

STANZA

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE MAINE POETS SOCIETY

VOLUME 22, NUMBER 4

DECEMBER 2014

NEWS OF OUR NEXT MEETING

Please join us for our next meeting on Saturday, February 21, 2015, at the Dyer Library, 371 Main Street in Saco.

Directions: From the Maine Turnpike: Take Exit 36 onto Route 195. Take Exit 2A – Route 1 south (Main Street). Pass Thornton Academy (on your right). The Saco Museum/Dyer Library is on the left about 8/10 of a mile down Main Street. Turn left into the parking lot – the museum is on the left, the library on the right.

Agenda for Meeting

9:30	Registration and coffee	1:00	<u>Form Contest:</u> Ottava Rima
10:00	Business Meeting		Member judge: Marta Finch
10:30	<u>Subject Contest:</u> “Family”	1:50	Member judge reads own work
	Guest judge: Marcia Brown	2:30	Announcements and closing
11:20	Guest judge reads own work	2:45	Reading in the Round
12:00	Lunch and Silent Auction		

Contest Submissions

(Submission to a contest constitutes permission to publish.)

- Send to Jennifer Doughty
278 Flaggy Meadow Rd.
Gorham, ME 04038
- **DEADLINE:** January 21, 2015
- 1 poem per contest (no fee)
- 2 copies of each poem (ONE of each identified)
- Envelope: Letter-size (long, #10) marked “CONTEST”
- INCLUDE SASE!!

AM Poem—SUBJECT, Family: Judge, Marcia Brown. Poems about family are among the most memorable and moving in the English language. Examples are: “Those Winter Sundays” by Robert Hayden, “My Papa’s Waltz,” by Theodore Roethke, and Maya Angelou’s “Mothering Darkness.” Our families provide our first and often our deepest emotional connections to other humans. Loving, nurturing, complex, imperfect, and flawed, families provide a rich resource for poetic expression. The best poems about family let us feel both the uniqueness of every family, and the profoundly human emotions we share in being part of one.

PM Poem—FORM, Ottava Rima: Judge, Marta Rijn Finch. The *ottava rima* stanza in English consists of 8 lines, usually iambic pentameter—that is, 5 beats (10 syllables) to each line. Be careful: if you start your line with an accented syllable, you could need only 9 syllables; conversely a feminine (unaccented) ending to the line might call for 11. Read your poem aloud, counting out the beat on your fingers, like a child first learning addition! Using the *abababcc* pattern, each stanza consists of three alternating rhymes and one ending couplet. One of the most famous examples of *ottava rima* in English is Byron’s mock-epic (16,000+ lines!) *Don Juan*. Yeats used it for “Among School Children” and “Sailing to Byzantium.” The latter is one of the most magnificent poems in English. You could follow the example of Wordsworth’s Daffodils (“I Wandered Lonely As a Cloud”) which follows the *ottava rima* pattern but is tetrameter—that is, 4 beats (8 syllables) to each line.

A shorter variation, a bit less constraining, is a stanza of 6 lines (*sesta rima*) using an *ababcc* pattern. Marta suggests we see her poem “Swing” from the last contest on page 2. She adds: “I thought I was making the pattern up, but it’s also known as the **Venus and Adonis** stanza, after the poem by Shakespeare—a poem of 1,194 lines! I should have known.”

ABOUT THE JUDGES

Member Judge Marta Rijn Finch served the Maine Poets Society for six years with her mother, Maggie, sharing together the duties of president and vice-president. Michael Burch (of *HyperTexts*) awarded her the New England Prize in *The Lyric* last year and she has been a finalist for the *String Poet* annual competition and for the Nemerov Sonnet Award. Her work is included in Wes McNair's anthology *Take Heart* (Down East, 2013) and several issues of *Encore* (NFSPS). Marta's formal translations of two French Renaissance poets were published in 2010 (Pernette du Guillet, *Complete Poems: A Bilingual Edition*) and 2014 (Jeanne Flore's *Tales and Trials of Love*) both by CRRS, Toronto. Marta is co-editor of *The Mountain Troubadour* and her own book of poems, *A Solitary Piper*, came out in 2011. She and her husband, Charles, summer on Moosehead Lake and go south for the winter—to Vermont. They are still looking for a year-round house in Maine!

Guest Judge Marcia Brown is the current Poet Laureate of Portland, Maine. She is the author of four poetry collections, including *When We Invented Water* (Moon Pie Press 2014). She is the Editor of the Anthology, *Port City Poems, Contemporary Poets Celebrate Portland, Maine* (Maine Poetry Central 2013) which was a finalist for the 2014 Maine Literary Awards. Marcia Holds an MFA from the University of Southern Maine's Stonecoast Program and has twice been nominated for a Pushcart Prize. Her work is widely published in literary journals and anthologies, including Garrison Keillors's *Good Poems, American Places* (Penguin Books 2011). She resides in Cape Elizabeth, ME with her husband.

SEPTEMBER 2014 CONTEST WINNERS

AM Contest—Subject: Walls; Judge: James Breslin

First Prize—Marshall Witten

The Perfect Wall

This dry wall was designed by a master mason.
He quarried shist, and cut each stone to the inch,
to fit together like a jigsaw puzzle,
to make a split in-line sixty foot bench
– individual stones like scales on a giant snake –
to grace the lawn between the house and meadow.
The break between the pair directs the eye's arc/
a quarter mile down the pasture like an arrow
to boundary trees and ever changing mountains.
Its axis bisects our pond in perfect symmetry.
This wall wasn't meant to keep things in or out.

Its sun warmed rocks are homes for frog and snake,
a hunting roost for bluebird, robin, wren,
while mosses cling to its shaded northern face.
Alone on the wall, I have watched bluebirds fledge,
turkey broods cross the meadow at sunset, deer graze
in early morning fog, unquiet hawks hunt.
It's stark, enduring in the summer sun,
in winter, wind whipped snow waves gently blunt
its flanks in ever shifting drifts. This brace
of open monuments anchor landscape and people.
Its level line creates reflective space.

Second Prize—Marta Rijn Finch

The Swing

(with a nod to R.L. Stevenson)

I must have been a happy child. Inside
these garden walls was my whole little world:
familiar were the leaves where bugs would hide;
my pebble-cars raced over tracks I'd swirled
into red earth, and every simple thing
seemed made for me—until we got the swing.

The thrill of flying through the air was all,
at first: my ruffled hair, the up-and-down—
but then one day, beyond the garden wall,
I glimpsed a large and unknown far-off town.
Might there be newer pleasures to explore
than swinging from an aged sycamore?

Attic windows allowed me wider views,
and soon I read, in volumes filled with rich
prints, fables of foreign lands! To peruse
them pushed me toward a travel-fever pitch.
I woke to worldly possibilities
and ran away to sail the seven seas:

from North to South and in between were dangers,
the like of which no fancy book had warned—
averted through new friends who'd started strangers.
They're all gone now, each one still loved, still mourned,
while here I've found repose, a peace of mind,
in walls where I had once felt too confined.

Third Prize—Carol Bachofner
Beyond the Walls of the Dead

She stays put, waiting for the stone to open,
 for the cup to runneth over,
 for the man she loved to come forth
 like Lazarus, covered in something like moss
 or wearing winding cloths. She froze there
 on the day he left without so much as a good-bye
 or a kiss on the cheek. Beyond the walls
 of the dead is a secret garden where Eves
 and not just a few Adams mourn
 their choices, hope for salvation. She stays
 put, solid salt and stone like Lot's wife, but not
 condemned for looking back.

First Honorable Mention—Rebecca Irene
Wallflower

What girl doesn't long to flower?
 Bud to blooming rose
 ripens every fairy tale.
 A heroine's destiny is to be his forever blossom.

So, you ready your innocent young self.
 Perfume for the first time, don't you remember?
 Silk dresses in white-white layers, infinite
 delicate petals rustling.

To the dance, finally, the dance. Punch and giggles,
 swaying to the music—not too much, not too much.
 Choosing, they are choosing! One by one other girls are led out
 emerging into blushing beauties—now called two by twos.

You lean against the wall—shrinking violet—
 notice the wallpaper has started to curl in the corners.
 You press down failing glue—not what you'd expected
 to be doing. Yet, this is only one of many lessons.

Not every thing can remain upright.
 Not every one can do as they are told.

Squirm now, as if your life depended on it.
 Think of a butterfly under pins, immobilized by force,
 all in the excuse of beauty—know suddenly what you are—
 Hear them whisper it as they pass you by.

*Why not invite a friend to come to the next
 meeting with you.*

Second Honorable Mention—
Jenny Doughty

**Something There is That Doesn't
 Love a Wall**

(A glosa on four lines from Robert Frost's
 "Mending Wall")

Before I built a wall I'd ask to know
 What I was walling in or walling out,
 And to whom I was like to give offence.
 Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
 ~Robert Frost

The ancient remnants of a garden wall,
 mark out my plot but only serve to show
 that I am temporary: walls will fall.
Before I built a wall I'd ask to know

whose land this was some centuries ago,
 and why they felt the need of walls so stout.
 I kept the wall although I did not know
what I was walling in or walling out.

Most walls are tribal, stones a warrior's shout,
 although we say we use them for defence;
 I'd rather know who has a friend's hand out
and to whom I'm like to give offence.

Perhaps I'll tear it down and build a fence
 with railings set apart so I can call
 to friends through spaces. That would make
 more sense.
Something there is that doesn't love a wall.

Second Honorable Mention—Bill Frayer**Losing You**

You have fallen behind the great wall
 taking with you memories
 of long-dead children, sweet touching,
 my unsteady embraces.

I peek through the cracks.
 Only dark, but your smell lingers.
 I stand on the sunny side calling to you.
 Asking you.
 Just silence.
 I am left to figure out
 this sacred geography.

I imagine jumping over
 to search for your eyes
 staring motionless in the dark.

I lean here, in the sun,
 against its sturdy blocks.
 My tears
 lubricate my regrets
 and cool my fears
 while your
 warm
 presence
 lingers.

Third Honorable Mention—Lisa Desrochers**Rock Wall in the Woods of Maine**

Crumbled pile of rocks all in a row,
 quartz, granite, marble, and limestone,
 used to show the boundary lines of land
 like tape on carpet in squabbling siblings rooms.
 Now no one knows who owns this side or that
 but moss grows fat and holds the wall intact
 for wooded wanderers to marvel at
 and wonder dreamily about the past.

PM Contest—Ballad or Common Meter; Judge: Rachel Contreni Flynn**First Prize—Marilyn Hotch****The Ballad of Bernie Madoff**

So like an eagle he did climb.
 He soared above the land.
 His wheeling and his dealing tricks
 A secret sleight of hand.

For who could see at that great height
 And great trajectory,
 That all the grace and swoops and fells,
 Were but a mimicry.

But just like in the fables old,
 When hubris is undone,
 The swooping bird just at his peak
 Was lost against the sun.

Exposure to the light is all
 It takes to stop the flight
 Of plans that need a secret life
 And never ending height.

So down he comes, this flim-flam bird,
 A straight shot to the earth,
 Exploding and destroying all
 Who touched his plan since birth.

The eagle is no longer here,
 No swoop or graceful dive,
 A different bird now in a cage
 As long as he's alive.

Second Prize—Rebecca Irene**The Ballad of Two Shadows**

Once, once, with moons ripe full, they kissed,
then kissed some more, it's true.

In wet wet grass they played all night,
with skies of blackest blue.

Yet, she now curses his mouth, that she
ever had ears to hear.

'This love is forever,' whispered
so slow—charmed words to fear.

For that same night he died, as he
rode home in fog filled air.

His lips and limbs turned blue—only
his shadow death couldn't tear.

He gifted her strange things, more gifts
than she could ever bear.

A haunted heart was one, my friend
—despair, despair, despair.

She's two shadows behind her now,
how people gape and stare!

So in sunlight they hide. At dusk,
emerge without a care.

They stroll the paths all night, after
her own shadow's away.

Alone, at last, his shade and she
—on wet wet grass they play.

Third Prize—Stanley Keach**The Interloper**

When something snuck into my house,
I had been occupied,
Or sleeping soundly, I suppose,
Or maybe I had died

For just a moment – then by chance
I came to life again,
And noticed I was not alone.
I couldn't say just when

That I became aware of it,
Or him, or maybe her.
I think it is inanimate –
I never heard it stir;

But something's here, inside my home
That wasn't here before.
I've locked the windows, every room,
And bolted up the door

To trap the interloper here,
So it can't get away.
I'm conquering initial fear,
And I want it to stay.

Since something snuck into my house
I find I want to share
The sense of doom so ever close,
The dark and bitter air.

First Honorable Mention—Marshall Witten**Diner Blues**

Janie Bella is a waitress.
She's always on her feet.
Lift heavy trays, small tips, guys' hits –
by quitting time she's beat.

It's hard to be a woman alone
Dragging along a stone

Shop for groceries going home.
His only welcome a grunt.
No dinner cooked or faucet fixed.
She's tired of bearing the brunt.

It's hard to be a woman alone
Putting up with a stone

The trash not emptied, harsh words yelled.
Fix dinner, clean the place,
run the washer, help with homework,
to bed a frazzled case.

It's hard to be a woman alone
Dragging along a stone

Alarm at five, quick shower, coffee.
Repeat the day again.
No respite from the constant grind,
Gets no respect, plain Jane.

She's proud to be a woman alone
She does not need this stone.

Second Honorable Mention—John Benoit**Key to the City**

Pine Hill was Bub's favorite route
to coast his truck to town.
He'd turn 'off', the ignition key,
as the road tumbled down.

"Mabel's Shingles and Grump's Gout",
said Chad, the local mechanic!
"That'll lock up the steering wheel,
giving him a pail of panic!"

Misfortune happened just last week
when the key was 'off' too long.
Bub lost control of his truck in town,
prompting angels to sigh a song.

Fenders and strands of Bubs red hair,
along with engine and frame
impacted a statue in the square,
giving Bub posthumous fame.

The accident produced an expected result;
Bub totaled the Studebaker,
seconds before he came to rest
at the door of the undertaker!

Third Honorable Mention—Anne Hammond**Beyond Center**

The family van explores the west,
Our trek in the wide-open realm
Where geology unfolds and history lies.
We are what we are, says Tina, on the helm.

Yellowstone geysers leap and spray
Mud-pots boil white hot
Super volcano in the making,
Lava will erupt on the caldera spot.

A cave carved by a river
Into the deep sandstone. We follow
Rooms, crawl holes, to a pool,
The end for spelunkers camped in the hollow.

Alternator gone, we pause on a hill,
Pass a night in the sage brush
Under the scent of pine greens.
How to escape this bush?

Chadron cliffs, knife-sharp angles,
Buttes where Crow and Sioux met
We are where Indians fought,
A treaty signed but never kept.

Fossil Beds, remains of a super volcano,
Ashfall animals that did not survive.
We are what we are
Except where history can thrive.

Publication News**Books**

Cynthia Brackett-Vincent, *Questions About Home*; Encircle Publications, 2014

Sharon Bray, *Putting Poems By*; Narramissic Notebook Project, August 2014

Marta Rijn Finch, (poetry translations) Jeanne Flore's *Tales and Trials of Love* (Toronto: CRRS, 2014), edited with prose translation of text by Kelly Peebles

Poems

Leslie Joan Linder, "Love," *Project Intersect - Issue One/Clarion Call*, September, 2014

Opportunity Grants Program

It was announced in the July issue of *The Stanza* that opportunity grants (on a first-come, first-served basis) would be available to members in good standing for help—up to \$300—for attendance at a workshop. There was a pot of \$1,000 available for 2014. Grants were awarded to the following:

Carol Bachofner—\$300 towards attendance at the Writers in the Round (WITR) conference held in early September 2014 on Star Island Isles of Shoals, NH. The conference leaders were Jason Anderson (song writing) and Dawn Potter (poetry).

DiTa Ondek—also \$300 for attendance at the Writers in the Round conference.

Susan van Alsenoy—\$60 for attendance at the Lincoln Arts Festival 2014 Poetry Workshop. The conference leader was Betsy Sholl

Sally Woolf-Wade—\$300 towards attendance at the Palm Beach Poetry Festival to be held in January 2015.

Share Your Member News: Holding a Reading or Event? Publishing a Book? Winner of a Contest? Submit your information to Sally Joy at: jsjoy@roadrunner.com or 16 Riverton Street, Augusta, ME 04330. Please include your contact information in case of questions. If sending via e-mail, please use **Info for Stanza** as the subject line.

Deadline for Member News for the next Stanza: March 30, 2015.



President's Ink

Brrrrr. That was some beginning to our cold season! I hope this missive finds all of you recovered from the big punch and settling in to our season of celebrations. We had four days of no power at this house, and developed an instant gratitude for warm showers! Let's have no more of that kind of weather, please!

I am looking forward to our February meeting at the Dyer Library in Saco. I hope we have fair enough weather so that many of you can participate. The venue is so warm and welcoming always, and I am grateful to Kitty for being our contact there and our hostess. One hint for travel: if you can budget for an overnight, it might be helpful to go to Saco (from both and central Maine) the day before and check into a cozy hotel for the night. I have been doing this for the past four years. Takes off a load of travel and timing stress!

I want to say a word about our round robins before I sign off. They are in large part struggling. I have spent time recently reorganizing some of them, combining and rearranging to get the most possible involvement. If you are in a robin that is struggling, I am likely working on fixing yours. I will have new robin configurations soon, including some added names. This will all be brought to the February meeting and new robins will be physically handed to the #1 person on each list if that person is present. Otherwise they will be mailed. The two robins that seem to fly fine on their own will not be altered.

On another note, I want to throw out a challenge: I am looking to start a robin that is wholly made up of PROSE PEOMS, including the prose sonnet. Intrigued? Contact me!

Wishing you always,
GOOD INK!!!

Carol Bachofner, President

Reminder: Your Maine Poets Society dues include membership in the National Federation of State Poetry Societies. Thus, you may enter many of their contests offering cash prizes. Visit their website: nfsp.com. Click on "Strophes" at the left-hand side of the home page to get access to their newsletter.

STANZA, Maine Poets Society
16 Riverton Street
Augusta, ME 04864

FIRST CLASS

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

FMI or to join, write
Margery Kivel
71 Ben Paul Lane
Apt 1
Rockport, ME 04856

Board Members

Carol Bachofner, President, Round Robins mainepoet@me.com
Jenny Doughty, Vice President jmdought@maine.rr.com
Deborah Neumeister, Secretary, Hospitality lady Slipr622@yahoo.com
Anne Hammond, Treasurer ahammond5@comcast.net
Sally Joy, Publicity, Newsletter jsjoy@roadrunner.com
Margery Kivel, Membership mtkivel@gmail.com
James Breslin, Programs jameslindabreslin@gmail.com

Webmaster, DiTa Ondek dita@dita.org

Check out our Website!

Please check out the MPS website (MainePoetsSociety.com) for all you need to know about the Maine Poets Society: Gatherings, Directions, Membership Application, Contests, Contact Information, President's Message, and more.