

POMEGRANATES

& POETRY



Poet and orator team up to bring words to life

Feature artwork by Jenny Junker / All photos Special to the Forum

With punchy lines as sweet as a pomegranate, a collection of Emily Vieweg's poetry was assembled for a virtual art experience including drinks, food, custom-made ceramics and a poetry recital produced by Livewire.

By **Ethan Mickelson**
The Arts Partnership

FARGO

In Emily Vieweg's poems, there's always a juicy kernel of knowledge that pops past the tongue and bounces down each short line, leaving the reader with a refreshed finish on the tail end of a period.

Her words are set in typical environments, like picking pomegranates in from the produce aisle. Her words shutter into existence from the clatter of a vintage typewriter, like this excerpt from "I'll Read Poems by the Pomegranates":

"lost in translation, between time and place, a spark

blazing through."

Vieweg is a poet and educator with published works including "Conversations with Beethoven and Bach" and a chapbook entitled "Look Where She Points." Her new book, "but the flames," will be published in 2021 by Finishing Line Press, an award-winning small press publisher based in Georgetown, Ky.

"My goal, as an artist and as a poet, is to make what I see in the world available to other people," Vieweg says.

The poet teamed up with an award-winning orator,

Maria Modi Tuya, to bring those words to life and streamed live to viewers on the other side of the internet as part of The Arts Partnership's Community Supported Art program.

Watch the virtual Community Supported Art video to experience a live reading of Vieweg's poem, "I'll Read Poems by the Pomegranates."

"She could identify with something in every single poem, which is fascinating because we come from two very different lives," Vieweg says about the orator's initial reaction to the body of work.

"I'm in my mid-40s, she's in her early 20s. I'm white, she's black. We just have different lives."

Tasked with breathing life into Vieweg's poetry, Modi

Tuya brings her own background to the story. As a native of South Sudan, she was recognized as the North Dakota State Poetry Out Loud competition in 2018. She was also in the Top 10 finalists at the national competition in Washington, D.C.

"Poetry is life, regardless of our differences," she says. "We can have shared experiences from everyday life."

A communications student at Minnesota State University Moorhead, Modi Tuya speaks both Arabic and English and lived in Cairo, Egypt, for a small part of her childhood.

She worked for The Arts Partnership in the summer of 2019 as a communication intern, and that's where she was first introduced to Vieweg for an article she wrote on the poet.

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Twin Flame Visuals

Left: Poet Emily Vieweg.

The Arts Partnership

Right: Orator Maria Modi Tuya.

Pondering life in the age of COVID-19

"Spring has sprung; the grass has riz; I wonder where all the people is?"

That poetic question is posed by **Don Ellingson**, Moorhead, in a note to "Neighbors." But then he answers it; they're staying home because of COVID-19.

And that leads to a tongue-in-cheek email Don received from **Clark Tufte**, Fargo, which he passed along to "Neighbors." Here it is:

Points to ponder these days:

1. I hope they give us two weeks' notice before sending us back out into the real world. I think we'll all need the time to become ourselves again. And by "ourselves," I mean to lose 10 pounds and cut our hair.
2. My new monthly budget these days: gas, \$0; entertainment, \$0; clothes, \$0; groceries, \$2,799.
3. Breaking news: Wearing a mask inside your home is now highly recommended. Not so much to stop COVID-19, but to stop eating.
4. When this quarantine is over, let's not tell some people.
5. I stepped on my scale this morning. It said, "Please practice social distancing ... only one person at

6. Not to brag, but I haven't been late to anything in more than six weeks.
7. You know those car commercials where there's the only one vehicle on the road; doesn't seem so unrealistic these days.
8. The spread of COVID-19 is based on two things: (1) How dense the population is; (2) How dense the population is.
9. Never in a million years could I have imagined I would go up to a bank teller wearing a mask and ask for money.
10. OK, so the schools are closed. So do we drop the kids off at the teacher's house or what?
11. Coronavirus has turned us all into dogs. We wander around the house looking for food. We get told "no" if we get too close to strangers, and we get excited about going for walks and car rides.
12. The dumbest thing I've ever bought was a 2020 planner.



BOB LIND
Neighbors

If you have an item of interest for this column, mail it to Neighbors, The Forum, Box 2020, Fargo, ND 58107, fax it to 701-241-5487 or email blind@forumcomm.com.

What seniors should know before going ahead with elective procedures

By **Judith Graham**
Kaiser Health News

For months, Patricia Merryweather-Arges, a health care expert, has fielded questions about the coronavirus pandemic from fellow Rotary Club members in the Midwest.

Recently people have wondered "Is it safe for me to go see my doctor? Should I keep that appointment with my dentist? What about that knee replacement I put on hold: Should I go ahead with that?"

These are pressing concerns as hospitals, outpatient clinics and physicians' practices have started providing elective medical procedures — services that had been suspended for several months.

Late last month, Kaiser Family Foun-

dation reported that 48% of adults had skipped or postponed medical care because of the pandemic. Physicians are deeply concerned about the consequences, especially for people with serious illnesses or chronic medical conditions.

To feel comfortable, patients need to take stock of the precautions providers are taking. This is especially true for older adults, who are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19. Here are suggestions that can help people think through concerns and decide whether to seek elective care:

Before you go in. Give yourself at least a week to learn about your medical provider's preparations. "You want to know in advance what's expected of you and what you can expect from your providers," said Lisa McGiffert,

co-founder of the Patient Safety Action Network.

Merryweather-Arges' organization, Project Patient Care, has developed a guide with recommended questions. Among them: Will I be screened for COVID-19 upon arrival? Do I need to wear a mask and gloves? Are there any restrictions on what I can bring (a laptop, books, a change of clothing)? Are the areas I'll visit cleaned and disinfected between patients?

Also ask whether patients known to have COVID are treated in the same areas you'll use. Will the medical staffers who interact with you also see these patients?

If you're getting care in a hospital, will you be tested for COVID-19 before your procedure? Is the staff being tested

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