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***Local NAAFA chapter president's new book shares the poetry & process of fat embodiment***  
*Royalties from anthology will go to National Association to Advance Fat Acceptance*

NASHVILLE, TN—In a sociocultural climate in which fat bodies are considered diseased and blamed for everything from rising medical costs to global warming, it takes courage for fat women, especially, to express anything but shame about their bodies. *Fat Poets Speak: Voices of the Fat Poets' Society*, co-authored by Los Angeles NAAFA chapter president Lesleigh J. Owen and four other women, is part of and intended for the growing movement reclaiming “fat” as a valid way to exist in the world.

Owen’s saucy smile graces the cover of the 126-page original trade paperback just released by Pearlson Press. The back cover features her co-authors Kathy Barron, Anne S. Kaplan, Corinna Makris and Frannie Zellman. Their book grew out of a poetry workshop at the 2006 annual convention of the National Association to Advance Fat Acceptance, a civil rights organization celebrating its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. The poets are donating their royalties to NAAFA.

“I truly, deeply, authentically believe that fat is beautiful,” Owens writes in the biographical section of *Fat Poets Speak*. “I find rolls, bulges, teddy-bear tummies, squishy and dimpled thighs, softly padded knees, delicately draped ankles, undulating bee-hinds, and shining, round faces to be more beautiful than anything I’ve seen slither out of Hollywood. Fat people are parades of tactile sensation: warm, soft, and giving. I find a particular kind of beauty and strength in fat people that I just don’t find anywhere else.”

Owen recently earned a Ph.D. in sociology from the University of California at Santa Cruz and teaches at a local community college. Her co-author Kathy Barron has a B.A. in English from the University of Michigan, ran her own health food store, worked as a bodyworker, energy healer and caregiver, and now is pursuing her dream of writing. Anne S. Kaplan is a Certified Personal Business and Life Coach, a “recovering scientist” with a Ph.D. in neuroscience, and a former computer programmer and consultant. Corinna Makris is the proprietress of ThisLushLife.com, an online plus-size clothing/living resource. Frannie Zellman (who edited *Fat Poets Speak*) has an M.A. in creative writing from Boston University and is also the author of the novel *FatLand*, published by Pearlson Press in January 2009.

*Fat Poets Speak: Voices of the Fat Poets Society* (May 6, 2009, Pearlson Press, \$15.95) is available from Amazon.com, Barnesandnoble.com, Powells.com and other online retailers, as well as directly from the publisher at [www.pearlsong.com](http://www.pearlsong.com).

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