



NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE POETRY SOCIETIES, INC.

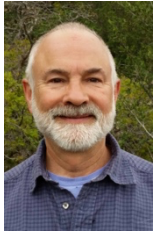
An educational and literary organization dedicated to the writing
and appreciation of poetry in America.

Strophes

Vol. LIX No. 3

www.nfsp.com

January 2023



Dear NFSPS Poets,

For the new year, I am challenging myself with the following:

1. Attend more in-person poetry events.
2. Learn about performance/slam poetry.
3. Find a minimal set of affordable technologies to effectively host hybrid poetry events.

What's my purpose for each of the above?

#1: Attending more poetry events will be both stimulating and increase social activity in my life. It will also require me to overcome my fear of contracting the coronavirus. I plan to wear my mask, perhaps looking out of place at times, but seeing and listening to poets will open me to more inspiration and joy.

#2: Performance/slam, I believe, has the potential to bring younger poets with these interests and skills into collaborative contact with more traditional page-oriented poets. I am keenly aware our societies' members are primarily "seniors." Most, including myself, will not be active members in 20 years. We need younger poets to come along side, learn how to lead, and then explore what poetry can be in the future they will pass on.

#3: Ideally, Zoom participants in a hybrid poetry event would be able to hear and see almost as if they were in the meeting room. Offering hybrid in-person and virtual participant poetry events is a win-win: the poetry society makes itself more accessible to those who cannot travel, whether for health reasons or personal situations. I like to think of this as our poetry societies following the example of the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990): we make our poetry societies more open to those who can't travel, which helps us reach more people interested in poetry in more places.

I suspect that each of you also have ideas on how to challenge yourself to grow, both in what you do well and in new areas. In the company I just retired from, their annual planning focused on finding the two or three challenges that would make the biggest difference in the coming year. The specific planning technique they use is called: Objectives and Key Results (OKR). My main point for each of us as individuals and as poetry societies is to find those few areas that will make the most difference in what you think is important and in which you can reasonably hope to be successful. Having two or three goals, then making progress on them leads to future success.

Yes, it's not quite that simple. In support of each goal, you need to identify what success looks like and how to measure, such as number of poetry events attended (#1), books read on the topic and conversations with performance/slam practitioners (#2), and audio/video tech evaluated, purchased, then tested along with identifying how to improve (#3). Related to both #1 and #2 above, I and a number other NFSPS members attended the first NFSPS BlackBerryPeach National Slam Poetry Competition held October 20-22, 2022, in Daytona Beach, Florida. Forty competitors from across the country came to present their poetry. These poets were from a variety of poetry organizations and locations. Some were from NFSPS societies, others represented established slam venues, and a few were independent "storm poets." There were two evenings of preliminaries, from which 13 poets with the highest scores entered the final slam competition. The final was held at the Bethune-Cookman University, a Historically Black College/University in Daytona Beach. These 13 finalists walked away with a

combined \$5,000 in prize money. You can see more detail on the winners at <http://www.nfsp.com/bbpps.html>.

I want to acknowledge the great support our first-ever slam competition received from the Florida State Poets Association. They held their 2022 poetry festival in Daytona Beach so that it overlapped two days with the slam competition. FSPA scheduled their events during the morning and afternoon so members would be open to attend slam events in the evenings. This enabled FSPA members to enjoy high-quality slam performances while also attend traditional poetry festival activities.

The NFSPS board is in the process of planning the 2023 convention. It will be held in West Des Moines, Iowa, June 21-26. As successfully demonstrated in our first slam competition held in conjunction with the FSPA annual convention, we plan to mirror this blend of slam competition events in the evenings with traditional convention activities during the day. Attendees can choose from the buffet of poetry available! And for those who can't make it to West Des Moines, we plan to provide the option to attend via Zoom. You will see more about our 2023 convention in this January *Strophes*, to be followed by much more detail in the April *Strophes*.

In my President's Message for the August 2022 *Strophes*, I introduced the new Board role of Learning Coordinator. I am happy to report that 2nd Vice Chancellor Peter Stein as our first Learning Coordinator, with assistance from Chancellor Deborah Petersen, have started to reach out to state society Presidents to identify content areas that are high priority for them. The full vision is to provide NFSPS state societies, both leaders and members, with content that will: 1) help societies improve the benefits they provide to members, and 2) offer guides on the craft of writing and performing poetry. Our term for this collected and published content is "Learning Central." Current work by Peter and Deborah is focused on helping state societies improve. As this initial focus area gains traction with content posted to Learning Central, work will shift to also include content that individual members may find helpful in their poetry endeavors. Much more to come on this initiative.

I hope you find your way to more poetry and poets in this new year.

Your servant in poetry,
Paul Ford, 35th NFSPS President
"Poetry belongs to everyone" ~ Joy Harjo

WIN YOUR WAY TO CONVENTION! Convention Madness! Poetry Contest

Win Your Way to the NFSPS Convention June 21- 26, 2023, in West Des Moines, Iowa. You must attend to receive prize. 1st Place— 5 nights stay at the West Des Moines Marriott, 2nd Place—All meals, 3rd Place—Registration Fee. **Enter:** Any form, any subject, limit one page, 12 point type. May be previously published. Simultaneous submissions acceptable. **Fee:** NFSPS, Inc. Members 3 poems for \$10.00. Non-members 3 poems for \$18.00. Make payment on Submittable to the National Federation of State Poetry Societies, Inc. No limit on number of submissions, so long as a new entry fee is included for each set of 3 poems. **DEADLINE:** February 28, 2023. Winners will be notified by March 31, 2023. To submit: Go to nfps.submittable.com

THE POWER OF PLAYING WITH POETRY OUTDOORS



When nine-year-old Nyankor reached down during a Poetry of Nature Walk and touched the first snake she had ever seen - a baby Eastern Ribbon snake tangled with its siblings in the ball of a new hatch, my heart sang. Escaped for a moment from the ravages of Somalia's war etched in the sadness of her young/ancient face and the bark of her preternaturally tall, willowy form, her eyes turned electric with wonder, and she was suddenly a child.

This is the power of playing with poetry outdoors.

That one experience led to King Street Center in Vermont engaging the Poetry of Nature Walks as a summer camp and after-school program upon the recommendation of Nyankor's mentor. The center is a community mentoring non-profit agency serving the large community of resettled refugee families and native intergenerational poverty families on Burlington's south side. Many of the children's parents and grandparents do not speak, read or understand English and are experiencing endemic continuities of trauma. To the children who experienced the Poetry of Nature Walks, aged Kindergarten through second grade, the hour a day we spent together for two weeks in summer camp and once a week in the after-school program during the school year made a world of difference.

Voices were found, and old wounds healed. On the first day with a group of after-schoolers, a girl who lost her right hand at home in a wood chipper at age three threw my supplies for writing and drawing poetry off the rooftop garden where we were meeting. A month later, after just four group Poetry of Nature Walks, she was my most eager helper because her speedy mind, mischievous cleverness and strong independence that usually got her in trouble were celebrated and given a constructive outlet through poetry in a space of "no mistakes."

With an approach of organic play directed by the kids' interests on each walk, we quickly discovered together that creating group poems verbally rather than being asked to write in a non-native language worked wonders. We used our bodies and a voiced poem created by the kids to focus as we set out on each of our walks over to Lake Champlain: *"One, two, touch my shoe. Three, four, we're going on a tour. Five, six, pick up a stick. Seven, eight, lay it out straight. Nine, ten, get out our pens."*



Field trips stick in children's memories. Poetry is made fun when it relates to what kids enjoy (such as singing popular songs from TikTok). Bringing the two together, the younger the word bug bites, the deeper and longer love of language grows. ~ *JC Wayne, NFSPS Youth Chair*

THE NFSPS BLACKBERRY PEACH SLAM

Bethune-Cookman University joined forces with the National Federation of State Poetry Societies (NFSPS) to sponsor the BlackBerry Peach National Poetry Slam Championships, Thursday to Saturday, October 20-22 in Daytona Beach and Daytona Beach Shores.

Many of the top performance poets and spoken word artists from around the United States competed for over \$5,000 in prize money. The poetry slam competition ran in conjunction with various side events and the Florida State Poetry Association's annual conference, with the entire happening dubbed The BlackBerry Peach National Poetry Festival, running from October 20th through October 23rd.

The National Slam Championship began Thursday evening with four first round "prelim bouts"- two held at the Residence Inn by Marriott Daytona Beach Oceanfront and two held at the Midtown Café Daytona. Poets then mixed it up again Friday evening in a second round of prelim bouts, with all four Friday bouts held at the Michael & Libby Johnson Center for Civic Engagement on the campus of Bethune-Cookman University. The best of the best made it to Saturday night's Final Stage, held at the Mary McLeod Bethune Performing Arts Center. Our winner and new National Champion is Asma Olajuwon, who edged out runner-up Dove Dupree, third place finisher Terry Odis, and fourth place poet Javon Rustin. Joining them on the stage were finalists Wayne Henry, Zachary Kluckman, Nykole Jackson, Devery Broox, Dennis Rodney, Wesley Frazier-Keys, Ray Jimenez, and Ray McNeice. Eddie Figueroa also qualified for Finals as the Sacrificial Poet. Hosting Final Stage was none other than Orlando's Poet Laureate, Shawn Welcome.

The festival featured various side events which were graced by many literary and performance poetry luminaries. Among them were HBO Punani Poet Bo Ellis, who featured at Thursday's Erotic Poetry Open Mic; Ed Mabry of California, the winningest poet in the history of poetry slam, hosted our Underground Slam on Friday night; New York spoken word pioneer and legend Bob Holman keynoted at both our Youth Mini-Festival and the FSPA main address on Saturday morning and afternoon; Saturday night's competition began with the National Haiku Slam, hosted by Riley Forest and won by Eddie Vega; and FSPA president Mary Marcelle stepped up to host the LGBTQ+/LGBTQ+ Ally Open Mic on Sunday.

I am immensely proud to have been the event organizer along with my partners Vivian Campbell and Kevin Campbell (aka NoirJente), co-founder of MainStreet Art & Culture Slam of DeLand. ~ *Joseph Cavanaugh, First Vice President*

2022 NFSPS CONVENTION SUMMARY REPORT

This year's NFSPS convention, held in Central Ohio, celebrated a return and a renewal of the annual gathering of poets from throughout the country. The first-ever NFSPS convention to offer both in-person and virtual attendance options, poets convened in the Buckeye State for four days of workshops, readings, a hike, and countless opportunities to listen to and support their fellow poets.

With more than 130 total registrants, convention attendance was robust, with 23 different states represented. Taking place on the heels of the summer solstice, the event saw long sunny days of gorgeous late-June weather, perfect for the opening EcoPoetry Hike at Highbanks Metro Park, just across the street from the Nationwide Hotel. The first day was capped by a terrific reading by some of Ohio's Appalachian voices, led by Ohio Poet Laureate Kari Gunter-Seymour.

From there, convention attendees were treated to several engaging workshops and a very special trivia night filled with laughter and also a bit of head scratching as they teamed up to answer questions about forms and first lines, famous poems and the poets who wrote them. We

enjoyed open mics in the hotel courtyards, where clear, starry skies loomed above us as we shared our poems. We savored the insights of the panel discussions, which included some of Ohio's local and regional poets laureate.

Our keynote, Columbus' very own Hanif Abdurraqib, was not to be missed. As he reflected on how his own sense of place informs his work, he moved us with his wisdom as a writer—perceptions full of profundity, especially for a writer of such a young age.

We celebrated numerous winners from across the country, including the Stevens Manuscript, College Undergraduate Poetry, and BlackBerry Peach competition winners. We also congratulated Paul Ford as he took office as NFSPS President, and thanked outgoing president Julie Cummings for all her hard work and dedication, and her leadership during the past two terrible years of the pandemic. And we congratulated Diane Glancy as recipient of a Lifetime Achievement Award for her many years of service to NFSPS.

OPA is grateful to have welcomed all of our extended family of poets to central Ohio. We learned a great deal about how to present the convention in cyberspace and will look forward to sharing our knowledge and recommendations to those state societies that will do so in the years to come. ~Chuck Salmons, *Immediate Past President Ohio Poetry Association*

NFSPS MEMBER SOCIETY NEWS

COLUMBINE POETS OF COLORADO celebrated their annual Poets Fest on Sept. 10 via Zoom. Their featured poet was Jessica Helen Lopez, Poet Laureate Emeritus of Albuquerque, New Mexico. Her workshop on Performance Poetry was enthusiastically received, and everyone was inspired to begin a new poem and practice performing it. Ms. Lopez delighted and charmed us with her poems. The Poets Fest was also the occasion to announce the winners of our members contest in three categories: free verse, traditional form, and prose poem. Winners read their poems to us, and we also got to hear the comments from their judges. Julie Cummings was re-elected president at the Fest.

Columbine Poets' northern chapter co-sponsors a quarterly seasonal-themed poetry reading and open mic that alternates meeting live in Loveland and on zoom. December's zoom will feature Columbine members from Hawaii, the U.K. and many parts of Colorado among the 15 featured readers. It's no surprise that 5 of the 7 members of the Advisory Committee for the Loveland Poet Laureate Program are Columbine Poets. The northern chapter also co-sponsors two readings & workshops a year, bringing leading writers to Loveland, including state and U.S. Poet Laureates. All events are free, with a donation welcome at the door. ~Lorrie Wolfe, *Secretary*

CONNECTICUT POETRY SOCIETY is ever growing! We currently have 273 members, to whom we offer the following ongoing programs: monthly Open Mics (MOM's); the monthly Poets on Poetry (POP's) educational talk led by CPS members – the POP's format. The most recent POP's included an Ekphrastic Workshop, "Writing the World Ekphrastic;" "The Eloquence of Elegies;" and a presentation on the poems of Linda Gregg. These offerings are free and open to the public. We also offer a bi-monthly "President's Workshop," led by President Pat Mottola and Dr. Vivian Shipley, where members bring work for discussion and feedback; and an annual "Halloween Howl." This Spring we will also offer *ConneCTions*, a reading and craft workshop with two professional national poets. In addition to these well-attended zoom offerings, we held two in-person events in 2022: our annual Spring Fling in June and a Summer picnic in August. Plans are in place for a New Year's party January 2023. We publish a quarterly newsletter, which can be accessed on our website.

CPS sponsors six contests with cash prizes each year, and publishes a national poetry journal, *Connecticut River Review*, which had 869 submitters from all across the country, as well as internationally, vying for spots in the beautiful 2022 edition. *CRR* can be ordered online.

There are 13 local chapters of CPS, each with its own Chapter President. Chapters meet monthly and provide members the opportunity to workshop their poems. This year we added a Youth Outreach Chair to our Board and three Student ambassadors. Together with the President, they are developing a new CPS Chapter specifically for High School students.

CPS welcomes members from any State! We invite you to check our website for lots more information: ctpoeetry.net ~ Pat Mottola, *President*

ILLINOIS STATE POETRY SOCIETY: The first ISPS student poetry contest is planned and will be underway by the time of the forthcoming *Strophes* printing. Contacting junior high and high school teachers as well as principals before winter holidays is the goal. Our annual adult poetry contest will have had the winners' list announced before mid-December. *Distilled Lives vol. 6* biennial anthology is planned for a December completion. ISPS has been invited again to participate in a joint poetry-painting event sponsored by the Addison Center for the Arts with an exhibit opening and reading on February 15, 2023. The public is invited to view the art exhibit and then attend a poetry reading by ISPS members. For the first time, ISPS has sponsored a Book of the Year 2022 contest. This event will be judged by Eleanor Berry.

Our website continues to showcase members' poetry, book reviews and other pertinent information including membership details. The website is illinoispoets.org and also lists the Brewed Awakening monthly featured readings in the Westmont coffeehouse. ~ Susan T. Moss, *President*

POETRY SOCIETY OF INDIANA: Just in time for the holidays, Poetry Society of Indiana published a winter-themed publication, *Once Upon a Winter*. Available on Amazon.com Amazon.com: *Once Upon a Winter: A Holiday Collection from the Poetry Society of Indiana: 9798362625849: Poetry Society of Indiana: Books*

We received our entries for our collaboration with Studio 1 Dance Academy, Words in Motion. An event of poetry and interpretive dance to be held March 11, 2023. Stage 1 will be selecting the poems they will be dancing to. The theme for the event is Mental Health.

We continue to meet on 1st Tuesdays via Zoom.

John Hinton led a workshop with Park Tudor High School students in Indianapolis and Premier Poet, Jenny Kalahar, will be leading a workshop at Elwood High School in December. ~John Hinton, *President*

IOWA POETRY ASSOCIATION: During November, the Iowa Poetry Association celebrated the written and spoken word with a regional in-person event held Nov. 11-13, Poetry on the Prairie, held in conjunction with Art on the Prairie, a regional arts festival held in Perry, Iowa. In collaboration with the Art on the Prairie Committee and Poetry; IPA hosted its first poetry slam (the first of four this winter and spring) plus two days of workshops and readings involving more than 30 poets. All events played to packed venues and were streamed on Facebook live.

During Poetry on the Prairie, IPA identified its first four qualifiers for the IPA state poetry slam championship to be held in Des Moines during the first week in April. The IPA slam representative will compete in the NFSPS BlackberryPeach slam competition to be held in West Des Moines in June. On Nov. 12, Poetry on the Prairie featured a welcome by four poets, including Iowa Poet Laureate Deb Marquart, followed by an ekphrastic writing workshop, also led by Marquart. Art pieces used as prompts were created by artists with work on display at the arts festival. The afternoon included readings by 13 of Iowa's best-known poets. On Nov. 13, winners from IPA's 2022 Lyrical Iowa anthology read their winning poems, plus additional work, followed by an afternoon of open mic, music and fun, including an impromptu guitar and vocal performance by Marquart.

Poet Rustin Larson said, "I feel recharged and optimistic about poetry in Iowa after hearing some familiar and totally new (to me) voices, all of the finest quality."

On Oct. 29, IPA held its first hybrid poetry workshop at Grand View University in Des Moines. IPA has continued to hold online member workshops twice a year through COVID. The return to an in-person and virtual option was well-received, with nearly as many people attending online as in-person. We look forward to our next hybrid workshop in April.

Upcoming topics on IPA LIVE, our monthly Zoom program, include Poems of Celebration, member readings in December; a New Year's Resolution program in January with ideas to fulfill educational and writing goals in the coming year; and in February, a generative workshop led by nationally known poet James Crews, "Path to Kindness: Writing for Self-Compassion." ~ *Dawn Terpstra, President*

The **MAINE POETS SOCIETY** held an online members-only "Reading in the Round" on November 19 and have another scheduled for January 21st. There will also be a workshop scheduled for a limited number of participants sometime before spring. They are looking forward to the possibility of presenting their first hybrid meeting in May of 2023. When available, details about the meeting location and the spring members-only contest and judge will be shared on our website. ~ *Sally Joy, Reporter*

MISSISSIPPI POETRY SOCIETY: Our annual contest guidelines are available on our website, misspoetry.net.

There are 29 categories, a wide range of topics, and impressive monetary prizes. Twenty-four categories are open to ALL poets. Poems placing first, second, or third will be published in the *MPS Contest Journal*. You may enter online or by USPS. The received-by deadline is March 1.

MPS appreciates *The Tunica Voice* newspaper for continuing to publish a poem by an MPS member weekly.

South Branch is publishing an anthology to commemorate the 40th anniversary since the Branch was formed. They will host the state poetry festival, so they are busy making plans. It will be held on the weekend of April 22-23, 2023, at the Walter Anderson Museum in Ocean Springs, MS. (Walter Anderson is known mainly for his artwork, but he was also a poet.) The theme is *Lighting the Coast with Poetry*.

Congratulations to Linda Watson Owen, our 2023 Poet of the Year. Linda's upcoming book is titled *A Gift of Dappled Light* to be presented at our Spring Festival. Here's the website link for your reference: <https://www.misspoetry.net/works.html>. ~ *Dorothy Wiman, Secretary*

NEVADA POETRY SOCIETY wishes everyone a Happy New Year! We feel blessed to have resumed our monthly meetings without masks or restrictions and Wynn Reed is hosting our Christmas Party this year which is a sure sign that we are back on track.

We begin 2023 with two new out of state members so we are optimistic that our numbers are growing. ~ *Phyllis Peacock, President*

NEW MEXICO STATE POETRY SOCIETY: Marcial Delgado and youth poet Chance Kluckman won the NMSPS "Slam 4 All" qualifier in August. Consequently, they represented New Mexico at the inaugural BlackBerry Peach (BBP) National Slam Poetry Competition held in Daytona Beach Shores, Florida, in October. Chance took Third in the Youth Division and won a special award for "Most Inspired" poem. As a finalist in the 2017 BBP Award contest, Zach Kluckman, Chance's father, was eligible to compete at the Daytona event and once again made the Finals. We congratulate our three NM contestants in this year's BBP National Slam!

JC Wayne has been appointed Youth Chair of both NMSPS and NFSPS. She is working with our Rio Grande Valencia chapter to develop a hybrid in-person and virtual program combining poetry, arts, and play to enrich curricula for public, charter, and home school students in Grades 1-6. She is also looking at a program to bring seniors and children together in summer Poetry and Art Camps and year-round after-school programs. Through her research and outreach over the past few months, a slew of new contacts and possibilities has emerged. We can't wait to hear what's ahead as she develops platforms for both classroom and outdoor poetry adventures. ~ *Bernadette Perez, President*

OHIO POETRY ASSOCIATION has finalized its budget and programming initiatives for 2023. In addition to our regular workshops and other events, we will spearhead and contribute to several exciting programmatic efforts.

In September, we will partner with Agraria Center for Regenerative Practice to again present the Sun & Moon Poetry Festival in Yellow Springs, Ohio.

We also will partner with Poets Against Racism USA and the National Underground Railroad Museum Freedom Center, in Cincinnati, for a special, two-phase project to take place in 2023 and 2024. The programming involves using the art of poetry and spoken word to celebrate Ohio's heritage and role in the Underground Railroad and to address human rights and social justice issues that persist today. For June-July 2023, in connection with Freedom Center activities, we'll have poets reading poems on Cincinnati street corners and distributing flyers promoting the subsequent event, which will occur at the Freedom Center on September 16-17. At that event, poets will provide poetry writing workshops and read work centered on social justice. In 2024, we'll conduct poetry readings throughout Ohio at whistle-stop locations for the Underground Railroad.

Visit ohiopoetryassn.org and follow us on Facebook for news and updates on these events! ~ *Chuck Salmons, OPA Interim President*

POETRY SOCIETY OF OKLAHOMA: In October we had our first in-person meeting in two-and-one-half years. We were few but mighty, sharing our Annual Poetry Day poems and learning the names of the July contest winners. We also presented our outgoing president, Patti Koch--who brilliantly served for six years--with a certificate of appreciation and two dozen red roses.

The Poetry Society of Oklahoma was founded in 1934 by Zoe Tilghman. She was a vague figure in history for most members until our vice president, Jim (James T.) Fletcher, began his research, which was presented in the November issue of our *Oklahoma Rose* newsletter. Zoe, incredibly versatile, was a linguist; musician; writer; poet; founder and president of civic and literary clubs; radio, TV, and film consultant; and major personality on the social scene. As a young teacher, she married one of the heroes of the Old West, lawman Bill Tilghman, What a woman!

Like many organizations these days, most of our members are seniors, and we're trying to attract young[er] blood. However, seniors and pre-seniors have little time for active membership due to the pace and/or vicissitudes of today's living. Consequently, finding new members and willing officer material is not easy. We are currently in search of members to fill four of our seven officer positions. ~ *Judith Rycroft, President*

POETRY SOCIETY OF TENNESSEE: Led by Program Coordinator Lacy Snapp, PST began statewide educational programs via Zoom in September. Presenters cover such topics as research (Melissa Helton), writing about place (Matthew Wimberley), and the poetics of what you shouldn't write poetry about (Andrew Lee Butler). Members may access program replays on YouTube.

Pat Hope (Knoxville) has joined PST's Regional Connections Committee. The first regional event (cosponsored by Friends of Oak Ridge Library) was held December 10. Dr. Marilyn Kallet and 17 others read from and sold their books. PST will be on hand to interact with attendees.

PST recognized monthly members-only contest winners and read winning poems in member meetings. PST also recognized members for publication of work in a variety of venues. Student contests are underway: free verse contests for High School (Dec 20 deadline) and Middle School (Dec 13) and an open form contest for Elementary (Feb 13). Seth Grindstaff is contest chair. Poet/educators Connie Green (PST member) and Heather Hoover serve as judges.

PST will hold a Poetry Festival April 15, 2023. In lieu of contests, an editorial board will select poems from a call for submissions for publication in *Tennessee Voices, 2022-2023*. Get program details: <https://poetrytennessee.com>. Follow PST on Facebook: @poetrysocietyoftennessee. ~ *Lisa Kalmonick, Communications*

POETRY SOCIETY OF TEXAS On November 5, 2022, the Poetry Society of Texas turned 101 years old. A week later, on Saturday, November 12, 2022, our Annual Awards Banquet was held at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel in Dallas, Texas. Banquet arrangements and reservations were handled by chairperson Beth Ayers, and the theme was Our Pathway to Poetry, complete with a large mural for photo ops that matched our program cover. Beth welcomed guests and led the silent invocation before the meal. After the meal, PST President Richard Weatherly was in charge of introductions before Budd Mahan, former NFSPS President, brought greetings from NFSPS, Inc. Budd, chairman of the Hilton Ross Greer Outstanding Service Award,

presented this year's beautiful Texas-shaped plaque to Patrick Marshall. After a short break, Vice President Catherine L'Herisson announced the top three places in contests 100 to 51. If present, first place winners read their poems. After another short break and warm chocolate chip cookies, President Richard Weatherly announced the top three places in contests 50 to 1. Susan Maxwell Campbell won contest #1. Richard Kushmaul, Chairman of the Catherine Case Lubbe Manuscript Prize, announced that the winner was Courtney O'Banion Smith of Houston, Texas. Susan Campbell read a poem from the manuscript in her absence. In closing remarks, Lynn Roberts Grice, PST Annual Contests Chairman, reported on number of entries and other information before she was presented with a certificate of appreciation by President Richard Weatherly. ~ *Catherine L'Herisson, Vice President*

WYOPOETS is thrilled to announce that Aaron Abeyta will be our presenter at the 2023 Spring Workshop, scheduled for April 28-29 in Riverton, Wyoming.

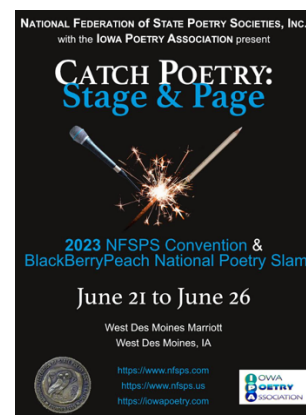
Aaron is a professor of English and the Mayor of Antonito, Colorado, his hometown. He is the author of 4 collections of poetry, 1 novel, and over 100 publications. For more information on Aaron, see: <https://aaronabeytapoet.com/> ~ *John Roedel, President*

WRITER-FRIENDLY HABITS

Have you ever had a time when you wanted to write but just could not get started? Writer's block or a dearth of inspiration hits most of us from time to time.

Maria Polson Veres, a Poetry Society of Oklahoma member, is a freelance writer, creative writing teacher, and author of four books of poetry. Here is her list of ways to keep writing momentum going, writer-friendly habits she has developed and found useful.

Keep a journal, an easy, low-pressure way to put words on the page. **Always keep a notebook handy,** at home and away. Ideas, lines, words, sometimes entire poems, may come to you at any time. If you prefer to keep notes digitally, you can also jot them on your phone. **Do regular, deadlined work.** Contest entries are a prime example. Even business and personal letters require a certain amount of creativity, and they keep your skills moving forward. **Belong to a critique group,** to build accountability and production. **Work on a book.** Whether the subject is poetry, plays, memoir, historical research, fiction, or a children's book, keeping a project going provides a long-term goal to work towards. **Take guilt-free breaks.** Sometimes the best thing you can do for yourself as a writer is to step back from writing entirely and enjoy other parts of your life.



NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE POETRY SOCIETIES
2022 Pushcart Prize Nominations

 **Carol Clark Williams**
"Winter Rations" & "Signs of Age"
from *Unpacking for the Journey*
Barbara Stevens Poetry Book
Manuscript Award

 **Danae Young**
"Just a Brown Girl's Glass Box"
from *Melanin Sun (-) Blind Spots*
Florence Kahn Memorial Award

 **Ingrid Piña**
"What I Could Do"
from *Ragweed Body*
Edna Meudt Memorial Award

 **Budd Powell Mahan**
"Beyond Words"
from *Encore Prize Poems 2022*
NFSPS Founders Award

ANNUAL CONTEST INFORMATION AND REMINDERS

There are two major changes to the rules for the annual contests. The first change is to rule #3. It now reads:

3. An eligible poem **may not be withdrawn** after submission. **No simultaneous submissions.**

The second change is to rule 10.e. under "mailed in submissions." It now reads:

- e. Include an 8.5 X 11 cover sheet with poet's name, address, phone number, e-mail address (if available), and state society membership (or "Non-member of NFSPS"). List on the cover sheet the category number(s) and the poem title(s) of each contest you are entering. List the total number of poems sent. Do NOT staple the cover sheet to entries or to entry fee.

There are often questions about the 40 line limit. This is answered in rule 1.c.

- c. Have a 40 line limit for all contests **not** stating line limit. Line count includes every line, both **printed and blank**. A one line title and its following space is not counted in the line limit. Specific forms (e.g. rondeau, sonnet, villanelle, etc.) should follow required format spacing and line limits.

SUBMITTABLE TIPS AND TRICKS

What is Submittable? Submittable is a submission management system for the literary world and beyond. NFSPS, Inc. has contracted with Submittable to better manage submissions to contests and it will help poets with their annual contest submissions. There is a small fee added to the submission, but the poet definitely saves compared to paying postage on paper entries!

Another benefit to our members is that Submittable helps the poet use time wisely. When submitting to the contests, poets will not need to complete every submission on the same day. In the annual NFSPS contests, poets have 75 days to complete their entries! One very important thing is to enter the poem in the correct contest (form), then list the poems on the cover sheet (form) and submit the cover sheet with payment. All this needs to be completed by March 15th, not all on the same day as is done with mail in entries.

Simply create a free account at nfps.submittable.com, and set up your profile. Send your work: Complete the submission through the Submittable website. When submitting online, you will only submit the unnamed copy. Judges can see what is on the page, as well as the title of the document, and your name should **not** be anywhere except on the submission form. Before submitting your material, look at the rules to check subject and form and line limits. Follow the submission instructions precisely. Take the time to check and double check the instructions and put your best poem forward. You don't have to submit your payment until you've completed all the required material and remember, if you enter contest #1 and contests 2-50, you will have 2 payments on Submittable because of the different entry requirements.

Remember, the benefits of Submittable are great and immense. You don't have to complete all your entries and submit them at the same time, as with the paper entry process. You save on postage, printing, paper, envelopes, etc. It also gives you an electronic record in Submittable of what you have submitted. Give it a try, and a side note, it makes the job of the contest chair easier and timelier. Please do not hesitate to contact ContestChair.nfps@gmail.com with any questions.

THE RUBAIYAT

The **Miriam S. Strauss Memorial Award** is for members only. It is sponsored by Russell H. Strauss and the form is linked Rubaiyat with any subject and a line limit of 12-20 lines. What exactly is a rubaiyat, and what does 12-20 lines mean?

Briefly, the rubaiyat (pronounced "roo-bái-yát") is a Persian form of several quatrains. Its name is derived from the Arabic plural of the word for "quatrain," rubá'iyah. This word comes from the Arabic word rubá, meaning "four." Rubai (the singular form) is a quatrain or a set of two couplets. The Rubai form is more than a thousand years old.

The English adaptation of rubaiyat is as beautiful as the Persian form. A rubai is, though intended to stand alone, usually a suite of rubai (rubaiyat) composed and arranged in a standard rhyming order. In a single rubai, the rhyme scheme of aaba is used with enjambment (the continuing of a sentence or thought) between the 3rd and 4th lines. The usual meter used is iambic pentameter, however, iambic tetrameter may be used. (classicalpoets.org)

Read "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" by Robert Frost as an example of an interlocking rubaiyat in iambic tetrameter with a deviation of rhyme order in the last stanza (dddd). This poem has 4 quatrains for a total of 16 lines. Mr. Strauss calls for the exact rhyme scheme of AABA BBCB CCDC etc. (where etc. is a continuation of the rhyme scheme.) If there are 5 quatrains (20 lines) in the poem, the final stanza may be EEEE, EEAE, or EEFE.

Here are the rules of the interlocking rubaiyat as published in Writer's Digest: 1. The poem is comprised of quatrains following an aaba rhyme pattern. 2. Each successive quatrain picks up the unrhymed line as the rhyme for that stanza. So a three-stanza rubaiyat might rhyme so: aaba/bbcb/ccdc. Sometimes the final stanza, as in Frost's, rhymes all four lines. 3. Lines are usually tetrameter and pentameter.

Because this contest is a specific form, the 40 line limit does not apply. Mr. Strauss has stated 12-20 lines as the limit, or 3-5 quatrains. The rubaiyat is fun to write. Try it yourself! Then, submit! ~ *Julie Cummings, Contest Chair*

**NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE
POETRY SOCIETIES
CONVENTION HOST CONTEST 2023
INVOCATIONAL POEMS**

The NFSPS Board will host the NFSPS national convention in West Des Moines, Iowa June 21-26, 2023. We are pleased to announce the Invocational Poems Contest.

Subject: Invocational poems to be read by winners at the beginning of convention meals.

Criteria: The paramount consideration is poetic value, not religious orthodoxy: "It must be first of all a poem." Poems should be suitable for a religiously diverse membership, should use gender-inclusive, contemporary language, and should have equal value for the religious and the non-religious.

Form: Any form, not to exceed 30 lines. Name the form on your entry.

Eligibility: Open to all poets. No fee to enter.

Limits: 4 Poems per poet. Must be the original work of the poet, unpublished, not submitted elsewhere for publication, and not a previous host-contest winning poem. Typed or printed from computer. One poem per page.

Opening: Send entries after January 1, 2023.

Deadline: February 28, 2023, postmark.

Winners: Notified individually by mail in April of the year 2023. We place a high value on your reading of your own poem, but we will provide a substitute reader if you cannot be present at the convention in June.

Copies: Two. Your name and postal address and name of your chosen form at upper right corner of one; name of contest and chosen form only in upper right corner of the other. Poems will not be returned.

Ownership: NFSPS receives the right to have the poem read at this convention. You retain all other rights.

Mail entries to:
Susan Chambers
700 Agency Trail
Mankato, MN 56001

Questions? schambersmediator@yahoo.com

OHIO POETRY DAY CONTESTS

Now in our 86th year, Ohio offers a contest with 20 + categories, all money winners, published in a copyrighted book, all for one \$10 entry fee. To get on our mailing list, send a postcard with your name and address, or a #10 SASE for the rules. Contest opens March 1st and closes May 15th. Prizes awarded in October. Send to Amy Jo Zook, 3520 State Route 56, Mechanicsburg, OH. 43044

PLEASE BE WARY OF SCAMMERS

I have had many NFSPS members forward scam emails to me with "Paul Ford" as the purported sender. Often the message is a direct request to help "me" with buying a gift card or some other monetary assistance. There are more subtle scammers who initially ask if the recipient is available. Please, whenever you get an email with my name as the sender, check to see if the message is actually sent from pmford3@gmail.com. If it isn't, I suggest you report the email as scam/phishing to your email provider. For example, with Gmail I can click on the three horizontal dots to the top-right of the message and select either Report Scam or Report Phishing. Please be careful. And know I will not ask you for money in an email.

~ Paul Ford, 35th NFSPS President

**2023 NFSPS COLLEGE
UNDERGRADUATE POETRY
COMPETITION**

The deadline for the 2023 NFSPS College Undergraduate Poetry Competition is Jan. 31, 2023. For complete submission guidelines, see nfspss.com/CUP.html.

Save The Dates! The NFSPS Convention and BlackBerry Peach SLAM will be held June 21-26, 2023, in West Des Moines, Iowa. **More details in the April issue of Strophes!**

MONTHLY POETRY CONTEST

Wilda Morris, former president of the Illinois State Poetry Society, posts a contest for other poets each month on her blog. New contests are posted the first of the month; deadline is the 15th of the month. No charge to enter. Previously published poems are okay, but not simultaneous submissions. Winning poems are published. See: wildamorris.blogspot.com.

ENCORE PRIZE POEMS 2022



The 2022 anthology of 159 prize-winning poems awarded at the "Renewal Through Poetry" NFSPS convention is available on amazon.com. All

royalties from *Encore* sales support NFSPS.

~ Kathy Cotton, *Encore* Editor

**NFSPS CONTEST BROCHURE
MAILINGS**

The NFSPS 2023 Contest Brochure was mailed to state contacts in August and is also available online. You may also request a copy by mailing a SASE to Julie Cummings, 9428 Fallen Rock Road, Conifer, CO. 80433