

STANZA

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE MAINE POETS SOCIETY

VOLUME 27, NUMBER 3

DECEMBER 2018

NEWS OF OUR NEXT MEETING

Our next meeting will be Saturday, April 27, 2019, at the First Universalist Church, 169 Pleasant St. in Auburn. Bring a bag lunch. Coffee, tea, and bottled water will be provided. A \$10 registration fee will help defray the cost of renting the facility.

Agenda for Meeting

9:30	Registration and coffee	1:00	<u>Contest</u> : A Persona Poem, With a Twist – 30-line limit. Judge: Carol Bachofner
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	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: March 27, 2019

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— Persona Poem, With a Twist. Persona poems are those written in the voice and character of another person. A persona, from the Latin for mask, is a character taken on by a poet to speak in first-person. This person doesn't have to be a famous or recognizable character. You might choose to write in the voice of a friend, a family member, or a made-up character (a carnival barker, a policeman, a child, a musician, etc).

Remember that doing a persona is like being an actor. You take on a role. This may require a bit of research but will surely take planning and revision to make sure your character's voice comes through. Writing as someone else—exploring what you don't know—can prove an excellent method of coming to know yourself as a writer. Persona poems can address a number of writing concerns—creating dramatic tension, making decisions about authorial distance, and addressing difficult or seemingly private personal subjects—while allowing a greater freedom to write without self-censure.

Persona presents a puzzle. In a persona poem, the writer speaks directly to readers and forges an interpersonal relationship with them. It whispers in their ears or grabs them by the neck. Keep the poem in the present tense. Form is up to you, something loose and free or a form that you like using (triolet, pantoum, prose poem, villanelle, etc.) Just remember to limit to 30 lines. The gold standard for persona poems is Robert Browning's dramatic monologue "My Last Duchess."

ABOUT THE JUDGE

Carol Willette Bachofner, poet, watercolorist, and photographer, is the author of seven books, the latest released in 2017 and 2018: *The Boyfriend Project* (poetry); and *Test Pattern, a Fantod of Prose Poems*. Individual poems have appeared in various journals such as *Prairie Schooner*, *The Connecticut Review*, *The Comstock Review*, *Cream City Review*, *Crab Orchard Journal*, *Bangor Metro*, *Stolen Island*, and many others.

Her poems have appeared in the following anthologies: *Take Heart: Poems From Maine*, selected by Wesley McNair, Maine State Poet Laureate; *Unraveling the Spreading Cloth of Time: Indigenous Thoughts Concerning the Universe*; and *Dawnland Voices, an anthology of writings from Indigenous New England*.

Carol won the 2017 Maine Postmark Contest for her poem, *Passagassawaukeag*, published in *The Maine Review*. She was awarded an MFA in Poetry from Vermont College of Fine Arts in 2004 and served as Poet Laureate of Rockland Maine from 2012-2016.

Winter Gatherings – 2019

We are planning two regional meetings this year. Anyone is welcome to participate in either or both. An RSVP is asked for the Southern Maine gathering. RSVP is not necessary for the Open Mic in Augusta.

Regional Gathering Southern Maine Area

Saturday, January 19, 2019 (Snow date, Sunday, February 2)

9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

HOST: Jenny Doughty

Location: The home of Alice Persons, 16 Walton Street, Westbrook.

NOTE: There are cats at this location

BRING: \$5 registration fee. A brown bag lunch, a notepad and pen, and poem(s) to share. Coffee/tea and water will be provided. Also cookies (everything goes better with cookies).

RSVP by January 5 to Jenny at jmdought@maine.rr.com or (207) 207-699-9243.

FORMAT: Up to 10 people

EMPHASIS: Revision strategies

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| 9:30 | Check-in and coffee |
| 10:00-12:00 | Revision strategies: writing exercises and handouts to facilitate this. |
| 12:00 | Lunch and conversation |
| 12:45-2:30 | Workshop. Please include in your RSVP if you would like to bring a poem with you to be workshopped and bring 12 copies of the poem with you. If more wish to participate than time will allow, slots will be allocated on a first come, first served basis according to when the request was received. If you have never taken part in a poetry workshop before, please check out http://www.mshogue.com/poetry/wkshp.html . Line length of poems for workshopping should not exceed 24 lines. |
| 2:30-3:00 | Reading in the round, vote on 3 poems to send to the <i>Stanza</i> . 24 line limit. |
| 3:00 | Fill out evaluation forms; farewell and homeward. |

Regional Gathering Augusta Area

Saturday March 23, 2019 – 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

HOST: Sally Joy

Location: Maine Authors Room, Maine State Library, Augusta

BRING: Up to 4 poems to share (Time allotted for each reader will depend on number of attendees.)

RSVP not required – consider yourself invited

FORMAT: Open Mic – number not limited

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| 10:15 | Sign-in; meet and greet. |
| 10:30-12:30 | Open Mic |

The Maine Authors Room – Info and an Invitation

On the evening of Wednesday, October 24, an enthusiastic and appreciative audience gathered at the Maine State Library in Augusta for The Maine Poetry Express Culminating Celebration and Grand Opening of the Maine Authors Room. The Maine Poetry Express, originally designed by Wesley McNair during his time as the Maine State Poet Laureate, connects local poets in sharing Maine's poetry with their community.

The Maine Authors Room is a new community space in the Maine State Library. This multipurpose room offers individual and group meeting and presentation space, is equipped with remote/teleconferencing capability, and is open for community use by appointment/reservation free of charge during normal library hours. Keeping true to the spirit of the room, the library will feature a rotating exhibit from the Maine State Library's extensive Maine Authors Collection. The library envisions this room to be a welcoming space where writers will gather, create, and share their work.

Peggy O'Kane, Special Collections Librarian for the Maine State Library, will facilitate an open group "for poets with and without experience" every second Tuesday (5:30 to 6:30 p.m.) from January through June. This will be an opportunity for interested poets to share their work and to ask for constructive feedback. It promises an opportunity to enjoy poetry. Her promotional flyer indicates there will be neither age nor attendance requirements.

Additionally, the Maine Poets Society has asked for the room for an open mic on Saturday, March 23, from 10:30 to 12:30 as one of our winter regional gatherings. Since the library will not charge us for use of the room and no handouts will be provided, there will be no charge for participation. Please come if you can and invite friends to join you. (Details on page 2.)

For more information about using the room, please contact Alison Maxell, Director of Public and Outreach Services, Research & Innovation (207) 287-5631 or alison.l.maxell@maine.gov.

THE MAINE POETS SOCIETY PRIZE POEM CONTEST 2019

The Maine Poets Society is proud to present our second annual \$100 prize poem contest. This year we are also offering a \$50 prize to Maine poets who have not been previously published. Publication in a newsletter or an online workshop does not count for this purpose.

The contests are open to all Maine residents, including seasonal. If your entry will be postmarked out of state, please enclose a letter verifying your address when resident in Maine. Entries must be postmarked between February 19th and March 30th 2019.

There is a \$5 entry fee for the \$100 prize poem contest, and a \$2.50 entry fee for the \$50 contest for previously unpublished poets. A maximum of 4 entries for each is permitted, but each entry must be covered by an entry fee.

Topic and form are left open to the poet's judgment, but there is a limit of 50 lines. Entries exceeding the limit will be disqualified. Previously published poems are not permitted.

Our distinguished judge in 2019 for the \$100 prize poem contest will be Gibson Fay LeBlanc, director of The Telling Room, and winner of the Vassar Miller Prize in Poetry 2011. Board members of the Maine Poets Society will judge the contest for previously unpublished poets. The winner will be published in MPS's newsletter, Stanza.

Our prizes will be presented at the 2019 Maine Writers and Publishers Alliance awards evening, on Thursday, June 13th in Portland. The shortlists will be announced beforehand by email.

Please send two copies of your poem, one of them identified with your name, contact details (mailing address, email address and telephone number) and which contest you are entering, and one with no additional information on it, to MPS President Jenny Doughty, at 31 Rustic Lane, Portland, ME 04103. Mark your envelope CONTEST.

Enclose a check payable to Maine Poets Society, with 'Contest entry' on the memo line. Entries will not be returned, so please retain a copy.

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 January 2019 issue of Strophes, which has been posted to <http://nfsp.com/>

September 2018 CONTEST WINNERS

Contest—Subject: Place or Displacement – Judge, Linda Aldrich

First Prize— Jenny Doughty**Letting Go**

I turn, sleepless, as the night passes,
remember other bedrooms. Cradle
memories escape but I retain heat,
bright colors, spice-scents on dark skin, later
cold rain, grey skies, a narrow room.
These bone deep things remain, won't let go.

I let go my college days, forget most
of what I crammed into my brain but keep
my college dorm room, poster-plastered walls,
a giant paper fish in the window,
then first apartment, the only heat
a one-bar electric fire or us,

attic with brass bedstead whose jangling springs
embarrassed, bedside tables upturned
garbage cans. This I keep, but let go
the next anonymous furnished rented rooms,
and keep the glory of our own small house,
our own bed from a store with Green Shield stamps.

Parental discard furniture, choosing
carpets, the cat who trained us to be parents,
echoes of baby cries, that bed worn out,
let go, expanded like the house. Babyhoods
let go, the crib and pram sold on,
rooms growing smaller as the children grew.

The night slips away like a cheating lover,
and I feel displaced from my life. My rooms
are empty, the house too big the yard too hard
to tend. I let go furniture, readjust
to narrower rooms, wonder how long
it will take to let go of everything.

Second Prize—Tammi Truax**NOLA: It's Not About Beads**

Sitting on a corner of the quarter
leaning back in my black iron chair
sipping an Abita beer
considering the damage done here.

What it must have been like -
boarding up these doors and windows,
heavy shutters like butterfly wings
even in the first of the winds.

The questions - do we stay or go?
What to leave? What to bring?
Where should we go?
What will happen to our home?

Then the water, so cold and scary,
hard and noisy from above,
slowly seeping up the avenues,
but rising, rising, ever higher.

Later, the bloated boats of bodies
typically, thankfully, floating face down
not looking up toward the sky,
now so clean, and clear,
brimful of bright stars.

Deadline for Member and Publication News for the next *Stanza*: July 10, 2019.

Third Prize—James Breslin
Port Judith Rhode Island, 1953

At Point Judith there was this small white clapboard bungalow we'd rent,
 Just a short walk from a peaceful empty beach.
 Mom would teach me rummy and Dad taught penny poker.
 We'd huddle around the radio at night
 To hear the shows they had back then.

Back home my parents drank a lot
 And fought about their money.
 Mom would beat me with her high-heeled shoe
 When she returned from work
 If I forgot some chore, and sometimes when I didn't.
 My father never hit, but kept quiet when my mother did

At Point Judith we attended Mass together.
 We ate lunch out a lot and I discovered lobster rolls.
 When we'd get back, I played catch with Dad and Mom would clap.

Back on Staten Island my mother got so mad at my father once
 She threw the upstairs downstairs. I don't know why.
 Sheets, shoes, mattresses and lamps were piled up on the stairs.
 I sat with Dad confused, while he said nothing, drank his bourbon.

At Point Judith Mom took me to the beach at Narraganset
 Whenever Dad played golf there.
 We collected marble rocks to bring home for the garden.
 We swam, skipped rocks and ate fried clams for lunch.

Back home there was always tar on the beach
 You had to wipe off with kerosene that sometimes stung.
 Lots of boards with lock-jaw nails, and buried, broken bottles,
 Trash that people left to blow around your feet.

Point Judith people put their litter in the barrels.
 The ocean there was always clean and pure and shamrock green-
 Not like the water home with its high-tide wash-up of garbage.

Honorable Mention—Jim Brosnan
Early Sunday Morning

On my drive into town
 past fields of prairie grass
 and a meandering creek
 tracing winding asphalt,
 I count the telephone poles
 leaning against an August sky
 of churning cumulus,
 and wonder if the Murphys
 have moved away yet.
 I park the Buick a block away
 from Rexall Drug,
 stroll past the whitewashed
 facade of Bartley's Bookstore,
 its contents emptied last month,
 its soul now only revealing a few
 of Kirk's acrylic paintings,
 reproductions of old motorcycles,
 in the front bay window
 while the clock retrieved
 from the one-room schoolhouse
 mounted above this art display
 reveals the exact hour in Madrid.

Membership Chair's Annual Message

Happy Holidays fellow poets! I hope your 2018 endeavors have been fruitful and rewarding. As you know, MPS is dependent on member dues to thrive and 2019 will be like no other. We are expanding on our first successful statewide prize poem to include an unpublished writers section this year, in addition to continuing the high quality of contest judging and workshops you've come to expect from our regional and state gatherings. All of this is possible because of your support, just \$20 for all of 2019. As always, this includes membership in the National Federation of State Poetry Societies (NFSPS), and access to any number of their contests and events. 2018 was a healthy year for growth as we saw a good influx of new membership and ideas, so let's continue that support so poetry can continue to grow and thrive here in the great state of Maine!

Gus Peterson
 Treasurer and Membership Chair

Honorable Mention—Carl Little Genie

After reading Russell Libby's poems about trees

I loved the name, pepperidge, and that I
knew the name. I also knew maple, ailanthus and
trees father planted-Northern Spy

with its verboten apples, beloved shaggy
cryptomeria-but the pepperidge
stood apart, forming a retreat, perfectly

natural space even if a narrow path
had been cut through cat briar,
spindly trees removed on the way

to the perfect pond. I like to think
those pepperidge still stand, holding
their comer of the land, surviving

bittersweet, wild grape and other stranglers,
elegant limbs raised to the same sky
I worshipped, so blue on late June days,

rubbing my hands against the bark
as if pepperidge could produce a genie,
which it did: a breeze off the water

that brought goose bumps to my skin..

Honorable Mention—Karen Farrell After Life

Old Hindu farmer with crooked back and feet of pain

If you died in my arms right now

I would put your soul in my bag

And take you on the plane back to Maine

Lay you in my top drawer for safe keeping

While I grow for you in my belly a fresh new life

So you could walk among the pines in hiking boots

And float in the cool ocean

As a fresh new you shining with soap and clean water

And I will line your room with books of philosophy

but I will keep a secret from you

And when you are a teenager I will stoke the yearning fire

you have

Take you on a plane to Delhi

watch you try to reminisce with the sounds and smells as we drive

to the country side

You can kneel down on the ground in Lucknow

And let your tears drench the Tulsi

And shake hands with your grandchildren

Publication & Member News

Poems

Robert Paul Allen has published two poems in the *Foliage Oaks Literary Magazine*, "Furious Hearts" and "Shells on the Beach" which will appear in the Spring Edition.

Nick Stone is featured as "The Poet Amongst Us" and has four poems from his book *FRAGMENTS* in the current Fall/Winter issue of *Northern Journeys*.

Bill Frayer's poem "An American Disabused on Curling" has been accepted for The Poeming Pigeon's new anthology *Poems About Sports*, due out in May 2019.

Craig Sipe has a poem published on line in *The DECASP Comedy Gazette*. The poem is titled "Zombie Love Sonnet." It explores some of the revels and conflicts associated undead love.

Susan Colburn Motta has two poems included in *Balancing Act 2*, an anthology of poems by fifty Maine women, published by Littoral Books in December 2018.

Jim Brosnan's poem, "More Than A Whisper" will be published in the Avocet's winter issue. "Unanticipated" and "I Can't Explain" have been recently published on *STRANDS* (an online magazine in India).

(Continued on next page)

Books

Monday Morning Poets (MPS members, Darlene Glover, Kathryn Tracy, Nancy Orr, Linda DeSantis, and Bill Frayer), *Wit, Wisdom, and Whimsy*, available on Amazon.

Sarah J. Woolf-Wade's book of poems, *Wolf Moon Down*, Goose River Press, 2018 is now available from Goose River Press, Amazon, or from Sarah herself at sallyjww@gmail.com.

Other Member News

Jim Brosnan is currently working on a poetry collection as part of a university fellowship this academic year. This fall he received a silver medal in a national competition for Nameless Roads, his full-length poetry collection. As a full professor at Johnson & Wales University in Providence, RI, Jim teaches Poetry and Creative Writing courses.

**President's Message**

Dear fellow poets

I hope that you all had a good holiday season, and I wish everybody a happy, healthy and prosperous 2019 – and if you can't manage all of those things, then I hope you can manage at least one. And if you can't manage any of them, please write a poem about it.

As you will see from the rest of *Stanza*, MPS is running our prize poem contest again this year. When it was launched last year we said we hoped it would become an annual event, and as it was so successful last year we are continuing with it. This year, though, we have a new part to the contest that may interest some of our members.

The board members who screened the entries last year noticed that the majority of the shortlisted poets had a record of publication. This seemed to us to not give poets with less experience a chance to shine, so we decided to offer a second contest for poets whose only experience of publication was in an online workshop or a newsletter rather than a literary magazine or review. Any poet with no experience of publication can enter both contests, but previously published poets can only enter the main prize poem contest. Details are on the flyer printed elsewhere in *Stanza*.

I hope our members who have not yet been published outside our newsletter will take this opportunity to enter. I know we have some talented unpublished writers, and I look forward to reading their work.

I also hope you will feel able to come to one of our two winter regional meetings. One is our usual workshop format, and the other is an open mic, where we are looking forward to experiencing the new Maine Authors Room at the Maine State Library in Augusta. All are welcome!

I highly recommend to all our members that you find a local writers' group to work with, if you don't have one already. The kind of feedback you get from your peers is priceless. If you have nobody to share your work with, consider joining the MPS Facebook page, and its annex, the MPS Round Robin page. Also consider joining the Maine Writers and Publishers Alliance, who offer some fantastic classes.

Best wishes for 2019.

Jenny Doughty (President, MPS)

STANZA, Maine Poets Society
16 Riverton Street
Augusta, ME 04330

FIRST CLASS

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

FMI or to join, write
Gus Peterson
12 Middle Street
Randolph, ME 04346

Board Members

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James Breslin, Vice President and Program Chair, jamesbreslin7843@gmail.com
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Gus Peterson, Treasurer & Membership Chair, glp3324@gmail.com
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Webmaster, Lisa Montagna lisa@dimensionswebdesign.com

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.”