

STANZA

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE MAINE POETS SOCIETY

VOLUME 26, NUMBER 1

FEBRUARY 2018

NEWS OF OUR NEXT MEETING

Our next meeting will be Saturday, April 28, 2018, at the First Universalist Church, 169 Pleasant St. in Auburn. Due to the limited number of attendees at our last several meetings, we ask that people bring a bag lunch. Coffee, tea, bottled water and cookies will be provided.

A \$10 registration fee will help defray the cost of renting the facility. Previous spring meetings have happened in May, but we hope the April date may work better for a number of our members.

Agenda for Meeting

9:30	Registration and coffee	1:00	<u>Contest</u> : a poem of no more than 30 lines that connects an experience from your own or your family history with a broader social, political, or historical context. Judge: Lee Sharkey
10:00	Business Meeting		
10:30	Open Mic (Poets' Corner) sign up at registration - first readers will be those who have not submitted a poem for the contest. A total of one hour will be allotted for this.	1:50	Judge reads her own work and/or offers poetry writing helps.
11:30	Nate Amadon, of <i>Word Portland</i> will give a presentation on slam poetry.	2:30	Announcements and closing
12:00	Lunch (bring your own) - Book exchange to replace the Silent Auction (If books you bring are there at the end of the meeting, you may reclaim them. Otherwise they'll be given to Good Will.)		

Contest Submissions

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

Send to: James Breslin
451 Bassett Rd.
Winslow, ME 04901
DEADLINE: March 28, 2018
1 poem (no fee)

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

Contest Poem—**SUBJECT:** Write a poem of no more than 30 lines that connects an experience from your own or your family history with a broader social, political, or historical context.

In "The Dancing" (on page 2), Gerald Stern describes the scene in his parents' house when the family hears over the radio that Germany has surrendered and World War II will come to an end. Stern's poem connects his direct experience on a powerful emotional level to what has been happening in Europe, specifically the murders in the concentration camps.

The Dancing**Gerald Stern, b. 1925**

In all these rotten shops, in all this broken furniture
 and wrinkled ties and baseball trophies and coffee pots
 I have never seen a post-war Philco
 with the automatic eye
 nor heard Ravel's "Bolero" the way I did
 in 1945 in that tiny living room
 on Beechwood Boulevard, nor danced as I did
 then, my knives all flashing, my hair all streaming,
 my mother red with laughter, my father cupping
 his left hand under his armpit, doing the dance
 of old Ukraine, the sound of his skin half drum,
 half fart, the world at last a meadow,
 the three of us whirling and singing, the three of us
 screaming and falling, as if we were dying,
 as if we could never stop—in 1945—
 in Pittsburgh, beautiful filthy Pittsburgh, home
 of the evil Mellons, 5,000 miles away
 from the other dancing—in Poland and Germany—
 oh God of mercy, oh wild God.

ABOUT THE JUDGE

Lee Sharkey is the author of *Walking Backwards* (Tupelo, 2016), *Calendars of Fire* (Tupelo, 2013), *A Darker, Sweeter String* (Off the Grid, 2008), and eight earlier full-length poetry collections and chapbooks. Her poetry has appeared in *Consequence*, *Crazyhorse*, *FIELD*, *Kenyon Review*, *Massachusetts Review*, *Seattle Review*, and other journals. Her recognitions include the Ballymaloe International Poetry Prize, the Abraham Sutzkever Centennial Translation Prize, the *RHINO* Editors' Prize, and the Maine Writers and Publishers Alliance's Distinguished Achievement Award.

Reminder: Members of MPS are automatically members of the National Federation of State Poetry Societies, and thus eligible to enter their contests. You can find a full list of the contests in each edition of the NFSPS newsletter, *Strophes*, so check out the October 2017 issue of *Strophes*, which has been posted to <http://nfsp.com/>

Central Maine Regional Gathering: An Open Mic – March 3, 2018**Regional Gathering Central Maine Area****Saturday, March 3, 2018 – 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.****HOST: Bill Frayer****Location:** First Universalist Church, 169 Pleasant St., Auburn.**BRING:** \$5 registration fee. Coffee/tea and cookies will be provided**RSVP by February 24** to Bill at billfrayer@gmail.com or 207-899-2822.**FORMAT:** Up to 20 people**EMPHASIS:** Open Mic

12:45	Check-in and coffee
1:00-1:15	Conversation about the Maine Poets Society
1:15-2:15	Open discussion about "What makes a good poem?"
2:15-4:00	Open Mic
4:00	(Evaluations?) Farewell and homeward.

Report from the Southern Maine Area Regional Gathering

Eight members gathered for the January regional workshop, run by Jenny Doughty at Alice Persons' house. We spent the morning studying "telling by showing" and read and discussed poems by Major Jackson, Derek Walcott, Louis MacNeice, Philip Larkin, David Stankiewicz and others. After lunch, we workshopped poems that people had brought with them, and then chose three of those to send to Stanza. It was a very rich and enjoyable day.

Just a Bunch a Culch Darlene Glover

It ain't even mine....
leftovers from them that's passed on
clutterin' up my cellah

Overflowin' boxes, all broke up
damp and stinkin'
prob'ly full o' mouse turds too

I'd as soon leave it to the young-un
'ceptin she lives in Georgia
and will just scoot up for my funeral

I ain't touchin' this stuff with bare hands
my Gran's straw hat, half eaten by the moths
Jeez....who'd they save this crap for anyway?

Just a bunch a culch
It ain't even mine

Evening Talk Radio Jim Brosnan

Along the interstate light traffic
flows past paving equipment
resting motionless on the cloverleaf
like the twenty love letters sitting
on my desk never mailed and Dan
is on late night FM radio discussing
alternative facts, fake news and how
official government spokesmen deny
the obvious facts. I've been
driving for fourteen hours.
I'm in Minnesota or South Dakota
and sixteen hours from the Atlantic.
I'm a quarter of a tank from pulling
over, stretching my weary body
under a full moon between rows
of genuflecting wheat and waiting
for first light. Dan continues his rant
entertaining third-shift workers
and night owls eager for someone
to talk with. It's one AM when I pass
the next construction zone, an empty
coffee cup in the console,
a thousand stars littering
a pale blue sky this evening.

Progress Bill Frayer

"Hola amigo! My fish is tasty, so good!"
The big man with bushy hair, dark skin,
wore a faded Yankees T and blood-stained pants
points with his sharp blade to
the array of fish with gaping mouths
staring, milky eyed, from a solid block of ice
on the makeshift table at the outside market.

*"Can I help you?" asks the young groomed man
with a clean cap and thick glasses
standing behind the display of fresh-cut fillets
lined up in rows on the shaved ice bed.*

"Let me fillet this for you, señor,
He pushes one of his fresh fish towards me to smell.

just roll in corneal and fry, tasty, so good!"
He slices the skin and removes the spine in seconds,
drops it in a plastic bag with ice chips for the hot day.
"Gracias, Amigo! I see you next week, si?"
Big smile.

*"Is this talapia fresh?"
He consults a notebook. "Yes, Yesterday"
He dons latex gloves, carefully weighs it,
prints a label, wraps it in white paper,
inserts it into a sterile plastic bag.
"Will there be anything else?"
He looks weary and bored.*



President's Message

Greetings fellow poets, and a happy spring to everybody.

Winter is usually the time of year when we have time to hunker in and concentrate on writing, unless the snow needs shoveling or the wood needs fetching or... you know all those tasks that cause us to wander away from our desks. But spring is a time for renewed energy as well, and a time for new inspiration. Change – whether it's of scenery or weather or life in general – is a great wellspring for poetry.

We have made some significant changes to the Maine Poets Society over the past few years. We now have winter regional meetings, each with a different focus. Our meeting in Westbrook in January was a great success and all attendees enjoyed studying together the art of telling by showing, and then workshopping poems brought with them. You'll find some of those in this edition of Stanza. Sadly, our February meeting did not attract enough people to justify renting the necessary space, but there is still our March regional meeting in Auburn to look forward to – you'll find the details elsewhere in this newsletter.

I do hope that as many of you as possible will be able to attend our next all-Maine meeting in Auburn. As part of the changes to the way meetings are organized, we are focusing part of our meeting time on the craft of poetry, and we are looking forward to a presentation by Nate Amadon of the Portland based performance poetry organization Port Veritas. He has been host of Portland's longest running poetry slam for the past 6 years. You'll find the details and the agenda here in Stanza.

We have a fascinating poetry contest this time, judged by a wonderful award-winning Maine poet, Lee Sharkey. I have certainly been casting around for an event I can connect with my own life and I've almost finished my draft. We have lived through such interesting times, haven't we? (And no, that isn't totally "interesting" in the sense of the Chinese curse.) I'm sure those of you whose memories, like mine, stretch back into the 1950s can remember events that had an impact on you – the nuclear bomb, Vietnam, Woodstock, 9/11... it's an endless list. Your event might be closer to home than some great world event – the year your high school football team won a trophy for example. I'm looking forward to hearing the poems at our April meeting. This contest is only open to MPS members, so if you haven't yet renewed your membership, please send a \$20 check for this year's membership to our treasurer, Gus Peterson, at 12 Middle Street Randolph, ME 04346. Remember that membership also entitles you to enter any of the other state poetry contests advertised in the NFSPS newsletter, Strophes. Check them out at <http://nfsp.com/>.

Speaking of contests, I do hope many MPS members are planning to enter our inaugural prize poem contest, judged by former Maine poet laureate Betsy Sholl and with a \$100 prize (and only \$5 to enter!) Sadly I'm not allowed to enter that one, and nor is any other member of the MPS board, but I have been reading the entries that have been sent to me so far, most of them so far not from our membership, and they are of a wonderful variety. The closing date for that contest is March 10th, so you still have time to polish up your best poems and send them in.

Off you go...

Jenny Doughty (President, MPS)

THE MAINE POETS SOCIETY PRIZE POEM CONTEST 2018

Maine Poets Society is proud to present our inaugural (but we hope annual) prize poem contest.

The contest is open to all Maine residents, including seasonal residents, with the exception of current members of the MPS board. If your entry will be postmarked out of state, please enclose a letter verifying your address when resident in Maine. There is a \$5 entry fee.

The topic and form are left open to the poet's judgment, but there is a line limit of 50 lines. Entries exceeding the limit will be disqualified.

Our distinguished judge in 2018 will be Betsy Sholl, Maine Poet Laureate from 2009-2013. Our prize of \$100 will be presented at the 2018 Maine Writers and Publishers Alliance awards evening, which will be held on Thursday, June 14 in Portland.

Please send two copies of your poem, one of them identified with your name and contact details (mailing address, email address and telephone number) and one with no additional information on it, to MPS President Jenny Doughty, at 278 Flaggy Meadow Road, Gorham, ME 04038. Mark your envelope CONTEST.

Entries may be sent any time after January 1, 2018. The closing date for entries is March 10 and entries should be postmarked on or before that date.

Enclose a check for \$5 payable to Maine Poets Society, with 'Contest entry' on the memo line.

Enclose a stamped self-addressed envelope if you would like your entry returned.

Publication & Member News

Readings

Jenny Doughty will be reading alongside essayist Michelle Cacho-Negrete at York Library on March 1st at 6 p.m., at Lowry's Lodge (held at the Continuum for Creativity in the Main Street in Westbrook, kitty corner from CVS) at 6 p.m. on March 17th, and at the Harlow Gallery at 7 p.m. on May 18th.

Books

Carol Willette Bachofner has a new book, *Test Pattern, a Fantod of Prose Poems*, ready for pre orders directly from Finishing Line Press. Pre orders will ship in mid May.



STANZA, Maine Poets Society
16 Riverton Street
Augusta, ME 04330

FIRST CLASS

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

FMI or to join, write
Gus Peterson
12 Middle Street
Randolph, ME 04346

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Jenny Doughty, President, jmdought@maine.rr.com
James Breslin, Vice President and Program Chair, jamesbreslin7843@gmail.com
Bill Frayer, Secretary, billfrayer@gmail.com
Gus Peterson, Treasurer & Membership Chair, glp3324@gmail.com
Sally Joy, Publicity, Newsletter jsjoy@roadrunner.com

Webmaster, DiTa Ondek dita@dita.org

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.”