



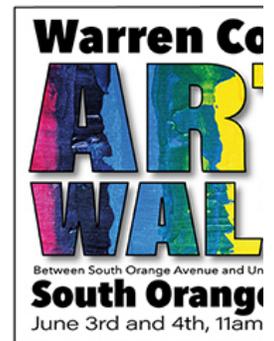
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95-Year-Old Maplewood Poet Publishes Her First Book; Two More to Follow

“So many things can inspire you. You don’t know what’s in your background that something brings forth. It can be a person, a thing, an event,” said Harriet Ribot.

Written By [Meghan Durkin](#) May 23, 2023



At 95 years old, Maplewood resident Harriet Ribot published her first poetry book, *Ember*, with two more collections, *Willow Tree* and *Dormant*, being released later this year.

“I feel as though I have achieved something I could have achieved. And, having achieved it, I feel acknowledged. It makes me feel as though what I thought I have, I have,” Ribot said in an email interview with Village Green.

Ribot held a launch for *Ember* on April 26 at Winchester Gardens in Maplewood, where she read selected poems and answered questions from the audience.



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Ember, which contains 61 poems, “explores emotions.” Willow Tree is an epoch poem, while Dormant, the last of the books to be published, contains 56 poems in chronological order.

A long-time writer, Ribot has been writing for as “far back as [she] can remember” She recalled her early experiences as a poet in college. “I showed my professor a poem I had written called Early April and he said, ‘You’re a poet.’ I said, ‘I am?’ I was so pleased with the designation, but I did not believe it,” Ribot said.

Her passion for writing even goes beyond poetry. In her late 50s, she returned to college, where she received a bachelor’s degree in journalism. Yet, poetry remained her most beloved form of writing.

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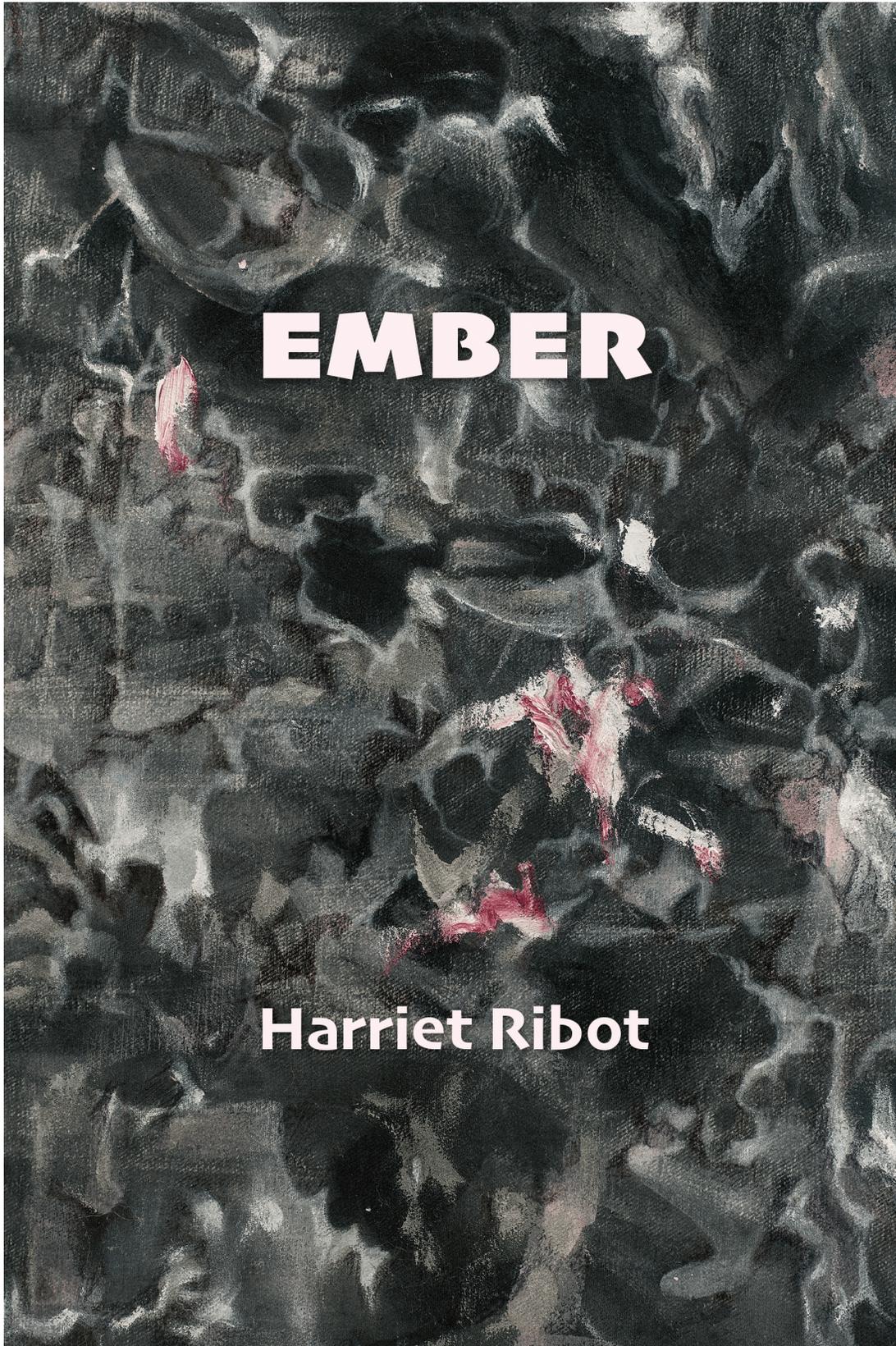
Harriet Ribot at her book signing at Winchester Gardens

“You can say much in a short time. It’s lyrical,” Ribot said. Some of it almost seems like a song. I don’t think I can tackle something long, say a book. I find that when I reflect on things there are short incidents in my life or small aspects of some greater form that I can concentrate on—at least at this time. I don’t think I can sustain a long writing adventure. I haven’t been schooled in that. I haven’t learned that. I am not interested in learning that at this time. I’m busy writing what I think I can.”



When seeking inspiration to fuel her poetry, Ribot looks in all different directions, pulling from her background, experiences, and favorite poets, including Stephen Crane.

“So many things can inspire you. You don’t know what’s in your background that something brings forth. It can be a person, a thing, an event,” she said.





Harriet Ribot at her book signing at Winchester Gardens

Ultimately, Ribot hopes readers take away “common sense” from her poetry.

“That’s all. It’s only common sense. I’m kind of preaching, a little bit, what I’ve learned. If they can take away something from what I’ve written and it resounds in them, then maybe I’ve reached someone. The fact is, I know that I am not alone in my thoughts. My thoughts are shared by other people. They just don’t voice them, and I’m voicing them,” Ribot said.

With a lifetime of experience, Ribot shared her advice with hopeful writers: “Write it all down, because if you don’t it won’t come back in the same form.”

Just Like That, from *Ember*

He said:

Write me two poems over the weekend

Just like that, I thought

And then—why not

Why not gather up the sights and sounds

Funnel them into me

And distill them for him.

No, not for him—for me.

More about Harriet:

Harriet Ribot is a poet and resident of Maplewood, NJ. This year she is publishing her first three books. After a lifetime of writing, she first revealed her trove of poetry and short stories to family and friends only three years ago. Since then she compiled her works into three books, all accepted for publication. She is now working on a book of short stories.

Her first book, just published, *Ember*, is a collection of 61 poems just released by Kelsay Books. The second, an epoch poem entitled *Willow Tree*, already available online, is to be out from Finishing Line Press in early May. The last to be published, but first written, *Dormant*, is a collection of 56 poems scheduled to be released, also by Finishing Line, this autumn. Endorsements and links for Harriet Ribot's books are below – in the order they were written.

Dormant Endorsement: “I write to share” writes Harriet Ribot in her first-ever book of poems, *Dormant*. Words tumble gently down the page. An occasional rhyme gives a boost. But the poems always land, gently, in the heart. Maybe, as “The Little Imp” says, “The whole world has a common bond of loneliness.” Maybe, as in “The Net,” There are “structures/holding us together in delicate balance.” In this “keep-moving world” where we “drink from the fountain of kiss,” Harriet reminds us that when you are on “the corner of somewhere to someplace else” that “life’s what you choose—not what you’ve found.” “Loosen up...” she urges, “live it up...show love to someone else!” Reader, follow the advice in these poems, and join with our Poet, saying “Having loved, I can face the future.”

Bob Holman, activist, poet and filmmaker, is author of 17 volumes of poetry, most recently *(Un)spoken* and *Life Poem*, is founder of the Bowery Poetry Club and host of
Language Matters

Dormant Endorsement: In “Dormant,” Harriet Ribot’s deeply honest first book of poetry, the reader is invited to share a writer’s late life self-discovery. With children long ago raised and husband gone, Ribot doesn’t over-romanticize her lived experience. “When your brain/has lain/dormant/what torment/to waken this thing” she tells us in the title poem. In another she writes, “Patience is time spread thin over peaks of frustration/and mounds of buried dreams, still visible/as one looks back over many years.” A deep and playful affection for language lace together love, loss and painful awakening throughout this lovely book.

Roy Nathanson, author of *Subway Moon* Saxophonist and former member of
the Lounge Lizards and founder of the Jazz Passengers

Ember Endorsement: Harriet Ribot’s book of poetry titled *Ember* is an enjoyable, easy read. She mixes serious wisdom with light-hearted humor, using rhyme and meter to charm her readers. The poet’s thoughts and ironies are easily shared as moments that occur in every woman’s life.



Daniela Gioseffi, poet, novelist and performer who won the American Book Award in 1990 for *Women on War; International Writings from Antiquity to the Present*. She has published 16 books of poetry and prose and won a PEN American Center’s Short Fiction prize (1995), and The John Ciardi Award for Lifetime Achievement in Poetry (2007).

Ember Kelsay Books Link:

https://kelsaybooks.com/products/ember?_pos=1&_sid=563855caf&_ss=r

Willow Tree Endorsement: Harriet Ribot paints with words, creating a portrait of a willow with March boughs “clean and spare/as a whippet/straining/at the starting gate.” With sparse lines she creates mystery, elegy, and focused attention. Step in among the leaves and imagine what tales she has braided into a crown, with grace. — Tina Kelley, author of *Rise Wildly* and *Abloom & Awry*.

Tina Kelley, and author of *Rise Wildly*, *Abloom & Awry*, *Precise*, and *Gospel of Galore*

Willow Tree Finishing Line Press Link:

<https://www.finishinglinepress.com/product/willow-tree-by-harriet-ribot/?fbclid=IwAR2ntAiW5klvkPJsZ6UDMW88OTDwCMkKB8o3Kfhy3hGGz9dZraConQsAiSM>



95-YEAR-OLD POET	EMBER	HARRIET RIBOT	MAPLEWOOD POET	POETRY	WINCHESTER GARDENS
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