

Work of local artists inspires poets' 'Visions in Verse'

By **KERRY O'BRIEN**
NEWS STAFF WRITER

GARDNER — In an exercise in ekphrasis, the Women of Words, or WOW, poetry group let visual art inspire their writings during the fifth annual Visions in Verse event on Wednesday.

As a collaboration of artistic mediums, WOW presented poems inspired by selected works from the Greater Gardner Artists Association's exhibit held in April.

"We enjoy the idea of putting art into word," said Paula Botch. "It's just a way of collaborating and getting people involved in the arts."

"A descriptive work of prose or poetry on a film or even a photograph may enhance the original art and take on a life of it's own through it's description," said Marie MacDonald.

The five poets each wrote pieces inspired by selections they chose themselves, as well as about a piece picked by Mayor Mark Hawke.

"In Our Time" by Ms. Botch personified the "nostalgia with bitersweet accents" she derived from an oil on canvas painting entitled "The Old Truck" by Dorothy



News photo by LATRICE COOPER

Members of the Women of Words poetry group — from left, Jan VanVaerenwyck, Marie Macdonald, Corinne H. Smith, Paula J. Botch and Linda Cramer — gather during Wednesday's Visions in Verse event.

Munroe. She described an encounter with an old friend — which happened to be a truck — and recalling feelings of "true love" and "whispered secrets."

In her poem "A Wait on the Cape," Corinne Smith described "the swimming and squirming, and breathing and digging, the blowing and reaching, and budding and

blooming" that occurs "in the place where the shore line meets the sea" as depicted in Priscilla Mavrikis Walker's "Misty Marsh."

Jan VanVaerenwyck reminisced about the moments shared and lessons learned in a garden with her late friend in her poem, "Sarah," after being inspired by a watercolor on canvas entitled

"Lilies" by M. Isabel Roberts.

Linda Cramer was reminded that "peace can come from a connection to nature" after viewing Karol Berzin's water color canvas entitled "Sounds of Silence," and explained that "a connection to something bigger than ourselves can be very healing" through her poem "Reclamation."

In her poem "Red Pill, Blue Pill," Ms. MacDonald described Kevin Bruce's lithograph entitled "Dragonhearted," which includes images of Dolly Parton, Buddha and Minnie Mouse. Ms. MacDonald allowed her words to follow the looping symmetrical pattern of the artwork.

In describing Mayor Hawke's choice, "Springtime on Pleasant Street" by Lori MacDonald, the women wrote of "how one eye can see very differently from the next."

Visions in Verse is the brainchild of a former member and friend of the group Kathy Bennett, who said that she likes what the women have done with her idea.

"They really had a sense of humor this year," she said.

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