

## Words that grew from the concrete

BY ADRIENNE CLOUTIER NOV 2, 2016 391

It all started with an idea. What came of that initial meeting between the Meadows Community League and two artists went far beyond the artists' dreams. The Community then implemented a big vision for connecting people with words.

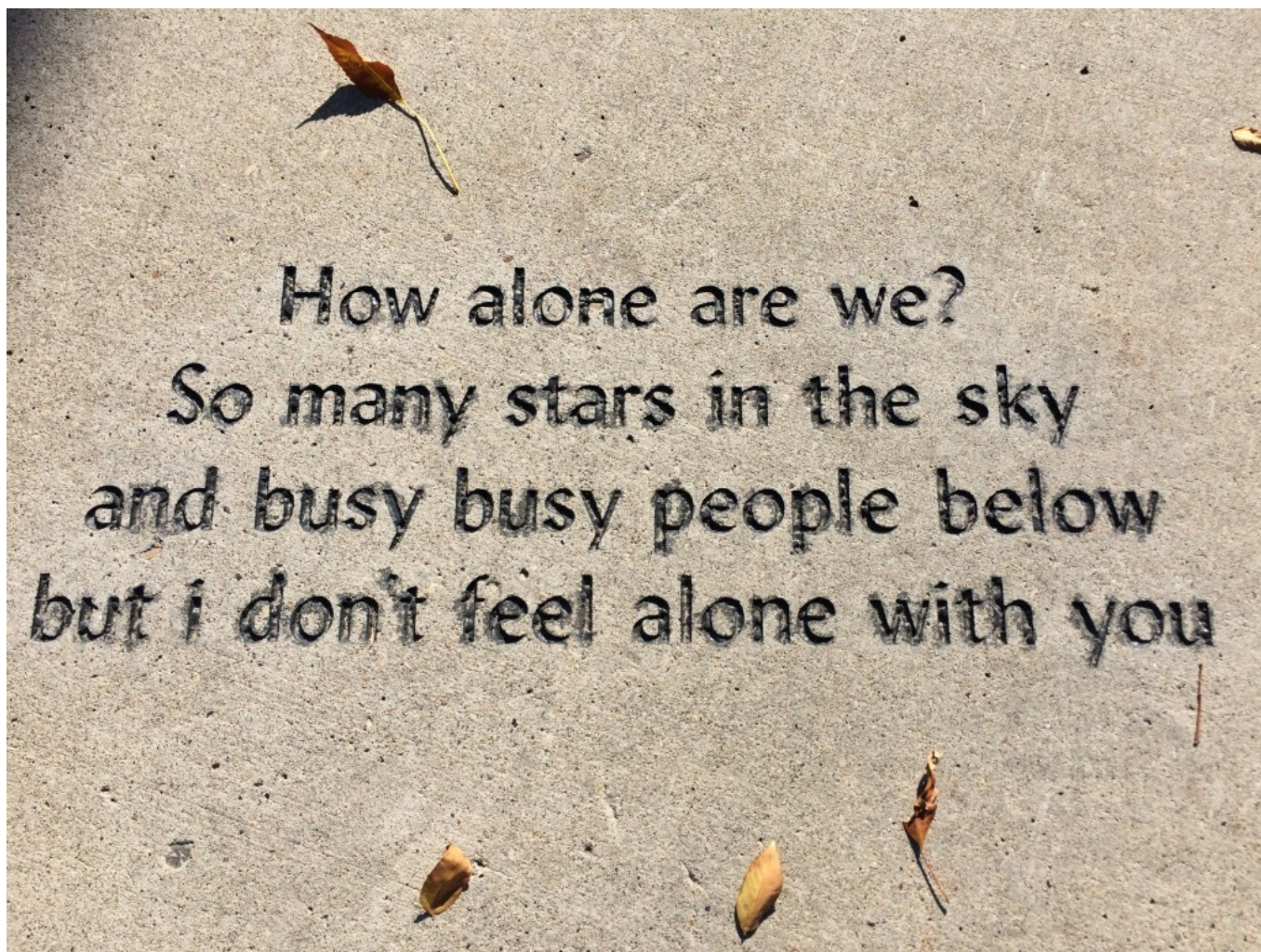
And so, Bissett, Father Michael Troy, other area feeder schools, and the City all played a role in helping poetry come to life on the sidewalks in their community.

Stacey Leach, Community Recreation Coordinator with the City of Edmonton, says, "This was a community driven project made possible by the hard work of many involved. Once we were able to approve the sandblasting, the project moved forward quickly. Now there is a lasting art project right in the neighbourhood that will bring smiles to people's faces, for years to come."

In the summer, sandblasting began along the sidewalks in front of Father Michael Troy school. Many of the short poems relate a story. Some, describing experiences of [loneliness and isolation](#); mental and social well being; young love; hope and connection, were etched into the sidewalk permanently for all to enjoy. These words don't speak of large historic events, but of small moments we all share.

Artists Agnieszka Matejko and Jannie Edwards were integral to bringing these poems to life.





“While art can and should sometimes provoke and challenge, there is also a need for art that ties communities together, art that uplifts, delights and reduces urban stress and isolation. That’s precisely the goal of the new *Poetry Pathways in the Meadows* installation,” says Agnieszka.

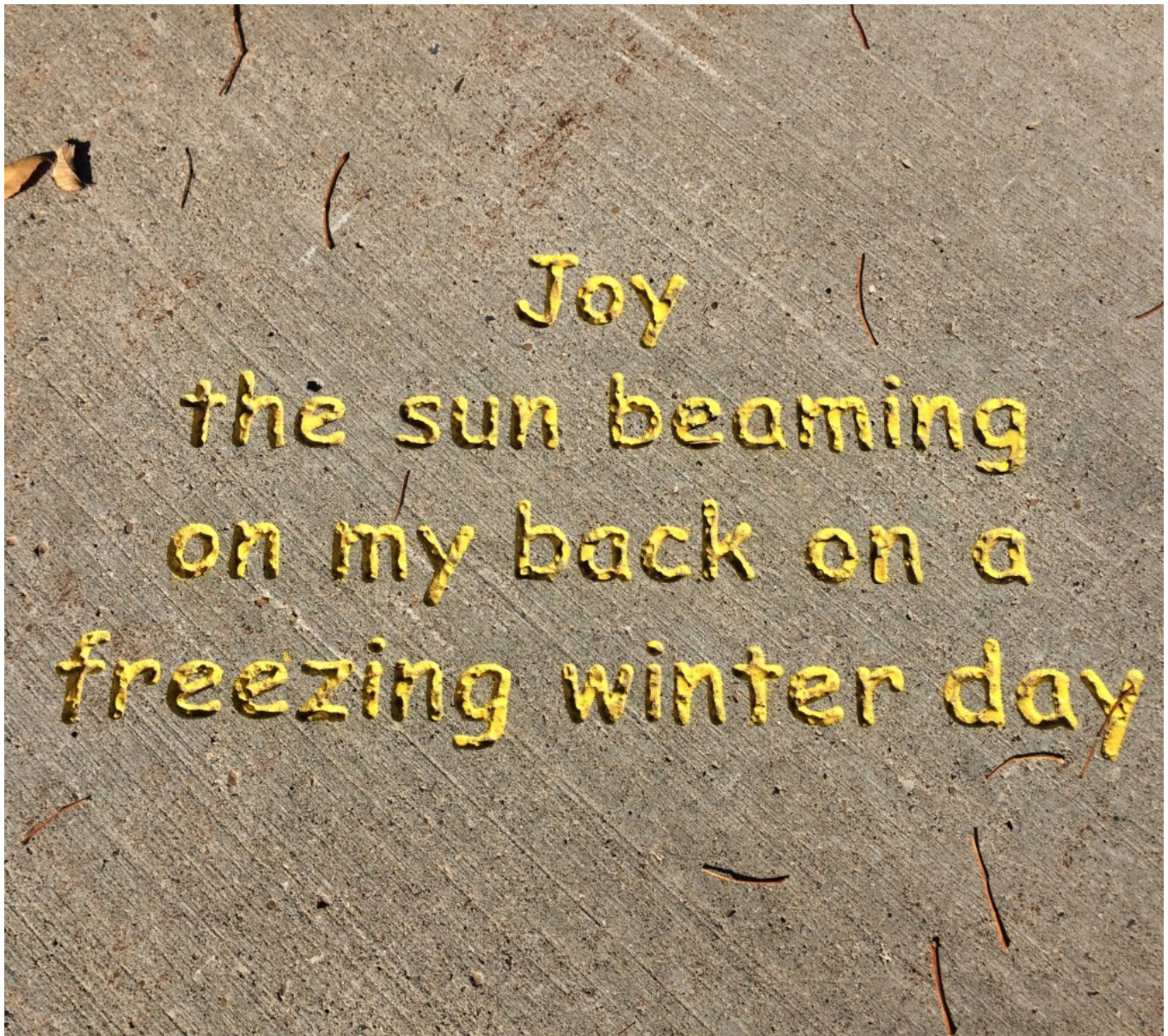
A community jury selected twenty poems from more than one hundred submissions. Area residents, youth, children, newcomers, teachers and two Poet Laureates, Pierrette Requier and Charlotte Cranston, participated in the project either through open submissions or workshops conducted by the artists.

Agnieszka adds, “Many submitting poets, like Sarabjeet Kaur, walked the very path where their work is etched. Kaur’s moving poem expresses what it was like to face her first December in Canada. She pushed a stroller down this sidewalk holding her older child’s hand on many frosty mornings.”

*Slow down  
Print your footsteps well  
Their route makes a story  
To tell*

The vision behind *Poetry Pathways in the Meadows* is to help increase diversity and create a more welcoming community; made by and for the community it now serves.





Meadows Community League hopes to engage the public living or working in the Meadows areas of Larkspur, Wildrose, Silverberry and Laurel to submit their poems. For more information on how to submit poems, visit <http://www.themeadowscommunity.ca/poetry-pathways-in-the-meadows-call-for-your-poems/>

The selected poems will be installed in the next two phases, in front of Velma E. Baker Elementary School and Silverberry Playground, in the near future.

To see *Poetry Pathways in the Meadows*, visit Father Troy School at 3630 23 St NW.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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