

**Salon for Creative Expression**  
**Guest Artists**  
**2026**

**Anya Kirshbaum** is a bi/queer poet and somatic therapist living in Seattle, Washington. Her work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Swamp Pink*, *Mississippi Review*, *Whale Road Review*, *Crannóg*, *Solstice Literary Magazine*, and elsewhere. She was a finalist for the Orison Spiritual Literature Prize and the Patricia Dobler Poetry Award, was nominated for a 2024 Forward Prize, and was the recipient of the 2023 Banyan Poetry Prize. Her work recently appeared in *Best New Poets 2025*. (Apr. 2026)

**Carl Korfmacher** started playing bass in the praise band at his church about 15 years ago. He co-founded The Straight 8's in 2019 along with Jim Gallagher. The band played bars and festivals up until 2022 when Carl moved to Minnesota. In 2022, the band played at the Monroe, Wisconsin Cheese days for a crowd of over 1,000. Admittedly, they weren't there just to see The Straight 8s. Gene Simmons, formerly of KISS, was there to introduce a signature vodka at the local distillery. The last song ended on an extended guitar solo and Jim took it to the last note as Gene walked on stage. (Jan. 2026)

**Owin Korfmacher** attends Northwestern Ohio University for high performance automotive. He has many interests including gardening, cooking, weight lifting and music. In high school he played a mean bari sax and had the distinction of being the only person in his school to play football and sing in the choir. He found the bari was not that popular among his generation so took up guitar a few years ago. He loves country music but can't stand some of the new stuff that sounds like pop. His favorite artists include Luke Bryan, Cody Johnson and Hardy. (Jan. 2026)

**Beverly Price Melby** is a semi-retired teacher, avid reader, and long-time sewist. Family lore has it that she stole a needle from her grandmother when she was 5, and proceeded to making doll clothes. She has constructed slipcovers, boat covers, military reenactment uniforms, and of course, clothing. She also knits, crochets, and embroiders. She cannot quilt to save her life. For the foreseeable future she will be concentrating her efforts on baby clothes.

**Octavio Quintanilla** is the 2025 Texas Poet Laureate and the author of the poetry collections, *If I Go Missing* (Slough Press, 2014), *The Book of Wounded Sparrows* (Texas Review Press, 2024), which was longlisted for the National Book Award, and *Las Horas Imposibles / The Impossible Hours*, winner of the 2024 Ambroggio Prize of the Academy of American Poets (University of Arizona Press, 2025). His Frontextos (visual poems) have been published and exhibited widely, including in the Mexican Cultural Institute in San Antonio. He is the founder and director of the literature & arts festival, VersoFrontera, publisher of Alabrava Press, and former Poet Laureate of San Antonio, TX. Octavio is also the recipient of the Nebrija Creadores Scholarship which allowed him a month-long residency at the Instituto Franklin at Alcalá University in Alcalá de Henares, Spain. He holds a Ph.D. from the University of North Texas and teaches at Our Lady of the Lake University in San Antonio, Texas. He was recently inducted into the Texas Institute of Letters. (Feb. 2026)