

Alamance County Poetry Stroll 2026

What Home Means to Me by Mary Archer

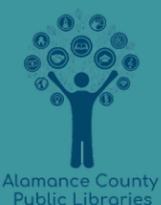
Thanksgiving dinner with family and friends
Gathered together to celebrate the holiday.
Praying together with bowed heads,
Hands joined around the table.

Festive table set with Mom's best dishes
Filled with family favorites.
Turkey and all the trimmings
Sweet potatoes, cranberries, pumpkin pie.

Sharing adventures of the past year
The good times and the challenges.
Laughing about the time Uncle Charlie built a raft...

Thinking of grandfather's empty chair
Remembering those who are no longer with us
With longing in our hearts.

As the golden sun sets in the western sky,
Warm hugs and teary good-byes
Draw the day to a close
Fill me with gratitude
And remind me of home.



Sponsored by:



ALAMANCE ARTS

Alamance County Poetry Stroll 2026

My Home Doesn't Look Like Yours by Mechelle Cortes

My home doesn't look like yours,
I know that much is true.

You have a door that locks at night,
I wish I had one too.

My home doesn't look like yours,
It moves from place to place.

Sometimes it's mom's old car seat,
Sometimes a friend's warm space.

We have no money, no food, and no home,
These words feel heavy when I'm alone.

I have a few clothes and a little comb,
I keep them close wherever I roam.

My home doesn't look like yours,
No pictures hang on a wall.

But I still do my homework,
And dream despite it all.

I carry hope inside my bag, with socks that never seem to pair.
And learned to live on borrowed time, still young, I spare.

I try to smile at morning light,
And hold my tears until the night.

My home doesn't look like yours,
I'm growing up the best I can.

I laugh, I learn, I wish, I try,
And I'm more than anyone ever planned.

So, if you see me walking by,
Please don't just turn away.

My home doesn't look like yours right now,
But I'm hoping it will, someday.



Alamance County Poetry Stroll 2026

People by Elizabeth Solazzo

My home isn't built of wood, brick or glass,
but the people who connect my days.
Family, friends, even strangers are my tribe,
a safe place in this wide wild world.

Heartbroken, raw, unsure of next moves.
They stand steady by my side, lead me,
walk me numbly forward,
trembling at what might come.

They hold out a hand, lift me from the floor
when I am lost and alone, bleeding with grief.
They help me rise in raging rivers,
and laugh when joy comes along again.

Mother, father, and brother now gone,
blood sisters laugh and cry, friends listen,
husband and child I nurture still,
grandchildren bloom like spring flowers.

I live in this simple home of heart,
with sweet spirit and sad sorrows,
family and friends remain firmly here,
a mother, daughter, sister, friend.

My people are the only home for me.



Alamance County Poetry Stroll 2026

REFLECTIONS AT THE RIVER by Dianna Aubin

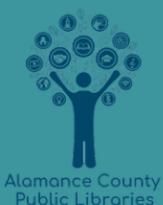
The river keeps its own counsel at dusk,
a long sentence written in silver across stone.
I walk beside it with my pockets full of questions,
each one heavier than the last light of day.

The trees lean in as if they have heard this before;
the soft unraveling of a human heart.
Wind moves through them like a careful editor,
crossing out what I thought could not be changed.

A heron lifts, deliberate as prayer,
and the sky opens a blue door behind it.
I begin to understand how leaving
is only another word for becoming.

Water shapes the rock without anger,
without hurry, without applause.
It does not argue with the mountain.
It does not demand a witness.

I kneel at the bank and touch the current,
letting it revise the sharp edges of my name.
When I rise, the river continues;
and with a sigh, so do I.



Sponsored by:



ALAMANCE ARTS

Alamance County Poetry Stroll 2026

The Cat Is Home by Mitch Cox

i
at last, he's home, she purrs,
this cat who has waited
for so long,
certainly not missing
at all
the old dance in his
office before he left for work
each morning, her white,
delicate paws
gliding across the laptop keys,
his hands encircling her
torso to gently lift
and place her
on the windowsill
next to him,
this waltz again and
again until

iii
now positioned
atop
the velvet blanket
in his lap,
she scolds him
for even
taking a sip from
the cup of a cup on the table
beside the sofa
where he sits,
stroke my back, rub
me under my chin,

his coffee is cold
and she stalks
off,
tail in the air,
offended by his refusal
to obey her,
hold her
as she wants
to be held

ii
the cat is home
home is the cat
the cat is lap and luxury
lap and luxury is the cat
the home of the cat
the cat of the home
no longer chatters at summer tanagers

she purrs,
this queen who
has at last
domesticated
him

iv
the cat is home
home is the cat
the cat is lap and luxury
lap and luxury is the cat
the home of the cat
the cat of the home
no longer sings to summer tanagers



Alamance County Poetry Stroll 2026

Tabled by Rebecca Cole-Turner

Though I try to keep it
neat and tidy
like my Great-Grandma Sadie's,
it always ends up looking
more like Great-Grandma Nancy Jane's.
Her table was ancient, oak, large, round,
with pockmarks, scratches, burned spots,
faded white circles, wet mug imprints
of a thousand cups of Folger's coffee
or Lipton's tea drunk there by family, friends
over a marriage of 65 years.

My table, like hers, has used napkins,
bits and piles of paper, important "To Do" notes,
scribbled phone numbers, birthday cards to send.
My Tuxedo cats are at home here,
sit muffin-style staring contentedly at me,
or headbutt me, nudge my computer, my arm,
trying to get me to rub their foreheads.
Heart of my home,
we live out our lives here,
having meals together as well,
bowing our heads in prayer
to help us go on.



Alamance County Poetry Stroll 2026

At Home by Rebecca Cole-Turner

At 10 p.m. the cats jump
onto the sofa and pounce
on me.

TREATS!!!!

I scatter morsels with soft
chewy centers onto the floor
for them.

TREATS!!!!

I wonder: what do they do
when I am not at home
to give them

TREATS!!!!



Alamance County Poetry Stroll 2026

The Entry by Wendy Dembeck

It's never really just a door
It opens to a promised land
A portal to a distant shore
Where contentment is preplanned.

One can't escape the pleasing warmth
The kind that soothes the soul
Outside troubles float away
At home they've no control.

A whiff of dinner on the stove
Creates its own perfume
Colognes can't top this treasure trove
Aromas fill the room.

There's music someplace in the house
A tune that makes me smile
The notes that linger in the air
Will please me quite a while.

Each sense we have is titillated
And pleased beyond belief
The joy of home's not underrated
It's the place to feel complete.



Alamance County Poetry Stroll 2026

The Lair by Celia Emstad

I built my home the way a dragon builds a hoard,
piece by piece.

The building blocks are made of memories,
precious and concrete,
stacked haphazardly to keep out the wind's chill.

I step across the threshold and relish in the comfort, the smell,
the way each room was hand-crafted like a tiny sculpture.

I breathe it in,
my treasure, my gold,
and I feel the dragon's greed:

*It is mine,
all mine.*



Alamance County Poetry Stroll 2026

Vesicle by Celia Emstad

The winter draws its curtains around the world
begging five more minutes away from the morning sun.
I observe the world outside,
desiccated and destitute,
from within the warmth captured in my bubble,
my safe space, my home.

I settle further down between my couch cushions
as I watch a neighbor walk by,
the coat pulled up over his chin doing its best
to protect him from winter's sharp teeth.
I close the blinds and shut out the reminder of the season.
I am left in the warm yellow light of my living room
and I am grateful
that I have no need to fear the cold.



Alamance County Poetry Stroll 2026

True North by Stacie Nagy

I want to be the kind of person
that I'd fall in love with:

Kind, generous, constant, brave,
given over to the terror of being known

Willing to excise my own heart
for the privilege of acquainting with yours

Giving voice to my needs and wants,
Renouncing resentment for potentiality

Embracing growth and change while turning
toward whoever and wherever I call home.

I want to be that kind of person,
as well as all the other lives I have lived

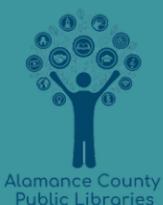
And I want all the versions of me
to point toward you.



Alamance County Poetry Stroll 2026

Welcome Home by Rev. Mandy Sayers

Home is where you can breathe deep and let your shoulders drop.
Where there's a chair and it's waiting for you. Not the hard kind...
But the kind you can sink all the way into.
Light pours forth from windows and laughter too,
And arms are open, and eyes are smiling.
Hands are open too, different shapes and ages and shades,
offering platters of food of every spice and kind, steaming goodness
Around a table that stretches to the horizon.
And accents, different as Pentecost, but lovely as a symphony,
Sing together that old, new song,
Whose words are grace upon grace....
"Welcome Home."



Sponsored by:



ALAMANCE ARTS

Alamance County

Poetry Stroll 2026

When Darkness Didn't Win by Mechelle Cortes

She was a single mother, three children at her side,
Working two jobs, schooling nights, with nowhere left to hide.

Bills stacked high like towers, while her paycheck came up short,
She ran the race of survival with no safety net or support.

The power clicked off often, the cold crept through the seams,
No money left for heat or gas, just half-forgotten dreams.

She laid her babies on the floor, by the kitchen stove's small glow,
Wrapped in blankets, sheets hung up to block the winter's blow.

Doorways draped in fabric, doing all that she could do,
Turning one warm room into a shelter pulled them through.

Many nights she chose hunger so her children could be fed,
Tucking them in with courage, though fear slept in her bed.

She scraped up coins for gasoline, just trying to get to work,
Her bank account stayed negative, the numbers seemed to smirk.

The car was repossessed one day, foreclosure almost took the home,
And darkness pressed in heavily, she'd never felt so alone.

But still she didn't surrender, though the nights were long and grim,
She worked, stayed disciplined, and prayed when hope felt thin.

And slowly, step by step, the shadows lost their claim,
One day at a time, the light began to reign.

So, to the mother, grandmother, and parent worn and thin,
If survival is your language, there is fiercer strength within.

If you're sleeping in one warm room, counting change and whispered prayer,
If your house feels like a question, the weight of worry everywhere.

Please hear this: you are building light, though all you see is night,
One step, one breath, one faithful try is still a worthy fight.

This season will not hold you; it will teach you how to stand,
And in the end, you will see when darkness didn't win, the light you've held in your hand.



Alamance County Poetry Stroll 2026

Where is Home? by Renee Lynch

Home is warmth like butter on toast
It's kisses from Mama and "I love you the most"
Blankets and music and TV and laughter
Comfort in smells long lingering after.

But somehow this home isn't home anymore.
Terrors set in and you hide from the door.
Is it plague or disease, something bad that's within?
Is your greatest offense melanin in your skin?

"Our home is still home,
We've done nothing wrong."
Pleas unheard, unanswered
From thugs on their throne.

"Please Mama, please stay,
Stay here where it's warm!"
Outside has turned ICEy.
The world is a storm.

What happens when this home
is all that you've known
but you're no longer welcome
and you've nowhere to go...



Alamance County Poetry Stroll 2026

You Look Like Your Mother by Renee Lynch

“You look like your mother.”
But what do you see?

The green of her eyes,
Shifty, unsettled?
Emerald waves, tragically beautiful.
Rivers reflecting her stories.
How deep are the pools of sadness?
Do they spill into me?

The warmth of her smile,
corners stretched up
with compassion, understanding, love.
Unconditional, limitless LOVE.
Small joys hidden in small moments,
the glimmers in her broken world.

The shape of her face,
nothing like it once was?
Distorted by pain of unthinkable years.
The altered landscape of bridges and malars.
But how could you know
what was there once before?

Is it here on my face?
The HER that could have been?
In another world, another life?
These features are haunted
ghosts of her fear, her pain.

Questions I cannot answer,
choices I cannot understand.
Yet the resemblance still stands.
My mirror.... a relic
to moments and memories and the life
of someone who deserved so much more.



Alamance County Poetry Stroll 2026

Wrought in space by Mike Holland

(June 2023, Father's day, sitting on the edge of a planet circling an average main line star called Sol)

Morning's rays, Rosy Fingered-
6x10²⁴ kilograms turning, our central engine.
Spun up and held in thrawl by lovely sol
Across space, 4 years our past, it winks to a twin, there
There, a stark like ours spins up planets with equal aplomb
There their sun watches, watches and waits as here.

They dabble in their reports, first atmosphere, 1st molecule, 1st life
They compare trace elements and measure fiords of ice
To each sun they feed the same elixir, then
To each it's fate they retreat and watch and wait

What could their object be, their lens so large
What plan for man could they have sought
Not to just spin up each morning, new and bright
Not to wonder?
Not spite?

What guides their aim this billionth year
Following our path, objective clear
What purpose their study, their experiment
Not just to compare?
Not torment --

Sky Gods peer down at two suns
They bake planets bright, as if one
Which one wins this race they wrought
Which one heeds the lesson taught
Will Earth, the victor, target spent?

