

**Richard Osler** is a Vancouver Island-based poet, retreat facilitator and poetry therapist at an addiction recovery center. Nothing in his previous lives as a business journalist with the Financial Post, on-air business columnist with CBC's Morningside radio program and specialty money manager prepared him for the unexpected ways words and poems can become paths to healing. His chapbook of short poems *Where the Water Lives* was published by Leaf Press in 2012 and his full-length poetry collection, *Hyaena Season*, is forthcoming from Quattro Books in the Fall of 2016. His poetry blog can be found on his website:

**Nasreen Pejvack** is a published Author, her novel *Amity* was published by Inanna Publications, York University Press on October 15th 2015. She was born in Tehran, Iran, however at a young age Nasreen left Iran for Greece due to the brutal aftermath of the 1979 revolution in Iran. After several months living in Athens, she left for Canada to begin a new life in a more peaceful environment. In Ottawa she studied computer programming at Algonquin College and worked in that city for about 10 years.

Soon, her adventurous spirit brought her to Vancouver, British Columbia where she continued work in the computer field, and at the same time discovered the magnificent beauty of the West Coast.

She then moved to California to work as a Systems Analyst for CNet during the tech boom of the 1990s. After several years she returned to her new homeland of Canada and her beloved BC. Eventually she left the IT field and decided to start a new chapter in her life and made a conscious decision to work with people instead of coding. While working as a counselor and educator, she pursued a degree in Psychology, and at the same worked in the North Vancouver school district.

As she travels and enjoys nature, she has learned more and more about the human psyche and people's behaviours, and tries to understand humanity in all its complexity. She is concerned about why have we come such a long way in this epoch in gaining such profound intellectual capital and developing such marvelous technology, and yet war, pain, conflict, hunger and strife have followed us throughout this history? She asks the world why, despite all that we have accomplished, self-interest and intolerance threatens to overcome all our achievements. She continues her research and anxiously watches human nature and behaviour to see if we can step back from the brink of destroying everything. She has developed a website as a hub wherein people can find in one place resources on a wide variety of topics  
<http://examine-consider-act.org/index.html>

By 2012, she decided to take early retirement and has since renewed her battle with the world's wars, hunger and greed. To start, she wrote a historical novel called "Amity."

She also writes poetry, short stories and articles for Inanna publications and for her own website, and at the same time she presents her own workshops that she has developed on variety of topics.

<http://examine-consider-act.org/Workshops.html?0=>

**Rachael Preston** is the author of three novels, *Tent of Blue* and *The Wind Seller*, both with Goose Lane Editions, and *The Fishers of Paradise*. After winning Arts Hamilton's inaugural Kerry Schooley Award in 2013 for the book most representative of Hamilton, *The Fishers of Paradise*, originally self-published, was picked up by Wolsak & Wynn Publishers and reissued in April 2016 under their new James Street North Books imprint. In February 2016, Project Bookmark Canada announced that *The Fishers of Paradise* had been chosen as Bookmark #16. The plaque was unveiled along the Desjardins Trail in Hamilton's Cootes Paradise on June 9, 2016.

Rachael has a Master's Degree in English Literature from Queen's University and spent twenty years teaching in Canada, England, Japan and, briefly, the Czech Republic. She taught creative writing at Ontario Colleges and in 2005 and 2006 chaired gritLIT, Hamilton's Literary Festival. Currently, she lives in Departure Bay, Nanaimo, BC.

## **SHAKESPEAREAN BLUES**

**Shirley Graham**

**new poems**

"Welcome to **Shirley Graham's** one-woman staging of Shakespeare, played from her room of masks, as she puts on all the parts in front of her mirror and then takes them off, word by word by word. This is Shakespeare played with an orchestra conducted by Lorca. Will said all the world was a stage. Graham shows that he got that a bit wrong. All the stage is a world, and she shows us that the world is a woman's body talking mirror talk. A tour de force." Harold Rhenisch, author of *Living Will: Shakespeare After Dark and Free Will*.

"In Shirley Graham's masterful new poems, the boundaries between stage, audience and backstage are blurred. In the wise stillness of these words you are propelled to motion. As you enter and exit, you bump shoulders with your various selves. How will you speak now without shattering / the carefully gathered silence? How will you live in this world and keep yourself tender?" – Daniela Elza, author of *the weight of dew and milk tooth bane bone*.

Celebrating the four hundredth anniversary of William Shakespeare's death, *Shakespearean Blues* is a modern romp through the state of mankind, drenched in Shakespeare's words and characters. At turns joyous, tragic, witty, solemn, mysterious and wry, these poems are wide ranging like the quotes and characters that inspire them. Graham returns to the blue world of

prior volumes, and uses the bard as a springboard to explore our human condition, seeing us somewhere between Puck's "Lord what fools these mortals be" and Miranda's "How beauteous mankind is!" "Graham has the virtuosic skill of rendering a moment eternal."—Don Domanski, Governor General's Award for Poetry

Shirley Graham has been writing, publishing in literary magazines and giving readings in Canada and the U.S. for three decades. She studied writing and literature at UC Irvine, UCLA, Brown University, the Sorbonne in Paris, and in private workshops with a range of writers, including Galway Kinnell, Sharon Olds, Robert Haas and Mark Strand. Her books include *Blue Notes* (m)Other Tongue Press, *What Someone Wanted* and *Book of Blue* (Black Moss Press). She is a psychologist and lives on Salt Spring Island with her husband.

**Heidi Garnett** was born near Gdansk (Danzig) during the Second World War. Prior to being expelled in 1945-46, her Mennonite family had farmed the delta called the Danziger Werdersince the 1570s. Her poems have been published in literary journals and anthologies across Canada, in England and in California. She was shortlisted for the Arvon prize in London and was runner-up for the Rattle prize in Los Angeles. In addition, she has won the Descant Winston Collins prize and placed or been shortlisted in poetry contests sponsored by *Canada Writes*, *Arc*, *Antigonish Review*, *Fiddlehead*, *CV2*, *Freefall* and *Room*. She was awarded the Timothy Findlay scholarship by Humber College for her fiction work and included in *The Best Canadian Poetry in English*, ed. Stephanie Bolster, in 2008. She graduated with an MFA in Creative Writing from UBC Okanagan in 2010.

Heidi is presently working on an historical novel based on a tape her father left to be listened to after his death, a story about a man who in the summer of 1945 walks across war torn Germany as far as Gdansk, Poland, to find his wife and child who may or may not be alive now Russian troops have taken control of that area. The book spans many important and little known events that occurred on the Eastern Front in which her family was involved.

*Blood Orange* ponders the resilience of the human spirit as it explores the meaning of home (Heimat) and homelessness, and circles themes such as forced displacement and loss. Memory is interrogated, but never completely trusted as the poems shift back and forth between post-war Poland and western Canada, the past and present day and other unnameable time frames. Life and death, eros and thanatos intermingle in a world in which a mother braids her child's hair with hands of smoke and "where there is nowhere to sit comfortably" or feel safe, a world in which one is forever a refugee and without legitimate citizenship.

**Murray Reiss** has lived on Salt Spring Island since 1979. His first book, *The Survival Rate of Butterflies in the Wild* won the League of Canadian Poets'

Gerald Lampert Memorial Award for the best first book of poetry published in Canada in 2013. Lorna Crozier called it "heartbreakingly beautiful" and " a new and startling way" to "look at an age-old subject." His poetry and prose have been published in literary magazines and anthologies in Canada and the United States, and short-listed for a number of prizes and awards. Reiss brings his poetry to life on the stage as well as the page as a Climate Action Performance Poet and founding member of the Only Planet Cabaret.

*Cemetery Compost* is Reiss's second book. By turns garrulous and gnomic, playful and foreboding, tender and raucous, its poems plumb our daily contradictions and divided natures. Treading a taut line between bemusement and despair, they tiptoe through the unexploded ordnance of time, dissolving the distinctions between heartbreak and humour, politics and pets, or mortality and the taste of a single strawberry, revealing our inner and outer worlds as—thrillingly—one and the same.

**Kailey DeFehr** is a 22 year old writer, born and raised in beautiful Nanaimo, B.C. She began writing poetry in elementary school and carried the art form with her into her teen years. Her interest in writing was originally in short stories and novels, but poetry always seemed to come naturally to her. It quickly became something she felt she had to do, not just something she enjoyed. She is a full time dental assistant, part time creative writing student at VIU, and Nanaimo's Inaugural Youth Poet Laureate.

**Carla Funk** was born and raised in Vanderhoof, but now lives and writes in Victoria, where she served as the inaugural poet laureate (2006-2008). *Gloryland* (Turnstone Press, 2016) is her fifth book of poems. She's currently at work on a creative nonfiction collection about childhood, God, and small town imagination.

**Blaine Greenwood**, born in Viking Alberta 1951, is an educator by profession – with a career spanning from classroom teacher to museum educator and event planner. It is from this foundation that Blaine's poetry has come to reflect his interest in psychology, history and spirituality. His verse has been described as "dark, homespun, sensual, rich with images."

Blaine has presented his poetry in Calgary at the Poetry Orgy 2009 at Waterton National Park's Bear Grass Days, Lethbridge's Peace through Poetry and StreetFest as well as the Fort Macleod's South Country Fair. He was one of the local writers at Lethbridge, Alberta's Word on the Street 2012 and has read at Robyn's Bookstore in Philadelphia PA.

Blaine's first book is *Black Cat in the Shadows* (Ekstatis Editions, 2015)

**Tina Biello** grew up in a small logging town, Lake Cowichan, B.C. She studied Theatre at UBC and now finds herself writing. Her poems have appeared in chapbook anthologies edited by Patrick Lane since 2008. Her

solo chapbook, *Momenti*, published by Leaf Press was shortlisted for the Bressani Prize and was part of a multi-disciplinary art exhibition of poetry and watercolour in Montreal and Vancouver. These poems have also been composed into a CD of music called 'Dolci Momenti'. Her first full length book, *In the Bone Cracks of the Walls* was published by Leaf Press in 2014 and was translated into Italian in 2015. She presented it in Italy at Molise Cinema in Aug of 2015. Her second full-length book, *A Housecoat Remains* has just been released by Guernica Editions. Tina is the current Poet Laureate for Nanaimo.

**Timothy Allen** has been tap dancing for 9 years and is constantly expanding his rhythmical vocabulary. He grew up studying tap dance with Lynda Allen, who inspired his love of dance. Timothy has danced in Vancouver, Calgary, and Seattle. Danny Neilson, Nicholas Young, Derrick Grant, Diane Walker, and Ted Levy are just some the names he has had the pleasure of learning from and dancing with. Timothy earned several scholarships from the West Coast Tap Collective and other festivals from around the Island for which he is grateful. He was also honored to have the opportunity to dance in the International tap dance day show in Vancouver in 2015.

### **Geneviève Johnson**

Actress and dancer, Geneviève Johnson, meshes dance to theatre, poetry to movement, in her work. Trained in a variety of dance styles, it is through butoh – a Japanese contemporary dance – that this interweaving comes fully to fruition.

After completing a bachelor degree in theatre (acting) at University of Quebec in Montreal, she perfected her butoh skills in Japan under the tutelage of Kazuo and Yoshito Ohno, Min Tanaka and the Dairakudakan group.

Since then, she developed her own creative language of poetic dance – *Landscape Under Skin Theatre* – in a series of solo works and workshops. In 2007, she completed a PhD on the dynamic of "metissage" in theatre and dance performance, using butoh as a base for her reflection.

Through her career she worked with companies like La Nef, Pigeons International, Trans-Theatre, Microclimat Theatre as well as directors and choreographers like Larry Tremblay, Martine Beaulne, Holly Bright, Estelle Claretton, Eric Jean.

Through her shows and education, Geneviève continues to go into greater depth with her quest to marry poetry to the body in motion.

She is regularly teaching Contemporary Creative Dance at Vancouver Island University and is currently teaching Pilates and Corealign at Fine Balance Pilates in Nanaimo.

**Chantelle Norris:** Originally from Calgary AB, Chantelle Norris trained with some of North America's most prominent classical instructors at schools such as, the Alberta Ballet, the Royal Winnipeg Ballet and the Banff Centre for Performing Arts. After her professional career, she became a certified ARAD and ISTD instructor and now teaches full time, while also directing her youth ballet company "Nanaimo Contemporary Ballet."

Wendy Donawa, formerly a museum curator and academic in Barbados, now lives on the West Coast and participates in Victoria's vibrant poetry scene. Her poems have appeared in anthologies, magazines, and online publications across Canada. She was a finalist in The Malahat Review's 2013 Open Season Competition, and in 2015 she was runner-up in the inaugural Cedric Literary Awards. She has published three chapbooks, *Sliding Towards Equinox* (Rubicon Press, 2009), *Those Astonishments of Sorrow, of Joy* (Leaf Press, 2012) and *The Gorge: A Cartography of Sorrows* (JackPine Press, 2016). *Thin Air of the Knowable* is her first collection.

**Daniel G Scott** currently is the Artistic Director of the Planet Earth Poetry Reading Series in Victoria BC and will retire from the School of Child & Youth Care at the University of Victoria in June 2016. He has published individual poems in journals, and anthologies and this book is his third book of poetry, preceded by *black onion* (Goldfinch Press, 2012) and *terrains* (Ekstasis Editions, 2014). He has two previous chapbooks the latest, *interrupted* (Goldfinch, 2015) explores two cancer journeys. He has numerous academic publications in journals, book chapters and with co-author Shannon McFerran *The Girls' Diary Project* (University of Victoria, 2013). Writing has saved his life on more than one occasion.