

Alamance County Poetry Stroll 2026

A Life of Homes by Kristy Mabe

No matter what life brings,
I'll always remember a few special things.

As a college student, I couldn't wait for the time
to say, "I'm going home!"
No rushing to classes on time,
sleeping late with no chime,
and home cooking on someone else's dime.
Honestly, I'd never been so happy to see a gnome.

As a wife, I looked forward to calling
to report, "I'm headed home."
At times, groceries I'd be hauling,
sometimes I'd be upset and bawling,
but most of the time I'd come lol-ing.
Nightly, we'd snuggle on the sofa under a blanket dome.

As a mother, I got excited at the end of the day
to text, "We're coming home."
With her safe in the car, singing away,
we were excited and ready to play,
then wind down after making time to pray.
Finally, it was time to let our dreams roam.

No matter the number of daily dings,
I was always ready for what being home brings.



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Belonging by Stacie Nagy

Unclench, unfurrow, breathe deeply
May your whole body feel ease

Set aside your woes, be still
Unburden your heart of what's due

The clock is no master of ours
No urgency can reach us

We could melt here, in this place
Blend together and reform anew

Constant din fades to soft hum
As old burls of tension unravel

I was not aware of the magnitude
Of joy and comfort one opens to

When you have a safe place in life—
An embrace warm and welcoming

The truth of it is: there is no place
Like home, and no home like you



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Brand New Day by Melissa Graham

Morning moon
In a stardust sky.
Signs of life
In a bedroom light
Cool and crisp,
Bringing fall to the air.
Saving grace
From a long summer's fare.
Waking up, with early smiles,
Girding ourselves
For a new set of trials.
A brand new day,
That's never been touched.
Full of promise
Full of glory
Ready for the taking
Go write your story!
Thank the heavens
And God above,
For filling this home
With so much love.



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Cardboard Sign by Shereá D. Burnett

There is a man on Front Street with a cardboard sign.
A cardboard sign identifying him as homeless,
a cardboard sign asking for help.

I am reminded of past images of people in other states,
seeking safety in cardboard boxes.
Of people losing their lives and belongings
in encampment sweeps elsewhere in the South.
But this wasn't another state.
It wasn't elsewhere in the South.
This was on a street that I have driven since first getting my driver's license.
A street where small business owners thrive.
The street where I got married.
Front Street is an album of memories that create my image of home.
The only cardboard I remember seeing there were boxes delivered,
later broken down as trash.

But there is a Black man on Front Street with a cardboard sign.
A cardboard sign identifying him as homeless,
a cardboard sign asking for help.

His disposition seems friendly yet cautious.
His needs seeming to go beyond what could fit on his sign.
The fabric on his back isn't much
and offers little protection from the wind and the January temperatures.
The fabric that creates what I know as home,
as community offering little support for those who are home-less.
People in this community quote scripture,
they speak of being neighborly and community minded.
They speak of the villages that raise our community's children,
of how bad things are in other cities.

But there is a man. On Front Street. With a cardboard sign.



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To Have a House by Cheryl Wilder

What does it mean
to tape a door frame—

careful to press edges
without a wrinkle

follow along the ceiling, floorboards
surround the windowpane?

To glide a roller through
heavy smooth liquid

the first stroke on solid surface—a stripe,

a white backdrop. What does it mean
to have a house in the world

to have it connect to poetry—
a blank page ready

for the work of words across it—
the sublime falling to its graces?

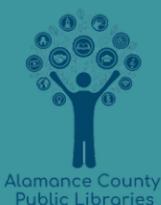
What does it mean to shelter
a loved one? to allow for refuge?

A secret room
the proper color

for wiping tears on sheets.



Anything That Happens. Press 53. 2021.



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1709 Center Road by Cheryl Wilder

From the beginning
we are pushed. Timestamped.

The sea turtle leaves the beach
connected by a magnetic force

to home as reservoir. An imprint.
1100 square feet plus a screened-in

front porch orients our blended
family to our own coordinates.

Mother and son. Husband.
Two dogs and one old cat.

Two babies arrive
twenty minutes apart, and time

stands still, as it tends to do—
both familiar and new, as I'm older now

watching my first born enter
the world inside himself.

The babies, born beyond a lifetime
they didn't experience, receive

our presence, instill their homing instinct.
This house, where we all begin again.



Singing Riptide. Press 53. 2025



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Quietly by Debra Kaufman

We stroll through her garden,
a profusion of pastels
she tends with purpose.
She pauses: *There's one
flower in particular.*

Under a bower,
perfectly centered,
perfectly sunlit,
as if in a painting,

one red flower
radiates.

Taller than us,
it telegraphs a deep
but passing awareness.
We bask in its glow,
not speaking.

Then she quietly says,
*It takes real genius
to say nothing,
and winks.*



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Emily's Wish by Debra Kaufman

Put me in the smallest room
high in the attic
under slanted rafters
where dusty light streams in
from rippled windows

Let there be a feather bed
a cherry desk
creamy stationery a fountain pen
French doors opening
to a widow's walk

In my white nightgown
I will watch birds flutter
I will praise the falling world
sing to myself
My Glorious Domain



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Family Is Home by Miranda Clark

Home always defined by walls,
A place at the end of each day.
Always wondering otherwise.
Waiting for this sense of feeling,
Will I just waste away?

Deep in search,
Feeling lost.
Looking beyond,
No home where I belong.

Home now feels like being alone,
Knowing it's more than being told.
Still wondering..
What is it like,
A household?

Curious, still searching..
In seeking, learned I'm pregnant.
I'm now a mother.
Birth.
Uncontrollable love.
Unbreakable bond.
The feeling I've been waiting to discover.

Always wondering the unknown,
In building my family.
They gave me clarity.
Wherever they are, I will always be home.



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FOR THOSE WHO STOOD by Dianne Aubin

They rose when dawn was still a whispered thought,
when mist lay soft across the sleeping fields.
Their breath was steady, hearts like beating drums
that kept the time of courage, fear, and faith.

No song announced their leaving, only wind,
and boots that pressed the earth they vowed to guard.
They walked through fire, through rain that smelled of smoke,
through silence heavier than any gun.

The years have carved their stories into stone,
but not the living kind that we can see;
the quiet eyes, the hands that shake yet build,
the calm that hides the storm of memory.

They gave their youth to promises of peace,
and came back bearing more than they had left.
The world moved on, yet in the hush of night,
some echoes still return, unbidden, clear.

We owe them more than words, though words must do.
For every freedom drawn in morning's breath,
for every child who runs beneath a flag,
a veteran once stood so we might stand.



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Full of Home by Sarah Gnatiuk

What is this feeling?
That I have searched for
far too long
Finally safe
Finally free
I no longer have to contain
My soul inside this body
Cover the walls
Fill the drawers
Surrounded by bits of me
Allowing myself
To become unmoored
Rooted in where I belong
Seeking solace
In the little moments
Light shining through glass panes
Warming my face
Quiet peacefulness
And deep sorrow
Boisterous joy
And utmost fulfillment
All of me
Is welcome here
I am HOME



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The Destination by Sarah Gnatiuk

Where do you find yourself
Longing to be
When the world around
Is crumbling in despair?
Where can you be safe,
Loved for only yourself,
Surrounded by caring creatures,
And filled with warmth?
All emotions are welcome here
Feel free to lower the walls
You've made it to the place
That you have made your own
Pieces of your soul
Litter the shelves
And fill the drawers
The only place that
You can carry inside
Wherever life takes you
Whenever you feel lost
Know you can always return
HOME



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Going Home by Diane Hitzke

Inside the crevices
Of everyone's soul,
We yearn to go home.
To the place where our
Darkest secrets are known,
But still, we are loved.
Where we can be our worst
So we will learn to be our best.
Where our hurts are seen
So our wounds can heal.
The place we can be weak
So we can learn to be brave.
Home helps us remember,
When the world makes us forget,
That we are enough and
All that really matters
Is love.



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HOME by Mary Reck

A winter storm wreaked havoc,
Ice blanketed the roads,
And there I was away from home
Where I only wished to go.
'Twas not the rocking chair I missed,
Nor the ticking of the clock,
Nor the teapot whistling on the stove
That filled my thoughts this night.
No, only my loved one waiting there,
Wanting me with him.
For together we find comfort,
Together we are whole.
The music of our love
Is what defines *Home*.



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H O M E by Susan Maxon

H – haven

Hearth for body, mind, and spirit

O – oasis

Refuge of rest and refreshment

M – memory maker

Space for cultivating shared experiences

E – emotional connection

Nest of belonging fostering loving and lasting bonds

