

Ray McNiece has authored eleven books of poems and monologues and CDs, most recently *Love Song for Cleveland*, a collaboration with photographer Tim Lachina and *Breath Burns Away, New Haiku*. The Orlando Sentinel reporting on Ray's solo theater piece "Us — Talking Across America" at the Fringe Festival called him "a modern day descendant of Woody Guthrie. He has a way with words and a wry sense of humor." He toured Russia with Yevgeny Yevtushenko, appeared on *Good Morning, Russia* and performed at the Moscow Polytech, the Russian Poets' Hall of Fame where he was dubbed 'the American Mayakovski.' He has toured Italy twice with legendary Beat poet Lawrence Ferlinghetti. He fronts the blues rock band, Tongue-in-Groove. Among many awards, he has received a Creative Work Force Fellowship and residencies at The Cuyahoga Valley National Park and the Jack Kerouac House. He is currently Poet Laureate of Cleveland Heights. In 2021 he received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Cleveland Arts Prize.