helped me find a better understanding of what poems were about. I never thought I could find enjoyment and fulfillment in writing poems and expressing how I feel. In my free time I am going to start a journal. It seems like an easier way of getting my feelings out,

and I find it relaxing. I am happy I took this class and wouldn't change a thing about it because I learned a tremendous amount from taking this class, not only how to write poems but also how to express myself.

I was born in Ottumwa, Iowa. I have two younger brothers. My father works for Dr. Pepper in Ottumwa, and my mother is a preschool teacher in Albia, which is where I live today. I graduated last year from Albia High School. I have been working for Albia Recycling for four years now. Currently, I am attending Indian Hills to receive my AA degree and plan to transfer to a university where I would like to receive a degree in Sports Studies. My hobbies are enjoying the outdoors, playing any kind of sport, being with my family, and riding dirt bikes with friends."

Trisha Poole was born premature in 1984. "I had to fight to live. From that and other experiences, I know that I am a strong person. After I went through back surgery in 2009, I decided my life needed a change. So, I thought long and hard and decided that I would enroll in college and choose a career path. I want to be a teacher because a lot of kids do not have a positive role model in their lives, and I want to be that for them. Spring term will be my fifth term at Indian Hills for my A.A.S. degree. In 2012, I plan on transferring and getting my teaching degree."

Kagan Post was born in the great state of Iowa. "I am the youngest of three; I have an older brother and an older sister. My father works in a factory, and my mother works in a pharmacy. My brother works in a factory, and my sister is a soldier in the United States Army. One day I will join the Army, which I have started the paper work for already. I live in Albia, and I work at Menards in Ottumwa and take classes at IHCC. I plan one day to see the world via the Army, and then retire out of the Army to relax by playing golf every day. My interests include: golf, motorcycles, disc golf, football, basketball, and hockey. I hope to live a life that someone later on will say was a great life, and he did well in his life."

Brooke Six is currently a student in the Arts and Sciences with plans to attend the Nursing program this summer. "I am twenty-seven years old, married, and a mother of three. I work part time as a safety coordinator for K/L Service. I am a blocker for the O.M.G. (Oskaloosa Mayhem Girls) roller derby team, and I am also an amateur kick boxer. I really

enjoy spending time with my family and friends and doing volunteer work around the community. I decided to take the online poetry writing class because poetry has always interested me, and I thought it would be a good chance to express myself. Throughout taking this class I have had the opportunity to get to read some absolutely amazing poems and get a glimpse into the thoughts and lives of my classmates. I don't think there was a poem I did not like. I found most of our assigned reading to be very interesting, and now I have an even bigger appreciation for poetry.”

Jami Sibaja-Toledo believes writing poetry is a form of relaxation, a way of getting her feelings out and letting them go. “My poetry is written about my past and present hurts that have damaged me deep down inside; they left me an everlasting mark needing to be released. By writing poetry this term, I surprised myself because I never knew I could get so much out and feel so much better inside. It has been a place of escape for me. I do think that writing poetry is a form of healing I could get used to and practice for a long time to come.”

Cameron Steinbach is a young man from Ottumwa, Iowa. He enjoys playing music, reading, painting, and writing poetry. He is thankful that he goes to school with such wonderful teachers and friends and with his loving and supportive sister Callie. Cameron was born October 15, 1989. He is set to graduate from Indian Hills Community College in May of 2011 with an A.A. in Liberal Arts and an A.A.S. in Early Childhood Education.

Barry Surber is currently attending Indian Hills. A graduate of Ottumwa High School class of 2008, he has lived in Ottumwa his entire life. He enjoys playing disc golf, riding motorcycles, and likes nice weather. He plans to earn his MBA.

Deonna Troxel was born and raised in Ottumwa, Iowa. When she started taking classes at Indian Hills, she thought she wanted to become a pharmacist, but now she has become more interested in psychology. Her passions include music, cats, and analytical thinking.

Cara Waller is forty-one years old and married to her high school sweetheart. “We have two great kids. I lost my job in 2000 from a

Finance Company that went out of business, so I started my own daycare. I still run my daycare after eleven years now and love it. However, it is very difficult to teach preschool with very limited funds and equipment, and that is why I decided to go back to school and get a college degree. I have been working towards my Early Childhood Associates degree part time, and I am almost finished. I plan on going for my Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education with a Special Education Endorsement. I really want to teach preschool or kindergarten.”

Syh Weir is from Montour, Iowa. He began taking classes at Indian Hills Fall term of 2010 and currently is undecided on a major. He writes his own music, plays guitar, and sings in a one-man Alternative Rock band known as Shywire.