

STANZA

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE MAINE POETS SOCIETY

VOLUME 33, NUMBER 2

July 2025

NEWS OF OUR NEXT MEETING

Our fall in-person meeting will take place on September 27 at Christ Episcopal Church, 2 Dresden Avenue in Gardiner. This will, of course, be a hybrid meeting. 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 let us know so our Hospitality Host can know how many to prepare for.** The judge for the fall members-only contest and workshop leader will be Carol Bachofner. Registration will begin at 9:30. There'll be a half-hour break for lunch followed by a 90-minute workshop beginning at 12:30. (Details on Page 2.) 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.

September Members-Only Contest

Times New Roman or Arial font preferred.

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

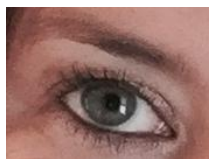
Deadline: August 27, 2025

Contest Details

Contest Poem—Prose Poem Portrait

Using the example of “Iris,” write a prose poem portrait of your own. Can be of a person or a part of a person (hands, eyes, face, hair, etc.) You may also choose to write a self-portrait prose poem. Do NOT simply describe the person/thing about which you are writing! Use direct metaphor, as in the example. Make sure that your poem is a block, using a right-justified margin. There is a story behind every portrait, even if the portrait is not of a whole person. Use poetic language to tell that story. Examine the sample poem, “Iris,” to see how it is done.

Example:



Iris

I carry a photo of your right eye in my wallet, look at it in spring when the earth begins to bloom after its taupe skin of winter brightens to greens, blues, lavenders, pinks. Is it crazy that I worship the whole world in your eye, show the photo to my friends the way other mothers show off their newborns' hospital pictures or their five-year-olds' first day of school pictures? Your eye is not any of that, not merely a source of motherly pride. It lives on its own. Offspring of Mother Earth. I revel in the details: the deep black of the pupil like a crater lake, the iris that reminds of wildflowers on a mountain path, curved lashes the jagged edges of the tree line, the brow an ancient wind-carved arch. Your right eye is mine to admire while all the world gawks at girls in too-short dresses or too-red lipstick. Time will rid the world of all that, fashion a fickle lover. As for your right eye (and its twin), no trend of society can alter its beauty.

~ Carol Bachofner

The Judge

Carol Willette Bachofner served as Poet Laureate of Rockland, Maine from 2012 -2016. She is the author of seven books of poetry, including *Test Pattern, a fantod of prose poems* (Finishing Line Press, 2018). *Every Place I look, Women With Embers at Their Feet* is forthcoming from Main Street Rag. Bachofner's poems have appeared in numerous journals, including *The Mackinaw: a journal of prose poetry*, and in the following anthologies: *Dawnland Voices, An Anthology of Writings from Indigenous New England* (University of Nebraska Press, 2013), *Enough!* (Littoral Books 2020) and *Wait* (Littoral Books 2021).

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: Jenny Doughty, 31 Rustic Lane, Portland ME 04103, 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 27 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 10 to jennydoughty@icloud.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 September 2025** or something similar in the subject line.

Workshop: "Prose Poems" by Carol Bachofner

Prose poems existed since the dawn of poetry, morphing from the oral form (think "bard") to the written and variable styles we accomplish today. We'll look at the formatting: blocks or stanzas, and examine the various kinds. Today's workshop will focus on the portrait poem (in a single block) and the prose sonnet, using a numbering system and no numbering system. We will try these on our own. You will be provided with a reading list and specific strategies for beginning and finishing a prose poem and we'll take a look at sample poems (comprehensive handout provided). Overall, we will attempt to answer the question: *Is there really such a thing as this genre or is it just flash fiction we call "poetry"?*

Board information

We have been lucky enough to have a volunteer for the post of Vice President, and we look forward to introducing her to everybody at the September meeting.

However, we still really really really need a volunteer for Treasurer. We feel very fortunate that Gus Peterson has consented to stay on in the role temporarily, which enables us to keep functioning. However, without somebody in that role, we would have to fold, since it enables us to comply with various regulations and none of the rest of us on the board feel equipped to do it.

It's not onerous or time consuming, but it needs somebody who is comfortable with numbers and good at keeping track of a spreadsheet. Gus is very willing to show anybody how it has all been set up. Our previous treasurer, John Seksay, organized things excellently.

Please consider taking on this role. As a board member you would not just be performing your own particular function on the board but also taking part in discussions on how the society should function, and what sort of events our members would enjoy. All thoughts welcome!

May 2025 CONTEST WINNERS

Contest: A Narrative Poem focusing on Nature and Using Anaphora Judge, Dr. Jim Brosnan

1st Prize— Diane Hunt

Under Cetus

Under the sea
Right whales
understand the clicking
undertones of sonar.
Their undulating underbellies
frolic and flow in the undertow.

They have learned to never
underestimate
the untrustworthy
mammalian underlings
above them.

Those who have turned
the leviathan's under ocean abode
into an unforgettable killing field,
an undertaker's undercroft
an unholy catacomb
of genocide –
an under-the-radar
undercurrent of greed
an unforgiveable work
of underlying doom.

Is it too late to understand
the underhandedness of their
unexcusable name?
or are we still under the spell
of the Pequod captain's
unfathomably mad undertaking?

3rd Prize—Jenny Doughty

Grafted

Purple blossom on our lilac - light and dark.
Grafted, my dad explained. *One grown here, one*
small branch cut from another tree and joined,
grafted like me to a city dad called home,

grafted accent wrong enough for people
to question where I was from, really.
Once grafted, I hid behind heart-shaped leaves,
dizzy scent from both shades of purple,

2nd Prize—Nancy Sobanik

The Wood Thrush Sings

It reaches toward the chasm of the night,
this silvered song that hovers in the still,
a tinkling bell well hidden from our sight

whose ringing call may shield us from our fright.
We shrink into the dark from what may kill.
It reaches toward the chasm of the night

with notes that pierce the gloaming, pure and bright.
What question lingers in its warbled trill?
A tinkling bell well hidden from our sight

still sings despite the world's devolving plight.
We wonder how it wards against the chill
while reaching toward the chasm of the night.

Whose dulcet tones help banish doubt and blight,
repolarize hearts with electric thrill?
This tinkling bell well hidden from our sight

will write tomorrow's song despite half-light.
Reverberate until, until, until —
it reaches toward the chasm of the night.
Oh tinkling bell well hidden from our sight!



florets crammed like one flower into cones,
grafted but clear to which cone each belonged.
Maybe this was practice for my future,
grafted again to a foreign land,

grafted with a voice that makes people
ask where I'm from, really. The lilac tree
was my hiding place then, my way to graft
myself, a child, into that new world:

over and over I climbed up and swung
down on a bendy branch, my hands stained green
and bitter scented from its thready bark,
grafted and in the end too big to hide.

1st Honorable Mention—Laura West**Incoming Tide**

it brushed my cheek,
the breath of the sea,
on the incoming tide

smell to my nose—
seaweed, sour and salty
on the incoming tide

a black velvet sky
the Milky Way,
an incoming tide

a lone loon cries
on the incoming tide

**2nd Honorable Mention—Linda Spalding****In the Forest**

In the forest, the trees watch our comings and goings
The simple joy of lovers in a secret embrace
The single minded runner oblivious to the smell of sweet fern
The hulking man with vacant eyes
who discards his heavy burden and covers it with brush

In the forest, a hiker spots a Cooper's Hawk and leaves the path
He trips on something that looks like a wig
He kicks at it with his foot and yelps when he sees shriveled bits of scalp stained rusty
red, faded blue elastics securing long brown braids

In the forest, the trees keep their counsel
while evidence techs comb through the detritus of leaves and brambles
painstakingly assembling a puzzle of bones

In the forest, the leaves unfurl, caress the breeze, blush, and tumble to the ground to
cover the lovely, the brutal, the inexplicable.

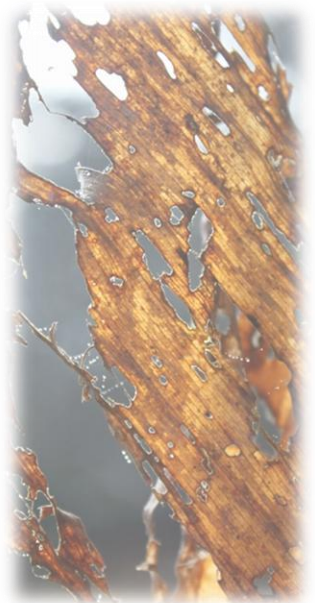
3rd Honorable Mention—David Sloan**Manifesto**

The woods have been too white
for too long. It's past time
to shake the blanket, breathe
unburied bones back to life,
crack the sullen hush
of winter's accumulated crust,
slough off constricting skin.

It's past time for seeds to stir,
to periscope their timid shoots,
scouts probing new territory,
unfurling flags to announce
the long-overdue reappearance
of hues and wholeness—
soul's deepest cravings. For too long

we've fretted by the window.
We're pallid as the view, tethered,
tamped down, well-dry, watching
fearfully as harsh winds paralyze
the countryside. It's past time
to break out shears, trust bee, leaf,
sing Spring, burst into flower.

Reclaiming one's land is never
a risk-free pastime.



Thinking Ahead to the Next Maine Poets Society Anthology

At the May 2025 general meeting, we announced our hope of producing an anthology in 2026. That day a five-member Anthology committee was created. You'll be learning in the months ahead when, how, and to whom your submissions should be emailed or mailed. In the meantime, start looking through your poems and choose some of your favorites. You'll be asked to submit five of which two will be chosen for inclusion. Be aware that one very long poem could mean only that one might be included. You'll be expected to include all information concerning previous publication of each poem you submit. For now, just know it's in the works. More will be announced at our meeting in Gardiner on September 27.

An Unexpected Closure

Last issue we announced an Open Poetry Mic at 6:30 every third Thursday of the month at Cafe Obscura, 108 Lisbon St., downtown Lewiston. That venue has recently closed.

An Invitation

Poetry Salon w/Josh and Gus: on the 4th Friday of every month, from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m., MPS member Gus Peterson and Josh Rollson, owner of Stone Broke Bread & Books in Gardiner, hold an informal conversation about their shared love of poetry in an intimate but low-key setting. After discussing the week's proposed topic for an hour, they invite the audience to participate. They are currently looking for other poets to join them as panelists to encourage better conversation through a diversity of perspective and experience. All ages and abilities welcome. This is an open and affirming space. You do not have to be published. Just love poetry! Feel free to reach out to Gus if interested, glp3324@gmail.com

Publication & Member News

Poems:

Robert Paul Allen's poem "Scrid of Culch" was published by *Northern New England Review* (April 2025); and Piker Press published his poems "The Cabbie," "First Snow," and "Lake Smoke" (respectively in March, April, and May 2025).

Richard Foerster's poem "A Few Words Respecting" appears in the current issue of *Under a Warm Green Linden* (<https://www.greenlindenpress.com/issue19-richard-foerster>). His poem "Prayer" will appear later this year in *Relief: A Journal of Art and Faith*, and "Magnolia" will be published in *32 Poems* (#46) this winter. Richard also had poems accepted for two anthologies: "Anxiety Dream: And/Or" is included in the Dirigo Democracy Project's *Defiance!: Maine Poets Protest the Attack on Democracy* (Evergreen Press); and his poems "Spring Tide," "A Rogue Wave," and "A Shoal" will appear later this year in *Echoes in the Fog: Reflections on the Liminal Spaces of Maine's Coast* (12 Willows Press).

Alice Haines had the following poems published: "Nuptial Agreement" in *Pine Row Press* (No. 10, Spring 2025); "Our Town Becomes a Number" and "March Mud Season Rap" in *Pangyrus* (April 2025); "Kindling the Woodstove" and "The House" in *Does It Have Pockets* (June 2025); and "Red Osier" in *Dunes Review* (July 2025, V29.1).

Dr. Emory Jones published the following poems: "Fury Haiku" in *March Haiku 2025* of the Connecticut Poetry Society; "Eagle Snow" in *East on Central* (V. 23/2024–2025); "Injured Angel" in *Pennsylvania's Poetic Voices* (April 2025); and "The Survivor" in *Poetry Super Highway* (April 17, 2025). The Spring 2025 edition of *WyoPoets News* published "Sea of Grass," "Dancing Autumn: An Etheree," "Bones Die Hard," and "Eagle Snow." "The Survivor" was published in 27th *Annual Yom HaShoa* (Holocaust Remembrance Day) *Poetry Issue*. "Injured Angel" appeared in *News 'N' Notes* of the Poets' Roundtable of Arkansas (February 2025); and a number of his poems received prizes (by the Poetry Society of Tennessee, in *Pennsylvania's Poetic Voices*, and by the Mississippi and Missouri Poetry Societies). "Eagle Snow" received 2nd Place in the Poetry Society of Indiana 2025 Summer Contest, Confluence Category. "Painted Desert" appeared in *The Avocet: A Journal of Nature Poetry* (Summer—2025). In addition, "Upon Putting an Anthology of Poetry in the Community College Bookstore" won 4th Place in the "Anything Goes" Category of the 2025 Spring Award of the Alabama State Poetry Society.

Jeanne Julian's poem "Junk Drawer" received Honorable Mention in *I-70 Review*'s Bill Hickok Humor Award for Poetry 2025. Her poem "[Lament on Leaving Home for Two Weeks](#)" appears in *Jackdaw Review*. *Synkroniciti* published "Kilroy in Hell" and "Preservation" in its "Recovery"-themed issue this spring. *Windward Review* will publish "How Novice Birders Learn the Names," "Return," and "P.O.V." in Volume 23, with the theme of "Conversations."

Jim Krossschell has recently published poems in [Rise Up](#), [Euphony](#), [Thread Litmap](#), and [The Northeast Coast](#).

Isis Phoenix's poem "Ecstatic Burdens" will appear in *Mayari Literature* (V. 2, Issue 4, July 15, 2025). Her poem "My Grandmother's Violets" was selected by Gibson Fay-LeBlanc for Maine Public Radio's *Poems from Here* (2025–2026).

Anne Rankin had two poems ("Pattern of Barely" and "Left Unsaid") published in a special section of the *Mid-Atlantic Review*, *Amplifying Disabled Voices*. Her poem "this business of her nerves being older" received Honorable Mention in the Stephen A. DiBiase Poetry Contest 2025. Her poem "Waiting at Sand Beach" will be featured in the anthology *The Nature of Our Times: Poems on America's Lands, Waters, Wildlife, and Other Natural Wonders* (due in September 2025 from Paloma Press, in collaboration with Wick Poetry Center at Kent State University and Poets for Science).

Mark Saba's poem "Family Reunions" appears in the recently published anthology [Keystone Poetry](#) from Penn State University Press, which celebrates Pennsylvania poets. Mark is a native of Pittsburgh.

John Seksay's poem "Cutting Edge Crafts" took 1st Place among the 85 submissions to the Eastport Poetry Contest.

Nancy Sobanik's poem "Recipe for Summiting the Southwest Ridge Trail" appeared in the *Sheila-Na-Gig* (Vol. 9.4, Summer 2025); and "I Knew" will appear in *Hole in the Head Review* (Fall 2025).

Books:

Gus Peterson's book *Male Pattern* is available through the publisher. [Male Pattern by Gus Peterson—Finishing Line Press](#)

Marshall Witten's latest poetry collection, *How I See It*, was published in June by Pregio Press.

Member News:

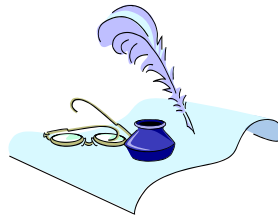
Mike Bove has taken over editorship of *Hole in the Head Review*, an online journal of poetry. The new editorial staff also includes Ken Craft, Kate Kearns, Jefferson Navicky, and Jeri Theriault. The Fall 2025 issue arrives August 15th. www.holeintheheadreview.com

Gus Peterson will be launching [Male Pattern \(Finishing Line Press\)](#) on July 20th, 2:00–4:00 p.m. at [Stone Broke Bread & Books](#) in Gardiner. Come for a reading followed by a short Q & A. Refreshments provided. Feel free to pick up some bread and books too. Owners Josh and Rachel do so much for the local community, especially poets. Help lift them up in turn!

Alice Lee Timmins recently read as the headliner at Nancy Wheaton's event held at the Office Lounge in Dover, NH. She is scheduled to do public readings in Kittery, South Berwick, and Portsmouth over the next several months.

Opportunity Grants

Do you have a poetry workshop, retreat, or seminar that interests you? Remember, MPS offers members the chance to apply for Opportunity Grants of up to \$100 (some of which could be used for gas/travel expenses) to help defray the cost. The grant recipient is required to write a short piece for the *Stanza* afterwards to tell other members about their experience. Up to \$500 in total a year is available for grants on a first come, first served basis. If interested, go to the Maine Poets Society website, click on the Membership tab, and then on "a Membership Opportunity Grant Application."



President's Ink July 2025

I've been away traveling in France and in brushing up my rusty French one of the things that became clear to me was how much I relied on stock phrases. Now, admittedly, my French is tourist-functional rather than conversational, so a lot of interactions revolve around phrases such as where is... how much... and I need... (as well as 'white wine please,' and 'yes I'll have the pâté and yes I do like Camembert'). However, using those trusted phrases helped me function.

This made me think about how easy it can be to return to familiar language when we're figuring out how to convey what we mean in a poem. We know these terms and we know that our readers will know them too and understand what we mean. Even in prose, however, there are limits to people's enjoyment in reading well-worn phrases. In poetry, what we really enjoy is surprise.

As speakers of English, we enjoy the use of a language with the largest vocabulary in the world. Other languages also have large vocabularies, and each language has its own history and nuance encapsulated in its vocabulary, but English is a thief of other languages. Like Autolycus in Shakespeare's *A Winter's Tale*, it is "a snapper-up of unconsidered trifles".

I grew up in Yorkshire, where village names reflect their origins in Anglo-Saxon conquest of earlier tribes, and in Viking raids. They end in words like 'thorpe' (settlement), 'thwaite' (clearing), 'beck' (stream) and 'by' (farm). There is a famous hill in England called Torpenhow Hill, which accumulates three words for hill - tor, pen and how - since invaders obviously asked a native what the place was called and got whatever the name for hill was at the time.

A friend once told me that if you pronounce any English word ending in -tion with a French accent, you may end up with a viable French word since so many of those words stem from the Norman conquest of Britain and the incorporation of French words into English. See also the Latin that stemmed from the Roman occupation, and the Germanic words that came with the Saxon invaders. The British habit of invading other countries also led to the incorporation of Indian words such as pajama, bungalow and verandah into English. In the US we have a history of incorporating Native American words into the language as well.

As writers of English, then, we have a toolbox containing the richest possible collection of synonyms and a capacity for nuance better than any other language. We continue to absorb words into the language from new technology—I grew up never having heard of many words that are commonplace today, because the technology hadn't been invented.

Delve deep into your toolboxes!

Happy summer

Jenny Doughty

The more time I spend with poetry, the less certain I am of anything I say about it. I'll admit that as a reader I tend to favor clarity over innovation, beauty over authenticity, and feeling over moral rectitude. As a writer I just try to write poems I would want to read. But even these inclinations I grow daily less sure of.

~ Matthew Buckley Smith in *Rattle*

Could a greater miracle exist than for us to look through each other's eyes for a moment?

~ Henry David Thoreau

STANZA, Maine Poets Society
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Augusta, ME 04330

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

FIRST CLASS

FMI or to join, write
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Gus Peterson, Interim Treasurer, glp3324@gmail.com
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Diane Hunt, Hospitality Chair, DL.Hunt@ATT.net
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Dr. Jim Brosnan, Board Member at-large, opmewriter@gmail.com

MPS website (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.”