

# POETRY OF HOPE AND HEALING

February 25, 2021

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Organized by:  
Frank Meyskens MD & Johanna Shapiro PhD

**4<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM**  
**POETRY OF HOPE AND HEALING**  
February 25, 2021 | 6 – 8 pm (Zoom Webinar)

6:00 – 6:08 pm	<b>Welcome &amp; Opening Poems</b> “My Healing Anodyne” “The Newspeak Mask”	Frank Meyskens
6:08 – 6:10 pm	<b>Introduction of Keynote Speaker</b>	Johanna Shapiro
6:10 – 6:30 pm	<b>Keynote Presentation and Poems</b> “This is How Grief Goes” “Piecing the Breakage”	Thelma Reyna
6:30 – 6:40 pm	<b>Responses</b>	Jayne Lewis
6:40 – 7:05 pm	<b>Community Voices</b> “‘Sankofa’, said the Wind” “No Longer Empty” “Lilly, John, and Lucy” “Covid 19” “Accident on PCH”	Jamielle Rankine-Kirlew Marcus Medford Johanna Shapiro
7:05 – 7:15 pm	<b>Responses</b>	Jayne Lewis
7:15 – 7:17 pm	<b>Introduction of Speaker</b>	Frank Meyskens
7:17 – 7:45 pm	<b>Clinical Perspectives</b> “Can You See Me” “Plant Seeds of Love” “I Rise” “We do not need tear gas, Mr. President” “Fourth of July 2018” “Celestial Embrace”	Candice Taylor Lucas Gabriella Miotto Frank Meyskens
7:45 – 7:57 pm	<b>Responses</b>	Jayne Lewis
7:57 – 8:00 pm	<b>Closing Remarks</b>	Frank Meyskens

## **My Healing Anodyne**

Healing is an ancient art  
long practiced around the fireside  
in times of disease and damage,  
from whatever the cause therein.

And we moderns find a way  
to enlightenment as science unveils  
secrets that underlie causality,  
leading to drugs and other potions.

As the healer in the white coat  
builds trust that enables me  
to be probed and prodded,  
my corporeal being aching.

But when the moment became dire  
your hands covered mine and  
I feel you once again, my loving anodyne.  
Hope restored and healing begins again

Frank L. Meyskens, Jr.  
December 30, 2020

## **The Newspeak Mask**

Now your mask protects me  
From death transmitted in the air.  
Eyes playing hide-and-seek  
with emotions.  
Tonal melodies communicating  
the mood of the moment.

No touching in this new world.  
Hugs condemned to virtuality.  
We become muggers of empathy,  
obliterating kindness and compassion.

Now my mask shields me  
from digital algorithms on the hunt  
searching for identities to condemn  
each one of us as we enter

an Orwellian tomorrow.

Frank L. Meyskens, Jr.  
December 30, 2020

## THIS IS HOW GRIEF GOES

*“When we are grieving, people may wonder about us,  
and we may wonder about ourselves.”*

--Elisabeth Kubler-Ross\*

When loss is swift, when it strikes like a viper in a pot,  
blunting hopes and well-laid plans, the hole  
that swallows us is bottomless and fierce.

Emptiness unspools like mummy’s tape, endless, frayed, muffling,  
gagging, dooming lips and eyes to tombs devoid of words and light,  
stripped of loving hands,  
caverns of ululations.

Loss flattens us.  
But this is how grief goes.  
This is how we sink, to rise,  
how brokenness is patched together again,  
how despair ultimately defies death.

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\*Quotation from book by Kubler-Ross and David Kessler, *On Grief and Grieving: Finding the Meaning of Grief Through the Five Stages of Loss*. Poem originally appeared in a prior version in the author’s book, *Reading Tea Leaves After Trump* (2020: Golden Foothills Press).

- Thelma T. Reyna

## PIECING THE BREAKAGE

There comes the day when we resign  
ourselves—as Hindi brides stepping into  
the pyre—to the impermeable.

The cudgel of loss has struck, and it  
will not unswing itself.

We grind teeth, gird tired loins,  
and plod on—blind, limping, bleeding,  
broken, or miraculously soothed—  
into the new *what is*.

Piecing the breakage together again  
may take priests, imams, wizards,  
shamans, or crystal ball gazers...  
elders, lovers, books, pilgrimages...  
or whatever trods the journey of loss  
with us.

But the journey has been walked.

*All roads face forward from here.*

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\*Originally appeared in a prior version as “Acceptance” in  
the author’s book, *Reading Tea Leaves After Trump*.

- Thelma T. Reyna

## **“Sankofa”, said the Wind**

By Jamielle

I found myself staring at the wind, captivated by the way she moves.

Dancing back and forth sharing stories as she grooves.

I began to listen closely; the story was clear as day.

“The journey will be rewarding”, she said... but you must look back the way you came.

I thought to myself, why look backwards as my feet proceeds north.

Will I not fall or get confused not remembering why I was moving forth?

The wind kindly answered, as she gently brushed against my skin.

In order for you to grow you must be willing to look from within.

You must revisit your past, but there you should not dwell.

For your past is filled with history so rich that you must tell.

To truly appreciate where you are going, you must first acknowledge where you have been.

There are lessons in your mistakes valuable to making you win.

So, dance wind dance! My zest trembled the leaves.

If I do the same no more will my joy be stolen by life’s thieves.

That’s doubt, fear, self-loathing and my regretful thoughts.

The price for life to be purposeful is free of cost.

She told me the journey will not be easy, but it is filled with many rewards.

Your choices will be made clearly, and you will know exactly what you’re moving towards.

I thought to myself once again, this must be why the wind likes to prance.

**Sankofa.** Looking back, moving forward, gives our lives a better chance.

## **“No Longer Empty”**

By Jamielle

The tears I cried no longer flow from my eyes for I am no longer empty.

I used them all and have washed away my sorrows.

Buried seeds that grew into thick skin.

Clothed myself in zeal, for in this life I was destined to win.

I knew this day would come, although I ran from it as the moon does the sun.

Chasing a happy ending but, carrying my cross?

There was none.

Or at least that was the script once written.

Twice shy, once bitten.

Learning from my mistakes. Loving myself no matter what it takes.

See the devil is liar.

Sitting low as he bounds but, the Creator sits higher.

With plans to prosper and give me hope.

Direction and purpose, you can't find in a horoscope.

We all have wounds to heal but, fear the scars they leave behind.

A tornado of whether to forgive or forget intertwined.

Too bad in life you can't just press rewind...

One foot in front of the other, and then repeat.

Perspective is the only deference between victory and defeat.

And with that said

I choose to feed only the constructive thoughts that take root in my head.

No longer empty.

From me adversities and self-destruction fled.

No longer empty.

To the Holy Spirit I am now wed.

I am... no longer empty.



## **Lily, John and Lucy:**

*John:*

A man must be gentle and strong  
To raise a daughter.  
I will do so so long  
As I am your father.  
I want to help you grow  
But what can I do that your mother can't?  
There's so much I don't know,  
Help me to understand  
How can I give you protection  
But let you find your own strength?  
You need space and affection  
So I'll go to any length.  
Just know that I love you and that you are precious  
Beautiful daughter whom I have been blessed with.

*Lucy:*

Baby girl, the world is yours.  
You can achieve all accomplishments,  
You are smart, beautiful and competent,  
Of that I am sure.  
Do not drown when they pour  
On you adoration and compliments.  
Have strength in your own consciousness,  
Smile. Know what you stand for.  
You may never plan  
To raise a daughter.  
You might not want a baby.  
Just understand  
There's many ways to prosper  
So be your own lady.

*Lily:*

Mother and father give me direction  
To be a mountain but free as water  
Help me grow as I go farther  
Through the trials of adolescence.  
Through even the toughest questions.  
Is it a bother  
To raise a daughter?  
Did I waste your affection?  
Does love make you strong or weak?  
Could it be both maybe?

True to myself I will keep  
And live my life bravely.  
I know that the world is my oyster,  
I just want to be happy and be sure.

- Marcus Medford

## COVID-19

Searching for the key to social cohesion  
enamel, an antidote.  
Stripped of love  
Left alone  
With no company but his reflection  
He stood wounded, waiting, as the world turned.  
No one is ever prepared for the earth beneath their feet to give way  
But disasters set like fog  
And refuge is just an illusion.  
Even the sun's light is fleeting,  
Everything feels futile.

Memories clamour in the distance  
Don't look, fix your face.  
What choice do I have but to redeploy my heart  
When normalcy has been destroyed,  
Discarded and left for dead?  
Even oxygen tastes foreign.

I'm restless  
Broiling beneath the surface  
On the precipice of an eruption.  
I'm seething with guilt and shame  
But if you ask me how I'm doing I'll say "I'm fine."  
I've yet to find my inner strength,  
I've become adept at self-deception.  
I find myself fantasizing about silence  
Moments of respite found only in the margins.

I wish I was a magician,  
Who could pull time out of a hat.  
That way I would love every second.  
I'd go visit my grandfather,  
Trace his hard but kind hands with my fingers.  
I would coach, I would give back.  
I would fight for animals and the environment,  
for equity.  
I'd be the friend I know I should be.

I'm tired of hearing words like morale  
Or being told that I have to rally.  
Suddenly I have to psych myself out  
Just to survive.  
I never signed up to be a soldier  
But I guess that's the nature of war.  
An all-consuming, constantly looming threat

Unwelcome yet still shows up at your door  
Tracking mud onto the porcelain tiles;  
A collective stain on our memory.

- Marcus Medford

## ACCIDENT on PCH

We are sitting  
drinking coffee, laughing  
talking about our kids  
The day is bright and happy  
The air is crisp, the sky blue  
the clouds white, the trees green  
The people around us  
are laughing too  
glad to be  
drinking coffee on such a day

Then a thud  
We all look up, laughter interrupted  
First we see the car  
at an unnatural angle  
the driver already halfway out, lamenting  
Other cars are stopping too  
brakes squealing with annoyance  
Only later do we see the kid  
scattered in the crosswalk  
the skateboard upside down  
wheels still spinning

The kid is Black I am not  
Through my caffeinated shock,  
even as I pull out my phone to call 911  
I realize I am seeing this tragedy through the  
cotton padding of my white privilege  
as I inevitably see all the Black men  
and boys and women  
sprawled on a road somewhere or a sidewalk somewhere  
or a park somewhere or an apartment somewhere  
killed by something  
more cruel, less random  
than a car

Still, I dial the phone  
And gather with the other white people  
standing around the boy  
telling him it will probably be all right  
when it probably won't be  
waiting for the people who love him  
to appear  
waiting for the wailing and the anguish to begin  
again

## Can You See Me

Can you see me in the skin I'm in  
Or does it seem like a disguise  
Like a costume hiding what lies beyond my eyes

Can you hear me...  
Can you help me...  
Can you heal me in this time...

Time of pain...  
Time of suffering...

Time of mine...

Can you pause and be present...  
To see me and address my needs

Can you listen and care deeply...  
To impart hope and believe

Can you care for me with kindness...  
To show me patience seldom seen

Can you see me, really see me...  
And know all that my life means

For...  
If you can...

You can see me...  
See my value and my worth

You will treat me with dignity...  
Respect deserved by all on this earth

- Candice Taylor Lucas

## **Plant Seeds of Love**

Isolated.

Quarantined.

I sit away from my husband. Away from my sons. Away from my family. Away from my friends.

Quarantined.

Our nation is in a state of crisis.

Hearts are broken.

Lives have been lost.

Lost to slavery.

Lost to segregation.

Lost to police brutality.

Lost to a virus.

Lost...

I am a Black woman

A daughter, sister, niece, cousin, friend, Godmother, Godsister, wife, daughter-in-law, mother, mentor, and mentee.

And...

I am a doctor – a pediatrician.

As we each watch screens flooded with messaging about Black people dying, purposeful demonstrations, and protests, I cannot help but think – what do our children see?

Do our children see this world for what it is?

What would we see if we looked at this world through a child's eyes?

Would we believe we belonged here?

Would we think we are safe?

Would we trust that we are all truly a part of the human race?

Would we feel loved?

Would we feel confident?

Would we feel positive about the next day?

Would we feel that if we spoke, others would listen?

Or would we think our breath could be taken away?

I sit in isolation.

I have been given much time to think.

Think with clarity about the future.

Think with keen awareness that we must change.

My body feels like it's on fire, and the nation feels the same.

Yet, I will act through writing.

I will write, because I must

And as I write I remember, that in God I trust.

And in acting I recognize that I am a part of a broader team.

A team whose children are trapped in isolation – in this time like you and me.

Children separated from essential workers...

Children isolated by a pandemic that seems like it will never end...

Children muted by the trauma we all are experiencing – outspoken by suffering and hate...

So team...

Refuse to stay silent.

Refuse to rest in despair.

Team...

Please speak louder.

Please be louder

Be intentional as you look at your children

As you look at our children, in the eyes.

Talk...

Read...

And Sing with them.

Play with them.

Hug them.



Kiss them.

Tell them they are loved.

Be louder.

Help our nation's children know that they matter – that BLACK LIVES MATTER.

Help them stand for something more.

They CAN be a better future than what has gone before.

Please listen...

Hear the voices of those in the present.

Please learn...

Review narratives from the past.

Please act...

Plant seeds of love.

- Candice Taylor Lucas

## I Rise

Today, I rise

Not because I want to in this moment

But because I must

I must think

I must serve

I must speak

Why?

Because I can breathe...

And with each breath, I have a voice

And with that voice, I will speak

I will speak for the voiceless

I will speak for the slain

I will speak, and fight remnants of slavery's pain

And...

I will stand...

I will stand against racism, and stand against hate

I will stand for the Beauty in Being Black

I will stand...

And...

Be...

And today...as I stand on the shoulders of Maya Angelou, and others who were great

Still...

I Rise

And I will continue to Rise

Up...

On wings...

As eagles...

*Written in memory of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and countless others who mattered.*

*References Still I Rise, Maya Angelou, and Isaiah 40:31*

- Candice Taylor Lucas

## **We do not need tear gas, Mr President**

We have already been weeping  
watching a man beg for breath  
beg for mercy  
while the guardians of our civil liberties look on  
look on and take a life.  
Take a life!

You who are a master at weaponizing words,  
listen now to our silence, listen hard:  
our silence of 8 minutes and 46 seconds.  
How many breaths would you take during that time?  
What if your cheek were ground into the street  
bread still in your stomach?  
What if you had survived COVID-19,  
survived the blocked arteries of your heart,  
and were now dying from a knee on the neck?  
A knee has no place on a neck,  
ask anyone, even the youngest child knows that.

Now, we walk and chant and write poems  
with broken and angry hearts  
and we tell you  
you cannot curb this fire,  
no matter what time you start the curfew.

And Mr George Floyd, I read your autopsy.  
Forgive me for knowing of your blue tattoos  
of names of those close to you,  
of the eagle on your chest.  
We were eyewitnesses to your torture,  
and I needed to know you a little better.

- Gabriella Miotto

## Fourth of July 2018

Lady Liberty, can I borrow your sandals?  
I know it is a funny question  
and I would only ask it on a day without rain  
so you would not tumble off the pedestal  
that men have made for you.

Yes, I know these sandals are way too big for me,  
but I think perhaps between the ridges of the sole  
I might find  
ashes from your torch,  
buffalo hair from the prairies,  
sweat from those who have landed here  
tempest-tossed.

And with these ingredients  
my friends and I would like to form new clay  
make a talisman,  
something we could wear over our hearts  
to help us recognize each other again,  
whether standing or kneeling  
in this land of the free,  
this home of the brave.

- Gabriella Miotto

## CELESTIAL EMBRACE

A visit to the healing place,  
home for forty-six days and nights.  
Distant past, present, and future  
coming together on the seventh floor.

I sensed that my heart was unwell,  
skipping beats in the middle of the night,  
awakening me to the urgency  
of that moment.

An arteriogram brought  
unwelcome news, blood no longer  
flowing where it was supposed to go.  
Blockages everywhere.

A triple bypass necessary or  
my life would be short.

An easy decision. Sternum split,  
veins removed and reattached,  
remodeling the flow  
to be lifegiving.

Now three months later  
healing from my wounds,  
physicality returning, my mind injured,  
repairs slowed by the damage within.

From three decades ago a remembrance  
of my life at age three

My mother screaming,  
"Frankie is dying  
**NO, NO"**

Looking down from heaven I saw  
A nurse and my mother holding my hands.  
The panic in my mother's voice calling me back,  
releasing me from the pull of the gleaming light.

I floated down to my mother's arms and  
opened my eyes in fright.

**The encounter**  
Burnt forever into my mind.

Seven decades have now passed.

I have seen dying and death again and again.  
Ten thousand patients, countless nurses  
imprinting compassion on my soul.

Each nurse offering their quiet wisdom  
to every patient, as I have become.  
Kindness blossoming into a tenderness  
that has bound me to them forever.

Florence Nightingales in disguise.  
Welcoming clumsiness with a smile  
and understanding. I will remember  
their gestures for eternity in my soul.

Now three months home again  
Memories beckoning me  
to recall another life, as if I were still  
a baby , hearing...

**"NO, NO"**

Taking my hands in hers, the nurses on earth  
offers healing to the weakened body.  
Angels living in my consciousness,  
roses in a Spring bouquet,  
their beauty and kindness imparting

**HOPE**

**Protecting me in a celestial embrace.**

*Frank L. Meyskens Jr. M.D.*

## Thelma T. Reyna, Ph.D.



National Award – Winning Author, Editor, & Indie Book Publisher  
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Thelma T. Reyna's books have collectively won 18 national literary awards. She has written 6 books: a short story collection, *The Heavens Weep for Us and Other Stories*; two poetry chapbooks—*Breath & Bone* and *Hearts in Common*; and three full-length poetry collections—*Rising, Falling, All of Us*; *Reading Tea Leaves After Trump*, which won 7 national book honors; and *Dearest Papa: A Memoir in Poems*, winner of 2 international awards (Golden Foothills Press, 2020). As Poet Laureate in Altadena, 2014-2016, she edited the *Altadena Poetry Review Anthology* in 2015 and 2016. She also edited *When the Virus Came Calling: COVID-19 Strikes America*, a national collection of poetry and prose, released in 2020. Thelma's fiction, poetry, and nonfiction have appeared in literary journals, anthologies, textbooks, blogs, and regional media, print and online, for over 30 years. She was a Pushcart Prize Nominee in Poetry in 2017. She received her Ph.D. from UCLA.

## Candice Taylor Lucas, M.D., M.P.H., F.A.A.P.



General Pediatrician  
Health Sciences Associate Clinical Professor  
UC Irvine School of Medicine, Department of Pediatrics  
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Candice is a general pediatrician and Health Sciences Associate Clinical Professor in the UC Irvine School of Medicine, Department of Pediatrics. She is Co-Director for Leadership Education to Advance Diversity for African, Black and Caribbean communities ([LEAD-ABC](#)), Associate Program Director for the UC Irvine/CHOC Children's Pediatric Residency [Program](#), and faculty affiliated with the UC Irvine Pediatric Exercise and Genomics Research Center ([PERC](#)). She was recognized as the 2018 American Academy of Pediatrics – Orange County Chapter Young Physician of the Year, and is the recipient of the 2019 UC Irvine School of Medicine Leonard Tow Humanism in Medicine Award, and the 2020 UC Irvine Humanism in Medicine Faculty Award. She champions novel curricula addressing diversity, equity and inclusion in undergraduate and graduate medical education, serves on the UC Irvine School of Medicine Clinical Faculty Equity and Diversity Committee, is a co-chair for the retention sub-committee of the Association of Pediatric Program Directors Underrepresented Minorities in Pediatric Graduate Medical Education learning community, and volunteers with the Board of Directors for two nonprofit organizations – [Shared Harvest Fund](#) - [myCovidMD](#), and [Raising Compassionate Leaders](#). Her



advocacy and research focus on early life physical activity, early childhood obesity prevention, maternal-child health disparities, and diversity, inclusion and equity in medicine.

Healing and hope are realities that are often captured in poetry in a manner that reminds us of our shared human experiences with health and illness. In writing poetry I pause to rest in joyful moments or escape negative thoughts and experience healing as I lean on my faith. The lens through which I write is influenced mostly by my personal experiences and reflections about the narratives of loved ones, and my work has grown to incorporate contemplations about issues that disproportionately impact Black people, youth, and minority communities broadly.

### **Frank L. Meyskens, Jr., M.D., F.A.C.P.**



Distinguished Professor of Medicine Emeritus on Recall  
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Dr. Meyskens spent his professional career as a Physician Scientist with translational clinical and basic laboratory research foci involving skin (especially melanoma), colorectal, and oral cancers. He is recognized nationally and internationally for his seminal contributions to the development of chemoprevention in the management of cancer and has received many awards for his work. For the past 20 years he has been active as a poet and published two books of poetry: “Aching for Tomorrow” (2007) and “Believing in Today” (2014) which deal with loss, healing, relationships, and caregiving using spare, concise, and deeply emotional verse. He was recognized in 2014 by the American Society of Clinical Oncology as Oncology’s Poet Laureate. He characterizes writing poetry as “breathing” not in ease, but as a fundamental necessity. The theme of his academic recall is “Paying it forward to the next generation(s)” and, in that spirit of sharing his knowledge and experience, is developing a new educational activity at UCI entitled “Physician Scientist Enhancement”.

He also offers himself as a mentor to individuals at all levels of learning since his personal experiences have been comprehensive and inclusive, including surviving several serious illnesses, many secondary to a rare congenital condition resulting from his mother’s exposure to animal food and mouth disease when he was *in utero*. Dr. Meyskens is married to Linda and has 3 grown children. The family, which now includes 8 grandchildren (7 boys!), is quite international, with the children marrying spouses from Argentina and Taiwan. His favorite leisure activities include listening to jazz, dancing, contemplating nature (since he no longer does cross-country hiking), and writing poetry.

### **Johanna Shapiro, Ph.D.**



Recall Professor Emerita, Department of Family Medicine  
Director, Program in Medical Humanities and Arts  
UC Irvine School of Medicine  
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Johanna Shapiro M.A., Ph.D. is the founder-director of the Program in Medical Humanities & Arts, UC Irvine, School of Medicine (<http://www.meded.uci.edu/student-life/medical-humanities.asp>). She is the recipient of many teaching awards and honors, including STFM's Humanism in Medicine Award in 2020 and UCI's Lauds & Laurels Award for Outstanding Faculty Achievement. She is also an elected member of the Gold Humanism Honors Society.

Dr. Shapiro's research and scholarship focuses on the process of professional identity formation in medical education, including the impact of training on student empathy, medical student-patient relationships, and the management of difficult clinical encounters. She is widely published in the field of medical humanities.

"I have always been interested in the intersection of medicine and the humanities. My career has focused on integrating narrative, poetry, and visual and performing arts into medical education. I routinely use reflective writing in medical student and resident teaching. In addition to serving as poetry co-editor for several professional journals, I have written critical analyses of medical student poetry, and have published poems in various medical journals. Writing poetry has been a way for me to interrogate inequities in healthcare as well as to explore my own privilege."

### **Jayne Lewis, Ph.D.**



Professor of Literature, Department of English  
School of Humanities  
Email: [jelewis@uci.edu](mailto:jelewis@uci.edu)

Jayne Lewis is a professor of literature in UC Irvine's Department of English. She regularly teaches courses on illness narrative and on the end(s) of life, and her current research explores the relationship between imagination and healing--dream therapies, aeriform environments, placebos, sympathetic touch--in the British Enlightenment.

## Jamielle Rankine-Kirlew



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My interest in contributing to the theme(s) healing and hope through poetry is due to my own self-seeking, and learning that self-love is the remedy to healing and the antidote to hope.

My race is a tremendous influence on my writing. As a Jamaican born African, my experiences have shaped the way I express myself, and the experiences of the black women I have been honored to learn from; in finding solace in a system that doesn't always celebrate us.

## Marcus Medford



Website: [www.stopandanalyze.wordpress.com](http://www.stopandanalyze.wordpress.com)  
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Marcus also known by the stage name Mars The Poet, is a poet and freelance journalist living in Toronto, Canada. He is a third-generation immigrant whose grandparents travelled to Canada from the Caribbean. Marcus graduated from the University of Toronto, specializing in journalism and minoring in philosophy. Marcus is a two-time TEDx-performer (2017, 2020) and he's spoken at the Racialized and Indigenous Students Experience summit twice (2016, 2017). In 2016, he self-published his debut collection of poetry, *Book of Mars*.

Marcus' poems have also been featured in the *Extreme Perception* anthology, *Grounders Magazine*, the *Ashvamegh Literary Journal*, and other publications.

Marcus was one of the winners of the 2017 "What's Your Story - Scarborough" writing contest, and finished runner-up at the Toronto Art Bar's 2016 Discovery Night. In his role as the Arts & Life Editor of the University of Toronto Scarborough Campus' official student publication, *The Underground*, Marcus helped establish the paper's first-ever poetry section. As a journalist, Marcus writes for ByBlacks.com, New Canadian Media, *The Edge Leaders Magazine*, and The Soap Box Press, where he also moderates panel discussions.

## Gabriella Miotto, M.D., M.P.H.



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Gabriella Miotto, MD, MPH is a family medicine physician at “TCC Family Health”, a community clinic/FQHC in Long Beach, California, where she led patient group visits using therapeutic art and dance for many years. Her life as a physician has focused on community medicine in California and Alaska, as well as humanitarian relief and development work internationally in Mexico, Guatemala, and the Balkans, with such groups as PROSECO, the UNHCR, and Doctors of the World.

She has given workshops and presentations over the past 15 years on the use of poetic imagery in healthcare at many universities and community settings and has led UCI School of Medicine retreat sessions for medical students using a variety of modalities including reflective writing, mask making, and seasonal body practices.

She is an active member of the Laguna Poets Workshop, and has been published in several anthologies, journals, and websites.

“I am the daughter of Italian immigrants, and the granddaughter of a prisoner of war. The ancestral experience of leaving the homeland has deeply colored my work and writing over the years. My current interests lie in the realm of the imagination and medicine, how body and psyche, both landscapes, can partner with each other for healing through imagery, the sacred and shamanic language of poetry, dream-tending, and seasonal/shamanic/multicultural wellness body practices.”