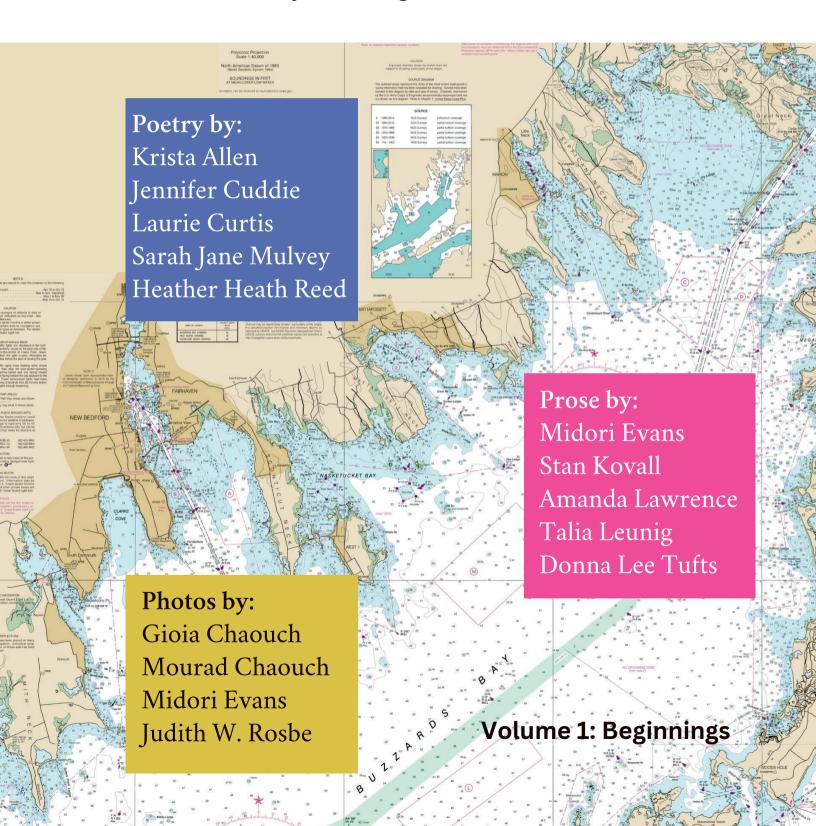


A creative literary frolic along the Massachusetts South Coast



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**ISSUE 1: BEGINNINGS JUNE 2023** The Massachusetts South Coast always nutured creativity. The fourteen writers and photographers

in the first issue of Sippizine are ready to take you on a vivid and written trip. Are you ready?

For me, taking the idea of a community culture journal, running writing prompt sessions and exploring the work submitted has been a great journey. Let me know what you think!







Print Sippizine





## Poetry by Sarah Mulvey

### ART FRIENDS

I think about Albert My painter-friend from the 1900s,
And the story of his long-awaited arrival
to a Christmas party.
So enamored with
candlelight through a window,
He never stepped over the threshold.
He took in the sight, made a memory,
And went home to his studio.

I think about Emily,
Who wrote about God so passionately,
About life and bright light,
Darkness and death,
Who burns so purely in our minds
Because her love couldn't know
Any other expression
Then fire and beauty.
Ecstasy in poetry.

I also think of Toni,
My friend who writes novelsstories of beauty and power.
She never found enough space to write
Until the words came.
Until the urge became desperate need.
And then every to-do, invite or invoice
Was cleared away to make room.

I know I am the same As I stare at a new baby,
My mind searches for
every soft and sweet word I know.
To describe his perfect cheeks,
The spark of discovery in his eyes.
Even right now, as I write I know I will be turning down an invite
Because the words are here, now.

How many of us live here, In the midst of our next creation? Clinging to life and the living of it, While clouding our minds with

which colors to mix
That will replicate the amber
of your lover's eye?

dreaming of words like Lilting, gilded, hearthfire To share the warmth of a full, familiar home?

Do you hear the melody In their laughter? Are your fingers already moving, Trying to hold it in place?

### Prose by Midori Evans

### BENNY

"Do you believe that rocks can be beautiful?" my daughter asked me as we wound our way through the tall grasses of the field that borders our property.

I nodded and then squeezed her hand twice for yes, remembering at the last minute the new eyepatch she proudly sported on her left eye. We had been walking down this same path, only three days ago but in a different world. An early fall storm had blown through on Friday, pulling down trees and scattering brambles and debris along the path. Benny had tripped at just the wrong time, scratching her eye badly enough that the doctor felt it needed to rest. Benny couldn't have been happier, running about the house screeching "yo, ho, ho!" until neither her brother nor my husband could stand it any more. The two of them, all day Saturday and Sunday, cleaning up our backyard, the Dennison's drive, and the field we all communally owned, needed some peace and quiet.

So Benny and I went out to trace our way down to the ocean. It, too, now a creature transformed from its wild and wooly Friday self. Today, bits of waves deigned to lap against the shore, sussurations of touch, the flirt of a dance move, hands reaching through for a mid do-si-do spin. The sun welcomed us, glinting off the scattered boulders.

"There," I said to Benny, picking up the thread of our conversation, "the rocks certainly look beautiful in the sunlight, don't they?"

She, in turn, nodded her head and squeezed twice, but turned to look directly at me, her one good eye conveying some mixture of doubt or confusion, or perhaps just the appropriate pause of a five-year-old contemplating philosophical ambiguities.

"But Momma," she finally said, "most days the sun doesn't visit the rocks for very long. The sun moves on, visiting everything, once a day, that's what my teacher told me. So what happens to their beauty then?"

I started to talk to her about the intrinsic beauty of every living thing but by now my pirate daughter's impatience had taken over. She had thrown herself out of my light grasp, racing down the beach to clamber over to her rock garden, the set of five wide boulders accessible at low tide. I watched her running, her body practically tripping over itself in her desire to fly faster than the air, her favorite play activity on low wind days like today.

Her question, left behind, had no such velocity. I thought of how easily I dismissed rocks, their grayscale palette, the cracks and wobbly spots, the awesome power of a centuries-old stone wall. Why did Benny and I or, for that matter, my husband and I, stop so often to appreciate flowers, with their intricate colors and petaled displays, but not the foundational stones that graced our worlds?

Off in the distance Benny leapt, scrambled, and pirouetted around her rock garden. Every now and again she stopped, lunge stance, pointing one hand off towards the horizon while the other shielded her right eye. The muted yo-ho-ho's came one after another, one for each rock, Benny leaping up to rotate, slamming her body back to the sand while yelling 'Pirate Power!' another of the phrases she'd been tossing around all weekend. I couldn't help but grin, the contagiousness of a child's enthuasiasm one of those gifts you can't put a price on.

I shifted a small stone I'd picked up from the beach, left to right hand, front pocket to back. Why did I assume this or that, pass one thing by and celebrate another? I marked today on my mental list: finding yet another assumption keeping me partially blinded. Life felt sometimes like a lifting of a veil, at least the second half of life. Framework assumptions that carefully built my sense of self for thirty years becoming dismantled in a slow process of questioning and rebirthing.

My daughter carried off half-blindness with aplomb and determination. I must have been like this, full of racuous laughter, intense stares, and unwavering drive, but I could no longer remember the years before I tipped over the adult fulcrum into blindness.

I looked up to see Benny running back down the beach toward me, the farthest rock of the rock garden having been swallowed by the approaching tide. Maybe I could find parts of that person again, in time, but all of this questioning could wait for another day. A pirate approached!

# Photography by Midori Evans ROCK BEACH



### **JANUARY 1, 2023**

Welcome, this first day, first month of this new year.

Welcome, sunshine and tips of green field grass and beach grass.

Welcome, wonderous blue sky, alight with gulls wheeling and hawks gliding.

Welcome, light breezes singing in swaying treetops,

that whistle in corners of the farmhouse and airy gaps in the stone walls.

Welcome, seed of calm that roots itself deep within to swell and strain in sweet release

into the blue and gold of new beginnings.

### BURSTING

A meteor of light spills out of meinward star-shine swelling from seeds of grief turned to hope.

I see possibility in bursts of golden surprise daffodils with bowed heads greet me by the kitchen door.

### **REJUVENATION**

Rain
falls lightly
on brittle grass
lies gently on leaves
on blooms parched and wilted.

I stand limp with relief, wetness covers me, pores drink greedily, skin softens.

Clouds scurry across sky, raindrops glisten in sunlight.

### **BLESSINGS**

I love to watch a golden daybreak peel back the black of night, how first snow lies on fields and sticks to grey bark, and I stare transfixed by juncos, jays, and doves waiting their turn at the feeders.

Words come to me
in snippets of verse,
my heart learning to let go
just enough to find my breath
and tiptoe into new beginnings
waiting for my nod and grateful smile.

#### HOPE

It feels good to kneel,
rake bare fingers through warm soil
the color ofdark caramel,
pull weeds, pluck stones
the size of peach pits,
prepare the earth to receive seeds
and wait in patient wonder.

### **IMAGINE**

It is late afternoon.

You kneel to dig deep round holes dust tem with drived compost and center one tulip bulb in each as the sky bursts into flame.

Imagine looking up and being blinded by red and gold flames that lick the edges and spread across the nightening sky.

Then imagine that instant when you grab the garden hose only to drop it as if it were poke-red hot and instead sit back on your heels to watch the sky burn.

## Poetry by Jennifer Cuddy

### GROWL

There is an anger, and it lives deep inside.

Like in the place I'd image your soul would be if I believed in that sort of thing.

It's deep, with roots, but sometimes...sometimes in the spring of my existence, it rises to the surface to face the sunof my reality.

And, if you listen closely, you can hear a low guttural growl that seeps through me like a wind passing through the leaves of a spring-born tree.

It only appears with the anger and sometimes brings its friend frustration along for the ride.

But the growl is not a symptom of the anger or even a byproduct.

It's a gate keeper. It's the blinders on a Clydesdale horse in a huge drunken St. Patty's Day parade. It's abouncer keeping anger from ruining a good time at the club.

But what the growl doesn't know, what falls on its deaf ears, is that anger just wants to leave. It's had enough.

A legacy that I know I will gift to my own children, no matter how much I promise them I won't.

Maybe, just maybe, the growl will pass out in a drunken stupor and anger will bolt for the door dragging its twin sadness to the next party.

But then, I think, what will I have to give? What will be my legacy?

## Photography by Judith W. Rosbe



Autumn view of Erik Durant's sculpture of Elizabeth Taber in Bicentennial Park, Marion.

### Prose by Donna Lee Tufts

### SUNDAY RIDES

Gone are the days of the "Sunday Family Rides." Before parents became the constant transportation to soccer, hockey, and a myriad of other activities; when I was growing up in the mid-fifties, we had the Sunday ride!

My family had one car. That one car was usually a second-hand station wagon used during the week for Dad's surveying company; on Saturdays for picking up Grama for church; and on Sundays for our rides. Although my Mom worked outside the home, she didn't need a car.

As a child, I loved our Sunday family rides. Sitting behind my father, I would pretend Iwas driving the car. Evidently I had inherited the "Thompson" gene for the "love of driving." In fact, I learned to drive at fourteen driving to "The Nest" for pizza when a family friend would suggest we order pizza and he would insist that he and I ride over to get it. He would let me drive his new car, once safely out of view, all the way to "The Nest." With me behind the wheel and he in the passenger's seat. I thought I was such a "big shot!"

Getting back to our Sunday family rides, there was a reason for driving around southeastern Massachusetts and Cape Cod. My dad wore many "hats" in his small company; among them was checking out new work and collecting paid invoices. I learned the back roads from Westport, Dartmouth, Acushnet, Rochester, Mattapoisett, Plymouth, and Cape Cod. Oftentimes we would pack a lunch and return late in the afternoon. Here we were, my Dad, my Mom, me, and my seven years younger brother, Michael. He was very predictable with his constant, "Where are we going?" "When are we gonna get there?" "I have to go to the bathroom." You know, the typical younger brother annoyances.

During these rides, my dad and mom would enlighten us about the small towns, historical facts, funny stories, and in general, keep the rides interesting.

I do vividly remember one particular Sunday ride that would enlighten my intellect and stimulate my mind forever. We were driving to a "new" development at New Seabury on Cape Cod in the town of Mashpee. We drove through a lovely entrance with stone or brick pillars—it all looked very "private." As this development was at its beginning stages, there were only two completed homes, but both were fully landscaped with trees, shrubs, and manicured lawns, all very beautiful!

Dad parked the car within walking distance of the two "model" homes. I had no idea what a "model" home was, but my mom explained later.

We entered the first home—architecture by Royal Barry Wills—one and one half stories colonial style, fully furnished with all the necessary items of a "real" home. I asked my mom if anyone was living here...she answered, "No, no, this is a "model" home. These homes are for sale and they're furnished to give people an idea of what they could look like. It's all part of the promotion..." WOW! I couldn't believe this! I went from roomto room in utter amazement. I was fascinated with the Library full of books; the diningtable set for dinner; beds with their linens; lamps; tables; pillows on the sofa; and eventoys in the children's rooms! This was awesome!

Our next "model" home was built by the "Acorn" company; a contemporary style and the opposite of the first "model" home. Here again, I was fascinated with the different interiors; the large expanse of glass windows; the tall ceilings; and again, all the comforts of an actual family living here.

In looking back, I believe this was my first introduction to architecture and interiordesign. I soon realized that I thought in "spatial" concepts and was good with color. I began drawing floor plans for the homes of my imagination. Although I had no idea how to draw the construction elements, planning and creating my fantasy homes was my focus. It made sense to take four years of Mechanical Drawing once I was in

high school; this was all pre-computer and CAD. I loved putting the lead to the paper, drawing nuts and bolts; learning how to draft! Ienjoy all the aspects of floor plans, elevations, details, and sections, along with space planning. Had I been born in a more recent generation, someone would have picked up on my intense interest and suggest I become an architect. However, in the mid to late 1960s, females were pursuing careers as teachers, nurses, and secretaries, not architects!

My life was about to change during the early 1980s. I left my career as an elementary educator to work for Saltonstall Architects, Inc. in Marion. Bill Saltonstall was just starting out on his own with a small office on Cottage Street. Under the guidance of Bill Saltonstall, I learned about architecture and it was from there that I started my own interior design firm in 1986. Bill encouraged me to study and sit for the ASID certification exam. Because of my first-hand experience in architecture, I passed the exam in April 1990. Had it not been for my mentor and employer, Bill Saltonstall, I would never have passed that exam. I am very grateful.

It has been thirty-seven years since I opened my interior design firm. Although my business has slowed a bit, nothing excites me more than to see great architecture or spaces coordinated with color and fabulous design concepts! I have found that my space planning ideas have continued to sustain me. My interior design has given me much happiness.

Now, many years later, I can look back and remember those Sunday family rides, specifically the day at New Seabury, which was all part of my life's grand plan. We never know when a small learning experience will have such a long and lasting effect. Thanks mom and dad for all the family rides!

## Photography by Judith W. Rosbe MOON GATE



## Prose by Stan Kovall

### LEARNING TO HELP

- A. If we wish to succeed in helping someone to reach a particular goal, we must first find out where he/she is now and start from there.
- B. If we cannot do this, we merely delude ourselves into believing that we can help others.
- C. Before we can help someone, we must know more than he/she does, but most of all, we must understand what he/she understands. If we cannot do that, our knowing more will not help.
- D. If we nonetheless wish to show how much we know, it is only because we are vain and arrogant, and our true goal is to be admired, not help others.
- E. All genuine helpfulness starts with humility before those we wish to help, so we must understand that helping is not a wish to dominate but a wish to serve.
- F. If we cannot do this, neither can we help anyone.

## Poetry by Krista Allen

### MISTAKEN IDENTITY

On the Quansett Trail
The Old Man's Beard
A canopy of fungi & algae
Colonizing the bare branches

Shy chirps of Sharp-tailed sparrows
Flitting up from the saltmarsh to perch
Beside buds preparing to paint the forest
The color of a Spring sunrise

Mourning Cloaks drift by
Hovering on dark iridescent wings
Without urgency
Unlike many of their lepidopterist relations

To be a butterfly
Unaware of the brevity of life
Or of the fleeting beauty
While savoring the sweetest trickle from native nectaries

## Photography by Gioia Chaouch snowdrops



## Poetry by Laurie O. Curtis

### **PEEPERS**

just when it feels like spring
and the night sighs soft and warm
the peepers creep up tangled stalks of grass
tiny frogs with big voices
and grey green lines that make patterns
like x's on their backs
with sticky toe pads
to help them grip the reeds
they slip and swim
into marshes and bogs
to chirp and sing
and start their evening chorus
at the top of their tiny lungs
or sacs

chirrup chirrup chirrup tinkle-toes pinklewinks peepers do you hear them? it's spring

### Content Warning

The next piece includes references to sexual acts and life struggles. Readers who may be sensitive to these elements, please take note.

If you prefer, you may skip to the following piece.

## Prose by Talia Leuning

### YOUR SERVER TONIGHT

I startle easily. I lose things. I forget. I remember. I talk too loud. I don't listen to directions. I know all the names of the various types of face lotion my mother used to sell through Avon, but can't name the 5 salad dressings available at the local restaurant I've worked at for almost 2 years. I have a phobia of maggots, so I can't take out the trash. I hate the sound of birds chirping. I have never had a pet, other than a fish I won at a Halloween costume party in 3rd grade, and it died the next day, before I even got to name it. My dad always called me "little lady" while I was growing up, but I was always big and never much of a lady, so the nickname seemed more like a cruel joke than a term of endearment. My mom never called me anything other than my name. I was named after a great aunt I never met and never knew much about. My mom had 3 miscarriages before she had me. I was a miracle. I was a mistake.

I forget the name of the boy who took my virginity, at that party, in the upstairs bathroom, where I hiked my skirt above my waist, turned around and let him push my underwear to the side to stick it in. I bled, but not much. I didn't cry. It hurt, but not as much as I had expected. I let him finish inside of me, then wiped myself with toilet paper that I stuffed to the bottom of the waste basket under the sink. I was always afraid of clogging someone's toilet. I was always afraid.

I went to the prom with my second cousin, because neither of us had any other options and everyone said we'd regret it if we didn't go. My mom picked out my dress for me, at a store in the mall. It was a cream color that almost made me camouflage, but didn't. I drank warm sparkling water all night and sat on a folding metal chair. I watched other people dance. I watched other people talk. I watched other people.

I pretend I am someone new every night I work. I tell them my name is Stacy, and I'll be your server tonight, I tell them my name is Becky and I'll be your server tonight, I tell them my name is Rachel and I'll be your server tonight. I tell table two I have 4 kids at home. I tell table five I've been married for almost 10 years. I tell table seven I went to med school but had to drop out to take care of my sick mother, child, husband, great aunt. I tell them I am somebody. I tell them I have a dog, a cat, a fish, perhaps a goldfish with a name like "Goldie" or some other unoriginal but adorable child made name.

I remember the names of my imaginary children, but not the names of the types of bread we offer. I forget things. I forget.

They say you are not what happens to you, but what you choose to become. They say so many things that make no sense. They say so many things we are supposed to believe. I never believed in much, but I could always choose who to become.

Hi, my name is.... And I'll be your server tonight.

# Photography by Mourad Chaouch HADLEY



## Prose by Amanda Lawrence

### CHAPTER XVII

"Let's go, mom."

My teenager grabs the car keys and strolls outside.

"Are you sure you're ready for this?" I ask, drifting after him into the starless evening. "Yeah, I have to practice driving at night."

And at sunset. And in the rain. And in the snow.

Oh, no... I'm losing my baby, code red. Danger! Not a drill.

I shuffle after him, saying none of this. My seatbelt clicks into place as the engine roars to life. The dreary air looks oil spill slick. He illuminates the darkness with headlights, shifts, and releases the brake—for the first time in his young existence, he's driving at night...

"You're doing great," I manage, though my mouth feels dry and my throat is tight. You're okay, not in any real danger, I remind myself. It's no big deal. We're just careening down a major road in a 4,000-pound metal death trap piloted by someone whose brain won't fully develop for another eight years!

It's fine. Everything's fine.

He merges onto Huttleston Avenue; my whole-body tenses, bracing for an impact that never comes. Meanwhile, the "age of maturity" creeps behind us like a panther. Nobody in the history of humanity has become a capable adult—literally overnight—but according to the law, my son will be one on his next birthday.

Whose bright idea was that, anyway? It's dumber than Victor Frankenstein refusing to tell anyone about his monster. Look how that turned out!

Speaking of the undead, maybe I should discuss how to prepare a living will with him... I mentally add that to the growing list bouncing around my brain: SAT prep, college and career exploration, interviews, insurance, voting rights, medical proxies, and the dreaded military draft; sure, there hasn't been one since the 1970s, but he still has to register.

Gulp.

Is it hot in here, or is it me? Where did all the air go? Why can't I breathe? My heart beats against my ribs like a wild blue bird in a cage. I project a calm façade, but I'm dying inside while he's cruising slowly down Water street. I point out an opportunity to practice parallel parking.

"Okay," he says, visibly nervous. He hates this part.

"Use your blinkah."

"I know, mom."

He knows everything. I'm not surprised. He's the same age as Holden Caulfield, for goodness' sake! It's a frightening time. A cold sweat drips down my neck. He pulls alongside the car, backs up, slowly turns the wheel to the right, and maneuvers snugly behind the vehicle.

"Excellent! Now do it again," I say. He does.

Darkness surrounds us, concealing the ocean like a curtain as we loop around the lighthouse at Ned's Point. I think about how Driver's Ed moved slower than molasses in January, with everyone short-staffed and over-scheduled. What felt like annoyances at the moment were actually backhanded blessings slowing us down.

Our time is fleeting, according to the calendar.

It feels like I blinked and someone hit the hyperdrive. How am I supposed to handle this? It's been almost five years since his dad passed away, and we still wear that grief like a wool cloak. Every lonely step forward toward adulthood exasperates my sorrow. And there's nothing I can do.

On our way home, bright halogenheadlights blind me like the future. I try to stifle mytrepidation, butnew beginnings and oncoming traffic areapproaching fast. It makes me uneasy. Being uncomfortable is something many folks tend to neglect. Our instinct is to resolve discomfort as swiftly as possible. But the light at the end of my tunnel of distress is quickly coming at me with resolution hot on its tail, and there's nothing I can do except sit with it and endure.

We arrive home in one piece.

My son parks my car in its usual spot. He kills the engine and hands me the keys.

"You did great, kid," I say as we walk to the door.

"Thanks, mom," he replies. "By the way, are you working Saturday?"

For a second, I'm mentally planning our day—a trip to the museum and some lunch—when he interrupts.

"I asked Mia to the movies. We need a ride."

"Okay," I say, but I'm crying inside.

He smiles and goes in.

I sigh, glance up at the inky night sky, and pray.

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change. Amen.

With only a few blank pages left in his childhood book, I'm struggling to close this chapter and begin authoring another.

"This is what's true," I reiterate. "This is what's happening to you: you're approaching middle age; your baby is growing up. There's no stopping either locomotive. It's best to get on board, buckle up, and accept that being uncomfortable is a part of life."

Each time we experience new levels of change, it feels like the first time again. All we can do is pray, endure, and remember that suffering is redemptive. So, suffer well, folks, because this, too, shall pass.

At least that's what I'm telling myself!

## Author/Artist Biographies

Krista Allen

is an author & artist living in Westport, MA. @veganf

Laurie O. Curtis

Reading "Harriet The Spy" was a pivotal moment in her childhood. It launched her into the world of craving black & white composition books, pens, fake glasses and writing down everything she encountered. She recorded minute details of everyday life. Being a dairy farmer's daughter, there was ample material from which to draw. Her spying career ended abruptly when she was caught lurking around a back porch by a neighbor named Annabelle. Happily, she continued to read and write.

Being a second grade teacher turned out to be the best job Laurie could possibly choose. First, seven year olds are naturally upbeat, curious, enthusiastic humans. Second, there is a lot of QRT (quiet reading time) AND writing workshop. Laurie currently lives in Marion, MA and is working on a collection of nature poems for kids, essays about life on the farm and a YA novel.

Gioia Chaouch

is an amateur photographer who enjoys weekends touring South Coast garden centers and visiting Silvershell Beach.

Mourad Chaouch is a technologist and sailor who enjoys travel.

Jennifer Cuddy

I am a life long resident of New Bedford, MA and have been writing since I was in grade school. From scraps of paper to notes in my phone, I am documenting my life thru my feelings almost on a daily basis. It has been a life long dream to be able have any of my work published.

Midori Evans

Founder of <u>Midori Creativity</u>, Midori understands how creatives think. Through workshops, Artist's Way classes, and community projects, she follows an inner vision to create spaces for exploring creativity and meaningful life choices. An engaging public speaker and creative explorer, she looks for light in unexpected places, integrating themes of nature into her work as a writer and photographer.

You can find her writing in The Creativity Workbook for Coaches and Creatives; Transformational Journaling for Coaches, Therapists, and Clients; and The Great Book of Journaling and her photography at <u>cedarlightimages.com</u>.

Stan Kovall

is your average "geek" that loves and wants to give back. An entrepreneur at the core, he wishes to help in any small way that he can. He started seven businesses.

Amanda Lawrence is a children's librarian and aspiring novelist. School Library Journal, the Massachusetts School Library Association, and The Horn Book feature her work.

Talia Leuning

describes herself as a reader and a writer, a truth seeker and speaker, someone who leads from her heart at all times and is deeply passionate about what matters most to her. She grew up on the island of Martha's Vineyard and because of that, is never far from the ocean. This is her first time being published and she hopes to publish more in the future. If you'd like to see more of Tali's work, follow @Talialune on Instagram.

Sarah Jane Mulvey is a poet and non-profit professional. She is a co-founder of Anomaly <u>Poetry</u> and host of their monthly open mic nights at the Co-Creative Center. She is currently serving as the Poet Laureate of the City of New Bedford. Find her on Instagram as @sarahmulvz and @anomaly.poetry

**Judith Westlund** Rosbe

is a retired lawyer. She is the author of six local history books about Marion, which were published by Arcadia Publishing Co. She was also a director of the Sippican Historical Society for 45 years and was its president for 15 years and its treasurer for five years.

**Heather Heath** Reed

lives in Westport, MA, and is a member of the Westport Poetry Group. She's published poems in Friends Journal, The Plough, and Corona Chronicles. Heather volunteers at the Westport Library and Council on Aging and is an avid gardener, walker, lover of books, and recently has taken up acrylic painting.

Donna Lee Tufts

is a teacher, photographer, interior designer, and writer having published two non-fiction books. She grew up in Marion, attending Both Sippican School and ORRHS. She has been married to her husband, Peter, for 52 years. She spends her time in physical activities, Tai Chi, kayaking, writing and taking care of small dogs.

We hope you enjoyed Sippizine, the twice-yearly celebration of South Coast Mass creatives.

## What's next...

ISSUE 2: NEXT STEP AUTUMN 2023

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