

STANZA

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE MAINE POETS SOCIETY

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March 2023

NEWS OF OUR NEXT MEETING

A Hybrid Experiment

May 20 - 10:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

In-Person Component at the Durham Friends Meeting House

Good news! We're proceeding with a hybrid meeting for Saturday, May 20. We'll gather at the Durham Friends Meeting House, located at 532 Quaker Meeting House Road in Durham. (Driving directions are at the bottom of Page 2.) Registration will begin at 9:30 a.m. We will plan for at least 10 attendees and will send a reminder a few days before the meeting.

Our hospitality chair, Diane Hunt, will be preparing brunch and needs a feel for how many to expect. Please email Gus or Jenny, preferably by May 17, to let us know if you're planning to come. Email addresses can be found on Page 8.

The host organization has offered us the privilege of using their OWL equipment so we can see how well this may work for us. The Zoom link will be sent to all current MPS members by May 19 to offer the opportunity of participation without traveling. For those able to attend in person, we hope to see you there!

What will the meeting entail? A brief business meeting beginning at 10:00. Then the results of the members only contest by our judge Cynthia Brackett-Vincent. Next she'll read some of her own work for us. We'll take an hour-long break for lunch. While there will be light refreshments available, a bag lunch is recommended if you want something more substantial. We'll reconvene at 1:00 p.m. Cynthia will lead a 90-minute workshop on the craft of Haiku poems.

Many of our newer members may not know that MPS has charged a registration fee for members and guests at in-person meetings to help with the costs of renting a facility and for the refreshments provided (most recently \$12 per person). The board has voted to forgo that for the foreseeable future as we work out the details of hybrid meetings. There will, however, be a donation jar on the refreshment table for those wishing to help offset the cost of this meeting.

May Members-Only Contest

Times New Roman or Arial font preferred.

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

Deadline, April 20, 2023

CONTEST DETAILS

Contest Poem — Imagistic Poems – 30-line limit

What do we remember about poems we've read? We remember the images we see and we remember the feelings they evoke. While poems evoke different emotions from different people at different times, the images are what stay crystal clear in the reader's mind. For example, what do we remember after reading this poem by Jane Kenyon?

What Came to Me

I took the last
dusty piece of china
out of the barrel.
It was your gravy boat,
with a hard, brown
drop of gravy still
on the porcelain lip.
I grieved for you then
as I never had before.

(Jane Kenyon: Collected Poems, Graywolf Press, 2005.)

Emotion-wise, we feel sorrow, sympathy and longing. But it's her images that make those emotions stay with us. Her central image is that of "...a hard, brown/drop of gravy still/on the porcelain lip." The other image is that of "...the last/dusty piece of china." I might forget the title of the poem, maybe some days even that it was Kenyon who wrote it, but I will never forget that drop of gravy on the porcelain lip.

Perhaps the most famous imagistic poem is "In a Station of the Metro" by Ezra Pound who founded the Imagist movement:

The apparition of these faces in the crowd:
Petals on a wet, black bough.

(From *Poetry* magazine.)

As famous is "The Fish" by Elizabeth Bishop. So we are not looking for poems that use only images; we are looking for poems that use images well. Other examples of poems that make great use of images are haiku (such as Basho's simple "A field of cotton/as if the moon/had flowered," "Nantucket" by William Carlos Williams, "Forty Years" by Mary Oliver, "Empire" by Charles Simic, and "The Knot" by Stanley Kunitz.

For a brief guide to the early 20th century Imagist movement, see <https://poets.org/text/brief-guide-imagism>.

ABOUT THE JUDGE

Cynthia Brackett-Vincent founded *the Aureorean* poetry journal (1995–2020), which printed the work of over 1,600 poets worldwide. Lead and acquisitions editor for Encircle Publications, she edits fiction and poetry books. Her poetry has been published in *frogpond*, *Ibbetson Street*, *The Penman Review*, *Sandy River Review*, *Yankee*, and others, and was nominated for the Pushcart Prize by *Pirene's Fountain*. She previously served as membership chair of Maine Poets Society and now serves as treasurer for the Haiku Society of America. Cynthia facilitates a yearly poetry workshop in the Adirondacks. In 2016 she received a Norton Island residency in poetry. Her co-edited anthology, *Women on Poetry: Writing, Revising, Publishing & Teaching* (McFarland) was named "One of 100 Best Books for Writers" by *Poets & Writers*. She lives near Farmington with her husband and their two needy rescue cats. She holds a BFA in Creative Writing from the University of Maine, Farmington.

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: Gus Peterson, 12 Middle Street, Randolph 04346

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 April 20 to be considered.** Please be sure to enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope.

Email entries must be sent as an attachment on or before April 20 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.** We suggest **Member Contest Entry Spring 2023** or something similar in the subject line.

Driving Directions to the Durham Friends Meeting House

If you are coming from the north – follow I-295 south towards Brunswick. Take exit 28 off 295 and then take Durham Rd. to the location. From the south – take I-295 north to exit 22 for ME-125 N/ME-136N/Mallett Dr. (Freeport). Follow ME-125 N to Quaker Meeting House Rd. in Durham.

Opportunity Grant Buzz for 2023!

Opportunity Grants of up to \$100 (some of which could be used for gas/travel expenses) are available for any type of online or in person poetry seminar/workshop experience. Members who joined or renewed MPS membership for the current year by the end of January may apply. Individual members can only have one grant in any three-year period. The grant recipient is required to write a short piece for *Stanza* afterwards to tell other members about their experience. We are pleased to report that we had two requests last year and would definitely like to see more. See Todd McKinley's report below. The second grant was for an event that is yet to take place. We look forward to hearing from that recipient as well.

Up to \$500 in total a year is available for grants – first come, first served. If interested, go here to print out an application: <http://mainepoetsociety.com/PDFs/2022-MPS-Membership-Application-or-Renewal-Form.pdf>. Or go to the Maine Poets Society website, click on the Membership tab, and then on “a Membership Opportunity Grant Application.”

— John Seksay, Treasurer

Reporting on the use of an Opportunity Grant

I recently received \$100 through an Opportunity Grant to cover half the cost for a course offered by the Frost Place.

Over three weeks, Dawn Potter led me and five other participants through the class, “Learning from Nina Simone: An Introductory Chapbook Seminar.” Framing the course around Simone's first album, “Little Girl Blue,” Dawn provided a number of ways to examine a manuscript of ten poems.

In the first class, Dawn asked participants to consider which poems could serve as beginnings, middles, and ends. After spending class time examining the poems of a published poet, Dawn assigned partners to examine each other's manuscripts. Each person proposed two possible sets of beginnings, middles, and ends.

In our second meeting, Dawn extended our learning to consider what poems might be removed from the manuscript. Following a similar process for our first class, we were divided into pairs to offer feedback on which poems did not seem to fit the collection. We also shared our thoughts about the order of the remaining poems, providing explanations for our selections.

In our final class, we devoted much of our meeting time on writing, framing our work around what Dawn described as “deliberate surprises.” Using a number of prompts, Dawn asked us to reflect on this collection of poems in a variety of ways. This final meeting highlighted a central theme of this course: encouraging us as writers to be more attentive to their work. Dawn prompted us to notice the relationships between the poems in the manuscript. Additionally, she emphasized the importance of being intentional about our work, especially as we consider building a collection for a chapbook or longer manuscript.

As much as I prefer to attend workshops in person, these virtual sessions also passed quickly, and I gained such valuable feedback offered by Dawn and the other writers. More importantly, this class quickly established a community of writers that we hope to carry into the future.

Thank you again for your support of this course.

Sincerely,
Todd W. McKinley

National Federation of State Poetry Societies 2023 Contests

Brochure is still available – *Entries must be postmarked no later than March 15*

Just a reminder that membership in the Maine Poets Society includes membership in NFSPS. The brochure for the 2023 contests is still available. [brochure2023.pdf \(nfsps.com\)](#) Note that it is designed to be printed on legal length paper (8.5 x 14). Entries must not be postmarked earlier than January 1, 2023, nor later than March 15. The submission process is a bit complicated, so be sure to read what's expected in that regard. There are 50 contests. To be eligible to participate as a member, your Maine Poetry Society dues must be paid for 2023 by the beginning of March. There is a link on the home page of our website ([MainePoetsSociety.com](#)) that will take you to the current issue of the NFSPS newsletter (*Strophes*).

Did you know?

The Maine Poets Society sponsors a contest through the NFSPS every year open to poets from across the country! Our contest for 2023 will close in March. There are 1st, 2nd, and 3rd prize awards of cash for a poem in any form, up to 40 lines, on the Subject "An Encounter with Nature." Entry details are available on the NFSPS website. Results will be printed in the August 2023 issue of *Strophes*.

The 2022 contest, judged by the President of NFSPS, was themed on the sea and had 108 entries! Names and poem titles of winners and honorable mentions were printed in the August 2022 issue of *Strophes*. They are from 9 different states. These included our own Jim Brosnan among the honorable mentions. Those placing in the top three are shown below.

- 1st place : Candy Lish Fowler, St. George, UT "Six Observations"
- 2nd place: Daniel Libertson, Cottage grove, OR "The Lighthouse"
- 3rd Place: Karen Kay Bailey, Blanchard, OK "Considering Apples by the Sea"

We will be sponsoring a contest again in 2024. The information on that contest will appear in the upcoming issues of *Strophes* this summer, and we will replicate the notice in the upcoming issues of the *Stanza* as well.

— John Seksay, Treasurer

Spam/Phishing emails

Since several people have received emails purporting to be from a member of the board of Maine Poets Society asking for some kind of financial help, this is just a general statement that nobody will ever receive an email from any of us asking for money or gift cards or anything similar.

Unfortunately, anywhere that has our emails publicly listed, such as on our website or newsletter, may have it used in this way, and sophisticated scammers know how to "spoof" an email – that is, make it look as if it is coming from a particular person when it is not. One way to check this is to click on the name of the sender to reveal the email address it is sent from.

If you are concerned and unsure, please directly contact the person whose name appears as the sender, ideally by sending him or her an email to the address you know to be valid for that individual. **Do not reply to the email you are questioning.**

One sign to look for is anything that starts with a generic greeting such as "Do you have some time? Can you do me a favor?" or "I need your help." These are signs of a phishing scam (where somebody is trying to get hold of your financial details or swindle you out of some money). Also keeping your device updated is a safeguard, and you can report phishing to APWG.ORG.

— Jenny Doughty

Members who live in Maine at least part of the year, take note.

When you receive this newsletter, we will be nearing the end of the submission period for our Prize Poem contest. If you have never had a poem published, please consider submitting to our category for previously unpublished poets. The cost of entry is very low at \$2.50, and there is a \$50 prize. Having had a poem in *Stanza* does not count as publication for this purpose, since it is a private newsletter for MPS members and not a widely distributed journal. We would very much like to read your work.

— Jenny Doughty

MAINE POETS SOCIETY PRIZE POEM CONTESTS 2023 Entries must be postmarked no later than March 30

The Maine Poets Society is proud to present our sixth annual \$100 prize poem contest. This year we are again also offering a \$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, except for Maine Poets Society board members. 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 15th and the deadline of March 30th, 2023.

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 may 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 2023 will be Wesley McNair, Maine Poet Laureate from 2011-2016 and Emeritus Professor at the University of Maine, Farmington. He has received fellowships from the Rockefeller Foundation, the Guggenheim Foundation, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Endowment for the Arts, and United States Artists. Among his other honors are the Robert Frost Prize, the Theodore Roethke Prize, the Jane Kenyon Award for Outstanding Book, the Sarah Josepha Hale Medal for “distinguished contribution to the world of letters.”

Our prizes will be presented at the 2023 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, mailing address, email address and telephone number and which contest you are entering, and one with no additional information, to MPS Vice-President Gus Peterson, at 12 Middle Street, Randolph, ME 04346. 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.

April is National Poetry Month

Launched by the Academy of American Poets in April 1996, National Poetry Month is a special occasion that celebrates poets’ integral role in our culture: "Over the years, it has become the largest literary celebration in the world, with tens of millions of readers, students, K–12 teachers, librarians, booksellers, literary events curators, publishers, families, and—of course—poets, marking poetry’s important place in our lives." Some writers have come to adopt April as National Poetry Writing Month (NaPoWriMo), attempting to write a poem a day for the month. In 2003, Maureen Thorson, a poet living in Washington, DC, was inspired by [NaNoWriMo](https://www.napowrimo.net/about/), or National Novel Writing Month, to start an April poem-a-day project. She posted them on her blog, and soon other poets joined in. Now, there are a few groups and web sites that encourage you to write a poem a day, some offering prompts. It’s a great way to stay creative and productive! Thorson’s web site is: <https://www.napowrimo.net/about/>

Writer’s Digest also offers prompts throughout the month. Here’s a link to their prompts from Poem-A-Day 2022: <https://www.writersdigest.com/write-better-poetry/30-poetry-prompts-for-the-2022-april-pad-challenge>

Publication & Member News

Poems

Mike Bove has poems forthcoming this spring in *Poetry East*, *The Café Review*, and *Hole in the Head Review*.

Craig Sipe's poem, "the cozy soup," will appear in the April 2023 edition of *Spank the Carp*

Carol Bachofner's poem, "Seven," was published in *Maine Women, Winter Edition 2023*.

David Sloan's poem, "Earth School," has been accepted for publication in the *Crosswinds Poetry Journal*'s spring issue.

Gus Peterson's poem, "In the Photo," will be published this summer in issue 6.1 of *Thimble*. He has three poems forthcoming in print with *Pirene's Fountain* as well. Poems also appeared this spring online in *Rust + Moth*, *Hole in the Head Review*, and *Rat's Ass Review*.

Jeanne Julian's poem, "How to Welcome a New Year," appears in the January 2023 issue of *MacQueen's Quinterly*. Her poem, "Bison," is published in Issue 23 of *Panoply: a literary zine*; and "Nonsense" and "Heaven on Earth" will be in the spring issue of *Nine Mile Magazine*.

Nancy Sobanik will have two poems, "Pilgrimage" and "Morning Swim," published in the forthcoming March 17th, 2023 issue of *Sparks of Calliope* <https://sparksofcalliope.com/>

Cynthia Larson's poem, "Perhaps to Dream," won Margaret F. Tripp Poetry Award's Honorable Mention in Topsham Public Library's "Joy of the Pen" annual writing competition.

Anne Rankin's poem, "Small Primer on Loneliness," will be published this spring in *Atlanta Review*.

Nancy R. Davison has three poems, "Reality," "Partial Clarity," and "Eye Surgery—Right and Left," in *The American Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry*, Vol. 31, Issue 3, March 2023.

Books

Mark Saba's poetry book *Flowers in the Dark* was recently published by Kelsay Books. He has provided a link for those interested in ordering or learning more.

Other Member News

Carol Bachofner has launched a substack newsletter, Carol's Poetry Puddles. <https://carolbach.substack.com>. This is a subscription newsletter of poems, writing tips, and musings about writing. Participants who choose to become paid subscribers can enjoy additional benefits on the craft of poetry.

Cynthia Brackett-Vincent was elected Treasurer of The Haiku Society of America {hsa-haiku.org} for 2023. The HSA is a not-for-profit organization founded in 1968 to promote the writing and appreciation of haiku in English, with over 1,000 members worldwide.

Sharon Bray has about 300 poems in a pile on her desk and in boxes in the living room corner. She sent this as "not news," but gave permission for us to include it, believing others might relate. Although Sharon is a published poet, this is a good reminder that having been published – recently or not – is not a prerequisite for membership in the Maine Poets Society.



President's Ink Spring 2023

I am writing this in mid-February, about to take off to the UK for a month. My UK friends are telling me about crocuses and spring flowers, and I am telling them about the snow still on my lawn. However, I am reminded how lucky I am that we will be having crocuses of our own when I return in mid-March, and that I am exceedingly lucky in having two springs in one year.

So many images revolve around spring, and they are different from place to place. In the UK, my image of spring involves bluebells, which I have never seen here in Maine, and also lambs, which I rarely see. Spring is a different creature here in Maine, and the image I have of it here involves Maine Maple Sunday, drinking hot chocolate and wading through mud on our way to cram into a farm shop and buy a gallon of maple syrup (that would be far too expensive to buy in the UK). But crocuses are something both countries have in common, albeit with that time lag. Perhaps you can think of your own images and send them to our members-only contest for imagistic poems?

We are lucky to have the wonderful Cynthia Brackett-Vincent as not only our judge for the contest but also willing to run a workshop about haiku for us. As treasurer of the National Haiku Society, I'm sure she has plenty of interesting thoughts to share with us and I am looking forward to being there.

As a reminder, this will be our first attempt at a hybrid meeting – both in person and on Zoom at the same time. Durham Friends Meeting House has the OWL system we would like to buy already installed, so we are trying theirs out before we invest your membership money in our own. We have had a very positive response to all our Zoom meetings, and it is clear that the availability of Zoom enables people to attend who live at too much of a distance to make the journey for a day. However, many of us also like the camaraderie and interaction of meeting in person, so we live in hopes that this will be a successful experiment, and I hope as many of you as possible will feel able to attend.

As will be mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter, we will need to know how many people are likely to attend in order to manage catering (and we welcome Diane Hunt to the board as our new hospitality chair now that Darlene Glover has moved to warmer climes nearer her daughter). Please give some thought to what you would like to do and email me or Gus Peterson to let us know nearer the time.

Warm spring wishes to all Maine poets

Jenny

The people in the world, and the objects in it, and the world as a whole, are not absolute things, but on the contrary, are the phenomena of perception.... If we were all alike: if we were millions of people saying do, re, mi, in unison, one poet would be enough... But we are not alone, and everything needs expounding all the time because, as people live and die, each one perceiving life and death for himself, and mostly by and in himself, there develops a curiosity about the perceptions of others. This is what makes it possible to go on saying new things about old things.

— Wallace Stevens, "A Note on Samuel French Morse"

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
John Seksay
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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.”