



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: Poetry & Love & Death



*Love is not all: it is not meat nor drink
Nor slumber nor a roof against the rain;
Nor yet a floating spar to men that sink
And rise and sink and rise and sink again;*

In one of many brilliant sonnets, Edna St. Vincent Millay reminds us that *Love cannot fill the thickened lung with breath, / Nor clean the blood, nor set the fractured bone.* Apart from the poem's keen intellect and shivering admissions, this poem has a great deal of personal relevance for me. It's the poem I most often heard my parents reciting to each other again and again, exchanging line for line, in what turned out to be the last years and months and weeks of my mother's life. It's one of the poems, along with my mother's own, that my father, my brothers, my sisters and I read to her during those last difficult days in early July, and at our celebration of her life.

Like love, perhaps, poetry makes nothing happen. It is not food or water, not sleep or shelter. Like our love for others, it brings us no income worth speaking of. And yet in its best articulations, poetry is love, our own small mash-notes to our loves, a record and a testament of what Frost called *a lover's quarrel with the world.*

The death of a loved one changes the shape of our world, our little zodiac of consciousness, in ways that are hard to measure except through our own brokenness. We stumble through our lives, trying to find the pattern again, trying to patch the crazy quilt together after so many pieces have scattered. We are lost in times like these, as Millay says, *where many a man is making friends with death / Even as I speak, for lack of love alone.* Or in Williams' phrasing, *men die miserably every day / for lack of the news to be found in poetry.*

And yet the pattern coheres; not a floating spar to keep us from sinking again, not something that will save our lives. A love-letter or a book of poems is too thin to stop the assassin's bullet. And yet it is exactly this insubstantial love and poetry that saves what is more important than our lives, this patterned exchange—of voices, rhythms, emotions, constellated harmonies—without which we cannot exist as our selves. Millay's vision, its quiver of uncertainty, is exact and elegant:

*It well may be that in a difficult hour,
Pinned down by pain and moaning for release,
Or nagged by want past resolution's power,
I might be driven to sell your love for peace,
Or trade the memory of this night for food.
It well may be. I do not think I would.*

Jeremy M. Downes ~ 30th NFSPS President

2014 NFSPS COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY LEVEL POETRY COMPETITION

An Exceptional Opportunity for Undergraduate Poets

Through its programs, NFSPS offers recognition and publication to poets of all ages and at all stages of development. A particularly exciting program is the College/University Level Poetry Competition, which offers two awards for college undergraduates.

These two awards—the Edna Meudt Memorial Award and the Florence Kahn Memorial Award—are given for manuscripts of ten poems each. Each award recipient receives \$500 plus publication of his or her winning manuscript as a chapbook. Each winner is also given 75 copies of the chapbook to sell or give to friends and family.

Both award recipients are invited to read from their work at the NFSPS Convention and offered a \$300 stipend to offset travel expenses.

Please help spread the word about this exceptional opportunity for poetically talented undergraduates. Encourage any aspiring poets among the college students in your family and among your friends to enter the competition. And tell any college or university creative writing teachers you know about this opportunity for the poets in their undergraduate classes.

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, 2014. A panel of three judges will select the two winning manuscripts from among all those submitted that meet the guidelines. The two award recipients will be announced by April 18, 2014, and their chapbooks will be published in time for the 2014 NFSPS Convention.

Complete submission guidelines for the College/University Level Poetry Competition are on the NFSPS website at www.nfspd.com/scholarship.htm. The required application form can be downloaded from there. Anyone with questions about the competition is welcome to email the competition chair, Eleanor Berry: eberry@wvi.com.

NFSPS 2014 NATIONAL CONVENTION IN UTAH

Though we just finished the fabulous convention in Albuquerque, it's already time to start planning to attend the NFSPS 2014 National Convention, hosted by the Utah State Poetry Society, in Salt Lake City, with the theme, RENDEZVOUS OF POETS FOR ALL SEASONS. The convention will run from June 25-29 at the Double Tree Suites, a short two miles from the Salt Lake City Airport. With the newly-completed TRAX light rail line to the airport, you can easily ride into downtown Salt Lake City. This project is funded in part by the Utah Division of Arts and Museums and also by the National Endowment for the Arts.

NFSPS MEMBER SOCIETY NEWS

ALABAMA STATE POETRY SOCIETY, in addition to gearing up for the October meeting at the University of Montevallo, our big news for Alabama is the creation of the Ralph Hammond Poetry Library. The collection will include books donated by the family of the late Ralph Hammond, Alabama Poet Laureate and Past NFSPS President, along with works by other Alabama poets. ASPS members will be invited to donate their own books to the collection, which will be housed at the Bailey Cove Branch of the Huntsville Public Library. A dedication ceremony is planned for February, to coincide with the Society's mid-winter meeting at the Library. ~ *Barry S. Marks, President*

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

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

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

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**NFSPS MEMBER STATE SOCIETIES
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ARIZONA: Arizona State Poetry Society
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Little Rock, AR 72205 ~ cmoran@arml.org

CALIFORNIA: California State Poetry Society
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CONNECTICUT: Connecticut Poetry Society
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GEORGIA: Georgia Poetry Society
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MICHIGAN: Poetry Society of Michigan
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MINNESOTA: League of Minnesota Poets
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OHIO: Ohio Poetry Association
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OKLAHOMA: Poetry Society of Oklahoma
Rob Burgess, President ~ 10608 N. Council Rd. #13,
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UTAH: Utah State Poetry Society
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WYOMING: WyoPoets
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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 \$4.00 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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*Carl Morton	Budd Powell Mahan
*Alice Briley	Doris Stengel
*Wauneta Hackleman	Nancy Baass
	Russell H. Strauss

* Deceased

MANNINGHAM TRUST STUDENT POETRY CONTEST

Rules: 2014 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 2013 or 2014.

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, 2014.

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, 2014. 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, 2014.

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

2013 STEVENS POETRY MANUSCRIPT COMPETITION GUIDELINES

awarding \$1,000 + publication + 50 books

* Except for previous Stevens winners, open to all poets writing in English

* 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 including zip, and phone. If applicable, state poetry society membership, and which state. Include a table of contents.

Enclose a business-size self-addressed, stamped envelope to be notified of the results in January, 2014. 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 Chairman. 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 2014.

ADDRESS FOR SUBMISSIONS:

Amy Jo Zook, Chairman

NFSPS Stevens Poetry Manuscript Competition

3520 State Route 56

Mechanicsburg, OH 43044

Phone 937-834-2666

SUBMISSION PERIOD: August 1-October 15, 2013 (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, Maggie Anderson.

RECENT WINNER: Copies of the current winning volume of the Stevens Poetry Manuscript Competition, Lisa Ampleman's *Full Cry*, are available through the NFSPS website.

NFSPS MEMBER SOCIETY NEWS (continued)

ARIZONA STATE POETRY SOCIETY is pleased to announce that an Arizona Poet Laureate has been appointed by Governor Jan Brewer. Celebrated poet Alberto Alvaro Rios has been named Arizona's inaugural Poet Laureate, establishing the 43rd state Poet Laureate or Writer Laureate in the nation. Governor Brewer stated how proud she was to appoint Rios and celebrate the state's remarkable literary history and future. She charged him to champion

the art of American poetry, and inspire an emerging generation of writers. Rios said of his appointment, "This is a profound honor. A small-town border kid from Nogales to Poet Laureate—this is a good story, an Arizona story." Professor Rios' work has been extensively published over nearly 40 years, including ten books of poetry, three books of stories and a memoir, *Capirotada*, about growing up in a border town; plus works in over 300 journal and 250 anthologies, and numerous national awards. The Arizona Commission on the Arts facilitated the selection process. ASPS President Christy White served on the nomination and review committee. More information on Professor Rios is available at: www.public.asu.edu/~aarrios/. As a tribute to our quality poets, the *2013 ASPS Anthology* has been published and is available for purchase on www.azpoetry.webs.com at a cost of \$5.50 for ASPS members and \$7.50 for non-members, which includes shipping and handling. It is a beautiful, perfect bound book with outstanding poetry from members and will enhance any poetry collection! Our annual Fall Conference will start on the evening of Nov. 15th and continue on Saturday, Nov 16th at the Glendale Community College Student Union. An exciting program is planned and the 2113 ASPS Poetry Contest winners will be announced and read. Winning poems will be printed in a beautiful anthology. Thanks to member Carol Hogan for her work on this project. ~ *Molly Saty, Reporter*

FLORIDA STATE POETS ASSOCIATION has been busy planning our annual Fall Convention to be held October 11-13 in Orlando at the Florida Mall Hotel. This year we are celebrating Poets Laureate including Peter Meinke, Poet Laureate of St. Petersburg, FL, Sue Walker, Poet Laureate of the State of Alabama, and Kevin McEaney, Poet Laureate of Smithfield Valley, NY. They will conduct a panel discussion and lead workshops. The Convention will include other activities such as a poetry writing trip to Gatorland. We invite everyone to come to Orlando and join us in this exciting event. See floridastatepoetsassociation.org for more information. We also welcome our newest chapter, Orlando Area Poets, who have jumped right in and are hosting this convention. Our congratulations and thanks to them. ~ *Mary-Ann Westbrook, Secretary*

GEORGIA POETRY SOCIETY's Summer Quarterly Meeting was hosted by Mercer University of Atlanta. Liz Garcia, editor of *The Reach of Song*, presented this year's anthology. The Awards for Excellence winning poems were read and certificates awarded. The morning

workshop, "Making Your Poems More Marketable," was led by Linda Taylor, who teaches literature and creative writing at Oglethorpe University. Ms. Taylor has published poems in *The Kenyon Review*, *The Massachusetts Review*, *Black Warrior Review*, *The Ohio Review*, *The Georgia Review*, *Tar River Poetry*, *The Journal* (Ohio State University), *Permafrost*, *Nimrod*, *Poetry Northwest*, and other journals. She has won prizes for poetry at the *Nassau Review* and *The Comstock Review*. Her work in the *Indiana Review* was nominated for the Pushcart Prize. In 2008 and 2012, her book manuscript was a semi-finalist in the University of Wisconsin Press poetry first book competition. GPS members submitted poems online to be used during the workshop about learning to self-critique our poems. Robert Lynn read from his new book, *Cancer is So Limited and Other Poems of Faith*. Georgia's NFSPS winners were announced, and their poems were read. The afternoon workshop consisted of small group critique sessions. Members utilized methods discussed in the morning workshop to critique poems that they shared. ~ *DuAnne Royall Kaiser, Reporter*

ILLINOIS STATE POETRY SOCIETY members have been invited to participate in the annual night of the arts event sponsored by the Northbrook Public library on October 4, 2013. Besides the reading of poetry, a juried art show and music will share the venue. On September 20, 2013, ISPS will hold its first board meeting of the new two-year term. Agenda items will include planning a state convention, creating another members' anthology and creating an online member critique opportunity among others ideas and issues. ~ *Susan T. Moss, President*

MASSACHUSETTS STATE POETRY SOCIETY's widely-anticipated summer meeting took place Aug 3 on a glorious day. We shared the verdant space with melodious birds and buzzing bumble bees at the spacious grounds of historic Saugus Iron Works. President Jeanette Maes welcomed new members and guests that included Sandy Hokanson, President of the Georgia Poetry Society. Congratulations went to recent contest winners. Jeanette called for entries to the MSPS National Poetry Day Contest and *2013 Anthology*. She then challenged us with a blast-from-the-past workshop: to bring nursery rhymes into the 21st century. When the results were read aloud, original and unpredictable poems ran the gamut from A as in 'apt' to Z as in 'zany'. Jeanette's assignments typically require one to think first and then write fast, furiously—and fittingly. What fun this was! Bev Barnes,

Director of the Wordcrafters Chapter, informed us of the results of the recent Peabody Art Association event, "Poetry on Canvas." MSPS members were invited to submit poems from which the artists could select one that inspired, then render the subject on canvas. Congrats to our poets whose efforts so inspired! MSPS was well represented among the winners. Following a colorful luncheon feast that featured New England's summer bounty, poets were invited to read their latest efforts and ballyhoo their achievements. The next MSPS meeting will celebrate National Poetry Day and will take place on Saturday, October 5, from 11 am to 3 pm at the Winthrop Public Library. Waterfront CREW Poets will host the gathering. They promise a PowerPoint program that will highlight their Chapter's recent project exploring Ekphrasis then producing diverse Ekphrastic poetry. ~ *Patricia Bruen Tacelli, Reporter*

MISSISSIPPI POETRY SOCIETY's Fall-Mini Fest will be held on October 12th at Belhaven University in Jackson, MS. A pre-festival reading will be held Friday night, Oct. 11, at Julep Restaurant in Jackson. The guest speaker, Paula J. Lambert, of Dublin, OH, holds an MFA in Creative Writing from Bowling Green State University and an MA in English from the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Author of two poetry books and professor for over 20 years, Lambert specializes in Writing as a Healing Process and co-facilitates Peripatetic Poets, a Columbus poetry venue. MPS 2013 Poet of the Year, Patricia Butkovich, will have copies of her book, *A Long-stemmed Rose*, for sale. Contest winners will be announced at the festival. For more details, see the *Magnolia Muse* newsletter at misspoetry.net. ~ *Wynne H. Alexander, Secretary*

OREGON POETRY ASSOCIATION's Fall Conference is scheduled for October 18-20, to be held at Pacific University in Forest Grove. The theme is "Teaching Poetry." We will be collaborating with members of the University's English faculty. Workshop leaders are to be Stephanie Lenox, of Willamette University, and Brent Johnson, of Pacific University. On Saturday night there will be a "Teaching Poetry" panel discussion, which will include a member of the University faculty and teachers of English in various other venues. We have also scheduled four consultants, two of which are from the University faculty, to hold half-hour mentoring sessions on Sunday morning, a recent addition to our conferences which has proven very popular. Entries to the several Fall Contests are already in the judges' hands. Winners will be announced at the Conference. Money has been donated to fund

a writers' retreat on Oregon's south coast, to honor Virginia Corrie-Cozart, who died last year of pancreatic cancer. The retreat, organized by Eleanor Berry, was held in August near Bandon, which was one of Virginia's favorite spots. Twelve poets took part, six in each of two three-day sessions. Erik Muller served as Poet-in-Residence Residence for the entire six days. Eleanor and OPA plan a chapbook of poems that resulted from the retreat, copies to be distributed to participants, donors, and Virginia's husband Dave. The Board held its annual retreat in August, to include unit chairs, the newsletter editor, and the website mistress, Katie Eberhart. She is moving the website to Wordpress in hopes of making it more accessible and flexible. We continue discussions with the Oregon State Library about housing the Oregon Poetry Collection, in case cuts to OSL's budget make it impossible to keep it in their building. We are coordinating reviews of OPA members' books, by OPA members; and searching more actively for volunteers to help with all OPA's programs and projects. ~ *Dave Harvey, Secretary*

POETRY SOCIETY OF TENNESSEE will hold their First Annual Poetry in the Park event together with Inner City South, a local organization who performs Poetry in Motion for various organizations in Memphis and statewide. This is scheduled for Sunday, September 15 from 2-4 p.m. Everyone who wishes to can bring two original poems to read, a blanket, refreshments, and listen to Memphis' own home-grown talent. On the 10th of August we held our summer poetry reading at the home of PST President, JoAn Howerton, where we enjoyed listening to poetry read by fellow members as well as guests. Everyone brought a covered dish of appetizers or desserts and a fun time was had by all. There were 23 attendees, including two potential new members. We are looking forward to our Mid-South Poetry Festival, October 4-5 at the Holiday Inn University Memphis with one of our own members, Janice Hornberg, as guest workshop leader. Please check our website tpstn.org for details. We are looking forward to a great year. ~ *JoAn Robbins Howerton, President*

POETRY SOCIETY OF TEXAS' Summer Conference was held July 12-13, 2013, at the Doubletree by Hilton in Richardson. "A Texas Garden of Verses" was hosted by Chairman Patrick Lee Marshall, PST President Jimmie Inez Sessions, PST Director Beth Ayers and PST past presidents Catherine L'Herisson and Budd Powell Mahan. Presenting a variety of programs and workshops were Pat Stodghill, Cliff and

Brenda Roberts, Pam Boyd, Karona Drummond, Michael Baldwin and Annie Neugebauer, who presented alone and with Beth Honeycutt and Jan Spence. Charlotte Renk was a presenter and was also one of the poets representing various PST chapters who read their poetry throughout the event, the others being Dorothy Dyer, Loretta Burns Vaughan, Barbara Green Powell, Loretta Diane Walker, Lynn Roberts Grice, Sylvia S. Medel, Susan Maxwell Campbell, Barbara Lewie Berry and Jeannette L. Strother. Lynn Lewis, winner of PST's 2012 Edwin M. Eakin Memorial Book Publication Award, read selections from her book, *Somewhere to Come From, Just This Side of Paradise*. On Friday after lunch, Linda Thorsen Bond entertained with an impersonation of Karle Wilson Baker, a PST founder, and after dinner, Blackbeard and the Sea Dogs, a costumed poet/actor troupe, read "pirate poetry." On Saturday, the luncheon speaker was R. Scott Yarborough, who read from his newest book, and the dinner speaker was Nathan Brown, Poet Laureate of Oklahoma. The Conference poetry contest, "You Be There," was won by Barbara Lewie Berry and Wallace Vaughan was the winner of the PST-sponsored "You Be the Judge" poetry contest. ~ *Nancy Baass*

WYOPOETS had two of its members' poems selected for publication in a forthcoming *Globe-Pequot/TwoDot* book. The poems, "Sheep Wagon Saga" by Lee Ann Siebken, and "Riding the Edge of Goodbye" along with "Provenance" penned by Patricia Frolander, will be included in an anthology featuring women's voices from rural America. Patricia was Wyoming Poet Laureate for 2011-2013 and is a long-time member of WyoPoets. Lee Ann is a charter member of WyoPoets and is co-chairman of the current chapbook project. ~ *Lee Ann Siebken, Reporter*

CONTESTS

POETS ROUNDTABLE OF ARKANSAS has a monthly poetry contest for members with the exception of May and October. May is the annual Lily Peters luncheon with three special prizes. The month of October holds the annual Poetry Day event with an estimated 24-36 contests. For deadlines and rules see: www.poetsroundtable.com.

CONNECTICUT POETRY SOCIETY is accepting submissions for the Connecticut Poetry Award through May 31, 2014. There are prizes of \$400, \$100, and \$50 for the winners. Winning poems will be published in the *Connecticut River Review*. For a fee of \$15, made out to CPS, poets can enter up to three poems, with an 80-line limit for each poem. Writers should include two copies of

each poem, one with complete contact information and the other with NO contact information. Send submissions to Connecticut Poetry Award, CPS, PO Box 270554, W. Hartford, CT 06127. Include SASE for results.

GEORGIA POETRY SOCIETY'S deadline for both the Fall Contests and the Charles Dickson Chapbook Competition is November 15, 2013. For more details, see: www.georgiapoetrysociety.org/contests/contest-details/. The deadline for the GPS Youth Competition, open to students enrolled in Georgia schools, is January 31, 2014.

ILLINOIS STATE POETRY SOCIETY'S annual poetry contest has a submissions deadline of November 9, 2013. There are four categories: 1) Free Verse, 2) Formal Verse, 3) Haiku: traditional (5-7-5 syllables) or modern (17 syllables or fewer), and 4) Humor. Cash prizes for each category: \$50, \$30, and \$10. For further essential submission guidelines, see illinoispoets.org. Send submissions to Joanne Blakley, ISPS Poetry Contest Chair, 201 Michaelson Drive, Anna, IL 62906. For further information contact Joanne at 618-697-6285.

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, or 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 is: Postmark, February 15, 2014. 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, members only (any form, any subject). Members pay \$2 per entry in each category. Non-members pay \$2 per entry, categories 1-4. Payable to MSPS. Send poems and fees to Bill Lower, 21010 S. Hwy 245, Fair Play, MO 65649. Send SASE for list of winners.

WYOPOETS' EUGENE V. SHEA NATIONAL CONTEST is open to all poets worldwide; however, submissions must be in English and fees in U.S. funds. Prizes will be

awarded in U.S. currency. Contest poems may be published or unpublished, on any subject, any form, 40 lines or less (including title and line breaks). Any poet who has NOT won a prize larger than \$50 in any one contest, or a money prize in a previous WyoPoets Annual Contest is eligible. All poems must be original work of entrant. No pornography, racial or sexual slurs, or language considered obscene by average broad-minded reader. Contest opens October 1st with the deadline December 1, 2013. Prizes are: 1st \$100, 2nd \$50, 3rd \$30, 4th \$20. Five or more ranked Honorable Mentions will also be awarded. Fees are: \$2 entry fee, plus \$1 per poem (e.g., 3 poems for \$5, 5 poems for \$7). No maximum number of entries. Checks and money orders must be made out to WyoPoets. Submitted poems, except for Oriental forms, must be titled. Poems must be typed or computer generated, in English, on 8-1/2" by 11" white paper, or similar computer paper. At least 10 point, preferably 12 point or larger font. No more than one poem on a page. Single or double-spaced. One side of the paper only. Photocopies okay if clear and legible. Submit two copies of each poem, one copy for the judge with no identification on it. On the other copy, show your name, mailing address, and phone numbers in the upper right hand corner of the front side. No limit on number of entries. No electronic submissions. No one poet can win more than one monetary prize, but can win additional Honorable Mentions. Include SASE for winners list to be mailed by April 1. Send both copies of poems submitted together with entry fee to: Nancy Ruskowsky, Contest Chair, 331 Road 6RT, Cody, WY 82414. For additional info email nrusk59@gmail.com. Final judging will be by a qualified out-of-state judge not affiliated with WyoPoets. Decisions of the judge will be final. The Contest Chair will not enter this contest. Winners will be invited to read their winning poem at the WyoPoets spring workshop (date and place to be announced later). Winning poems may be published in our spring newsletter only with the poet's written permission. All rights remain with the poet. Be sure to keep copies of your entries as poems will NOT be returned. All copies of the poems will be destroyed after the spring workshop.

POETRY ARTICLES*

Increasing Our Membership: Growth of Our State Societies

Steven Concert, NFSPS Membership Chair,
Pennsylvania Poetry Society

The biggest challenge faced by our state societies is how to grow our membership. There seems to be no easy "one-size-fits-all"

answer. Focus appears to be how we attract younger poets so that our organizations don't fade away. Instead of asking ourselves how to attract younger poets, I think we need to find a way to attract ALL poets to our organizations. By only looking at how to bring in youth, we are basically limiting ourselves. Effectively, we are limiting our potential new members by half or more.

The first step in growing our numbers is to let potential members know that we exist. Our state organizations cannot grow if nobody knows we are here. Make contact with your state's tourism agency. Their job is to promote what the state has to offer its citizens. We can get ourselves listed through their website and in printed materials. If there are local tourism agencies, make contact with them as well. Approach universities, colleges, and high schools to find potential members. Make contact with teachers and professors so that they are aware we exist.

We are in the digital age and should be utilizing technology to its fullest potential. That said, all state societies should have a website. Yet, there are five NFSPS state societies that are still not "online." If you are a member of one of these five state societies, you should be aware that NFSPS can provide your society with web space through the NFSPS website. No experience is needed as there are NFSPS members willing to help develop your web pages. At the very least, each state society should have a basic web page that tells "who" we are and "how" to contact our organization.

Social media is a very popular way to keep in touch: Facebook, MySpace, Yahoo Groups, and chat groups. The list goes on. If a state society does not have a presence here, think of all the potential members we are failing to reach (thousands, possibly millions). These websites can help us to announce who we are. By design, social media allows us to connect with our friends, and those friends connect with their friends, and friend's friends connect with their friends, creating an intertwined network of potential members.

We've put our information out there. It's time to sit back and relax. Any day now the poets will be kicking down our doors to join. While we can hope that with our information "out there" others will come in search of us, such a statement couldn't be further from the reality of the situation each of our state societies faces every day.

The second step in growing our numbers is to actively seek out potential members. This will increase our chances of success. We need to identify where these potential members can be found. Chances are if your town has a popular coffee shop/cafe that routinely hosts "open mic" nights, you will

find poets there. Do the cafes routinely bring in poets to conduct a reading? Chances are that the audience will be mostly comprised of poets. Who from our state societies are sitting in the audience? Add to your list local colleges and universities as well as local high schools. A few years back, a local university brought Billy Collins to the campus to do a reading. It was standing room only in an auditorium that easily holds 1,000 people. And several hundred attended the "meet the poet" reception held following the reading. Among the crowd were many local and regional poets who did not belong to the state society. Think: potential members. Another place where poets are sure to gather are local, regional, and state poetry festivals. Local and college libraries as well as book stores could be additional sources for potential members. Check the Internet to see if there is a local chat group for poets. Leave no stone unturned when identifying where potential members can be found.

We've put our information out there, and identified where poets are most likely to be found. So, now what do we do?

To be continued Look for **Increasing Our Membership: Growth of Our State Societies – Part II** in an upcoming edition of *Strophes*.

Photo Poems: For Pictures You Wish You'd Taken—or Pictures You Imagine

David Harvey, Secretary,
Oregon Poetry Association

- * "I wish I'd gotten a picture of that!"
- * "The light was too dim for a good picture."
- * "They didn't allow cameras in that museum/church/concert hall."
- * "I ran out of film [my battery went flat] just before it happened."
- * "It happened so fast! By the time I got my camera out—"
- * "I forgot my camera that day."

Who hasn't come home from a vacation or special occasion saying something like that? Sometimes, just out for a walk, shopping, or waiting while they change our oil, there's a moment that would make a fantastic picture—only we aren't ready with a camera, and we miss it.

Actually, we don't miss it. We *see* it. There may even be a sound, aroma, texture, or taste involved, and we record that, too. It goes into our memory, as vividly as if we'd snapped it.

I propose that those memories can be shared in a way that brings them alive for our friends and families: photo poems, in which memories become words. Putting them into words can affect how we write, how we remember the sights/events we couldn't get into photos, and how others understand our experiences.

For many of us, the haiku is the most familiar photo poem. Jo Miles, writing over fifty years ago, remarked that “the haiku is the nearest thing in literature to a photograph.” This led me to see that certain other short forms, including short free-verse poems, can have the *effect* of photographs. They even have the advantage over most cameras in that they can record sounds, smells, textures, and tastes. They can record them in dim or even no light. They might even be pictures that *never happened at all*, or only in your imagination!

I used to begin the school year with my eighth-graders in Eureka with The Photo Poem Assignment. The rules I gave them may help you get started.

1. Any subject is OK, whether you are witnessing it as you write, you remember it from days past, or even if you only imagine what you might witness if it really happened.
2. Titles are OK. Let them be like the captions you might write beside photographs in an album, giving place, date, other pertinent information.
3. Any length between three and twenty lines. (In practice, poems longer than ten lines tend to become “video-clip poems,” but that might also be all right for you.)
4. Always set in present tense. (Like a photograph.)
5. Nothing but sense details—don’t tell how it made you feel—just describe the details that gave you that feeling.
6. I didn’t allow rhymes, because they tended with youngsters, to run away with the sense of the poem as they searched for rhyming words. However, as mature poets, you should be able to disregard this rule, and create “photos that *sing*.”

You may enjoy setting your poems in classic forms. A few are listed below with examples.

Haiku: Always three lines, and many teachers—not all, including me—require 17 syllables, arranged 5-7-5. Classically, haiku poems are untitled. Apply “Rule 2” above, as suits you. Example by Pedro Miguel Lock, Panama Canal, Nov. 5, 1962, aboard the USS Okanogan:

Green lawns, sunset light,
gray walls, green with ancient moss—
tall gates close astern.

Trilet: Three lines, 18 syllables, arranged 3-6-9. Example by David Harvey, Jan 2008, on my bike above Emigrant Reservoir

Old 99, Climbing into a Snowstorm
Tires crackle
on scattered gravel; first
flakes fly in my face at Milepost Five.

Tanka. Five lines, 31 syllables, arranged 5-7-5-7-7. Example by David Harvey:

Going in My Geezer-Gear

At three miles an hour,
I slowly crank my burdens;
my chain's steady whir:
the pine trees pass down,
and the sweat runs in my eyes.

Crapsey Cinquain: Named for its inventor, the American poet Adelaide Crapsey. Five lines, 22 syllables, arranged 2-4-6-8-2. Ms. Crapsey cheerfully allowed an extra syllable, or an omitted one, here or there, if it made a better poem. I have had fun with “cinquain chains,” poems of several stanzas, each following this form, but the last line of each stanza becoming the first line of the next.

Poetry Immersion at the Dodge Festival

Ginny Connors, Contest Chair,
Connecticut Poetry Society

The biennial Geraldine R. Dodge Poetry Festival took place October 11-14, 2012 in the downtown Arts District of Newark, NJ. I was lucky enough to attend, along with several poetry-loving friends. During the day, there were simultaneous events in multiple locations, all within a few blocks of the NJ Performing Arts Center, Prudential Hall, which served as Poetry Central during the event. Thursday was set aside for high school students and their teachers, and on Friday many students also attended.

A great range of poets gave readings, participated in poetry “conversations,” on stage, and gave craft lectures. Among them were Philip Levine, Patricia Smith, Jane Hirshfield, Eavan Boland, Thomas Lux, Natasha Trethewey, Gregory Orr, Raúl Zurita, Henri Cole, Terrence Hayes, Dorianne Laux, Taylor Mali—the list goes on and on. Festival Coordinator Martin Farawell gave thoughtful introductions to the poets at the evening readings.

A focus of many of the craft lectures was the music of poetry, and music was also performed at some of the events. On Friday evening, tap dancer Maurice Chestnut performed along with poet/musician Kurtis Lamkin, who accompanied himself on the kora, an African stringed instrument. (Lamkin made his by hand.) Who would have thought that such a combination of art forms would work so well together? Saturday morning began with a performance by the Newark Boys Choir. On Saturday night, the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra String Quartet played along as Patricia Smith read dramatic and moving selections about those left behind in a nursing home during Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath. The poems were from her book, *Blood Dazzler*.

Among several craft lectures I attended, one by Dorianne Laux stood out. She spoke movingly of her initiation into poetry through watching a performance of *Romeo and Juliet*, and later listening to a performance of it over and over, concentration most especially on the rhythm. During the talk she quoted passages from memory in order to make her points clear. She recreated the process of thinking that she had gone through as a young woman from a family that had little use for books or for poetry. Laux talked about the power of certain words that break the rhythm and force a reader or listener to pause, to pay attention. Spondees, consisting of two stressed syllables, are such words. “These are mother words,” she said. “They force you to pay attention. Come here. Sit down. Shut up.” In *Romeo and Juliet*, one spondee is “rough touch.” It breaks the iambic pentameter so that a reader or listener lingers over it. It also foreshadows what happens later in the play.

Another poem that really made her think about rhythm in poetry was “Tarantulas on the Life Buoy” by Thomas Lux. She believes that the word “semi-tropical” (say it aloud) might have helped him find the rhythm and voice for this poem. If you are interested in this poem, you can find it at: www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/178152. She also spoke of her belief that the best poems “stand on the knife edge of yes and no.” Life is complex. The last line of a poem should probably emphasize that division, that teetering edge.

There is so much more one could say about the Dodge Poetry Festival experience (www.dodgepoetry.org), including the pleasure of joining a large community of people who are passionate about poetry, but the best thing I can do is to suggest that you try to attend the next Festival in 2014.

A Few Thoughts on Open Mic and the Microphone

Mark Hersman, President,
Ohio Poetry Association

Test the mic (loudness and quality) before people arrive. And if you, the poet, are allowed do the same—do it. Instead of asking people, “Can you hear me,” watch them as you read, hear yourself as you read.

If you emcee/host a reading event, lay out specific, CLEAR guidelines for the poets and stick to them. For example, try to avoid epic poems at the mic (consider most audiences’ attention span). Consider one or two short poems with line limits. Seriously address rant, vulgarity, and profanity. Again, most importantly, who is your audience? Address this before the event begins, and again if need be, as numbers sign up during the event and at break.

At the mic, remember that most often, less is more—fewer poems are generally better received than volumes. Explain less and get right into your work, for both poets and emcees—artfully use the mic.

For all readings, if there is a mic, please use it. NEVER at the microphone ask if you have to use it. Remember, in EVERY group there are individuals with various hearing disabilities. Perhaps the exception to this guideline would be a mic or sound system not functioning properly. In this scenario, politely acknowledge the situation, then step away from the mic (closer to the audience), and speak loud, clear, and slow! Smile often.

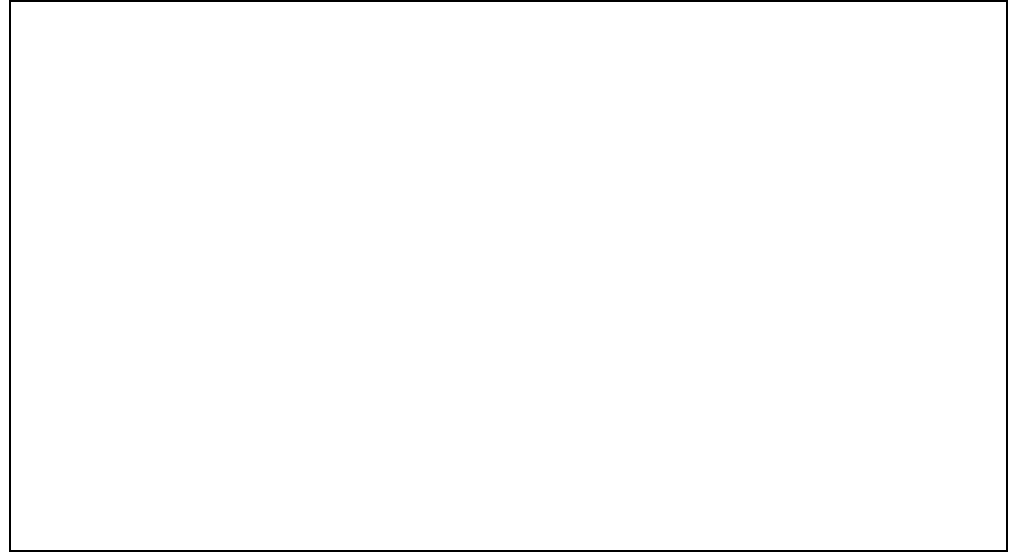
This may be difficult to believe, but the audience actually WANTS to hear the poems.

Every reading at the mic is a performance, no confusion here: EVERY reading a performance. Engage the audience; look at each one, smile often, look up and around (try memorizing your work). Without the audience, there is no reading. Help the audience feel special. THEY ARE SPECIAL. I have watched far too many good poets lose their future readers because of their poor delivery.

Don't forget the power of first impression at the mic. This applies to all people as well as the individual poem. Dress appropriately. TYPE OUT your poems/notes, using large bold dark print to avoid stumbling. See yourself from the audience's perspective. Plan for bad lighting as this is often the case. Carry your glasses to the mic and don't apologize for using them. Avoid apologizing for anything at the mic. Be humble. Be proud of your work. Woo your audience to the World of Poetry—the power of first impression at the mic is HUGE! Don't hide behind it.

An excellent book to assist both the host/emcee and the poet is *Stage Performance* by Livingston Taylor. This is an absolute must for all who plan to use the mic and for nearly all public readings as well. Another must-read book on speaking and performing at the mic is *Ace a Reading and Sell Your Chapbooks* by Jennifer Bosveld, Puddinghouse Publications, 2011.

If you want your audience and fellow poets to take you seriously, you must first seriously consider your own professionalism at the mic as well as your preparation and performance. The microphone is the heartbeat of every poem. Use it to your advantage. Learn the love language between the audio system and your listeners. And use it artfully well—wishing you more delightful, powerful open mics.



STATE TREASURERS & MEMBERSHIP CHAIRS

A Message from the NFSPS Treasurer

First of all, THANK YOU to all the state societies who sent in dues and membership lists last year. Dues for the 2013-14 fiscal year are already beginning to come in, with Louisiana leading the pack!

Please note Rules 5b and 9 on the 2014 contest folder that accompanies this issue of *Strophes*. Remind your members and potential members that one of the advantages of having current dues paid up in your state organization is the big break in NFSPS contest entry fees.

The TWO times I need to hear from each state are:

- By January 15 - Membership list and dues check. We do not sell or give out information for other purposes, so if you can easily include both mailing addresses and e-mails, this is helpful and safe. Both were used this year to contact individual poets about uncashed checks and undelivered award certificates. Send membership list via hard copy or email to:

lucille_e_wilson@hotmail.com

Note: In calculating dues, \$3.00 per person is to be paid on honorary members and all dues-paying members, including those who may also be members of other state societies. You do not need to include those on your mailing list who receive complimentary copies, such as public libraries or NFSPS board members.

- By March 15 – additional names not included in the Jan. 15th listing. It is probably easier for all of us if these additions are made at one time, rather than one or two at a time as you receive them. However, we'll accept them any time as evidence of your society's growth, and give your poets the extra advantage over having a firm first-of-the-year cut-off date.

The membership list sent to me is the ONLY one that needs to be sent. It is one of the treasurer's duties to see that this information is given to the contest chair, who depends on it to determine contest eligibility.

The number of quarterly *Strophes* you receive is based on number of members you report, plus a few extras to cover non-members if you send bulk mailings, and minus those who will receive the publication by email. Be sure to let Paul Ford, *Strophes* Editor, know of changes in number or where to ship them.

YOU help make *Strophes* more interesting and valuable to your members by sending in news from your state organization and submitting articles pertinent to our writing endeavors.

Thanks for your cooperation.

Lucille Morgan Wilson, NFSPS Treasurer

POETRY IN THE PARK – SOUTHERN UTAH

Mark the 21th of March, 2014, on your calendar for Poetry in the Park at Zion National Park in Utah with John Rezmerski. Details are available at: www.poetry-in-the-park.com.

INTERESTED IN SLAM POETRY?

Steven Concert, NFSPS Chancellor, is looking to form a NFSPS Slam Team. Want to join? Email Steven for details at: paperlesspoetsonline@hotmail.com.

* **Note from the *Strophes* Editor:** These four poetry articles were first included in the January 2013 *Strophes Web Edition* published on nfsp.com. Since the majority of our state society members do not read *Strophes* online (and there was room in this issue), these articles have been included.