

STANZA

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE MAINE POETS SOCIETY

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July 2026

NEWS OF OUR NEXT MEETING

Our fall in-person meeting will take place on **Saturday, September 19 at Saint Luke's Episcopal church in Wilton.** The address is 59 High Street. Entering from the rear is easiest as that's where you will park and where the entrance to fellowship hall is located. This will as usual be a hybrid meeting. A link will be sent to all current members a day or two prior to the meeting.

In-person registration will begin at 9:30. Coffee and tea will be available. **Our hospitality hostess has offered to prepare lunch for us, so it is important that you let us know by Wednesday, September 16, if you plan to attend.**

The judge for the fall members-only contest will be Bill Schulz. He will offer a workshop on Saturday, October 17 from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. at the Public Library in Windham. See details on Page 3.

Plans for the afternoon of September 19 are to celebrate the publication of *Timberline and Shoreline*, our long awaited Anthology celebrating our 90th anniversary. Copies will be available for \$10.

September Members-Only Contest

Times New Roman or Arial font preferred.

(REMINDER: Submission to a contest constitutes permission to publish. Please do not submit previously published work or things out for consideration)

Deadline: August 19, 2026

Contest Details

Contest: A Place Poem

Write a poem exploring a place, real or imagined, of no greater than 30 lines in the format of your choice.

A place belongs forever to whoever claims it hardest, remembers it most obsessively, wrenches it from itself, shapes it, renders it, loves it so radically that he remakes it in his own image. ~ Joan Didion

Look around. Where are you? Are you familiar with this place or is it strange, unreal, frightening? Or is it your childhood home, a sacred mountain, or a beach in Sardinia? Frost found himself at a fork in a road. Dante's journey began in a dark wood. 100 cantos and 14,233 lines later, the poet Virgil and his beloved Beatrice walked him through Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise. You do not have to go to such lengths! Two poems are shown below as examples. Here are links to two more:

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/46481/a-blessing>; [moment :: wislawa szymborska – poetry](#)

On this Very Street in Belgrade by Charles Simic

Your mother carried you
Out of the smoking ruins of a building
And set you down on this sidewalk
Like a doll bundled in burnt rags,
Where you now stood years later
Talking to a homeless dog,
Half-hidden behind a parked car,
His eyes brimming with hope
As he inched forward, ready for the worst.

<https://poets.org/poem/very-street-belgrade>

Steady, They Say, by Gary Snyder

Clambering up the rocks of a dry wash gully,
Warped sandstone, by the San Juan River,
look north to stony mountains
shifting clouds and sun
– despair at how the human world goes down
Consult my old advisers
“steady,” they say
“today”

[Steady, They Say – Gary Snyder | Edge of Atlantic](#)

The Judge

Bill Schulz lives in Maine, not far from the farm his ancestors settled in 1783. He is the author of two books of poetry, *Dog or Wolf* and *Another Psalm*. His poetry has appeared in *The Aureorean*, *The Maine Arts Journal*, *Nine Mile*, *Nixes Mate*, *The Seneca Review*, and other periodicals. His paintings have appeared in *The Glacier*, *The Maine Arts Journal*, *The Santa Clara Review*, *Sunspot Lit* and other periodicals. He is the founder and former editor of *The Hole In The Head Review*. He holds a master's degree in English from The University of New Hampshire Poetry Workshop (1977) and a master's degree in theological studies from The Franciscan School of Theology (2005).

How to Submit

Only current MPS members are eligible and only one entry per person is permitted. Note that Times New Roman or Arial font is preferred.

If submitting by USPS: Mail to: Deborah Smith at 10 Shoreland Drive, #306, Belfast, ME 04915. Send 2 copies of your poem (ONE with your name; one without) in a letter-size (#10) envelope marked "CONTEST." **Must be postmarked on or before August 19 to be considered.** Please be sure to enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope.

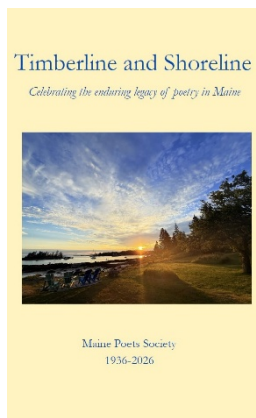
Email entries must be sent as an attachment on or before August 19 to deborah.smith.2006@gmail.com. In the upper right-hand corner, include your name, address, telephone number and email address. **Please send the poem in a .doc, .docx or .rtf format. Do not send it as a .pdf.** We suggest **Member Contest Entry May 2026** or something similar in the subject line.

Launching the Anthology: *Timberline and Shoreline*

Rather than a workshop for the afternoon session on September 19, we'll be commemorating the 90th anniversary of the founding of Maine Poets Society and officially launching our new anthology with poems by over 50 of our members. After a special lunch prepared by our Hospitality Chair, we'll reconvene for some celebratory activities that everyone can participate in, whether with us in person, or on Zoom.

- **Reading in the round.** Those whose work is in the anthology may read one of those poems, and those who did not contribute may read one of their own poems or a favorite that has always inspired them.
- **90 poetry prompts.** Before the meeting's over, can we collectively come up with 90 ideas to share among our members, to nudge our creativity as our 90th year winds down?
- **Rough drafts.** In a timed free-writing session, try your hand at a poem about being 90 years old. Extra points for a clever limerick! Or, write an ekphrastic poem based on the photograph on the cover of *Timberline and Shoreline*.
- **Door prizes.** We'll have a (free) drawing for prizes of books and writerly items.

The anthology will be available for purchase at the meeting (only \$10 per copy), and we'll have free bookmarks for everyone present.



**On October 17, Bill Schulz will present a hybrid workshop
Workshop: Poetry of Place, real or imagined**

Time will be 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. Those able to attend in person will meet at the Windham Public Library. This two-hour workshop will invite participants to explore poetry as a way of attending closely to the places, real or imagined, that have formed, moved, scared, or haunted them. We'll identify key characteristics of place-based poetry and offer examples from a range of voices before sharing a poem or two, yours or another poet's. Be prepared to read your selections aloud. More will be shared as the time approaches.

May 2026 CONTEST WINNERS

Contest: An Ars Poetica

Judge, Mike Bove

1st Prize— Jeanne Julian

Water skiing lesson

It wasn't fear that locked my grip. I love swimming, depths don't scare me. It was this: as I was dragged along, the ideal persisted, unextinguished, despite the pummeling. As soon as the boat revved, the rope yanked me prone *whack* in the water and instead of rising and riding the waves or letting go I clung to the handle on the tow rope, pulled face-first forward, furrowing fast as a shark but battered, graceless, baffled, blinded by the crush of water until the boat arced around to haul me out, hope and pride sluicing off into puddles at my feet as I shivered in the stern. Like now as words speed across the page, I'm pulled, almost choking, never finding equipoise, by some possibility: skimming strong and balanced unbound by earth, air, or water, the *I-did-it* gasp of grasping wingless flight.

2nd Prize—Elizabeth Koopman

A Poem

a cotyledon, green
fire, beginning
I must listen
for growth
like music, from the dark
underground

be ready

to give form
hold my hands around
liquid fire

shape
the colours
of music
guide
the vine

3rd Prize—Jim Brosnan

Awaiting Dawn

Under the glow
of thin silvery clouds,
I compose a narrative
poem at three-thirty
in the morning
describing sunlit fields
in a small Vermont town
before total darkness
smothered those meadows
sprinkled with red clover
and white wild daisies—

fields that we roamed
hand-in-hand years ago
as I now recreate
scenes of my sepia
tinted past when
I once again remember
our first whispers
under a canvas of stars—
my draft copy
an early rehearsal
for the final version.

1st Honorable Mention—Jenny Doughty**The work of words**

All making is pain. Your labor with child
breaks you open until baby arrives.
The cake you bake for her fourth birthday -

the one like a fairy-tale castle
with Swiss roll towers, ice-cream cone turrets,
candy flowers on the walls - is hours' work

her joyful glee repays, even when
it's reduced to crumbs in five minutes.
Even the poem you write about

the event that demolished your world -
the poem you can't read at an open mic
because tears still rise too easily -

becomes joy gathering words that pin down
this, this is how it was. These words are
the new-hatched butterfly you observe

on a blossom in spring sunshine split
its papery chrysalis and push free
to unfold its damp and crumpled wings.

2nd Honorable Mention—Gus Peterson**Ars Poetica: On Finding “Wash Me” Written on the Back of the Car**

Isn't the rain good enough? How it takes
the white graffiti of a bird, regifts it to earth.
The water cycle, the recycle, the cycle
of things we keep telling ourselves matter.
After the last payment, you took a picture,
posted it. Four or five thumbs up. One heart.
And what were they supposed to say?
Congratulations! For extricating yourself.
From a voluntary sentence. A self-imposed
re-freedom. How long was it on loan? Five years?
Six? Whoever remembers but the warden,
the bank? Tell us, how did you intend to distribute
what is so briefly yours – four doors, rubber meeting
the road? You are sentenced to possession.
Of this winter of years beneath your feet, accelerating.
You should vacuum it. You should be driving
but the passenger seat is also heated,
power pressed like a hand to the small of its back.
How it owns one half of this dual climate zone
like a far-flung planet you run across during the deluge
of a doomscroll, frozen eyeball staring into
what blinds. Unblinking, unable to spin away, the iris
so like yours – blue, but never weeping. Only
the flood that flashes before a tear gathers, drops.
Only if the fist of a meteor arrives with
its burning extinction.



Judge, Mike Bove, with MPS
Vice President, Deborah Smith.



3rd Honorable Mention—Nancy Sobanik Poem Maker

What if I tell you to write is to see,
but first, to notice?

In the beginning, a straight road.
A white paint line,
until mouth catches tail,
tail becomes a sphere, a galaxy of spheres.

And if I tell you to notice is to listen—
you must attend
to things euphonious,
for nothing less than music will do.

If a writer is adept, words whistle
cardinals through the labyrinth of ears,
sweet as a black velvet tango,
a salted caramel tap and jive.

Remember the sphere?
Some roll true, others veer,
but A always reaches Z.

Many poems arrive
at a door that snaps shut.
Others hold it open with a foot
and admit mist.

I have no authority
to speak, which is to say,
the poem finds
me, not the other way around.
It tells what I didn't know I know.
But allow me to parable
this—

A poet might pluck her brows
and wrap herself in skins,
yet when she commits
to words there is no window dressing.

She, who measures time in moons,
is architect of new life,
a weaver of allusion.
With eyes, ears, fingers, and tongue she is
composer of a silken thread.

An opportunity especially for Maine poets: Belfast Poetry Festival's Maine Postmark Poetry Contest

You have about a month to choose two of your poems and submit them to this year's Maine Postmark Poetry Contest, in which all submissions must be mailed with a Maine postmark! Winners of the contest are featured in various events during the Belfast Poetry Festival, which is October 15-18 this year. For the past decade, the contest's winning poems have been published by [The Maine Review](http://TheMaineReview.com). The 2025 contest received 182 entries, with the top three winners and an honorable mention selected out of the 10 finalists.

Oregon-based poet and writing teacher Julia Fehrenbacher will serve as this year's finalist judge. Julia is the author of three books of poetry, and the founder and facilitator of the online writing community *Write Yourself Free*. Learn more at www.juliafehrenbacher.com and on her Substack page.

The Maine Postmark Poetry Contest deadline is Friday, August 14. Consult the [Belfast Poetry Festival web site](http://BelfastPoetryFestival.org) for details on how to submit your work.



RESULTS OF THE MAINE POETS SOCIETY'S 2026 PRIZE POEM CONTESTS

After a one-year hiatus, the Maine Poets Society proudly sponsored our eighth Maine Prize Poem Contest, open to all Maine residents. As in the past, there were two categories: one for poets who have been previously published, and one for those who have not, with new and larger prize awards of \$150 and \$75 respectively. Our distinguished judge for the published category in 2026 was Meghan Sterling, author of four full length poetry collections and winner of Lily Poetry Review's Paul Nemser Book Prize. She is currently Poet Laureate of Gardiner, Maine. The MPS board served as judges for the unpublished category. Poets in both categories could enter up to 4 poems, previously unpublished. Topic and form were open, but there was a 50-line limit. Prizes were announced and presented at the 2026 Maine Writers and Publishers Alliance awards evening on May 28th in Gardiner, Maine at the Johnson Hall Opera House.

The Winner of the Published Poets Contest was Peter Beckford For "Have You Heard"

Have You Heard—Peter Beckford

That young couple down the hill are getting married,
so they say.
I might've guessed they were already married
but I can't say the question ever came to mind.
That's a nice difference nowadays.

Helen says it's called a ceremony of commitment,
which sounds awful dry, or ominous, to me.
I prefer "getting hitched" –
the image of a barn yard with a matched ox team,
but pick your favorite draft animal,
yoked or harnessed,
ready to pull,
trusting
for better or worse.

This couple reminds us of when all the hippies came
with their hair and good nature,
their pot and two goats,
and respect for old folks.
But they usually came in a group,
and these two know a lot more than nothing
about farming,
and we don't whisper about weed anymore.

Those hippies were what we needed though,
and there's an awful lot of them still around,

cleaned up and on select boards and such.
Like them, this couple getting married are stickers,
that's what Wendell Berry would call them.
He always says affection for place
is as important as anything,
not being afraid to root where you live.
You're not going anywhere and everyone knows it.

Which is an awful lot of what marriage is about
isn't it
at least in a rural place,
carrying affection together
for the place –
the people and plants
and paths in the woods,
knowing back roads, and swimming holes,
and where the biggest elm is,
discussing frost, then ice-out,
knowing your four directions and
thinking about the moon
and caring about the farmers and framers and brewers
and going to the library
and talking about the sound of the coyotes
and a porcupine's waddle,
all that
shared with affection.

Honorable Mention**Six over six, 8 a.m. - Katia Ancona**

The sun behind
translucent unbleached muslin
turns it plaid.

Double hung frames half overlapped,
a closed curtain spans
the full width of my bedroom window.

Undulating grids of dark and light,
fabric floats on airy breezes,
snaps and jerks against stronger gusts.

Shadows arch and stretch,
the cloth gives form to what can't be seen;
it plays the zephyr like you played me last night
teased between breath and stillness.

Honorable Mention**Lace Sestina, Alice Haines**

Alice has asked that we not share her poem in the *Stanza* so that she is free to offer it to a literary digest. We respect that, of course, but would remind you that when you submit a poem for our members-only contests, the same does not hold true. Offering a poem there includes "permission to print" and that counts as "pre-published" in terms of sending it elsewhere to consideration.

We asked Alice for comments about her poem and she offered this:

The poem weaves 'lace,' 'milk,' 'lean,' 'jewel,' 'marvel,' and 'lips' into a fabric of humanity that is textured with sadness and sin, beauty of the ordinary, and compassion.

Results of the Unpublished Prize Poem Contest
The Winner was Max Keeler for "The Moon Needs a Manicure"

The Moon Needs a Manicure
By Max Keeler

you left your lighter in my coat,
the one with the tear in the sleeve.
i carry it like a prayer
or a bad habit i don't wanna quit

the moon's been clipping its nails again
leaving slivers all over the bay
you'd laugh at that
say i talk like i swallowed a song

there's a pebble in my boot
and i don't take it out
reminds me of you
how you stay just enough to feel

last night i dreamt you were a crow
stealing scraps from my ribs
you said this is how love works
and flew off with my pocketknife

Honorable Mention—Robert Chance
Promise from the Silent Center
of the Winter Solstice

The wind has died, twilight expired giving up the sun's ghost
hours ago, the cold moon rides high over the cold earth.
I sit motionless as the bare trees, small part of the dearth
of winter, waiting. Stoplights mark time in the empty streets,
working without cause purpose or pause their automatic cycles.

Thoughts stumble upstairs, kick the past about the attic,
seeking souvenirs of smiles, of loves lost or obsolete.
Time sniffs by like a stray dog in the street.
The cold moon disappears behind a colder mist.
Ego guards against regret, the cop patrols a lonely beat.

Tides suckle strength from the deep maternal seas.
Trees swaddle spring leaves on sky-cradled stems.

A midnight wind rises, troubling nests left behind
by birds that will return to them in spring.
All around me sinks into sleep. I follow,
knowing the sun will wake me tomorrow
to promise from the silent center of the winter solstice.

Honorable Mention—Max Keeler
August Makes a Door of Me
a collage in four tenses

[before]

- i learn the names of bugs before the names of coworkers
- every goodbye at camp is sticky with sap and sunscreen
- i cry in the woodshed because a nine-year-old told me he'd miss me
- i say i hate marshfield like a chant, like if i say it enough, it'll spit me out

[now]

- august arrives like it always does: quiet, golden, suspicious
 - i buy a fan for the new apartment
- my friend sends me photos of the empty living room, echoing
 - i touch the doorknob of the future but don't turn it
 - i miss maine so much my stomach tightens at low tide
- a kid from camp waves to me in the grocery store. i feel like a myth

[becoming]

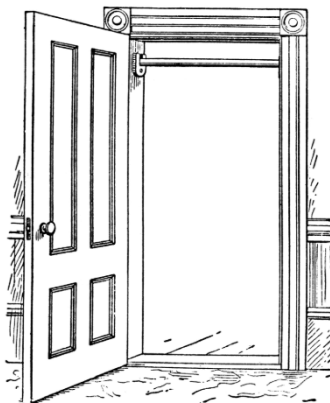
- the basil dies, we forget to water it, but the toaster finally arrives
 - i eat toast on the floor with my knees up to my chest
- someone yells "home!" when they walk in, and it makes me blink hard
 - we bike to the river without speaking
 - i leave my towel on the balcony and it smells like wind
 - we light candles in jam jars and laugh until we choke on it

[someday]

- the kids grow up and forget me
 - but i will always remember
- the soft thud of a juice box tossed from a lunchbox
 the name tags peeling in the heat
 the sound of sneakers in the woods

august doesn't ask permission
 she just
 opens the door
 and says,

go.



Publication & Member News

Poems & Prose:

First, we acknowledge the 57 members whose work appears in our 2026 Anthology, *Timberline & Shoreline* and member David Hyde who provided the wonderful cover photo. Rather than list all that information in this newsletter, we offer here a link to the Table of Contents.

<https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:US:f0e54172-6465-490c-b12a-78de9ccd81ba>

Timothy Barlow's poems "In this Garden," "There is a Heaviness that Follows Yesterday," and "This Patch of Ground" have been accepted to *Water & Stone: Literary Reflections on Life Downeast*, the first anthology from The Schoodic Poets' Gathering and Faith Lane Books LLC. The anthology will launch in conjunction with the Downeast Authors' Book Fair & Literary Festival in August 2026. Copies will be available at the Downeast Writers' Book Fair & Literary Festival on August 8th.

Laura Buxbaum's poems "Snakes in the road" and "Tattoo" were chosen by Gibson Fay-LeBlanc for the Maine Writers and Publishers Alliance's *Poems from Here*. "Snakes in the road" aired on Maine Public June 28th. "Tattoo" is forthcoming. Her poem "Fog of War" appeared in *Writers Resist's* Summer 2026 issue <https://www.writersresist.com/2026/06/24/fog-of-war/>. Laura was also a finalist in the MWPA Maine Literary Awards, Short Forms, Poetry category for "Tattoo and other Poems." Her poem "You come home for a visit and hang your laundry out to dry" is forthcoming in the summer issue of *Painted Pebble Literary Magazine*. Her debut chapbook, *Roadkill and Other Encounters*, will be published by Kelsay Books this fall.

Jenny Doughty's poems "Easter in Athens" and "Omaha Beach" will be in the summer issue of *Cafe Review*.

Mia Dyson's poems "Orange Man Under the Swinging Bridge and The ICY Road to Fascism" appeared in the Poetry Global Network's anthology *TDS 2026: Trump Derangement Syndrome*.

Sara Lynn Eastler's poem "This Day" will appear in issue 9.2 of *River Heron Review* and "The Bounds of Girlhood" will appear on the August 15th in *Hole in the Head Review*. Her poems "Mexican Marigolds" and "Stitched Together" will be published in the 12 Willows Press anthology *Thinning Light: Literary Reflections on Fall's Transformation in Maine*.

Richard Foerster has several poems forthcoming: "Mritasana" in *Anti-Heroine Chic*, "If Only" and "Rendered" in *Sequestrum*, "Ode to a Lenten Rose in a Pocket Garden" in *Cider Press Review*, and "Love Affair" in the 12 Willows Press anthology *Thinning Light: Literary Reflections on Fall's Transformation in Maine*.

Janie Gendron's poem "Hope" was chosen for the Deep Water series curated by Meghan Grumbling in the *Portland Press Herald* and was published in May 2026. Janie's poems "Sounds of Mercy" and "Shift End" were published in *Comfort Rounds: An Anthology of Solace* (Bee Monk Press, May 2026). Janie also had her poem "Both/And" accepted by the *Portsmouth Public Poetry Project* in April 2026, and her poem remains on display in the storefront window of The Vibe Collective in Portsmouth, NH.

Dr. Emory Jones's "Winter Sunshine," "Dancing Autumn—An Etheree," "Playful Spring—A Kyrielle" and "Verse Virus" were published in *Sagebrush and Silver: Nevada Poetry Anthology 2026*. "Light and Dark Haiku" was published in the Connecticut Poetry Society's Haiku Group for January 2026. His haiku "Daffodils...." was published in the *Connecticut Poetry Society's Haiku Group April 2026*. "Trick or Treat" won 1st Place in Category #7 (North Star Award) of the Mississippi Poetry Society 2026 Contest and was published in the *Mississippi Poetry Journal 2026 Contest Edition*. "Haunted House" won 2nd Place in the 2026 Mississippi Poetry Society Past Presidents Award of the Mississippi Poetry Society 2026 Contest and was published in the *Mississippi Poetry Journal 2026 Contest Edition*. Several of his poems won honorable mentions in the Mississippi Poetry Society 2026 Contest. "Eagle Snow" and "The Naming of Cats" were published in *Ink to Paper #10 2026* of the Poetry Society of Indiana. "Yellow butterflies...." Won 3rd Place in

Category #3 (Formal Haiku Award) of 2025 Oklahoma Poetry Society. It was also published in the *Connecticut poetry Haiku Group* in May 2026.

Jeanne Julian's poem "Second Chances" was in the Deep Water series curated by Meghan Grumbling in the *Portland Press Herald* (January 21, 2026). Her poems "They Never Said" and "Self-portrait as constellation" were published in *Does It Have Pockets* (April 1, 2026) and "The Drive to Work" was published in *Pinhole Poetry* (April 2026). "Almost Warm" is in *Wordpeace* (issue 11.1)

Carl Little has had three poems accepted for the 12 Willows Press anthology *Thinning Light: Literary Reflections on Fall's Transformation in Maine*. His review of Christian Barter's *The Ends: Poems* and Kimberly Cloutier Green's *Openings for Light to Pass Through: Poems* appeared in *The Café Review*.

Gus Peterson's manuscript, *Back Toward Luminescence*, was a finalist in The Poetry Corner's 2026 Chapbook Contest. Two poems from it—"Treatment Plan" and "Autumn, Still No Diagnosis and I'm Reading"—will appear this year with *Poems From Here*. A third, "Transplantsubstantiation," will appear in the Deep Water series curated by Megan Grumbling in the *Portland Press Herald*.

In May, Deborah Smith's poem, "The Art of Poetry is a Public Good (Proclaims the Poet)," won first prize in the Massachusetts State Poetry Society contest category for the Gertrude Dole Memorial Award. Also in May, her poem, "The Conversation Continues," appeared in *We Are The Watershed, 2026 Edition*, an anthology published by We Are the Watershed Collective in Eastport. In June, The Evergreen Press hosted a book launch in Belfast for a second volume of poems, *Tyranny! Maine Poets Decry the Demise of American Democracy*. Her poem, also titled "Tyranny," is included. Her non-fiction flash piece "A Red Sweatshirt" (less than 400 words), will appear in the online arts journal, *Synkroniciti* (Vol. 8, No. 3) in September.

Nancy Sobanik's poem "Vigil" won a contest honorable mention, judged by Joan Kwon Glass, and was published in *Odd Pocket Press, Issue 1*; "Backstitch Berlin, 1989" will appear in *Neologism Poetry Journal, Issue #109*; "We Rise in a Light That Is Already Leaving" and "Putting the Garden to Sleep" will appear in the 12 Willows Press anthology *Thinning Light: Literary Reflections on Fall's Transformation in Maine*; and "Stoop Sitting and Pickin" and "Gift Shop in Sedona, But Could Be Anywhere, USA" will appear in *The Café Review*, Summer 2026.

Books:

Mia Dyson's book *Penetralia* will be published by Finishing Line Press in Spring 2027, available in pre-sales through the publisher November 23-January 29.

Member News:

Nancy Sobanik was a featured reader at *Poetry In The Spaulding Center* in Kennebunk on July 10th, 1:00 pm - 3:00 p.m., sponsored by WePoets and Verse, along with Maine poets Maya Stein and Jeffrey Thomson and NY/VT poet Ralph Culver, who will read in tribute selected poems of the late poet Paul S. Nelson, who resided in Kennebunk (1934- 2026)

Looking for a New Editor for *Stanza*

Longtime MPS member Sally Joy has faithfully brought us *Stanza* since 2014 and has enjoyed doing so. She is finding, though, that it is time for her to step down and let someone else have the privilege and responsibility. Are you interested? If so, please let her know and she'll be happy to tell you what it entails. Her email address is sjoy43@gmail.com.

She currently produces *Stanza* in Microsoft Word, but a new editor would be free to choose whatever software he or she is comfortable with and would also be free to redesign the newsletter. Board members offer content and provide proofreading and other support.

The *Stanza* editor serves on the board of the society as an appointee, with a full voice and vote.



President's Ink July 2026

I gained a new level of respect for the publishing industry earlier this year as the anthology committee wrestled with putting together everyone's contributions to "Timberline and Shoreline" and formatting them to meet the printer's exacting requirements. As a society, we owe a huge debt of gratitude to our wonderful secretary, Jeanne Julian, whose mastery of the technical skills required was beyond anything we might have expected. It certainly saved us the money we would otherwise have had to pay the printers to do that level of preparation. As it is, we have ended up with a beautiful book that is a tribute to the poetic skills of our membership and a fitting celebration of our ninety years as an organization under one name or another.

These challenges did, however, have one consequence: we were unable to get our volumes in time for the May meeting, so we are having the official launch at the September meeting. Our hospitality chair, Diane Hunt, is laying on a special lunch for this, and as well as our normal contest event we are including a reading in the round by the poets from their work in the anthology. I hope that as many of you as possible will be there in person to celebrate and of course we always welcome on Zoom those members who live far away or have mobility issues.

The prospect of celebrating the anthology together also made me think about why these gatherings matter beyond the publication of a book. Although it is gratifying when people read and comment on your work, and publication is something we all celebrate, I don't think publication is the reason most of us write. You can be a poet for the sake of your own expressiveness without ever having been published. I find writing a poem often helps me to formulate what I think, to notice in retrospect something about a sight I've seen, or a memory I carry, or discover what I really want to say about an idea. Sometimes I surprise myself!

Writing poetry is an art (or a craft if you prefer). Like all skills it takes practice. It's not that there is a right or wrong way to write a poem, just that there is the challenge of finding the words, rhythm and music that allow another person to experience what we have seen, remembered or imagined. I have been fortunate to find in Maine Poets Society a group of people to whom that activity is meaningful in itself. I enjoy sharing my work with them at our Readings in the Round on Zoom and in turn hearing their work. Every reading reminds me how many different ways there are of seeing the world. Listening to one another's poems sharpens our own ears as well as our own voices. I look forward to hearing your voices at our next Reading in the Round and at the meeting in September.

Happy summer

Jenny Doughty

When I say I'm a poet, people always look surprised. One time a dental hygienist said, "Poet? Do people still do that?" As if poetry was something people wrote only in Shakespeare's time. Sometimes people ask, "What kind of poems do you write?" Or, "What are your poems about?" These seem like pretty basic questions, but I've always found them difficult to answer. What kind of poems do I write? Um, free verse? Poems for adults? Poems that mostly don't rhyme? And the other question is just as loaded, because I'm not thinking about what my poems are "about" when I'm writing them. I'm not planning a "theme." I think "aboutness," for a poet, can be a trap. I think you can ruin a poem by going into it determined to write about something in particular. Ideally, you pay attention and listen, and you let the language lead you, not some idea of "theme." The poem reveals itself over time. ~ Maggie Smith, in *The Slowdown*

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