

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

MARCH 11, 2026

FROM: Ballston Spa Committee on the Arts.

WHEN: Starting April 1, 2026 and throughout the month

WHAT: Third Annual “**Random Acts of Poetry**”, a local celebration of National Poetry Month

The Village of Ballston Spa and its’ Committee on the Arts proudly announces the Third Annual “Random Acts of Poetry” series. This village-wide, month-long celebration of National Poetry Month in April boasts many different poetry activities and projects. The ongoing “Acts” will include poetry banners on the street lights throughout the Village and haiku written by Ballston Spa Central School District high school students and local residents on lawn signs in both Wiswall Park and Memorial Park that will create a “Poetry Walk.” There will be a “Dining with Poetry” in some Village restaurants, and many Ballston Spa businesses will be hosting a “Poetry Chalk Walk” written on the sidewalks in front of their shops by local Girl Scout Troops. Also to be found are “Poem in Your Pocket,” buckets where select business will have poetry scrolls available to take. The Ballston Spa Committee on the Arts social media Facebook page will feature “A Daily Dose” of poetry, most of which has been written by local poets.

The “Acts” events start with a book signing at the Ballston Spa Library with authors Rose Marie LaPietra and MacKenzie Akin-Martel on April 7th. A “Poetry Performance Reading” will take place in the historic Brookside Museum’s Long Room, hosted by local poet and Saratoga Springs Poet Laureate, Jay Rogoff, and will feature readings from his own work along with poets Barbara Ungar and Hajar Hussaini on Sunday, April 12th at 7pm. This will be followed by two workshops at the Library on April 18th, the first starting at 10:00am: “A Playful Way into Reading Poetry” and the second starting at 1pm, “Playing With Words: A Poetry Writing Workshop” led by local poets Elaine Handley and Marilyn McCabe. The “Acts” culminates with an Open Mic Night, once again hosted by Steven Guilfoyle, on April 30th at 6:00 at the Back Barn Brewery.

All events are free and open to the public, however space is limited. To reserve a seat for the poetry performance reading on April 12th, please pre-register online through the Brookside Museum website. brooksidemuseum.org/events/upcoming-events/

Here is a summary of “Random Acts of Poetry”

Throughout the month:

Book Display at the Library

Haiku banners on the street lamps

Haiku in the park

Poem-a-day (this is online, on the Arts social media)

Poem in your pocket, Poetry Chalk Walk, and Dine with Poetry - find these at local businesses

Specific dates:

Tuesday, April 7 - Book Signing with **Rose Marie LaPietra** and **MacKenzie Akin-Martel**.

Sunday, April 12, 7pm - Poetry reading, featuring Jay **Rogoff**, Poet Laureate, **Barbara Ungar**, and **Hajar Hussaini**

Saturday, April 18, 10am and 1pm - Poetry workshops (2) led by **Marilyn McCabe** and Elaine **Handley**

- Poking at Poems: A Playful Way into Reading Poetry(10:00 a.m. -11:30 a.m.)
- Playing with Words: A Poetry Writing Workshop (1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.)

Thursday, April 30, 6pm - Poetry Open Mic Night at the Back Barn Brewing Company hosted by **Steven Guilfoyle**.

About the workshops:

Community Poetry Workshops at the Ballston Spa Library:

Poking at Poems: A Playful Way into Reading Poetry April 18th 10:00 a.m. --11:30 a.m.

Poems aren't puzzles—they're experiences. In this workshop, we'll read poems together slowly and aloud, noticing sound, rhythm, and surprise. We'll share responses, follow our curiosities, and practice ways of approaching poems that make reading feel more inviting and less mysterious. Leave with new confidence—and new pleasures—in reading poetry.

Playing with Words: A Poetry Writing Workshop April 18th 1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Want to try writing poetry? Or maybe you already dabble and want to learn more about shaping poems. This workshop offers a welcoming space to explore. We'll play with words together, listening to how sound and meaning work in tandem, and see how small choices can bring a poem to life. Come playful and leave with new tools and fresh lines of your own.

About our Performance Poets:

Jay Rogoff, Poet Laureate of Saratoga Springs and “Random Acts of Poetry” mentor



Jay Rogoff has published seven books of poetry, most recently *Loving in Truth: New and Selected Poems*, from LSU Press. His essay collection, *Becoming Poetry: Poets and Their Methods*, also from LSU, won the Lewis P. Simpson Award for outstanding literary criticism. His work has appeared in many journals, including *AGNI*, *The Georgia Review*, *The Kenyon Review*, *The New Republic*, *Salmagundi*, and *The Southern Review*. As Saratoga Springs Poet Laureate for 2026 and 2027, he has organized area readings and workshops for the Laureate Poetry Series and the Poet Laureate Project.

Barbara Ungar is the author of six books and three chapbooks, most recently *After Naming the Animals* (The Word Works, 2024). Honors include the Snyder Publication Prize, Gival Poetry Prize, and being named to Kirkus Reviews Best Indie Books of 2015 and 2019. She has published poems in *Scientific American*, *Rattle*, *Salmagundi*, and many other journals. Her work has been translated into Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, and Bulgarian. Professor emerita from the College of Saint Rose, she lives in Saratoga Springs.



Hajar Hussaini is a poet and translator. She is the author of *Disbound: Poems* (University of Iowa Press, 2022). She has also translated *Death and His Brother: A Novel* by Khosrow Mani (Syracuse University Press, 2027), which won a 2025 PEN/Heim Translation Fund Grant, and *Wounded Vita Nuda: Poems* by Maral Taheri (Deep Vellum, 2027), which won the 2025 Mo Habib Translation Prize. A graduate of the Iowa Writers' Workshop, she teaches at Skidmore College and lives in Saratoga Springs, NY

