

# AUGUST 2017 Newsletter



## FROM THE PRESIDENT

by Kathleen Thomas



I recently completed my first workshoping week at the Napa Valley Writers Conference. I learned so much about the process, about my work, and was introduced to a wide array of literary experts and authors who sit down at the keyboard just like I do. It was an exciting, joyful, and mind-blowing experience.

I enjoyed spending some time with fellow NVWers who were here and there at the conference, or at the public readings and lectures. And...I met a few locals who didn't yet know about NVW. I think we may see a couple of new faces soon at our get-togethers.

I wanted to share just a few morsels I picked up at the conference:

"In your writing, explore the emotional mystery, not always the informational mystery."  
Jane Hirshfield tip.

"Beauty always takes place in the particular."  
Elaine Scarry quote used in lecture presentation.

From Peter Ho Davies, my workshop leader:

In thinking about your story's title, is it set in stone? Would it be better changed as you're revising your work? Is it a spoiler?

- 1) The original title of *War and Peace* was *All's Well That Ends Well*.
- 2) The working title for *Lady Chatterley's Lover* was *John Thomas and Lady Jane*. (John Thomas and Lady Jane are old British slang for male and female genitalia.)
- 3) *Of Mice and Men* was originally titled *Something Happened*.

And...my favorite: revision is not just a process - it's a skill.

In closing, I'd like to talk about how we each view our work, both when we're alone and as we discuss this thing called writing with our colleagues. A friend and I were recently discussing how often artists denigrate their work and themselves. Not just in their self-talk, but to others. This came up after one of the conference faculty did the same thing, related to her own work. My friend and I talked about just how sad it is that we do this, and how much we want to not do it anymore. I know I've been guilty too many times of this self-sabotage.

When I honor my work and myself, very little gets in my way. Whatever your goal is, whatever dream you have, keep after it. If you run into your own version of writer's block, work through it, put your pen to paper...and write. Or wait just a little bit until the muse strikes again. I'm pretty sure it will.

## NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, August 9  
7 - 9 p.m.

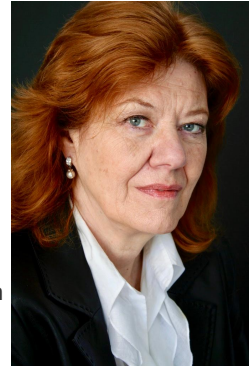
ANNE PERRY

In conversation  
with Victoria Zackheim

Anne Perry, international bestselling author of over fifty novels, which have sold over 25 million copies, will appear in Napa on Wednesday, August 9. The public is invited to meet and listen to Perry, along with author Victoria Zachheim, as they present a talk on how best to give your written words strength, thereby avoiding many of the pitfalls of writer's block and numerous re-writes.

The Times selected Perry as one of the 20th Century's "100 Masters of Crime". In 2015 she was awarded the Premio de Honor Aragón Negro. Her first series of Victorian crime novels, featuring Thomas and Charlotte Pitt, began with *The Cater Street Hangman*. The latest of these, *The Angel Court Affair*, is her most recent of many appearances on the New York Times bestseller list.

Read more about Anne here: [Anne Perry](#)

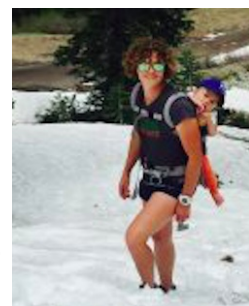


Victoria Zackheim, who appeared at Napa Valley Writers twice in 2015, is the author of the novel, *The Bone Weaver*, and editor of six anthologies, including *He Said What? Women Write About Moments When Everything Changed* and *FAITH: Essays from Believers, Agnostics, and Atheists*. Read more about Victoria here: [Victoria Zackheim](#)

Larisa Stephenson will be August's NVW Member Reader.

Larisa will read an excerpt from a memoir in progress, *Hi, I'm the Other Mother*. She writes monthly in her blog: [The Wild Mother Blog](#).

NVW meets monthly, the 2nd Wednesday of each month at Napa Valley Unitarian Universalists Church, 1625 Salvador Avenue in Napa. For more information, please see [Napa Valley Writers](#) or email [Sarita Lopez](#).



it's music that feeds my soul and lends me the inspiration to get to the business of writing. A few tunes that speak to me linger in my heart year after year. Up one track and down another.



Hold on Tight - Electric Light Orchestra

Cost at the door: \$8 for guests, \$5 for CWC members. Students with ID, free. Refreshments, networking, books published by local authors and NVW's *First Press: Collected Works by Napa Valley Writers 2017* are all available.

For more information about this upcoming meeting, or any other questions, please contact Publicity Chair [Sarita Lopez](#) or see [Napa Valley Writers](#). NVW events are open to the public.

*NVW fosters professionalism in writing, promotes networking of writers within the Napa Valley writing community, mentors new writers, and provides literary support for writers and the writing community through education, networking, and leadership.*

## Coming Soon to Napa Valley Writers

**SEPTEMBER 13**  
**Kevin Fisher-Paulson**

Kevin believes writing is a search for meaning. He will address the forms writing represent and the different means of exploring experience.

He will discuss the craft of writing from the perspective of purpose and structure. Specifically Kevin talks about the process of writing a weekly column for a major newspaper. The writer must learn how to open his soul without telling every secret, how to establish a rhythm and a voice. The writer must learn to tell the truth, but let the world act as fact check.



The writing process begins with a commitment to the creative self. As Kevin explains, everyone has an autobiography but not everyone has a memoir.

You may remember Kevin's presentation to NVW about his experience with hybrid publishing when he published his first book, *A Song for Lost Angels*. We're excited to have him return to Napa!

Learn more about Kevin here: <http://www.sfchronicle.com/author/kevin-fisher-paulson/>

## Did you renew your CWC Napa Valley Writers membership yet?

If you have questions, please contact our Membership Chair, Roberta Wright.

If you're not yet a dues-paying voting member of Napa Valley Writers, this is the perfect time to join.



## LAST MEETING

Melissa Cistaro reminded her audience that telling stories helps us to understand. She wrote her memoir for twelve years before deciding to publish her work to share the story and not keep it in a drawer.

Her memoir started out as fiction, she wasn't ready then to tell her story. She noted that at times, it can take a long time to be able to claim your own space.



Melissa spoke about structuring the book, and the writing, by going back to address the grief and the hurt. What kept her going was the quote she kept wherever she would see it: "Nobody cares if you write or not." It was her choice to keep going.

In closing, she shared with the group that she's never read the reviews posted about *Pieces of My Mother*.

*submitted by Kathy Thomas*

## COMING SOON

Based on the success of her talk in July, we've invited Melissa to return in a workshop!

**WORKSHOP COMING SOON!!**

## MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

### FIVE THINGS ABOUT ME

#### Kymberlie Ingalls

1 - My movie heroes are King Kong, Norman Bates, Jaws and Lorelei Lee. Ask me why sometime.

2 - I was a DJ for a time at a rock station under the name "Midnight Rider"

3 - I was the first kid in school to spell supercalifragilisticexpialidocious correctly by sounding it out - 4th grade

4 - I have a pet sock monkey named Chinga who accompanies us on all of our road trips and is a social media rock star.

5 - The final scene of *American Graffiti* was filmed 5 days before my first birthday at the airport just two blocks away from where we lived. The movie



## The Story You Have to Tell: A Writing Workshop Facilitated by Melissa Cistaro

8:30 am: Networking and sign-in  
Workshop time: 9 am - noon  
Saturday, September 16  
Synergy Medical Fitness Center  
3421 Villa Lane in Napa.

How do we find the courage to craft our narrative truths?

Sometimes we embed those truths into our fictional stories, poems, and essays. Whether you write fiction or nonfiction, mining the emotional landscape of a story gives it power.

Through writing exercises, reading, and discussion, we will explore how we can be more effective storytellers. We will look at examples from writers like Dani Shapiro, Darrin Strauss, and Tim O'Brien.

Come prepared with a brief paragraph about the story you need to tell.

Melissa is the author of the memoir *PIECES OF MY MOTHER* (winner of the 'Best Nonfiction Book of 2015' selected by The Northern California Independent Booksellers Association).



We encourage pre-payment to hold your spot. For more information, or to register with pre-payment, please contact workshop coordinator, Doug Brozell at [Doug Brozell](#).

Workshop registration fee is \$25 for members of Napa Valley Writers and \$45 for non-members.

More information: [Napa Valley Writers Events](#)

## Caption Me! In Six Words

### July Submissions

Decades pass, still her flower blooms.  
-Bernhold Rankenburg

Baby's first taste of Mother Nature.  
-Lance Burris

Who put Baby in the flowerpot?  
-Molly Detwiler

Cross wailing toddler fears antique prams.

The old man's first nature lesson.  
-Dina Corcoran



-Nancy Welty

### August Challenge:



Do you have a six-word story for this photograph? Have fun! Be creative!

Send your submission to [Cheryl Velasquez](#)

## BOOK EXCERPT OF THE MONTH

### TIGHTROPE

By Steve Villano

Cuomo knew, from personal experience, of the damage also done by stigma and negative stereotyping, fighting the ugly lies of "mob connections" for years. "My whole life has been a statement against that crap," he argued passionately when a *Newsday* editorial questioned why he refused to deliver a JFK-style "Houston Ministers" speech to squash the rumors.

Donald Trump's life expressed exactly the opposite statement. His "incestuous intertwining with organized crime," with mobsters like John Cody and "Fat Tony" Salerno had been documented for decades, according to Barrett in *Trump: The Deals and the Downfall*.

Trump took his counsel from shrivel-souled sycophants of the mob like Roy Cohn, and, for years, did business with the New York and Philadelphia crime families. Writing in *Politico*, (May 22, 2016) author David Cay Johnston put it bluntly: "No other candidate for the White House...has anything close to Trump's record of repeated, explicit and

## NEW MEMBER

### SPOTLIGHT OF THE MONTH

Larisa Stephenson

1. I am a MUT runner, i.e., a Mountain Ultra Trail runner...in my free time.
2. My wife and I have a one year-old son and a 10-year old dog.
3. I love coffee and tea, but my favorite is coffee, and I can (and will!) drink it at all hours of the day.
4. I came very close to overfilling the bathtub for a much-needed relaxing bubble bath while typing up this email.
5. I am planning on sneaking a beehive and a tortoise at some point into our backyard without my wife finding out. I am banking on her lack of finding missing objects, and the fact that she is actually red-green color-blind, to help me pull off this feat.

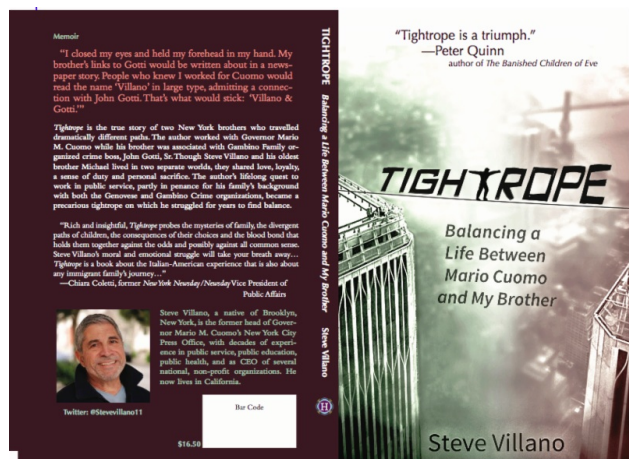


anything close to Trump's record of repeated social and business dealings with mobsters, swindlers, and crooks."

Trump was a punk among punks: an amoral actor doing business with amoral peers. No souls, no hearts, no nothing-the complete antithesis of Mario Cuomo. As John Cody's son observed, my brother's friends had zero respect for Trump. They knew they could squeeze him for as much as they wanted, since all that mattered to Trump was money. That's a language organized crime understood.

Conversely, although they knew he opposed everything they represented, even the mob guys could see that Cuomo-the anti-thug pointed the way toward a better life for their children, and, in their gruff way, they admired him for it.

You can find Tighrope locally at Napa Bookmine and online at [Amazon-Villano "Tighrope"](#).



## Member Prose Contribution

### COWBOY

The class of '54 continues to fade away. Now the cowboy has been thrown. He's bit the dust.

In high school, he charmed me with his twinkly eyes and a shy, lopsided grin that came at you from under the brim of his black cowboy hat. The western boots finished the picture. I always called him "Cowboy."

At reunions he used to tell me that he liked my nickname, it made him feel special.

After graduation he moved to Texas where he wrangled the big rigs. His grandson, a fellow truck driver, riding the interstate ahead of him that day, watched the accident unfold in his rearview mirror. A family of four. . . not Cowboy's fault, but guilt haunted him the rest of his life.

The impact broke my friend's body, leaving him with a permanent limp, as if he'd been thrown from a horse. One recent day, unsteady, he fell and broke his skull.

Those of us who used to have good teen-age times with him are on a deathwatch now, our eyes cloud with tears, our voices are hushed as we commune with each other on the phone. We never thought of outcomes like this when we were young; we believed our futures held only love, success, and happy times.

Ah, Cowboy. Pick yourself up, dust yourself off, and ride into that sunset with your eyes atwinkle and your grin firmly back in place. We know you are a good man.

submitted by *Dina Corcoran*

If you'd like an excerpt from YOUR book featured in this newsletter, please send your request with a short Word or text excerpt and a jpg of your book cover to [Sarita Lopez](#).

If you would like your 250 words or less prose published in this newsletter, please send to [Cheryl Velasquez](#)

## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

### Napa Farmer's Market

### SATURDAY, AUGUST 19



Napa Valley Writers booth is open at the Napa Market each 3rd Saturday of the month until the season ends in October. All

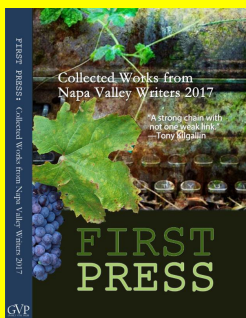
NVW members with published books are welcome to provide their books for the booth. A wide range of genre and authors is welcome, along with new

volunteers (around 4-5 a month) to be at the booth.

To sell your books and participate, please email [Sarita Lopez](#). The booth is no cost to club members; just donate your time." See you there....

## MEMBER NEWS

### Napa Copperfield's presents First Press



#### AUTHOR EVENT

MEET AND GREET  
Saturday, August 26  
11 am - 3 pm

Napa Copperfield's will provide an opportunity for *First Press* authors to meet and chat with store shoppers, perhaps autograph purchased

books. Readings are not part of the day.

Copperfield's will provide a small table for 1-2 authors or a larger table for up to 4 people. A maximum of 16 authors can participate at this initial event.

If you want to be part of this first effort, please contact [Kathy Thomas](#) today.

## 2nd Annual Lucky Shorts 2017

### Short Story Festival

August 13, 2017

Membership in CWC and Napa Valley Writers is divided generally into three categories. There is a strong emphasis in CWC/NVW on assisting members to move their work along, to submit to journals, to publish their work so the world can see how great it is! Just as important, to support all our members in their individual writing goals.



Our membership committee is currently reviewing member status. Some of you may be contacted about your status. Thank you for your patience as we move through the list. Please see [CWC Membership](#) to get a better understanding of the membership categories.

Here are the highlights:

Active membership is accorded those writers whose work is in print and meets some minimum criteria. There are no limits to the number of active members in any branch.

Writers who are not yet published but can show work in progress may be given associate membership. In any branch, the number of associate members must not exceed active.

Supporting membership is for people who are interested in the writing craft but either do not meet the minimum qualifications or must wait for an opening in the associate ranks.

Please contact our membership chair, [Roberta Wright](#), if you have questions about your status.

**Napa Valley Writers was recognized** for its donation of scholarship for local writers during the NVW Conference Donors Reception. Kudos to NVW! In the coming year, NVW expects to receive a \$250 matching grant from California Writers Club to augment a portion of our own NVW scholarship budget.

The NVW Board of Trustees has scheduled a retreat for the end of August. Please, please, please tell us what you'd like to see YOUR CLUB doing in the next year or so. Favorite perks? Best thing you like about NVW? Favorite events? What new activities would you like to see? What can we do better? What don't you like at all? Contact any of the Board members and let them know: Kathy Thomas, Edgar Calvelo, Roberta Wright, Lenore Hirsch, Michael Wycombe, Madeline Rogers, and Cheryl Velasquez.

Lucky Penny Productions is proud to present its second annual "Lucky Shorts" short story festival featuring local authors, many of whom you already know. LPP judges reviewed dozens of short stories submitted by local authors from Napa, Sonoma, and Solano Counties.

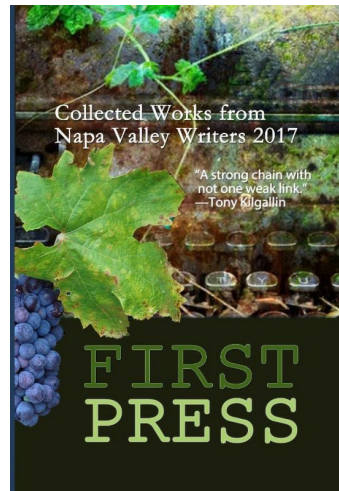
Nine stories were selected to be performed by Lucky Penny actors at the Community Arts Center. This year's selected authors and stories are:

- Patsy Ann Taylor, Napa, "West Hope" \*\*
- Charlotte Stark, Napa, "Refuge" \*\*
- Ann Cash, Napa, "The Haunting of Kitty O'Casey"
- Jennifer Sullivan, Pope Valley, "Shadow of a Doubt" \*\*
- Monroe Katz, Napa, "Hitchhiking"
- Jerry Levitin, Napa, "I Didn't Think That Killing Oneself Would be So Difficult"
- Nathaniel Robert Winters, St. Helena, "Fishing for a Legend" \*\*
- Sue Kessler, Napa, "Baby Pictures" \*\*
- Kira Catanzaro, Sonoma, "Tiramisu"



All seats for "Lucky Shorts 2017" are \$15 with children under 16 admitted free. Tickets are available online - follow this link - or call 707-266-6305.

Congratulations to all the winners and especially those \*\* Napa Valley Writers!



Congratulation and thank you to new Board Member, Madeline Rogers, for helping us create excitement in the valley for this beautiful anthology of members' work.

Both Copperfield's in the valley now have *First Press* on their shelves.

Many members and authors are adding the amazon *First Press* link, with this book cover jpeg to their own individual emails, to further spread the word. Try it!

All First Press authors should have been contacted to complete a survey of their experience in the publication process. Did you get yours? We take this survey very seriously in planning for our next big project.

Thank you!

**First Press**  
Available now at Napa Bookmine  
at [First Press - Amazon](#)  
and at Copperfield's Books, Napa



One of your newest Board members, Cheryl Velasquez, is taking the reins as Newsletter Editor. Cheryl has a great deal of experience creating and editing newsletters, is excited to take on our monthly publication, and has already implented a new feature: Caption Me.

So please, when you see Cheryl, welcome and thank her! From this day forward, when you have questions, information, news, kudos, or anything relevant to the newsletter, reach out to her at Cheryl Velasquez.



Kudos to the planners, coordinators, interns, volunteers, caterers, faculty, workshopppers, and everyone involved in this year's Napa Valley Writers Conference.

The week seemed to go off without a hitch. When the power in the valley went out during Peter Ho Davies reading at Robert Mondavi, Peter carried on like the champion he is! Nobody moved, each eye and ear bent to Peter.

everyone!

**Kymerlie Ingalls** has released her third collection of personal essays, *43*. Themes include depression, loss, navigating midlife and self-prophecy. Available at [WriterOfTheStorm.com](http://WriterOfTheStorm.com) and [RainfallPress.com](http://RainfallPress.com)



**FROM THE COVER:** "Like the fool, I began this life feeling strangely empty and profoundly sad as if I'd already lost something. I have no prediction to how it will end, but do believe my truth will be found when I get there. I am a hoarder of moments, of words and photos and status updates. I'm not sure if I'm letting go so that I can move forward or so that I can finally be at rest. Death has taken hold and isn't letting go - 12 people in 12 months was only the beginning. I'm tired of the fight, of the grieving and the recovery that never has a chance to happen. I'm ready for it to be over. My life was set to expire at 43 years of age. My Intuition said so, and she's never wrong. Interpretation is everything."



...Our thanks to the leadership & members of [Arts Council Napa Valley](#), [Arts Associaton Napa Valley](#), and [Napa Valley Writers Conference](#) for your continued collaboration in our arts partnerships. Thank you to everyone at [Napa Bookmine](#) for their support of our writers and readers in the Valley. Our thanks to the [Boys and Girls Club of Napa Valley](#) for their monthly donation of NVW Board meeting space.



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS**  
OF NAPA VALLEY

## WHAT MOTIVATES YOU?



One early morning, on my way to work a song came across the speakers of my car. I hadn't heard this song since my high school days. The song, "The Night Chicago Died" tells a story about a cop who is shot in the line of duty and believed to be dead. As the song played on, I felt tears stream down my cheeks. The song had moved me—but I was baffled as to the sudden emotion. I wiped away my tears and wondered what would cause this emotion. More than that, I became keenly aware of my feelings and quickly wrote down a description of the loss I had felt. Out of that moment, I wrote this:

*I pulled Vera's scarf from my coat pocket and crumpled it to my face. A hint of jasmine lingered on the fabric. The scent widened the empty hole in my heart and forbade me to forget. I wanted to be angry at someone; but who? Vera? That didn't seem right. At Krous for his role in this mess? Or Billy and his brothers? No, I blamed the whole damn world for being so screwed up--for being upside down--for leaving me to balance between right and wrong.*

*As I climbed the steps to my apartment, the black and white cat who had followed me home from the Algonquin, last week, curled around my ankles. I kicked him down the steps and told him to go find some other sucker to love. My woes weren't his fault but somehow yelling at that helpless creature eased a monumental rage building in my veins. Five minutes later, I broke down crying.*

*My tears stopped somewhere in the middle of the night, but the growing ache in my heart nearly immobilized me. Every laden breath burned against the loss of my dearest friend. I called off work for the following day and the day after that. It was the first time I'd ever missed a shift. By the third day I needed to get out. The walls were closing in on me. And I had come to realize that nothing would bring Vera back--nothing but the sweet taste of revenge. It was time to implement my plan.*

- Except from

*The Last Curtain* by Catherine Dolcezza

What motivates you to write a sentence? A story? A book? Feel free to send a motivational moment to us and we'll share it here. Send your submission to [Cheryl Velasquez](#)

## NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS

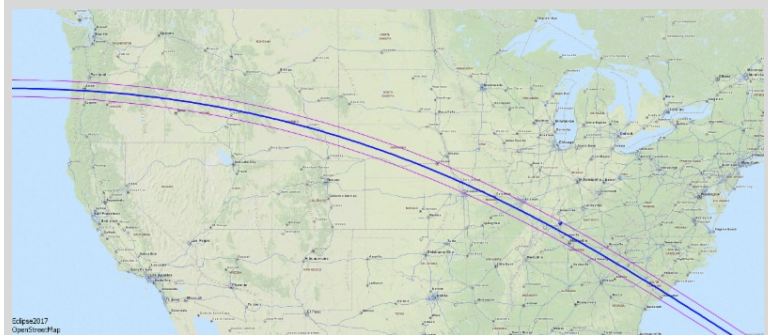
We are eager to receive your newsletter submissions. Please keep poetry to 24 lines or less. Other articles of interest, including short prose, should be approximately 250 words or less.

Send us your photos, current events, news of interest to writers, new

publications, conferences, etc., no later than the 15th of each month to be included in the next month's newsletter.

Thank you.

[Cheryl Velasquez](#)  
Newsletter Editor



Join Our  
Mailing List



## POETRY CORNER

No poems were submitted by our readers for this month's newsletter. We're hope you'll enjoy this poem recently shared at the Napa Valley Writers Conference.

### The Decision

Jane Hirshfield

**NAPA VALLEY WRITERS**  
A Branch of the California Writers Club

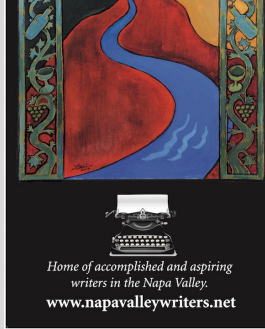


### LINKS

[Contact Us](#)

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[NVW Website](#)



There is a moment before a shape  
 hardens, a color sets.  
 Before the fixative or heat of kiln.  
 The letter might still be taken  
 from the mailbox.  
 The hand held back by the elbow,  
 the word kept between the larynx pulse  
 and the amplifying drum-skin of the room's air.  
 The thorax of an ant is not as narrow.  
 The green coat on old copper weighs more.  
 Yet something slips through it -  
 looks around,  
 sets out in the new direction, for other lands.  
 Not into exile, not into hope. Simply Changed.  
 As a sandy track-rut changes when called a Silk Road:  
 it cannot be after turned back from.

## INVITE THE MUSE IS TAKING A SUMMER BREAK.

Watch for our new Start-up Dates...