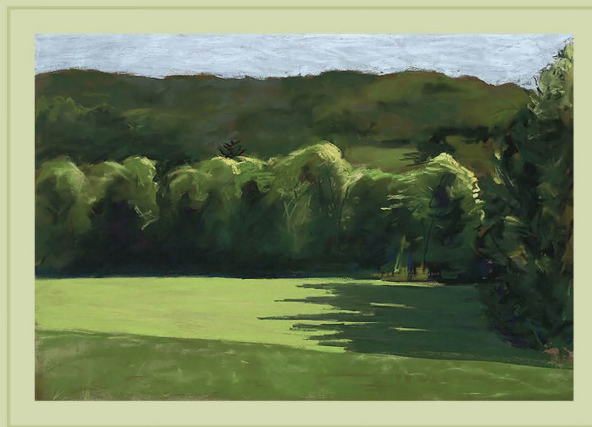


Virtual Workshop:
Fusing Poetry and Mindfulness
Thursday - June 5th, 2025

*Facilitated by Gloria Heffernan &
ZenJen Brown*

FUSED



poems by
Gloria Heffernan

FUSED by Gloria Heffernan

*I could not hear the blood
entering my vein
one drop at a time all night long.*

*Four pints. Four donors.
Four faces I would never see.
Hands I would never touch.*

*I could not hear their voices -
the languages they spoke,
the prayers they prayed.*

*I did not know what car they drove,
or who they voted for or why.
But I knew I would die without them.*

*I knew the rupture in my body
Would only be healed
Because for strangers said yes.*

*And now, I cannot look
at the woman in the grocery store,
or the man who cut me off in traffic,*

*or the people in line at the voting booth,
without wondering,
Did you save my life?*

Prompt: What does it mean to be connected to others?

How does it feel to really believe that “we are all in this together?”

Recall or imagine a time when you experienced a moment of connection with a person with whom you have some fundamental differences.

How can we be present to each other’s humanity despite our differences?

Write a poem or journal entry in which you imagine yourself “fused” within a community of mutual dependence and trust.

How might this viewpoint effect your interactions with people you might not usually engage?

MURMURATION by Gloria Heffernan

*The first time I saw one
I had to pull off the road,*

*too wound up in wonder to wonder why.
I simply gazed at the aerial choreography:*

*Murmuration, a wave of starlings
whirling and wheeling across the sky.*

*Meditation in motion,
Lava lamp lit in the winter dusk.*

*Fibonacci sequence of spirals spinning
into funnel clouds and coiling flows -*

*shapeshifting curtain in constant motion -
black rose blooming across the horizon -*

*mammoth butterfly with undulating wings -
beating heart aloft in the fading light.*

*A thousand wings murmur on the wind.
I merely murmur, Amen.*

Prompt: Think of a time when you surrendered to awe.

What inspired it: a sight in nature, a piece of music, witnessing an act of kindness?

Whatever it was, try to recapture the sensation of being totally present in that moment.

Write about it in sensory detail.

Take us there.

ANIMAL GRACE by Gloria Heffernan

*I have tried all the prayers my mother taught me
kneeling by my bedside when I was five.
They're all good, but they never felt like me.*

*I have tried Namaste and Shalom and Amen
because I know words matter and I want to choose
wisely from the lexicon of peace.*

*But it wasn't until I saw the three-legged pit-bull
bounding across the playground
that a prayer rose to my lips that finally said,*

*Yes, this is my psalm.
This is the hymn I will carry in my heart
until the day I die.*

*And so, I begin the day with these words.
Dear Lord, let me greet every person
who crosses my path as if they were a dog.*

*Let my face light up with joy and curiosity.
Let my hand reach out with tenderness and care.
Let me see and celebrate their eagerness to love.*

*Let me offer up bowls of food and soft blankets.
Let me pause and gaze into their deep warm eyes.
Let me trust their capacity for goodness.*

When I find a person who has been mistreated,

*who growls like a hungry cur in a dark alley,
let me approach cautiously, but approach, nonetheless.*

*When I see one who is hungry
and trembling in a doorway, let me share
with them whatever is mine to give.*

*Let me love first and ask questions later.
Let me see in their eyes the answer
to the only question that matters.*

*No matter the pedigree, no matter the mix,
let me see a creature whose only job
is to be loved.*

Thank you for joining us today!

Gloria Heffernan

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ZenJen Brown

<https://zenjenbrown.com/>