

TLHLife

'MY FOOTPRINTS, MY WORDS'

RAIN, TRAINS
AND TIRES TURN
IMAGINATIVE
WHEELS FOR
CAROL LYNNE
KNIGHT



Carol Lynne Knight shares poems in the "Poems on Panes" project. AL HALL

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Council on Culture & Arts

Poetry is color for Carol Lynne Knight.

Knight worked as an arts educator for many years, and paints, draws and sculpts in addition to writing. The combination of these mediums blend seamlessly together on paper. She has exhibited her digital paintings alongside poetry in many City Hall shows over the years and is excited to share her poems as part of the "Poems on Panes" project this spring.

The project was initiated by COCA in partnership with the Downtown Improvement Authority as a community building initiative that engages local writers and business owners along with readers in discovering poetry in public places. Knight's selected poem answers the prompt "Tallahassee Proud" with ruminations on her favorite spot in town — her yard.

"The front of it is tame and the back of it is like a wildlife habitat," says Knight. "I look out the back window and I see a giant oak, camel-

lias, pecan trees, a fig tree and squirrels. It is also a really great habitat for millions of insects from what I hear."

Knight's inspiration stems from lines she picks up throughout her day. It could be the sound of rain when it hums, the drumming of tires on Tharpe Street or the train that runs down by Mission Road. She remains in tune with her environment and says she often resides in her head, bringing up scraps of memory or nostalgia from childhood.

Her first poem in third grade was an ode to the color pink, while another poem in college, "The Revolution" was published in the University of Miami's paper and followed a rebellious herd of cattle. Knight says she looks up to poet Diane Wakoski for incorporating social bravery and feminist perspectives, and also enjoys the work of E. E. Cummings.

As an editor for Anhinga Press, she is deeply immersed in the poetry culture of the country and just released her second book, "A Fretted Terrain, Like Mars."

"I run a lot of stuff by my cat," laughs Knight who says Lucky serves as her trusty assistant editor at home. "I sit and read to her

If you go

What: Poems on Panes Poetry Reading

When: 6-7:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 4; Tallahassee Proud Opening Reception

Where: City Hall Art Gallery, 300 South Adams Street (Poems on public display from Jan. 29 – April 13 throughout downtown Tallahassee)

Cost: Free

Contact: For more information please call 850-224-2500 or visit www.tallahasseearts.org.

and if she's interested, she'll stick around, but if I'm boring her, she's gone."

Knight prefers more descriptive scenes over didactic poems and describes her own style as intuitive and informal. She writes without a roadmap, allowing words to flow

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Knight

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freely for some time before going back and seeing what has been revealed. Then comes time to revise, finding better words to express what she feels and speaking out loud to find the right rhythms.

“The first half of the poem that day might just be totally deleted because it’s just like revving an engine before I get started,” says Knight.

The title of her book, “A Fretted Terrain, Like Mars,” comes from a poem describing the parking lot of a Nashville bar at four in the morning. The first poem in the book follows a teenage girl riding in the backseat of her boyfriend’s car, invoking images of the Panama Canal and

discovering “the Pacific Ocean hidden in your backseat or the atomic bomb I was wishing for in your kiss.”

Though Knight doesn’t carry around a notebook, she says that in the editing process it is imperative to have a large bed to make piles of poems, sorting and re-sorting through them to find similar moods and themes. Sequencing a book means finding emotional arcs or chronology. She finds the ending is always a challenge.

“I don’t want it to feel like a door has slammed but that it has been shut and you might see light coming out from under the door jamb,” says Knight, whose last line in her book is ‘meet me halfway.’ “It kind of leaves it open, but closes it.”

When it comes to giving readings, Knight says she starts reading in a whisper, finding what needs to be emphasized. Knight is looking forward to the

readings from all the selected poets at the upcoming reception on March 4, which also celebrates the Tallahassee Proud art exhibit. The project features the work of local poets in street-visible locations in an effort to bring poetry to a wider audience.

The poets’ submissions were juried and selected poems have been printed onto clear vinyl window clings and will be publicly displayed from Jan. 29 – April 13 on storefronts of participating downtown Tallahassee businesses.

The businesses involved include Sachs Media Group, The Advocacy Group at Cardenas Partners, TCC Center for Innovation, Florida Education Association, Adams St. Advocates, Nic’s Toggery, SKD Consulting Group, Capital City Trust Company, Downtown Improvement Authority, The Council on Culture & Arts and the Visit Tallahassee Visitor

Information Center & Gift Shop sponsored by The Southern Group.

Knight is hoping passersby will stop and have a quiet, reflective moment, or that people who wouldn’t normally pick up a poetry book will make a genuine connection. For her, putting poetry in public places means leaving permanent footprints on our world.

“On paper there’s evidence that I was here,” says Knight. “Somewhere I left my footprints, my words. I think expression is part of what makes us more human. I taught art in schools for a long time and there’s a little artist in every one of us whether we’re dancing, writing, painting, or drawing.”

Amanda Sieradzki is the feature writer for the Council on Culture & Arts. COCA is the capital area’s umbrella agency for arts and culture (www.tallahasseearts.org).