

## Poets Bios for 2021 DASHing Words in Motion

**Zeina Azzam** is a Palestinian American poet, writer, and editor. Her poems appear in literary journals and edited volumes, including *Bettering American Poetry*, *Making Mirrors: Writing/Righting by and for Refugees*, and *Gaza Unsilenced*. Her poetry chapbook, *Bayna Bayna, In-Between*, is published by The Poetry Box. Zeina holds an M.A. in Arabic literature from Georgetown University.

**Susan Clark Behnke** is a life-long writer, beginning with poetry when she was six. She has a degree in journalism and held jobs as a Congressional Press Secretary and as Creative Director at a large trade association. She also has written speeches and collateral materials as a volunteer for several Alexandria non-profits.

**James Colby**, Since 1991, Jim Colby has served as a speech writer/editor for the National Science Foundation. From 1982-1990, Mr. Colby was a press aide for U.S. Representative Eligio de la Garza (TX 15<sup>th</sup> District). He received a Bachelor of Arts degree (1973) in English literature and Political Science from Southwestern University, Georgetown, Texas.

**KaNikki Jakarta**, Poet Laureate, City of Alexandria is an advocate for the art of poetry and believes that positive poetry can connect people from all walks of life. She brings to the role of poet laureate a passion to create platforms of safe spaces to highlight the talents of other artists. Ms. Jakarta writes and recites what she calls “real life fiction.” She says, “If you think something I say on the microphone may change your life; you’re probably right.”

**May-Mei Lee** is a native Washingtonian currently residing in Virginia. She has written in a variety of forms but shunned poetry until 2020 when her attention span turned into the size of a pea. May-Mei’s making it a mission to splash her words in public spaces all across the DC region.

**Betty Jo Middleton** has lived in Alexandria since 1968. Her articles have appeared in the Alexandria Gazette Packet and other local publications. She is retired from the Unitarian Universalist ministry. One of her poems appeared on DASH busses and the King Street Trolley in 2017.

**Charlene Murphy**, she is a country music song writer, library planner, museum fan, and volunteer gardener in Old Town Alexandria.

**Devin Reese** is a Ph.D. turtle biologist and science writer whose three kids attended ACPS schools. She views our human lives through the lens of animal behavior. Devin writes science content for various platforms, including SciShow, PBS-Eons, WWF, and Plain Language  
Source: <https://writers.work/devinareese>

**veeteabee** is an artist, poet, and writer living in Alexandria, VA, who brings interests from a diverse background to creating works that capture personal feelings.