

# STANZA

## OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE MAINE POETS SOCIETY

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July 2024

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### NEWS OF OUR NEXT MEETING

Hybrid Meeting

September 28 - 10:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Our fall in-person meeting will take place **Saturday, September 28 at Christ Episcopal Church, 2 Dresden Avenue in Gardiner**. On-street parking is available. This will again be a hybrid meeting using our own OWL system. A link will be sent to all current members a day or two prior to the meeting. **If you plan to attend in person, please do let us know so our Hospitality Host can know how many to prepare for.** Guest judge and workshop leader will be Jeri Theriault. Registration begins at 9:30 a.m. The meeting will start at 10:00. A half-hour break for lunch will be followed by a 90-minute workshop starting at 12:30. There will not be an attendance fee, but there will be a donation jar on the table with hopes of offsetting some of the cost of refreshments and renting the facility.

### Workshop: Mining Memory by Jeri Theriault

In this generative workshop, each participant will explore place-memories by drawing their childhood home (or neighborhood). No previous drawing experience needed! The goal is not to produce “art” but rather to access memory in a visual way. You might think of this as a diagram, aerial view, or architectural drawing. Next, participants will write into the spaces created by these visual memories. Please bring a notebook and favorite writing implement.

Finally, we’ll discuss the process and share excerpts. Sharing will not be mandatory, and Jeri says she’ll be happy to provide feedback to anyone who emails her their completed draft.

### September Members-Only Contest

Times New Roman or Arial font preferred.

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

**Deadline, August 28, 2024**

### CONTEST DETAILS

**Contest Poem — A poem about work: 14 to 30 lines.** You may choose to write about your own experience, or about your parents’ or grandparents’ work. You might even choose to be an observer and write about a job or work about which you have no first-hand knowledge. Feel free to write in your own voice or create a persona. The work in question might be paid or unpaid.

As you draft and revise, try to create the workspace for your reader to enter, using details of place and sensory images. Note how Heaney captures the sounds of the shovel breaking into turf and the smell of the potatoes. Note how Pinsky overwhelms us with the minute processes involved in making a shirt. The reader can almost feel the “gummy plates” and greasy water Susan Meyers creates.

### Examples:

[Digging](#) by Seamus Heaney.

[Fall River](#) by David Rivard.

[Mother, Washing Dishes](#) by Susan Meyers

[Laundry](#) by Ruth Moose

[Night Waitress](#) by Linda Hull

[Shirt](#) by Robert Pinsky

[Filling Station](#) by Elizabeth Bishop

## **ABOUT THE JUDGE**

**Jeri Theriault.** Jeri's recent awards include the 2023 Maine Arts Commission Literary Arts Fellowship, the 2023 Monson Arts Fellowship, and the 2022 NORward Prize (*New Ohio Review*). Her poems and reviews have appeared in *The Rumpus*, *The Texas Review*, *The Atlanta Review*, *The Asheville Review*, *Plume*, and many other publications. Her collections are *Radost, my red*, *(M)other*, and *Self-Portrait as Homestead*. She is the editor of *WAIT: Poems from the Pandemic*. Jeri lives in South Portland, Maine.

## **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. Simultaneous submissions are not permitted for MPS Members-only Contest entries. We ask that your poem be unpublished and NOT under consideration elsewhere until winners are announced.

**If submitting by USPS:** Mail to: Gus Peterson, 12 Middle Street, Randolph, ME 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 August 28 to be considered.** Please be sure to enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope.

**Email entries** must be sent as an attachment on or before August 28 to Gus Peterson at [glp3324@gmail.com](mailto:glp3324@gmail.com). **Please note this is a different email address than we've sometimes used for contest entries.** Gus will confirm each entry upon receiving it. If you've emailed a poem and not heard from Gus by a week before the August 28th deadline, please reach out. 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 September 2024** or something similar in the subject line.

For the past several years, NFSPS has asked us for an annual report for the year just past. What you see below is what we sent them for 2023.

## **Maine Poets Society Annual Report 2023**

Maine Poets Society was able to conduct hybrid meetings twice in 2023 (in May and September). This was made possible by the Durham Friends Meeting House who allowed us to rent their facility and to use their OWL set-up. This gave us the opportunity to try out the equipment as we considered whether to purchase an OWL of our own.

Judges for our members-only contests are asked to choose six poems. There are small cash awards for the top 3. Their poems, along with the 3 chosen for honorable mention, are printed in the *Stanza* (our tri-annual newsletter).

In May the contest theme was Imagistic Poems with a 30-line limit. The judge was Cynthia Brackett-Vincent. Cynthia led a 45-minute workshop on writing haiku in the afternoon.

In September, the subject was Music, again with a 30-line limit. Jim Mello was the judge. Jim led a 45-minute workshop in the afternoon on Revisions: Haiku, Rewrites, and Fragments.

Annual dues were increased in September to \$22. Those present at the meeting (in person and online) approved a proposal to offer a fee waiver for those facing financial hardship. Such a request was received and granted in November for a member's 2024 dues.

We continued to make Opportunity Grants available to our members. A member may apply once every 3 years for funding up to \$100 to help defray costs of participating in a workshop, taking a class, or attending a poetry festival or residency. One grant was awarded in 2023 and used to help support a member's participation in an out-of-state manuscript conference.

*(Continued on Page 5)*

## May 2024 CONTEST WINNERS

### Contest: “In Praise of the Ordinary”—Judge, Dennis Camire

#### 1st Prize— Nancy Sobanik

#### Ode to My Ears

There you sit, keyhole lurkers, skull side hanger-ons, candle makers,  
whether wagging jug handles or petit shells, I never gave you much thought.  
After all, eyes glamor and glimmer stars, the nose discriminates pheromones from scat,  
and lips, so expressive— lifting, whispering, sometimes pursed like a snapping turtle.

No, I took you for granted, hidden behind a sway of hair, needed for tucking loose strands,  
an occasional pull at your lobes, considered your auricles neither wise nor capable of  
divination,  
just flesh and cartilage satellites, filters, really!

Scientists replicate you with giant antennas, rap out prime numbers and listen  
for the reply of extraterrestrial life, but you aren't concerned with any of that,  
just report what's in your neck of the woods.

Maybe that's why I learned to tune you out, kept you covered with wool hats or hands,  
because you gathered grenades in the small kitchen of my childhood home  
where my brother, sister and I learned to disappear dinner, then ferret ourselves away,

but as you know sound travels approximately 343 meters/ second  
and there was nowhere in that Cape where you did not oblige,  
ossicles vibrated alcohol-fueled Minotaur roars across tympana,  
traversing labyrinth to cochlea

until one day, the bluebird song of music fluttered and flapped in exuberant brass,  
searing strings and smooth synths, and you had me, as if siphoned in-  
to the curved inner world of a nautilus, a Mandelbrot geometry of sound.

So now, my keepers, my docents curating the waterfall vortex, dancing leaves,  
wind and white pine whispers, I will promise to keep your canals open,  
stuff cotton only where a soft landing is needed.

### **Dates Have Been Chosen for the Next Three “Readings in the Round”**

At the summer meeting of the MPS's executive committee, dates were chosen for the next three members-only “Readings in the Round.” These take place on Zoom only, all on Saturdays, from 10:00 a.m. to noon. If interested, please note these dates on your calendars. Reminders will be sent a week or two prior to each and current members will be sent the Zoom link a day or two in advance of the reading.

**July 27, 2024**

**November 16, 2024**

**March 15, 2025**

We are really pleased that these have been so well received. If you've not yet taken part in one, we encourage you to do so. It's a chance to get to know other members and an opportunity to share some of your own work in your own voice. We'd be delighted to see you there.

## 2nd Prize— Jeanne Julian

### In Praise of Sweat

The advertisements tell you not to. Instead, smear neutralizing potions in your armpits to banish sweat, the stain and stink of strain, of effort and desire. (Did Wordsworth perspire?)

I always did, from ardor. Or stage fright. Or both. Like the first time I called a boy, asked him to a high school dance, tongue-tied and afflicted with excess nervous-Nellie perspiration.

Only later did I celebrate the sacrament of sweat, converted by the rapture of running. Local races baptized me, haphazard novitiate, in the sweat of striving, outpaced by a flock of breezy speedsters.

And let us praise the bliss of blended sweat, two copilots comingling fuels in the cockpit of lusty love, skidding together on curves of desire as warmth accelerates to heat, heat melts to a slick.

And let us praise the sweat of work earnest, hard, and healthful: of planting, harvest, building, wielding winch or rake or shovel. The dignity of a damp brow and a soaked shirt to mop it.

Share psalms of praise for salty sweat! Salute the body's analog to ocean waves, remind ourselves we're all sixty percent pure water. Go on: sweat. Dissolve the bone-dry dust we all return to.

## 3rd Prize—Gus Peterson

### Ode to a Desk Job You Were Planning to Leave

How, your first day back, there are new operations, prescriptions to profit and loss to be made aware of and a fine layer of dust laid like late April squall over your printer. The past few months a blur, the light the same – fluorescent, clinical. Whitewash of a doctor's coat overlaying a coffee mug, the copier's bulk. Like any nurse a comfort, Ativan for your arterial mind. The same slow undercurrent of politic and power grab behind each sympathetic flash of teeth. They were right. You, the fragile shipment. You, this medicine cabinet of opaque plastic and side effects needing to know the password, a way to log in, what needs to be done. Here, one says, taking the mouse from your hand. She lingers like a fog, like the first spritz of kiss to her skin at the mall before either of you dared dream of seasonless days in an ICU. Before disinfectant, approval and denial of coverage, clusters of moon rock gathered in the clear cone of their ship. Before what smelled like death could remit all this anew— this pinched nose, this swallowing the same you did before each launch into the deepest end of any adult pool.

## 1st Honorable Mention—Sara Eastler

### Ode to Tiny Perseverance

A slow laser on four pairs of legs, you track my presence when I am near, sense each step I take through field and wood, seek the heat that pours from my skin. Focused on my body you map the climb of pulse points— ankle to thigh, wrist to neck— more attentive to your task than any lover I have known. When at last my blood throbs beneath, you penetrate with barbed mouth, compelling my reserves of life force into your body until engorgement.

O parasite! O tick! When you sip the cocktail of my blood— a vampire, a hanger-on who lusts after my red heat— I entreat you to consider keeping the roulette to yourself. Do not inject my virgin veins with tainted tickborne spit. I will take my Bloody Mary without the squeeze of Lyme, without pasture fever or dose of Doxy. I will flick you from my pant cuffs and refuse your advances. I'm no white-tail deer proxy, even for a tiny champion of perseverance.

**2nd Honorable Mention—Kathryn Tracy****Ode to Vetch**

Here's the common tangle--  
leaves and purple blossoms  
at home on gritty edges of roads.

Here are tendrils and vines  
netting weary earth.  
Vetch requires little sustenance,

discerns opportunity  
in happenstance, sends taproots  
even into hardpan.

The friends of vetch are duff and heat  
in common cause with neglect.  
As life calls to life,

vetch hovers in rocky fields,  
blossoms in season with bromegrass  
and wild blueberries.

Vetch returns goodness  
to thin soil, offers tender forage  
for yearling deer.

In the company of vetch,  
I am learning so many names  
for generosity.

**3rd Honorable Mention—Carl Little****Pocket Comb**

They slip out when  
my hearing aids are off and fall  
between seats of Subaru  
or to carpet or ground,  
soundless, so many

lost over the years, small harmless  
hair accessory and companion,  
thin teeth that make  
tiny music when fingered,  
color of licorice or tar,

a couple of dollars at the pharmacy  
adding up to maybe  
a hundred smackeros, each time leaving me empty-handed  
in my digging around among

chapstick, a pen, illegible notes,  
needing the comb to tame what little  
remains, maybe add water  
to help keep the flaring hair  
in place.

Oh, friend, farewell!

May someone find you and need you.

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**MPS Annual Report (Continued from Page 2)**

Our Zoom members-only "Reading in the Round" events are growing in popularity and give us an opportunity to get to know each other and to hear folks read samples of their work in their own voices. Four were held in 2023, in January, in April, in July, and in November.

We again offered two Prize Poem Contests open to all residents of the State of Maine, including those only here for part of the year, one for published poets and another for individuals whose work has not yet been published. This was the sixth year that we have done this. We are pleased to be able to award cash prizes for the winning poems. As in other years, \$100 was given to the previously published winner and \$50 to the winner of the unpublished poets contest.

Membership in the society at the end of 2023 was 69. Our public Facebook page had a membership of slightly over 400. The page provides a link to our website with access to our newsletter.

## Results of the Published Poets Prize Poem Contest

Winner of the \$150 prize was Janie Gendron for her poem “Daily Report.” Judge for the contest was poet Judy Kaber. She selected poems by Janie Gendron, Tara Connor, and Richard Foerster as finalists. Janie was announced as the winner at the MWPA Awards Ceremony on May 30. We ask winners of this contest whether they are willing for us to print their poems or if they want to send it out for possible publication. Janie has generally offered to allow us to share her winning poem with you.

### Winner of the \$150 Prize—Janie J. Gendron

#### DAILY REPORT

Your usage is up this week  
compared to last week;  
here, let me show you  
with a bar graph how  
you are frittering away time,  
so you will really understand.

Talk, text, thumbs up, thumbs down,  
calendar, comment, create, dictate,  
bank, balk, bark, and rant  
all on your little anxiety rectangle.  
If you forget it, you go back for it,  
don't you? This tether  
to our brave new world.

Solitaire, crosswords, Wordle,  
share your results, show  
the brilliant person you are  
and seize that free I-pad  
(you only pay shipping  
and surprise, you've been rooked  
while you were killing time).

What news will you feed me today  
that is critical for my world?  
What song is this, Siri?  
How do I get from here to there?  
What's the best recipe for kale?  
Please send me reminders.  
Please check these symptoms:  
is my heart beating too fast?

You are walking less  
than this time last week,  
less moving about in the actual world,  
romping freely in your virtual reality—  
now there's an oxymoron!  
And can you look up “oxymoron?”

Alexa, turn it off, make it stop,  
but before that, please  
report the weather,  
start the Instapot,  
check the security cameras,  
remind the children it's time for bed,  
record my favorite show,  
read me a book, play that podcast,  
and can you turn out the lights?

### 2nd Place— Richard Foerster for “Prayer”

Richard Foerster's poem “prayer” was awarded 2nd place. He tells us it is currently under consideration at a handful of magazines and recently got a shout-out at *The Hudson Review*, though they didn't accept it. He believes it is a strong poem and will find a good home in a magazine soon, and so he chooses not to grant us permission to print it here. We look forward to hearing that the poem has found that “good home.” Here is what the judge had to say about it. “Through lyrical description and expert word choices, this poem encapsulates the sensual nature of our world. In essence, this is a prayer of thanksgiving, acknowledging the wonder of creation, its luxurious nature and our desire to be a part of it and to ‘give witness’ with our voices.”

### 3rd Place—Tara Connor Thirteen

We are driving on a bitter cold New Year's Day.  
The sun is blinding but not warm.  
A newly minted teenager sits in the passenger seat.  
The edges of the leather pressing against  
our thighs are an almost painful reminder of the air outside.

She is thirteen now, an ominous number, even outside of adolescence.  
But Friday the thirteenth has always been lucky for me.  
Thirteen sighs, thirteen eye rolls, maybe thirteen arguments  
before we left the house this morning. But thirteen reasons  
I love her smile, thirteen times she made me snort with laughter.  
Some things are more worth counting than others.

Passing by the paper mill stacks we see water vapor frozen in the sky.  
Great towering heaps and piles of it, immobilized by the freezing air.  
She asks why it doesn't drop to the ground, frozen hard in pellets.  
I'm not sure, I say.  
Maybe the particles are too small, she offers.  
Could be. I really don't know.

We see a long, thin strand of cloud looping between the two  
huge masses of frozen mist, the edges scalloped like filigree.  
It looks like a watch chain, I say, stretched across some fat man's belly.  
She laughs and I'm glad we've read so much together  
that she knows about watch chains, even if I don't know  
about why frozen vapor doesn't fall to earth.

Counting Crows plays on the radio and we both sing along.  
Do you count crows? I ask. She is surprised from her quiet window watching.  
Wait, that's a real thing?  
Yeah, one for sorrow, two for joy... It's an old rhyme, a superstition.  
Huh. She turns back to the window.

What about thirteen crows, I wonder. If you counted them  
what would they signify? An omen or a promise?  
I imagine thirteen graceful shapes against the snow, feathers  
shining blue-black in the too brilliant light, the contrast stark and lovely,  
like the wing of dark hair across her pale cheek.

### A Zoom Workshop with Dennis Camire August 10, 2:00-3:30/4:00 P.M.

#### Shifting Perspectives: Personifying Flora and Fauna and the Dramatic Monologue

In this fun, imaginative workshop we will merely seek to put our identity as humans aside in order to adopt the perspective of some flora or fauna which we will then personify via a dramatic monologue. First, we'll have a brief discussion on the characteristics of the dramatic monologue.

Next, we'll look at a few dramatic monologues written from the perspective of both flora and fauna. After that, we'll allow our imaginations to run wild and, as a group, do some brainstorming exercises to discover interesting flora and fauna whose perspectives we can adopt and place in interesting contexts.

Finally, we'll spend about a half hour writing our chosen fun, imaginative, and insightful dramatic monologue which we'll then share with one another before convening.

A few of key questions we'll confront: "What does humanity need to know about x from the perspective of y?" "What does x see/feel that, tragically, goes unseen/unfelt by humans?" "How can suspending our identity as humans expand our consciousness in ways that benefit the human family?" "How do we navigate the paradox of how the self both dissolves and expands when engaging in such imaginative, shapeshifting, play with perspective?"

### A Zoom Workshop with Dennis Camire -- August 10, 2:00-3:30/4:00 P.M.

As we let you know in May, Dennis Camire is willing to offer a workshop for us on Zoom. Please read the description in the right-hand column above. **This is open to all current members of the Maine Poets Society without charge**, but please let us know if you'd like to attend so that we can send you the link when the time is right.

## Results of the Unpublished Poets Prize Poem Contest

### Winner of the \$75 Prize—M. Hrynick

#### Plowing Before a Storm

Out in the dooryard that dull day the snow  
lay ankle-deep, no more, and scarcely worth  
the trouble. But the old man buttoned up  
his coat, and climbed into his Ford, and fired  
her up, and dropped his plow. More coming, so  
they said, two foot or more, and two foot four  
might be about as much as this old truck  
could handle, even down in four-wheel low,  
and in first gear, and with eight hundred pounds  
of ballast in the back, or nearly that.  
Best that the new stuff land and lie as low  
as he and his old truck could well arrange.  
But then he thought again, and paused,  
just sitting in the F150's cab.  
“Why am I doing this?” he asked himself.

It may be that he'd grown a little tired.  
There was no doubt that his old hands were cold,  
and sure it was that in the way of things,  
the old man'd not see seventy again.  
“I plow,” he said, in something like despair,  
“I plow this dooryard neat and clear and then--  
next day it snows again. What profit hath  
a man of all the weary labor which  
he taketh in the sun? The rivers run  
into the sea, and yet the sea's not full,  
and still unto the place from whence they come  
the rivers do at length again return.”

But there was pleasure in the solid old  
black wheel beneath his big-veined hands, and in  
the heavy clunking as he changed his gears,  
forward and back, and up and down, and as  
he swung, and dropped, and lifted up again  
his battered yellow plow, and as he slammed  
the snow he scraped each time into a bank--  
a quiet, virile joy. “This may indeed,”  
he thought, “be vanity; The Preacher says  
that there is nothing else. But I'm not dead,  
not yet, and in the house I have a wife,  
who needs this dooryard clear; and she will have  
a supper hot upon the fire for us,  
when I have got this plowing done. This storm  
should find a ready open space in which  
to dump its load, so I and my old Ford,  
in this last light, will plow one out again.”

### 3rd Place—Paul Redstone

#### Thank You for Your Service

“Thank you for your service”  
Words to make me cringe  
I no longer wear my uniform,  
the badge of Vietnam

I need to apologize  
I was slow to speak out  
reluctant to act out  
Even worse, I helped  
the machine stay oiled,  
avoid getting clogged  
by anger,  
opposition,  
despair,  
resistance

I apologize for placating,  
smiling, allowing

Those lost souls I oversaw in a prison  
had no justice  
They were left in a vast empty space  
a bit reminiscent of  
the slave castles of Ghana

lost from their villages  
mommas, sweethearts  
Lost and deceived by the hustle of recruiters  
lured with glowing promises  
and then left on the shore

I apologize and can no longer  
see the victims directly,  
yet the arc of shame is long  
That man over there, in the raggedy tent,  
seems vaguely familiar,  
perhaps enduring the legacy  
of my failure to apologize sooner

All that injustice still sits there,  
proud and unashamed,  
not even aware of the crying  
need for the apology

“Thank you for your service”.

## 2nd Place—Deborah Smith

### Questions for my Sister's Mother

Who has passed you on the street, and made you wonder if she might be your daughter?  
 Who else might have called her a sibling? Did you have other children later?  
 Who filled out the birth certificate using only the mother's surname?

Such records were permitted then, a vestige of laws meant to mitigate shame.  
 Did you live in panic they would be repealed?  
 Never fear. We tried so hard to find you, but you were never revealed.

What was the reason that day in early spring for the intimacy that produced her?  
 What was it like as the days grew longer, then shorter, and you felt her tiny body stir?  
 What word best captures her father's mood as he tried to walk a fine line?  
 Committed, calculating, capricious, coercive, on cloud nine?

Did he ever whisper, "I love you," in your ear?  
 Did he stick around? Or disappear?

Where were you when you learned the true reason your belly began to swell?  
 Where did you go to find someone to smile with, or cry with, or simply to tell?  
 Where was the hospital? Near your home? Or far away, so no one could guess?  
 We could never find a birth announcement in any local press.

Did you hear her cry when she emerged, or had the nurses drugged you into sleep?  
 Did they let you hold her? Or did you turn your face away and weep?

When the calendar turned over every year, was it a date you ever forgot?  
 When a woman's choice became the law, did you sigh, "Not for me—I got caught!"  
 When your choices were a rock and a hard place, did the rest of your life feel conflicted?  
 Punished, praised, satisfied, stupefied, convinced, contradicted?

Roe was overturned 70 years after her birth.  
 Were you still alive on this earth?

Why did you choose to carry the baby to term, then give her away to strangers?  
 Why were you afraid? Did you feel you were in danger?  
 Because abortion was illegal at the time,  
 and you were afraid to commit a crime?  
 Because they told you sex was a transgression,  
 and this was your only hope of heaven?  
 Because you believed still more lies from others,  
 that single women are terrible mothers?  
 Because you knew your life was not yet ready  
 to be safe, secure, and steady?

I want you to believe you made the right choice for you.  
 You can believe this truth: it was right for her, and for me, too.  
 After six years of childless marriage, our parents were thrilled to be told:  
 "You can welcome your first daughter home," when she was just days old.  
 They marked her second birthday with their own act of love, so sweet.  
 Thirty-six weeks later, our family of four was complete.

Even after I grew taller by three inches, she was always my big sister.  
 Those who say—"That bond was merely adopted"—force me to resist.  
 She was my real and natural sister, who had her own unique style.  
 When she died at the age I am now, I cried like a motherless child.  
 Her pre-natal life story was stillborn.  
 The unanswered questions are still mourned.

## Publication & Member News

### Poems

Robert Paul Allen's poem "Last Chapter" was published by *Impspired* in May 2024.

Carol Bachofner's poem "Hearing About Us in the Car" was chosen by Judy Kaber to be featured in her column in *Republican Journal*. Six of her prose poems ("On the 8<sup>th</sup> Day She Woke Up," "Half-Haunted," "Sunblock," "The Urn," "Ars Poetica," and "Bird") were accepted by *The Mackinaw, a journal of prose poetry*, to be published in its September 15<sup>th</sup> issue. Carol has embarked upon a year-long detailed study/examination of the prose poem, so this acceptance is excitingly pertinent to that work.

Dr. Jim Brosnan's "Evening Contemplation" received Honorable Mention in the National Federation of State Poetry Societies' William Stafford Memorial Award contest. "Harvesting Silence" was recently published by *Ekphrastic Review Challenge*.

It is apparent that MPS member Dr. Emory Jones of Iuka, Mississippi, sends out more poems than probably any of our other members. He has an impressive number of successes. The full page of credits he sent for this issue shows many of his poems having won contests and/or having been published. These include "Deep Freeze," "The Courtyard," "Cloister: A French Sonnet," and "Survivor."

Jeanne Julian's poem "Shortfall (Family Edition)" was a finalist in *The Broad River Review's* Rash Award for poetry for 2024. *Hole in the Head Review's* May issue includes her poems "The Burrowers Recall Life A.G.," "Of Bone and Brain," and "Backyard Fox"; and *Grey Sparrow Journal* (issue 43) published "Home of the Brave." Her poems "Restaurant Review" and "Ode to Imagination" are in *Thriving: An Anthology* (Exsolutas Press, 2024). Editor Rhonda Rosenheck is promoting the anthology with a talk, reading, and book signing on August 17<sup>th</sup>, 3:00 p.m., at the new Barnes & Noble in South Portland.

Jim Krossschell has recently published poems in *Northern New England Review* and [Uppagus](#).

Gus Peterson's manuscript *Undiagnosis* was selected as a finalist in *The Poetry Box's* 2024 chapbook contest, judged by Donna Hilbert. Another manuscript, *Order of Operations*, was selected by Robert Brewer in *Writer's Digest* annual November poem-a-day (PAD) Chapbook Challenge. His poem "Therapy Poem," will be published in the next issue of *Frost Meadow Review*. A debut full-length collection, *Male Pattern*, will be published by Finishing Line Press in 2025.

Anne Rankin has published or has work forthcoming in *Abandoned Mine*, *The Bluebird Word*, *Boomer Lit*, *The Healing Muse*, and *kerning*. Her poem "just the same" will be featured on Maine Public Radio's *Poems from Here* later this year.

Mark Saba's poem "Morning Sheds Light" was featured on Maine Public Radio's *Poems from Here* on April 28<sup>th</sup>:

[Morning Sheds Light](#)  
[mainepublic.org](http://mainepublic.org)

Nancy Sobanik's poem "My Mother Taught Me to Harvest Sky" was published by *Silver Birch Press* on June 14<sup>th</sup> in its "All About My Mother" series.

### Books

Dr. Jim Brosnan's latest poetry and original photography collection, *Long Distance Driving*, was recently published by *Ochre Leaf Press*. The focus of the book is on geographic locations west of the Mississippi River.

### Other Member News

Carol Bachofner was a featured reader at the recent Camden Festival of Poetry, where she shared the stage with Dave Morrison and others. She is headed to Provincetown at the end of July for a week's study with Patricia Spears Jones at the Fine Arts Work Center. The topic of study will be building bridges in poems and between poems. She will be teaching a 3-hour workshop on November 9<sup>th</sup> for Wheaton Writing Academy called, "Honoring the Idea Stream," which will focus on how to sequence ideas in a poem and how to create a sequence of several poems. Anyone interested can access the registration information by googling Wheaton Writing Academy. Fees are low for the workshops (\$50 for 3 hours), and scholarships are available.

Richard Foerster is the Guest Editor for *Hole in the Head Review's* August 1<sup>st</sup> issue. He will also be the Poetry Editor for the *Ten Piscataqua Writers 2026 Anthology*. His most recent book, *With Little Light and Sometimes None at All*, was a Finalist for this year's Maine Literary Award for Poetry.

Carl Little's review of Mike Bove's *Eye* appeared in the spring issue of *The Café Review*. The 2024 *Island Journal* includes Little's essay on the Maine island writings of poet Samuel French Morse (1916–1985), and a folio of images from his and his brother David's book *Art of Penobscot Bay* (Islandport Press).

John Seksay is celebrating having become "a formally published author," having been awarded 1<sup>st</sup> place in the Minnesota contest judged by NFSPS for 2024 for his poem "Almost Touching."



### President's Ink July 2024

It feels strange to be sitting in my office on a very hot July day with my window-shaker air-conditioner humming, thinking about the fall and winter and spring to come, but here I am.

We have our summer board meeting next week, during which we do our best to plan a schedule of events that our members will enjoy. We also use that meeting as an opportunity to figure out how to organize ourselves as a society to reflect the needs of our members.

Those of you who have been members for some time will recognize that like all societies of people with specific interests in common, our membership goes up and down. Right now, the membership of MPS is steadily growing, which is a tribute to the power of poetry to interest and involve people. Some of it is because our Facebook page has given us a wider reach and more publicity - if only all of them would join as members! Some of it is because of our state-wide prize poem contest as well as our members-only contests. We have been delighted to welcome entrants to that contest as members. Our membership in the National Federation of State Poetry Societies, offering the opportunity to enter contests outside our own membership, is also an attraction.

One of the pleasures of membership is the opportunity to get together with like-minded people to discuss and take part in something we all enjoy. We hope that our biannual meetings plus the opportunities offered by our quarterly Readings in the Round and the workshops we offer are things that everybody feels they can take part in. We welcome suggestions for other events too, so don't be shy to come forward with yours.

However, I would also like to put forward a plea for a more active engagement. The work involved in organizing the Maine Poets Society is not onerous nor that frequent, but for everybody's enjoyment it needs to be done. As you might know, we have two board members - John Seksay, our Treasurer, and Gus Peterson, our Vice President - who have done sterling work for the board over several years but who now have other things in their lives that must take priority and need to step down. One of our tasks at our summer board meeting will be to reassess and clarify our job descriptions, but both John and Gus have done excellent work in leaving things organized for their successors.

Please think about offering your time and skills to help the work of MPS and come to our September 28th meeting at Christ Episcopal Church in Gardiner to volunteer - we need you! Should the urge to volunteer be powerful, please don't hesitate to contact me directly. I may overwhelm you with gratitude.

In the meantime, have a beautiful summer, stay as cool as you can, and write some poetry.

Jenny

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*Stanza* is the tri-annual  
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### **Board Members**

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MPS website ([MainePoetsSociety.com](http://MainePoetsSociety.com))

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