

STANZA

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE MAINE POETS SOCIETY

VOLUME 29, NUMBER 2

JULY 2021

NEWS OF OUR NEXT MEETING

Our next general meeting will be October 2, 10:00 to 12:00 on Zoom. 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 sent by September 30. Jefferson will also offer a workshop on Zoom on November 20, 10:00 to 12:00 noon, on avoiding prosy narrative poetry. This will not involve workshopping poems of participants, and will be open to any 2021 MPS members who want to be part of it. We will provide the link for that a couple of days in advance.

October Members-Only Contest

Theme: Solidarity – 40-line limit

Times New Roman or Arial font preferred.

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

Deadline, September 2, 2021

CONTEST DETAILS

Contest Poem — 40-line limit — Theme: Solidarity

This past year has been something else, hasn't it? I suppose it's been many somethings, and they've all been entirely something else. Throughout all the ups and downs of the pandemic, racial reckoning, and political discord, there have been many slivers of hope. People come together when the going gets tough. And the tough get going, or in this case, they get writing poems. I'd love to see poems that speak broadly to the theme of Solidarity, both collective and individual, as a body and within a larger body. We are always stronger together. I want to read poems that arise from this urge to gather together. Here are links to a few poems that embody some aspects of that principle. Some of the examples are overtly political or topical, which the poems for the contest don't have to be. <https://www.rattle.com/the-afternoon-the-world-health-organization-declared-the-pandemic-by-rosemary-wahtola-trommer/>, <https://poets.org/poem/i-must-become-menace-my-enemies>, and <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2020/06/22/george-floyd>.

ABOUT THE JUDGE

Jefferson Navicky was born in Chicago, and grew up in Southeastern Ohio. He earned a B.A. in English from Denison University, and a M.F.A. in Writing & Poetics from Naropa University. Jefferson is the author of a collection of modern parables, *Antique Densities* (forthcoming 2021); a story collection, *The Paper Coast*; and a poetic novel, *The Book of Transparencies*. His writing has appeared in *Smokelong Quarterly*, *Electric Literature*, *Fairy Tale Review*, and *Beloit Poetry Journal*; his short plays have been produced across New England. He has been awarded a Maine Arts Commission grant, two Maine Literary Awards, and was the 2019 winner of the Maine Postmark Poetry Contest. Jefferson is the archivist for the Maine Women Writers Collection.

HOW TO SUBMIT

Only current MPS members are eligible and only one entry per person is permitted. Note that Times New Roman or Arial font is preferred.

If submitting by USPS: Mail to: James Breslin, 451 Bassett Rd., Winslow, ME 04901

2 copies of your poem (ONE with your name; one without) in a letter-size (#10) envelope marked "CONTEST." **Must be postmarked on or before September 2 to be considered.** Please be sure to enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope.

Email entries must be sent as an attachment on or before September 2 to mainepoetsociety@gmail.com. In the upper right-hand corner, include your name, address, telephone number and email address. **Please send the poem in a .doc, .docx or .rtf format. Do not send it as a .pdf.**

November 20: A Members-Only Workshop – 10:00 to 12:00 noon on Zoom

Jefferson Navicky, the judge for our October general meeting, is offering a workshop for members on the theme of “Techniques for making a narrative poem less prosy.”

The line between prose narrative and poetic narrative is an easy one to blur, especially in these days of prose poems. Many of us writing a narrative poem may find ourselves overloading our poem with factual detail, “because that’s how it happened” without looking for the germ of the poem in the narrative. Jefferson is offering us a two-hour workshop in looking at precisely how we can make our poems fall on the side of poetry rather than prose chopped into short lines. Many of us will find this very useful!

IMPORTANT: Maine Poets Society Needs a Treasurer/Membership Secretary

We are very much in need of someone to take over the combined position of Treasurer and Membership Secretary. Gus has done an excellent job for us, but is ready to step into the position of Vice President (to be confirmed, of course, at our October meeting). We feel confident that there are members with the ability to assume this role. We understand that it’s easy to sit back and say “maybe someone else will offer.” Please know that if several respond, we’ll check to see if there is someone who would really like to do it. The Treasurer/Membership Secretary is a member of the Executive Board, which involves at least three meetings a year and email exchanges among board members as circumstances require.

Gus is willing to work with his replacement to coach and explain as a transition takes place. Here is what he offers as explanation of the work involved:

- Membership chair keeps an updated member list on file (done in Excel, Word, or whatever word processing program you use).
- Membership also coordinates with NFSPS a list of current members by March 15th of every year in order to make those members eligible to enter their contests (\$3 per member annually).
- The Treasurer sends out the contest winner cards and an honorarium to the judge for member contests (cards/envelopes provided).
- Deposits dues and other sources of income, such as donations and entry fees from the annual Prize Poem Contest.
- Pays out expenses including rent and workshop fees, prizes, reimbursements, professional services, web hosting, etc.
- Requires and keeps receipts of all income and payments made for tax purposes.
- Maintains an updated file of all transactions (file box/materials provided). Keeping an electronic file is recommended but not required – Gus uses Quicken, but Excel, Word or any other program will also work – it helps expedite other tasks, including taxes.
- Files taxes with the IRS by May 15th of every year. We are not required to file with the state, and only have to submit one form.
- See to the eligibility for, and disbursement of, opportunity grants to membership yearly.
- Coordinate with publicity and the board to write up reminders and blurbs for Stanza and emails to membership as needed.
- Reports financial and membership information at general meetings to membership, such as account balances, current number of active members, etc.

Second Prize—Pat Karpen
West 70th Between B'Way and West End

I'm not a flashdancer up on the corner where it's so
 Damn bright I lose my own glow in the shadows.
 People prattling. Boxes booming. Beer cans piling.
 Cars honking. Taxis racing. Dogs brawling.

I glimmer for people hunting keys, kleenex, phones,
 Cigarettes, glasses, gum, pepper spray or an address in
 Cavernous purses and pockets of pants. Poets pause to
 pen ideas. Woman waits for a man who ain't gonna show.

I have been pissed and puked on by the four legged, two
 Legged and things that fly. Piles of shit have been
 Deposited at my base. Ads, announcements are
 Albatrossed all over and I have the scotch tape to prove it.

The weary park their bags and wiggle their skinny asses
 Onto my bottom. Broken ones hang on me and sorrow
 Themselves. Jabbers dent my metal; jostle my fibers
 And kids declare a dare to "do it" wedged up against me.

In snow, rain, wind, heat with or without sun or moon,
 Despite urine, suicidal moths and sexy rapacious bats
 I glow on. Sometimes I run down and burn out. The
 Gloaming is twinkling at me but even in the darkness

I'm still sparking -- a little damp but not out. The shine is
 Mine. It attracts and comforts and guides and seduces
 But even though they've left graffiti inked and etched
 All up and down my sides, I shimmer on. My own glowmojo

Third Prize—Laura West
As I Live and Breathe

He is never absent in his attention, the sun.
 I turn slowly to bathe in the warmth of his love.

It sends shivers of ecstasy that ripple through my
 breath
 circulating throughout, creating wind and weather.

My life's blood rises into clouds, then pours down
 in torrents or droplets nourishing my body

soaking through my skin, feeding the deep springs
 within,
 or spills over steep hillsides in streams

frantic to meet the oceans
 or hits high mountains and the poles of my existence

and stores itself in ice and snow sweetly delaying
 the journey to my seas.

Held in his life-giving embrace, this is how
 I live and breathe.

Craft tip (adapted from <https://poetryschool.com/assets/uploads/2016/01/Clare-Pollard-Work-your-Verbs.pdf>)

Powerful poems use muscular verbs. It's so easy to fall into familiar combinations – the sun shines, clouds drift and so on. Try for something a bit more surprising. Read Ted Hughes' poem Hawk in the Rain, <https://genius.com/Ted-hughes-the-hawk-in-the-rain-annotated>, and look at his choice of verbs for the wind.

Avoid adverbs (Susan walked slowly) if you can think of a more powerful verb to use instead – try saunter or stroll or amble or trudge and you've condensed the words and made them more accurate.

Avoid verbs ending -ing that make them passive – 'I was running' is less powerful than 'I ran'.

Invent verbs if you can – check out Inversnaid by Gerard Manley Hopkins for the verb 'twindles', which merges twists and dwindles. <https://hopkinspoetry.com/poem/inversnaid/>

Try making a noun into a verb. I wrote a poem recently in which I talked about the sound of boys playing basketball and said it 'soundtracks my street'.

First Honorable Mention—Janie Gendron**Between Trees**

If you think I'm pining for you,
 you are correct.
 If you think my boughs hang with cones of desire
 you are watching closely;
 this pleases me.
 If you think the very air around you refreshes me,
 you are wildly right.

Oh, pining for you, yes I am,
 my fresh green feathery arms seducing
 the very roots of your evergreen being.
 I feel the sap in me turn
 to sweet sticky liquid.

And then the snow comes,
 I wait patiently, heavy with delight,
 still and elegant
 white snow gracing forest green,
 watching you, watching me.

And then the sun comes;
 is there anything more beautiful,
 brilliant and proud
 than pine green reaching toward an endless blue sky,
 and watching you, watching me.

Third Honorable Mention—Carol Bachofner
Underwear Bomber*

O, hi O, where are the panties? I left you
 a dreck of dainties along the highway,
 a scourge of skivvies beside the street.

Depends draped
 on bushes, a barrage of boxers
 in bags, some new some clearly skidded
 on, a litter of the lingerie kind
 strewn for miles.

What of my midnight raids,
 what of the drawers emptied in the moonlight?
 What of the secret sneak of installation?

Second Honorable Mention—Jenny Doughty**Reconsidering the Snail**

I am all muscle,
 move in waves
 through an ocean
 of air and scent,
 ripple through a drenching forest
 marking my path with mucus
 smeared on the wet earth,
 move from dark to light,
 retreat into my walls
 at the wrong shadow
 although I am a creature
 of a thousand teeth.

I follow the slime
 to mate with a touch;
 one tentacle hangs
 hopefully in the air,
 skin touches skin,
 softly strokes, probes,
 and we twine, glistening
 under the open sky,
 taste and smell, until
 a rapid stab,
 exchange of sperm,
 hermaphroditic ecstasy.

Going commando,
 free-balling it, hanging loose, getting air.
 Now that's freedom, that's a statement.
 Ohio, aren't you mad enough, wild enough
 to gawk in admiration, see this is art?

Some would say a cache of 1500 chonies,
 a profusion 3000 pairs of knickers
 is dumping, littering. I say it's a start.

*Based on a true story, reported Ohio 2011

RESULTS OF THE MAINE POETS SOCIETY 2021 PRIZE POEM CONTESTS

We had 75 entries from 29 different poets for the \$100 published poets contest, and 10 entries from 4 different poets for the \$50 unpublished poets contest. Judge for the published poets contest was Cate Marvin, professor of creative writing at the College of Staten Island, CUNY, and at the Stonecoast MFA program in Maine. The Maine Poets Society Executive Board served as judges for the unpublished poets contest.

Winner of the \$50 Prize – Unpublished Poets

The Red Handkerchief of Mudville - Sarah Frick

Grown up now and folding the laundry,
 I come across one of my dad's old, red handkerchiefs.
 Matching the corners and pressing it on my stomach
 with my palm to smooth the creases,
 a sudden memory flashes, hauntingly familiar in my mind.
 Feeling the unique smoothness of the handkerchief,
 with its white, swirling, paisley design,
 I am transported to a simpler time...
 to a secret place among rocks and boulders,
 behind the house, near a little creek by the forest
 that we called "Mudville".
 We used dad's handkerchiefs to carry mud from the stream
 to make into mud pies and "bricks",
 in our small town of Mudville, population: three.
 The red handkerchief would get layered in mud,
 feeling smooth from the slick, wet clay,
 before they hardened and cracked in the summer sun.
 I'm suddenly brought back to the room,
 and as I fold over the handkerchief into a neat, pressed square,
 I remember fondly those warm days of past,
 those simpler days
 of Mudville.

Honorable Mentions

Mermaids for Tea –Sarah Frick

It's rung three o'clock all under the sea,
 it's time for the mermaids to take in their tea.
 They all gather 'round for a hot pot of ocean,
 (rushing and slurping are nary the notion.)
 Sea-cucumber sandwiches roll in on their carts,
 along with a tray of cold jelly-fish tarts.
 They sip and they chat as the bubbles rise up,
 carefully dusting the salt from their cups,
 each maid enjoys one more steaming glass,
 then use seaweed napkins, finished at last.
 Three-thirty's announced by the sound of a chime.
 They put the seacups away until tomorrow's tea time.

The Door – Mary Michael Billings

The door is reality
 Set in the face of it.
 Reality, to be seen and felt.
 Open it reveals,
 Closed it demands.
 The Past experienced,
 Gone but lingering
 In images as we remember,
 As feelings that surge
 And ebb...
 Here behind the door.
 On either side we move
 Into our separation.
 In nights a fitful slumber
 Gives rise to waking dreams.
 Listen for the sounds.
 And wait.

Published Poets - \$100 Prize.

We are unable to publish the poems chosen as the top three by the judge, so that the poets can be free to send their poems to be considered for publication. We are including here, however, the names of the poets, the names of their poems, and the judge's comments on each.

The Winner of the \$100 Prize

Judy Kaber – “Fat Lady at the Side Show”

This poem takes me inside its person, into the slippery luxury of food and the presiding textures and flavors that distinguish its affections. And then into the intimacy of the face, its plush cheeks. Finally, the writer imparts the sensation of a weight both literal and metaphorical: libidinal desire as experienced through food, the body wearing the gravity of its flesh. There were several poems in this batch that moved me deeply, but I most admired this one for the risks it takes and the experience it provides to its reader.

Runners up

Doug "Woody" Woodsum – “The Grace of Heavenly Bodies”

A narrative poem, this piece terrifies through suggestion. We are to understand that she has a person in her past who "burdened" her, and the forthright manner in which she relays this causes us to relax, until we begin to understand, much later in the poem, that a certain savagery (not to be named) has taken place. This poem achieves the balance we are forced to enact in our own lives, which are so often struck off-balance by grief and trauma.

Jeri Theriault – “metamorphic: grandmother as Scylla”

I was very much drawn to the form of this poem, as well as its project: to present the aging body as a transformation so complete that one disappears into a shape most monstrous. An exceptional poem that speaks to the grief of aging, and our inability to remake our ideas of beauty to accommodate the wisest among us.

A Reading in the Round – November 13, 2021

Time: 10:00 a.m. to Noon

All MPS members will be invited to participate

(If you're not sure your membership is up-to-date, please ask.)

On March 20, we held a Zoom “Reading in the Round” with 22 members present, nearly all choosing to read at least one poem. It was well received and most enjoyable. We got to see and hear from those who have been able to attend our in-person meetings; a number of those who have entered contests, but have not been able to come to meetings; and several whose primary contact with MPS has been receiving the *Stanza* three times a year.

Sally Joy will again host this event. 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 you'd like to read only as you enter the Zoom room on the 13th, 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.

Reading is not required. You are welcome to just 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. 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.

Publication & Member News

Poems

Jenny Doughty's poems "A Reply From The Subject" and "Schrodinger's Valentine" are published in the current issue of Mezzo Cammin, a journal of formalist poetry by women. "A Reply From The Subject" was originally written for a Maine Poets Society members-only contest.

<https://www.mezzocammin.com/iambic.php?vol=2021&iss=1&cat=poetry&page=doughty&fbclid=IwAR1gEcCzh4zXYnK1NvrdNgykXq7o-nJIAQLFSg41XN58AWTyjhn8ODxvyNU>

Robert Paul Allen has had the following poems published: "Edna Was in a Real Bind" was published in the Black Dog and One Eyed Press 3/13/21; "The Generator" was published by Piker Press 4/12/21; "Wearing a Black Chador" was published by the Frost Meadow Review 4/21; "Bridge Across the Narrows" was published by Piker Press 5/24/21; "The World's Worst Pool Player" was published by Piker Press 6/14/21; "The Last Visit" was published by Piker Press 7/12/21; and "She Chances Upon Him" will be published by Piker Press 8/9/21

Marshall Witten's poems "Resolute," "Mistake" and "Winter Window" have been published in the 2021 print edition of Otter Creek Poets' Anthology from Zig Zag Lit Mag in Vergennes, Vermont.

Richard Foerster's poem "In the Keys" appears in the Spring 2021 issue of Tar River Poetry; another, "Vesper Sparrow," is forthcoming in the Maine Sunday Telegram as part of the Deep Water Series. Richard has also had appearances online: "Theme with Variation" in The Night Heron Barks and "Listening to Symphony No. 7, Rondo Finale, After Reading Henry-Louis de La Grange" forthcoming in One. He's had work appear in two new anthologies: "With Little Light and Sometimes None at All" in Wait: Poems from the Pandemic and "Gay Head" in From the Farther Shore: Discovering Cape Cod & the Islands Through Poetry. Richard also received a \$100 award in this year's Stephen A. DiBiase Poetry Contest for his poem "Aspens."

Jeanne Julian's poem "Eulogy (Unwritten)" will be included in the spring/summer 2021 issue of The Comstock Review.

Craig Sipe's poem "Smart Pay" was published in the June 2021 edition of the on-line journal *Spank the Carp*.

Books

Linda Aldrich's new poetry collection Ballast has been reviewed by Mike Bove in the Summer 2021 issue of The Cafe Review, <https://www.thecafereview.com/summer-2021-review-ballast/>

Other Member News

Darlene Glover, a member of the Mountain Poets Society of Western Maine, as well as MPS, participated in a reading of ekphrastic poetry in conjunction with Western Maine Arts in an exhibit entitled "Then and Now.". Mountain Poet members were asked to write poems inspired by paintings by prominent local artists. Darlene's poem "Oxford County Fair" was after the painting "County Fair" by Duncan Slade.

Jim Brosnan's poetry was recently recognized in two contests sponsored by the National Federation of Poetry Societies this June. "Dining at Mama Rose's" was awarded First Place in the San Antonio Poets Association Award contest. That poem reminisced wonderful Italian meals prepared by his wife's mom. "Crossing Wyoming" received an Honorable Mention in the Wyopoets Award contest. That poem recalled driving across Wyoming on a cross-country trip.

A memorial service for Andrew C. Twaddle will be held on Sunday, August 1st at St. Columba's Episcopal Church, 32 Emery Lane, Boothbay Harbor. Gathering will begin at 4:15 pm with the service starting at 4:30 pm. Rev. "Kitsy" Winthrop, (friend and former minister of the Mid-coast Unitarian Universalist Fellowship), will lead the service. A reception time (consider it a light supper) will follow the service. Directions: Take Rt. 27 into Boothbay Harbor. Emery Lane is just beyond the High School and tennis courts on the right (St. Andrews Village is at the end of Emery Lane). If you received your COVID vaccination at the Boothbay YMCA, Emery Lane is just a little further on the right.



President's Ink July 2021

Good summer, friends and fellow-poets

Today I am not sure whether we are scorching or drowning or some bizarre combination of the two.

The rest of the board members and I met earlier this month to lay out the schedule for the next year, and I hope you will all enjoy what's on offer. In the fall we have our general meeting, for which you will find details elsewhere in Stanza. Jefferson Navicky, our judge, can only make it on Zoom for both the general meeting and the workshop he is offering later, so although we had intended to try for a hybrid meeting, we decided to stick with Zoom for now and try for hybrid in the spring. As the Delta variant is starting to spread, this seems like the best decision for the moment.

One of the most important things we need, as a society, right now, is a new Treasurer. Gus has done a sterling job for the last few years, but now needs to step back from that and (unless we have another candidate) step into the Vice President's role as James is retreating from that role. If you have any kind of organized and logical mind, or experience with figures, please consider volunteering. The demands of being on the board are not great – attendance at two all-member meetings and a board meeting during the year, taking part in email exchanges, and the Treasurer and Membership Secretary duties Gus has outlined. If two people want to split this job, we would welcome that. However, our society can't continue without somebody stepping up for this vital administrative role. We are responsible for your membership fees and how we can best serve you with them, with the mutual aim of enjoying and spreading the joy of poetry in the state of Maine and supporting each other in sharing and improving our own creative work.

The feedback we had from membership, for which I thank you, was strongly supportive of us investing MPS funds in buying the technology to enable us to hold hybrid meetings in the future. I think Zoom has opened up the possibility of attending meetings to many members who have previously been unable to attend because of physical or transport difficulties, and I foresee it being used for a long time.

I am also looking forward to our next members-only "Reading in The Round" in the fall, also on Zoom. Our last one went very well indeed, thanks to Sally Joy's excellent organizing abilities.

I have been taking a class on Zoom with the wonderful poet Mark Doty, and I highly recommend to everybody to find a class or a workshop and take it. I find my own work gets a real push from such classes, and in exposure to others' reactions I can refine and improve it if I think it needs it. One of the hardest things to get over as a writer is being to stand back and look at our own work objectively and see where it can be improved, or to listen to others' ideas about that and evaluate them, without feeling defensive.

I do hope we will see as many of you as possible at the fall meeting on October 2nd and the members-only workshop on November 20th, where we can hone our skills together.

My best wishes for a warm and productive summer.

Jenny Doughty

"Ideas are like rabbits. You get a couple and learn how to handle them, and pretty soon you have a dozen."

~ John Steinbeck

"As a film-maker and a poet, I feel it's my duty to be an eye and an antenna to what's happening around me. I always felt a solidarity with those who are desperate and confused and misused and are seeking a way out of it.

~ Jonas Mekas"

STANZA, Maine Poets Society
16 Riverton Street
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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.”