

Alamance County Poetry Stroll 2025

Freedom from My Chains

by Pernell Wise Jr.

Jehovah Jireh is the name.
I needed healing from my pain—
Jehovah Rapha is the one who came.

Take my shame, take my blame—
Jesus remains the only holy name.
You're always here, year after year, To wipe my tears.

Take my doubts, take my fears,
Take my flaws, breakdown walls.
I trust in your power, not man-made laws.

And this I know—
The Lord is Almighty.
Just look at what happened to Jericho.

Death is overcome,
You have already won.
It is done—
Jesus is all I need.

Who the Son sets free is free indeed!
Let my life reflect on You,
Through all my struggles, You pull me through.

In my worst seasons, You keep me breathing.
You are the reason—
I can't stop believing.

So, I will worship You for the joy You bring.
Holy, Holy, King of Kings we will all sing.
Jehovah, Yahweh-You are my everything.

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I Am

by Pernell Wise Jr.

God always delivers.
His love and blessings flow like
rivers.

He is my heavenly Father.
So, I am a member.
He spared the sinners.
His forgiveness is rendered.

Let your Kingdom come.
You gave us your Son.
Now, God is declared the
winner,
That's why I remember -
I say, thank you, Yahweh,
For the best day
Is in December.

You give me hope.
You help me cope.
So, I surrender.
You made me free, with no fee -
My defender.
Your love is sweet;
It tastes like splendor.
There is no contender.
You set the bar,
Your love is tender.

My life - you entered, you
became my center.
Your sacrifice paid the price.
You saved my wife, you saved
my life.

Who is better than my Jesus
Christ?

You came here once - now
make it twice.

Your bride is ready to throw
the rice.

With your might, I win the
fight.

Your light is bright; it leads my
sight.

When I am wrong, you make
me right.

You're the spark in my dark.
I asked you, "Lord, where do I
start?"

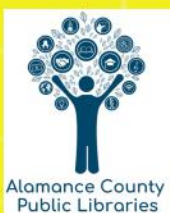
You said, "Your heart."

The Devil is a lie, his plan a
scam.

Priest Most High, you are the
Lamb.

"Are you my God?" my Lord
replied -
With "I Am."

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November

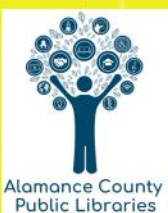
by Mary Archer

*Barren branches gazing downward,
Wrinkled leaves that scurry past.
Heartless chill that breezes southward,
Steel blue sky above the blast.*

*Desolation in November
All seems hushed, no more to live.
Trees their leaves no more remember
Fruit no more a branch does give.*

*All is silent, dormant, waiting
For the vernal sun to rise;
Nature in the springtime plaiting
Leaf-bud branches in her skies.*

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Renewal

by Wendy Dembeck

I breathe him, deeply inhaling
Warm youth-fresh aromas
Mixed with soccer or baseball in season
Grass, and damp, cool earth.

The softness of his skin as I nuzzle his neck
And taste sweet salt
Or caress his fine back
Silken hairs beneath my palm.

My soul is his soul

A mother's fingers curve on a head
His hair—rich and full thickly cushions me
I love the sight of him.

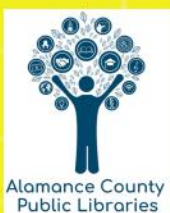
Unhampered and wild
Experimentally stalking with his imagination
Proud of his daring
Or deeply intense, hunched in concentration
Tongue between his teeth, he struggles with fourth grade math
Can he write without that tongue?

My littlest love; his father young again.

Delights still-soprano vocalized in songs, riddles,
Knock Knock jokes
Still awed by layered wonders opening like petals before him
Fresh in season.

Still keeping me aware.
My fountain of youth.
My completion of purpose.

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Replace by Kevin Boyle

I love to cook from recipes that allow shifts
from spice to spice—if without Aleppo pepper
try paprika and cayenne, if without parsley,
sub in cilantro, though the flavors will differ—
and if you don't have cannellini beans for bean stew,
try a great Northern, if you don't want tofu,
cut some boneless chicken, please feel free to use ghee instead of butter
and if you stay in the kitchen long enough, filled
with scents that rise and wander, you'll begin to say,

Though I prefer a day with sun, I can accept clouds
that press down or hit like a mallet, or if I want joy
I will make do with appetites fulfilled—if using drams
you can convert to liters over time—and if you think
praying the way your father prayed, total immersion
in God, would be a gift, accept speaking loudly enough
so your wife can hear as you call her in to the new meal
you've never made before. Instead of routine, invention,
instead of lack of concentration, presence, thankfulness,
it is what it is becomes *don't change a thing*. I stirred it
while my hands were clasped in prayer.
Taste and see the raptures of the winter land

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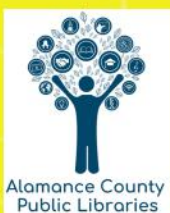
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Tranquil Door

by Tina Buck

I see a stone doorway... what does it lead to?
Peace? Serenity? Growth?
It's a pretty door with Irises and other flowers.
Natural and growing wild with a few weeds.
Butterflies flutter from flower to flower gaining
nourishment.
Bumble bees covered in pollen do their work to
bring more flowers.
Just this sight alone welcomes peace and brings
my heart joy.
Light heartedness.
There's mushrooms growing along the stones
edge.
Looks like a perfect little fairy garden.
Do I go through the door,
or stay in this space and hold onto the peace it
brings?

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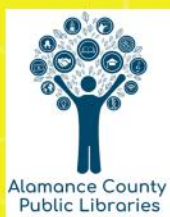
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Making Bubbles

by Tina Buck

The suit fits like a glove against my skin. The equipment heavy, but life saving and very much needed with my fear of the water. The air is warm and perfect for going under. The water is a gentle contrast to the air around me. As I descend... plop, plop, plop... the bubbles hit the top smoothly. I focus on my breathing as the platform, rocks, and fish come into view. It's just slightly murky today, but vision is several feet of clarity. What a wondrous sight to behold. The peace and awe is indescribable. And to think I could have let my fear keep all of this beauty from me. What a tragedy that would have been.

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Spring

by Lauren Farris

The groundhog proclaims six more weeks,
but already I can see it:
A cluster of yellow blossoms reach skyward
defying the blanket of snow that paints the earth
white.

The icy wind howls, “Not yet! Not yet!”,
but already I can hear it:
The bluebirds return triumphant
singing love songs filled with the promise of new life.

The calendar swears twenty more days,
but already I can feel it:
I shed my coat in the warmth of the afternoon sun
turning my face skyward to soak it all in.

The days are still short,
The trees are still bare,

But take a deep breath
Now hold it.

Just like the earth:
Be still a moment.

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Alas, but a Chicken Can Dream

by Emma Kingsley-Jones

Oh, how her feathers shine so bright
In the beautiful show of eerie moonlight

And her beak – gilded and sharp
And the comb on her head, a shining red arc

She wishes to fly like the owl, who soars without
making a sound
Instead, she is bound by her stubby wings that
keep her close to ground

Alas, but a chicken can dream!

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Down the Narrow Path

by Katie Beth Jourdan

Whenever I walkthrough the woods
Down the narrow path,
I hear the wind whispering softly
Through the waving grass.

I see the chattering gray squirrels
Leaping from limb to limb,
In a frenzied, flurried madness
To catch their thieving kin

I smell the clean, fresh scent
Of the woods after it rains;
And the sweet Larkspur flowers
Blossoming once again.

I feel the cool, soft fog
Gently misting my face;
Until the warm, bright sun
Casts down his yellow rays.

I know, that no matter
How old I get to be,
These beautiful, outdoor memories
Will always stay with me.

And whenever I walk through the woods
Down the narrow path,
God's creations are all around me
From the first bend to the last.

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Twilight Hour

by Katie Beth Jourdan

The sun is gently slipping
Behind the shadowed hill,
The final shafts of sunlight
Over the tree-line spill.

Bright strokes of peach and orange
Across the sky are streaked,
Lavender fades to blue above
With scattered clouds of pink.

The horizon slowly darkens,
The moon rises, entranced;
Sparkling stars appear one by one
In their own celestial dance.

Anything more majestic
Than this, I'll never see;
As if God has shown a fraction
Of Heaven to humanity.

No matter how hard or dreary
Or long this day has been,
The splendor of the twilight hour
Will lift my heart again.

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Where I am From

by Diane Hitzke

I am from tornados
Spitting wire and wood.
I am from marching bands
Drowning out the sound
Of incessant crickets
Half buried in the ground.
I am from peeling paint
On outhouse sized churches
Preachers promising hell's fire
To punish unsuppressed urges.
I am from the perfume of
The paper mill that lives
In the curls of my waist-length
Chestnut-colored hair.
I am from fragments of fights
Straining to cipher sworn secrets
Alone in a room lit by a pale moon.
But I belong under towering trees
Feeling their ancient sap
Surge through my veins.

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Wellspring by Cheryl Wilder

Contentment—
possesses nothing,
regenerates cells.

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Origins by Cheryl Wilder

I need to visit the one-lane
dead-end road on a small
cinder cone mountain wrapped
by a river moving beyond town
entering the ocean between
sunbathing seals to recall why
I define thinking as water.

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Broken Treasures

by Lisa Sink Beard

A gift from her father. The vase was a treasure.
She guarded and loved it, for it brought her great pleasure.

For years, it remained steadfast in its place.
Brightly shining with color, lighting the space.

Her hands became careless, letting her guard down.
Tears poured like a river when she heard the sound.

Shards of glass scattered, her knees hit the floor.
Knowing in her heart she could have done more.

"I've lost it," she cried, "my treasure is broken."
She remembered a friend, though it'd been a while since she spoke to him.

His talent was mending broken pieces, using an art form of old.
Putting them back together, connecting the cracks with gold.

Desperately she called, and he came right away.
He took the many pieces and said, "I'll start today."

Anxiously pacing, awaiting the knock at her door.
Watching for the artist to bring home her vase restored.

With a smile he placed it in her hands, more beautiful than when new.
Each golden line a reminder of what capable hands can do.

The Master Mender is waiting. Offer him your broken parts.
He will come quickly and restore you more beautifully than the start.

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An Instinct Before a Test

by Lynn Sanchez

An instinct before a test,
A feeling before the confirmation,
Followed by the big reveal,
The fervent preparations and festivities,
The quiet and not so quiet anxiety.
Then, finally, the labor.
The moment has arrived! The birth.
The metamorphosis of the self into the mother.

The initiation is abrupt.
Exhaustion and sleeplessness cycle through the days and nights.
The cluster feedings.
The endless diapers.
The crying, both theirs and yours.
The recovery, an afterthought.
Finally acclimating and settling in,
The reordering of life and family to fit the tiny new force.

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NEVER HAVE I EVER

by Candice Hope Littleton

What I didn't tell you before
is how I so long to kiss
so, so softly
the mole behind your right ear.
Sometimes when you turn your head
my secret's revealed —
like a curl
tucked behind,
a missed moment,
a tiny star,
a piece of a constellation not yet born.

And to touch it,
not with fingers, but with lips,
would reveal all my secrets
and make a moment not missed.

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OUTSIDE

by Candice Hope Littleton

Outside:

freshly mown grass to turn your ten toes green
a mourning dove lamenting, throaty and sweet
seven stray cats and their kittens, no longer strays
(Grum fed them once and can't keep them away),
so now

they're napping in cool concrete corners off streets,
under windows - wet earth scent and packed oak leaves -
where the damp and dark pools, safe from the sun,
yet not as inviting as that green sprawling lawn.

Go now,
go barefoot,
run.

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