



# CAPE COD TIMES

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Lifestyle

## Five poets chosen for Cape Cod Times first poetry page

**By Gwenn Friss**

Posted Jun 22, 2019 at 11:09 PM

Updated Jun 23, 2019 at 6:31 AM

Poets flock to the Cape and Islands like migrating birds, coming to bask in the scrubby pine, flourishing hydrangea, golden sunlight spread over azure waves ... and so much more.

It has been frustrating to live among such a wealth of poetry, but have no place specifically for it in the Cape Cod Times.

Now we do. This is our first poetry page, with poems chosen by a panel of published poets, who volunteered to read and choose among the three dozen submissions sent to them without the poet's name attached.

The panel will continue to accept for consideration poems from Cape and Islands poets (see rules and meet our judges in the box here) and the newspaper will periodically publish those chosen. The next submission deadline is June 30.

There are some well-known names in this first round and some newcomers who were all chosen in the panel's blind reading of these poems. Please email entries, questions and comments to [CCTpoetry12@gmail.com/](mailto:CCTpoetry12@gmail.com/).

We thank the judges and the poetry project coordinator for all their work. Punctuation and capitalization are printed as indicated by the poets. Enjoy these poems from our Cape and Islands' neighbors.

### **The Face Cloth**

*for Lauren*

I run the tap on HOT

until question marks of steam

punctuate the basin.

I know you wouldn't approve –

so much water wasted

until it gets just right.

But for this your

“spa treatment”

decadence is required.

I soak and wring

the terry cloth square,

hands working like a milkmaid,

then dash to your bedside

before too much heat

escapes the folds.

What happens next

is nearly too beautiful

for words.

Your face opens

to this warmth

like an alpine flower  
after snow melt,  
and beneath the cloth  
you are whole again  
for a moment.

-- Paula Erickson, Wellfleet

Wellfleet washashore Paula Erickson is a performance artist, actor, singer and community activist. Her poems have been featured on WCAI Poetry Sunday, The WOMR Outermost Poetry Contest and Barry Hellman's Cape Cod Poetry Group. Experiences as a social worker, educator, naturalist and doula for the dying provide fodder for her creative work.

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### **Sons and Descanos\***

and so they tie a board  
to the fence, a leash fastened with a marker  
invites short elegies: ocean brother  
shred in ride forever te amamos (we love you)  
strewn goldenrods and pepperbush dry slowly  
near bottles of Blue Moon, two rubber sandals –  
as if vestiges of original agreements  
once sworn on vellum  
and still the surf carries you/your brother

deep into the ocean to slide over swells,  
curl into your own glassed waves  
as I stand in this collision of grief &  
fragments of found things knowing  
if you have other pulls to summer  
they are slight  
\*roadside memorials

– Theresa Rogers, Wellfleet

Theresa Rogers is a university teacher and poet who divides her time between Vancouver, British Columbia and Wellfleet. Her poems have appeared in Cape Cod Poetry Review, the San Diego Reader and Uppagus, among other places. Her website is: [tessrogerspoetry.com](http://tessrogerspoetry.com)

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### **On Clear Summer Evenings,**

### **My Father and I Walked Around Our Block**

He'd tuck his hands deep  
into gray workpants,  
their legs still smacked with oil;  
keep his pace slow, his back straight.  
I did the same, trying to stand taller  
than his bottom rib.

Twilight gathered in our hair as the sun  
sank behind rowhouse peaks, their shadows growing  
over postage-stamp lawns, sidewalk cracks,  
the dirty chrome of cars straddling curbs.

My father's eyes, bright as a bird's,  
took it all in. He'd wave to neighbors  
who sat on their stoops, waiting  
for the streetlamps' evening ping.

Sometimes we'd drift into pungent  
scents: garlic and onion, grill-seared meat.

I'd feel his elbow, hear a soft "mmm."

And sometimes we'd stop before something new:

Black-eyed Susans in the Kleins' flowerbed.

Fresh pointing between Mr. Kelly's bricks.

The Costas' shiny screen door with  
wrought-iron trim, a giant "C" at its core.

He'd point to his discoveries  
with that same damaged finger –  
scar-mapped, crooked, nail a charred tooth –

as if no words were good enough

to capture what he saw: little victories  
in lives where victories came hard  
and never made the news. Then we'd  
walk on, just a man and his son, into  
twilight's deep, its radiant bruise.

-- Rich Youmans, North Falmouth

Rich Youmans has published his poetry in various journals, including Cape Cod Poetry Review, Paterson Literary Review, and Contemporary Haibun Online. His books include "Shadow Lines," a collection of linked haibun with Maggie Chula that won a Merit Book Award from the Haiku Society of America, and "Head-On," recently published by Red Bird Chapbooks. He, along with other poets, is currently working on the anthology "From the Farther Shore: Discovering Cape Cod and the Islands through Poetry," a collaboration between Calliope Poetry and Bass River Press. It will be published in 2020.

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WHEN MY FATHER LEFT

everyone and everything he loved  
he was between waking and sleeping,  
and light moved in and out  
as when one loss follows another.

At Woodland Cemetery

I was on my knees  
between two Red Maples,

turned up my collar,  
reached for handfuls of dirt;  
suddenly I understood my grief –  
he was like the leaves  
that had been descending  
for months, letting go and falling  
until there were no more leaves.

– Barry Hellman, Eastham

Barry Hellman is a clinical psychologist whose poems have appeared in literary journals, anthologies, broadsides, playbills and “The King of Newark,” published by Finishing Line Press. He’s the founder of the Cape Cod Poetry Group, curates and hosts its poetry, music events and workshops, and administers the group’s Facebook page. Hellman is an adviser to WCAI’s Poetry Sunday, and Outer Cape representative for Mass Poetry in Boston. Previously, he curated and hosted poetry and music events at the Cultural Center of Cape Cod and Chapel in the Pines, and founded and led a writers group at the Eastham Library.

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## **Snapper**

An aquatic armored tank advancing,  
she takes ground. Her olive drab shell  
trails a mantle of algae and duckweed.  
She scuffs the grass in her wake,  
moves in her own hurried time.

She's come to nest in the turned soil,  
to plant among my neat rows of peas  
her seeds. She digs a cache, shifts  
her weight to balance on three webbed feet,  
delivers the first luminous opal, cradling it  
with her hind foot. Ushers it tenderly  
into the earth.

I am close enough to smell  
her musk, to see the powerful jaw  
I've been taught to fear. Today, we are  
mothers claiming a small piece of earth,  
emptying ourselves into existence.

– Theresa Gleason, Teaticket

Theresa Gleason is an adjunct professor at Mount Wachusett Community College and Nashua Community College where she teaches online writing courses. She holds an M.A. from the University of Massachusetts at Boston. In addition to writing short stories and essays, she is a published poet. Her work has appeared in numerous journals and anthologies including: Southern Humanities Review, Appalachia, Cape Cod Poetry Review, Comstock Review, and The New Guard Literary Review.

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**Meet the Cape Cod Times poetry advisory panel**

**Keith Althaus:** poet and teacher at Truro Center for the Arts at Castle Hill workshops; author of “Ladder of Hours,” “Rival Heavens” and “Cold Storage.”

**Elizabeth Bradfield:** poet, naturalist; founding editor of Broadsided Press; Brandeis University professor; author of four poetry books: “Interpretive Work,” “Approaching Ice,” “Once Removed” and “Toward Antarctica”

**Lucile Burt:** Narrow Land poet, retired English teacher, author of “Neither Created nor Destroyed” and “The Cone of Uncertainty”

**Alice Kociemba:** poet; psychotherapist; director of Calliope Poetry Series, Falmouth; author of “Bourne Bridge” and “Death of Teaticket Hardware.”

**Kaimi Rose Lum:** poet, journalist (former editor of the Provincetown Banner), assistant director of Snow Library in Orleans.