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 or reading and writing poetry, about building bridges with Japan, and reflecting on the 75th 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