

STANZA

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE MAINE POETS SOCIETY

VOLUME 26, NUMBER 2

JULY 2018

NEWS OF OUR NEXT MEETING

Our next meeting will be Saturday, September 15, 2018, at the Emmanuel Lutheran Episcopal Church, 209 Eastern Ave. in Augusta. Please bring a bag lunch. Coffee, tea, bottled water and cookies will be provided. A \$10 registration fee, expected from all attendees including guests, will help defray the cost of renting the facility.

Agenda for Meeting

9:30	Registration and coffee	1:00	<u>Contest</u> : A poem of no more than 30 lines that has to do with some aspect of place or its reverse, displacement. Judge: Linda Aldrich
10:00	Business Meeting		
10:30	Open Mic (Poets' Corner) sign up at registration - first readers will be those who have not submitted a poem for the contest. A total of one hour will be allotted for this.	1:50	Judge reads her own work and/or offers poetry writing helps.
11:30	Mini-workshop on generating new work.	2:30	Announcements and closing
12:00	Lunch (bring your own) - Book exchange to replace the Silent Auction (If books you bring are there at the end of the meeting, you may reclaim them. Otherwise they'll be given to Good Will.)		

Contest Submissions

(NOTE: Submission to a contest constitutes permission to publish.)

Send to: James Breslin
451 Bassett Rd.
Winslow, ME 04901

DEADLINE: August 15, 2018
1 poem (no fee)

- 2 copies of your poem (ONE with your name; one without)
- Envelope: Letter-size (long, #10) marked "CONTEST"
- INCLUDE SASE!!

Contest Poem—SUBJECT: Write a poem of no more than 30 lines that has to do with some aspect of place or its reverse, displacement. Place may be widely interpreted through geography, culture, history, or psychology. Displacement or to feel out-of-place carries discomfort, sometimes extreme.

On place:

"...place in writing often exists at that intersection between the reality of place and one's imagination about that place, what one believes, hopes, or imagines about the various possibilities of oneself in that place, even if only as they can be held in memory." ~ David St. John

"Honoring a place, wherever that place is, is just a matter of paying attention. And suddenly you have this apprehension of an inexhaustible fullness around us." ~ Scott Cairns

On displacement:

“...my own family was made refugees by the state of Israel in 1948. I carry their sense of exile...a profound sense of exile.” ~ Naomi Shihab Nye

“There was so much shame growing up French-Canadian. And when you grow up a working class kid, you want to be better...But if you're in a small town and you're the oddball, it's not so easy. My small town didn't embrace its oddballs.” ~ Denise Duhamel

Placement Example:**Mare Frigoris**

by Sandra Alcosser

Coming home late spring night, stars a foreign
Language above me, I thought I would know

The moons like family, their dark plains—sea of
Crises, sea of nectar, serpent sea.

How quickly a century passes,
Minerals crystallize at different speeds,

Limestone dissolves, rivers sneak through its absence.
This morning I learned painted turtles

Sleeping inches below the streambank
Freeze and do not die. Fifteen degrees

Mare Frigoris, sea of cold, second
Quadrant of the moon's face. I slide toward

The cabin, arms full of brown bags, one light
Syrups over drifts of snow. Night rubs her

Icy skin against me and I warm
Small delicacies—cilantro, primrose—

Close to the body. A hundred million
Impulses race three hundred miles an hour

Through seventeen square feet of skin and
Gravity that collapses stars, lift's earth's

Watery dress from her body, touches me
With such tenderness, I hardly breathe.

Displacement Example:**Thoreau**

by Timothy Liu

My father and I have no place to go.
His wife will not let us in the house—
afraid of catching AIDS. She thinks
sleeping with men is more than a sin,
my father says, as we sit on the curb
in front of someone else's house.
Sixty-four years have made my father
impotent. Silver roots, faded black
dye mottling his hair make him look
almost comical, as if his shame
belonged to me. Last night we read
Thoreau in a steak house down the road
and wept: “If a man does not keep pace
with his companions, let him travel
to the music that he hears, however
measured or far away.” The orchards
are gone, his village near Shanghai
bombed by the Japanese, the groves
I have known in Almaden—apricot,
walnut, peach, and plum—hacked down.

MPS Prize Poem Contest Results

First Place: *Going like Gaudi* – David Sloan

Second Place: *Peace Piece* – Bruce Willard

Third Place: *Boy on a Doorstep* – Richard Foerster

Honorable Mentions (not numbered):

The Fortune Teller – Jim Brosnan

Cold Storage – Deborah Pfeffer

In the Valley of the Brattleboro – Paul Weiss

The Places You Wore Khakis – Amy Kopec

ABOUT THE JUDGE

Linda Aldrich was inaugurated as Poet Laureate of Portland on Tuesday, June 26, 2018. She has published two collections of poetry, *Foothold* (2008) and *March and Mad Women* (2012), and was awarded the Emily Dickinson Award for Poetry from Universities West Press. She has published poems in *Denver Quarterly*, *Third Coast*, *Poet Lore*, *Cimarron Review*, *The Snake Nation Review*, *Ilanot Review*, and the *Maine Arts Journal*, among others. Linda received an MFA in poetry from Vermont College and teaches English at Southern Maine Community College. She co-hosts the Local Writers at the Local Buzz reading series in Cape Elizabeth with poet Marcia Brown. Linda lives in Portland, Maine, with her husband David and their exceptional dog Simba.

April 2018 CONTEST WINNERS

Contest: A poem of no more than 30 lines that connects an experience from your own or your family history with a broader social, political, or historical context.– Judge, Lee Sharkey

First Prize—Bill Frayer

It's Not Natural

It is not natural
to worry about our child
being a victim of hate.
It was 1998.

To worry about our child
who just told us she was gay.
It was 1998;
Matthew Shepard had been left to die.

She'd just told us she was gay,
but who could imagine?
Matthew Shepard had been left to die.
What would happen now?

Who could imagine?
How does rage begin?
What would happen now?
her edgy haircut, tattooed arms.

Where does rage begin?
I could not sleep at night.
her edgy haircut, tattooed arms.
She was just in love.

I could not sleep at night
while she danced all night in gay bars,
She was just in love.
I, helpless to protect.

She danced all night in gay bars,
not yet a victim of hate.
I, helpless to protect.

This was not natural.

Second Prize—Marshall Witten

November Deer Camp

The woods are wet, leaves are quiet from
soft showers. Six stags, still warm, hang, tongues out,
heads down, along the porch. Inside, a shaded
gas lantern casts a circle through a fog
of blue – from fragrant Turkish pipe tobacco,
and cheap, twisted Parodi cigars – hovering
above a green, felt-covered gaming table.
I'm dealing Texas Hold'Em. Stacks of chips
and cards clutter the table in the midst
of brimming bourbon glasses and half-filled
ashtrays. The woodstove fills the room with smells
as simmering deer liver, bacon, and onions,
overpower stale tobacco smoke
and wool soaked from hunting in the rain.
I bang the cards on felt to cut through chatter
about the hunt, inquiring: "Are you in?"
I give each player two hole cards and wait
for the first round of betting, then deal the flop.
They bet, fourth face up card, the turn, more bets.
We hear the truck come up the drive. It's Kent,
back from town with groceries. Rushing in,
he blurts out: "Kennedy has been shot in Dallas."
Nobody looks up from the table.
I calmly ask: "Check, bet, or fold?"
"This is serious. Not a joking matter."
You come hear it on the Chevy's radio."
We all walk out and shiver 'round the cab,
his shooting is the only story airing,
and one by one we file back inside, chastened.
It's quiet at the table, cards turned face down.

Third Prize—James Breslin Degrees of Separation

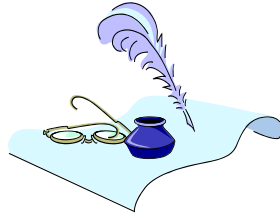
“ Uresha one of the kids you helped get out of Willowbrook
 -long before Geraldo’s expose-
 came the day we had the doctor stop your life supports.
 He heard you had been sick and traveled hours from the Bronx.
 There he stood with us, a huge, imposing figure of a man while
 the doctor stared, uneasy about just who this dark intruder was.
 He’d been your student and we greeted him.
 Even then you still amazed me with this final tribute to your life.
 I’d once been proud before when I was 8 when you were running Ike’s campaign.
 You’d stood with him upon the platform, your picture made the paper,
 had introduced me and gave to me the gift of history not with fading ink
 but as a drama rich with fleshly heroes on a stage.
 You had your intersecting history too-yours left you with a wild, disgruntled heart.
 You raged at trivialities and I never knew just what would set you off.
 You’d drink too much and flirt with married men.
 I’d bristle as you’d lecture me and slur the words:
 “Kid, you always wanted, another kind of mother,
 like all the stay-home Mommies of your friends.
 I hate to disappoint you, I really do,
 but you got me instead. I guess you’ll have to deal with it.”
 You were unique and even admirable, fierce about what you thought was right.
 In a different world you might have run for office, crusaded for some public cause.
 I hated you for years, wore self-pity like a hair-shirt,
 and I blamed you for my errant questing for content.
 But now, on this, the anniversary of your death,
 I have no brooding need to reignite a grudge.
 I know you did the best you could,
 considering your sad and loveless childhood.
 You were another kind mother, that’s for sure,
 but all in all I guess you’d say I’d dealt with it.

NOTE: Once again, only three poems were selected for special recognition. No honorable mentions were chosen, although the judge offered comments on the poems of all who were present.

Opportunity Grants

To date we have disbursed just \$50 out of \$1,000 allotted for 2018 opportunity grants. Opportunity grants, on a first-come, first-served basis, up to \$300 are available to members in good standing (except those who have had such a grant within the past 3 years) — for attendance at a workshop, to take a class, or to attend a poetry festival or residency. If interested, visit our website and download an application form, or see Gus for details in writing or at an upcoming meeting!

Gus Peterson, Treasurer & Membership Chair, glp3324@gmail.com



President's Message

I hope all my fellow poets are having a wonderful summer.

Summer is a good time to be lazy and hang out in the shade or float in (or on!) a lake or the sea, thinking interesting thoughts, and how to express them in a poem. Sometimes the unlikeliest things crop up when you're in the normal course of your day, so keep a notebook handy and jot down anything that feels like something you might write about – it doesn't have to be heavy or profound.

I'm happy to report that our inaugural prize poem contest for Maine residents was a great success. We had a total of 95 entries, including entries from some of our members and some from poets who have since joined us and who I hope we will see at our fall meeting in Augusta. We were very honored by being allowed to present the prize at the MWPA Literary Awards evening in June. We will certainly repeat the contest next year, and we feel as a board that we have learned a lot from the exercise.

I would like to explain the judging process so that everybody understands how it works, for future reference. All the entries came to me, and I separated them into named and unnamed piles, matched by number. Three members of the MPS board then did a preliminary screening of the unnamed copies, and agreed on the best thirty for the shortlist, which we then sent to Betsy Sholl for judging. She chose the winner from that shortlist. As you may have heard, our winner was David Sloan, with his poem "Going Like Gaudi". We can't print it just yet, because he has sent it to various avenues for publication, but we hope to be able to print it in the future. It was a worthy winner.

We were very fortunate that Linda Aldrich, the new Poet Laureate of Portland, agreed to judge the contest for our next meeting before she knew of her appointment, because I'm fairly sure she will be a busy lady for the next couple of years! The topic is a fascinating one – a poem that deals with aspects of place or being displaced. We are so lucky to live in such a beautiful state, and there is certainly much to write about if you choose to write about places in Maine, but there are also those like me who are immigrants and have things to say about being displaced. Immigration in all its aspects is front and center of the political scene this year, so there is plenty of material around to work with. Check the rest of this newsletter for details of the topic and the closing date.

In our next meeting we will have time for a mini-workshop about generating new work, so I hope as many of you as possible will be there. Seeing each other in person and sharing our work and our interests is the best possible stimulation for new work.

Yours in poetry

Jenny Doughty (President, MPS)

"Poetry is ordinary language raised to the Nth power. Poetry is boned with ideas, nerved and blooded with emotions, all held together by the delicate, tough skin of words."

~ Paul Engle, from an article in *The New York Times*.

Publication & Member News

Poems

Robert Paul Allen has a poem in the *Aurorean Spring/Summer Issue 2018*. The poem is entitled “On Hearing My Footsteps” about a recurring encounter with some horses in a corral in Oklahoma.

Richard Foerster has two poems in the Spring 2018 issue of *The Heartland Review*, titled “The Falling Rocket” (based on a work by James McNeill Whistler) and “Watercress” (inspired by an encounter with a young supermarket cashier). He also has an interview and two poems in the current online edition of *Rappahannock Review*: “Boy on a Doorstep” (the title poem of his forthcoming volume of new and selected poems) and “To Someone Somewhere After All These Years” about an unexpected email from an ex-wife.

Craig Sipe has one poem in *Good Fat* Volume 3, Summer 2018 Issue titled “Fear and Trembling at the Bottle Redemption Center”. The poem is about a recent time that philosopher Soren Kierkegaard brought his returnables back to his local market to reclaim his deposit.

Readings

Nancy Ann Schaefer will read from her latest chapbook, *Living at hope's edge* (Tiger's Eye Press, 2018), at the Norway Music & Arts Festival July 14 at 2 p.m. All proceeds from sales go to Long Journey Animal Rescue, Fryeburg.

Margaret Yocom will be reading at the 12th annual Hugh Ogden Memorial Evening of Poetry held at the Ecopelagicon Nature Store in Rangeley at 6 p.m. on Sunday, August 5.

Books

Ted Bookey has a new book, *Stitiously Speaking*, published by and available from Moon Pie Press. It received a rave review in the K J and other Maine newspapers.

Ruth Bookey also has a new book, *I Still Feel the Swirl*, published by Moon Pie Press. She has given several readings in the area.

Sarah J. Woolf-Wade has a book of poems coming out in a couple of months, *Wolf Moon Down*, Goose River Press, 2018

Margaret Yocom, *ALL KINDS OF FUR: Erasure Poems & New Translation of a Tale from the Brothers Grimm*, Deerbrook Editions, 2018.

Other Member News

James Breslin will be teaching a class on poetry at the UMA's Senior College this fall.

NOTE: The deadline for Publication & Member News for the next *Stanza* is November 1, 2018.

This section of the *Stanza* has been available for many years and deadlines announced. However, this is the first time we've sent a reminder out via e-mail while an issue is in the preparatory phase. We are delighted with the number of responses, resulting in nearly a full page of member news and publication credits. Thanks to all who responded, and especially to those who did so using the requested format. That really does make things easier on this end.

We would be interested to know about poetry groups in which our members participate and invite you to tell us about them in a brief paragraph, including whether they are open groups or by invitation only. This information can be emailed to the *Stanza* Editor (Sally Joy at jsjoy@roadrunner.com) at any time prior to the deadline given for Publication & Member News.

Maine Writers & Publishers Alliance (MWPA) offers a variety of workshops. An Opportunity Grant could be applied to the cost of any of these. (See page 4.) Note, there is a price for MWPA members and another for non-members. MPS membership alone does not entitle you to the member price. <http://mainewriters.org/events/category/workshops/>

Reminder: Members of MPS are automatically members of the National Federation of State Poetry Societies, and thus eligible to enter their contests. You can find a full list of the contests in each edition of the NFSPS newsletter, *Strophes*, so check out the April 2018 issue of *Strophes*, which has been posted to <http://nfsps.com/> as the current issue.

One of Many Revision Strategies

by Jenny Doughty, MPS President

Read your poem out loud, or if you can bear it, get somebody else to read it out loud to you. Read it several times, and at different times of day.

While you are listening, make a note of places where the rhythm stumbles or it is awkward to read and see if the rhythm serves the purpose you have for the poem. Some stumbles can be deliberate. Read Wilfred Owen's poem *Dulce Et Decorum Est* for a wonderful example of the deliberate use of stumbles in rhythm to emphasise the point being made. An accidental stumble that doesn't work with the poem might spoil the feeling you are trying to create.

Listen for the sounds your poem makes. When you are revising, see if you can create deliberate sound echoes from one line to the next. Those sound echoes can be consonants (alliteration) or vowels (consonance). Poetry is much like spoken music.

Sound echoes can also be, but don't have to be, internal rhymes or rhymes at the end of lines. Don't force a rhyme. In other words, don't impose a rhyme scheme on your poem that isn't emerging naturally, or distort the syntax or the meaning of the line you want to write in order to arrive at a rhyming word. Also, don't reach for clichés to create a rhyme or a sound echo. As the great 18th century poet, Alexander Pope, wrote in his *Essay On Criticism*:

Where'er you find "the cooling western breeze",
In the next line, it "whispers through the trees":
If "crystal streams with pleasing murmurs creep",
The reader's threaten'd (not in vain) with "sleep".

If you've ever been to a poetry slam, you know that the highest scoring emotion is self-righteous indignation: *How dare you judge me?* So in that way, the poem, 'What Teachers Make,' is an absolutely formulaic slam poem designed to allow me to get up on my soap box and say, "Let me tell you what really makes me angry."

~ Taylor Mali

NOTE: You can read the poem on the Internet.

STANZA, Maine Poets Society
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FIRST CLASS

Stanza is the tri-annual
newsletter of the
Maine Poets Society
promoting good poetry
since 1936

FMI or to join, write
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MPS website (MainePoetsSociety.com)

MPS Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1747588905507733/>. When you indicate an interest in joining the group, Jenny (as Administrator) will be able to confirm your request. You can also search within Facebook for Maine Poets Society. Choose the option that says “public group.”