**BECLEE NEWCOMER WILSON** P.O. Box 507
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Beclee Wilson is the author of three published books of poetry:
*Winter Fruit* (which was featured at the Miami International Book Fair in 2012, Xlibris Press)
*Tassajara Wind* (Wheelwright Press, San Francisco)
*Woman in Bits and Pieces* (New World Press, San Francisco

She is a graduate of Northwestern University with a BA in Speech and Drama, University of Michigan with a MA in Communications and University of Minnesota with a PhD in Rhetorical Theory.

Teaching experience: University of Michigan, University of Illinois and University of Missouri--Kansas City, Graduate Theological Union---Center for Women and Religion. Also, taught in the Elementary Schools of Ann Arbor, Michigan before going back to graduate school.

For the past fifteen years, I have lived in St. Helena and been involved in a number of Napa Valley poetry activities--teaching, writing and performance.

 Napa Valley Writers Conference
 Participant in 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2013. Studied under Jane Hirshfield,
 Brenda Hillman, Elizabeth Alexander, Arthur Sze.

Poetry Writers Conference, Ghost Ranch, New Mexico, 2014

St. Helen Public Schools
 Teaches the "Special Poetry Unit" to fifth grade students (2011, 2012, 2014 and is scheduled to teach 2015). This program introduces elementary school students to poetry from around the world and through history as well as my poetry. The students then create and perform poetry so that they gain confidence in reciting along with writing. After a total sharing among all 90 students at the school, all students recite their original poems and have them displayed at a local coffee shop in St. Helena. Some students also take the opportunity to recite at Rianda House Senior Center. I arrange for all of these public appearances.

Personal Performances
 White Barn (one woman show of my poetry and favorite songs, March 2012)
 Rianda House Senior Center (organized and read for special community poetry programs, May 2012 and December 2013)
 Robert Louis Stevenson Library Valentine Celebration (2013)
 St. Helena Public Library (participated in several community poetry readings)
 Markham Winery Valentine Celebration (read original poems accompanied by
 guitar, 2014)
 St. Helena Choral Society Christmas Concert (read poem, December 2014)
 Saint Helena Solstice Writing Group (member for past twelve years)

 **MY VISION OF NAPA VALLEY POET LAUREATE**

The opportunities to both create and appreciate poetry in Napa Valley for people of all ages and back grounds have been a great treasure for me as is clear in the summary of my involvements in the last fifteen years as a County resident. It is indeed an honor to be a nominee for the position of Napa Valley Poet Laureate.

I feel I would bring to the position a variety of ways to extend the work done by past Poet Laureates, and, through imagination and persuasion, expand participation in the art of poetic writing and the audience that appreciates poetry in all forms, through history and in all life stages.

Having introduced 300 fifth graders to their inner poet, watching them share their work with friends and strangers, writing me "thanks" for giving them a love of poetry, working with them to read in public, and inviting me to write a poem celebrating their grade school graduation, it doesn't get much better. But I would love to have the opportunity to spread poetry around in more places and to a variety of audiences.

I am presently working with teachers in the Saint Helena Elementary school to make National Poetry Month (April) a bigger event than it currently is in the elementary schools, expanding the program at all grade levels. As Poet Laureate, I would look forward to expanding the celebration of National Poetry Month to more public and private schools and to County citizens through the media and other venues.

My years of meeting weekly with other poets, both in classes at the College and at the St. Helena Senior Activity Center, gives me a treasure of great poets right here in the Valley (many former teachers), to join in these efforts.

As an artist as well as a poet, all of my published books of poetry have included visual art to expand an appreciation of the written word. My latest book, *Winter Fruit,* is my own art. *Woman in Bits and Pieces* features photography by well-know Bay Area photographer Margaretta Mitchell, and *Tassajara Wind* involved two artists, a pen and ink artist and a calligrapher. I would look forward to working for the collaboration of artists and poets throughout Napa Valley and especially to working with our public schools to engage both the artist and the poet in their programs.

An example, when visiting in Maine last summer I saw an amazing public display of what the local community had done. It was a joint program of the school system and the community where students were given a small camera with the assignment to take pictures of the life around them (friends, natural environment, settings) and write a poem expressing their thoughts and feelings given their pictures. Their photos and poems were then mounted on copper rods that turned revealing their inspiration and poems. It would be exciting to duplicate such a creative approach in Napa Valley.

Having attended the Napa Valley Writer's Conference for five years, I feel that there is a big opportunity for the Poet Laureate to expand the awareness and support for this Napa Valley treasure. If children can bring in the crowds at coffee houses, so could the really gifted poets who attend the conference. Currently, only the instructors read to the public. Why not the student poets as well?

The public moment has been a lifelong love. It would be with great pleasure that I would look forward to public readings.

 Poem Entry One

 **BRIX**

I search for purple sweetness on the vine,
slash leaves, tight clusters cut then toss away.
Spray off the mist the fog has left behind,
pierce fruit, at times before a hint of day.
In all grapes left, sweetness is on the rise,
and now a humble task before I rest.
How quick the blade that strips away the prize.
If longings in my heart could be pierced so,
and Cupid's arrow touch a love that's true.
Then all the bleeding longing that would flow
could blend a treasured vintage shared with you.

Come! Sit with me! Taste our sweet time made strong.
This harvest like our grapes may soon be gone.

 Poetry Entry Two

 **Tassajara Baths**

Whisper me awake
 small boy
 half asleep

We'll struggle
 into our robes and shoes
 search for towels
 still damp and chilled

 Going to the baths
 before anyone
 there is between us

 the solitude
 clear morning
 sun coming sideways
 on the creek stones
 under the bridge

You cannot stand
 below the first step
 legs ruby from the heat
 still you shiver

Too soon
 you'll descend
 walking freely
 tall above the water
 letting go of me

 Poetry Entry Three

 **Condolence**

 The paper is smooth
 satin to the touch
 My pen poised
 to say something
 of condolence

 Outside, charcoal sky
 pitches tight crystals
 tapping pavement
 First daffodils
 yellow cups on petal saucers
 bend like bare branches
 barely holding buds

 I think of my friend
 at a loss
 like my pen
 pausing
 wondering
 what will flow
 out of emptiness

 Poem Entry Four

 **9/11 Remembered**

At noon, my daughter leaves work through a staff check point,
walks the Tidal Basin, passes the Vietnam Memorial,
greets Martin, a new arrival, smiles at Thomas standing firm.

Returns to her Federal Reserve Bank office,
where once there was landscaping, now barriers of concrete.
Where visitors once entered with only an ID,
now every person, every object is scanned.
Security guards, with machine guns pace outside her window.
Inside, she resumes work on economic worlds continuing to crumble.

In the evening, she relives 9/11.
Tells her children their part of the story
 --daycare a block from the White House
 --the rush to evacuate, plane headed their way
 --the fire door slashing Mommy's ankle
 --the race across Key Bridge, seeking safety
 --the search for Urgent Care Center
Why?
 All the hospitals full of people
 from the Pentagon flames.

When all is told and some questions put to rest,
children begin to understand some of the whys
that changed their lives.

 Poetry Entry Five

**Observation at Bouchon Bakery**

Man of a certain age
dismounts his metal steed.
H'mm, I notice a strong chin--
intense, well built. I'd say a man
who has been somewhere
with a desire for coffee and croissant.
He takes his metal bar,
passes in through the spokes,
rustles through his basket for lock,
reaches across chin
unsnaps helmet
revealing charcoal grey hair--
close cropped, and lots of it!
As if reading my observation
he rubs his hand over his head
in a "Yes, It's all mine," gesture.
Always the tantalizing sign of one
who cares how he is groomed.
His jeans even have a crease--
a true seventy-plus survivor!

H'mm, I've been looking
at men of the wrong age.