

STANZA

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE MAINE POETS SOCIETY

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March 2026

NEWS OF OUR NEXT MEETING

Our spring in-person meeting will take place May 16 at Christ Episcopal Church, 2 Dresden Avenue in Gardiner. Off-street parking is available, and on-street parking is available to be closer to the handicap accessible entryway. The meeting includes the book launch and sale of the new anthology, the announcement of the members-only contest results, and a generative workshop. The judge for the members-only contest and our workshop leader will be Mike Bove. Registration begins at 9:30 a.m. The meeting starts at 10:00. There'll be a half-hour break for lunch and a 45-minute workshop beginning at 12:30. (Details on Page 3.) There will not be an attendance fee, but there will be a donation jar on the table with hopes of offsetting some of the cost of refreshments and renting the facility.

May Members-Only Contest

Times New Roman or Arial font preferred.

(REMINDER: Submission to a contest constitutes permission to publish.)

Deadline: April 16, 2026

Contest Details

Form: Ars Poetica. 40-line limit

Why write poems? What *is* a poem? The term *Ars Poetica* refers to a poem that explores or endeavors to explain the art of poetry: what it is, why it is, how it is. Write an *Ars Poetica* in any form. Three examples are suggested here for inspiration by contest judge, Mike Bove. (Please see also The Poetry Foundation for full copyright information.)

Of Modern Poetry

by Wallace Stevens

[Of Modern Poetry | The Poetry Foundation](#)

The poem of the mind in the act of finding
What will suffice. It has not always had
To find: the scene was set; it repeated what
Was in the script.

Then the theatre was changed
To something else. Its past was a souvenir.

It has to be living, to learn the speech of the place.
It has to face the men of the time and to meet
The women of the time. It has to think about war
And it has to find what will suffice. It has
To construct a new stage. It has to be on that stage
And, like an insatiable actor, slowly and
With meditation, speak words that in the ear,
In the delicatest ear of the mind, repeat,
Exactly, that which it wants to hear, at the sound
Of which, an invisible audience listens,
Not to the play, but to itself, expressed
In an emotion as of two people, as of two
Emotions becoming one. The actor is
A metaphysician in the dark, twanging

An instrument, twanging a wiry string that gives
Sounds passing through sudden rightnesses, wholly
Containing the mind, below which it cannot descend,
Beyond which it has no will to rise.

It must
Be the finding of a satisfaction, and may
Be of a man skating, a woman dancing, a woman
Combing. The poem of the act of the mind.

Poet's work

by Lorine Niedecker

[Poet's work | The Poetry Foundation](#)

Grandfather
advised me:
Learn a trade

I learned
to sit at desk
and condense

No layoff
from this
condensery

Ars Poetica?

by Czeslaw Milosz

[Ars Poetica? | The Poetry Foundation](#)

I have always aspired to a more spacious form that would be free from the claims of poetry or prose and would let us understand each other without exposing the author or reader to sublime agonies.

In the very essence of poetry there is something indecent: a thing is brought forth which we didn't know we had in us, so we blink our eyes, as if a tiger had sprung out and stood in the light, lashing his tail.

That's why poetry is rightly said to be dictated by a daimonion, though it's an exaggeration to maintain that he must be an angel.

It's hard to guess where that pride of poets comes from, when so often they're put to shame by the disclosure of their frailty.

What reasonable man would like to be a city of demons, who behave as if they were at home, speak in many tongues, and who, not satisfied with stealing his lips or hand, work at changing his destiny for their convenience?

It's true that what is morbid is highly valued today, and so you may think that I am only joking or that I've devised just one more means of praising Art with the help of irony.

There was a time when only wise books were read, helping us to bear our pain and misery. This, after all, is not quite the same as leafing through a thousand works fresh from psychiatric clinics.

And yet the world is different from what it seems to be and we are other than how we see ourselves in our ravings. People therefore preserve silent integrity, thus earning the respect of their relatives and neighbors.

The purpose of poetry is to remind us how difficult it is to remain just one person, for our house is open, there are no keys in the doors, and invisible guests come in and out at will.

What I'm saying here is not, I agree, poetry, as poems should be written rarely and reluctantly, under unbearable duress and only with the hope that good spirits, not evil ones, choose us for their instrument.

THE JUDGE

Mike Bove is the author of five books of poetry including *Mineralia*, forthcoming from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. His novella, *A Catalog of Imaginary Houses*, is forthcoming from Split/Lip Press. In 2024 he served as writer-in-residence at Acadia National Park, and he is the current Editor-in-Chief of *Hole in the Head Review*, a biannual poetry journal. Mike holds degrees from the University of New Hampshire and is Professor of English at Southern Maine Community College. He lives with his family in Portland where he was born and raised. www.mikebove.com

What can you enter in a Maine Poets Society Members-Only Contest?

Previously published poems are not eligible for this contest; this refers to any poem that has already been selected for a curated public journal, forum, or format (print or online). Members *may* submit poems that they have shared on their own social media (such as Facebook, a blog, or open mics)

Work that has been predominately generated by artificial intelligence (AI) is not eligible for this contest.

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 April 16 to be considered.** Please be sure to enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope.

Email entries must be sent as an attachment on or before April 16 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.

Workshop: Unexpected Detours: The Element of Surprise in Poetry

Presented by Mike Bove

May 16, 2026 – The afternoon session of our May General Meeting

Everyone knows we don't always end up in the same place we begin. In poetry, shifts in the journey keep readers engaged, interested, and excited. In this generative session, we'll examine and explore the poetic "turn" (traditionally called a "volta" in some forms): a shift in image, tone, or narrative in poems that lead the reader on a surprising journey or reveal an unexpected truth. With a variety of examples from which to draw inspiration, we'll explore the use of turns and craft our own poems that aim to surprise.

Members-Only "Reading in the Round" on Zoom

Wednesday evening, April 8, 2026

7:00 to 8:30 p.m.

On January 19, we sent an email asking those who have participated in our members-only (or had expressed an interest in doing so) to tell us whether we should decide to offer them only on Saturday mornings, only on a weekday evening, or alternate between both. What we learned from the responses is that a few can only do one or the other. For that reason we will alternate between the two for the time being. We also learned that while several of us find 9:00 p.m. later than we'd like the readings to last, 7:00 still seems to be the preferred evening start time. The suggestion was made that we see how well we might do with an hour and a half rather than a two-hour format. Hoping we'll have a good turnout for the evening of April 8. A link will be sent to all members. Please respond to that email if you plan to read.

Winter Workshop with MPS President Jenny Doughty postponed due to weather

Jenny's winter workshop had to be postponed due to inclement weather on February 21st. It is now expected to take place on March 21st. There is one remaining space available. To sign up, email jennydoughty@icloud.com.

There's Still Time to Send Entries for the Prize Poem Contests

Note that the Prize Poem contests are ongoing until the end of March. The contests are open to anyone who lives in Maine for at least part of each year (except for MPS board members). A copy of the flyer is available on our website. [Microsoft Word - THE MAINE POETS SOCIETY PRIZE POEM CONTESTS 2026 \(1\)](#) Please share the information with any writing group you belong to or with your local library if the flyer isn't already posted there.

90th Anniversary Anthology Celebrates Poetry by Members

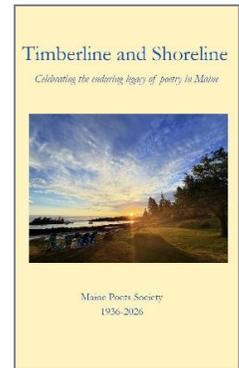
Maine Poets Society is thrilled to announce the forthcoming release of a new 127-page anthology featuring poetry by 56 member poets. The book's publication commemorates the 90th anniversary of Maine Poets Society, which was founded in 1936 as the Poetry Fellowship of Maine. A book launch will be part of the program at the spring meeting on Saturday, May 16th.

Both well-published and less experienced poets are included, and their work encompasses an array of settings, subjects, and styles.

The title is *Timberline and Shoreline*, reflecting the Maine environment, and echoing the titles of past anthologies produced by MPS: *Juniper and White Pine* (1962), *Rock Ledge and Apple Blossoms* (1971), and *Salt Spray and Pine* (1978), for example.

The paperback features a full-color cover with a photograph by Maine Poets Society member David Hyde. Included are two poems from each contributor, selected from their submissions of up to five poems. There is also a biographical note for each contributor.

The book will be available for purchase from Amazon, and an anonymous donor is providing funds to allow MPS to place the book in the public library of each poet's community. The objective is to make the book as affordable and accessible as possible. With a cover price of \$10, the anthology is not intended to be a money-making enterprise for MPS.



“The intent of this anthology is to celebrate the voices of our members, to share the joy of poetry and the way our members have chosen to put their thoughts and voices into words,” said Jenny Doughty, MPS president. The anthology committee—Jenny Doughty, Bill Frayer, Jeanne Julian, Gus Peterson, Deborah Smith, and Ellen White—has served as the book's editorial staff, and they are pleased to announce that the book is complete. It is now being proofed.

“With the understanding that it represents a milestone in the distinguished history of our organization, we're working to ensure the production of a book that our poets and our state truly can be proud of,” Jenny said.

Challenge yourself to writing a poem a day in April

April is National Poetry Month. It has become a tradition among some poets to attempt to write “a poem a day” in April. If you'd like to try to meet that creative challenge, these resources provide prompts to help get you going:

[Writer's Digest](#): Robert Lee Brewer offers fun and inspirational prompts every day in April.

[NaPoWriMo](#): posts a daily prompt and features a different participant each day, as well as a daily poetry-related resource.

[A teacher's blog](#): you can find 30 days of themes, styles, and examples from poetry luminaries on a site designed for teaching poetry. Brush up on metonymy and synecdoche! Explore other helpful poetry resources on this page, as well.

According to the Academy of American Poets, which launched the initiative in April 1996, “National Poetry Month is a special occasion that celebrates poets' integral role in our culture and that poetry matters. Over the years, it has become the largest literary celebration in the world.” [Poem in Your Pocket Day, on April 30](#), encourages the sharing of poems in person and in social media; the Academy shares lots of ways to do that.

A Heads-up for a Downeast Poetry Opportunity

The Eastport Arts Center is accepting submissions for the 2026 Charles Moore Poetry Prize Competition. The themes for the 5th annual contest are "Sound" and "Silence." The deadline to enter is May 31. Cash prizes are awarded in two categories: Youth (age 17 and younger) and Adult (age 18 and older). All submissions are included in a published anthology. An awards ceremony will be held in Eastport on August 16, and all poets who submitted a poem will be invited to read. For details on the submission rules, please see <https://www.eastportartscenter.org/poetry-contest>

Publication & Member News

Poems:

Robert Paul Allen will publish his poem "Mementos" in the *Westward Quarterly Spring 2026* and publish four poems in *Piker Press* this spring: "In the Theater," "Counting Down," "In the Garden of the Gods," and "The Bionic Man."

Carol Bachofner had three poems accepted by *Painted Pebble Lit Mag*: "The Magdalen Misconception" will appear in the spring edition and "The Maestro" and "At a Bend in the River" will appear in the fall edition. All three will be in both print and audio.

Timothy Barlow's poem "A Little Boy in Shorts and Suspenders" has been accepted for the "Lost Child" themed second issue of the *Gut Punch Literary Journal*, to be published later this year by the Poetry Society of Indiana.

Jim Brosnan's poem "Back Cove Books" was featured on Maine's NPR [Poems from Here](#) program. His poems, "Countless Nights," "All in a Day," "Patrolling the Border," and "Only a Daydream," received honorable mentions in the 2025 National Federation of State Poetry Societies.

Laura Buxbaum has had four poems accepted. "Fog of war" will appear in *Writers Resist* in the next two months. "You come home and hang your laundry out to dry" will be in the June/July issue of *Painted Pebble Lit Mag*. "Weeding" will be in the June/July issue of *Gyroscope*. Her poem "Recipes" will appear in *Amaranth Journal's* summer issue.

Jess Chua's short poem "Queen" received an honorable mention in *The Dark Poets Prize IV*. She has also been narrating her poetry alongside Maine nature videos on her tiny YouTube channel ([@JessWriting](#)).

Richard Foerster's poem "Self-portrait as Postage Stamp" appears in the current issue of *Hole in the Head Review*. He also has several poems forthcoming: "Fieldnotes: Wooden Statue of Senedjemib Mehi" in *Dogwood: A Journal of Poetry and Prose*; "Ode to a Man-'o-war" in *I-70 Review*; "Allan Petterson Addresses His Critics" in *South 85 Journal*; and "Alex" in *West Trade Review*.

Alice Haines' poem "Lost" appears in the Spring 2026 issue of *Hole in the Head Review*. Her poem "Homeless Heritage" recently came out in the Spring/Summer 2026 issue of *Smoky Blue Literary and Arts Magazine (SBLAAM)*.

Jeanne Julian's poem "Even Misery" appears in the January 2026 issue of [The Kleksograph](#).

Jim Krosschell has recently published poems in *Slippery Elm*, *Ionosphere*, and [Sunlight Press](#).

Gus Peterson's poem "Still Bountiful" was accepted for a forthcoming issue of *Prairie Schooner*. "Working Out Again" was included in the Spring issue of *Hole in the Head Review*, and two poems—

“Transplantsubstantiation” and “Autumn, Still No Diagnosis and I’m Reading”—will be featured locally with the Deep Water series and [Poems from Here](#).

Nancy Sobanik’s poem “The Garden Has No Gate” was published Jan.1, 2026, by *Verse-Virtual*, and “Ice” was published by *New Verse News* on Dec. 9, 2025.

Books:

Carol Bachofner’s official book launch of her latest collection, *Every Place I Look, women with embers at their feet*, will take place at the Rock City Cafe on March 21 at 6:30 p.m., sponsored by hello, hello books. Refreshments will be provided and books will be available for signing.

Carolyn Parker is pleased to report that *Pleasures on the Presumpscot, prose and poetry written afloat in my kayak on the Presumpscot River in Maine* is ready for distribution at the price of \$9.99. It will be available at bookstores in Gorham, Windham and Standish. She will also be happy to send it by mail (with an additional cost for postage and handling). She can be contacted at carolyndowparker@gmail.com

Mark Saba’s fourth poetry book, *Looking for Kerouac*, will be published this month by Kelsay Books.

Nancy Sobanik’s chapbook *The Unfolding* was a semi-finalist in the 2025 Open Chapbook Competition by Finishing Line Press and will be published on May 27, 2026. Pre-order at a discount until March 22nd at <https://www.finishinglinepress.com/product/the-unfolding-by-nancy-sobanik/> Please contact Nancy at nancysobanik@gmail.com if you’d like her to send a signed copy to you.

Member News:

Carol Bachofner is launching a series of four FREE pop-up workshops in Rockland, Camden, and Rockport during April to celebrate National Poetry Month. Topics include: Portrait Poetry, Starts & Stops (beginnings and endings), The List Poem, and Make it Personal, looking at first-person writing. Email to sign up and get notified of dates and locations: mainepoet@me.com.

Nancy Sobanik will be one of three featured readers at WePoets & Verse with Poetry In The Spaulding Center in Kennebunk on Friday, June 26 from 1-3 p.m. Watch for more information on the MPS Facebook page as the date draws near.

Opportunity Grants Available

Opportunity Grants of up to \$100 (some of which could be used for gas/travel expenses) are available for any type of online or in person poetry seminar/workshop experience. Members who joined or renewed MPS membership for the current year by the end of January may apply. Individual members can only have one grant in any three-year period. The grant recipient is required to write a short piece for *Stanza* afterwards to tell other members about their experience.

Up to \$500 in total a year is available for grants – first come, first served. If interested, go here to print out an application: [2025-Opportunity-Grants-explanation-and-application.pdf](#) or go to the Maine Poets Society website, click on the Membership tab, and then on “a Membership Opportunity Grant Application.” It’s OK that the document title says 2025. The information is valid.

— Gus Peterson, Treasurer



President's Ink March 2026

Our anthology committee has spent a very interesting and exciting few months putting together the poems submitted for our forthcoming anthology, *Timberline and Shoreline: Celebrating the enduring legacy of poetry in Maine*. This anthology was collected to celebrate the 90th anniversary of Maine Poets Society, or the Poetry Fellowship of Maine (as it was known in 1936).

Our secretary, Jeanne Julian, and I had a fascinating visit to the Dyer Library in Saco last year, to browse through the archives of MPS held there — far sparser than we had hoped but nonetheless an insight into our history and our place in the poetry community in our state. I wrote a brief introduction to the anthology and Jeanne has followed it with a interesting history of MPS to accompany the works of over fifty of our members. I hope that when you buy your copy (or copies — because I'm sure you'll want to share it so your family and friends can read your work and the work of other poets in the society) you'll enjoy learning about that.

I must confess that when we embarked on this project, I was extremely naive about the amount of work that would be involved. What could be complicated about gathering together a bunch of poems and publishing them? Luckily, our other editors — Jeanne, Gus Peterson (our treasurer), Debbie Smith (our VP), Bill Frayer (former secretary) and Ellen White (MPS member) — were more clued-in than me. We also have to thank Gus's father Gary, who nobly offered (or possibly was press-ganged) into giving it a final proofread. I don't know how I could have missed the number of decisions that had to be made about things like font, layout on the page, page numbering, placement of poet's name and acknowledgements of previous publication, style of biographical notes and many more.

We also owe a vote of thanks to all those members who sent in pictures that might be used as a cover picture, and especially to David Hyde whose beautiful photograph depicting both timberline and shoreline we chose from many lovely entries. And of course, we owe a huge debt of gratitude to all the members who sent in so many wonderful poems. It was quite a task to choose from them only two from each poet. The biographical notes on each poet were a treasure too. I am so glad we have such a wonderful variety of poets here in Maine.

Among the many decisions we had to make about the anthology was the order in which these poems would be presented. In the end, because we wanted to keep each poet's poems together, we did it alphabetically, and by a glorious coincidence the first poem in the book, by Robert Allen, is about a birth, and the last poem, by Margaret Yocom, is called "Closing Camp."

We want our meeting on May 16th to be the launch party for the book, so I do hope that as many of you as possible will make it to Gardiner for the meeting. Please do write and let me know if you plan to attend in person.

Jenny Doughty

President, MPS

I've come to believe that in order to matter, poems must be both entertaining and useful—entertaining by being rooted in the human traditions of telling stories and making music; useful by disturbing our lives enough to reinforce our humanness. These are the kinds of poems I endeavor to write.

—Andrea Hollander

STANZA, Maine Poets Society
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FIRST CLASS

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

FMI or to join, write
Gus Peterson
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Dr. Jim Brosnan, Board Member at-large, opmewriter@gmail.com

MPS website (MainePoetsSociety.com)

MPS Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1747588905507733/>. When you indicate an interest in joining the group, Jenny or Jeanne (as Administrators) will be able to confirm your request. You can also search within Facebook for Maine Poets Society. Choose the option that says “public group.”