

# Poets ponder connection and frailty, faith and forgiveness

A month or so ago, this column focused on recently published books by two male poets. This week, let's give equal time to the ladies.

Seattle poet Katy E. Ellis already had two chapbooks to her name when her newest effort, "Night Watch," was awarded the 2017 Floating Bridge Press Chapbook Award. Floating Bridge Press, founded nearly a quarter century ago and run by volunteers, supports the work of Washington State poets.

To get the full effect of the poems in "Night Watch," you'll want to read them sequentially, from the front of the book to the back. Ellis

alternates between "Pre-" and "Post-" entries — but for what purpose you will be hard-pressed to fathom if you try, as I did at first, to dip randomly into the pages to sample the poems. To do that is only to be confounded.

It's much better to begin at the beginning, where you'll find an exquisitely crafted paragraph that describes nighttime at a cabin in winter — "a stratification of blankets," and a "star-infested sky."

Turn the page and you'll consider a train ride from several years past, the passengers a motley but generally convivial mix of Deadheads, pious

immigrants, families and runaways. On to the next page and a different train ride, somewhat later.

And sure enough, through these "Pre-" and "Post-" poems, you'll begin arriving — not instantaneously, but gradually — at a new reality that couldn't have been imagined until it happened.

From meteor showers and the moon in the sky above, to the Coast Starlight on the ground — Ellis' poems ponder connection and acknowledge frailty. This little chapbook, filled with tragedy and wonder, is simply first-rate.

Also highly recommended: the debut poetry

collection of a Tacoma octogenarian — we shouldn't have had to wait so long! Glenna Cook's new book, "Thresholds," is a kaleidoscopic review of life within a family.

Mother, sister, husband, son: With each poetic turn, the colored chips of foibles, virtues, habits, mistakes and milestone events reconfigure — making sense in different ways, sparkling or seeming to disappear, then cropping up again to be reconsidered from a fresh perspective.

While the challenges Cook explores through her poetry are uniquely her own, every family has its litany, and any reader should be able to find many points of entry to

of the same stuff.

After a lifetime of stepping in to serve as the caregiver to family members who are coping with mental or physical challenges, Cook gets her own diagnosis of Parkinson's disease. She pushes back in a poem titled "New Friend": "You'll be my incentive / to fill my days / with nourishing pursuits ..."

Uplifting if not always upbeat, these poems resonate with poignancy and faith and forgiveness. While the challenges Cook explores through her poetry are uniquely her own, every family has its litany, and any reader should be able to find many points of entry to

**"Thresholds"**  
By Glenna Cook  
MoonPath Press  
178 pp  
\$15

these poems.

Thanks to Tillamook-based MoonPath Press for seeing to it that this poetry collection got published.

*The Bookmonger is Barbara Lloyd McMichael, who writes this weekly column focusing on the books, authors and publishers of the Pacific Northwest. Contact her at [bkmonger@nwlinc.com](mailto:bkmonger@nwlinc.com).*

## Artist guild showcases Nitzel's paintings

LONG BEACH, WASH. — Northwest Artist Guild will hold its first reception of the year 5:30 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 10. The public is invited to enjoy newly created art at The Picture Attic (711 Pacific Highway North) in Long Beach.

Jean Nitzel, a founding member of the guild will be the featured artist for this occasion. Nitzel works in watercolor, and her paintings show a softer side of local birds and animals. She also paints landscape and seascape subjects. Her art is meant to convey joy in living through watercolor.

The guild will be showing every other month this year; the next show will be in April. In May the group will again sponsor their nonmember art show with monetary prizes to the top winners.

For information on the contest, contact The Picture Attic at [picattic@gmail.com](mailto:picattic@gmail.com) or by phone at 360-642-4770.



A painting of a forest path by Jean Nitzel

PHOTOS COURTESY JEAN NITZEL



A painting of a beagle pup by Jean Nitzel

**LOOKING TO PURCHASE OR REFINANCE A HOME,**  
*we are ready to help you with your mortgage needs*

**Lance Allbritton**  
c:503-801-2400 o:503-338-5200



**MOTTO**  
MORTGAGE  
PROFESSIONALS

## The Illahee Apartments



*Why Live Anywhere Else?*

1046 Grand Avenue  
Astoria, OR 97103

503-325-2280