

## Poetry

By LeRoy Harris

Programming & Technology Services Librarian

One hundred or even one hundred fifty years ago, it was quite common for poems to be published in the newspaper. We have many examples in our archives. April is National Poetry Month, and I know that New Ulm has a rich past and present of poets and poetry. Poetry can be difficult to define. It comes in many shapes and sizes. It can be rhythmic or discordant. Poetry runs the gamut of human emotions. In general, poetry makes a connection between writer and reader or speaker and hearer. This connection can be empathetic, emotional, or logical even. The poet Tomasso Ceva said, "Poetry is a dream dreamed in the presence of reason." Poems make us think. They can also make us laugh, cry, feel anger, or a multitude of other things.

The New Ulm Public Library has over 150 books that are catalogued as poetry. That doesn't count the thousands more that may include poetry as quotations, chapter headings, as part of a story, the means of telling a story, or to make or emphasize a point. We also have a Poetry Group that meets every month on the second Monday of the month in our Fred Johnson room. Come and share favorite poems, recently read poems, or your own work. You can also just listen too. Everyone is welcome, and we hope you'll find a new interest, make a connection with a poem, or make a new friend!

In speaking with many poets and teachers, I am frequently told that the way school classes study poetry often misses the mark. They analyze and dissect poems to look for 'meaning'. To borrow a phrase, it is like killing the goose that lays the golden egg to try to get the gold inside. It is much like language acquisition. Many language courses for adults teach grammar, sentence structure, and repetition, but language immersion – actually being surrounded by and having to use a language – is a more effective way to learn. So it can be said with poetry. The best way to learn and appreciate it is to actually read or listen to it.

There is no place that I can name, close to home or far away. A resting stop on cloudy day, in snow or sun it'd be the same. A pondering spot or worrying way, a dragon's den or adventurous tomb. The mystery of the locked up room, flip worn page where hearts hold sway. A house of learning free to all, where knowledge and ideas grow. Curiosity we plant and sow, for aged brow or child small. Midst smell of books or stacks of shelves, a gathering of friends is found. A story time with children round, a sanctuary to be ourselves.

We hope you'll be adventurous this National Poetry Month! See what the power of words can bring to your life, and if you need a little help, you're always welcome to explore the many wonderful words we have at the library.

The library is located at 17 N. Broadway and is open to the public Monday-Thursday 9:30 a.m.-8 p.m. and Friday-Saturday 9:30 a.m.-5 p.m.