



POETRY IN THE PARKS

DIGITAL COLLECTION

CREATED BY

Danielle Badra

FAIRFAX COUNTY POET LAUREATE
2022-2024

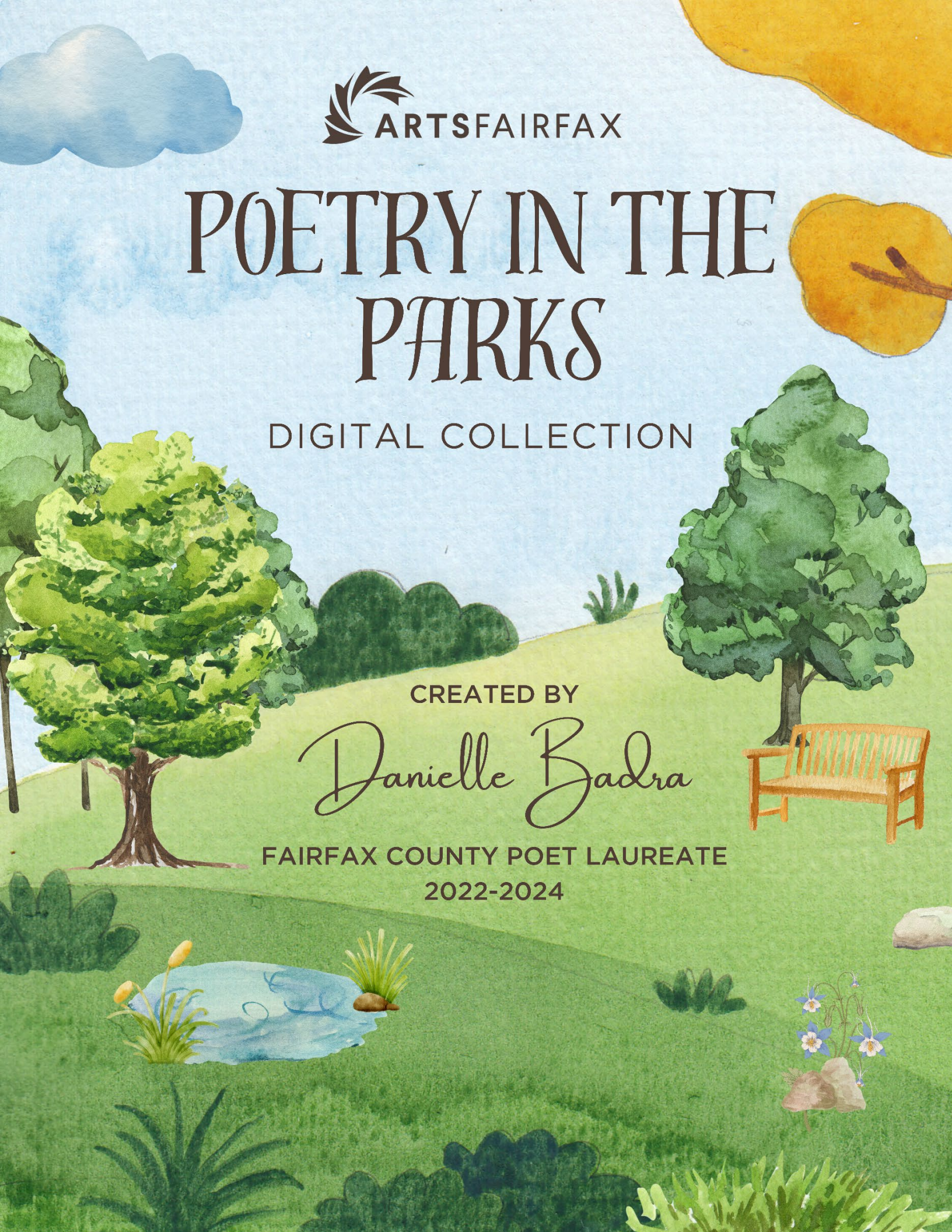


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A Message from Danielle Badra, Fairfax County Poet Laureate 2022-2024

The Poetry in the Parks Program was created by Fairfax County Poet Laureate Danielle Badra, sponsored by ArtsFairfax, and facilitated in collaboration with the Fairfax County Park Authority. The program included several poetry readings and workshops held at Fairfax County Parks from 2022-2024. We intended to bring together nature lovers and poetry lovers at local parks to explore the connections between nature and poetry. There were two Pride Month poetry readings, one at Ellanor C. Lawrence Park and one at Green Spring Gardens. One National Poetry Month poetry reading was held at Green Spring Gardens. We held a ghazal workshop at Ellanor C. Lawrence Park after the Arab American Heritage Month poetry reading. At Huntley Meadows, we held a guided nature tour and poetry workshop to incorporate the sights and sounds of the wetlands into our writing.

The most popular event was Poetry Beneath the Stars, hosted three times at the Turner Farm Park, with volunteer support from the Analemma Society. Poetry Beneath the Stars offered up poems inspired by the cosmos. We asked participants to gaze through telescopes at Saturn, the moon, Venus, star clusters, and more, while considering the ways in which the cosmos flows through us into our poems. We wrote poems by amber reading light surrounded by fireflies and the sounds of late summer crickets.

At each poetry reading and workshop, a call was made for participants to submit their poetry to a Poetry in the Parks Digital Collection. Below you will find poems that are inspired by the Poetry in the Parks workshops as well as the Fairfax County parks. These poems feature an astro-doggie, the moon, a turtle, dying stars, A.I., and Delilah's Bowl. Poems by children, teenagers, adults. A poem for a granddaughter. A poem for the parks. Poems that take on both traditional and experimental forms. These poems inspire me to go outside, find a quiet spot, sit down, and write. I hope that these poems will inspire you to do the same.

If you want to contribute to this collection, visit one of the poetry plaques available at Riverbend Park and Ellanor C. Lawrence Park. Each plaque has a poem and poetry prompts for you to respond to when visiting that park. Help us keep building this digital collection of poems inspired by the parks!

A Message from Stuart Holt, ArtsFairfax President & CEO

This Poetry in the Parks Digital Collection is a celebration of nature, community, and art. Launched in 2022, this series of programming has amplified and celebrated the literary arts in Fairfax County. From Danielle Badra leading poetry workshops, to presenting accomplished poets in poetry readings, Poetry in the Parks truly encouraged Fairfax County's creativity.

Thank you to Fairfax County for designating the position of the Fairfax County Poet Laureate and allowing ArtsFairfax the opportunity to support this role. To our partners at the Fairfax County Park Authority, thank you for sharing our passion for community engagement, and the generosity you have shown in hosting events at Ellanor C. Lawrence Park, Green Spring Gardens, Huntley Meadows Park, Riverbend Park, and Turner Farm Park. Finally, special thanks to our funders, your support made this program possible: National Endowment for the Arts, Virginia Humanities, Virginia Commission for the Arts, and the Dimick Foundation.

To Danielle Badra, Fairfax County Poet Laureate 2022-2024, thank you for the time, passion, and artistry. You have ignited our creativity and engaged the residents of Fairfax County through the art of poetry. ArtsFairfax is honored to continue your legacy through this Poetry in the Parks Digital Collection.

Poetry in the Parks

By Danielle Badra

a park is a history that spans habitats
a pond inside a garden

explore a green gold mine of
inspiration and horticulture

a stream valley
open dawn to dusk

nestled inside
a rain garden

undisturbed and tranquil
these are reasons to visit

a haven
a wonder

a park is home to
wildflower-speckled life

wildlife on a river bend
isolation and beauty

a complete
place

a [redacted] Park is [redacted] a history that spans [redacted] habitats [redacted] a pond. Inside [redacted]

[redacted] a [redacted] garden [redacted]

Explore [redacted]

[redacted] a [redacted]

Green [redacted] gold mine of [redacted] inspiration [redacted] and [redacted] horticulture [redacted] a [redacted] stream valley

[redacted] open dawn to dusk.

[redacted] nestled inside [redacted] a rain garden [redacted]

Undisturbed [redacted] and [redacted] tranquil [redacted]. These are reasons to visit [redacted] a [redacted] haven [redacted] a [redacted] wonder [redacted]

[redacted] a [redacted] Park [redacted] is home to [redacted] wildflower-speckled [redacted] life. [redacted] wildlife [redacted]

[redacted] on a [redacted] River bend [redacted] isolation and beauty [redacted]

[redacted] a [redacted] complete [redacted] Place [redacted]

Astro-doggie

By Cecilia Patrick

My doggie tried to bounce on the sun.
He thought it would be very fun.
Turns out he sizzled up
and there ain't too much left of that poor pup.

When he tried to bounce on Mercury
Out he flew in a hurry.
Venus was too much like summer.
It was too hot. What a bummer.

Bouncing on Earth was like a puddle.
My doggie got much too confuddled.
Off to Mars he had to go
But where that was he did not know.

Bounding on Mars, he accidentally crushed
the Curiosity Rover, smush, smush, smush.
Catching the Comet Bus,
he went through the asteroid belt in a rush.

Bouncing on Jupiter he went through
the gas, holding his breath 'til he was blue
He wanted to visit Jupiter's moons,
but he also wanted to hear Saturn's tunes.
And off he went, bouncing on its rings,

pausing only to with it sing,
the tune of delicious doggie treats,
warm doggie beds, cheese, and meat.

On Uranus and Neptune, he almost froze.
This was no place for a doggie doze,
for he was tired from bouncing all day.
And he thought of his bed far, far away.

So the Big Dipper picked him up.
Virgo bent down and kissed the lil pup
and placed him in his cozy bed.
“Good Night, Sweet Dreams, sleep well,” she said.

Laughing with the Stars

By Suzanne Patrick

Stars staring down at me
Twinkling
I hope they're laughing
Because I am
There's the big dipper, my husband says
And that's the little dipper.
There's the medium dipper,
And that's the chip and dipper.
Ceci has told us a thousand times.
Their names and why they are important.
But to us they are simply bright and beautiful
Like our children.

At Last

By Suzanne Patrick

Peace

Quiet

Stillness

Stars

The World beneath my feet

God's arms around me

I am complete.

be to all

the Soul

inside and out

above

and above

Wonderful

Stopping by the Moons on a meteor shower night

By Grant Gibbons

Whose moons are these, I think I know
Her home is on the Planet though

My stopping here is clearly out of her sight
As I observe her moons get pelted by meteorites

My starship's A.I. must think it odd
To stop without a re-fueling pod

From Ursa Major to the far side of Lynx
They are the only moons getting hit like from a firing squad

I turn to the A.I. warning light as it Blinks
To confirm us being here is not flawed

The only other sight is just to the West
The Planet of the moons, as we drift abroad

The moons stand defiantly, even as they are distressed
But I'm behind schedule, and haven't progressed

And light years to go, before I rest
And light years to go, before I rest

Note from the Author:

My mother read to me Robert Frost's "Stopping by the woods on a snowy evening" every night when I was a child. It was the first (and only) poem that I ever memorized. My poem was inspired by the prompts from "Fairfax Poet Laureate: Poetry Beneath the Stars at Turner Farm Park Observatory", as I took Robert Frost's poem, line structure, and rhyming scheme; and move it of our planet and into the stars.

You Are a Star

By Kasey Hatch

a star never knows
the impact they have,
how many worlds they burned up,
or frozen planets they thawed
and brought to life,
how much their gravity kept
others close,
or whose hearts they touched
with their tender rays,
visible on eternity after they
have passed on,
or what a massive void they
create in the universe
when they die

Box Turtle in Summertime

By Aziza Bayou

I spotted her immediately:

a child's delight as she crossed the paved path.

Her orange eyes, streaked neck,

perfectly patterned carapace.

All 12 segments hard and bright.

Each ridge a year, each scute a moon.

A half-chewed slug dangling from her toothless beak.

Her shell could fit in the palm of my hand, but

I'm grown, and would no longer subject her to that.

We are both more vulnerable lately.

Head aloft, hind claws pushing off the blacktop. Directly toward the thick shine

of a poison ivy patch. Quickly engulfed in tangled green.

Our homes are near one another.

Neither of us far from where we were born.

We might live the same duration, in the same wilderness.

Ensconced in our boxes, both.

In fall she will search the leaf litter for what remains.

Needn't busy herself with harvests, packing, and storing.

She will simply slow.

When in winter the air dries and light diminishes, she will become dormant.

I may wish to be.

In spring, if in abundance, somehow she and a male will find one another.

She will lay her clutch of eggs, in a secret place where they cannot be smelled or seen.

This is where she and I depart.

I leave to rejoin my family, to talk of this turtle and nuzzle my children's warm scalps.

I want to see her, but would never enter the poison ivy patch.

Later, when I looked for her again, I saw a steady rustle in the tall grass.

Note from the Author:

The main lines are the thoughts, and the indented lines are the feelings, thoughts arise from the overwhelming feeling/sense of kinship I have with this turtle.

Shared

By Starpoppa Dan

We chased the “Messiers” across the night
Savoring their feathery elusiveness
Not to check some arbitrary box
Choosing instead to fill our cups

Dissing the learned-old-men’s labels
We found new names for our times
Not unlike done by Greek Astronomers of old
“Ptolemy’s Cluster” became “Delilah’s Bowl”

A thousand tribes have named the stars
And the stars paid no heed to their hubris
Creatures from Vega’s system care not
What silly light-shifted humans call them

We watched the Milky Way scale the sky
As it has for billions of years
And will for billions more
But tonight, we share the sky - our sky

God of Flies

By Allister Nelson

And the fly, too, is beauty.
God loves all things great,
but moreso, the
small.

Thousands of beetle gems,
the soft breath of dragonfly
wings upon silky river, spiders
milking for their young, the jump
of katydid, and the small

Tenacity

of roach.

E.O. Wilson found G-d
in ants.

And maybe I

find happiness

in flies.



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