

Three Poems



Connie Jordan Green

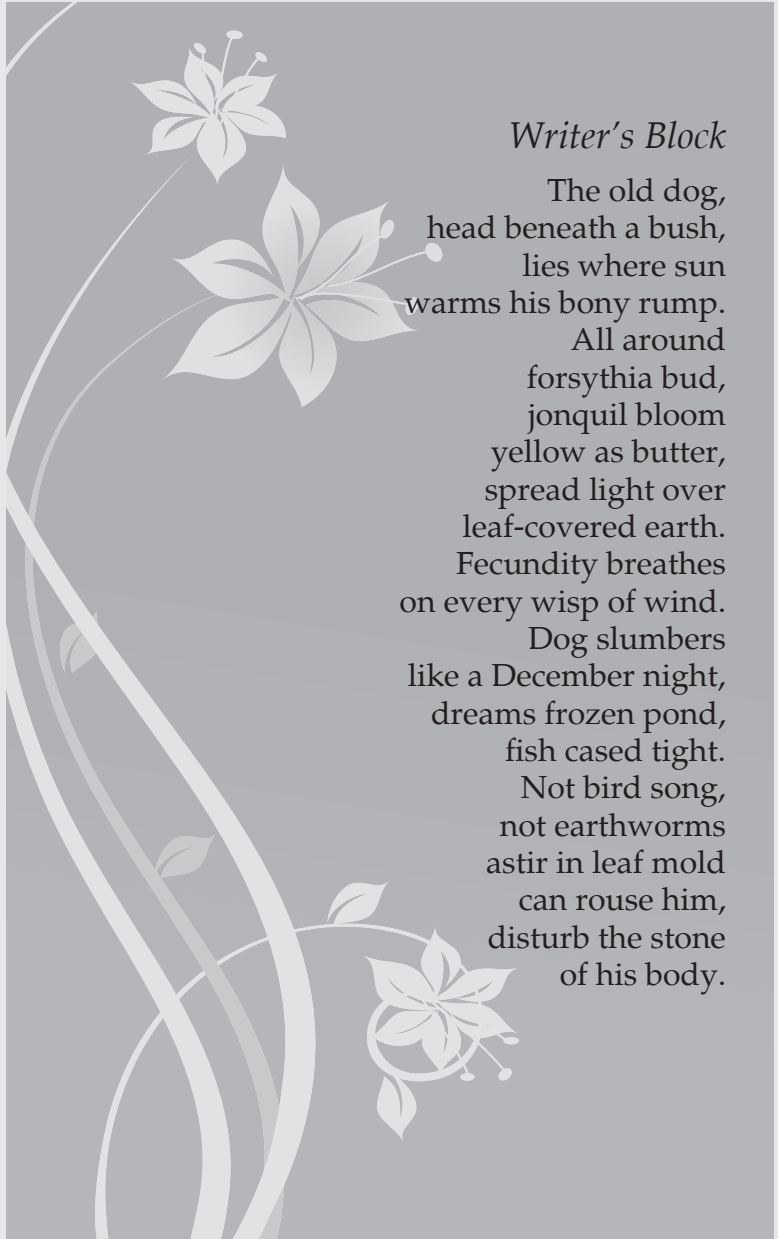
lives on a farm in Loudon County where, when she isn't gardening, she writes in a small attic study. She is the author of two novels for young people (**The War at Home** and **Emmy**), both recently reissued in soft cover by Tellico Books, an imprint of Iris Publishing, and a book of poetry, **Slow Children Playing**, from Finishing Line Press. Her poetry has appeared in numerous journals and publications. Since 1978 she has written a newspaper column for **The Loudon County News Herald**. She teaches creative writing and other subjects related to literature for Oak Ridge Institute of Continued Learning. She and her husband have three grown children and seven grandchildren.

The Graveyard School of Tennessee Poets

he names us, as bodies and blood
flow from each pen, tombstones
and eulogies sit beside each elbow,
and death holds us in his bony
grip the way love clutched us
years before in the rage of hormones
and youth, our heads this day
bowed to our papers, requiem
ringing from every legal pad.

Writer's Block

The old dog,
head beneath a bush,
lies where sun
warms his bony rump.
All around
forsythia bud,
jonquil bloom
yellow as butter,
spread light over
leaf-covered earth.
Fecundity breathes
on every wisp of wind.
Dog slumbers
like a December night,
dreams frozen pond,
fish cased tight.
Not bird song,
not earthworms
astir in leaf mold
can rouse him,
disturb the stone
of his body.



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The Reader

The year she left the mining camp,
moved with mother, father, sisters
into the government's temporary housing,
moved from close mountains, coal dust,
train that stopped by her back door—
the summer a war raged in Europe
she knew only the new town,
house on stilts like a picture
in the school's encyclopedia.
Oaks shielded red clay lawn
where she and sisters
played in mud puddles,
washed doll clothes to faded brown,
a match for the town's
drab green buildings and buses.
Her father worked swing shift—
day, night, Monday, Saturday
mixed together like vegetables
in the soup pot. That summer
a mobile library stopped
at the end of the lane,
step lowered so children
could climb aboard. Books
lined the vehicle's walls,
books real as her father's work shoes
set by the door. She gathered books
like acorns beneath the trees,
tasted syllables tangy as her mother's
lemon meringue pies, drank stories
the way she drank water on July afternoons,
could not know one day
she would plait words
into ropes to lift her
from deep wells the years would dig.

