

STANZA

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE MAINE POETS SOCIETY

VOLUME 29, NUMBER 1

MARCH 2021

Meeting Information

A Reading in the Round is scheduled on Zoom for March 20, 10:00 a.m. to noon. Details can be found on Page 3. Our next general meeting will be Saturday, May 22, from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. The link will be sent to members a day or two beforehand.

May Members-Only Contest

Times New Roman or Arial font preferred.

Contest open to Maine Poets Society members only

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

By USPS (See Column 2)

Send to: James Breslin*
451 Bassett Rd.
Winslow, ME 04901
DEADLINE: April 22, 2021
1 poem (no fee)

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

Via Email, send one copy with identifying info. Details on page 2.
(Note – entries for the Prize Poem contests must be sent USPS mail. See Page 4.)

ABOUT THE JUDGE

Dennis Camire teaches writing at Central Maine Community College and at the University of Maine at Augusta. For ten years he was the executive director of Maine Poetry Central which created and curated the Portland Poet Laureate Program and which brought nationally renowned poets like Tony Hoagland and Timothy Liu to Maine to read. His poems have appeared in *Poetry East*, *The Mid American Review*, *Spoon River Review*, *Hamilton Stone Review*, *Three Nations Anthology*, and Maine Public Radio's "Poems from Here." An AWP Intro Journal award winner, he has also been nominated for a Pushcart Prize. His most recent book is *Combed by Crows*, Deerbrook Editions, 2017. He lives in an A-frame in West Paris, Maine.

CONTEST DETAILS

Contest Poem — 30-line limit — A Persona Poem: Writing Prompt from the Judge:

When I've taught creative writing, I've been astounded at the quality of the poems I receive when my students write a personification poem where they assume the perspective and voice of a flower, tree, walrus, dump truck, dog, etc. Indeed, taking on the perspective of an animal, plant, or inanimate object like a dump truck often provides a wonderful means for you to think imaginatively and to see the world from a refreshing perspective free of ego boundaries. It seems to free the muse, too, to truly speak as she would like to speak if the ego's "I" weren't always interjecting. This type of exercise, then will playfully combine personification and the dramatic monologue. Choose, then, to assume the perspective and voice of a plant, animal, inanimate object (icicle, stapler), or force of nature (wind, death, tidal estuary). The only real requirement of this playful prompt is that you get out of your head and personal agenda and to BE IMAGINATIVE, A BIT OUTRAGEOUS, AND MAYBE EVEN FUNNY, FOR BEING SUCH DOES NOT PRECLUDE YOU FROM BEING HEARTBREAKING AND/OR PROFOUND AT THE END. Also, as all of you bards already know, it is still quite easy to create a compelling thread between the persona of, for example, that said icicle if you put that icicle in a particular context (the icicle outside my father's ICU as he lay dying). Think imaginatively, then, and engage in compelling juxta-positioning if you feel compelled to connect the perspective and voice of your plant, animal, inanimate object, or force of nature with something from your personal life. Finally, regarding form, there are no restrictions: free verse, formalistic, a hybrid of the two. Regarding feeling and tone, be funny, or serious, or profound, or delighted, or somber, or shocking. Whatever feeling feels right, go with it! Enjoy yourself. I'm confident I'll discover a tremendous number of poems to love, savor, and envy!

Examples: Dennis sent a number of samples of these types of poems. Any of these can be found on the Internet. “Quilts” by Nikki Giovanni; “The Mad Yak” by Greg Corso; “Animals Are Passing From Our Lives” by Philip Levine; “Einstein’s Bathrobe” by Howard Moss; “The Refrigerator Speaks of Love” by Scott Sigl; “The Toothbrush to the Bicycle Tire” by Sarah Kay; and “Pigeon Poem” by Jamila Woods.

Entries for our Members-Only Contests

Members who want to enter by email must do so by the closing date specified (for the May contest, April 22). Those sent by US Mail must be postmarked on or before April 22 to be considered. Only current MPS members are eligible and only one entry per person is permitted. Note that Times New Roman or Arial font is preferred.

Members who prefer to enter the contest **by postal mail** should, as usual, provide two copies, only one of which should have identification on it. Please be sure to enclose a stamped self-addressed envelope.

Email entries should be sent as an attachment to mainepoetssociety@gmail.com. Identifying information should be inserted in the document in the upper right-hand corner, including your name, address, telephone number and email address. **Please send the poem in a .doc or .docx or .rtf format. Do not send it as a .pdf.**

To ensure anonymity for judging, James will open each document as it arrives and add an identifying number. He will maintain two documents – one showing the identifying information and one without it. He’ll send the one showing only the numbers (no names or contact info) to the contest judge.

At the meeting, the judge will share his/her top 6 choices, as usual. After each is read, James will let us know whose work it is.

After the meeting, the judge will return the emailed poems, showing the judge’s comments, to James. James will email each of them back to its rightful owner.

Postal entries, also with the judge’s comments, will be returned to James in one envelope. James will mail them back to their owners in the SASEs which they have provided.

We are excited to offer this option and expect it to go smoothly.

Treasurer’s Message

Good Spring Fellow Poets! As we emerge into longer days and from a very rough, interior year, I am happy to report that MPS has weathered astoundingly well. The first and foremost reason is you, the membership. You placed your trust in the board in an off year to keep up the mission and community of our Society, and I’m happy to say as of writing this we have 42 current members in 2021. I’ve no doubt those numbers will continue to rise as we move forward. I will be reaching out to 2020 members who haven’t yet renewed this week. We are healthy fiscally with \$2247.00 in checking and \$4592.79 in savings. \$400 of these funds is still available as four Opportunity Grants for members who renewed by January 10th for 2021. Please refer to the website for more information on that or just drop me a line, and I’ll be happy to send it along. Part of our continued focus this year on membership will be incorporating an online payment system via PayPal or another platform by which you could pay dues or enter sponsored contests. Stay tuned for more on that, but we hope to have that up and running as a standard option in 2022 along with our continued use of Zoom. That’s about it on the membership/money front - stay safe, stay vigilant, and see you all in person soon!

Good Writing,
Gus

A Reading in the Round – March 20, 2021

Time: 10:00 a.m. to Noon

All MPS members will be invited to participate

As those who have been members for 5 years or more know, we used to do a “Reading in the Round” for those willing to stay for a while when the meeting was over. This was something for which we included members who had not entered the contests and those attending as guests. It was frequently disappointing, because the majority of attendees didn’t stay for it. In recent years, we’ve made it part of the morning session of our 9:00 to 3:00 meetings. In 2020, with our meetings on Zoom limited to 2 hours, the “Reading in the Round” has not been happening. I really miss it and suspect others do as well.

A link will be sent a few days beforehand to all members. Friends may be invited to listen in, but we ask that the link not be posted publicly. It will not be posted on our Facebook page or made available on our website.

Sally Joy will host this event. Info, not including a Zoom link, has already been sent to all members (current through 12/31/20 as well as those who have renewed for 2021). It would be helpful if those who know they want to read would email her at srjoy43@gmail.com at least one day prior to the event so she can start a list. If you should decide only as you enter the Zoom room on the 20th, please type your first and last name and the words “would like to read” in the Chat feature. We’ll go round as many times as will fit into a two-hour timeframe.

Please understand that participants will not be invited to critique the work presented, although very brief comments can be written in the Chat feature and the *clap* and *thumbs up* reactions will be permitted.

As you probably know, Maine Poets Society maintains a public Facebook page. At last count, that page shows 224 members, including many of us who are among the 42 current members of the society. A young woman who has shared a number of her recent successes with us on that platform is Lynne Schmidt. President Jenny Doughty has invited her to participate in the “Reading in the Round” on March 20 as a featured poet. It will be an opportunity to learn a bit more about her and to hear her read several of her poems.

We sincerely hope that members who have not been able to come to our in-person meetings will join those of us who have on Zoom for this event and that many will bring poems to share. You do not have to choose to read to come and listen. The link will be sent to all with a membership expiration date of 12/31/20 as well as those who have renewed for 2021.

Publication & Member News

Poems

Jenny Doughty’s poem “Limits” is going to be included in an anthology being prepared about experiences during the pandemic.

Jeanne Julian's two poems, "The George Washington Bridge" and "Catch," will be published in issue 3 of [Coastal Shelf](#).

J Gus Peterson’s poems “Male Pattern” and “Remodeling” will be coming out in the 2021 print edition of the *Sandy River Review* from the University of Maine at Farmington.

Darlene Glover was pleased to participate in a joint project with the Western Maine Art Group, resulting in a publication called *Then and Now*. This featured a collection of ekphrastic poetry by local poets inspired by the historic artists of Norway, Maine. Her poem, “Oxford County Fair,” was after Duncan Slade’s painting *County Fair*.

Anne Rankin has work forthcoming in the fall. Her poems "Storm of the Body" and "what she wanted them to know, after her suicide," will be published in *The Awakenings Review*; and her poem "holed up alone" will be published in a special issue of *The Poeming Pigeon* focusing on the pandemic and protest.

Books

Ballast, Poems by Linda Aldrich has been published by Deerbrook Editions, <https://www.deerbrookeditions.com/ballast>

Other Member News

In October we sent an email inviting members to enter the Illinois State Poetry Contest. Several of our members did so. We are delighted to share that Darlene Glover and John Seksay were both on the winners list. Darlene took third place for “Leviticus Violet” in the free verse contest and second honorable mention for “Heroes, Hotshots, and Helmets” in the First Responders Contest. John received a second honorable mention for “SMARTS” in the Morris Contest, which was for a humorous poem. Congratulations to both!

THE MAINE POETS SOCIETY PRIZE POEM CONTEST 2021

*Not for society members only, but open to all who are Maine residents for at least part of the year.
MPS Board members are not eligible for Prize Poem contests.*

Entries must be postmarked between January 31 and March 30, 2021. Note that these cannot be sent via email because of the entry fees.

The Maine Poets Society is proud to present our fourth annual \$100 prize poem contest. This year we are again also offering an additional \$50 prize to Maine poets whose poetry has 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 January 31 and March 30, 2021.

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. You can enter up to 4 poems, but you must cover each poem with an entry fee. You may not enter a poem that has been previously published. Topic and form are left open, but there is a 50-line limit. Entries exceeding this will be disqualified.

Our distinguished judge for the \$100 prize poem contest in 2021 is Cate Marvin, professor of creative writing at the College of Staten Island, CUNY, and at the Stonecoast MFA program in Maine. She holds an MFA in poetry from the University of Houston, a PhD in English and comparative literature from the University of Cincinnati and is about to publish her fourth collection of poetry. Her honors include the Kate Tufts Discovery Prize (2002), a Whiting Award (2007) and a Guggenheim Fellowship (2015). Board members of the Maine Poets Society will judge the contest for previously unpublished poets.

Our prizes will be presented at the 2021 Maine Writers and Publishers Alliance awards evening. The shortlists will be announced beforehand by email and on the MPS Facebook page.

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 identifying 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.

OPPORTUNITY GRANTS ARE STILL AVAILABLE

Opportunity Grants of up to \$100 (some of which could be used for gas/travel expenses) are available to members for any type of online or in person poetry seminar/workshop experience. Members must have renewed their MPS membership for the current year **on or before January 10** and be prepared to write a short piece for *Stanza* afterwards to tell other members about their experience. Individual members can only have one grant in any three-year period. Up to \$500 in total a year is available for grants – first come, first served. Go here to print out an application: <http://www.mainepoetsociety.com/PDFs/2020-Opportunity-Grants-explanation-and-application.pdf>.

Or go to the Maine Poets Society website, click on the Membership tab, and then on "Download a Membership Opportunity Grant Application."



President's Ink March 2021

Dear friends and fellow poets,

I'm guessing that we all hoped that by now the pandemic would be behind us, but here we all are after a year in which every month has felt like last March!

I know that my writing has benefited immeasurably from the online courses in writing poetry I took this year. I have written many poems and also found myself in a writing group that has emerged from those courses and been grateful to have amazing, thoughtful, creative feedback from the other members. Zoom has enabled us to do this, even though we are in different corners of the state, and we are all agreed that we will continue to meet this way even after everything opens up again.

As far as the Maine Poets Society is concerned, our May meeting will still be on Zoom, since we can't expect that everybody will be vaccinated by then and we can't yet rely on herd immunity to protect us. I hope that by September things will have opened up enough for us to feel confident to meet in person. I know many of us have really missed the human contact of that.

Because so many people in our members' survey about Zoom commented that they actually preferred Zoom because of the difficulty in traveling to meetings, I am trying to figure out if we can manage a way of participating in in-person meetings from a distance for those people for whom travel presents a problem. I am not techy enough to figure this out for myself, but I'm hoping that if we have any members who are technologically knowledgeable (or have children who are!) they will send me suggestions. If so, please send them to jennydougherty@icloud.com – I have changed my usual email address recently, and prefer to use that one, though I can still access my previous one.

Our winter workshop about learning from the Romantic poets went very well on Zoom, and I am looking forward to seeing your faces and hearing you read at the Zoom Reading in the Round this month that Sally Joy has organized in her usual careful and thorough fashion.

We are experimenting with email entries for our members-only contest for our May meeting. It may feel a little convoluted on the receiving end at first, but I think it will go smoothly enough. It is certainly convenient and involves no money changing hands. As yet, we are unable to offer this facility for the prize poem contest because we are trying to figure out how to manage payment for entries by email. PayPal seems to think we are a business if we do that, and charges fees that would mean raising the cost of entry, which we are reluctant to do because our mission is to spread the joy of poetry and open its creativity to as many people as possible. I guess poets have always had to have at least one foot in the real unpoetic world!

I wish everybody a happy spring, and a 2021 that is a considerable improvement over 2020, which should not be a difficult aim.

Jenny

“Poetry is the journal of the sea animal living on land, wanting to fly in the air. Poetry is a search for syllables to shoot at the barriers of the unknown and the unknowable. Poetry is a phantom script telling how rainbows are made and why they go away.”

~ Carl Sandburg

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

Jenny Doughty, President, jennydoughty@icloud.com
James Breslin, Vice President and Program Chair, jamesbreslin7843@gmail.com
Darlene Glover & Linda DeSantis, Secretary, delle@megalink.net; lds2012@earthlink.net
Gus Peterson, Treasurer & Membership Chair, glp3324@gmail.com
Sally Joy, Publicity, Newsletter srjoy43@gmail.com

Webmaster, Lisa Montagna LMontagna@apitechnology.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.”