

# STANZA

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE MAINE POETS SOCIETY

VOLUME 21, NUMBER 1

Winter 2012

## NEWS OF OUR NEXT MEETING

Our next meeting will be Saturday, February 9th, 2013, 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	PM Contest—
10:00	Business Meeting		FORM: <b>Short Couplet</b>
10:30	AM Contest—		Guest judge: <b>Bruce Spang</b>
	SUBJECT: “ <b>Running Away</b> ”	1:50	Guest judge reads his own work
	Guest judge: <b>Anne Britting Oleson</b>	2:30	Announcements and closing
11:20	Guest judge reads her own work	2:45	Reading in the Round
12:00	Lunch and <b>Silent Auction</b>		

\*\*\*\*\*

### **CONTEST SUBMISSIONS:**

- Maggie Finch, 1463 Washington Street, Bath, ME 04530
- DEADLINE—9 January 2013
- 1 poem per contest (no fee)
- 2 copies of each poem (ONE of each identified)
- Envelope: Letter-size (long, #10), marked “**CONTEST**”  
(*please*, NOT a large manila envelope)
- **INCLUDE SASE!!**



**AM Poem—SUBJECT:** Anne Britting Oleson will judge our poems (any form with a limit of 24 lines) on “Running Away.”

Even Emily Dickinson dreamed of escape, if her words are to be believed:

*I never hear the word “Escape”  
Without a quicker blood,  
A sudden expectation –  
A flying attitude!*

What about you? Where are you going? How will you get there? What will you do in that escape?  
Ready? Go!

**PM Poem—FORM:** Bruce Spang will be judging the *Short Couplet* in which the poem has two rhyming lines of iambic or trochaic tetrameter (any subject, not to exceed 24 lines). He suggests looking at the following poems as examples: Donald Just: “First Death,” Maxine Kumin: “Morning Swim;” and James Dickey: “The Island,” stating “it’s a form that, in its simplicity and elegance, allows for quiet reflection, a gentle repose.”

#### Couplet Form

- As its name suggests, a couplet has two lines. The last word of each line rhymes, and both lines have the same or nearly the same meter. Meter generally refers to the number of syllables in each line and the way each syllable is accented or stressed.

While rhyming is the norm, not all couplets must rhyme to be considered true couplets. For this contest, all couplets must rhyme, but off and slant rhyme is okay.

#### Usage of Space

- Couplets have to pack a lot of meaning into two short, concentrated lines that make a distinctive statement that appears more resonant because of the white space surrounding the lines. Each successive couplet relies upon the former to add meaning within this short space.

For the MPS "short couplet poem," there is to be a series of rhymed couplets in either iambic or trochaic TETRAMETER. Remember the line limit is 24 lines.

Here is one really good example (note that she uses a substitution in some of the lines wherein the syllabic count is 7 rather than 8):

*Morning Swim*

by Maxine Kumin

Into my empty head there come  
A cotton beach, a dock wherefrom

I set out, oily and nude  
through mist, in chilly solitude.

There was no line, no roof or floor  
to tell the water from the air.

Night fog thick as terry cloth  
closed me in its fuzzy growth.

I hung my bathrobe on two pegs.  
I took the lake between my legs.

Invaded and invader, I  
Went overhand on that flat sky

Fish twitched beneath me, quick and tame.  
In their green zone they sang my name

and in the rhythm of the swim  
I hummed a two-four-time slow hymn.

I hummed "Abide With Me." The beat  
rose in the fine thrash of my feet,

rose in the bubbles I put out  
slantwise, trailing through my mouth.

My bones drank water; water fell  
through all my doors. I was the well

that fed the lake that met my sea  
in which I sang, Abide With Me."

From Selected Poems, 1960-1990

\*\*\*\*\*

### ABOUT THE JUDGES

**Anne Britting Oleson** has been published widely in the US, UK and Canada. She earned her MFA at the Stonecoast program at the University of Southern Maine. She has published two chapbooks, *The Church of St. Materiana* (2007) and *The Beauty of It* (2010).

**Bruce Spang**, current Poet Laureate of Portland, teaches American Literature at Scarborough High School. Author of libretto "*The White Rose*" about the gay man murdered by 3 high school boys in Bangor. He is also writing a novel, putting together another book of poems and doing a book on putting the art back in language arts—a book on how to merge teaching the craft of writing as a way to teach literature. He is author of *To the Promised Land Grocery* (Moon Pie Press, 2008), *I Have Walked though Many Lives: Young Voices—Scarborough* (Moon Pie, Press 2009) and *The Knot*, (Snow Drift Press, 2005), *Tip End of Time* (Snow Drift Press, 2004). He has published four books on drug and alcohol education in the schools along with several articles in major magazines.

He has taught creative writing for seven years. Prior to that, for 10 years, as an administrator, he worked with Baron Wormser in teaching his staff to teach poetry in the classroom. Each year his students have won major prizes in local and state contests.

<b>FALL 2012 CONTEST WINNERS</b>
----------------------------------

**AM Contest—“From Away”: Judge, Jenny Doughty**

**First Prize, Tom Lyford**

COUNTRY MOUSE IN THE CITY

I spy the Goodwill-bin overcoat crunching a pretty good Thorazine-shuffle my way across the spaghetti-western gravel of this vacant urban lot, decades of pinkie-size plastic liquor bottles tramped-flat but still glinting like fool's gold in the sun—this jump-startin' my

efforts here—me gettin' the old move-on, hurryin' it up now and haulin' ass in earnest to beat the clock and get all these U-hauled apartment knickknacks unloaded so I can high-tail my butt back to the shady little safety of good ol' Pleasant Street three hundred miles

north of this, the wicked Emerald City—but too late! Sasquatch dreadlocks eclipse my sun and the dust-dry diesel-fumed air around me goes zoo-foul, goes all sweat-urine-earrings and-Thunderbird Wine dank on me and oh my... “Whattaya say whattaya say whattaya say” isn't really a question apparently,

but more shaman's chant, more on-going mantra—“*I* know you got some, *you* know you got some, an' we both know I gotta *have* some so whattaya say whattaya say whattaya say...” OK, somehow here I've gone and got myself inside one of the cages at the zoo, and here I am, rifling my wits,

ransacking my pants pockets for the price of admission out, and plunking loose change down into the palsied paw of this three-billy-goats-gruff troll who's already giving his gift-horse the hairy eye-ball. “*What?*” he accuses. “Seventy-three *cents?* What the f\*\*\* I s'posed to do with *that...*?”

like him, you know, the posh restaurant waiter and me, the deadbeat who just stiffed him out of his big tip...

**Second Prize, Ellen Taylor**

## YOU CAN GO HOME AGAIN

*And he never had the sense of home so much as when he felt that he was going there.  
It was only when he got there that his homelessness began.*

From Thomas Wolfe, *You Can't Go Home Again*

Well, you can go home, where much is the same:  
the horizon's tilt, the dip in the field,  
pocked driveway, porch, fresh bread. Same self-storage,  
same accents, same accidents, same slow curve,  
same slow newspapers, same slow news, but you  
are not – your cells replaced *in toto* twice,  
while you explored new continents, learned new  
languages—words for love, sadness, maybe.  
Now the market Muzax plays “Yesterday,”  
and just like that, by Eliot's peaches  
you feel the sore pang of a sob wanting  
out, and you swallow it whole. Deep inhale.  
You can go home again, you know the way.  
The question remains: How long will you stay?

**Third Prize, Carol Bachofner**

## OUT-TIDE

The tide reconsiders its sharp edge  
as watery things do  
marking the place of going out or in,  
making no sound or some  
great furious noise of arrival.

But at low, the tide seeks other places,  
leaves us with slick grey mud  
and a coastal personality. Watch  
for clam bubbles, ready  
the digging fork, the pail.

Put on a pair of waders.

If a raveler should clamp his nose shut  
against the out-tide smell,  
we here know well  
this is the stink  
of money.

**First Honorable Mention, Ted Bookey**

LISTENING TO ARCHANGELO CORELLI IN NEW ENGLAND

Being served dry  
biscuits and a watery instant  
(bread and water hospitality)  
in his New England home  
ain't my New York  
Jewish dish of tea idea.

Upright, I think, a bit  
up-tight, his posture is  
a New England tradition  
in leather chair with pipe

not anxious like me,  
my restless feet marking  
itchy time  
like the Diaspora.

Maybe he's inside his shoe  
tapping time to the allegro,  
Archangelo's wings beating  
wide over our two worlds.

**Second Honorable Mention, DiTa**

LE PETIT DEJEUNER

grey-headed fish eagle  
Asian stocky raptor  
reddish brown vest, white underpants  
black tuxedoed tail feathers

from cockcrow to dimday  
diving, swooping  
slow-moving rivers & streams  
lakes and tidal lagoon

hunter of shoaling and schooling  
synchronized swimmers  
bolting fast fare swim-able feast  
minnow kickshaws

from away, a stranger  
to my home: Hatchet Cove  
breathing my air  
ocean spirit: vitality & backbone

**Third Honorable Mention, Douglas Woody Woodsum****RED LOBSTER ON A PLASTIC BIB**

You forget the picnic table needs paint  
because all the meat from one lobster claw,  
drenched in melted butter, is in your mouth.  
You ignore the feeling of sunburn coming on  
because both hands and your teeth are busy  
gnawing an ear of corn glazed with melted butter.  
You think the flies buzzing the trash barrel  
and the gulls strutting and begging at your feet  
will add authenticity when you recount this meal.  
The sea pours from the other claw, when cracked.  
Tail meat curls like a giant shrimp. Peeling  
the red ribbon of meat from the top of the tail  
is like opening a gift. You move on to the bowl  
of clams steamed open enough to pry with your fingers.  
Held by the neck, like fruit by its stem, a clam  
takes one last swim in butter, then drops, ripe,  
into your mouth. Ignore the soggy dinner roll  
in the lobster juices. Ignore the paper cup  
of coleslaw. Blueberry pie awaits. Eat it  
like everything else, with your hands. The bib will protect you.

**PM Contest—Blank Verse: Judge, Jacob Fricke****First Prize, Douglas Woody Woodsum****BURIAL AT SEA**

—For Roland King

A cloud of milky ashes swirls and sinks  
in ocean swells, the final resting place,  
the fishing grounds that fed the man whose bone  
shards, slight as sand, now sink to ocean floor.  
Those bones that carried ninety-seven years,  
those joints but one, the hip he had replaced,  
those eyes the laser fixed so he could see  
and not see double . . . all settle now giving  
back, returning. A wisp or two of ash,  
caught in the breeze, carries across the waves  
to the rocky island crowned with green and rose  
bushes, prickly as the old man himself, but good.  
He lived but good. He gave what little he could . . .  
again . . . again . . . as now he gives and rests.

**Second Prize, Maggie Finch**

## ANOTHER

I'm sorry for my phone put off the hook.  
Walking the morning ride, suddenly all  
Was different: yet the same. I stopped and stared.  
How can I say this? Who will understand?  
I was another, watching with my eyes.  
Another woman, who? and where? And when?  
Breathed with my lungs, suffered my loneliness,  
Walked with my legs the path that was her own.

I may have been that woman—or was not—  
Or may have been the tree beside her door,  
Or patient little dog she wept upon  
In secret . . . in the night . . . I only know  
I saw a shadow moving, heard a cry.  
This was not wind. This was not wind, I swear.  
She'd waited—how?—until she found me there  
In human form—hoping that we could ease  
The anguish of our self-deceiving hearts

**Third Prize, Lynda La Rocca**

## THE FINAL ACT

The suitcase packed, the jacket on the chair,  
one ticket poking from the pocket rim.  
You step into the room to where I sit,  
regarding me as one more bridge to cross  
before your long-planned journey can begin.  
I rise to try and see into your eyes.  
You sit and turn your face to hide my view,  
and snatch my cigarettes—take the last one.  
Can't find yourself a light; you're offered none.  
And so it dangles from your lips as you  
jump up again to pace across the room.  
A whistle shrieks; you start and stop, then seek  
your jacket on the chair, pick up the case,  
your hand upon the doorknob, turn to me,  
the cigarette still dangling, start to speak;  
then pull it from your lips, and toss it down  
beside your feet. Yank at the unlocked door,  
then disappear, your bridges smoldering.

I tug at sightless bonds that held me fast,  
and force myself to reach, to close the door,  
then grind my last good smoke into the floor.

**First Honorable Mention, Alice Gifford**

85

Friends have taken their leave and I have wept,  
Mortality creeps near with whistling winds that  
Carry off the leaves and open up  
Eternity. Autumnal all my thoughts.  
True it is that I am not to live  
forever. That day awaits me just beyond  
my present scope, and now at eighty-five  
I am surprised that I am still alive.

**Second Honorable Mention, Elizabeth Berkenbile**MERMAIDS IN THE *UH-OH* ZONE

The needle on my dashboard starts to ping,  
the car begins to sputter, stalls, and dies.  
I'm stuck just like a boulder in a stream  
of summer traffic that I start to clog.  
*No problem*, I think, grappling for my purse  
and pulling out my cell phone, I soon find  
that once again I failed to plug it in.  
It has no charge, and now I'll pay the price.

My plans and expectations gone awry,  
light-headed as I start to enter in  
another realm, unanchored, and alone—  
the *Uh-Oh-Zone* has found me, once again.

Then suddenly a car pulls up behind;  
a silver, sleek convertible with fins,  
three women wearing pearls, and I can see  
compassion for a traveler in distress.  
They hand me a pink cell phone and insist  
they stay with me until my help shows up.  
The oldest one has spiky hair that gleams.  
I think they could be mermaids in disguise.

Perhaps, they are intrigued by this small town.  
I don't think it so odd that they should stop,  
for who, I think, could better comprehend  
a fish who's out of water, far from home.

**Third Honorable Mention, Jim Sargent**

## FLIGHT

What was it that I saw then? Something gray,  
 dark silver-gray, against a hard gray sky.  
 The fields about me were a softer gray;  
 old cold Spring snow now set and packed so tight  
 the crust would almost hold my weight but break  
 before I'd step again. And so I trudged  
 along.

'Twas then it came and peered at me.  
 An owl or gull perhaps? A hawk-like bird  
 with all its feathers ruffed against the cold?  
 It dipped so close and low I might have touched  
 it but for hands jammed deep inside my pants.  
 The cold wind sliced my face. I turned around,  
 ashamed to step-slump further down the path  
 now that I'd seen such grace slide by my eyes.

**Correction and apologies to Karie Friedman for an error in the last edition of the Stanza.** Her poem, *La Rentrée*, which won 2<sup>nd</sup> place as one of our "Travel" poems had two stray lines tagged onto the end which were not part of her lovely poem.

## MEMBER NEWS

Member Tom Lyford has published a new collection of poetry, *No Daffodils, No Clouds* (ISBN 978-1478230021) by <http://www.createpace.com/> on July 14th, 2012.

Share your member news! Send your publication news to Cynthia at:

[Brackett-Vincent@encirclepub.com](mailto:Brackett-Vincent@encirclepub.com)

or to PO Box 187, Farmington, ME 04938.

Please include your contact information in case of questions.

Deadline for Member News, next *Stanza*:

February 1, 2013.

***How to Submit:***

- Members may submit news of recent book publications (books of poetry/books related to poetry), *or* news of books forthcoming.
- For individual poem publications, submit news anytime *after* publication (in print or online).
- Format for submitting book publications (books of poetry/books related to poetry): member's name; name of book (including subtitle if applicable); publisher; date of release.
- Format for submitting poem publications: member's name; name of poem; journal or website name; name of press if different from journal (i.e. "*the Aurorean*; Encircle Publications"); date on journal or website (i.e. "Spring/Summer 2012"); volume and issue number.

## MEMBER PROFILE: MARGERY KIVEL

*We are delighted to have the chance to get to know you better, Margie! Let's start off by asking you where you live, and where you are from...*

I have recently moved from Harpswell to Freeport, Maine. Having bounced around the country from Virginia (early childhood) to Maine (through college), then California and Michigan, it is good to finally be back in Maine.

*How did you learn about Maine Poets Society?*

When I returned in 2011, my first mission was to find a poetry group and I discovered the Maine Poets Society on the web.

*What aspects of being a member do you enjoy the most?*

It is so refreshing to be among fellow poets—kind of like being with your own flock (swans, of course). The energy of a shared passion really fires up the writing process! Listening to the judges read the entries from the poetry contest at the last meeting certainly cracked wide open my previous conceptions of what was possible. The poems and the judges were exceptional, and I found Jacob's Fricke's detailed explanations of his critiques thought provoking.

*If you could offer any suggestions for Maine Poets Society, what might they be?*

Judging from the interest generated by his talk, I would think further exploration in the dynamics of the different poetic forms and ways to tweak them would be of interest to the membership. Sometimes, being reminded of what you already know produces new seeds.

*What type of poetry do you like to write? And how do you get and stay inspired?*

I don't know how to describe my own work. I am basically writing from instinct and a background as an artist who talks in pictures. A series of life-altering experiences spurred me into writing poetry on a daily basis as an emotional release in 2009. Before that I had the perfect job as Administrative Assistant at a Historical Society where I was able to combine my art and writing to create exhibits for their museum. This summer I attended the Kathleen Ellis *Poetry and Art Workshop* at the Farnsworth Museum in Rockland, and it was like walking into Wonderland. That awakening has changed the shape of my work. There is always something bubbling on the creative stove, as long as I tend the flame.

*Thank you, Margie, for sharing this profile with us and allowing your fellow MPS members to get to know you better!*

**—Cynthia Brackett-Vincent**

### Mentor Program

If you are an experienced poet, please consider volunteering to be a mentor. Many new members have asked to have a mentor, but we are desperately in need of mentors in order to fill these requests. If you would like to have a mentor or volunteer to be a mentor, please contact Master Mentor, Maggie Finch. Her phone number is: 443-2975. We have a wonderful opportunity within our poetic community to both share our knowledge and benefit from the knowledge of our more experienced poet colleagues.

*"Working with Maggie has helped me gain the confidence I needed to become a more successful poet. Her knowledge, kindness, and encouragement have been invaluable. Thank you, Maggie!". . . Elizabeth Berkenbile*

**Board Members**

Maggie Finch, co-President, Master Mentor [maggimer@gmail.com](mailto:maggimer@gmail.com)

Marta Finch, co-President [moimarta@comcast.net](mailto:moimarta@comcast.net)

Anne Hammond, Treasurer [ahammond5@comcast.net](mailto:ahammond5@comcast.net)

Deborah Neumeister, Hospitality, Secretary [ladyslipr622@yahoo.com](mailto:ladyslipr622@yahoo.com)

Elizabeth Berkenbile, Newsletter [eberkenbile@gmail.com](mailto:eberkenbile@gmail.com)

Cynthia Brackett-Vincent, Membership [brackett-vincent@encirclepub.com](mailto:brackett-vincent@encirclepub.com)

Sally Joy, Publicity [jsjoy@roadrunner.com](mailto:jsjoy@roadrunner.com)

Carol Bachofner, Programs, Round Robins [mim47@me.com](mailto:mim47@me.com)

*STANZA*, Maine Poets  
Society 186 Main Street  
Warren, 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  
Cynthia Brackett-Vincent at  
P.O. Box 187  
Farmington, ME 04938

---