



SETTI D. WARREN, MAYOR

Poetry in Edmands Park

Sunday, November 2, 2014
3:00 p.m.

Grey Held, *Project Manager*

Newton, Massachusetts
Dedicated November 2, 2014



Robert DeRubeis, Commissioner

Newton Parks and Recreation Department Commission

Chair: Arthur Magni
Vice-Chair: Richard Tucker
Members: Bethel Charkoudian
Peter Johnson
Byron Dunker
Andrew Stern
Donald Fishman
Michael Clarke
Peter Kastner
Jack Neville
Secretary: Robin McLaughlin

Special Thanks To:

The Landmark Self-Expression and Leadership Program, which inspired me to create this project and leverage my passion, commitment, and vision to make it come alive.

Virtual Packaging (Southlake, TX) for their craftsmanship in producing the transfer lettering and the non-profit discount they provided.

Eric Hyett for his consistent help, through rain or shine, in installing the poems onto stone and for documenting our progress.



Program

- 3:00 p.m. **Welcome**
Robert DeRubeis, *Commissioner,*
Newton Parks and Recreation Department
- 3:05 p.m. **Introduction of the Project Team**
Linda Plaut, *Director,*
Mayor's Office for Cultural Affairs
- 3:10 p.m. **Brief History of the Project**
Grey Held, *Project Director*
- 3:15 p.m. **Introduction of the Winning Poets and Reading of the Poems**
Wendy Drexler, *Assistant Project Director*
(Introductions)
Winning poets in attendance (Readings)
- 3:35 p.m. Self-guided walk in the park
- 4:15 p.m. Refreshments and mingle with the poets

Forward

My long-standing interest in putting poetry in public spaces and my long-abiding love of Edmands Park led me to bring the idea for Poetry in the Park to Linda Plaut, Director, Mayor's Office for Cultural Affairs, who became a great advocate and coach through the multistep proposal writing and approval-seeking process. My friend and fellow poet Wendy Drexler became a consistent and remarkable collaborator. Through a series of public hearings, Robert DeRubeis, Commissioner, Newton Parks and Recreation Department, and the Parks and Recreation Commission helped us address issues of permanence and maintenance. Harry Sanders and the Friends of Edmands Park helped us harness our vision with the goal of displaying the poems in a natural, nonintrusive way. This led us to develop a novel process of prepping the stones with a clear epoxy and then affixing the poems using a dry-transfer method. The Newton Arts Lottery Council provided a needed grant. From an open poetry competition with a national reach, we received almost 200 poems, from which Newton poet Wendy Mnookin selected 14 winning poems. Collectively, it took several hundred hours of labor to meticulously install the poems. I believe that park founder John Wiley Edmands would smile on this project, as he was a lover of nature and literature. We are thrilled and happy to be celebrating with you today.

—Grey Held, Project Director

Poetry in the Park Contest Winners

		Map Location	Page Location
Barbara Helfgott Hyett	Chestnut Hill, MA	F	8
Bill Brown	Greenbrier, TN	I	7
Catherine Strisik	San Cristobal, NM	J	11
Clara Silverstein	Auburndale, MA	C	14
Diane Croft	West Roxbury, MA	A	6
Elizabeth McLagan	Portland, OR	B	13
Emily Ferrara	Worcester, MA	K	14
Francis Lunney	Salem, MA	L	16
Joan A. W. Kimball	Concord, MA	N	15
Maxine Silverman	Nyack, NY	E	9
Sarah Sousa	Ashfield, MA	D	15
Richard Waring	Arlington, MA	H	10
Wally Swist	Amherst, MA	M	12
Wandajune Bishop-Towle	Andover, MA	G	11

Birdsong

Somewhere when I was young
in the valley of birdsong, a thrush
called me by name — an order
from his tongue to my heart.
Somewhere when I was young
a whirling dervish of crackled leaves
circled my hurried feet, I stood
at the center of a spiral galaxy.
Somewhere when I was young
a persistent moon followed me home
bent down low to kiss me,
glowed, she glowed.
Somewhere when I was young
a wild ibex with curved-back horns
paused to take in my essence — but
I moved too quickly and he was gone.
— *Diane Croft*

The Names of Creeks

— *for James Still*

Today the rounds of hay sit quietly in their fields.
A light frost melts from their tops, steams the air
like loaves of fresh bread on someone's porch.
The hills, like the heads of children sleeping,
are scuffed with hardwoods. They tangle
with huckleberry, like my morning heart,
not easy to sort through, pathless and mum.
Accept whatever comes, a great poet said. I want
to invert that thought: come to whatever accepts,
but the words don't make the right sense exactly.
Today sense nestles in the names of creeks:
Dry Fork, Crippled, Troublesome, New Hope.
— *Bill Brown*

The Pond at Cabot Woods

If this morning would slip softly,
starlings in their iridescence, the grub
in its clinging, the irises gone by
in that shush, geese might come to
stand beside me. Ungoosably, one
might lay her blazoned head on my lap,
proof of a kindly nature, and sun
would insinuate itself into the leather
laces of my shoes, the pond water
bounding in the narrowest of
wavelets — *whatever is detached
is welcome here*. The males in their
brown abstraction, the hours as steady
as dust, and the preening gosling
who swims, so graceful on her own.

— *Barbara Helfgott Hyett*

Life List

Driving home along a woodsy stretch,
the darker silhouettes of pine
and shrub against the dark sky,
our young son wonders who
lives in the woods.
“Maybe a fox,” his brother suggests.
I offer, “a deer.”
“Maybe a lion,” he guesses.
“Maybe an owl,” says his dad,
an old hand at birds.
“We don’t really know.”
And for miles down the road
my baby croons,
“We don’t really know
We don’t really know”
to the woman and man who’ve sworn
no harm will come
to him to him.

— *Maxine Silverman*

In Tall Grass

Over and over, the grasses part
for winds that will never give up
swelling, cresting, receding back
on themselves, wrapping around us.
We are glittering like the metallic green
of a tiger beetle, unhinged for flight,
alive in a field where so much
awaits, the mossy sorrows,
the grasshopping surprises. We fall
in love with all that is not
ours, this particular firefly,
that determined stalk of yarrow.
Leaving the woods is a sadness,
returning home a vague diminishment,
that we are father and son and not
some wild things in the night.
— *Richard Waring*

Moonrise at Cabot Woods

Against blue sky, the polished
arms of oaks catch day's
last gold minutes. Winter-pale,
a half moon, already risen, waits.
These woods go back, as is
their nature, to a wild order,
pattern branching from memory.
The old rink brims with broken
grasses, unskatable.

— *Wandajune Bishop-Towle*

Magpie

I am breaking in mid-body between paths.
Where magpie racket ricochets from breastbone
to branch with dusk's low hum. Molt violet.
Molt rainbow. Untwisting my own
sight from the green of this world turning
my morning eyes, my mourning eyes into
the dark-feathered bird. Murk and mud-
scent, my caw shadowed and thinning.

— *Catherine Strisik*

Wild Falling

Eyes frozen in headlights for
only a moment, the herd
of deer traverses the road
in this first winter blizzard
with such prudence they quiet
the wild falling. One after
another, they spring to clear
the ice-sheathed barbed wire hurdle,
that quivers from time to time
when one of their hooves grazes
against it. They bound into
the meadow, filling with white
fire, an icy afterglow
burnishing their tracks, which cross
and recross themselves, while wisps
of cloud wash over the moon.

— *Wally Swist*

All Alien Spirits Rest the Spirit

There are rocks that have forgotten the body:
orphaned, smoothed by their journey, tossed up
at random and left to dry in the sun. The river
retreats into its own life beyond the marsh
where deer graze by the secret ponds of geese.
Hard midday light on the surface of water,
the sky drawn back into blue distance: I want
to lie like a cloud on the river, like nothing,
like the milk of nothing. To be troubled by boats
and the footprints of birds. I'll be the ripple
the stone falls through. And if a gust of wind
rearranges the leaves and the shadows of leaves
where the air of the dead is transposed — just
passing, just passing through. Where is it
snowing? What is that cloud in the shape
of a mouth, trying to speak? Gray afternoon
without you, working the lung's white tree, the one
the leaves cover, the one leaves lay bare.

— *Elizabeth McLagan*

Instagram

yellow yolk of sun
pricked by leafless maple crown
pops in morning sky

— *Clara Silverstein*

Koan

Whether pine's whoosh
or aspen's quake, I am
rapt, enthralled, bereft
struck-awed, the all
and none, the no and
yes, the shirring hiss
this strange abyss
this life aloft the breath
of trees—susurrus!

— *Emily Ferrara*

Cold October

Cold October made four hairy bees
Soporifically lie at their ease,
Each apparently dead
On a thistle-stem head,
Until warmed in the sun by degrees.

— *Joan A. W. Kimball*

Learning My Name

The snow is pitted where an animal
stepped into its own shadow.
Summer's rampant knotweed has diminished
to a line of thin calligraphy — frail girls
bent by wind. Evening sun
colors them red. In the field,
sharp prints circle a tree where one
deer ate the bark —

came this close,

turned back

without learning my name.

— *Sarah Sousa*

Catching Native Trout

— for Warren Lillie

I caught a dozen brook trout from the cold stretch of stream that runs beside the orchard trees. With each cast, they surfaced to feed on crickets from our damp cellar. For weeks, I hooked only dull hatchery fish. Their eyes were gray and lifeless, mouths searching for water as I tried to release them. Then these native fish! Light spots of orange and yellow speckled their tiger-striped backs, and their blue sides shimmered almost purple in late afternoon light. I waded out farther, farther. Here they were, deep in the current, those fluttering hearts!

— Francis Lunnery

Bios of Winning Poets for Poetry in Edmands Park

Barbara Helfgott Hyett has published five collections of poetry, most recently *RIFT* from the University of Arkansas Press. She is the director of *PoemWorks: The Workshop for Publishing Poets*, in Chestnut Hill, MA.

Bill Brown is the author of eight poetry collections and a textbook, most recently, *The News Inside* (Iris Press 2010), *Late Winter* (Iris Press 2008), and *Tatters* (March Street Press 2007). His new book, *Elemental*, is forthcoming from 3: A Taos Press in 2014.

Catherine Strisik is author of *Thousand-Cricket Song*, 2010. She is co-editor of the online journal, *Taos Journal of International Poetry & Art*.

Clara Silverstein is the author of the memoir *White Girl: A Story of School Desegregation* (University of Georgia Press), and three cookbooks.

Diane Croft published the first illustrated biography of the inventor of braille, *Louis Braille: A Touch of Genius*. A collection of her poetry, *The Unseen Partner: Love & Longing in the Unconscious*, is forthcoming.

Elizabeth McLagan's collection, *In The White Room* (CW Books), was published in 2013. She teaches writing at Portland Community College in Portland, Oregon.

Emily Ferrara teaches family medicine and community health at University of Massachusetts Medical School. Her collection *The Alchemy of Grief* won the Bordighera Poetry Prize and was published in a bilingual edition in 2007.

Francis Lunnery began writing poetry as a graduate student at the University of New Hampshire. His poems have appeared in *The Owen Wister Review*, *Outside Bozeman*, and *Appalachia*.

Joan Alice Wood Kimball started sending poems to journals at the age of 71. A founder of the Concord Poetry Center, she has authored two books of poetry: *This River Hill* (2009) and *Summer River* (2013).

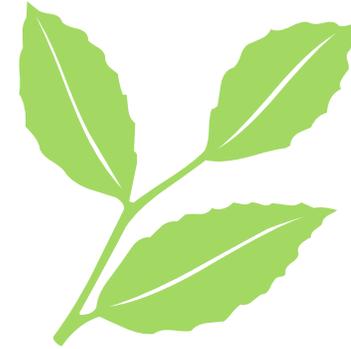
Maxine Silverman, a Pushcart Prize recipient, is the author of four chapbooks. Her most recent book is *Transport of the Aim, a garland of poems on the lives of Emily Dickinson, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, and Celia Thaxter* (Parallel Press).

Sarah Sousa's first collection won the Red Mountain Press Prize and will be published in May 2014. Her second collection will be published in late 2014 by Free Verse Editions.

Richard Waring's work has appeared in numerous publications. His chapbook, *Listening to Stones*, was published by Pudding House Publications in 1999.

Wally Swist's published collections include *Huang Po and the Dimensions of Love* (Southern Illinois University Press, 2012) and *Velocity* (Virtual Artists Collective, 2013). He is co-translator of *The Daodejing of Laozi* (Lamar University Press, 2015).

Wandajune Bishop-Towle is a poet, a licensed psychologist, and co-owner of Seasons of Peace Yoga in Andover, Massachusetts, where she teaches yoga and provides body-oriented psychotherapy.



Bios of the Project Directors and Contest Judge

Grey Held (Project Director) is a poet living in Newton. He is a recipient of a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship in Creative Writing and has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize. His first book of poems, *Two-Star General*, was published by Brick Road Poetry Press in 2012. His second book of poems *Spilled Milk* was published by Word Press in 2013.

Wendy Drexler (Assistant Project Director) is a poet and an editor living in Belmont, MA. Her first book-length collection, *Western Motel*, was published in 2012 by Turning Point. Her work has been nominated three times for a Pushcart Prize. She is a poetry editor for *Sanctuary*, the magazine of the Massachusetts Audubon Society.

Wendy Mnookin (Contest Judge) is a poet living in Newton, MA. Her latest book, *The Moon Makes Its Own Plea*, was published by BOA Editions in 2008. Her other collections are *What He Took, To Get Here*, and *Guenever Speaks*. Mnookin, who has received an NEA Fellowship in Poetry, teaches poetry at Grub Street, a nonprofit Boston writing center.

