



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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October 2021



Julie Cummings
34th NFSPS
President

Dear Poetry Family,

As we enter the next season, I am reminded that there is something to be thankful and grateful for every day in my life. I think about this every day now. I used to be rushed and felt like I never had enough time to take all the bad and good that life was handing me. While at work, I rarely stopped what I was working on to truly listen and be present. Now, I react differently. I want my entire attention devoted to the gift of who/what is in front of me. Whether it be a phone call, an email, a poetry meeting, or a Zoom call, I want

to be present.

I am sure you all read poetry as much as I do. I keep a file folder of my 10 favorite poems that I have hand copied, and I read them often. I recently replaced another favorite with the poem, "A Gift" by Kathryn Starbuck.

A Gift

Who is that creature
and who does he want?
Me, I trust. I do not
attempt to call out his
name for fear he will
tread on me. What do
you believe, he asks.

That we all want to be
alone, I reply, except when
we do not; that the world
was open to my sorrow
and ate most of it; that
today is a gift and I am
ready to receive you.

I take this poem to mean that it is time to pause and reflect on all that life offers, all that you offer. I like how at first a creature wants to know what you believe, and then the gift is revealed to be today. Today is a gift. This poem is short, and the message is exactly what I need now.

I have been gifted with emails and newsletters and the news of the celebrations of poetry in our state societies. It makes my heart happy when I am greeted by an email from a member describing the wonderful time they had at a state or local event. Whether it be inside or outside, poets are gathering and spreading their words and kinship. I am grateful to all of you that work to keep your state societies thriving! Our readings and fests and celebrations showcase the very best, most joyful experiences of being human. Coming together as one reminds us that there is beauty all around us and that expressing gratitude for this gift evokes so much more than a *thank you*. Being together is tradition, but while we are together, new ideas are formed and hopefully this allows us to be grateful for our gift of today.

Thank you for all you do for poetry!

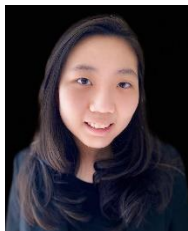
Your sister in words,

Julie Cummings, 34th NFSPS President

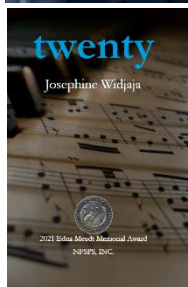
2021 COLLEGE UNDERGRADUATE POETRY COMPETITION

Steven Concert, NFSPS 4th Vice President & 2021 CUP Chair

The **2021 Edna Meudt Memorial Award** winner is Josephine Widjaja



for her manuscript, *twenty*. Josephine is a graduating junior at the University of California, Berkeley. She is currently studying chemical biology and is interested in pursuing biomedical research and medicine. Ever since she was eight, Josephine fell in love with writing poetry and prose, and continued to write throughout grade school and college. *twenty* is her first published work. When Josephine is not writing or studying, she loves to play the piano and to try to learn the guitar. As a daughter of Chinese-Indonesian immigrants, she also enjoys learning to cook Chinese and Indonesian dishes for her family.



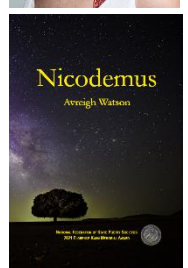
Robb Thibault, contest judge, said about *twenty*: "resonating with the inter-connectedness of generations and imagery used as so that the reader may slowly creak open a door to a poem and see the poet's world, it's right there! *epiphany* weaves the manuscript together and brings everything home."

Jessica Laser, author of *Planet Drill*, said: "Widjaja's unflinching, moving poems speak family, love and self into existence by affirming the vulnerability and precariousness of such forms."

The **2021 Florence Kahn Memorial Award** winner is Avreigh Watson



for her manuscript, *Nicodemus*. Avreigh is enrolled as a full-time student at the University of Arkansas at Fort Smith where she studies a little bit of everything. When she is not writing poetry in the margin of her class notes, Avreigh can be found doing what she loves the most: teaching at the university's Writing Center over a cup of black coffee. Or two. Or three. Avreigh grew up in Oklahoma with an adolescence split evenly between church pews, suburban streets and pages of books set everywhere else. She is a daughter, little sister, future teacher, and cool aunt to anyone who needs one. Her work explores these identities through the lens of religion, and she advocates for women to be both ferocious and unapologetic.



Robb Thibault, contest judge, said about *Nicodemus*: "a series of personal revelations with finely crafted language emitting powerful rhythms when read aloud. 'Cradle', 'Tremble', and 'To the Carpenter's Son' stand out."

Mary Lutze, PhD, Writing Center Director at University of Arkansas at Fort Smith, said of *Nicodemus*: "Watson has given us a gift: insight into the reconciliation of a dogmatic religious upbringing with a self-fashioned worldview . . . She weaves whip smart wordplay into her lyrical introspections that are effortless in their punch."

Three Honorable Mention were also named. First Honorable Mention went to Kevin Alberto Sanchez, a senior at Arizona State University in Tucson, AZ, for the manuscript, "Mosaics." Kevin is pursuing a degree in English and Creative Writing. Kevin also received an Honorable Mention in the 2020 CUP Competition. Second Honorable Mention went to Maggie Olszewski, a sophomore at Smith College in Northampton, MA, for the manuscript, "Laika." Maggie is pursuing a degree in English.

(continued on page 8)

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE POETRY SOCIETIES, INC.

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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 email, which is preferred, by authorized members of NFSPS member state societies to:

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* Submission Deadlines

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.

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NFSPS MEMBER SOCIETY NEWS**POETS ROUNDTABLE OF**

ARKANSAS' 2021 Poetry Day Conference is scheduled for November 6 in the Darragh Center Auditorium in Little Rock's Main Library. Laura Bridges will serve as Poetry Day Chair and Laura Trigg will serve as Poetry Day Contest Chair. Featured speaker is Mary Ellen Kubit. She is a lecturer in the School of Communication at the University of Central Arkansas. She has served as the story editor of Arts & Letters Radio since 2014, and since 2018 also serves as producer on the program. She is the creator and host of "The Write One," one-minute educational spots on how to improve writing and communication that air on UA Little Rock Public Radio. She has an MFA in poetry from the University of Pittsburgh and a M.Ed. in Adult Education from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. Poetry Day is the main poetry event in Arkansas. Each year this conference honors Arkansas Poet Laureate Rosa Zagnoni Marinoni (1953-1970). As a result of her efforts to promote poetry in Arkansas, Governor Ben Laney proclaimed October 15, 1948, the first annual Poetry Day in Arkansas. For Poetry Day Conference questions contact John McPherson at mmcpherson8391@gmail.com or 501-305-9972. For more information about PRA, see poetsroundtableofarkansas.org. ~ *Laura Bridges, PRA Vice President*

ILLINOIS STATE POETRY SOCIETY

poets continue to meet on Zoom or in person, depending on the decision of each chapter. One of the positive aspects of online is that members can attend from more distant locations. In both circumstances, there is a goal to participate in more interactions with local art groups, library programs and other projects that facilitators are discussing and hoping to offer local chapters. Our monthly Brewed Awakening coffeehouse readings, located in Westmont, continue both online and in person. In August there was a collaboration between ISPS and the Artists' Association of Elk Grove Village. The theme was Colors in Nature, with an exhibit tentatively planned for March 2022. Another project is with the Addison Center for the Arts with a reception in February 2022. July 1, 2021 was the start of a new two-year term for board members and renewal of member's yearly dues. Our website, illinoispoets.org, offers information on members' books and poetry, chapter meetings, archived President's Messages, and membership details, among other timely items. ~ *Susan T. Moss, President*

KENTUCKY STATE POETRY SOCIETY

invites poets to attend our 2021

Annual Poetry Conference on October 23-24. Like our successful conference last year, this year's conference is entirely online via Zoom, with ample opportunities to interact with our conference readers, presenters, and other conference attendees. Registration enables access to all events, including three generative workshops, two readings with Q&A, a panel on publishing, and an open mic. The keynote speaker is Kiki Petrosino, recent winner of the UNT Rilke Prize. Other featured poets include Frank X Walker, Joy Priest, Savannah Sipple, Dorian Hairston, and many more! Details and registration at: kystatepoetrysociety.org/conference.

~ *Sarah McCartt-Jackson, Digital Media Coordinator*

POETRY SOCIETY OF INDIANA:

Things are in full swing for planning the weekend-long Poetry Society of Indiana's annual Fall Rendezvous Conference to be held via Zoom October 29-31, 2021. This event will include: a Celebration of PSI Authors, presentation from our Premier Poet Sarah E. Morin, workshop on select Japanese poetry forms, visit from NFSPS Joe Cavanaugh to discuss the BlackBerryPeach Prizes for Poetry: Spoken & Heard competition (see contest guidelines at: nfsp.com/BBP3Guidelines.html). Keynote Presenter George Ironstrack is from Miami University in Ohio and a Researcher in the Myaamia Language Renewal Project. At the Fall Rendezvous Conference we will announce and share the winning poems from the PSI Annual Poetry Contest; our state contest this year had over 20 categories. Other Fall Rendezvous shenanigans will include costumes and dramatic (fireside?) readings to add to the fun of the weekend. Registration information can be found on our Events / Fall Rendezvous page of the PSI website poetrysocietyofindiana.org. For PSI members, we continue our (at no cost) "First Tuesdays" get-togethers in Zoom. These meetings include a PSI Family Check-In, a short presentation by one of our PSI members on a chosen poetry topic, and a round robin sharing of poems. We frequently update our PSI website with events, opportunities, gatherings, and connections with other wordsmiths across the state. We strive to stay intentional to keep connected in these trying times of uncertainty. ~ *Deborah Petersen, President*

MAINE POETS SOCIETY will meet on Zoom on October 2 from 10 am to noon. Members-only contest is a poem on the theme of "Solidarity" with a 40-line limit. Since the judge, Jefferson Navicky, is only available for a Zoom meeting that day, we decided to hold off on trying to do a hybrid meeting until spring. The link will be emailed

to members by September 30. Jefferson will also offer an online workshop on November 20 from 10 am to noon, on avoiding prosy narrative poetry. This will not involve workshopping poems of participants and will be open to 2021 MPS members. We will provide members with the link for that a couple of days in advance. Contest details are available on: mainepoetsociety.com. ~ *Sally Joy, Reporter*

MISSISSIPPI POETRY SOCIETY is planning its Fall Mini-festival in Natchez on October 23. Mark LaFrancis has reserved the W.L. Nelson Multi-Purpose Room at the Copiah-Lincoln Community College, Natchez Campus on Saturday, October 23rd for our meeting. There is plenty of room for social distancing, and it will be a wonderful chance for us to be together after such a long time. Fall contest winners and the 2022 Poet of the Year will be announced. Each of the branches is meeting regularly now. North Branch met in Starkville on July 31. Presenters were Bill Hill, who spoke about the Mid-South Christian Writers Conference and Tennessee Poetry Society; and Steve Robertson, who did a poetry reading. Branch members who are having books published soon are Tracy Miller and Michael Shelton (co-authors), Steve Robertson, and Bill Hill. Some members have specific plans for encouraging students to write poetry. Central Branch has met at the library in Flowood for the past several months. Last month's challenge was to take two poems of similar themes and combine them, making a new poem. South Branch continues to work on collaborative poems and meet in local libraries. ~ *Jeanne Kelly, MPS Secretary*

NEVADA POETRY SOCIETY was invited to Artech's Annual Open House in July. Artech is a huge Creative Development Space, home to 10+ independent cultural and art businesses and nonprofits. It also houses past and future Burning Man sculptures. We enjoyed touring the facility and were thrilled to be offered a permanent space for our monthly meetings. We believe this new association will help give NPS the added exposure and contacts needed to boost our shrinking membership numbers and make us more relevant within the community. We look forward to a fresh start with a new creative venue, which promises the chance for growth and a stronger future. ~ *Phyllis Peacock, President*

POETRY SOCIETY OF OKLAHOMA: October 15th is International Poetry Day, a celebration of poetry which takes place around the world. For PSO, the theme this year is "Choice" as we celebrate National Poetry Day on 16th October at our annual

business meeting. We will discuss and share poems about Choice. It is a busy time as we celebrate, present awards, read winning poems from our National Poetry Day contests, and give out door prizes—all celebrating poetry's power to bring people together. This is also the time for our election of officers for 2022-2023. Due to the COVID-19, it has been a very different year as we have been unable to meet in person since March 2020. Fortunately, we continue to have our contests, and the winners of the contests are always notified and sent their awards. We keep in touch through emails, social media, and old fashion telephone calls! Remember, mark your calendars for December 15th, 2021, the deadline date to enter PSO's annual spring contest (March 2022). It will be here before you know it! We encourage you to check our Facebook page and angelfire.com/poetry/psol/ for current PSO information. We welcome all to "Come and grow at PSO!" ~ *Patti Koch, President*

POETRY SOCIETY OF TENNESSEE will hold our 65th Tennessee Poetry Festival on Saturday, October 9, 2021. Our keynote speaker will be Jeff Hardin, Professor of English at Columbia State Community College in Columbia, Tennessee. This year's festival will be free to all, but registration will be required so please join us. For more information check out poetrytennessee.org. ~ *William Hill, President*

POETRY SOCIETY OF TEXAS: A whim of an idea was proposed to the PST board when President Irene Robertson asked: "Since our summer convention was cancelled, what can we do for a group get-together to celebrate PST's 100th Anniversary?" (1921 – 2021). When the PST board was meeting mid-April, Covid was beginning to lighten up to a degree with vaccine shots being applied. The whim was an idea that I had been thinking about for over 5 years. The little community of Poetry, Texas (founded in 1845), lies about 25 miles southeast of Dallas and 8 miles north of Terrell. Irene and I visited Poetry to check out what venues were available to hold a day of poetry readings. An outside venue was considered to coincide with Poetry's Spring Festival in May. With the Texas heat in May, Irene decided an outside venue would not work. With some additional research for inside venues, The Springs Wedding facility (seating for 300) had a Covid Special running in June. The contact was signed. PST set in motion a promotional plan: PST's *Bulletin* publisher, Valerie Martin Bailey, sent the information to the members across the state. Walla! 81 members responded with yes. Even some from Louisiana and Oklahoma responded. On June 27th, the PST board

opened the day with poets filing inside. The goal was for every poet that wanted to read, could read. Thus, the theme: "I read poetry in Poetry, Texas." It was a very successful event, especially listening to newly elected Mayor Tara Senkavich, who welcomed us to Poetry. The gathering poets, families and friends enjoyed a day of camaraderie, catered lunch, book sales and reading poetry. PST's official Annual Banquet is scheduled for November 5th & 6th. The 100 years of celebration continues. ~ *JDarrell Kirkley, PST Director*

NFSPS MANNINGHAM TRUST STUDENT POETRY CONTEST RULES: 2022 ANNUAL COMPETITION

1. There are two divisions: Grade 6-8 (Junior Division) and Grades 9-12 (Senior Division). Each NFSPS member state may submit ten (10) poems in each division. Poems may have been printed and/or have won previous awards. Contests at state level may have occurred anytime in 2021 or 2022.

2. The competition is open to all USA students in grades 6 – 12. Public, private, and homeschools are eligible for entry by individual NFSPS member states. Entries by individual students are allowed if a state does not submit entries. No individual entry will supersede a state's collective entries, but in cases in which a state has no NFSPS affiliation or sends less than 10 entries, an individual entry may qualify for judging. **Individual poets may only submit one poem.**

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, student email, school name and address, student grade level, and the student's language arts/English teacher's name and email address. 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 35 lines including space lines with no line having more than 60 characters including spaces and punctuation. Every poem entered should appear on a single sheet. 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. Larger fonts also make it impossible to confine the poem to one page, which is required.

6. Each entrant must make a declaration of originality. The statement should appear on the bottom of the ID copy only. The following statement 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." This declaration must be signed by the student.

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. Please include an email and phone number.

8. Entries must be received by April 1, 2022. Email submissions allowed. Send entries to Susan Chambers at 700 Agency Trail, Unit 207, Mankato, MN 56001 or email to schambersmediator@yahoo.com. Susan can also be reached at (507) 387-8154.

Ten prizes will be awarded in each division: 1st Place \$75, 2nd Place \$50, 3rd Place \$40, 4th Place \$35, 5th Place \$30, and five Honorable Mentions at \$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 the winners report will be sent to each state's Manningham (Youth) chair. 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 2022.

POETRY ARTICLES & NEWS

POETRY, THE ARTS, AND AN ACTOR By Ron Weber, Poetry Society of Michigan

As I typically do at the end of a year, or at the beginning of a new one, I have been purging my files in order to chuck the clutter. I found myself pausing to reflect on one in particular, then realized how it still resonates with me in terms of the value of poetry and the arts.

Many years ago, I had the privilege of meeting and talking with the actor James Earl Jones. At the time he was the keynote speaker at a conference in Detroit on business and arts partnerships. I think you'll be interested in what I want to share with you from that experience. I believe it is still relevant today.

Michigan was home to James Earl Jones

for many years. While a student at Dickson High School in Brethren, a very small rural community, he encountered Donald Crouch. Crouch was an English teacher, a full college professor and a compatriot of Robert Frost. When Mr. Crouch realized there were kids in this agricultural community trying to learn Chaucer, Shakespeare and Emerson, he parked the plow and went to teach literature and Latin.

By James' own admission, he was such a severe stutterer that he was practically mute. But I'll let him tell you the rest: "I loved poetry so much I was composing my own. Professor Crouch couldn't accept the idea that a kid who loved poetry couldn't sound it out loud the way it was meant. One day he said, 'Jim, this poem is good, so good I think you didn't write it. I think you plagiarized it. To prove you wrote it, get up in front of the class and recite it from memory.' I did and didn't stutter. He encouraged me to write more, recite more, both my poetry and everybody else's. I forsook my flatfooted attempts at athletic pursuits and used my extracurricular time to regain the power of speech. With his help I found myself on the path that led me to my career today."

I find this a fascinating story. A tribute not only to Mr. Crouch and Mr. Jones but, in my opinion, to poetry as well. I think we know what James Earl Jones would answer to the perennial question: Does Poetry Matter? James himself feels this serves as evidence that a focus on the arts enhances a student's ability to communicate and solve problems. Regarding his experience in the theater department at the University of Michigan, he feels that "Studying a great play gives a student a larger perspective, even if he or she chooses not to pursue a career in the theater."

James feels that artists are sometimes dreamers, sometimes visionaries. Artists are also stubborn. An artist who has a genuine calling will paint, compose, sculpt, perform and write whether he has support or not, which is a condition often initiated by parents and peers along the lines of "You expect to make a living writing poems?" He believes an artist learns early on to be the sole judge of whether they have talent or whether they have it in themselves to nourish that talent. He agrees that imagination is more important than knowledge. In other words, the seeds of knowledge are rooted in the imagination.

And speaking of imagination, allow me to close with the following scenario that popped up in my cerebral cortex. Don't ask me why; I have no idea.

The scene: an overflow meeting room at a fictional major university. The board of regents and administration are there to consider a policy for the university based upon the following: Be it resolved, free

speech is hate speech and must be cancelled. Representing parts of the faculty and the literary public at large are the following poets: Charles Bukowski, Yusef Komunyakaa, Dylan Thomas, Langston Hughes, Gertrude Stein, Ezra Pound, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Jim Harrison, and Lawrence Ferlinghetti.

The rest of the room has chanting protesters carrying signs denigrating free speech. The meeting is gavelled to order and 15 minutes later three squad cars and campus security are required to quell the mayhem. All of the poets are taken into custody. Gertrude Stein reportedly decked a protester three times her size, and Jim Harrison was giving the Dutch rub to a protest leader and refused orders to stop. Ezra Pound was caught on tape openly mooning the board president. Film at eleven. (Pudumpum! Sorry 'bout the interruption. I'm not well.)

So, a final bit of insight from James Earl Jones. "Theater, literature, film, dance, and the visual arts can document the vitality of the human spirit in an increasingly mechanized and technological world. The arts help plant and nurture the seeds of human creativity. For only in our imagination does every truth find an effective existence. For imagination, not invention, is the supreme master of art and life."

TO WRITE A POEM

By Emiliano Martín, Poetry Society of Pennsylvania President

In order to write a poem, one must be immersed in silence. Utilize the peace and quiet to put a thought in perspective. Take your time, grasp the idea and allow it to take form, caress the image you are shaping, make it become an attractive topic as it is penned on paper, with reason from the inner soul.

Soon the poem shall arise, touch it up with drops of wisdom and conviction of its own; be sure to add a message along with the right tone of words.

Yes, while verses are thrown into the air... they will fall where they belong. We all need luck after all.

GETTING POETRY OUT THERE

By Wilda Morris, Illinois State Poetry Society

Yesterday it rained, washing haiku off my sidewalk and driveway. So today my nine-year-old scribe, Daniel, is at work again. He will chalk one haiku on the sidewalk to be read by passersby walking west, another facing those walking east, and a third on the driveway facing the sidewalk. I give him at least six haiku to choose from each time and pay him a dollar (generally a gold dollar) for each haiku (once I surprised him with a \$2.00 bill, something he had not seen before). I

might have done the chalk work myself, but my knees, hips and back won't allow it. And this way, a young boy is learning about contemporary American haiku, while writing it on the sidewalk for others to read. He has also gotten some compliments on his writing from pleased readers. When Daniel's god-sister was in town, she wanted to participate. We ended up with nine haiku. I watched a couple stop to read everyone! One of these days I'm going to invite Daniel to write some haiku himself and chalk them on my walk.

It has occurred to me that encouraging the chalking of haiku or other poetry on the sidewalk would be a good project for National Poetry Month.

Another project that State Societies could encourage for National Poetry Month is for poets to slip a poem or two into the envelopes with their checks when paying bills in April. Last April, I printed short poems in columns – a poem by a famous poet on one side and one of mine on the other. They went with payments to my dentist, utility companies, and any other bills I paid by check. I did not get much feedback, but at least I'm putting poetry in the hands of potential readers. Poetry no longer appears regularly on the front pages of newspapers as it once did and is no longer an event awarding medals at the Olympics. Due to Covid, the Illinois State Poetry Society could not put poetry exhibits in libraries as we have done in April for a number of years. It seems to be time to come up with more ideas for spreading the love of well-written words, and not just for National Poetry Month.

SHARING POETRY DURING THE PANDEMIC

By Anita Jepson-Gilbert, President of the Columbine Poets of Colorado

Most of Colorado's Columbine Poets have taken steps to stay connected over the past 18 months while trying to stay free of Covid-19. Our Denver Chapter, which previously met in person every week before the pandemic, found ourselves suddenly scrambling to learn just enough computer technology from our electronic wizard, Julie Cummings, to make our way through cyberspace on Saturday mornings in attempt to continue those weekly workshops. The result is that this move has allowed our members in more remote areas to also join us, so the Saturday virtual workshops continue to expand with the aid of Zoom and Slack platforms.

The Northern Colorado Chapter, based in Loveland, has also offered a number of readings and workshops on Zoom over the past 18 months. The only event held live was an April program featuring our National Poet Laureate Joy Harjo at the Rialto Theater in Loveland, since donations for this project had

already started to be raised before the pandemic struck. A limited number of tickets were sold to keep the space in compliance with CDC guidelines. In exchange, the Rialto agreed to have Harjo's talk and her reading video-taped for all who wanted to watch it later for a month, free of charge.

In the high country around Salida, CO, the Shavano Poets have continued their monthly support group by email, working on assignments offered by a volunteer each month. Some of these assignments generated poems that won prizes in this year's NFSPS Contest. Members also stay in touch via email through monthly reports that list news on their current publications, contest prizes and readings. So email has become the preferred method for keeping this chapter of 20+ poets truly bonded during these months of isolation.

Now that our Columbine Poets have been vaccinated, there is a move to try meeting again in person, but how to do that amid the threat of variants at large? In the Denver Metro area, we have begun to try out our workshops in small groups of 4 to 6 members. In July we started 3 such groups to alternate weeks with the online workshops, so we hope to continue with both types of meetings while viruses continue to plague us. In Loveland, they are also experimenting with in-person readings, but seated farther apart.

The most important thing is to stay in touch with the Covid reports for the locations of each of our chapters. When infections start climbing, it's time to gather only virtually. When those numbers level off, small groups of vaccinated members might want to reconvene. The best advice in all situations is *Play It Safe!*

ONE POET'S PANDEMIC PONDERINGS

By Ron Weber, Poetry Society of Michigan

Ever notice how serious fears or concerns never really vacate our thought processes until they're somehow resolved? You know, things like an injury to your child, a deteriorating marriage, the sudden unexpected terminal illness of a loved one, job and income uncertainties, or this thing called a pandemic.

They seem to persist like an elephant in the room or a shadow in the corner, even when you're talking about a subject entirely unrelated. When there's a significant pause in the discussion or the visit concludes, there it is again, popping up to remind us of that bit of anxiety that is a part of life until the serious concern has, in some way, been alleviated or illuminated.

And because you are, as a result, more reflective of things in general, this anxiety

can tend to drag more things into thoughtful awareness more often than you might otherwise think. This seems to be where I'm at with the various pandemic ponderings that stumble expectantly into my mind. I'm not certain just what it's going to be until it comes knocking on my cerebral door. I'm referring to things like the following.

No matter what age we might be at, life is like playing a violin in public and learning the instrument as we go along. Come to think of it, I've never learned to play any instrument so why should this drama called life be any different? However, I do believe that a life spent making mistakes is not only more honorable, but more useful than a life spent fearing to do anything challenging because one might make mistakes.

Allow me to add here that, if I had my life to live over, I'd live it over a delicatessen. Hey, what can I tell ya, I love deli food!

One thing I have learned and truly believe in is that you have to live life to love life, and you have to love life to live life. It's not a vicious circle but a circle of seeking, reaching and achieving. It is a circle of finding and fulfilling. Meaningful reality is much more than a collective hunch.

Principles are paramount in life as we attempt to go forward with some semblance of character. But as one looks around at the landscape of hypocrisy, you learn that it's easier to fight for one's principles than to live up to them. Just look at the menagerie of protests that are populated by too many without the slightest concern for human decency in the behavior they exhibit. And the political class learns quickly that the most useful thing about a principle is that it always can be sacrificed for expediency.

Maybe it's just me, but has it ever occurred to you that a great many people think they are thinking when they are merely rearranging their prejudices? Oh, and for some reason this just came to mind: Illegal aliens have always been a problem in the United State. Ask any Native American.

Life always has been, is, and always will be a crap shoot. The greatest single variable is the person throwing the dice. On the other hand, if at first you don't succeed, find out if the loser gets anything. We all know that success is not guaranteed and, if achieved, it isn't necessarily permanent. Nor is there anything fatal about a failure. It depends on that all important variable, the person throwing the dice.

That's a wrap for now. May your own pandemic ponderings and random thoughts be interesting and meaningful as we go forward in uncertain times. Cheers!

BENEFITS OF BEING A MEMBER

By Julie Cummings, 34th NFSPS President

Note: the following article has been revised from the original one published in the Florida State Poets Association's bi-monthly literary magazine, Of Poets & Poetry, the September 2021 issue.

Being a member of my state poetry society automatically makes me a member of NFSPS, provided my dues are paid to NFSPS via my state. A member list and payment for each member needs to be made to the NFSPS Treasurer in January every year, and that list can be updated until March 15 each year. The reason for this is to verify membership for entry in NFSPS annual contests. The entry fee for members is greatly reduced and is one of the major benefits provided.

So, what exactly are the NFSPS membership benefits provided to you?

- * *Strophes* (quarterly newsletter) archived on nfsps.com
- * Reduced entry fee for all contests (Annual, BlackBerryPeach, and Stevens Manuscript)
- * Fellowship and networking
- * Annual Convention
- * National Archives
- * Virtual meetings
- * Meaningful volunteer opportunities
- * Speaker Directory
- * Contest Judge Directory

My state society, Columbine Poets of Colorado, and more specifically, my chapter, meets weekly. We study poets, forms of poetry, and hold critiques. We also hold business meetings. The greatest benefit of being a member of my state society is the personal connection with poets in my society. I love meeting with them (even online) and discussing poetry.

Beginning the year NFSPS was formed (1959), our National Federation has met once per year as a large group at the annual convention. We met as a small group for business and elections (the plenary) during the COVID lockdowns in 2020 via Google Meet and we held the annual convention via Zoom this past June (2021). The fellowship I have with my state society poetry family is evident at the national level as well. I have made many lifelong friends through attendance at national convention. I have also made friends with poets I have never met face to face. I have had many meaningful conversations with poets via phone and email. This is one of the reasons I love being a member and contributing to the future of poetry.

As always, I would love to hear from you about any ideas you may have. There are so many exciting things happening! Share your excitement! Do you want to join in my

monthly online open mic? Let me know! I love poetry and poets. Thanks for reading this, but more importantly, thanks for your contributions to the poetry world.

A JUDGE'S GENERAL COMMENTS

By Jon Sebba, Utah State Poetry Society

The task of ranking poems when judging a poetry contest is made easier by contestants who submit incomplete poems. When I judge, I mark down mistakes in grammar, spelling and other areas. I give credit for the use of poetic devices, brevity, concrete images and emotive power. Those are over and above the written requirements of the contest category. If I were to choose a poem containing errors as a winner, it would reflect badly on me and the organization sponsoring the contest.

The remainder of this article consists of tips to ensure that your poem is the best it can be, whether it is to be entered in a contest or submitted to a magazine or journal.

My advice to poets is (and I'm sure seasoned, winning poets will agree): check that your entry meets the written requirements of line length, subject, and form. Not meeting those are grounds for immediate disqualification. But at the risk of repeating myself, make sure that not only are you submitting your best poetry, but that there are no typos, or other errors in the text. If a poem was outstanding—head and shoulders above the other competitors—and had only one inadvertent typo, I might request that it be corrected before the award. But if, as is often the case, there are many flaws, I would not be so charitable.

This article is based on errors I have spotted in judging about a dozen contests. I write for those contestants who were ranked below the cutoff line. If you feel your poems were almost as good as the winners, tweak your work and resubmit in the next contest. Following these tips could make the difference between a winner and an “also-ran.” Here are my tips:

- A. Check and double-check for the errors mentioned earlier. (Third repetition.)
- B. Proofread your entry. Have a person you trust, who hasn't read it before, proofread the poem. Never send a poem to a contest which hasn't been reviewed by at least one “second pair of eyes.” Critique groups can be very helpful.
- C. Consider:
 1. The beginning. Are those lines of explanatory setup, introduction or explanation absolutely necessary? Some of us call those unnecessary “scaffolding.”
 2. The body. Should you try to rhyme, if not a requirement, when doing so makes the language sound awkward,

stilted or forced? Avoid “inversions” from normal speech for the sake of rhyme. For example: ending a line: “. . . these shoes, I shall not buy.”

3. The ending. Do you want to . . . sort of peter out . . . ? Does that sound better than writing an ending which leaves a lasting impression on your reader? Or do you want a stimulating and thoughtful ending which leaves the reader pondering? Or would you want to end with a BANG! which shocks, saddens, or evokes a laugh? A weak ending or a fade-away (in my opinion) leaves no impression and can weaken even a strong poem.
4. When you revise (all poems need revising), look for places to trim weak or overused words, or unnecessary words. You may hear it said that adverbs weaken verbs. Carefully consider whether to use adverbs, adjectives, and “filler” words such as: “and”, “or”, “but”, “also”, “so”, “indeed”, “really”.
- D. Remember:
 1. The differences between: they're, their, and there; your, you're, and yore; it's vs. its. These are commonly misused words. Look up the rules if you aren't sure.
 2. Misspelling and typos may not be fatal with some judges, but all would agree they make for a bad impression. Sometimes they're the difference between entries of similar quality.
 3. If you repeat a word or phrase, make sure you have a very good reason, and that the effect is one you want. Ask your “first reader” for their opinion. Avoid cliches, and most of all, avoid choosing to repeat cliches!
 4. Please, remember that yours is one of 50 to 100 poems the judge is reading and ranking. In a category where the subject was “parents and grandparents”, that I recently judged, 80% or more told about the poet missing the departed one, lists of things we learned from them, looking in the mirror at mama's or papa's face (I've written at least one like that myself), or how great the older generation was despite adversity. Don't get me wrong: these are good topics, but if you want to win, you must stand out from the crowd. So be original. Try to think of a different spin, unexpected POV, narrator, truly unusual accomplishments—otherwise your grandpa's just like everyone's grandpa, and not that memorable.
 5. As I wrote in the opening, none of the above gives permission for us to forget

about using poetic devices like metaphors, alliteration, sounds and rhythms, original word choices and combinations, figurative language, concrete images, some of the five senses, and other essential elements of poetry.

I repeat, the reason for this long harangue is to share my impressions and the criteria I use when judging. Other judges may have different considerations and priorities. I hope these observations will be helpful.

GOOD LUCK!

SELF-PROMOTION AND THE POET

By Ron Weber, Poetry Society of Michigan

Ok, here's the thing. We all love poetry, right? Otherwise, why be a member of any poetry society? And, based on the individual, that affection is exhibited in different ways. There are those who simply like reading it. Others are compelled to write it as well. The writing of it may be for the catharsis of venting emotions and not worrying about who might read it. And for some, it's the need to communicate on a broad scale with others as we attempt to touch someone's mind, heart, soul, and the gamut of human emotions, as well as to be fulfilled through this communication on a significant level as a poet.

As a result, this need for fulfillment and communication requires two things to exist: a sender and receiver. The third thing is self-promotion. You've got to get the word out there if you're going to engage the family of man, even on a local level, through poetry. Oh, I know. We were brought up to be polite and well-mannered, and that meant subverting anything that might be associated with your ego and to certainly refrain from bragging. Balderdash! As I believe Yogi Berra once said, *If you can do it, it ain't braggin'*.

Self-promotion for poets is something I have grown to strongly support in this world of too many monitors and too many screens. We have become a culture of media-crazed semi-literates who are more a tribe of comatose watchers than we are readers. The ability to be heard is more and more difficult. And self-promotion for poets isn't just about the poet, it's about the craft, maybe even more so. If it helps promote the craft we are passionate about, love, and is part of what defines us, then what's the problem? To be shy and unassuming is tantamount to hiding under a rock. Things under rocks tend to die rather unceremoniously.

If we want deeply to be a poet. If we desire to legitimately claim to be a poet, then we must be one! Internalize it, be proud of it, and don't be afraid of mentioning it in casual

(continued on page 8)

2021 COLLEGE UNDERGRADUATE POETRY COMPETITION (continued from page 1)

Third Honorable Mention went to Tegan Murrell, a senior at the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa, AL, for the manuscript, "Vascular Manslaughter." Tegan is pursuing a degree in Math with a minor in Creative Writing.

Robb Thibault, MS, is director of the Student Union / Student Activities at SUNY Oneonta. Having hosted more than 300 poetry events, he founded the Association of College Unions International (ACUI) college unions poetry slam invitational (CUPSI) in 2001 at the University of Michigan and directed the program for more than a decade.

Thibault has also established these poetry slam series: Slam on the Plains—the Fargo Poetry 1996-99, U-Club poetry slam at the University of Michigan 2000, and the big-O' poetry slam at SUNY Oneonta since 2001. He contributed the introduction to the book: *The Open Mic Night: Campus Programs that Champion Student Voice & Engagement* by Toby S. Jenkins, PhD, Crystal L. Endsley, PhD, Marla L. Jaksch, PhD, Anthony R. Keith, Jr., M.Ed. Robb has heard countless poems on stages across the country.

In 1989, the first two recipients of the Edna Meudt Memorial Scholarship Awards were recognized by NFSPS. Over the years, the competition saw a few name changes. As of 2021, NFSPS has now awarded prizes to the 65th and 66th recipients.

The 2022 College Undergraduate Poetry competition details will be available at: nfspss.com/CUP.html. Submissions will be accepted from 12/1/2021 to 1/31/2022.

SELF-PROMOTION AND THE POET (continued from page 7)

as well as serious conversations. Defend it and share it as needed. The worst part of being a poet is not disdain, ridicule and rejection; rather, it's having to face utter indifference.

I believe in self-promotion for poets because some of the best poetry experiences I've had have come from people I never knew about. If you go to enough "open mic" readings at libraries, pubs, bistros, galleries, slams, etc., you eventually have an epiphany. Some of the best poets out there are ones you never would have heard of otherwise. I am convinced that some of the best poets in the country are unpretentiously walking among us at the local level doing blue collar jobs instead of cashing Pulitzer checks.

As you might choose to promote poetry and yourself as a poet, keep this in mind: if you have ever been published and/or won a poetry contest, you are not just a poet. You are "a published and award-winning poet" and that's how you begin to sell yourself to a skeptical

and uninformed public. Use it in news releases, articles you might write and your biographical release. Yes, you should have a bio that highlights your literary credentials.

Now, for a pat on the back, a big smile, a hearty handshake and that warm glow of victory. Who was the best known and perhaps most successful self-promoting poet? Tick, tick, tick..., Bzzz! Times up, and you're right. Walt Whitman! Old Walt has to be the gold standard in this arena. And personally, thank goodness for it!

STROPHEs ASSOCIATE EDITOR CHANGE

After many years of excellent work as Associate Editor of *Strophes*, Jim Lambert has chosen to pass on this role. Jim brought a sharp focus to *Strophes*, especially state news reports. He also reviewed each draft issue to catch errors that got past me. Yes, I will miss working with Jim. He is both an excellent editor and someone I learned from on each issue.

When one door closes, another opens: I now look forward to working with our new Associate Editor, Julie Cummings (she's also NFSPS President!). I sincerely hope Julie finds editing *Strophes* to be enjoyable and, at some point in the future, may even take on the Editor role. ~ Paul Ford, Editor

POETRY CONTESTS

NFSPS STEVENS POETRY MANUSCRIPT COMPETITION

The Stevens Poetry Manuscript Competition is open for entries until December 31, 2021. The winning entrant will receive one thousand dollars (\$1,000), publication of the winning manuscript, and fifty (50) copies of the resulting book. The competition is open to all poets writing in English, except for previous Stevens Competition winners. Manuscripts should be the original work by a single author. The submission fee is \$20 for NFSPS members and \$25 for nonmembers. Please refer to the rules available at nfspss.com and at nfspss.submittable.com.

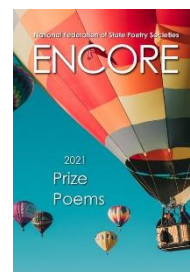
MONTHLY POETRY CONTEST

Wilda Morris, former president of the Illinois State Poetry Society, posts a contest for other poets each month on her blog. New contests are posted the first of the month; deadline is the 15th of the month. No charge to enter. Previously published poems are okay, but not simultaneous submissions. Winning poems are published. See: wildamorris.blogspot.com.

CHAPARRAL POETRY CONTEST 2022

Interested poets can find details on how to enter the Adult Chaparral Contest at: redrockwriters.org. Submissions postmarked from Sept 1st to Dec 1st, 2021.

ENCORE PRIZE POEMS 2021



The anthology of 160 prize-winning poems awarded at the "Anywhere and Everywhere" virtual NFSPS convention is available on amazon.com. The

2021 cover gives a nod to the Federation's first "sky-borne" annual gathering of poets. All royalties from *Encore* sales support NFSPS. ~ Kathy Cotton, *Encore* Editor

National Federation of State Poetry Societies



www.nfsps.com

Organized in Baton Rouge, LA – October 17, 1959
Constitution adopted in Philadelphia, PA – June 18, 1960
Incorporated in Madison, WI – July 15, 1966

NFSPS, Inc. offers fifty national contests plus three student contests each year and conducts an annual convention hosted by one of its affiliated state societies. The 2022 Convention site will be announced soon! Check the NFSPS website for details.

HONORARY CHANCELLORS (in order of appointment)

Joseph Auslander	Richard Armour	Tess Gallagher
John Crowe Ransom	Richard Eberhart	Michael Bugeja
Glenn Ward Dresbach	James Dickey	David Wagoner
Jessee Stuart	Judson Jerome	Maxine Kumin
Grace Noll Crowell	John Ciardi	Naomi Shihab Nye
Jean Star Untermeyer	Robert Coles	Li-Young Lee
Loring Williams	Richard Shelton	Lewis Turco
Harry M. Meacham	Marcia Lee Masters	Ted Kooser
John Williams Andrews	Robert Penn Warren	Natasha Tretheway
August Derleth	Richard Wilbur	Peter Meinke
William Stafford	William Stafford	Jo McDougal
N. Scott Momaday	Rodney Jones	David Rothman

62nd Annual Convention ~ 2022 Annual Contests

- NFSPS Founders Award** (to honor Mary B. Wall)
Subject: Any. Form: Any. 100 line limit. Sponsored by NFSPS, Inc.
1st Prize: \$1,000. 2nd Prize: \$500. 3rd Prize: \$250.
Entry fee – members (\$5) and non-members (\$10) per poem.
Limit: 4 poems per contestant.
- The Margo Award**
Subject: Windows. Form: Any. 50 line limit.
Sponsored by her friends in memory of Margo LaGattuta.
1st Prize: \$200. 2nd Prize: \$100. 3rd Prize: \$50.
- Donald Stodghill Memorial Award** (* Members Only)
Subject: Any. Form: Any. 40 line limit.
Sponsored by Pat Stodghill.
1st Prize: \$200. 2nd Prize: \$100. 3rd Prize: \$50.
- NFSPS Board Award**
Subject: Any. Form: Golden Shovel. 50 line limit.
Sponsored by the NFSPS Executive and Appointive boards.
1st Prize: \$170. 2nd Prize: \$100. 3rd Prize: \$60.
- Winners' Circle Award**
Subject: Any. Form: Any. 80 line limit.
Sponsored by Diane Glancy, Pat Stodghill, Sue Chambers
(previous prize winners in the NFSPS Founders Award)
1st Prize: \$150. 2nd Prize: \$80. 3rd Prize: \$30.
- Georgia Poetry Society Award** (* Members Only)
Subject: The American South – historical events, cultural aspects, weather, landscapes, etc. Form: Any. 40 line limit.
Sponsored by the Georgia Poetry Society.
1st Prize: \$150. 2nd Prize: \$75. 3rd Prize: \$25.
- Stone Gathering Award**
Subject: Food and Food ways. Form: Prose. 40 Line Limit.
Sponsored by Danielle Dufy Literary French Press Editions. Winning poems considered for publication in the print quarterly, *Stone Gathering: A Reader*.
1st Prize: \$125. 2nd Prize: \$75. 3rd Prize: \$50.
- Poetry Society of Texas Award** (* Members Only)
Subject: Any. Form: Any. 40 Line Limit.
Sponsored by the Poetry Society of Texas.
1st Prize: \$125. 2nd Prize: \$50. 3rd Prize: \$25.
- Jim Barton, Bard of the Pines Award**
In Memory of James Nathan Barton, past President of NFSPS and cheerleader to all writers, who saw wonder and poetry everywhere in nature.
Subject: In the Pines. Form: Rhymed. 40 Line Limit.
Sponsored by the South Arkansas Poets of the Pines.
1st Prize: \$100. 2nd Prize: \$60. 3rd Prize: \$40.
- Lucille Morgan Wilson Memorial Award**
Subject: Garden. Form: Any. 40 Line Limit
Sponsored by Julie Cummings and Carla Jordan
1st Prize: \$100. 2nd Prize: \$60. 3rd Prize: \$40.
- Al Laster Memorial Award** (* Members Only)
Subject: An Ekphrastic Poem – written in response to viewing a painting, photograph, sculpture, drawing, or other piece of visual art.
Form: Any. 50 Line Limit. Sponsored by Diana Gagne.
1st Prize: \$100. 2nd Prize: \$50. 3rd Prize: \$50.
- Arizona State Poetry Society Award**
Subject: When the door closes. Form: Any. 40 Line Limit.
Sponsored by the Arizona State Poetry Society (ASPS).
1st Prize: \$100. 2nd Prize: \$50. 3rd Prize: \$25.
- Jim Barton Memorial Award** (* Members Only)
Subject: Any. Form: Any. 40 Line Limit.
Sponsored by the Poets Roundtable of Arkansas
1st Prize: \$75. 2nd Prize: \$50. 3rd Prize: \$25.
- Alabama State Poetry Society Award** (* Members Only)
Subject: Breaking the Rules. Form: Choose a form but break it – modify an existing form to make it your own. Note form and modifications on entry.
50 Line Limit. Sponsored by the Alabama State Poetry Society.
1st Prize: \$75. 2nd Prize: \$50. 3rd Prize: \$25.
- Land of Enchantment Award**
To honor the memory of Susan Paquet
Subject: A poem related to “borders,” real or imagined. Form: Any.
40 Line Limit. Sponsored by the New Mexico State Poetry Society.
1st Prize: \$75. 2nd Prize: \$50. 3rd Prize: \$25.
- Poet's Work Award**
Subject: Life as Other. Form: Persona poem. 40 Line Limit
Sponsored by Paul Ford and Marie Andrews
1st Prize: \$75. 2nd Prize: \$50. 3rd Prize: \$25.
- The Listening Poem Award**
Subject: Listening. Form: Any. 40 Line Limit.
Sponsored by Linda Eve Diamond.
1st Prize: \$75. 2nd Prize: \$50. 3rd Prize: \$25.
- Power of Women Award**
Subject: The Power of Women. Form: Any. 40 Line Limit.
Sponsored by Sue Chambers and Christina Flaughter.
1st Prize: \$70. 2nd Prize: \$50. 3rd Prize: \$20.
- The Virginia Corrie-Cozart Memorial Award**
Honoring the author of *A Mutable Place* and *Wavering Reflection*
Subject: Reflections. Form: Any. 40 Line Limit.
Sponsored by her friends in the Peregrine Writers.
1st Prize: \$60. 2nd Prize: \$40. 3rd Prize: \$20.
- Mildred Vorpahl Baass Remembrance Award** (* Members Only)
Subject: Domestic Cats – their endearing habits, intelligence, loyalty, beauty, etc. (no reference to cruelty or abuse). Form: Any. 40 Line Limit. Sponsored by her daughter, Nancy Baass.
1st Prize: \$60. 2nd Prize: \$40. 3rd Prize: \$20.
- League of Minnesota Poets Award**
In memory of John Reznarski.
Subject: Any. Form: Free Verse. 45 Line Limit.
Sponsored by the League of Minnesota Poets
1st Prize: \$60. 2nd Prize: \$40. 3rd Prize: \$20.
- Jessica C. Saunders Memorial Award**
Subject: Any. Form: Villanelle. 19 Line Limit.
Sponsored by the Shavano Poets Society of Colorado.
1st Prize: \$60. 2nd Prize: \$40. 3rd Prize: \$20.
- Poetry Society of Indiana Award**
Subject: A Daily Ritual. Form: Any. 40 Line Limit.
Sponsored by the Poetry Society of Indiana.
1st Prize: \$50. 2nd Prize: \$30. 3rd Prize: \$20.
- Nevada Poetry Society Award** (* Members Only)
Subject: Any. Form: Rondino. 32 Line Limit.
Sponsored by the Nevada Poetry Society.
1st Prize: \$50. 2nd Prize: \$30. 3rd Prize: \$20.
- William Stafford Memorial Award**
In memory of William Stafford, Oregon's late Poet Laureate and twice Honorary Chancellor of NFSPS.
Subject: Any. Form: Any. 40 Line Limit.
Sponsored by the Oregon Poetry Association & friends of William Stafford.
1st Prize: \$50. 2nd Prize: \$30. 3rd Prize: \$20.

26. The New York Poetry Forum Award

Subject: The Art of Poetry. Form: Any. 40 Line Limit.
Sponsored by the New York Poetry Forum.
1st Prize: \$50. 2nd Prize: \$30. 3rd Prize: \$20.

***27. Columbine Poets of Colorado Award (* Members Only)**

Subject: Any. Form: Haibun. 30 Line Limit.
Sponsored by the Columbine Poets of Colorado.
1st Prize: \$50. 2nd Prize: \$30. 3rd Prize: \$20.

28. Morton D. Prouty & Elsie S. Prouty Memorial Award

In memory of Morton D. Prouty, Jr. who served as NFSPS Treasurer and Poet Laureate of Alabama, and Elsie S. Prouty
Subject: a Nature poem. Form: Any. 40 Line Limit.
Sponsored by daughters, Catherine P. Horn and Carol P. Ostberg and their families.
1st Prize: \$50. 2nd Prize: \$30. 3rd Prize: \$20.

29. Louisiana State Poetry Society Award

Subject: Any. Form: Any. 40 Line Limit.
Sponsored by the Louisiana State Poetry Society.
1st Prize: \$50. 2nd Prize: \$30. 3rd Prize: \$20.

***30. J. Paul Holcomb Memorial Award (* Members Only)**

Subject: Any. Form: Any. 28 Line Limit.
Sponsored by the Poetry Society of Texas.
1st Prize: \$50. 2nd Prize: \$30. 3rd Prize: \$20.

31. Utah State Poetry Society Award

Subject: Double Vision. Form: Any. 50 Line Limit.
Sponsored by the Utah State Poetry Society.
1st Prize: \$50. 2nd Prize: \$30. 3rd Prize: \$20.

32. Illinois State Poetry Society Award

Subject: Books. Form: Any. 40 Line Limit.
Sponsored by the Illinois State Poetry Society.
1st Prize: \$50. 2nd Prize: \$30. 3rd Prize: \$20.

33. The Robbie Award

Subject: Loss of a Child (not necessarily by death). Form: Any.
40 Line Limit. Sponsored by Joyce Wilson.
1st Prize: \$50. 2nd Prize: \$30. 3rd Prize: \$20.

34. Iowa Poetry Association Award

Subject: Poetry for Children. Form: Any. 50 Line Limit.
Sponsored by the Iowa Poetry Association.
1st Prize: \$50. 2nd Prize: \$30. 3rd Prize: \$20.

35. Ohio Award

Subject: Any. Form: Any. 40 Line Limit.
Sponsored by the Ohio Poetry Association.
1st Prize: \$50. 2nd Prize: \$25. 3rd Prize: \$15.

***36. Wallace Stevens Memorial Award (* Members Only)**

Subject: Any. Form: Rondeau. 40 Line Limit.
Sponsored by the Pennsylvania Poetry Society, Inc.
1st Prize: \$40. 2nd Prize: \$25. 3rd Prize: \$15.

37. WyoPoets Award

Subject: Wyoming or the West. Form: Any. 40 Line Limit.
Sponsored by the WyoPoets of Wyoming.
1st Prize: \$40. 2nd Prize: \$25. 3rd Prize: \$15.

38. Florida State Poets Association, Inc. Award

Subject: a Celebration of Florida History or Culture – or any other Florida topic, historic or contemporary. Form: Any. 40 Line Limit.
Sponsored by the Florida State Poets Association, Inc.
1st Prize: \$35. 2nd Prize: \$25. 3rd Prize: \$15.

39. Poetry society of Michigan Award

Subject: Any. Form: Free Verse. 40 Line Limit.
Sponsored by the Poetry Society of Michigan.
1st Prize: \$35. 2nd Prize: \$25. 3rd Prize: \$15.

40. Mississippi Poetry Society Award

Subject: Any. Form: Sonnet (include sonnet pattern on entry).
Sponsored by the Mississippi Poetry Society.
1st Prize: \$35. 2nd Prize: \$25. 3rd Prize: \$15.

41. Jesse Stuart Memorial Award

Subject: Any. Form: Any. 40 Line Limit.
Sponsored by the Kentucky State Poetry Society.
1st Prize: \$25. 2nd Prize: \$20. 3rd Prize: \$15.

42. Missouri State Poetry Society Award

Subject: The Show Me State. Form: Any. 40 Line Limit.
Sponsored by the Missouri State Poetry Society
1st Prize: \$25. 2nd Prize: \$20. 3rd Prize: \$15.

43. Barbara Stevens Memorial Award

Subject: Any Serious Theme. Form: Any. 12 Line Limit.
Sponsored by the South Dakota State Poetry Society.
1st Prize: \$25. 2nd Prize: \$20. 3rd Prize: \$15.

***44. Poetry Society of Oklahoma Award (* Members Only)**

Subject: Any. Form: Rondeau. 13 Line Limit.
Sponsored by the Poetry Society of Oklahoma.
1st Prize: \$25. 2nd Prize: \$20. 3rd Prize: \$15.

45. Save Our Earth Award

In memory of David F. Balph.
Subject: Environmental Issues. Form: Any. 40 Line Limit.
Sponsored by the Martha H. Balph.
1st Prize: \$25. 2nd Prize: \$20. 3rd Prize: \$15.

46. Massachusetts State Poetry Society Award

Subject: Any. Form: Any. 40 Line Limit.
Sponsored by the Massachusetts State Poetry Society.
1st Prize: \$25. 2nd Prize: \$20. 3rd Prize: \$15.

***47. Poetry Society of Tennessee Award (* Members Only)**

In honor of JoAn Howerton.
Subject: Families. Form: Any. 40 Line Limit.
Sponsored by the Poetry Society of Tennessee
1st Prize: \$25. 2nd Prize: \$20. 3rd Prize: \$15.

48. Maine Poets Society Award

Subject: the Sea or Seacoast. Form: Any. 40 Line Limit.
Sponsored by the Maine Poets Society, fostering poetry since 1936.
1st Prize: \$25. 2nd Prize: \$20. 3rd Prize: \$15.

***49. Miriam S. Strauss Memorial Award (* Members Only)**

Subject: a Humorous Poem. Form: Rhymed, Metered.
10 – 30 Line Limit. Sponsored by Russell H. Strauss.
1st Prize: \$25. 2nd Prize: \$20. 3rd Prize: \$15.

***50. The Poets Northwest Award (* Members Only)**

Subject: The Geography of Fire. Form: Any. 36 Line Limit.
Sponsored by Poets Northwest, a chapter of the Poetry Society of Texas, celebrating 33 years of encouraging and inspiring poets in their craft.
1st Prize: \$25. 2nd Prize: \$20. 3rd Prize: \$15.

Student Award: Grades 9 – 12

Subject: Any. Form: Any. 32 Line Limit.
Sponsored by Julie Cummings (CO), Catherine L'Herisson (TX)
1st Prize: \$50, 2nd Prize: \$30, 3rd Prize: \$20.
7 Honorable Mentions: \$5 each.

Poetry in the Classroom Award: Grades 6 – 8

Subject: Any. Form: Any. 32 Line Limit.
Sponsored by the New Mexico State Poetry Society.
1st Prize: \$25, 2nd Prize: \$15, 3rd Prize: \$20.

Poetry in the Classroom Award: Grades 3 – 5

Subject: Any. Form: Any. 32 Line Limit.
Sponsored by the New Mexico State Poetry Society.
1st Prize: \$25, 2nd Prize: \$15, 3rd Prize: \$20.

No entry fee is required for these student competitions. Open only to students in grades 3 thru 12. Include grade with name and summer mailing address on the second copy only (see Contest Rule 1) or enter via Submittable. One poem per student. Mail entries to 2022 Contest Chair.

CONTEST RULES

(Read carefully. Any violation will disqualify entry.)

1. Any poem submitted must:

- be the original work of the contestant, unpublished in any form, including electronically and placed on exhibition, not under consideration or accepted for publication. (Award will be recalled if a winning poem is found to be in violation of rules before publication in the NFSPS anthology of prize poems, and lower prizes and honorable mentions will move up in classification.);
- be written in English, be titled, unless the poem is a haiku or another form that is supposed to be untitled;
- have a 40 line limit for all contests not stating line limit. Line count includes every line, both **printed and blank**, except the title and its following space.
- be typed or computer generated (not handwritten or hand printed) and without illustrations.

2. Poets give NFSPS exclusive first printing rights to all poems entered in the NFSPS annual contests. Poems winning a cash prize of \$15 or more will be printed in the NFSPS prize poems anthology, *Encore*, at the discretion of the Editor. The Editor reserves the right to alter line breaks in poems having more than 50 characters per line, including punctuation marks and spaces. Printing rights revert to the poet after the anthology is published (approx. August of 2022). Printing rights to poems winning less than \$15 (or no prize) revert to the poet after the list of winners is published in the August 2022 NFSPS newsletter, *Strophes*. All prize winners will be notified, and others may obtain a list of winners in August 2022 by sending \$1 and a #10 SASE to:

Paul Ford, *Strophes* Editor
10239 Hickory Point Dr., Sandy, UT 84092

No poems will be returned, so poets should retain copies.

3. An eligible poem **may not be withdrawn** after submission.

4. Except as indicated in Contest 1 – NFSPS Founders Award, contestants may submit only one entry in any contest, and may not submit the same poem in any other contest.

5. Check or money order enclosed must be made payable to NFSPS, Inc. (initials are sufficient) rather than to any individual.

- Non-members may enter most contests at \$1 each (except \$5 for each entry in Contest 1 – NFSPS Founders Award). Non-members may not enter contests marked with an asterisk (*) and which are designated members only.
- Members may enter up to 10 contests for \$1 per poem or \$10 total for entry in more than 10 contests (except for Contest 1 – NFSPS Founders Award which is \$5 per poem).
- Entrants from outside the U.S. Must send checks drawn on U.S. banks or branches, payable in U.S. Funds, or send U.S. Currency.

6. First Prize winner in Contest 1 – NFSPS Founders Award is not eligible to enter that contest the following year (NFSPS Founders Award only).

7. Judges will be selected by NFSPS, Inc. No ties will be awarded, and the decisions of the judges will be final.

8. When to submit:

- Start date:** entries must not be postmarked before **January 1, 2022**.
- Deadline:** entries must be postmarked by **March 15, 2022**.

9. “Members Only” eligible if a paid-up member of a state society, list in alphabetical membership roll mailed by a state society along with NFSPS dues to:

Linda Harris, NFSPS Treasurer
711 6th St. SE, Altoona, IA 50009-1926

by **January 15, 2022**, and updated as required by the contest deadline. E-mail: Treasurer@NFSPS.com

10. How to submit poems via USPS:

- Send **two** copies of the poem, typed, photocopied, or computer-generated, on 8.5” X 11” white paper (no onion skin or tissue), in black ink, **single-spaced**. If the poem requires more than one page, staple together at the top **left** corner all pages of each copy.
- On **both** copies, place number and name of contest in upper **left** corner.
- On **second copy only**, put name, address, phone number, and e-mail address of the poet, state poetry society membership or “Non-member of NFSPS” in upper **right** corner. If a poem requires more than one page, number pages also on upper right corner (both copies).
- Separate originals from duplicates and stack in numerical order (1 – 50) with originals on top. Count them.
- Prepare a 3” X 5” lined file card (leave first line blank) and list poet's name, address, phone number, e-mail address (if available), state society membership (or “Non-member of NFSPS”). List on the card the number, but not the title, of each contest you are entering. List the total number of poems sent. Do NOT staple the card to entries or to entry fee.
- Mail all entries at one time, unfolded, in a large envelope, including the file card and entry fee. Mail to the Contest Chair by First Class, Priority Mail, or any form of delivery that does NOT require a signature upon receipt.

Mail Entries to:
2022 Contest Chair
5858 Pintail Way
Frederick, CO. 80504-9668

NFSPS, Inc. will **not** assume mailing costs and will **not** be responsible for any entries lost or delayed in the mail.

11. You may also enter via Submittable.com. **Please read and follow the rules on Submittable as they are slightly different.**

For INFORMATION REGARDING the FOLLOWING:

E-mail or send a #10 SASE to the Chair in Charge.

*** 2022 Contest Rules**

2022 Contest Chair
5858 Pintail Way, Frederick, CO 80504-9668
E-mail: ContestChair.nfsps@gmail.com

*** 2022 Contest Brochures Mailing**

Paul Ford, 1st VP / *Strophes* Editor
10239 Hickory Point Dr., Sandy, UT 84092
E-mail: pmford3@gmail.com

*** 2022 Co-Contest Sponsors / Brochure**

Steven Concert, 4th VP / Stevens & CUP Manuscript Co-Editor
49 Kitchen Avenue, Harveys Lake, PA 18618
E-mail: paperlesspoets@gmail.com

*** 2022 Co-Contest Sponsors / Brochure****Membership Coordinator**

Julie Cummings, President
9428 Fallen Rock Road, Conifer, CO 80433-4007
E-mail: President@NFSPS.com

*** Stevens Manuscript Competition**

Julie Cummings, Acting Stevens Manuscript Chair
9428 Fallen Rock Road, Conifer, CO 80433-4007
E-mail: stevens.nfsps@gmail.com

*** 2022 College Undergraduate Poetry (CUP) Competition**

Jessica Temple, Secretary / CUP Chair
Alabama A&M University McCormick Building, Rm. 1
P.O. Box 4900 Normal, AL 35762-4900
E-mail: NFSPSsecretary@gmail.com

*** 2022 BlackBerry Peach (BBP3) Awards**

Joseph Cavanaugh, 2nd VP / Development/Endowment
/ BBP3 Chair
3722 Longford Circle, Ormond Beach, FL 32174
E-mail: jcavanaugh1@gmail.com

NFSPS, Inc. is a non-profit organization, exclusively educational and literary. Its purpose is to recognize the importance of poetry with respect to national cultural heritage. It is dedicated solely to the furtherance of poetry on the national level and serves to unite poets in the bonds of fellowship and understanding.

The NFSPS anthology of prize poems, *Encore*, containing the winning poems from these contests will be available upon publication in August 2022 on Amazon.com and at the NFSPS convention in June 2023. For information regarding current *Encore* editions, contact: **Encore Editor, Kathy Cotton** at kcalcotton@gmail.com. For information regarding available editions and book prices, visit the NFSPS website (select "Publications" in the menu).