

Featured Fellow: **Gail Ghetia Bellamy, Ph.D.**
Poet



2010- Cleveland

Why have you chosen Cuyahoga County as a place to live and work?

I was born in Cuyahoga County and have lived here for all but 10 years of my life—when I went away to school or moved out of town for jobs. One of the reasons I wanted to return was because of the active poetry community here. Living elsewhere in Ohio, I subscribed to the Poets' League of Greater Cleveland (PLGC) newsletter. The organization later was renamed the Poets' and Writers' League of Greater Cleveland (PWLGC), and is now known as The LIT. After moving back to Cleveland, I became active in the organization and took advantage of what it had to offer Cleveland's writing community. From 2000 to 2006 I served as board president of the PWLGC.

Also, as a magazine journalist, Cleveland afforded me great job opportunities. I remember reading that it was the third-largest trade magazine publishing center in the country. I've found this city a supportive, inspiring place to live and write.

What is your favorite place, event, or "hidden gem" in Cuyahoga County?

Aside from our natural wonders and great libraries, I would choose Mac's Backs bookstore in Cleveland Heights as one of my hidden gems. Thanks to the enthusiastic support of Suzanne DeGaetano, Mac's Back's has done much to enrich Cuyahoga County's writing scene through its support of local writers, sponsorship of writing workshops, hosting readings, author appearances, and community involvement.

Who or what has influenced you locally and elsewhere?

Living in a supportive community of great writers has made a big difference to me. Members of Take Nine, a poetry group to which I've belonged for a decade, are an ongoing source of inspiration and encouragement for me.

How do you generate new ideas?

By observing the world and people around me. Reading, travel, conversation and music all serve as idea-generators.

What is the hardest part about creating?

The research, editing, revising and rewriting can be difficult, but for me the hardest part is tearing myself away from recreational or creative writing projects to do the business writing that allows me to earn a living.

What is the best moment you have had creating or presenting your work?

I was traveling—as I recall, I was in Oklahoma—and having a conversation with several people in a restaurant. One of them asked me where my first poem was published and what the title of the poem was. When I answered, our server overheard and joined in the conversation. She said she had a poem by that

name taped on her bedroom mirror, and went on to recite a few of the lines from my poem. What are the chances of that happening? Today I still ask myself sometimes, “Is this anything that anybody would ever tape on a mirror?”

How has the Creative Workforce Fellowship affected your career as an artist or your art work?

The Fellowship has encouraged me spend time every day on creative writing projects, and has given me the opportunity to do so. I have also been encouraged by the resources available through the COSE Arts Network.

For more information about Gail, please visit
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For more information about the Creative Workforce Fellowship or the Community Partnership for Arts and Culture, please visit www.cpacbiz.org or contact (216) 575-0331 or info@cpacbiz.org.

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