

# STANZA

## OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE MAINE POETS SOCIETY

VOLUME 29, NUMBER 3

DECEMBER 2021

### NEWS OF OUR NEXT MEETING

Our next general meeting will be May 14, 10:00 to 12:00 on Zoom. We still intend to buy equipment to allow for hybrid meetings, but the timetable for purchase and rollout may be delayed to avoid a hiatus between acquisition and implementation, where we would have to store the equipment and cope with the expense to no benefit.

#### May Members-Only Contest

Times New Roman or Arial font preferred.

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

**Deadline, April 14, 2022**

### CONTEST DETAILS

**Contest Poem — Subject: “Time and Place.” 30-line limit.**

What does time and place mean to you? It can be a specific event in time and space or a span of years. Immerse us in a second or a lifetime. The judge offers these sample poems as springboards for our creative thinking.

<p><b>Letter to a Moon Child</b> by Michael S. Harper</p> <p>Moon child: March is coming, In mixed anger, To an eventual end. The trees have cracked Under the weight of ice, Blotting power lines, And we have been without light, Days, nights, together. Elms are first to bloom, Slowly, in fear of constant Virus, that, heedless, Will kill them off in ten years; This year they bloom. The spindly trees, Taking shape, resist The inlet, hornet, And salt-night air. In this ribald quiet, Revisited without shame, There is evidence, Ornate, and our hunger.</p>	<p><b>Threat</b> by Denise Levertov</p> <p>You can live for years next door to a big pine tree, honored to have so venerable a neighbor, even when it sheds needles all over your flowers or wakes you, dropping big cones onto your deck at still of night. Only when, before dawn one year at the vernal equinox, the wind rises and rises, raising images of cockleshell boats tossed among huge advancing walls of waves, do you become aware that always, under respect, under your faith in the pine tree’s beauty, there lies the fear it will crash someday down on your house, on you in your bed, on the fragility of the safe dailiness you have almost grown used to.</p>	<p><b>Encounter</b> by Czeslaw Milosz</p> <p>We were riding through frozen fields in a wagon at dawn. A red wing rose in the darkness.</p> <p>And suddenly a hare ran across the road. One of us pointed to it with his hand.</p> <p>That was long ago. Today neither of them is alive, Not the hare, nor the man who made the gesture.</p> <p>O my love, where are they, where are they going The flash of a hand, streak of movement, rustle of pebbles. I ask not out of sorrow, but in wonder.</p>
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## ABOUT THE JUDGE

**Mike Bove** is the author of two books of poems: *Big Little City* (2018) and *House Museum* (2021). His work has appeared in journals in the US, UK, and Canada, and he was the winner of the 2021 Maine Postmark Poetry Contest. He holds degrees from the University of New Hampshire and is an Associate Professor of English at Southern Maine Community College. Mike lives with his family in Portland, Maine where he was born and raised.

## 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 14 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 14 to [mainepoetsociety@gmail.com](mailto: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.**

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## Watch for News of the Prize Poem Contests

In 2022 we will again be sponsoring our Prize Poem contests, open to all Maine residents whether they are members of the Maine Poets Society or not (with the exception of current MPS board members). Details will be sent round in an email to members in the first half of January, and it will be advertised on our Facebook page and through the library network, and through contact with various poetry networks. We will again be offering two prizes – a \$100 prize for poets who have had a poem published anywhere other than our newsletter, and a \$50 for previously unpublished poets. This year's judge for previously published poets will be the present Maine Poet Laureate, Julia Bouwsma. The board of Maine Poets Society will judge the contest for previously unpublished poets.

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## Reporting on the November 20, 2021 Workshop with Jefferson Navicky

On Saturday, November 20, over twenty MPS members attended a Zoom workshop with poet Jefferson Navicky on "making narrative poetry less prosy." Participants were encouraged to write a stream of consciousness type of poem at the start which was later workshopped using techniques presented by Jefferson: hyperfocus, repetition, telling a lie (or enhancing details for embellishment), and "putting a car in it." Sample poems were presented with each technique and ranged from Mary Ruefle and Wanda Coleman to the more obscure Robert Walser, but each fostered a rich conversation not just on the subject matter of the workshop but the meaning of the poem itself. At the end, participants took some time to apply what they'd reviewed to their original block of text. We thank Jefferson for running such a smooth and vibrant workshop, and once again the attendance blew us away. Stay tuned for the upcoming Spring contest/workshop!

## MPS Winter 2022 Events

### Winter workshop with Jenny Doughty February 12th, 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. including a lunch break “The Use of Sound in Poetry”

This workshop, led by MPS President Jenny Doughty, will be open to a maximum of 12 people. Please email her at [jmdought@maine.rr.com](mailto:jmdought@maine.rr.com) to be added to the list.

In the morning we will focus on various ways of making sounds work to strengthen our poems and discuss sample poems (which will be provided).

We will take a half hour lunch break in the middle.

In the afternoon anybody who wants to workshop a poem will be welcome to share it with the group and hear comments on it. We may not have time for everybody to workshop their work, so it will be first come, first served until we run out of time.

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### An “Open Mic” Open to Members and Non-Members

We are offering an Open Mic on March 19, on Zoom, from 10 until noon. This will be open to both members and non-members, and will be advertised on our Facebook page. In the past, new members have joined us following attendance and reading at an open mic, and it is a way of sharing our work with a wider audience than our own membership. Jenny Doughty is hosting this. If you would like to read, please put your name in the chat window with “would like to read” when you arrive in the Zoom room. If you would just like to be part of an appreciative listening audience, that is fine too.

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### Members Only “Reading in the Round” – January 15, 2022

**Time: 10:00 a.m. to Noon**

**All MPS members current for 2022 will be invited to participate**

On March 20 and again on November 13, we held a members-only Zoom “Reading in the Round” with most of those present choosing to read at least one poem. Afterwards feedback was asked, including how often those taking part felt we should offer these. The response was nearly unanimous: “quarterly” – four times a year.

Sally Joy will again host this event. It would be helpful if those who know they want to read would email her at [srjoy43@gmail.com](mailto:srjoy43@gmail.com) at least one day prior to the event so she can start a list. If you should decide you’d like to read only as you enter the Zoom room on January 15, please type your first and last name and the words “would like to read” in the Chat feature. We’ll go round as many times as will fit into a two-hour timeframe. Just a reminder that understand that participants will not be invited to critique the work presented, although very brief comments can be written in the Chat feature and the *clap* and *thumbs up* reactions will be permitted.

Reading is not required. You are welcome to just come and listen. The link will be sent to all with a membership expiration date of 12/31/21 as well as to current members. **Just a reminder that our membership year ended on December 21, 2021, so readers will be limited to those who have paid their dues for 2022.** If you have not yet renewed, please know that you are cordially invited to come and listen.

Friends also may be invited to listen in, but we ask that the link not be posted publicly. It will not be posted on our Facebook page or made available on our website.

<b>October 2021 CONTEST WINNERS</b>
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**Contest: Solidarity—Judge, Jefferson Navicky****1st Prize—Darlene Glover****COVID Bartering**

It started with too much fish for the chowder  
which led to more potatoes and extra onions  
and a dash more tarragon  
until the Dutch oven was too full for the two of us,  
so I sent a container to the neighbors  
who returned it with fresh baked cookies  
whereupon I sent my overabundance of pasta and meatballs  
and she sent back a lovely portion of shepherd's pie.  
When the power went out, their generator came on  
and while we struggled to light the basement box stove  
a carafe of coffee and a thermos of boiling water appeared  
which allowed oatmeal and warm soup  
so we re-gifted the Easter Lily  
that was potential poison to our cat  
and received a loaf of bread, warm from the oven,  
swapped then, for a stick of butter  
because everyone knows margarine doesn't belong  
on homemade bread.

**2nd Prize—Jeanne Julian****How the Spider Became My Sister**

You're poised in readiness. I am hunkered down.  
Now that a breath could carry malady,  
I can marvel, with just a touch of envy,  
as you scurry skittishly back into your lair  
whenever an observer's exhalation  
disturbs your perch on my window screen.  
Spider, you've found the perfect place  
for quarantine: a corner crevice in the sill.

You hide from my rag or broom—attacks  
from inside. My hazards come from without:  
a rampant virus, invisible as a flea's footprint,  
could flutter in, snag in my bronchial tree  
the way gnats are snared in your wispy strands.  
Once wary of your clandestine ways,  
I now regard you as a timid nimble sister.  
Your need for refuge endears.

Such tensile strength lies in a spider's silk  
that the hummingbird filches filaments  
to serve as girders for her sequestered nest  
where rest all her thin-shelled hopes.  
Spider, let us release each other from old fears.  
Spin for us a shimmering web that holds  
at bay the harms that hover unseen in the air.  
Enfold this globe, our home, and all its hidden dwellers.

**3rd Prize—James Breslin****Letter From the Northern Front in Time of Plague  
(March 15, 2020)**

*Another plague year would wipe out these differences, a close conversing with death. Daniel Defoe  
I have realized that we all have plague, and I have lost my peace. Albert Camus*

Covid 19? Let's call the damn thing plague  
and be done with and if it's not exactly black  
it is, at least, a bitter shade of gray,  
mostly killer, we are told, if we believe it, of the old and feeble.  
We too are old and seeming targets of this viral snipe,  
prisoners here as if on house arrest  
who only venture out when we're compelled to.  
We enter stores, afraid and cautious, like masked intruders  
knowing that these mask-less fellow shoppers,  
in denial, don't care if they harm us.  
My more stoic wife, resigned, doesn't watch the news.  
But I, still hungry for some hope, watch daily disappointed.  
A friend jokes that these times of isolation  
will bring new births or else new murders.  
Not so much as a grandchild in our lives and  
we're bored with fights that bring no resolution.  
And so, I'd have to say we're closer now  
and less grudgingly accept all that has passed.  
We've achieved the foxhole intimacy that crisis brings.  
And on and on it goes.  
I too could go on with grim redundancy  
and never find a way to end that pleases me.  
So, I'll just stop here for now,  
haunted by this letter's somber incompleteness.  
But let that stand as a kind of muddled metaphor  
for what has happened to our world.

**Note:** The poems that received Honorable Mentions in the October contest are included on Page 6.

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**Gratitude for our New Treasurer/Membership Secretary**

Good news! As you know, we sent out an appeal for someone to take over Gus Peterson's position as Treasurer & Membership Secretary to free him for his new role as Vice President. At our October general meeting, John Seksay volunteered to serve. We can assure you that he is very well qualified to assume this role and we are delighted to welcome him to the executive board.

The application/renewal form has been updated to show John as the appropriate individual to receive membership dues and requests for Opportunity Grants. [2021-MPS-Membership-Application-or-Renewal-Form.pdf](#)  
([mainepoetsociety.com](http://mainepoetsociety.com))

### 1st Honorable Mention—Robert Paul Allen Theresa's Hands

She was a force, relentless, determined,  
enthusiastic, indefatigable. Her soft hands,  
the nails just so, belied their strength.  
They forced her gardens to bloom

as she molded the soil to bring forth.  
Watching her hands fierce attack  
on her keyboard made me fear for her laptop.  
Her hands, not only strong but reaching

out to help where ever the need.  
She set up COVID clinics in places  
hospitals forgot, bringing in nursing students  
and medical assistants to help.

Her healing hands in constant motion,  
vaccinated shut ins, the homeless,  
and those in group homes  
where no one else would go.

Her work ethic dwarfed our own  
and her energy eclipsed us all.  
Then the unseen silent cancerous stalker  
cinched on to her and would not let go.

The fierce fight was short,  
her adversary's hands even stronger.  
Forced to let her go we hold hands  
together and pledge to finish her work

to defeat the pandemic by providing  
access to all. Though we know  
we're no substitute, her beseeching hands  
would beg us to persevere.

### 2nd Honorable Mention—Carol Bachofner When

the last days of open windows pass  
when the curtain swells quiet  
when dust motes lose the urge to dance  
I fold into something smaller,  
try to settle for less light, more shadows.

Is this what it means to die?  
Is winter just practice for the end of us?

When garden bees abandon the petal,  
when a single flower curls brown in its bed,  
when birds throw their eggs from the nest,  
I wonder if I can save them.  
I wonder who could save me.

When you realize there is something cruel  
about calendars and clocks, when you count  
the marks or minutes, figure  
there are fewer and fewer to hold you,  
do you despair? Do you sigh in relief?

Is this what it all means, you and I closing windows,  
praying there will be another spring...

### 3rd Honorable Mention—Gus Peterson Post 9/11 Rock Concert

This is the balcony section, and we are veterans now  
of this bloated production, its overpriced microbrews  
and watered down wellness sucked through a straw.  
We've earned this rank, put in our time as grunts,  
as boots on general admission ground, our knees  
too tired now to stand upright while theaters of tension  
build one tightened string at a time. But when its guitar  
ululates we'll thrill again to that mosh and mangle of bodies  
at war, the frontman's propaganda, its rules of engagement –

heads drummed in unison to refrain, to a bass cadence  
because we love this anthem even when a note falls flat,  
even as words flee his throat they rain back like bullets  
from the barrel of ours. And after a band walks off,  
if quiet has reverberated long enough you start to think  
of something resembling peace, one of us will stab  
two fingers into their mouth and call down  
the next encore of sound  
like an airstrike.

## Opportunity Grant Update

One person requested and was granted an Opportunity Grant last year. We would very much like to see these grants utilized by more of our members. Here is how that grant was used.

## Opportunity Grant Report

I wish to extend my heartfelt thanks to the Maine Poets Society for a \$100 Opportunity Grant to help me offset the \$500 tuition to attend “The Poet’s Craft,” an eight-week Zoom class with Mark Doty. A superb teacher (and one of my all-time favorite poets), Mark brought a wealth of knowledge and critical insight to each class, and his critiques of the participants’ poems were always spot-on and encouraging. I came away from the class feeling less isolated as a writer in this time of Covid and with renewed self-discipline.

During the first half of each two-hour session, Mark would focus on a different aspect of poem-making, such as line length, stanzaic patterns, sound and musicality, and strategies for revision. He would challenge us, for example, to take a draft written in quatrains and revise it in tercets to see how the content, tone, and momentum of the poem changes—indeed, must change. He provided reading assignments to focus each class discussion, which would then result in the writing assignment for the following week. Workshopping the drafts of our poems occupied the second hour, and because there were just six of us we each received ample feedback toward revision. By the end of the course, I had seven new poems, three of which, I’m pleased to say, have already been accepted for publication in magazines. “The Poet’s Craft” was time well-spent.

-- Richard Foerster

### OPPORTUNITY GRANTS ARE STILL AVAILABLE

Opportunity Grants of up to \$100 (some of which could be used for gas/travel expenses) are available to members for any type of online or in person poetry seminar/workshop experience. Members must have renewed their MPS \*membership for the current year **on or before January 10** and be prepared to write a short piece for *Stanza* afterwards to tell other members about their experience. Individual members can only have one grant in any three-year period. Up to \$500 in total a year is available for grants – first come, first served. Go here to print out an application: <http://www.maine poets society.com/PDFs/2020-Opportunity-Grants-explanation-and-application.pdf>.

Or go to the Maine Poets Society website, click on the Membership tab, and then on “Download a Membership Opportunity Grant Application.”

### National Federation of State Poetry Societies Contests

Just a reminder that membership in the Maine Poetry Society includes membership in NFSPS. The 2022 contests are now open with a March 15 deadline (50 of them, including one which we sponsor, but do not judge). The brochure is available at their website. [2022 NFSPS Contest Brochure.pdf](#)

## **Publication & Member News**

### **Poems**

Darlene Glover's poem "Riding Out the Storm" was published in the Winter edition of West Coast Maine magazine.

Jeanne Julian's poem "Angel of the Sensual" received the Margaret F. Tripp Poetry Award in Topsham Public Library's Joy of the Pen competition for 2021. The poem is posted on the library's web site along with the award recipients in other genres. Jeanne's poem "Trust" will be included in the June 2022 issue of *The Orchards Poetry Review*.

Anne Rankin's poem, "Small Primer on Loneliness," received Honorable Mention in this year's Belfast Poetry Festival contest.

Bill Frayer's poem, "Peril," was published the December edition of the online journal *Trouvaille Review*.

David Sloan's poem "Flames" was runner-up in the Topsham Library annual Joy of the Pen contest. His poem "What Looms," from his second collection *A Rising and Other Poems*, will appear in the Maine Sunday Telegram on December 19.

Robert Paul Allen's Poem "The Last Visit" was published by Piker Press July 12 2021; "Edna Was in a Real Bind" was published in the 2021 issue entitled *2020 An Anthology of Poetry by the Black Dog and One Eyed Press*; "The End of the Path" was published in Spring/Summer Volume 7 of the *Frost Meadow Review 2021*; and "Together Time" was published in the Fall/Winter Volume 8 of the *Frost Meadow Review 2021*,

Richard Foerster's poem "Theme with Variation," which appeared in the Spring 2021 issue of *The Night Heron Barks*, has been nominated by the editors for a Pushcart Prize. Several other poems are forthcoming: "Proteus" in *The Americal Journal of Poetry*; "At Uluru," "Egon Schiele's Cell," and "Hamburg" in *Hole in the Head Review*; "The Owl and the Malinois" and "Siegfried" in *Notre Dame Review*; and "Grindadráp, 9/12/21" and "X-ray" in *I-70 Review*. "First Poem" was anthologized in *Dream of the River* (Jacar Press, 2021). And his poem "Watercress," about an older man's encounter with a teenage cashier at a supermarket, is featured in Natasha Sajé's essay "The Iceberg of Ageism" in the November 2021 issue of *The Writer's Chronicle*.

Nancy Orr's haiku, "cloud smudged moon" was published in the Autumn 2021 issue of *Frogpond*, and "mushrooms" will be published in the Winter/Spring 2022 issue of *Modern Haiku*.

### **Books**

Robert Paul Allen's chapbook *Between the Panes* was published by Inked Toad Press in Autumn 2021

### **Other Member News**

John Seksay participated in the 2021 43rd Annual Contest for the Poetry Society of Indiana. With 23 contest categories offered, he submitted entries for 5, and received First Honorable Mention in 2 of them. He was particularly pleased that his first attempt at a theme in the required form of the Trijan refrain did so well. His other mention came in the Wild Card category, where there were no restrictions on theme or structure. Since honorable mention poems are not published, he feels that these works will find their way to other contests in the future!

Jenny Doughty is teaching a six-week course on Zoom for Lewiston-Auburn Senior College, beginning on January 18 from 2-4 p.m., **Meet the Victorians**. "If you enjoyed watching 'Victoria' and you'd like to know more about her times and the poets who inhabited them and left us with such a wonderful legacy of work, join us to discuss the fascinating lives and works of poets such as Tennyson, Arnold, Hopkins, both Brownings, Christina Rossetti and others." Texts will be supplied. If you're interested, and 55 or older, contact Lewiston-Auburn Senior College for details on how to register, on <https://usm.maine.edu/seniorcollege>.



### President's Ink December 2021

I hope all of us enjoy a warm and wonderful holiday season, whichever faith or no faith at all we subscribe to. Those of us with families we love will, I hope, enjoy their company if possible, and those of us without such families or with families far away will enjoy the pleasures of solitude, our own choice of TV and a good book. Any combination of the above that pleases people is a good way to enjoy this darkest time of year, in the middle of a dark period.

If writing cards becomes laborious, there is no shame in a round robin letter. Even Robert Frost wrote a round robin letter in poem form for his friends – see <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/57834/christmas-trees-56d23bb00debf>.

I confess I have now completely given up physical cards in favor of e-cards. Life is never too short to stay in touch with friends, but it can feel too short to actually put pen to paper, find the stamps and go to the mailbox.

Many of us poets can find inspiration in darkness as well as light. The human spirit is called to respond to events we see unfolding, and the words of poets offer us a way to contemplate both the beauty and the horror of the universe in both large and small things. If you find yourself lacking in inspiration as things weigh heavily, find something small and look at it closely. Usually that yields better results than looking at something large from far away.

We have a very broad contest subject for the spring, and I am looking forward to getting my poetic teeth (can you have poetic teeth?) into that one. I'm sure many of us have memories tied to time and place we can draw on.

I hope to see some of you on Zoom at my winter workshop, mentioned elsewhere in Stanza, and also at our open mic. This will be open to non-members as well as members, and again will be held on Zoom. If you have friends who write poetry but aren't yet members of the Maine Poets Society, encourage them to come along and read their work to an appreciative audience. We had hoped to open our meetings up for hybrid attendance both in person and on Zoom this year, but the rise of the omicron variant has put paid to that, I fear. "The rise of the omicron variant" sounds like the title of a bad science fiction movie, and that's how it feels.

I wish you all the happiest possible holiday.

Jenny Doughty

"I had forgotten the way that the earth takes on another form in the winter. It pulls out a coat of white from its seasonal closet to beautify its wardrobe. But winter is smart. It is actually distracting us, glossing over the truth: It is simply protecting itself from the bitter cold of the world."

~ Viola Shipman, *The Secret of Snow*

STANZA, Maine Poets Society  
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FIRST CLASS

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

FMI or to join, write  
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### **Board Members**

Jenny Doughty, President, [jennydoughty@icloud.com](mailto:jennydoughty@icloud.com)  
Gus Peterson, Vice President & Program Chair, [glp3324@gmail.com](mailto:glp3324@gmail.com)  
John Seksay, Treasurer & Membership Chair, [netmotel@gmail.com](mailto:netmotel@gmail.com)  
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James Breslin, Board Member at-large, [jamesbreslin7843@gmail.com](mailto:jamesbreslin7843@gmail.com)

Webmaster, Lisa Montagna [LMontagna@apitechnology.com](mailto:LMontagna@apitechnology.com)

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 (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.”