

# STANZA

## OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE MAINE POETS SOCIETY

VOLUME 20, NUMBER 3

SUMMER 2012

### NEWS OF OUR NEXT MEETING

Our next meeting will be Saturday, September 15, 2012, Rockland Library, 80 Union Street, Rockland.  
Directions: (Note parking entrance is on White Street.)

From the North (Augusta): Take ME-17 E/Eastern Ave for 40.3 miles. Turn right onto Birch St/U.S. 1A. Continue to follow U.S. 1A then turn left onto Beech Street.

Take the 2nd right onto White Street.

From the South (Portland): Take I-295 N to exit 28 toward US-1/Coastal Route/Brunswick Bath. Merge onto U.S. 1 S and keep left at the fork. Turn left onto U.S. 1 N/Mill Street. Continue to follow U.S. 1 N for 51.9 miles. Turn left onto Broadway/U.S. 1A. Take the 3rd right onto Limerock Street and then take the 2nd left onto White Street.

From the East (Bangor): Take U.S. 1A W/Bangor Road. Continue onto ME-3 W/U.S. 1 S/E Main St

Continue to follow U.S. 1 S for 29 miles. Turn left onto Main Street in Camden.

Continue onto U.S. 1 S/Elm Street. Turn right onto Rankin Street. Take a slight left onto Union Street. Turn right onto Beech Street. Take the 1st left onto White Street.

### Agenda for Meeting

9:30 Registration and coffee	1:00 PM Contest—FORM: <b>Blank Verse</b>
10:00 Business Meeting	guest judge, <b>Jacob Fricke</b>
10:30 AM Contest—SUBJECT: “ <b>From Away</b> ”	1:50 Guest judge reads his work
member judge, <b>Jenny Doughty</b>	2:30 Announcements and closing
11:20 Member judge reads her own work	2:45 Reading in the Round
12:00 Lunch and <b>Silent Auction</b>	

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### OUR NEXT CONTESTS

#### Instructions for Submitting:

- Maggie Finch, 1463 Washington Street, Bath, ME 04530
- DEADLINE—**POSTMARKED** 15 August 2012
- 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: Jenny Doughty** will judge our poems (any form with a limit of 24 lines) on **“From Away.”** There are no restrictions on this theme. She looks forward to seeing what participants will do to interpret and represent the subject. This topic can include any experience of being “from away” - an outsider in another culture, even another part of your culture such as a family with different traditions, or of simply being an onlooker. Or you could reverse things and write of looking at an outsider from the inside.

**PM Poem—FORM: Jacob Fricke** will be judging **Blank Verse.**

Blank verse is unrhymed iambic pentameter - is perhaps most familiar to us as the poetic form used in Shakespeare's plays. Iambic pentameter has often been called the meter in English most similar to everyday speech. For this contest, I'll be looking for ways words can create sound qualities without rhyming at the ends of lines, ways lines can subtly adhere to a fixed meter - five feet per line, an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable for each of the five feet - while still creating the feel of natural speech, ways a natural train of thought can be broken up into a series of discreet lines, each with its own purpose, and ways an underlying rhythmic structure can give ordinary speech conviction and force.

#### ABOUT THE JUDGES

**Jacob Fricke** has been performing poetry in various connections for over ten years, including on radio and television, at fairs, on the stage, and in the streets. He has twice been featured at the Belfast Poetry Festival. At Mr. Paperback in Belfast, he had an active hand in the annual Waldo County Young Poet Laureate Contest. He is the author of *This Book of Poems You Found* from The Illuminated Sea Press and is the current Poet Laureate of Belfast. Fricke works *at hello, hello books* in Rockland.

**Jenny Doughty** is a British Poet who has lived in Maine for ten years. She is a former English teacher, and an Education Adviser to Penguin Books in the UK. She has edited an anthology of pre-20<sup>th</sup> century poetry *Key Poets*, and published two children's non-fiction books *Historical Diaries, Letters and Journals*, and *Breakthroughs in Science* under the name Jenny Green. Her short stories and articles have been published in a number of magazines, including *Bella* magazine, *Parenting*, and *First Steps*, where she also did a stint as an agony aunt (Brit-speak for a person like Dear Abby who offers answers to readers' problems.) In the United States, her poems have been published in *Gestalt Review, Horticulture* magazine, *Pulse* online literary review and *Naugatuck River Review*.

## SPRING 2012 CONTEST WINNERS

### AM Contest— Travel: Judge, Ellen Taylor

#### First Prize, Carol Milkuhn

The Road to Traveling Light: a Woman's Journey

I relax into a padded mat, pulling knees to chest,  
and gently rock, massaging muscles, molding flesh to floor,  
while fleece-lined sweats slide smoothly over skin, and I think of

corsets, pantyhose and girdled thighs, of wood and whalebone  
creating curves, full-breasted bosoms and hourglass hips,  
of being beaded and braided, embroidered and brocaded,  
photographed and poured into  
    white linen for lawn croquet  
    or black satin for High Tea,  
bell-skirted, bone-waisted, but unable to breathe as  
I arch my back,

    body angled, bending to form a bridge –  
and I am grateful that I travel light, simply clothed,  
can feel the stretch of muscle, of bare feet on a cold floor,  
explore the edges  
    of natural, naked and raw.

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## Second Prize, Karie Friedman

La Rentrée

At Le Sancerre on the rue des Abbesses,  
we share a goodbye glass with friends,  
summer travels done, the first dry  
leaves scraping under the café table.

This is the season when liaisons falter,  
simple passion proves more complicated  
than we thought, unexplained silences  
lengthen between lovers, even the cricket's

ever-hopeful signals slowed by cold.  
A rumble of exhaust and a woman  
on a Harley pulls up near our table,  
wild red hair catching sunbeams,

her slender body in sharp contrast  
with the beast of black metal and chrome  
idling between her legs. All eyes turn  
as she touches boots to pavement, adjusts her scarf,

then revs the engine, a pit-of-the-stomach purr,  
and merges into traffic. In her mirror,  
we who were at the picture's center recede,  
background for the upward arc of her life.

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### Third Prize, Tom Lyford IDIOT'S GUIDE TO WORMHOLES

*"The shortest distance between two points is a straight line."* —Euclid  
*"The shortest distance between two points is not a straight line."* —Einstein

Not just the stuff of sci-fi. Northwest Passage? The Panama Canal?  
 Hell, even the old fire station Bat-Pole? All classic wormholes...  
*wormholology* being the study of lines, straight and curved;  
 of detours and shortcuts; of getting from point A  
 to point B; of getting to the other side

Ask the fleabag-motel-bedbug, commandeering your *Millenium*  
*Falcon* suitcase, about wormholes—by-passing airport security  
 and jet-setting from Florida, say, to Flint, Michigan; racking  
 up his frequent flyer miles in quantum-leaps to new  
 mattress Meccas anywhere and everywhere

Or the germ, regularly launching itself from the twin missile silos of  
 somebody's *nasal mucosa* in Big Bang sneezes—supernova-spews  
 of micro-galaxies, solar systems, and little green-cheese moons  
 destined for recapture in the tractor-beam thrall of the twin  
 docking bays of somebody else's *nasal mucosa*...

Or that Flight 19 squadron of keys and coins and combs gone missing  
*without a trace* down the Bermuda Triangle of your pants' pocket,  
 the one with the dark, patient spider of a black-hole residing at  
 the bottom, that linty little event-horizon gateway to the  
 alien asphalt surfaces of the sidewalks below...

Not just the stuff of sci-fi, no. But going a long way, perhaps,  
 toward explaining that *downed 1947 UFO in Roswell*...?

### Honorable Mention, Jim Brosnan 763 Miles From Denver

Holding the Hemi back at seventy-five, I whisk past  
 Peterbilts and Freightliners as well as countless silver  
 silos and red barns just yards from Interstate-80  
 as dusk envelops endless wheat. The stark silhouettes  
 of white farmhouses vividly outlined in an orange-stained  
 horizon are visible through cottonwood canopies. A black  
 plume rises from the parched soil, follows a John Deere's  
 return from an afternoon's labor. I turn into the Flying J  
 Travel Plaza outside of Davenport, park the Jeep a hundred  
 yards from a row of idling diesels, their purple and yellow  
 cabs vacant, their upright chrome exhausts belching fumes  
 into the Iowa evening. I enter Denny's, climb up on a red

swivel seat at the counter, wonder as I head west if she still remembers that summer—daily hikes at twelve thousand feet across a barren moonlike landscape daubed with snowfields and tiny pink blooms of alpine vegetation, the occasional elk and moose sightings, the distant valleys visible through boughs of towering Colorado spruce and aspen on our nightly descents—holding her, my arms around her waist as we savored the snowcapped range together in mountain silence. I pick up the laminated menu, read the caption, “Breakfast Served All Day”.

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### **Second Honorable Mention, Janet Favor**

By the Side of the Road

I am a two year veteran of this African country confident of my limited Swahili and driving skills, no mean feat on the “wrong” side of the road. My friend from the States hangs on my every word while I am oblivious to how she holds them tight against her chest.

Jeep packed up to the roof, back doors strapped shut, we speed along for hours seeing few animals and no people. We stop at the border to the Northern Frontier, scribble in the register: date, time, names, vehicle. “Why?” she asks. “In case we don’t come back,” I say, with a smirk. I pay no mind to the shiver that vibrates her shoulder blades.

I may have embellished the story from the paper: the tourists stopped by bandits...stripped of all their clothing and jewelry... abandoned by the side of the road.

As we bump along, eating dust, the rearview mirror reveals doors swinging open. I brake, scattering debris behind, flopping like birds with broken wings. We are cemented to our seats, fixated on the man in the side mirrors walking towards us from behind. I wonder where he came from. She thinks he will take the jeep and leave us naked by the side of the road.

I recognize the tribal cloth tightly wrapped around his loins, my hands loosen their grip on the wheel. My friend’s teeth chatter non-stop.

He bends down, sticks his head in her window, teeth gleaming. Her delicate pink panties fall limp into her open palm. “Asanti sana,” I smile: thank you very much.

**Third Honorable Mention, Jim Todd**

## The American Way

Coming from England, my wife and I, back in 'sixty-eight  
 had studied American ways, listened to Alistair Cooke,  
 read books, watched movies and seen the ads in National Geographic.  
 We knew that America had exciting cities with seedy violent dockyards,  
 the West – which contained the Rockies and California where fruit grew,  
 trains full of hobos, small towns with corrupt sheriffs,  
 shoeshine boys, kindly black servants and scientists locked in Los Alamos.

We had imported a Volkswagen Beetle from Germany  
 and went to the New York docks to pick it up,  
 On a bitterly cold February day. On the waterfront.

Neglect and dirt all around. The two public phones vandalized.  
 The Customs hut neat and clean. Officials stamped our papers,  
 sent us to another hut, three men inside sat around a stove.  
 A few yards away, a group of men stood and shivered in the cold.

We went to the shed window and knocked. The window slid open,  
 leaking cigarette smoke and heat from the stove. A man said “Whaddyer want?”  
 We showed him our papers. He frowned and confided a warning  
 “This could be a long time – – could be a *very* long time – – maybe even two or three days.”  
 I laid a ten-spot on the counter and it vanished.  
 He said “Wait over there,” pointing to the groups of men and slid the window closed.

Five long cold minutes passed. He opened the window and called:  
 “Charlie – get these people their car – they've been here three days now.”  
 Charlie drove the car round three minutes later.

We had done it the American way!

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**PM Contest—“Triolet:” Judge, Kathleen Ellis****First Prize, Ellen Goldsmith****Reversals**

Look closely to find what's not there,  
 no water in the cove, no smile on your face.  
 We all know perfect happiness is rare.  
 Look closely to find what's not there.  
 Last night each star seemed to stare –  
 for all time firmly fixed in place.  
 Look closely to find what's not there,  
 no water in the cove, no smile on your face.

As you lower into a pli , think rise,  
 Note when what seems wrong is right.  
 What matters is quality, not size.  
 As you lower into a pli , think rise,  
 say it over and over like a reprise.  
 Walk so your steps drum in the night.  
 As you lower into a pli , think rise.  
 Note times when what seems wrong is right.

The other side of the coin isn't heads or tails.  
 Alternatives multiply – starlings in the sky.  
 Fixed ways of thinking are invisible jails.  
 The other side of the coin isn't heads or tails.  
 Think back to childhood, sandboxes and pails,  
 wizards and witches, creatures that fly.  
 The other side of the coin isn't heads or tails.

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### Second Prize, Woody Woodsum

On the Back Steps

Night-song: stars, frogs trilling, water in a stream . . .  
 Goosebumps, thrilling, come and go with the breeze.  
 From dark space, from mud, from water we came.  
 Night-song: stars, frogs trilling, water in a stream . . .  
 We fear the end, but fearing has its gleam.  
 The songbirds aren't dead; they're asleep in the trees.  
 Night-song: stars, frogs trilling, water in a stream . . .  
 Goosebumps, thrilling, come and go with the breeze.

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### Third Prize, Elizabeth Berkenbile

Like the Birds

Orioles perched on a telephone line  
 cannot imagine the magic they touch,  
 content to assume that it's only a vine.  
 Orioles perched on a telephone line  
 can't hear the voices, electric, sublime,  
 running through wires their little feet clutch.  
 Orioles perched on a telephone line  
 cannot imagine the magic they touch.

Perhaps like the birds, we breathe unaware  
 of worlds within worlds we can comprehend  
 and think what we know is all that is there.  
 Perhaps like the birds, we breathe unaware--  
 while things unimagined move through the air,  
 we cling to beliefs we dare not suspend.  
 Perhaps like the birds, we live unaware  
 of worlds within worlds we can comprehend

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**First Honorable Mention, John Benoit**

## Pulling Teeth

Folk who claim talk is cheap  
never employed a wordy shyster  
to settle a quarrelsome cause of action.

Folk who claim talk is cheap  
always have an opposite reaction  
after hiring a courthouse jester.

Folk who claim talk is cheap  
haven't danced to the tune of a shyster.

Let me tell you about Uncle Bill  
who engaged a courtroom buffoon  
to straighten out a dental mistake.

Let me tell you about Uncle Bill  
who wasn't really mentally awake;  
retaining a dude donned in pantaloons

Let me tell you about Uncle Bill  
And the lawyer's verbal loony-tunes.

The judge threw Bill's case out,  
rapping the gavel in a "Wham"  
that halted the lawyer's lingo.

The judge threw Bill's case out  
with a surprising shout of "Bingo"  
and ruling the case was a sham.

The judge threw Bill's case out,  
bellowing, "Take your false teeth and scam!"

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**Second Honorable Mention, Mary Ann Moore**

## TRIOLET

She slipped on the ice and fell  
We laughed until our sides split.  
I fear we will all go to hell  
She slipped on the ice and fell.  
Please promise you'll never tell  
The poor girl's name was Margrit.  
She slipped on the ice and fell  
We laughed until our sides split.

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**Third Honorable Mention, Barbara Baig**

## At the Zoo in July

The polar bear behind the bars.  
People escape their sweltering cars  
To watch him not eat.  
The polar bear behind the bars  
Wilts, a white lump, in the heat.

The polar bear behind the bars  
 Wilts, a white lump, in the heat.  
 An exiled king, a dethroned czar.

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### President's Message

We met in the beautiful fireplace room at UM Augusta which leant a nice informal feeling to the meeting. With several new (or, new-ish) members, we took a bit longer than usual with the initial self-introductions, allowing us to learn a little more about one another.

The turnout was excellent, with the highest-ever number participating in the contests: Ellen Taylor helped us “Travel” to all sorts of interesting places; and *triolet*s with Kathleen Ellis were loads of fun! Both critics shared their own poetry after reading comments they had made on our entries.

The Reading-in-the-Round was one of the best—and in comfortable lounge chairs this time. There were also some fine buys to be had in the Silent Auction.

Thanks to all of you who chipped in to help—even in small ways; but we must single out Deb Neumeister’s true dedication—just back from months in Florida tending her father, and with two obligations that Saturday, she still made time to organize the morning coffee and the lunches, though unable to stay for the meeting herself. (*And* she brought us the last lilacs from her garden!) Marija Sanderling took minutes again and Dita Ondek shared the wonderful new web-site she designed for us—so we now have a place to go if we’ve forgotten dates or deadlines—also, a link to send a friend wishing to join MPS: [mainepoetsociety.com/](http://mainepoetsociety.com/) Those of you who want to become more involved, please don’t wait to be asked—show up early to sit in on the Executive Board Meeting or help with setting up.

We hope you will all join us at the Rockland Library on September 15<sup>th</sup>. If you want a meeting in your neck of the woods, do send information on where we might meet. Unfortunately, at this time, not in Bangor or points north (last time only eleven members showed up there!); though someone *has* expressed interest in forming a new chapter in that area. Contact one of us for details—and remember also to check on Round Robins and Mentoring.

May the Muse be with you,  
 Maggie and Marta.

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### **Member Profile: Maggie Finch, MPS Co-President**

I sat with Maggie on a warm June afternoon in her lovely home in Bath, chatting her up over salad, cookies and tea. I told her I would never get any work done if I lived where she does: overlooking the Kennebec, I would be tempted to sit and look out all day. I would venture a guess that much of her inspiration comes from this setting.

Maggie shared that she grew up in New Jersey right on the ocean (“the tip of New Jersey”) in Cape May Point, also known as “Twenty Miles at Sea.” In her adolescence, she lived in New York overlooking the Hudson River. It seems she has always had a connection with the water. As a young adult, she visited Maine

as her aunts rented cottages in Maine for the summer in order to get away from the city and the heat. She felt, upon making the decision to move to Maine (when she became widowed), as if she was “going home.” She has always been a pacifist, active in the War Resisters League—an organization that one of her aunts founded. In 2010 at age 89, Maggie participated in the Maine Peace Walk and several local newspapers picked up the story.

Maggie raised her children principally in New York City. Of her five children (four daughters and one son), two are poets and translators—as we know—both Marta and Annie. I asked Maggie when was it that she began to write poetry. She began writing in earnest after the age of ten when her father left home. At first she wrote poetry solely from her mother’s perspective. Her interest in poetry continued through her young adulthood and Maggie enjoys writing sonnets and published a full-length collection last year, titled *Sonnets from Seventy-Five Years*. As a young woman, she enjoyed listening to lectures on Shakespeare given in New York by W. H. Auden, and at one such lecture she met her second husband. While in New York, she applied for and was accepted into the Poetry Society of America (in the days when one had to apply to join).

Shortly after moving to Bath, she attended a lecture on “Poetry and Jazz,” given by MPS member Anne Hammond, who turned out to be a next-door neighbor! Maggie promptly joined the society! I asked Maggie what it is that she enjoys most about being a member of Maine Poets Society. She answered, “Just knowing that other poets are around.” It is about the sense of comradeship, common interest and purpose. A place for poets to be with other poets. She has worn many hats for MPS, filling in here and there as needed, mentoring new members, coordinating the MPS mentor program, editing the two most recent MPS anthologies, and she enjoys receiving and processing the contest poems as they arrive three times a year. When asked about her co-presidency, she said she and Marta became co-presidents “through the back door.” At a time when the presidency was open, Maggie knew that she would need help if she were to consider the position, and Marta agreed to jump on board as co-president. It is a partnership that serves us members well.

Lastly, I asked Maggie if she had any suggestions she’d like to see MPS implement. She is very pleased with the organization, and sees the new website as moving us in the right direction, but if she had one wish, it would be for more informal get-togethers—if localized groups of MPS poets were able to get together more often, it would ease the burden of being spread out geographically. he did (in jest) institute one new rule before I left: Anyone who visits her from now on must bring food. (I suggest bringing a grilled salmon salad and shortbread cookies.) Maggie will provide the tea and easy, companionable conversation while the Kennebec will offer up ambiance and inspiration.

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### Member Publications & News

#### Poems:

Lynda La Rocca’s poem, “In the Now,” received an honorable mention in Maine’s Friends of Acadia 8th Biannual Nature Poetry Prize contest for 2012.

#### Books:

Cynthia Brackett-Vincent’s co-edited anthology (with Carol Smallwood and Colleen S. Harris; Foreword by Molly Peacock), *Women on Poetry: Writing, Revising, Publishing and Teaching* was released in January of 2012 by McFarland. Paperback/Kindle; 286 pages.

<http://www.mcfarlandbooks.com> or <http://www.amazon.com>

Bob Brooks’ collection *Unguarded Crossing*, published in 2011 by Antrim House, was named first runner-up for the Eric Hoffer Book Award for Poetry. See US Review of Books: <http://www.theusreview.com/USRhoffer.html#poetry> and short-listed for the Maine Literary Award in Poetry (it came in third). His chapbook, *Companion Pieces* appeared this spring from Finishing Line Press. <http://www.finishinglinepress.com>

Lynda La Rocca’s third poetry book, *Spiral* (chapbook-length, perfect-bound) was published in April 2012 by Liquid Light Press—a new, independent, small press that focuses on Colorado poets. <http://www.liquidlightpress.com>

#### Distinctions/Posts/Fellowships/Grants:

Carol Bachofner was named **Poet Laureate of Rockland** at Poetry Month Rockland’s annual Poetry Swarm on April 26, 2012. Author of four books of poetry and hundreds of published poems, Bachofner was chosen to be the face of poetry in a city that has moved itself from simple fishing town to an art destination. According to the Mayor, “a Poet Laureate is a symbol of the important role that ... poetry plays in the lives of our community.” She will serve a two-year, renewable term.

Cynthia Brackett-Vincent was selected to participate in the Frost Place Conference on Poetry and Teaching in Franconia, New Hampshire, June 24–28, 2012. The Conference is co-led by Dawn Potter and Baron Wormser.

<http://www.frostplace.org>

Please include your contact information in case of questions.  
Deadline for Member News, next Stanza: November 1, 2012.

- Members may submit news of recent (in the previous twelve months) 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 (i.e. "*the Aurean*; Encircle Publications"); date on journal or website (i.e. "Spring/Summer 2012"); volume and issue number.

Share your news! Send your member 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:

November 1, 2012.

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*Correction from the Winter Stanza 2012: The triolet sample was titled "Tryst."*

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)

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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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