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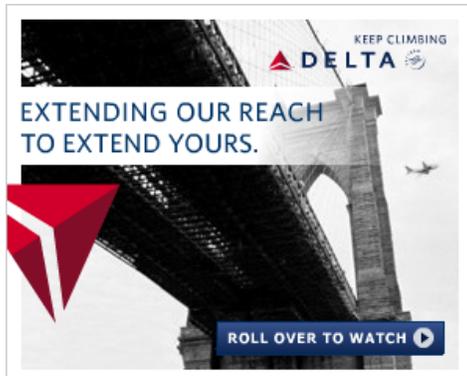
## Poet found her passion in 4th grade

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By Naila Francis Staff Writer |

She was in fourth grade when the revelation freed her, when words, typically a chaotic presence in her mind, were presented with an avenue for order.

Corie Feiner had never written poetry before, but when a visiting poet came to her school, she would begin a lifelong adventure with the art form.



"She just said poetry is neither good nor bad or right or wrong. It's just whether it does its job of moving people," recalled Feiner, now 38. "Of course, it's an arguable statement, but as a young child I was floored by that."

Today, she has built a career writing not only emotionally compelling poetry, but good — some might even say exceptional — poetry, too, all of which has led to Feiner being named the 2011 Bucks County Poet Laureate by Bucks County Community College.

The Yardley resident is the author of the poetry collection "Radishes into Roses," as well as the recently published children's book "Who Was Born at Home?" She was selected from 72 entrants in the 35th annual contest sponsored by the BCCC Language and Literature Department and the Bucks County commissioners.

She'll give an inaugural reading as the county's 2011 poet laureate at an on-campus reception Nov. 13.

Martha Rhodes, who was the final judge in the contest, said Feiner's poems showed the most attention to the craft among the 20 finalists.

"I look for a complexity of textures (such as) good diction, interesting syntax, attention to pacing, line, and overall structure, as well as the ability of the writer, in this case Corie Feiner, to ground the reader, to bring the reader to the page and to keep the reader moving across and down the page, poem to poem," said Rhodes.

"Corie's poems engaged me in that way and stood out as the strongest group of poems," said Rhodes, who's the author of three poetry collections, including the award-winning "Perfect Disappearance." She's also the director of Four Way Books and the Robert Frost Poetry Festival.

For Feiner, a longtime performance poet and teaching artist who has been featured at venues such as the Geraldine R. Dodge Poetry Festival and in publications such as The New York Times and Backstage magazine, the honor came serendipitously. The native New Yorker and her family moved to Yardley in June after visiting the area for years and unwittingly bought the house of 2006 Poet Laureate Marie Kane.

"When we were first going through the house, I got to her bathroom and I'm thinking, 'I can't believe she has this poetry magazine, The Sun, and all these journals.' Then I went to the office and again, I saw all these amazing journals with my favorite poets on them. I didn't know it was Marie Kane's house at all, but I did know a poet lived there," Feiner said.

She discovered her seller's identity right before closing, and it was Kane who suggested that Feiner enter the contest, which is the longest-running poet-laureate competition in Pennsylvania. Now that she's won, Feiner is making it her goal to introduce poetry to communities throughout Bucks where it may be under-appreciated or dismissed as the realm of the erudite and obscure.

"I think everyone has at least one poem in them," said Feiner, a two-time Pushcart Prize nominee and winner of the 2007 Vent Your Inspiration Poetry Contest. "You have to teach them the formulas and they can fill it in and expand from there."

Feiner was 15 when she began to take her own poetry seriously. By then, she had been wooed by the words of poets Anne Sexton, whom she called "my first love," and poets Walt Whitman and Sylvia Plath.

"I really wanted a voice," she said of her initial impetus to write. "I wanted to take what I would call the many thoughts in my mind going in different directions and just focus them in and put them in a place where they seemed concrete and solid."

Today, she writes to imprint moments, ephemeral and profound, tender and humorous, drawn to the inspirational well of family, healing from loss and food.

"I find I can go to a farmers market and it seems like the most beautiful place in the world to me, all the squashes and crates and fresh burdock. ... It kind of strikes me as a beautiful painting," she said. "What happens to me is suddenly there is this convergence of something that seems outside of the normal day-to-day stuff and it seems hyper-real. It could happen anytime where there's just this complete and utter love, where I feel, 'I have to write this down. I have to capture this moment.'"

Corie Feiner will read at 2 p.m. Nov. 13 in the Orangery at Bucks County Community College, 275 Swamp Road, Newtown. She will be joined by runners-up Geri Ann McLaughlin of Quakertown, Katherine Falk of Newtown, Nick Hiser of Warrington and outgoing Poet Laureate Lorraine Henrie

Naila Francis: 215-345-3149;

email: [nfrancis@phillyburbs.com](mailto:nfrancis@phillyburbs.com);

Twitter: @Naila\_Francis

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