

STANZA

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE MAINE POETS SOCIETY

VOLUME 32, NUMBER 3

December 2024

A Winter Workshop with MPS President Jenny Doughty

Winter Workshop: "Line Breaks"

Saturday, January 18, 2025

10:00 to 3:00 with a 45-minute break for lunch

Host and Workshop Presenter: MPS President, Jenny Doughty

Location: 31 Rustic Lane, Portland 04103

Limited to the first 6 members who ask to participate. Should you be granted a space and find yourself unable to attend, do make that known so that someone else can take part. Please arrive no earlier than 9:45 a.m.

NOTE: There are cats at this location

BRING: \$5 registration fee to cover expenses. A notepad and pen, and poem(s) to share.

Tea, coffee, water and cookies provided but please bring your own packed lunch.

RSVP to Jenny at jennydoughty@icloud.com or 207-699-9243.

FORMAT: Maximum of 6 people

EMPHASIS: A.M.: Assessing the effects of different ways of breaking a line in free verse and seeing how they apply to our own work. **P.M.:** Bring a poem you would like to workshop with the group.

Members-Only "Reading in the Round" on Zoom

Saturday, March 15, 2025

10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon (or perhaps 9:30 to 11:30)

The suggestion has been made that we start a bit earlier. Let us know if that would make a difference for you (positive or negative). Email your response to Sally Joy at srjoy43@gmail.com. A reminder of the reading and the selected times will be sent sometime the week before and the Zoom link to all members a day or two before the reading. This really is a good way to get to know other members of the society and hear them share their work in their own voices. If you haven't tried it yet, we hope you'll consider giving it a try.

Mark Your Calendar for the Spring Meeting on May 10

Details are not yet available. We'll share them once they are. We've usually met on the 3rd Saturday of the month, but that conflicts with another important poetry event. Our intent is to avoid that.

What can you enter in a Maine Poets Society Members-Only Contest?

Previously published poems are not eligible for our contests. This refers to any poem that has already been selected for a curated public journal, forum, or format (print or online). Members *may* submit poems that they have shared on their own social media (such as Facebook, a blog, or open mics)

Note that work that has been predominately generated by artificial intelligence (AI) is not eligible for our contests.

September 2024 CONTEST WINNERS

Contest: “Work”—Judge, Jeri Theriault

1st Prize—Margaret Yocom

What the Excavator Found

for David “Joe” Haley, M&H Logging & Construction, Rangeley, Maine

Joe saw you first in the jaws of his excavator
smoothing, as he was, our meadow by the
lake,
pitted by the fall of towering pines
eight of them, storm-tossed,
their snake-nest roots upturned,
scouring the sky.

The others he dropped by the birch,
but you—
finest rock of all—
he held high.

Born glossy black on the sea’s floor
four hundred seventy million years
before,
others name you pillow basalt, lava.

The ocean waters that seemed eternal
turned you soft sea-green—
your iron, their oxygen and magnesium.
They left you
exposed, dry on Maine’s Ledge Ridge.

How do I name you?

Gift of glaciers,
the slow tongue of ice brought you to us
south, fifty miles, and moved on.

You stand now guardian, by the brook.
My Stonehenge, my Newgrange.
Last light lingers on your face.

Twilight star, anchor of evening.
Monument to my day that’s passing,
still, solid promise of one to come.

Note: My thanks to my husband, Dr. John F. Slack, U.S. Geological Survey emeritus, for sharing with me his life-long passion for the geology of Earth, and beyond.

2nd Prize—Jeanne Julian

Dawn Chaser

for Eric Storm, photographer

He leaves home before sunrise, before
the hours spent at the money-making job
that’s work. Re-seeing night’s end as ever-new,
is not—not work, those starlit prowls to stalk

singular vantage points, startling angles,
where he’ll aim his camera on some other day.
Not work, to envision how texture, forms,
line, and luminosity will subtly interlock.

Nor his calculus of could-be color, possible
reflections, likely coincidence. Or his careful
consultations with weather models,
topo maps, GPS, almanac, tide clock.

Nor clambering up a mountain in the dark
to find the summit’s vista, the secret
place where pine tree branches part.
No burden, his tripod, lenses, extra socks.

No, not work, enduring frigid wind to capture
first rays, or waiting for sea smoke to shift, reveal
a moored red dory and a distant white steeple.
Nor hunkering belly-down on wet rocks.

Ah! Snowy field. Lone farmhouse, window golden.
Black fenceposts propped against sky ablaze with pink
just long enough to set shutter speed, aperture. It all
works. And when you see it—gotta stop.



3rd Prize—Bill Frayer Hombres en el Trabajo

They wear faded tees on their heads to save
their necks from the blazing Mexican sun,
swinging pickaxes at cobblestones
to level the rain ditches in the road.
They chatter, laugh, and sometimes sing
sad ballads they know by heart
to the chink...chink...chink of their tools
keeping the rhythm
passing the time.

With the sun at its peak
they pause to eat
build a fire in the street
to heat tortillas
roast their meat.

They munch their tacos, sharing jokes,
then find a patch of comfort in the shade
under a graceful jacaranda tree,
cooled for now by well-earned sweat,
they doze to escape the noontime heat.
To have work in Mexico today is sweet.

Honorable Mention—Sharon Bray Dump Rake

Richard's centurion hay rake gleams
in surprise October heat where it
fills view and memory.
When the rake piles up enough cut grass
and weeds and dead mice
its operator pulls a lever handle,
lifts tines, leaves neat stacks
to gather when they dry.
The rake dumps its pile to wait
for the tedder to spin hay showers
onto barer ground to wait
for either mechanical baler
or a farmer with pitch fork
and slow-moving rusty truck.
Decoration now, the rake
could still be pulled across
the pasture, has been from time
to recent time in our lives
as we gather what other farmers
left behind.

Honorable Mention—Deborah Smith Song for a Working Girl *In honor of Helen, 1890-1974 Daughter of James (d. 1900) and Jenny (d. 1909)*

Before the first World War, music stores would hire talented girls
if they could play on sight any music a customer wanted to hear.
That was one job of my grandmother, named Helen,
always neatly attired in a home sewn dress, her brown hair stylishly curled,
who could perfectly strike the balance between the eye and the ear.

She was one of three daughters the day her father, a barber, died.
Little sister was too young to work, the older still had one year to go
to finish her high school degree, which maybe then
would increase the odds for a better paying job. But for the middle child,
making ends meet meant making more money—or sell the piano.

Their mother found cleaning work, but also rose before dawn to bake.
“Please, what would you like to buy today?” became shy Helen's question to ask.
Hoping to boost sales, she added one more item
when she knocked on strangers' doors: tiny paper flowers she learned how to make.
Practicing scales probably kept her fingers nimble for that task.

One day at the music store, she saw a man saunter through the door.
He noticed her, too, and told her he directed the college student band.
Discovering their shared love of music opened
an ascending major chord, not the minor modes too often struck before.

The work of married life—never easy, with no breaks—soon began.
Helen never talked about her childhood. The piano in their
parlor was the only proof needed for the stories my own mother told:
family history rendered as an anthem
of praise to the power of music, and a working girl who bravely dared
to survive by her hands and wits—a song that has yet to grow old.



Photos from the September 28 meeting by Jeanne Julian. On the left, Judge Jeri Theriault with Diane (MPS Hospitality Chair) and Rebecca. On the right, Alice and images of a few of those present on Zoom.

Is the Increase in MPS Membership Dues Burdensome for you?

At the general meeting on September 28, 2024, the Maine Poets Society voted to establish a scholarship fund and add an opportunity on the renewal form for contributions to that fund. Contributions to the scholarship fund will be used for those requesting a waiver of the membership fee. Because we value the engagement of Maine poets of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities, we hope that no writer need forego MPS membership simply because they can't afford it. The waiver is good for one annual membership. A recipient may reapply when membership renewal is scheduled. Current members or prospective members may apply at any time during the calendar year. It's not necessary to provide a reason for applying, but if you wish to provide a very short statement of need, please feel free to do that. Names of applicants and recipients will be held in confidence by the Society. We encourage you to take advantage of this opportunity when needed. Email our treasurer at glp3324@gmail.com.

Consider Helping to Build our Poetry Community by Joining the MPS Board.

Treasurer:

Gus Peterson is currently serving as Interim Treasurer, having previously held the job for several years. He would really like to be relieved of that responsibility. It does require someone with bookkeeping and record-keeping skills, as well as the ability to get to a bank to deposit incoming checks. We do not have a way for members to join or renew online. There are also some annual forms that need to be filed, checks written to hosting facilities and prize winners, and contact with the National Federation of State Poetry Societies,

Vice President:

This position is an important one, involving significant involvement in the spring and fall members-only contests. Among other duties, this person serves as the point of contact for judges and meeting sites, receives and tracks entries to the contests (assigning a number to each), making sure the judge gets unsigned copies of all of them at least 3 weeks prior to the meeting, and sends copies with the judge's comments to the entrants following the meeting.

If you're interested in either of these opportunities, please contact President Jenny Doughty at jennydoughty@icloud.com for a more detailed explanation. Ratification of both positions is needed and will be asked for at the May meeting.

Opportunity Grants Available for 2025

Opportunity Grants of up to \$100 (some of which could be used for gas/travel expenses) are available for any type of online or in person poetry seminar/workshop experience. Members who joined or renewed MPS membership for the current year by the end of January may apply. Individual members can only have one grant in any three-year period. The grant recipient is required to write a short piece for 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."

Publication & Member News

Poems

Seven MPS members have work in *Connecting Nature*, poetry from the Eastport Center's 2024 Charles Moore Poetry Prize Competition. Dennis Camire was awarded 1st prize for "Yak Meditation." Nancy Sobanik received Honorable Mention for "Leave No Trace." The others are Barbara Gravinese ("Ode to an Empty Space"), Jeanne Julian ("Letter to Snow Birds"), Todd McKinley ("Shatter Zone, Mount Desert Island"), John Seksay ("Turning"), and Deborah Smith ("Seascape Memories on a Falling Tide").

Robert Paul Allen published "Spring Vacation" in *Impspired* (August 2024) and "From My First Days" in the *Silver Birch Press* (Spring 2024).

Sara Lynn Eastler's poem "The Delicate Art of Human Preservation" was published in the June issue of *Passengers Journal*. *The Bangalore Review* published "Lemons" in its May issue, and *Anodyne Magazine* published three of her poems: "single-use," "A Procedure," and "This is a poem without women" in its July issue. Her poem "Nine Meditations of a Ponderosa Pine" was published in *Lucky Jefferson's* Ember edition.

Richard Foerster's poem "Drift" appears in *South 85* (Winter/Fall 2024). His poem "Anxiety Dream: And/Or" can be found in the latest issue of *Hole in the Head Review*.

Dr. Emory Jones' poem "Border Country" won 1st Honorable Mention in Category #1 (John Calvin Rezmerske Memorial Prize) of the League of Minnesota Poets 2024 Contest. "High Plains" won 1st Honorable Mention in Category #5 (Audrey Weibold Memorial) of the League of Minnesota Poets 2024 Contest. "Sacred Music" won 2nd Place in Category #15 (Orlando Area Poets Award) of the Florida State Poets Association 2024 Contest. "Recycle" won 1st Honorable Mention in the "Because I Said So" Category of the August 31, 2024 White County Creative Writers Contest. "Personal Aesthetic" won 1st Place in the Rhymed Verse of Blank Verse Category of the 2024 Missouri State Poetry Society's Summer Contest. Six poems placed in the 2024 Poetry Society of Texas Contest: "Rain Regiment" won 2nd Place in the Anthony & Mara Gibbs Award; "Irish Home" won 2nd Place in the Francis Doyle Klier Memorial Contest; "Dancing Autumn: An Etheree" won 5th Place in the Owens Award; "Tume Garden: A Sestina" won 6th Place in the Denton Poets Assembly Appreciation Award; "Cloister: A French Sonnet" won 7th Place in the Lewis and Edith Hall Award; and "Ancient Astronomy" won 9th Place in the John Doyle Klier Memorial Award.

Jeanne Julian's poem "From Away" is in *The Main Street Rag* (Fall 2024). "The Ride" appears in *Kakalak 2024*. Her poem "Recurrence" is included in *Synkroniciti's* December 2024 issue with the theme of "Haunting." ([Submissions](#) are now open for its "Identity" issue and will close January 15, 2025.) "We Are Nature" is included in *The Gallery*, a collection of poems under consideration for an anthology, *The Nature of Our Times: Poems on America's Lands, Waters, Wildlife, and Other Natural Wonders*, forthcoming next fall from Paloma Press and Poets for Science ([submissions are open](#) for that publication too).

Jim Krosschell has recently published poems in [Naugatuck River Review](#) and [The Orchards Poetry Journal](#); and two poems in *The River*: <https://sandyriverreview.com/2024/10/21/turkeys/> and <https://sandyriverreview.com/2024/10/21/barkskins/>.

Carl Little had a winter solstice poem displayed in the exhibition "Sol Invictus" at the Courthouse Gallery in Ellsworth. He read his poem at the opening on December 21.

<https://courthousegallery.com/exhibition/november-13-january-10-2024/>

Todd McKinley's three poems—"Under the Wolf Moon," "The Call," and "Evensong"—were published in the anthology *North Woods at Night* (12 Willows Press). The anthology is available at <https://12willowspress.com/north-woods-at-night/>.

Anne Rankin's poem "this business of her nerves being older" received Honorable Mention in the Belfast Poetry Festival Maine Postmark Contest last fall.

Deborah Smith's poem "My Teacher Was a Poet" won 2nd place in the Massachusetts State Poetry Society's categorical contest, "Teachers." Her poem "Ode to a Leap of Faith" tied for 2nd place in the Voices of Lincoln (California) Poetry Contest in the category "Leap into the Unknown" and was published in its chapbook that came out this fall. Her poem "In the Twilight of the 2024 Election" was rated 5th out of 34 entries in one of the Poetry Society of Texas contest categories. Her poem "Christmas Shopping 1979" appeared in *Midcoast Villager* as Poem of the Week in its November 28th edition.

Nancy Sobanik had her ekphrastic poem chosen by artist David Graeme Baker (after *Ivy and Winslow, Study*) in *The Poet's Corner Art and Ekphrastic Poetry 2024* contest. "Ivy Dreams Herself into a Winslow Homer Scene" was read at The Page Gallery, Camden, on November 16. She was awarded 3rd Place in the Belfast Poetry Festival Maine Postmark Contest for her poem "Intravenous," judged by Diannely Antigua. "Leave No Trace" received Honorable Mention in the Eastport Arts Center 2024 Charles Moore Poetry Prize competition, judged by MPS member Jeri Theriault. *Verses-Virtual* published two poems ("Rare" and "Autumnal Garden") in September. *One Art: A Journal of Poetry* published "Election Year" on August 3. *Frost Meadow Review* (Vol. 12, December 2024) published two poems, "September" and "Morning." *Anti-Heroic Chic* published "A Difficult Year" and "Room of Mirrors" in its December 2024 issue. *Ekphrastic Review* published "Hope" on November 11 and "Their Room" on December 1. Her poem "Walk Out of Any Doorway" is pending publication in *Poetry Is Dead II: Once You're Dead You're Dead Forever Anthology* (Hercules Publishing), with a release date of January 15, 2025.

Books

Carl Little's *Blanket of the Night* (Deerbrook Editions) came out in November:
<https://www.deerbrookeditions.com/blanket-of-the-night/>

Other Member News

We are aware of at least two MPS members who responded to the invitation to participate in the challenge to have their work compared to that of AI. Linda Dowell and Cindy Dow are those members. Perhaps there are others as well. This was an opportunity offered to members, but not an MPS activity.

Eileen Hugo's novel *Jenny's Journey* was published by Palmetto Publishing and can be found on Amazon and Barnes and Noble. It's a story about a young Irish girl who comes to America to work to support her family back in Ireland.

Contest for full-length poetry collections

Bauhan Publishing is accepting submissions for the 2025 May Sarton New Hampshire Poetry Prize. The deadline is June 30, 2025. They are looking for collections that are roughly 50 to 80 pages in length. The submission fee is \$30 per entry. The winner receives \$1000, book publication, and 50 copies of the published book, as well as distribution with other spring titles through the distributor Casemate IPM. This year's judge is poet Anthony Walton, author of *The End of Respectability*. He is currently writer-in-residence at Bowdoin College, teaching writing and poetry. For more information about submitting, see <https://bauhanpublishing.submittable.com/submit/306685/2025-may-sarton-new-hampshirepoetry-prize>.

Novel Book Bar & Café hosts writing workshops

A Portland café on Congress Street in Portland has the feel of a library—but with refreshments! Enjoy coffee from beans freshly roasted in-house (or a cocktail from the full bar) and browse their bookshelves. You can read any from their impressive selection of books, and yes, they are all for sale. Every Sunday morning between 10:30 and 11:30, Novel hosts a writing workshop with Maya Williams. You can join on Zoom or in person. There's a different writing prompt every week supplemented by a "jar of destiny" of random words. [Pre-register on their web site at https://www.novelmaine.com/event-details/sunday-writing-workshop-with-maya-williams-2024-12-22-10-30](https://www.novelmaine.com/event-details/sunday-writing-workshop-with-maya-williams-2024-12-22-10-30)

Save the date: the Camden Festival of Poetry: May 16-17, 2025

This year, the keynote speaker is Jane Hirshfield, award-winning poet, translator & essayist. Author of ten poetry books, Hirshfield has been praised for her "ability to marry philosophical meditation with domestic observation." Nobel Laureate Czesław Miłosz wrote of Hirshfield's "profound empathy for the suffering of all living beings." In recent decades, Hirshfield has become increasingly known as a poet working at the intersection of poetry, the sciences, and the crisis of the biosphere. She has been poet in residence at both the H.J. Andrews Experimental Forest in Oregon and a neuroscience research program at UCSF



President's Ink December 2024

And so this is Christmas, and what have we done? Another year (almost) over and a new one (almost) begun. Perhaps I date myself by remembering lyrics of old songs, but in fact I think we have done pretty well this year.

Our statewide contest continues to draw entries. The aim of the contest was always to both spread the joy of poetry and to allow previously unpublished poets a chance to enter a contest with other previously unpublished poets rather than competing with experienced poets.

We have always publicized this contest by sending emails to all the libraries in Maine and asking librarians to print our flyer and post it on their notice boards for interested people locally. This year we are going to ask any willing members to also print out their own copy and take it to their local library, since not all libraries are posting it up on their notice boards. You might also send it to any of your friends who might be interested in entering. Some communities have a community notice board in other places that might be open to allowing us to post our flyer. We'll be sending you all an email about this in the new year.

Our members-only readings in the round were very popular again this year, and it was a pleasure to hear so many voices sharing their work. The contests and workshops at the meetings in person were also well attended. The use of our hybrid technology has been a great asset in enabling members from the farther-flung corners of our state, or those who have difficulty travelling, to attend online, but I would like to encourage those of you who can travel readily to attend in person if possible. That personal contact does add an extra element of enjoyment.

Our major problem as a society this year has been the struggle to fill positions on the board. We did think we had a Vice President, but unfortunately that did not work out as we hoped, so we still stand in need of one. We also need a new Treasurer. Gus Peterson completed his service as Vice President in September because of a need to deal with a host of family and personal issues and to focus on his forthcoming book, which will be published in April. He will, however, remain on the board as our Tech person. He has agreed to serve as Interim Treasurer. We really need a couple of people to step up to serve in these positions. You'll see elsewhere in this copy of *Stanza* a brief overview of what each of the positions entails. Please contact me if you would consider taking on one of these jobs. It is vital for the continued success and growth of MPS that we have turnover on the board. Unlike a traditional job, these are volunteer positions. New faces mean new perspectives and fresh ideas. We consider this essential and encourage you to reach out if you think this is something you would like to give a try. You will have our full support, and Gus will be available to answer any and all questions for an incoming Treasurer.

My personal disappointment of the year has been learning recently that the book I thought was going to be published in April is now subject to a freeze on new publications by the publisher. However, onward and upward, and I'm sending it elsewhere. If you too are tired of receiving rejections for your work, just keep sending it out. Somebody, somewhere, will like it.

In the meantime, I wish everybody happy holidays, and the best of good things coming your way in 2025.

Jenny Doughty,
President, MPS

A violet by a mossy stone, half hidden from the eye! Fair as a star, when only one is shining in the sky.

~ William Wordsworth

STANZA, Maine Poets Society
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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
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<u>Board Members</u>

Jenny Doughty, President, jennydoughty@icloud.com
Currently Open, Vice President & Program Chair,
Gus Peterson, Interim Treasurer, glp3324@gmail.com
Jeanne Julian, Secretary, jmcjulian@yahoo.com
Diane Hunt, Hospitality Chair, DL.Hunt@ATT.net
Sally Joy, Newsletter Editor & Membership Secretary, srjoy43@gmail.com
Dr. Jim Brosnan, Board Member at-large, opmewriter@gmail.com

Webmaster, Lisa Montagna LMontagna@apitechnology.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.”