

CITY OF PORTSMOUTH



## UPDATE from the City Manager for Sunday, August 9, 2020

**Portsmouth Protection Plan:  
Do your part. Wear a mask.**

**Deaths to date from COVID-19:  
In the US: 163,109. In NH: 419.  
In Rockingham County: 96.  
Cumulative cases in US: 5,065,692.  
Cumulative cases in New Hampshire, 6,818.  
Cumulative, Rockingham County: 1,688.  
Current cases in Rockingham County: 107.  
Current cases in Portsmouth: 9.  
For the complete, NH Department of Health &  
Human Services dashboard  
<http://www.nh.gov/covid19>**

Celebrating Portsmouth Poet Laureate Tammi Truax,  
whose “poems speak to the soul amid the stats and  
protocols” according to *The New York Times* and  
Associated Press.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/07/us/portsmouth-nh-newsletter-poems.html>

<https://federalnewsnetwork.com/entertainment-news/2020/08/weekly-poems-elevate-new-hampshire-citys-virus-newsletters/>

*This week I have been thinking a lot about the  
healing power of reading and writing poetry, about  
building bridges with Japan, and reflecting on the  
75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the atomic bombing of  
Hiroshima, and I wrote this poem for you.*

### **Haruo's Tale of Healing**

Haruo Shimizu was his name.  
He was forty-two on the day  
the Little Boy fell hard from the sky,  
as parachutes billowed behind.

Haruo saw a silver-white flash,  
heard the sound of fireworks,  
then a thunder clap, flames,  
columns of brown clouds.

Haruo was covered in blood, not his own.  
He shared his umbrella with a gasping  
woman, as they stepped around bodies,  
begging for water or burned to death.

Haruo suffered, but survived and  
returned to Hiroshima Higher School  
where he studied the work of his hero,  
the American poet Walt Whitman.

Haruo felt that *Leaves of Grass*  
revealed the life journey of the soul,  
which even if beaten or broken,  
will, in time, “reattach itself

warmly to the world”.

**-- Tammi J Truax**

*Portsmouth Poet Laureate 2019-2021  
Maine Beat Poet Laureate 2018-2020*