

TAKOMA PARK ARTS

All upcoming Takoma Park Arts events at the Takoma Park Community Center have been postponed to help prevent the spread of the coronavirus, but you can watch many of our past events online now at artsevents.takomaparkmd.gov, including concerts, theater performances, poetry readings, film screenings, art exhibitions, and more. Please sign up for our weekly e-newsletter at takomaparkmd.gov/arts for updates about when events will be rescheduled.

Check out the links below to see an engaging lecture, an unusual guitar concert, or a fun children's concert that will get your kids' feet moving! We're all in this together. Stay safe and healthy.

Mr. Jon Children's Music Concert

Mr. Jon performs energetic music for the entire family that is all about fun, dancing, and laughter! He has attracted loyal audiences across the D.C. area, including the kids who laughed and danced their way through this concert. See if your kids want to join in the fun at home! <https://bit.ly/2U0xul4>



A Night of Guitar Music with Yasmin Williams

Have you ever heard a guitar played with a bow, lap tapping, or alternate tunings? Acoustic finger-style guitarist Yasmin Williams captivated a large audience with an engaging concert that expanded the possibilities for guitar music. Takoma Park's own guitar legend John Fahey would be proud. <https://bit.ly/391IBP4>

A LONG OVERDUE STORY



From Slavery to Freedom: A Black Union Soldier's Life Story

In an engaging lecture, Dianne Cross shared the remarkable story of her great-great-grandfather Sgt. Isaac Hall who earned his freedom from slavery fighting in the Union Army during the Civil War. <https://bit.ly/2xaX25V>

Here's Poetry When You Need It!

Editor's Note: While it may be a while before residents can be together in one location to enjoy the arts, rest assured that creativity is alive and well in Takoma Park. In that spirit, I asked Takoma Park Poet Laureate Kathleen O'Toole to offer some words of inspiration as we all enjoy our poetry in place during this National Poetry Month.



Kathleen O'Toole

By Kathleen O'Toole, Takoma Park Poet Laureate

A year ago, my first article as Takoma Park Poet Laureate celebrated the plentitude of poetry in our community, never imagining that a year later my audience would be "self-isolating" in a pandemic. First, we still have a lot to celebrate. Since September 2019, our Third Thursday Poetry audiences have appreciated "Poems of Exile" and the work of current and formerly incarcerated poets of the *Free Minds Book Club*, among our usual crop of talented poets. Stay tuned for the line up of new voices and seasoned poets whose readings we're re-scheduling for this fall.

Now, for this moment ... let me suggest a few ways we can all discover poetry's power to calm and comfort, uplift

and challenge in the poems of others, or by trying our hands at making our own poems.

Online poetry sources

As I scroll through emails and Facebook posts, I've witnessed how many people are already turning to poetry and sharing poems. Here are a few sources, should you want to search for poems, or receive a daily dose of poetry in your Inbox:

- *Poetry Daily* poetrydaily@poems.com
- *Poem-a-Day* Poets.org collection from the American Academy of Poets, now hosting "Shelter In Poems" on a daily basis (#ShelterInPoems)

You may also enjoy downloading poetry podcasts like "The Slowdown" (www.slowdownshow.org) hosted by Tracy K. Smith, which lets you hear the daily poem, with a short reflection on the verse. I also love the *On Being Poetry Project*, now featuring "Poetry for Tumultuous Times" at onbeing.org/starting-points/poetry-for-tumultuous-times.

Try your hand: Dip into Haiku

What a gift it has been for those of us able to step out (carefully spaced) into

spring! For me, writing haiku as I walk captures fleeting moments of wonder that can be a source of joy and balm. A quick definition: A haiku is a short poem that uses images to convey the essence of an experience of nature or the season intuitively linked to the human condition. Don't worry about the old "three lines, 5-7-5 syllables" you learned in grade school! Be brief. Capture the image(s) to express what you feel. A few of my own from this last week:

last night's rain
a robin with a wren splashing
pothole birdbath

lock down day 5
on the star magnolia
first blossoms

cherry blossoms
on the sidewalk...too soon

And you don't need to be outdoors. Use your windows, or notice what's in front of you:

March rain
hyacinth in a vase
scent of spring

Don't want to fuss with specific forms? Accept the invitation of Reginald

Dwayne Betts on *Weekend All Things Considered*. Try twitter-verse in fewer than 140 characters, emphasis (same as with haiku) on noticing! His offering: "I heard the sound of a squirrel's claws as it climbed a tree. And I realized that I had just never heard that before because I'd never been outside in nature without the hum of a car."

Finally, two poems that have come my way in the early days of cloistering:

From "The Peace of Wild Things"

By Wendell Berry
"I come into the peace of wild things who do not tax their lives with forethought of grief. I come into the presence of still water. And I feel above me the day-blind stars waiting with their light. For a time I rest in the grace of the world, and am free."

From "Pandemic"

By Rev. Dr. Lynn Ungar
"Promise this world your love—for better or for worse, in sickness and in health, so long as we all shall live."

You can look up the poems in their entirety at billmoyers.com/story/peace-wild-things and www.uuworld.org/articles/poem-pandemic, respectively.