



Politics in rhyme helps Bainbridge man in difficult times

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BY LESLIE KELLY

Like many others in this country, Neil Doherty was stunned when Donald Trump won the presidential race in 2016.

“When I think about it, I still get that same terrible feeling in my stomach,” Doherty said. “It was so bloody depressing. It made it so hard to concentrate on life.”

But Doherty put that disappointment to work and came up with a solution that helped him weather the political storm. He wrote poetry.

The result is his collection of 45 poems in a bound edition titled, “The Treasury of Trump.”

“I was so distracted by the [results of the] election that I couldn’t really do anything,” Doherty said. “But then I thought, ‘Maybe I can turn this distraction into something positive.’”

Seeing other like-minded people at various gathering helped him realize he wasn't the only one upset by the Trump Presidency. He put pen to paper and began to express himself. Having an interest in politics, and being a writer made it easier, but Doherty admits it was the first time he attempted to write poetry.

“Poetry isn't something you just sit down and write,” he said. “It's like they say, ‘Poetry is 95 percent perspiration and 5 percent inspiration.’”

When he had an idea, he'd sit down and write notes.

“Then it would go this way or that,” he said. “And then the structure forms.”

He wrote many in a nursery rhyme style, with a certain cadence, he said. Even the title of the book reflects child-like poetry collections. Once many of the poems were written, Doherty said he'd go back and “smooth them out.”

The poems address many of the happenings of the Trump Administration to date. Take “Ten Days that Shook the White House...Again,” which is a tribute to Anthony Scaramucci's short, ill-fated tenure as the White House communications director. And another, “The Last Days of Twitter,” in which the president's nearly ceaseless tweet-storm is foiled (at least for one evening) by Melania, according to a review of the book.

But Doherty also addresses serious things like climate change and the consequences of Americans taking democracy for granted.

Doherty is a retired economics professor from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania — the same school that afforded Donald Trump and two of his children an undergraduate degree. He moved to Bainbridge Island seven years ago. He grew up in Liverpool, England and lived in Philadelphia, but retired to the Pacific Northwest. His wife Caroline is from Seattle, where her parents live.

They also have traveled extensively to Africa, Canada and Belize.

His book was released near the one-year anniversary of the 2016 Election last November. Since its release, Doherty has been pleased with the response.

“I’ve gotten a lot of thank-yous,” he said. “People are commenting that what I’ve written is exactly what they’ve been thinking. Readers have told me, ‘You nailed it.’”

He has made electronic copies available to many, and the book sold well at the holidays as something people gave to their friends and family, he said.

But he added, “I haven’t had any response from Trump supporters yet.”

Another reason why he wrote the book of poems is because he saw so many people reacting to the Trump election with a “woe-is-me” attitude.

“That doesn’t help anything,” he said. “For a time it’s OK to sit and just soak it in. But then you have to do something. You have to take action.”

He said he is encouraged by the fact that many notable newspapers in the country are raising the right issues and are not backing down.

“I’m encouraged that the conversation has been elevated,” he said.

“Responsible newspapers and television stations are responding [to Trump] in a challenging way. The directness of some of the editorials is surprising.”

Doherty hopes to do some local book signings and readings in the near future. Just what poems he will read will depend on his mood.

“The poems reflect different moods,” he said. “Some are humor, some show desperation and some express a certain amount of anguish.”

At the current time, he’s working on another book of poems that address paradoxes and logical puzzles.

“Things like ‘What if you killed your grandfather?’ Then your mother would never have been and neither would you. So you couldn’t have killed your grandfather,” he chose as an example. “I’m asking those kinds of questions and writing poetry that asks, is that true or false?”

His past works have been technical books about his field of study, economics.

And to those who may say that the Trump presidency is too serious of a situation to be made fun of in verse, Doherty says:

“You’ve got to make light of it. You can’t cope rationally with something this severe. If you don’t laugh, you can’t make it.”

The Treasury of Trump is available on Amazon.com and at local bookstores.

From the book:

Repealing Obamacare

My base swelled as all can see

with “born again” and GOP;

that evangelical Bible School

that quite forgot the Golden Rule.

To them, I pledge with word and sword

to make the sick all uninsured.

I’ll broach my Christian task ahead

returning Lazarus to the dead.

Fake News/ Real News

If news is seditious deceit

to the mind and man on the street,

then let him peruse

more orthodox views

from Beobachter, Pravda, or Tweet.

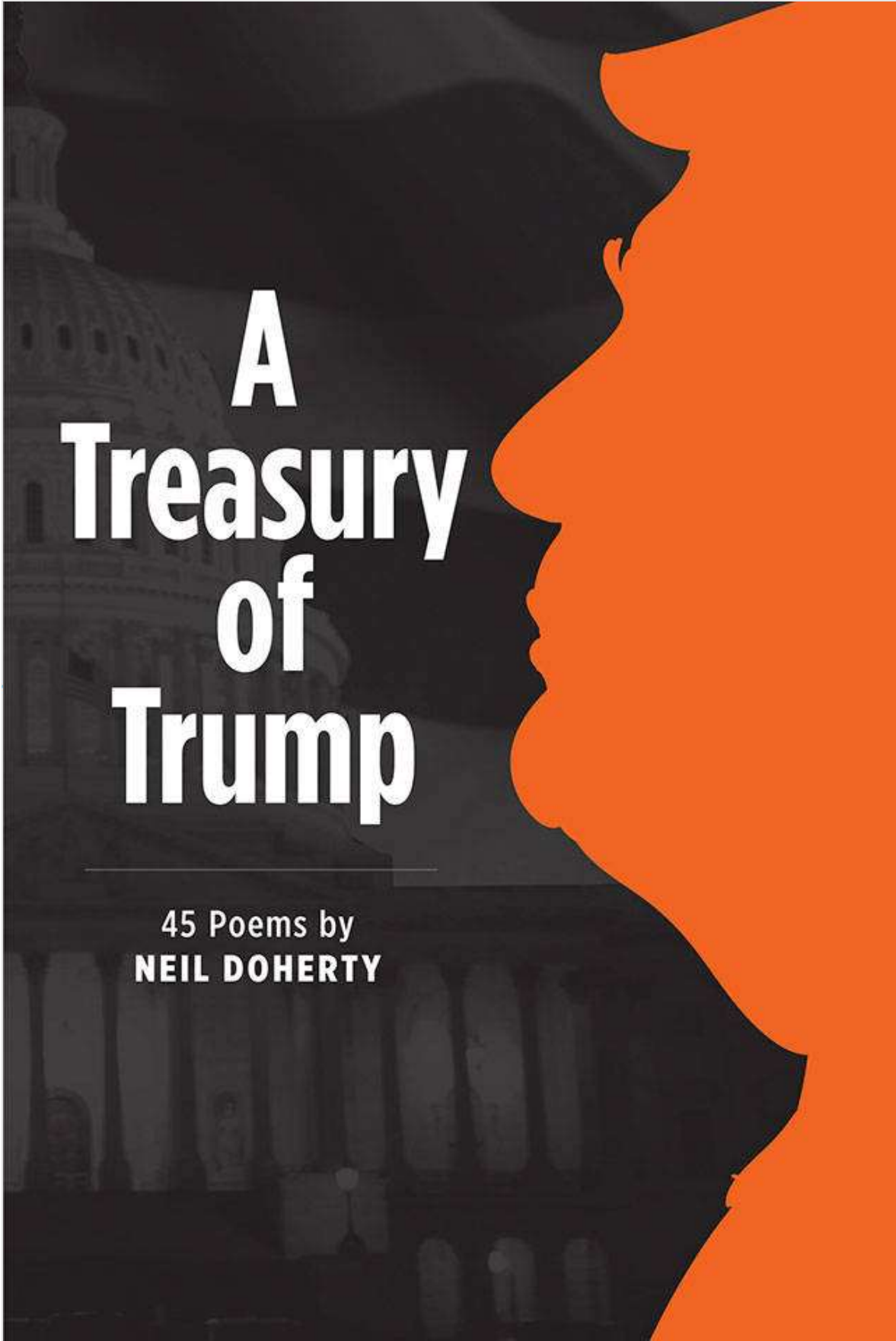
And forget that old CNN panel

you can now get the Trumpety channel

where you can meander

through Trump propaganda

and all of his Trumpety flannel.



A Treasury of Trump

45 Poems by
NEIL DOHERTY

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