



Kiesa Kay

Distinguished Kansas Poet

- [E-mail](#)

Kiesa Kay was raised and lived in Kansas for thirty years. She graduated with a B.S. in journalism and M.A. in English from the University of Kansas. She travels frequently, but always finds her way home to the Sunshine State.

Kay has read poetry for Cottonwood Review and Many Mountains Moving. She also reviewed books of poetry for New Hope International. Kay is a member of the Toe River Poets in Micaville, North Carolina.

Kay's publications include 3 chapbooks: *New Entity* (edited by Thomas Zvi Wilson), *CARESS: Poems for Lovers* and *WINDSTORM: Poetry of Divorce*.

Her poems have appeared in: *Coal City Review*, *Communities*, *Sentinel*, *Mandy's Meanderings*, *Kansas City Star*, *I-70 Review*, *Sisters Today*, *Radiance*, *Phoebe*, *Finding Our Own Ways*, *Awakening* and several others.

Honeysuckle

Fairies twirled in the honeysuckle that twined
up the east side of that Kansas lake cottage.
They rose beside little Anne when she hid
in the glossy green leaves.
In shade she tasted honey one drop
at a time from the blossoms, pulling
stamens taut and catching the dewy droplets
on the tip of her tongue, delicious comfort.
She wondered how a thousand drops
of honeysuckle juice
would taste all at once. Decades later,
she found exactly that sweet flavor surging
from the one she loved, a thousand at once,
a nectar waterfall of honeysuckle droplets.

Cactus Court

They came, the men in glasses,
and inspected my shoes for seeds,
the kind that would prove
I'd been wandering.

Now I rest in this desert,
dust coating my skin.
my sand-scorched feet bare.
Someone's stolen my shoes.

At night the coyotes circle,
snapping the silence.
I beg them to carry me.

The men in their glasses
can not keep me in this place.
Bone by bone,
I am still traveling.

Chris Saves

Forty in all, sports cars, pickup trucks, rebuilt junkers,
peeled out full-throttle on the spot where his wheels
last touched pavement, next to that telephone pole.
The scent of motor oil lingered in the breeze for hours,
mingling with wind prayers, fuzz blown from dandelions.
Christopher's mother, known for her tenderness,
the one who always shared her pillow, the one
who gave away the last of her popcorn;
This mother straightened the hood
of her son's sweatshirt for the last time.
Hard rain threatened, so she handed out orange
plastic ponchos for the brightest graveyard gathering,
the largest funeral ever in Springhill, Kansas.
Chris left laughter in his wake.
Rich folks dead get stone angels,
bridges named after them,
bronze plaques in bell towers
surrounded by lilacs and rosebushes.
One memorial lives for Christopher:
His sister emblazoned his name across her shoulder blades,
a blue tattoo memorial of wings and roses,
permanent and irrevocable.
And then the Chris stories began, like this:
*The brakes failed in my truck as I plunged downhill
toward a school building. I down-shifted and prayed
hard to Christopher, patron saint of travelers.
Suddenly I felt as if the truck had become a roller coaster,
end over end. A loud yee-haw sounded in my ears.
My truck went safe, and I knew Chris had saved me,
even as he'd shown me that his own death held no fear.*
One by one, his friends found themselves surviving
the impossible, hearing that whoop of laughter.

Memory Slips

Joe looked an hour for his eyeglasses.
They turned up on his face.
He searched thirty minutes for his camera bag –
The one strapped across his shoulder.
For four hours the living room got a thorough
inspection
Till the car keys appeared in his black overcoat.

It only gets worse, he told Lily, his wife for fifty years.
When she went to check the mailbox,
Joe thought she'd left him for good.
He rocked and moaned quietly in the chair
He'd hewn by hand from a red oak tree
Felled near the barn in a winter windstorm.

Lily saw him weeping. She threw down the bills,
Ran to his lap and kissed his face,
unbuttoned his shirt;
her hand on his heart always soothed him.
Lady, I don't know who you are, he said,
But when my wife gets back, you'll be sorry.

She showed him her wedding ring
And how it matched his,
Engraved "Ever After."
Later he'd accuse her of stealing the ring
But this time he believed her.

Joe plaited her hair into two silver braids.
Let's sing our song, he demanded.
His baritone lilt and her sweet soprano
Melded in the mist of the morning.

Potter Lake

My golden son
 runs beside me
across icy ripples and ridges.
 He touches gray-soggy snow.
 "Don't eat this, Momma."
His woolen mittens clap together
 with a gentle-soft pat.
 "Where did the ducks go, Momma?"
 "South," I tell him.
 "Ducks can't swim on ice."
The pond sculpted tiny castles-on-mountains
as I coaxed him back from its edge.
I hug him close.
 "Our heartbeats are touching, Momma."
Frozen brown-yellow grass crackles
 beneath our galoshes.
We race to the biggest tree, so big
 when my son stands on one side
 and I stand on the other
 our arms around that tree don't meet.
"Look," I whisper, and he does.
 "See how these branches twist
 against each other.
Long ago maybe the wind put them here
 and they stayed that way. See?"
We run as fast as we can around the tree.
We rub the algae-covered bark with our cold noses.
We gasp deep breaths of icy clean air.
We look together at the sun
 as it emerges from gray clouds.
We run together
 laughing, laughing.
My son takes my hand,
 his blue eyes the shade of his daddy's eyes.
 I remember shielding him with my body
 as his daddy slapped my face.
"Momma, Momma,"
 he grins at me,
 he hugs me close.
"Momma, we're living
 happily
 ever
 after."