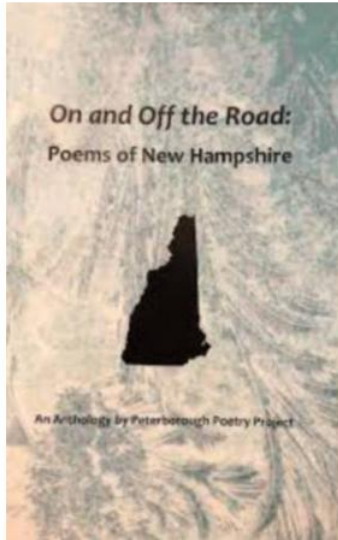


Arts-Living

The Avid Reader: Sharing deepest thoughts through poetry



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What is poetry? The Encyclopedia Britannica defines it as, “literature that evokes a concentrated imaginative awareness of experience or a specific emotional response through language chosen and arranged for its meaning, sound, and rhythm.”

Ok, yawn, we have a nice, clinical definition. But that definition doesn’t even come close to what poetry does for the writer, for what it communicates to the reader or listener, and how it can move our very being.

Our local poets, however, clearly understand what poetry really is, and what electrifying and stimulating responses it often arouses in each of us. These poets, members of the Peterborough Poetry Project, are a group of writers, thinkers, and observers of life, who open their passionate hearts and share their deepest thoughts every time they pick up a pen and reveal a piece of themselves to us.

‘On and Off the Road’

“On and Off the Road: Poems of New Hampshire” is their first published collection. It is an anthology of works consisting of contemplations about people, places, and the wild – reflective of the New Hampshire ways we express ourselves.

We have a unique view of the world up here in Northern New England, and it is difficult sometimes to explain our distinctive culture and the irreplaceable way we express ourselves. This slim volume does indeed reveal our inimitable voice.

Interestingly, the poets and their poems came from many places other than New Hampshire! Over 160 poems were submitted from locations as close as the Monadnock region and as far away as Florida, Washington, and California. Yet, each reflects that unique New Hampshire spirit that we celebrate, contemplate, and ruminate upon every day here in this glorious state. Clearly, there are people “from away” who understand, admire, and can convey the “genuine us.”

One contributor, Elizabeth Gauffreau, in her poem “New Hampshire Comfort” nicely covered one part of how we think in her last stanza:

When granite stones survive

There will always be someone

To wonder who we were

And how we lived

And whether we were loved.

I like to think we all have these musings as we go about our day, and while Gauffreau and her fellow poets certainly have the discipline to sit down and put these ponderings to paper, the Peterborough Poetry Project would like to see everyone writing, reading, and thinking about poetry as part of everyday life.