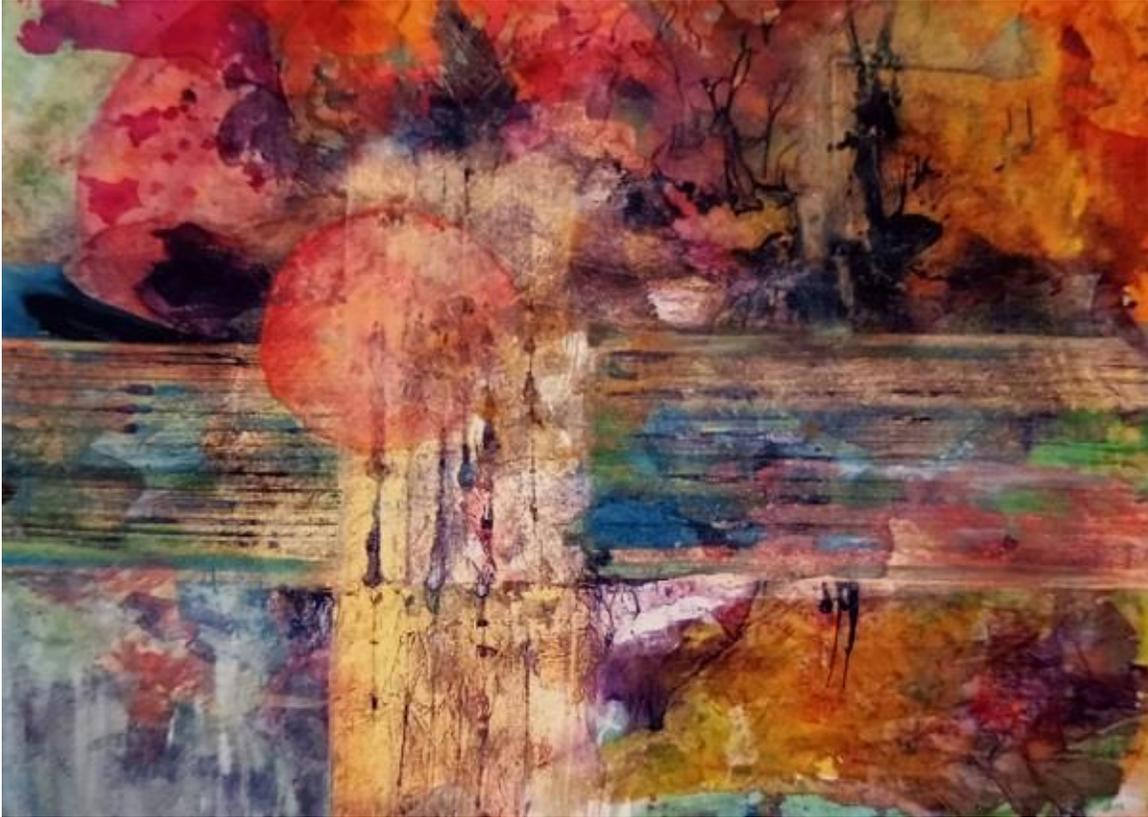


“Hiding/Coming Out of Hiding”

By Rehoboth Beach Writers Guild Members

Edited and Arranged by Irene Fick



“Marsh Sunset”

Artist: Faith Lord

“Hiding/Coming Out of Hiding”

In honor of National Poetry Month 2021, RBWG created a community-sourced poem, known as a “cento.” Writers were instructed to submit 20 words or fewer using the theme of “*Today...*” Guild member and poet **Irene Fick** then studied all of the lines submitted and worked her magic to turn them into the poem on the following pages. We list the 27 contributing writers at the end.

When we asked Irene to take on the challenge of arranging into a whole these unrelated lines, vastly different in subject and tone, and coming from 27 unique writers, we had no idea what, exactly, we were asking or what to expect. The task seemed daunting.

We are thrilled with the outcome: a poem so beautiful, so coherent, so creative, so moving. Could Irene have accomplished this without the care our writers put into their submissions? Possibly not. Could we have this powerful community poem without her?

No way.

Thank you, Irene!

Maribeth
RBWG Executive Director

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I. March 2020

Today, the sun is setting upon all
I had planned. Like a ghost, I wander
through town, see no one. I pass
the Lewes Bake Shoppe, so many
places we once gathered. Closed.
For how long? Everything dead.
I feel like a vulture as I pry

open the crispy head of fried fish
to pick apart the bones, suck
the juicy eyes. At the food pantry,
a man cried when I gave him beans,
cereal, bread, said it was the first time
he'd asked for food. His words buzzed

around me like locusts. Today, my
journal pages are worn and tired
like heels on shoes that never quite fit.
I am out of sorts with my scratching
pen. I write such nonsense: to do oat
toy ya day to at yod day. I am lost

in a haze of words, a suffocating fog.
In the deserted park, even the dog
ignores my come here pleas. Hard times.
Seasons sneak by us. All year long, I move
clothes in and out of storage: winter
to summer, summer to winter, summer
again. I want to come out of hiding.

Today, I face the unknown, the white space,
the breath between lines, the silent longing
that lurks within, the lonely hiss of memory.

"Hiding/Coming Out of Hiding"

II. April 2021

Day's curtain call. Before it falls, I hold
my love, lift up the hours with kind words
that sway in the wind. I emerge, shop
the crowded aisles for food, first time
in a year, vaccinated at last. Driving home,
I pull the car over, weep. Today is a line

cast into murky water. I will take all
that luck offers. Tomorrow, I will be new,
dress up, beautify my nails. Strawberry
margarita is the color I will choose
to carry me from winter to spring, to fix

my naked fingers, locked-up toes. Today
I will soar with eagles, lie down with lions.
(But first, I must get out of bed.) Today,
I will live a little, die a little. Tiny points
of worry try to worm through my psyche,
but today, I pray they don't poke through.
Today, I will coax the corners of my lips

to curve upward. Today, the earth comes
alive around me. I am slowly shedding
my cocoon. The dawn is inky, orangey
and the palms stand in blackest silhouette.
All shimmer in the pond. Soft reflection. Today,
I watched a robin by my window, perched
high in a tree. Later, I faced a bluebird.
Two cardinals settled on a small branch, greeted
me through the window with a kiss. They lifted

my spirit. I wanted to join them all in flight.
As I walked along a wooded path, a yellow warbler
greeted me. Sunlight suffused my heart. I saw

red knots and empty shells: new life at last.
Today, I want to plant: peas and beans and mint
for mojitos. My feet on solid ground.

Today, I am grateful for life: friends, home,
the arts, nature, humor, freedom, good over evil.

“Hiding/Coming Out of Hiding”

I am blessed with a brain that still works, loving family, loyal friends.

Today, at long last, the earth is coming alive.



Contributing Writers

Diane Albanese

Patty Bennett

Kim Burnett

Judy Catterton

Gail Comorat

Steve Conley

Deanne Coolidge

Walt Curran (who submitted
lines from Liz Dolan and
Fleda Brown)

Ann Cyr

Zita Dresner

Irene Fick

Robert Fleming

Carole Guerard

Cynthia Hall

Paul P. McFarlane

Elaine Oakes

Rich Parfitt

Molly Pauker

Maureen Rouhi

Willie Schatz

Karen Schneiderman

Elise Seyfried

Leslie Slan

Mary Ellen South

Nancy Walker

Judy N. Wood

Sharon Wright