

# STANZA

## OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE MAINE POETS SOCIETY

VOLUME 23, NUMBER 1

MARCH 2015

### NEWS OF OUR NEXT MEETING

Our next meeting will be Saturday, May 16, 2015, in the Fireplace Room of the Randall Student Tech Center at the University of Maine, Augusta.

#### **Directions to the Augusta campus:**

From the North: Take Interstate 95 south to exit 112, turn left off exit ramp. Go about .75 miles and turn right at the UMA entrance sign.

From the South: Take Interstate 95 north to Exit 112 A, turn right off exit ramp. Go about .75 miles and turn right at the UMA entrance sign.

As usual, there will be a \$12 registration fee which includes lunch. (Please note that the fee applies to all attendees and is the same even if individuals opt not to share in the lunch.)

#### **Agenda for Meeting**

9:30	Registration and coffee	1:00	<u>Form Contest:</u> Triolet
10:00	Business Meeting, to include election of officers		Member judge: Ted Bookey
10:30	<u>Subject Contest:</u> "Birds"	1:50	Member judge reads own work
	Guest judge: Alice Persons	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 Carol Bachofner  
12 Center St, Rockland ME 04841  
**DEADLINE:** April 16, 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, Birds:** Guest Judge, Alice Persons says: "I'm hoping there will be a wide variety of poems about birds coming out of this contest – birds as symbol, animus, muse – amusing, benign or cruel. Don't be afraid to use humor."

**PM Poem—FORM, Triolet:** Member Judge, Ted Bookey. The *triolet* (pronounced "TREE-o-LAY) is an old form that (goes back to the 13th century). The Triolet has become a popular form once again. The "tri" (meaning "three") refers to the fact that the opening line occurs tree times in this form. It is an eight-line poem with two rhymes and two repeating lines. The line is repeated as the fourth and seventh lines, and the second and eight lines are the same.

*Continued on page 2)*

(*Triolet, continued from page 1*)

If we make a diagram with the two rhymes designated at A and B respectively, and let line A1 stand for the first repeated line and B2 the second repeated line, it would look like this:

She was in love with the same danger	A1
everybody is. Dangerous	B2
as it is to love a stranger,	A
she was in love. With that same danger	A1
an adulteress risks a husband's anger.	A
Stealthily death enters a house:	B
she was in love with that danger.	A1
Everybody is dangerous.	B2
—by Sandra McPherson	

The triolet is a relative easy form to work with because of its short length and repeating lines. Usually, the two opening lines determine the poem's flavor and feel. You might want to begin by simply writing down two lines that you would say to a friend in conversation; or you might think of a subject, such as a place, and write two statements (not necessarily connected to one another) concerning that place. After writing the two opening lines, you could then repeat the opening lines further down where they belong, and then jump into the poem from there.

For this contest, you may submit either one 8-line poem or 2 or 3 related triolets, which would equate to a 24-line poem.

## ABOUT THE JUDGES

**Member Judge Ted Bookey** teaches poetry writing workshops in the Senior College program at the University of Maine in Augusta. He is the author of five books of poems: *Mixty Motions*; *Language as a Second Language*; *Lostalgia*; *With A Whole In One*, and in collaboration with his wife, poet and painter Ruth, translations of the German poet Erich Kästner. He is also editor of the two poetry anthologies *How Many Cars Have We Been Married?* and *Sunshine on Snow*. Ted and Ruth dwell in a log home on Lake Maranacook in Readfield, Maine.

**Guest Judge Alice Persons** moved to Maine 32 years ago to go to law school and never left. Her full length poetry collection is called *Thank Your Lucky Stars*. Eight of her poems have been selected for Garrison Keillor's *The Writer's Almanac* on NPR. She is the editor and publisher of Moon Pie Press, established in 2003, which has published 81 books of poetry. She is passionate about animal advocacy and, of course, poetry.

### Electronic Copies of Winning Poems for the Stanza

When you submit poems for our contests, please keep an electronic copy *as submitted* on your computer. If your work is selected for recognition by a judge (whether a prize or an honorable mention), please email an electronic copy to *Stanza* editor, Sally Joy, as soon as possible after you know are aware of this. If you've made changes since your submission, please do not include them. Give us the poem as it was judged. Thank you.

### Elections are on the Agenda for our May Meeting

Officers (President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer) are elected for two-year terms, and it's that time again. A slate of officers will be presented during the business meeting at our May meeting in Augusta. Nominations from the floor will also be accepted.

<b>FEBRUARY 2015 CONTEST WINNERS</b>
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**AM Contest—Subject: Family; Judge: Marcia Brown****First Prize—Rebecca Irene****Four Out of Six***for R.F.*

More myth than man. Your hair, the color  
of birch, as memorable as your verse.

*Every poem should be your last poem*, you roared  
to chosen pupils on some New England porch, another  
hot Bread-Loaf summer of cicada screams  
and furious bees. Your disciples' clear-eyed  
passion fed off your tired tongue's  
spew. Lips see-sawed rehearsed lines  
while, inside, spirits of departed children  
flit flew and whispered.

Elliott saw the hidden presents you wrapped  
in brown paper and twine. 'Don't cry,' he pled  
'I was almost four—yet, happy.'  
Elinor Bettina, three days old, perfect fingernails  
never cut, hair never shorn. Marjorie—  
Marjorie repeated 'the baby was worth the dying.'  
Finally, Carol, beloved son, turned a deer hunting rifle  
on his own doe eyes. Ghosts of words he almost said—  
'I will come to lonely ruin you know  
from love's soft flailing in gray winter's snow.'

Ghosts of words you should have said—  
*My son, my son, broken, curled cold, alone*  
*no poetry*  
*can ease the weight of bone.*

**Second Prize—Jenny Doughty****Mother on the beach**

"Have you girls been out here long?" she said  
to the nurses who tended to the drip  
that fed her arm. 'Nil by mouth' it said  
above her bed; the cancer in her stomach  
ate her life. They did not understand her  
but I knew.

In her mind she was in India.  
Not quite the Raj, of course, but Europeans  
still had it good: cooks, dhoti-wallahs  
for the laundry, ayahs for the baby,  
a life less ordinary than post-war England,  
dull and ration-booked; ate mangoes, drank the milk  
of coconuts cut green straight from the tree,  
adventured into thaal and vindaloo,  
and welcomed monsoon rains to break the heat.

She lay, either asleep or in this dream.  
Each weekend I drove up two hundred miles  
to my home town, felt her frail fingers lie  
limp under mine, told her that no, she hadn't  
lost more weight, while she became her photo,  
black and white, a woman on a beach, wearing  
a striped two-piece swimsuit, cigarette in hand,  
squinting at the sun and smiling while  
the Indian Ocean washed about her feet.

**Third Prize—Gus Peterson****Father**

I start, sweaty palmed, with an F note.  
It shouldn't matter, but I'm still nervous

when you chime in three measures later,  
the notes wavering, an old sadness

walking beside me, leaning on my arm.  
Grandpa's cornet looks down on his wife.

How she loved this hymn, the slow pulse of its beat.  
Our feet tap the carpet as one, the way  
star song drips through a sky sieve,  
wetting the upturned eye with light.

Sometimes now, at home, when the melody  
of your absence begins to play itself,

I pull out those horns and lay them beside  
one another on the bed like brass hearts.

I pick up each one, frozen with neglect,  
press moist lips to it.

I want to see if they're alive – to know  
they can still bleed.

**First Honorable Mention—Carol Bachofner**  
**Lonely Dusty Road**

—for Chris Willette

Try to make it a good one; this road ain't no prize  
 no bread crumbs for you to follow,  
 no Tin Man or Lion waiting 'round the bend.  
 Lonely dusty road you travel, lonely bed you sleep in.  
 Oh Cousin, don't you see  
 how much fun you might have had if only

If only I'd called, one call, maybe  
 in the late afternoon of your birthday or some morning  
 while you were shaving, that face like a terrible shame  
 no one speaks of at family gatherings, the face  
 turned sour so long ago. Oh Cousin, you could have  
 come over, might have had a beer with me—something

Something you called unique we just didn't get.  
 No one got you off the wrong track  
 you were running. Lonely dusty road wouldn't let you go, took you  
 to some crazy hotel called danger-zoo. Face it, now —  
 you're sitting on some ragged cloud laughing  
 that ironic laugh everyone laughs at the end.

At the end—we all trudge off the road into the weeds;  
 no tears, no pills can save us. It's a cold fact—might as well  
 face into the wind and move on. The only thing to do  
 is begin. Again. Again. Again. Pick up your face  
 and go on. Born to hang, you'll never drown. Our daddies said so.  
 But dying on the lonely dusty road—is just lonely.

**Second Honorable Mention—**  
**Amanda Johnston**

**Belated Elegy**

Life is the same until it isn't.

In no permutation were your lips that thin –  
 crude comprehension of the present.

A wake of obligatory condolence  
 paraded mourners clad in the past tense  
 while I bruised the skin of my inner wrist  
 so as to not embarrass the living.

The beauty of impermanence is lost to me.

Discarded gray flannel and golf clubs  
 designate outward progress;  
 inability to stop for the grave marks  
 the stagnation of grief.

Matter can neither be created nor destroyed;  
 that takes care of the bones, but  
 what of the ethereal –

the blend of ineffable energy  
 whose significance remains unmeasured?

**Third Honorable Mention—Lynda La Rocca**

**A Memory of Summer**

Grandpa and I walked to the woodpile.  
 He carried split pine and let me hold his favorite pipe,  
 Grandma's gift when they were newly married.  
 I sat on the ground and watched him heap the firewood high,  
 his back to me, talking of other lands,  
 lost times he hungered to replace.  
 He stacked and spoke, I silently smoked,  
 pretending, puffing the unlit pipe,  
 tobacco rich, sweet-smelling.  
 A snake slid from the shattered logs, copper body gleaming.  
 I froze, eyes wide.  
 The wooden pipe dropped from my mouth  
 and crashed onto a rock and cracked.

The snake coiled, tongue flickering.  
 Grandpa turned, clutching a log. In a flash  
 he smashed its shining head.  
 Underneath the snake exploded, yellow, green, and dead.  
 Grandpa buried it,  
 then carefully slipped the broken pipe bowl near his breast.  
 A shame about that snake, he said,  
 but some things can't be helped.  
 And some things, Grandpa added,  
 you just never can replace.

**PM Contest—Ottava Rima; Judge: Marta Rijn Finch****First Prize—Elizabeth Berkenbile****Chasing Butterflies**

I tipped the cup, then slowly closed my eyes,  
and as I stumbled down the halls of sleep,  
I dreamt that I was chasing butterflies  
into the woods, into a calm so deep  
that soon I ceased to long for anything  
except the gentle brush of gauzy wings.

Around my feet a thousand flowers grew,  
like stars, they fanned across the forest floor  
in vibrant shades of scarlet, gold, and blue,  
and colors I had never seen before.

Inhaling deep, I breathed their fragrance in  
and as I did the world began to spin.

A carousel of flowers, leaves, and wings  
swirled round-and-round the glade in which I stood,  
a dizzying collage of living things  
that seemed to now be flying from the wood;  
when suddenly a young girl stepped in view,  
a child from my past—a girl I knew.

She warned all pretty things aren't what they seem,  
though some say *truth is beauty, beauty truth*;  
it's often just a dream within a dream  
for those who chase the fading dreams of youth,  
and as she spoke compassion filled her eyes  
for one who took to chasing butterflies.

**Second Prize—Marshall Witten****Winter Fantasy**

In green woods stands a forlorn spruce, branches snow  
bent to the breaking point, a lost Carthusian,  
his cowl askew, bowed shoulders sighing woe.  
Stooped by the cold, red blooded, normal, human;  
has cabin fever, longs to be incognito,  
escape his sore knees, create himself bohemian.  
He could be tired or tipsy from abuse  
of the green liqueur in their cave, Chartreuse.

**Third Prize—Gus Peterson****Walking**

It's a simple formula: left foot, then right.  
Day or night, westering sun, a horn of moon -  
shadow is shadow wherever will's want lights;  
only time's ticking hand brims our cup with gloom.  
So let us walk - no, let us stride - when the clock  
chimes right - to open the door before the knock!

It's a simple formula, adding your steps:  
how far you have come, how far there is to go.  
We say one passed us by while the other leapt  
over distant hills, as far as far could know.  
So let us walk - no, let us stride - when the clock  
chimes right - and open the door before the knock!

**First Honorable Mention—Leslie Linder****Requiem**

I reach into the crack between the worlds,  
assisted by the fingers of the dead.  
I breach the veil and grasp tightly the curled  
cold hands of my beloved, gently led  
into the other land, I trespass, bold.  
Made brave by love of my lost one, I tread  
amongst the icy tides of River Styx,  
a realm immune to all our mortal tricks.

Yet I am but a trespasser to Death.  
I have not made the proper journey yet.  
My loved one bids me hastily draw breath,  
which pulls me back to life, out of Death's net.  
Be this the first time or the ninetieth  
I try, but my love, I cannot forget.  
Melancholy, I long for whom I've seen  
until we meet again, next Halloween.

**Second Honorable Mention—Muriel Allen****Going with the 11 syllable****ABABABCC Flow**

The river runs on industrial schedule,  
 happy when flowing at full capacity.  
 Proud of its efficiency as transport tool,  
 it gives service to all the border cities.  
 With devotion to deadlines, quotas and rules,  
 it surges ever seaward brown and gritty.  
 With patient concern for what might change its course,  
 it revels in its irrepressible force.

The brook appears on permanent holiday,  
 giggling and laughing when encountering rocks.  
 Meandering and musing along its way,  
 it offers refreshment to those without socks.  
 To bodies more serious it looks like play-  
 this defiance of deadlines, quotas and clocks.  
 With slow twisting progress it honors its banks  
 and with all that it passes exchanges thanks.

Duty when done well with reverence and joy  
 is the equal of quiet meditation.  
 Aimless wandering is in secret a ploy  
 for the strengthening of our dedication.  
 Leisure and method are not poised to destroy.  
 Creation makes use of this combination.  
 Sing praise to Spirit for everything that flows  
 regardless of speed or direction it goes.

**Third Honorable Mention—Jenny Doughty**  
**Heroes**

Do all our idols stand on feet of clay?  
 Shackleton, slogging to the icy poles,  
 braved cold that takes a normal breath away  
 then died in debt, his pockets full of holes  
 that leaked out IOUs he'd not repay,  
 his reputation heaped with fiery coals.  
 To keep your reputation as heroic  
 you must be solvent just as much as stoic.

Bill Clinton, once a boy from Arkansas  
 whose small-town start seemed hopeless at the best,  
 rose through the ranks by studying the law,  
 learned what 'is' meant as well as all the rest,  
 became a President, inspired awe –  
 then lost respect because of one blue dress.  
 To give your reputation half a chance,  
 you have to learn to keep it in your pants.

So may our heroes crumble into dust  
 once history digs into all their deeds  
 and points a blaming finger at their lust,  
 their secret hearts, their ignorance, their greed.  
 Can't we acknowledge, trying to be just,  
 that every person has his natural needs?  
 We'd keep heroic images by seeing  
 not just the hero but the human being.

**Opportunity Grants Program**

It was announced in the July 2014 issue of the *Stanza* that opportunity grants (on a first-come, first-served basis) are available to members in good standing for help—up to \$300—for attendance at a workshop, to take a class, or to attend a poetry festival or residency. You can download a Membership Opportunity Grant Application and guidelines from our website. Click on “Membership” at the home page.

Two grants have been awarded for 2015: one to Rebecca Irene and the other to Margery Kivel. This accounts for approximately half of the money available for grants for the year. Information on how the grants are used will be included in a future issue of the *Stanza*.

**Please Let Us Know When Your Contact Info Changes**

Because most copies of the *Stanza* are distributed by email, it is especially important that you let us know of changes as soon as they occur. Margery Kivel, Membership Secretary, is the person to contact with changes (address, phone number, and/or email address). She can be reached at [mtkivel@gmail.com](mailto:mtkivel@gmail.com) Thank you.

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

**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: [nfps.com](http://nfps.com). Click on “Strophes” at the left-hand side of the home page to get access to their newsletter.



### President's Ink

Ask not what MPS can do for you, ask what you can do for MPS  
— with a nod of thanks to John F Kennedy

We are a society of poets, Maine poets. As such (the Maine part) we come from a tradition of helpfulness and volunteerism. Neighbors helping neighbors and all that. It is a rich and beautiful tradition. Yesterday the men of our neighborhood got together to move EVERYONE'S latest glut of heavy wet snow. No one asked to have payment, no one asked for "gas money" for their snowblowers. Their work, their common work, left every family safer, better off.

It occurs to me that we, as a society of poets, may be losing sight of this spirit of volunteerism. It is a fact that it is hard to get remuneration from the publishing world. Most poets do not have agents to argue for them the big contracts, and mostly there is no payment for our accepted poems by journals (other than in copies). We are pretty much expected to "give away" our work.

But what about "getting something" as members of MPS? We "expect" a complimentary breakfast when we arrive. We want the lunch to be there at the appointed hour. Yes, we pay a registration fee for each meeting, which includes lunch, but some do not pay it, saying they are not eating lunch so they should not have to pay it. Some members delay dues payments until the last possible moment in the year when they are still going to be "entitled" to enter the NFSPS contests. How is all of this contributing to the good of the society? I scratch my head here and wonder.

I hope that, instead of seeking to "get" benefits, we would all rethink the idea of how we might benefit our own society, our poetry neighborhood, by pitching in. Certainly by contributing time, talent, and treasure. We have a small group of volunteers who take it all on for our good as a whole. Why not the rest? Why not at least pitch in with what is required? Pay dues ON TIME. Dues are DUE by December 31st (not in February, though we have not been dogmatic about this). Dues keep our programs running. It costs money to do what we do. Offer to help out with setting up and tearing down the meeting room. Bring goodies to share for the morning. Volunteer. Volunteer. Volunteer. Step up and get on board to help define and create our wonderful society. Ask not... well, you have the quote.

Carol Bachofner, President

### Publication News

#### Books

Jim Mello, *All Four Seasons*; Moon Pie Press, 2014

**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](mailto: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:** August 11, 2015.

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

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  
Margery Kivel  
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### **Board Members**

Carol Bachofner, President, Round Robins [mainepoet@me.com](mailto:mainepoet@me.com)  
Jenny Doughty, Vice President [jmdought@maine.rr.com](mailto:jmdought@maine.rr.com)  
Deborah Neumeister, Secretary, Hospitality [lady Slipr622@yahoo.com](mailto:lady Slipr622@yahoo.com)  
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Webmaster, DiTa Ondek [dita@dita.org](mailto:dita@dita.org)

### **Check out our Website!**

Please check out the MPS website ([MainePoetsSociety.com](http://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.