



NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE POETRY SOCIETIES, INC.

An educational and literary organization dedicated to the writing and appreciation of poetry in America.

Strophes

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www.nfspd.com

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President's Message



Dear NFSPS Poets:

I'm delighted to let you all know—though many of you have already heard—that Natasha Trethewey has agreed to be the new Honorary Chancellor of NFSPS. Natasha Trethewey, as you know, is Poet Laureate of the United States, as well as Poet Laureate of the State of Mississippi, so it's a remarkable year for her, as it is a remarkable accomplishment for us as a national organization.

I first met Natasha when she applied for an assistant professor position in my department, back in the 1990s, and we were colleagues for several years before her blossoming career led her elsewhere. She was (and is) a young woman of particular elegance, with an enchanting reading voice. I've had the chance to hear her read several times—from her much-taught *Domestic Work*, from her acclaimed *Bellocq's Ophelia*, from her Pulitzer prize winning *Native Guard*, and, this spring, from her most mature work, *Thrall*, which comes out this month. Her voice is a smooth contralto, and the control with which she finishes and holds a last line, a last word, is remarkable.

What I remember best about meeting Natasha for the first time was her peculiar kind of nervousness. All new assistant professors are nervous, of course, but Natasha's nervousness conveyed itself in an oddly assured way that I didn't see in other interviewees. The way she shook your hand, the way she spoke, the way she dressed, always just a touch more than one would have expected. As though she was so used to the fact of her nervousness that it had ceased to get in her way. As years went by, I started to realize—or perhaps I realized it even then—that Natasha's biracial inheritance had helped to produce this nervousness, a kind of constant "betweenness." Living between what were (and still are) very different worlds of experience had given rise to a young woman who was *practiced* at nervousness, and so had grown almost comfortable, almost casual with it, like the ambivalent fish in these lines from "Flounder":

*A flounder, she said, and you can tell
'cause one of its sides is black.*

*The other side is white, she said.
It landed with a thump.
I stood there watching that fish flip-flop,
switch sides with every jump.*

I think that Natasha's long-accepted sense of "betweenness," of the need to "switch sides" is part of what has made her such a powerful poet. All poets, perhaps, have to navigate this philosophical terrain of negative capability, of being able to shift between worlds and perspectives without holding one superior to another; all of us, as we enter the world of our writing, have to adopt the ways of what Keats calls "the chameleon poet"—almost becoming someone or something else—in order to write effectively and movingly about what our hearts have witnessed. Natasha Trethewey, growing up both black and white in a racially divided America, had this kind of betweenness thrust upon her, and she continues to follow it through in the most spectacular way. It's a privilege to know her, and a special privilege to introduce her to all of you as our new Honorary Chancellor.

Jeremy M. Downes ~ 30th NFSPS President

2013 NFSPS COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY LEVEL POETRY COMPETITION

A Great Opportunity for Undergraduate Poets

The College/University Level Poetry Awards are a great opportunity for poetically talented undergraduates. There are two awards—the Edna Meudt Memorial Award and the Florence Kahn Memorial Award. Hence, there are two winners to the competition. Each award recipient receives \$500 plus publication of his or her winning manuscript as a chapbook, and is given 75 copies of the chapbook to sell or give to friends and family.

The two award recipients are also invited to give a reading of their work at the NFSPS Convention. Each one who accepts this invitation receives a \$300 stipend to offset travel expenses.

To enter the competition, undergraduates must mail four copies of a manuscript of ten poems, plus a completed and notarized application form, to the College/University Poetry Awards Chair between January 1 and February 14, 2013. Complete guidelines, specifying the required length of the poems and format of the manuscript, are on the NFSPS website: nfspd.com.

A panel of three judges will select the two winning manuscripts from among all those submitted that meet the guidelines. The award recipients will be announced by April 15, 2013.

Anyone with questions about the College/University Poetry Awards competition is welcome to email the competition chair, Eleanor Berry: eberry@wvi.com.

NFSPS members, please tell aspiring poets among the college students in your family and circle of friends about this opportunity, and encourage them to enter the competition. Please also tell any college or university creative writing teachers you know about this opportunity for the poets in their undergraduate classes.

NFSPS 2013 NATIONAL CONVENTION

New Mexico State Poetry Society has great things in store for the NFSPS Annual Convention in Albuquerque, NM, next June 13-16. Please check out the "Convention" tab on our website, www.nmpoetry.com for the workshop lineup and speakers, fabulous tour opportunities, and hotel contact information, room rates, and discount code. The hotel has already made numerous bookings for early bird registrants, so don't delay. Exciting news: we will be **filming the winners' readings** at the 2013 Contest Awards. Details on the website. You could be a star—but only if you enter the contests and come to the Convention.

ENCORE COVER PHOTO

The winner of the 2011 Encore cover was Linda Banks of Mesquite, TX. Her photo entitled "Butterfly Moment" was taken in her backyard garden and features a beautiful hot pink zinnia upon which a golden Gulf Fritillary butterfly lit just as she snapped a picture of her zinnia. The photo provided a stunning cover for *Encore*.



**NATIONAL FEDERATION OF
STATE POETRY SOCIETIES, INC.**

Organized October 17, 1959 ~ Mary B. Wall, Founder

Honorary Chancellor: Natasha Trethewey
(Appointment made July, 2012)

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STROPHES

Strophes, the newsletter of the National Federation of State Poetry Societies, Inc., is published four times a year: August (*June 25th) ~ October (*August 25th) ~ January (*November 25th) ~ April (*February 25th). News items and information on contests may be sent via regular mail or e-mail, which is preferred, by authorized members of NFSPS member state societies to:

Paul Ford, *Strophes* Editor
10239 Hickory Pt. Dr., Sandy, UT 84092
pmford3@yahoo.com

Strophes is available without cost to all paid-up members of NFSPS member state societies when mailed/shipped in bulk to the president or other designated person, who is responsible for ordering the number needed by the submission deadline for each issue. Individual subscriptions are \$5.00 a year to cover handling costs. Special orders are mailed separately. To order a single issue: specify the issue ordered, include a #10 SASE and \$1.00 per copy.

* Submission Deadlines

**NFSPS PAST PRESIDENTS
(Presidential Advisors)**

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*Wauneta Hackleman	Nancy Baass
	Russell H. Strauss

* Deceased

MANNINGHAM TRUST STUDENT POETRY CONTEST

Rules: 2013 annual competition

1. There are two divisions: Grade 6-8 (Junior Division) and Grades 9-12 (Senior Division). Each state may submit ten (10) top poems in each division. Poems may have been printed and/or have won previous awards. Contests at state level may have occurred anytime in 2012 or 2013.

2. The competition is open to all USA students in grades 6 – 12. Public, private, and home-schools are eligible for entry by individual NFSPS member states.

3. Submit two copies of each poem. Put the division (junior or senior) in the upper left corner of both copies. One copy must have student's ID in upper right corner. The ID information is student name, school name and address, student grade level, and the student's language arts/English teacher's name. The second copy must not have ID information. Do not send a copy with any other marking - there should be no indication of prior award granted by the state.

4. Each poem must be neatly typed or computer-generated, and have no more than 50 lines. If a poem continues more than one page, staple the pages together. Do not staple the two copies of the poem together. It is suggested that each state representative keep a copy of poems entered.

5. There should be no large or unusual fonts or illustrations. Times New Roman is the suggested font. No font larger than 12 point should be used. Winning poems are scanned for the award anthology and large and/or unusual fonts impede the process.

6. Each entrant must make a declaration of originality. The statement should appear on the bottom of the ID copy only. The form below is acceptable:

I certify that this poem is my original work, and has not been copied in whole or part from any author's poems in print or posted on the Internet.

Signed: _____

7. Separate poems into respective divisions. Within each division separate the ID copy from the anonymous copy meant for judges. Include a cover letter identifying the Manningham (Youth) Chairperson to whom the report on the contests will be mailed.

8. Entries must be received by March 1, 2013.

Send entries to: Budd P. Mahan, 7059 Spring Valley Road, Dallas, TX 75254

Ten prizes will be awarded in each division: First Place - \$75, Second Place - \$50, Third Place - \$40, Fourth Place - \$35, Fifth Place - \$30, and five Honorable Mentions - \$10 each. All winning poems will be published in the Manningham Trust Poetry Student Award Anthology. Winners will receive complimentary copies. The schools of each winning student will receive a complimentary copy for the school library. Notice of winners report will be sent to each state's Manningham (Youth) Chair no later by May 20, 2013. Awards (certificates, checks, anthologies) will also be mailed to the state chairperson. Each state is responsible for distributing prizes to winners and winning schools. The top winning poems will be read to NFSPS members at the Convention held in June 2013.

I look forward to each state's participation in the Manningham Poetry Trust's annual contests. Questions may be directed to the chairperson at the addresses/numbers below.

Budd Powell Mahan

Manningham Trust Student Poetry Awards Chairperson

7059 Spring Valley Road

Dallas, TX 75254

972-788-4944

buddmahan@att.net

2012 STEVENS POETRY MANUSCRIPT COMPETITION GUIDELINES

awarding \$1,000 + publication + 50 books

- 48-70 page poetry manuscript by a single author
- Typewritten or computer printed, NO illustrations
- No author identification anywhere in manuscript
- Pages numbered, no more than one poem per page
- May include previously published poems (acknowledgments on separate sheet)
- Simultaneous and multiple submissions permitted
- Enclosed in a plain file folder and/or held by a manuscript clip, NO staples or binding
- No certified or registered mail; no disks

Include two title pages, one with no author ID, the other with name, address, phone number, email address, and, if applicable, state poetry society membership. Include a table of contents.

Entrants who provide an email address or who enclose a business-size self-addressed, stamped envelope will be notified of the results in January 2013. Manuscripts will be recycled.

Notify us immediately if your manuscript is accepted elsewhere.

All manuscripts will be reviewed for compliance with guidelines and overall quality by the competition chair. Approximately 100 will be sent, without identification or acknowledgments, to an independent judge, who will remain anonymous until the results are announced.

The winning manuscript will be published by the NFSPS Press, and the book will be available for sale at the NFSPS annual convention, on the web, and elsewhere in June 2013.

ADDRESS FOR SUBMISSIONS:

Amy Jo Zook, Chair

NFSPS Stevens Poetry Manuscript Competition

3520 State Rte. 56

Mechanicsburg, OH 43044

SUBMISSION PERIOD: August 1-October 15, 2012 (postmark deadline)

ENTRY FEE: \$20 for NFSPS members, \$25 for nonmembers (Members of state poetry societies affiliated with NFSPS are members.)

PAST JUDGES: David Baker, Michael Dennis Browne, Michael Bugeja, Anne Marx, Sue Brannan Walker, Kenneth Brewer, David Sutherland, Donna Salli, Bruce Eastman, Ruth Berman, Peter Meinke, Lawson Inada, Patricia Fagnoli, Jeff Gundy, Carolyne Wright, Ralph Burns, Lola Haskins, Jessica Garratt

RECENT WINNER: Copies of the current winning volume of the Stevens Poetry Manuscript Competition, Jennifer Habel's *Good Reason*, are available through the NFSPS website.

NFSPS MEMBER SOCIETY NEWS

ALABAMA STATE POETRY SOCIETY will meet at the University of Montevallo October 26-27. For more information, email Joe Whitten: whitten93@windstream.net. Our April meeting was in Fairhope, AL. In July, we sponsored an evening reception at the Alabama Writers' Conclave when it met in Huntsville, AL. After the reception, three Alabama poets, Sue Walker, Sue Scalf, and Andrew Glaze read from their works. ~ Joe Whitten, *President*

ARIZONA STATE POETRY SOCIETY'S President Christy White has a big job keeping track of and informing members and Arizona poets about all the exciting poetry events taking place all over Arizona. Our members are organizing and taking part in many of these events. The Scottsdale Mustang Poetry branch continues to partner with the Belle Art Public Poetry Readings. The last one was for the art installation, "A Tree Grows in Scottsdale." Christy also gave a "Healing Power of Poetry" workshop and reading on July 28th in her hometown of Cadiz, KY at the Janice Mason Museum. One of the local newspapers, the *Kentucky New Era*, out of Hopkinsville, published a nice feature about the event. Christy extends an invitation to poets visiting Arizona to set up a reading or a workshop, or to come to one of the many poetry events. Contact her at cchristy1@prodigy.net. Our big yearly event is our Fall Conference on Saturday, November 17th, hosted this year by the East Valley Poets Branch in Tempe. Contest winners for the Annual ASPS Contest will be announced and read at the conference. Non-members are invited to attend the conference as well. For more info about the conference, visit our website, www.azpoetry.webs.com or "Like" us on Facebook - Arizona State Poetry Society! One of our members, Mikel Weisser, poet and teacher from Kingman, is running for Congress in the recently redrawn District 4. His campaign validates that poets are socially and politically concerned. Lastly, the Arizona State Legislature created the position of Arizona State Poet Laureate in this year's spring session. The Arizona Commission on the Arts will make a call for nominations this fall and the selection process should have candidates for the governor to choose from by early 2013. ~ *Molly Saty, Reporter*

POETS ROUNDTABLE OF ARKANSAS' news is from two of their branches. 1) [Free Verse Poetry Group of Mountain Home](#). This new-to-PRA group has been meeting and growing since 2003. *Expressions*, our 2008 CD of poetry readings, will soon have a second printing and the group is also planning a new CD to be produced in 2013. Members are sponsoring a contest for middle school students in Izard County, AR this fall. They meet weekly. 2) [South Arkansas Poets of the Pines, El Dorado](#). Jim Barton attended NFSPS national convention, reported a good show, enjoyed by all. Jim also is involved in planning and promoting the upcoming convention at Albuquerque, NM next year. Mildred McKinney has been named a person of both distinction and historical significance by the City of Camden and Ouachita County, AR. A plaque will be placed to honor Mildred's life-long, far-reaching dedication

to community leadership. Helene Lambert received cover-page recognition and a focus article in the June 12th issue of *Bella Magazine*. Helene was recognized for her achievements in art and art education, and for her dedication to leading through community involvement. December 2011, Janet Ryan published an elegant chapbook of poetry, "This Woman's Life, Written". The branch is also working with their local library, SAPOP, on a "Come Together at the Library" where members and non-members alike read poems. One was scheduled for Saturday, August 25th with more to come. ~ *Laura Loughridge, Reporter*

CONNECTICUT POETRY SOCIETY poets were pleased to receive a number of awards in the NFSPS contests. We welcome members from other states to read our quarterly newsletters at www.ct-poetry-society.org. Past President Christine Beck conducted a workshop in June at the Greater New Haven Chapter on how to get your poetry published. You can read her article at www.ChristineBeck.net. Many members of CPS participated in the 20th anniversary celebration of the Sunken Garden Poetry Festival at the Hillstead Museum in Farmington, CT, including playing roles of famous poets in an original play, "The Haunted Shelves of Hillstead." ~ *Christine Beck, Past President*

GEORGIA POETRY SOCIETY'S quarterly meeting was hosted by the Burns Club of Atlanta on July 21, 2012, at the Burns Cottage in Atlanta. A replica of poet Robert Burns' birthplace in Alloway, Scotland, the cottage was built in 1911. Three Burns Club members, Edward T. Morgan, George McClellan, and Walker Chandler, recounted the life of Robert Burns through stories, poems, and song. GPS members were encouraged to write poems in the Burns' style. Those who read were judged and critiqued by the Burns Club members. Francie Rountree won with her poem, "In the Wee Town of Helen". The 2012 Reach of Song was unveiled and Awards for Excellence were presented for winning poems. First place was awarded to Maren Mitchell for her poem, "Not the Poem". A second place tie was awarded to Ron Self for the poem, "Nail with Shadow", and Russell Streur for "Six Roses". Ellouise Connolly won third place for "Trimming Roots". Ann Gillespie's poem, "Reflection", and Elizabeth Howells' "Beach Glass on Lake Michigan" tied for honorable mention. All GPS members whose poems placed in the recent NFSPS contest were recognized. The featured speaker for the day, Anne Webster, read from her book, *A History of Nursing*.

The poetry collection was a nominee for the 2009 National Book Award. Prior to its publication, Webster spent twenty-five years working in hospital critical care, emergency departments, and nursing administration. Her poetry has appeared in many literary journals and anthologies, including *The Southern Poetry Review*, the *New York Quarterly*, *Intensive Care: More Poetry and Prose by Nurses*, and *The Poetry of Nursing: Poems and Commentaries of Leading Nurse Poets*. Her essays and poems have been finalists in the Faulkner Words & Music Competition. She is currently completing a second book of poems, as well as a memoir. ~ *DuAnne Royall Kaiser, Reporter*

MISSISSIPPI POETRY SOCIETY'S Fall Mini-Festival will be held at Belhaven University in Jackson on October 20, 2012. Mississippi Humanities Scholar Steve Deaton will present a program on the history of ballads, and *Mississippi Milestone*, our 5-year anthology celebrating the 80th anniversary of MPS will be released. The 2013 Poet of the year will be named and winners in the 2012 Fall contest will be announced. ~ *Wynne H. Alexander, MPS Secretary*

NEW JERSEY POETRY SOCIETY will celebrate National Poetry Day on Saturday October 20, 2012 with a workshop to be led by Therese Halscheid on the topic of list poems. Ceremony awards contests will be on this same day. ~ *Edith R. Kaltovich, President*

OHIO POETRY ASSOCIATION is producing a major anthology planned for publication in March, 2013. Submissions are being accepted from September 1 through October 31, 2012. Only OPA members can submit and anyone can join. Poet, Steve Abbott, retired professor from Columbus State Community College, will edit this collection. For more information, see: ohiopoetryassociation.org. ~ *Mark Hersman, President*

POETRY SOCIETY OF OKLAHOMA has had a great 2012 so far. In March, we held our Annual Spring Awards and honored Carol Lavelle Snow of Tulsa, OK as our society's Poet Laureate. April was a time of celebration as National Poetry month was honored. Our parliamentarian worked hard and we were able to meet with the mayor of Oklahoma City, Mick Cornett. He proclaimed April National Poetry Month for Oklahoma City in front of the city council which was also broadcast. He presented a certificate of proclamation to Rob Burgess (President), Trina Lee (Vice President), Patti Koch (Parliamentarian), and Delores Walker

(Oklahoma Youth Lore representative). It was a fantastic day. We were also honored with a Resolution from the Oklahoma House of Representatives making April National Poetry Month for the state. State Representative Sally Kern presented the resolution. We celebrated the month with our Oklahoma Youth Lore Poetry & Art Contest. This was held at Southern Nazarene University where approximately 200 people attended honoring students with their poetry and art about Oklahoma. In July, we held our annual Summer Workshop. Our speaker was Jordan Burch of Jordan Burch Music in Oklahoma City. We had a great time as Jordan shared his lyrics and his music with us. We also had sessions of writing poetry as well as some poetry awards. This October we are excited to celebrate with our centenarian, Maxine Austin, as she celebrates her 102nd birthday. ~ *Rob Burgess, President*

OREGON POETRY ASSOCIATION is now planning its Fall Conference, to be held in Medford on October 5-7, with a "Harvest" theme. This will be the first conference held in southern Oregon since 2007. The Rogue Valley Unit is hosting, and is deep into planning the local poets' presentations and a history walk to be conducted by Ben Truwe and Dave Harvey on Sunday morning, for poets who want to walk and write. On Friday afternoon, four accomplished local poets—Gary Lark, Amy Miller, and Vince and Patty Wixon—will offer individual consulting sessions on poems submitted in advance. Later in the conference, they will discuss their writing processes and development as well as read samples of their work in a "Poetry Conversation" with all participants. The featured poets will be Henry Hughes and Maxine Scates, both past winners of the Oregon Book Award, who will read from their recent books and conduct workshops. At the conference luncheon, former Oregon Poet Laureate Lawson Inada will be honored, and awards for the fall contest will be announced—including one for a collaborative work by two or more poets. Winners in this category will split the prize money between them. OPA's five units are continuing regular activities and initiating some new projects. Most have monthly meetings, some with critiquing. The Portland and Eugene-Springfield units both have reading series. The Portland Unit brings poetry and poets into area nursing homes; the Eugene-Springfield unit, into a local high school. The Mid-Valley Poetry Society, OPA's Salem-area unit, is seeking to involve younger poets by placing poetry boxes in downtown coffee houses and organizing a poetry slam. One of its members has begun a weekly show of poetry and jazz on a local non-profit public

radio station. Its inaugural program was a tribute to the unit's co-founder and co-chair, Virginia Corrie-Cozart, a poet long active in Oregon who passed away this summer. ~ *Eleanor Berry, President, and Dave Harvey, Secretary*

POETRY SOCIETY OF TEXAS' Summer Conference was hosted by the McKinney-based Mockingbird Poetry Society, a PST chapter, July 19-21, in nearby Allen, at the Hilton Garden Inn. Co-Chairmen of "The Wide, Wide World of Poetry" were Jimmie Inez Sessions, Shannon Williams, and Beth Ayers. Presenting a variety of programs and workshops were Budd Powell Mahan, Loretta Diane Walker, Dr. Rachel Tudor, J. Paul Holcomb, Aalaya Cooper (a recent high school graduate), Alan Birkelbach, Karla K. Morton, Jan Seale, Jerry McElveen, Dr. Amanullah Khan, Gene Perkins, and members of the Mockingbird Chapter. Michael Baldwin, winner of PST's 2011 Edwin M. Eakin Memorial Book Publication Award, read selections from his book, *Scapes*. A "Mockingbird Moment" was shared with attendees when the Mockingbirds honored their oldest member, Inez Grimes, mother of Jimmie Inez Sessions, with poems and a gift. The dinner speaker on Thursday night was renowned poet, Naomi Shihab Nye, an NFSPS Honorary Chancellor, whose mother, Miriam Shihab, was in attendance. That night, Lavanya Desai and Samee Warriar, skilled in traditional Indian dance, performed a dance specially choreographed for PST. On Friday night, the dinner speaker was Scott Yarbrough, while musical entertainment was provided by James Duffer, a Collin College student. At Friday's luncheon, musical entertainment was provided by high school students, Josh Durkin and Scott Bartek. The Mockingbird Chapter sponsored a poetry contest and the winner was Budd Powell Mahan. The PST-sponsored "You Be the Judge" contest was won by Valerie Martin Bailey. PST President Catherine L'Herisson, head of the PST Delegation to the 2012 NFSPS Convention in Merrillville, IN, gave a brief report on that recently held event. ~ *Nancy Baass*

WYOPOETS extend their congratulations to A. Rose Hill of Sheridan, WY. Her poem, "Hands", was awarded seventh honorable mention in the NFSPS William Stafford Memorial Contest. Rose is a member of Wyoming Writers, Sheridan Range Writers, and WyoPoets. Her poetry has been published in a variety of venues including the Women Writing the West series, *Leaning into the Wind* and *Woven on the Wind*. Wyoming Writers, Inc. announced the winners of their annual writing contest in

June. Among the winning poems were Christine Valentine's traditional poem, "At the Spring, Alone", as well as two poems by Cornelius Kelly, "AMTRAK" and "September Sonnet". 'Cork,' as he is known by his fans, lives in Pinedale, WY and has read his work at venues as far away as Nicaragua and Spain. On June 25, Texas poet, Naomi Shihab Nye, presented a reading and workshop at the Eden-Farson Community Center in western Wyoming. The Equality State Book Festival was held in Casper, WY on September 14-15 with a long list of renowned writers and poets on their workshop roster for this two-day event. For information about poetry events in Wyoming go to our website, www.wyopoets.com. ~ *Lee Ann Siebken, Reporter*

CONTESTS

POETS ROUNDTABLE ARKANSAS sponsors three contests annually. See www.poetsroundtable.com for deadlines and rules.

MISSISSIPPI POETRY SOCIETY holds two contests each year, Spring and Fall, in conjunction with our festivals. For rules and information write to Jeanne S. Kelly, 315 Church St., Madison, MS 39110. Email: jskelly04@gmail.com (put "Contest Information" in the subject line), or consult the MPS website www.misspoetry.net.

MISSOURI STATE POETRY SOCIETY's Winter contest deadline: Postmark February 15, 2013. Two copies of each entry, category number and name in upper left corner of both copies, poet's name and address in upper right corner of one copy. If member, put "Missouri State Poetry Society" below your address, otherwise put "non-member". 40 or fewer lines. May be previously published if poet retains the rights to the poem; may enter each category as many times as poet wishes. Categories: 1) rhymed verse or blank verse, 2) free verse, 3) humorous verse, 4) any form, winter subject, 5) poet's choice, MSPS members only (any form, any subject). Members pay \$1 per entry. Non-members pay \$2 per entry. Payable to MSPS. Send to Bill Lower, 21010 S. Hwy 245, Fair Play, MO 65649. SASE or email address on a 3x5 index card for list of winners.

POETS & FRIENDS OF SPRINGFIELD, MO (a chapter of MSPS) is conducting their 13th Annual Poetry Contest with a deadline of November 30, 2012. Contest categories: 1) Free Verse Poems, Any Subject, 40 lines/fewer; 2) Formal Structured Poems, Any Subject, 40 lines/fewer, Classical forms

and forms must be named; 3) Contemporary Form Poetry, Poet's Choice, 40 lines/fewer, Modern form or theme poetry; 4) Humorous Poems, Poet's Choice, 40 lines/fewer; 5) Haiku or Senryu, Haiku-Nature 5-7-5 syllables, Senryu-Man&Nature; 6) Members Only, Poet's Choice, 120 lines/fewer; 7) Student Divisions: Division I - Middle School (6-8), Division II - High School (9-12). Prizes: 1st place \$25, 2nd place \$15, 3rd place \$10. Honorable Mentions in each category. For information on categories 1-6, contact Marsha Becco: MJBecco@hotmail or call 417-818-5056. For specific instructions on the Student Divisions, contact Don DePriest: dondepriest85@yahoo.com or call 417-848-4376.

NEW MEXICO STATE POETRY SOCIETY will have quarterly contests in 2012 to feed our "get-ready kitty" for the 2013 Convention. Only \$1 per poem up to 15 poems; half of the entry fees pot (up to \$100 per contest) to be divided by 3 winners. Publication in early 2013. Remaining deadline: January 1st, 2013. For themes and contest rules, visit us at www.nmpoetry.org and click on Contests. While you're there, check out the rest of our new website.

POETRY ARTICLES

Eight Tips For Writing Poetry

Valerie Martin Bailey, *Encore* Editor

1) Read

Read lots of poetry—both classic and contemporary. Reading all kinds of poetry will help you find your own voice. Your confidence will grow as you learn what you like and don't like. Read books to help you write poetry. *Writing Poems* by Robert Wallace is great. And though it's not about poetry, you'll benefit by reading *Write Tight* by William Brohaugh. For online help, try writersdigest.com or winningwriters.com. Avoid scam poetry contest Web sites. They are not really interested in your poetry, just your money.

2) Observe

A careful observation of the world around you—nature, animals, people, and events—will give you plenty of material for poems. The honest expression of your feelings will give those poems life. It is not the scope of your experience, but the intensity of observation and emotion that makes poetry out of what you know. In his foreword to Robert Wallace's book, *Writing Poems*, X.J. Kennedy says, "To find raw material for poems you don't need to backpack to Katmandu—some have done so and returned knowing less than Emily Dickinson knew from watching hummingbirds and garter snakes in the meadow across the road...."

Sensitivity to observations and experiences, fresh metaphors, and lively verbs will enable you to create appealing poems. As you observe, practice describing things without resorting to clichés. When you think of a great metaphor, make a note of it for later use.

3) Write

This sounds simplistic, but if you don't sit down and tackle it, it won't happen. Whether you work better at a computer or with pen and paper—just do it. The computer is faster and gives quick access to online helps, but pen and notebook can be taken anywhere to jot down impressions. Use both: take notes and do stream of consciousness writing with pen and paper and then do the actual poem building—shaping, sculpting, revising, and polishing on the computer. If you don't have a computer, don't worry, poets were writing long before computers were invented. I've noticed that most of today's prolific young poets have notebooks full of handwritten notes and poems. Perhaps computers are for old folks.

4) Beat writer's block

If you have writer's block, write stream of consciousness. In this exercise, don't lift your pen from the paper; your pen must keep moving as you think. Don't try to focus on a subject; you are blocked because you are trying too hard to focus. Let uncontrolled thinking flow from your subconscious to your pen. Don't be afraid to ramble; what you write may not make sense at first, but from the verbal chaos an idea will eventually emerge. Ideas will breed other ideas. Your mind will wander in all directions, and some of the best ideas are found on those meandering paths. You can also help break writer's block by going back to tip #1—read poetry.

5) Shape and sculpt your poem

Take the idea your subconscious produces and do a focused stream of consciousness. Think of all the facets of your basic idea. Now shape your poem. Poetry is characterized by its economy of words, its choice of the very best words, its conciseness, its descriptiveness, and emotional impact. Take out your mental chisel and begin to chip off everything that doesn't say exactly what you want to say. This is the early stage in the creation of your poem. You are bringing order out of chaos, and it can be a messy process. But don't worry, the poem will appear.

6) Let your poem define itself

Some poets scorn rhyming, metered poems. They despise being confined by rules, referring to academics and formalists as

"McPoets" to show their disdain for what they think are "cookie cutter" poems—stiff, without passion. Conversely, some formalists say free verse isn't real poetry and those who write it do so because they aren't skilled enough to learn the rules of rhyme and meter. Neither view is correct, yet both have grains of truth. Rules can sometimes inhibit a poem. For years I wrote only rhyming, metered poetry because that's what I learned in school. Now I write both styles. I learned the rules well, and I enjoy writing sonnets and some other forms, but rhyme can be trite and forced. If it doesn't flow naturally, it's awful. Use rules to enhance, not inhibit, your poem. I love writing free verse; it can be beautifully poetic, but I've read as much bad free verse as I have bad metered rhyme. Good and bad poetry is written in both styles. Your poem will decide what it wants to be. If it seems to fall into rhyming meter, go with it; work on it. If the words begin to come freely and unpatterned, go with that.

7) Cool and revise

A wine taster clears his palate before tasting again. Take a break from your poem for an hour, a day, or a week. See your poem from a fresh perspective by clearing your mind. When you return to it, you will probably see things you want to change. I know a poet who truly believes his words are so inspired they don't need any work. He presents them exactly as they come to him without revision. His confidence is great, but his poetry is mediocre. Once in a great while, a poem falls into place and needs little or no revision, but this is quite rare. The few times this has happened to me, I've realized that I had already done a great deal of mental revising before I ever put it on paper. A good poem can only get better with sculpting and polishing.

8) Keep a positive, teachable attitude

Criticism is hard to take. We tend to protect our poems as if they were our children; indeed they are our brain children. Ask someone whose opinion you value to critique your poem. Don't be arrogant or sensitive; listen to criticism with an open mind. Take what is valid; discard what isn't. If a friend says your child's nose is too big and suggests plastic surgery, that's a matter of opinion that must be considered carefully. But if your doctor says your child's vision is impaired and prescribes glasses—you get the glasses. Be teachable, but don't let anyone rewrite your poem and silence your unique voice. Don't be afraid of who you are, and don't give up. If you are not satisfied with your first attempts, keep trying. Never stop learning, and you will succeed.

Poetry Has a Story

Diane Glancy, NFSPS 3rd Vice President

Poetry is an old story. It is fundamental as breath.
It is the heart-song of our lives.
What can I say about poetry?
It is the linking of our thoughts into the rhythm of language
and the imagery of our visible world.

Returning to Kansas from Texas on I-35 one evening
the setting sun lit the autumn trees on fire.
Not a bonfire, but the way a dark room is lit by a fireplace
with a presence that is tangible.
The russet leaves were more than they were by themselves.
They had a golden glow, but I don't like the word, golden,
nor glow, for that matter. But how to say what it was like.
That is poetry. The conundrum of it.
The puzzle. The hurdle of it.
The drafts it takes to get there.
The struggle to get to that experience on the road
that connects the outer world to the inner world
and then to the other worldliness of the incandescent light on the leaves.
Why is it so hard?—taking the sun by the hand through the leaves,
lighting them into a russet fire.
How can brown come alive like it did with the evening sun upon it?
That is the work of poetry.

Poetry has a story. It is a journey of purpose.
It is like a small animal digging in the leaves,
foraging for an acorn of some thought
that will connect to another thought.

Poetry asks, *How do I find a way to say it?*
It is an interior landscape where little is known
but a lonely thought reaching to another.

Now poetry is a flight through the air—
once I lived by a bakery in Minnesota. Each year
the cardinal built a nest of twigs, bits of string and bakery papers
in the bush outside the window in my study.
Poetry brings together materials like that.
It finds its way through the world.
Each poem is a nest that contains words.
Poetry is a vacuum that calls the poem to it.
Poetry is a crow that mimics what it sees.
How can I tie these loose thoughts together?
What is it I have to say? What words do I use to make a nest?
What journeys fly from there?

I think poetry is mainly thinking.
What do I have to say to record an observation of thought
or an experience or a reaction to a circumstance?
Poetry has to have a story—
the story of poetry is a story of its being.
Its subtext. The reason for its being on the page.

Poetry uses a form of many forms.
What epigraph could I use for mustering?—
to release the poem in the agency of its thought.

Poetry is a long journey on an interstate where the sun lights the trees.
It finds turns in a straight road and straight places in a bending road.
When all is dark, poetry is the twinkling of an interior star.

Exercising the Muscle of Materialism and Particularity

Christine Beck, past president, Connecticut Poetry Society

This past August, I attended a workshop sponsored by the Sunken Garden Poetry Festival at the Hillstead Museum in Farmington, CT. Tony Hoagland led a three-day workshop for teachers of poetry. As he says in his book on the craft of “real sofistikashun,” “power is a source of pleasure, as innately human as sex or food. And as readers [writers and teachers] too, don't we know the pleasure of being subject to the power of another?” Tony Hoagland is not a big man. His power comes not from physical girth, but from his enthusiasm for and dedication to the power of poetry. As he said “Contemporary American poetry is actually one thing I feel patriotic about.” For the thirty-two teachers and writers clustered around a conference table in a barn, Hoagland exerted a welcome power that stirred image and association. His writing prompts literally pulled from us words, lines, and stanzas that surprised, delighted, and occasionally frightened us.

Hoagland is quick-witted and irreverent. He said: “Don't give your readers ‘good poems’ just because they are good for them. Better to rot their teeth now and develop good dietary habits later” and “I see a student and what I think is ‘You should practice reading so you won't be embarrassed reading the 12 steps at your AA meeting’, and what I say is ‘So, how's that Geometry coming along?’”

Hoagland suggested we begin by using words with “sonic appeal,” names of specific places or things that create surprise, pleasure, and connotation just by the sound of the word itself. He suggested we abandon logic and sense, move toward free association and the pleasure of the sounds of words. He didn't mean that poems formed this way will be complete—merely that writing from the imagination rather than sense will unlock creative energy and lead to better writing. His first prompt came from a poem that began “All this romance/is just Zanzibar.” How does Zanzibar relate to romance? It sounds exotic, fun, and zippy, with its two “zs.” He asked us to substitute an abstract noun for “romance” and a place with sonic appeal for “Zanzibar.” For example, “All this conversation is just Milwaukee.”

After the conference, I reviewed some of my existing poems, looking for places to “name drop,” so to speak. I added a line “from Albuquerque to Lawrenceville” to one of my poems. Hoagland's approach helped me to substitute “sonic” for “sense” which helps my craft in two ways. First, it gives the reader something to do. In other words, the reader gets to free associate with the sound of a word like Tucumcari and bring those associations to the poem. Second, it helps me practice the art of restraint, of saying less and allowing what is not said to resonate with the reader. For a “connect the dots” writer like me, practicing Hoagland's suggestions allows me to erase some of the dots.

In various ways over the next three days, we practiced exercising the “muscle of materialism and particularity.” One time, Hoagland asked us to write a four-line poem with specific items (weather, a movie, etc) in each line. Then we each read one line of our poem around the room, as we created what has been called an “exquisite corpse.” (The idea is that each writer adds one line to a poem by reading only the line immediately before his, kind of the poet's version of the old game “telephone.”) Even though the lines didn't make “sense,” we definitely were in our “pleasure center.”

Although the workshop was designed for teachers, we wrote poems based on prompts as would our own students. Because the prompts were short and specific, I could imagine using them as “warm up” exercises in a poetry workshop. The energy that is

released will carry us through poetry critique. I left with good beginnings for fifteen poems—often what I write in a full semester in graduate school. You can read more at Tony Hoagland's "Five Powers Poetry" at www.fivepowerspoetry.com or www.facebook.com/TheFivePowersofPoetry. He will be teaching at the annual Palm Beach Poetry Festival in January and is a speaker at the Association of Writers and Writing Programs conference in Boston next March 6-9, 2013. www.awpwriter.org

A Challenge For Our Members

Amy Jo Zook, Stevens Manuscript
Competition Chair

The last award I gave as I was ending my "career" as Special Awards chairman was for states to tell me whether they had access to an archival permanent library where books by members and state groups could be stored for the future use of scholars. Several states, including Oregon, New Jersey, Michigan, Wyoming, Mississippi, Ohio, and Texas said they did. They then were out of the "competition," having already achieved the desired result. Only Colorado reported that they have currently no such type of collection, and thus they "won" the award, a challenge to see if such could be begun in their state.

My reasoning is simple: as many of you know, libraries all over the country are currently removing books from their shelves to make room for more computers, to make the cost of purchase and cataloging less, and simply to be "in the moment." These books are going to remote storage, to lesser libraries, or—horribly—simply to the dumpster. As an organization with four contests a year that all result in books, and with our state affiliates doing mostly the same, we are obviously a group of people who take actual physical books seriously, and do not want to see ours end up in oblivion. Our individual members have the same impulse, to judge by the books everywhere displayed and for sale in the NFSPS convention book room.

Many states did not answer my call for reports. I want to ask all of you from states I did not name above to check your own state for the existence of a library that archives books in suitable surroundings, making them accessible to scholars but not allowing them to circulate so they cannot be "lost" by careless readers. If there is not such a place, who better than you to lead the call for one? I want my books to last longer than I do, and I imagine most of you do also.

POETRY EVENT

NFSPS poets, plan ahead for an awe-inspiring weekend in southern Utah next spring. On Friday, March 22, 2013, POETRY IN the PARK now in its 4th year, will feature Utah's new Poet Laureate Lance Larsen to help you find and develop your poetic voice in beautiful Zion National Park. Make plans to explore the park's majestic red rock cliffs and impressive natural beauty. Stay nearby in St. George, UT (45 minutes away) with its new regional airport or fly into Las Vegas, NV. Participants are limited to 30 poets for this workshop from 9 am to 4 pm that includes an easy nature walk along the Virgin River guided by Naturalist Michael Plyler. Held at the historic Zion Nature Center, you'll love this time away from life's pressures to fill your well, write poetry, and picnic with new friends. Cost of \$60 (\$48 for UTSPS or ZNPF members) includes a free entrance to the park, snacks provided; please bring your own sack lunch. Presented in partnership with Zion Canyon Field Institute and Zion National Park Foundation; partially funded by the Utah State Poetry Society, Utah Division of Arts and Museums, and the National Endowment for the Arts. For more information see www.poetry-in-the-park.com. In conjunction with POETRY IN the PARK, make March 22-23, 2013 a complete writers' weekend paradise by attending the annual Redrock Writers' Seminar in the historic St George, UT Opera House. Featured faculty will include Lance Larsen, Utah's Poet Laureate, Maurine Haltiner, former Utah Poet of the Year, and Janice Brooks, journalist and freelance writer. Contest awards for the prestigious national Chaparral Poetry Forum will be presented during the seminar. See www.redrockwriters.org for more information.

For those not familiar with Utah's Poet Laureate Lance Larsen, he is a professor of English at Brigham Young University, NEA Fellow in Poetry, and an award-winning author of several poetry collections: *Genius Loci*, *Backyard Alchemy*, *In All Their Animal Brilliance*, and *Erasable Walls*.

IN MEMORIAM

Sybella Beyer-Snyder, Newark, NJ, 7-2-21 / Inverness, FL, 3-9-12, served on the NFSPS College/University Competition committee beginning in 1995, ending as chairman 2002-2004. She also served on the NFSPS board for several years as Publicity Chair and ending her years on the board as 2nd Vice Chancellor 2002-2004. She was a member of the Florida State Poets Association since 1984, and serve on its board over the years as membership chair, anthology editor, contest chair, and often as co-convention chair. She was a Florida State Poets Association annual delegate to the NFSPS convention from 1999 through 2003. She was Associate Editor of *Harp-Strings Poetry Journal* from its inception in 1989 and Assistant Editor of *Poets' Forum Magazine* from 1995 until her health forced her to resign both these positions in 2011. Sybella was an award-winning poet in state and national competitions and author of *African Memories*, volumes 1 and 2, and *Across the Span of Time*.

STROPHES CONTRIBUTORS

Thanks to all who took time to prepare and submit information for this issue. It is an honor to be able to share your activities and insights with *Strophes* readers across the country and, via the *Strophes* link on nfsp.com, with others around the world.
~ Paul Ford, Editor