



NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE POETRY SOCIETIES, INC.

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

Strophes

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April 2022



Julie Cummings
34th NFSPS
President

Dear Poetry Family,

My time as NFSPS President will end this June, and this will be my last message to you in this format. Two years ago, I wrote in the *Strophes* message that I have been so proud to serve as your president. I have talked with many of you for hours on the phone, have made email friends, and have tried to be an effective leader. As we plan the activities for this year's convention, I am reflecting on everything that NFSPS has meant to me since I joined Columbine Poets many years ago. I still feel that way. I am so proud of our organization. I took on the role of Acting President after the unfortunate illness of Jim Barton, NFSPS 32nd President, forced him to step down in March of 2018. I was

then elected in June 2018, as the 33rd President and because of COVID-19, again in June 2020, as the 34th President. I want to thank all the elected and appointed board members who have served with me over the past four+ years. It has been a privilege to work with such a wonderful group of poets and friends. We have had the joy of meeting together in person in 2018 in Denver, Colorado, in 2019 in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and in 2020 we met for meetings via Google Meet, then landed in Zoom Rooms for the first (and hopefully only) totally online 2021 convention planned by Polly Opsahl, Paul Ford, Steven Concert, Susan Chambers, and me. We all continue to serve on the NFSPS Convention Committee for 2022.

The use of technology by NFSPS kept the organization itself alive, vital, and connected during two years of a pandemic which could have killed NFSPS. I cannot even imagine how the founders communicated! If I had been limited to phone calls and snail mail, I think I would have gone stir crazy! If you ask anyone close to me, I am not the greatest letter writer. Our founders didn't even have conference calls! Technology gave all of us a way to remain connected and share our poetry. The connections many of us made, via Zoom, have become lasting friendships. Using Zoom has "invited in" those who previously couldn't be part of NFSPS events due to finances, distance, or health concerns. Hopefully this is something that won't end once the pandemic finally does—it's a whole new way of maintaining ties within the organization.

Since 2019, every contest (except the *BlackBerry Peach Prizes for Poetry: Spoken and Heard*, which is only online) has the option of online or mail in submissions using nfspd.submittable.com or the USPS. Carla Jordan has been a diligent and competent Contest Chair, adding a touch of humor to the Contest Award presentations.

While serving as the 31st NFSPS President, Eleanor Berry tried to improve communication with state societies and to help them to attract and engage younger members. I think with the move to more technology, we have been able to continue that push. Using Zoom, the Board and I have met with State Presidents to disseminate information. I have contacted or been contacted by many poetry groups in non-member states and the Board has succeeded in voting into NFSPS two new state societies. To facilitate communication between the national organization and the affiliated societies, Eleanor Berry also appointed Russell Strauss, a past NFSPS President and past President of the Poetry Society of Tennessee, as Board Liaison to the State Societies. I have kept him in this role. As always, he is ready to help state societies and can be reached via email at rstrpoet@cs.com.

I also began the duties of Sponsorship Chair when Sharon Martin Turner fell ill in January 2018. With the assistance of Valerie Martin Bailey, we were able to seamlessly transfer the files and get the brochure out in a timely manner. I continue to assist in a Co-Chair role with Steven Concert, NFSPS 4th Vice President. Publishing the brochure in a little larger type size enables us to read it easier! Steven wears many hats and has been of great assistance to me.

In addition, I also became the Stevens Manuscript Acting Chair in 2019 and still have not found a person to fill that role so I will continue as acting chair, unless you want to take over? (*Continued on page 8*)

NFSPS 2022 CONVENTION RENEWAL THROUGH POETRY

As host of this year's Annual Convention of the National Federation of State Poetry Societies (NFSPS), the Ohio Poetry Association (OPA) welcomes each of you from June 23–26, 2022. We are thrilled to return to a live and in-person event that also offers virtual attendance options. We hope that the majority of NFSPS members will join us in celebrating a *Renewal through Poetry* and our commitment to the writing life.

Experience the abundant cultural offerings the capital of Ohio, Columbus (one of the most livable cities in the nation), has in store for you. The Buckeye State is home to a dynamic poetry community that is eager to showcase its talents, charm you with its natural scenery, and awe you with the single independent Community Festival left in the country that very weekend. We hope you will be part of this inspiring opportunity to connect with old friends and make new ones. We look forward to seeing you in June!

Sincerely, *Chuck Salmons, OPA President*

2022 CONVENTION SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

Unless otherwise noted, all program events will take place at Nationwide Hotel & Conference Center. Also, all schedule times are in Eastern Time Zone and subject to change.

THURSDAY, June 23

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Morning/Afternoon | Excursion: Poetry Hike in Highbanks Metro Park |
| 2:00-4:00 pm | Convention registration; Bookstore open for intake |
| 4:00-6:00 pm | 1st NFSPS Board Meeting |
| 6:00-8:00 pm | Dinner on your own |
| 8:00-10:00 pm | Evening program; Convention registration; Bookstore open for intake |
| 9:00 pm | Open Mic |

FRIDAY, June 24

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| 7:30-8:30 am | Contest Winners |
| 8:00-11:30 am | Convention Registration |
| 8:45-9:00 am | Opening Ceremony |
| 9:15-10:15 am | Morning Workshop |
| 10:30-11:30 am | 1st Plenary Session |
| 11:30 am-12:30 pm | Buffet Lunch w/ Manningham Awards |
| 1:00-3:15 pm | Afternoon Workshops |
| 3:30-4:30 pm | Contest Winners |
| 5:00-6:30 pm | Buffet Dinner w/ College Undergraduate Poetry Contest Winners |
| 7:00-8:30 pm | Open Mic |
| 8:30-10:00 pm | Evening Program |

(Continued on page 3)

NFSPS 2022 CONVENTION SCHEDULE (continued from page 1)

SATURDAY, June 25

| | |
|----------------|--|
| 7:00-8:00 am | Contest Winners |
| 8:00-11:30 am | Convention Registration |
| 8:30-10:30 am | State Presidents' Meeting |
| 10:30-11:45 am | Morning Workshop |
| 12:00-1:00 pm | Buffet Lunch & Stevens Award Winner |
| 1:30-5:00 pm | Afternoon Workshops/ Programs |
| 5:30-7:00 pm | Gala Banquet w/ Keynote Speaker Hanif Abdurraqib |
| 7:00-8:30 pm | Contest Winners |
| 9:00 pm | Open Mic |

SUNDAY, June 26

| | |
|------------------|---|
| 7:30-9:30 am | Contest Winners |
| 9:45 am-12:00 pm | Morning Workshops (2) |
| 12:00-1:00 pm | Buffet Lunch |
| 1:30-2:30 pm | 2nd Plenary Session & Election |
| 2:30 pm | DEADLINE for book pickup from Bookstore |
| 3:00-4:30 pm | Reception and Book Signings |
| 5:00-8:00 pm | Buffet Dinner w/ BBP Award Winner; Convention closing & final Contest Winners |
| 8:30 pm | Open Mic |

MONDAY, June 27

| | |
|---------------|-------------------------|
| 8:00-10:00 am | 2nd NFSPS Board Meeting |
|---------------|-------------------------|

Visit the OPA website, ohiopoetryassn.org, for complete updated speaker and program information.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Hanif Abdurraqib is a poet, essayist, and cultural critic from Columbus, Ohio. His poetry has been published in *Muzzle*, *Vinyl*, *PEN American*, and various other journals. His essays and music criticism have been published in *The FADER*, *Pitchfork*, *The New Yorker*, and *The New York Times*. His first full length poetry collection, *The Crown Ain't Worth Much*, was released in June 2016 from Button Poetry. It was named a finalist for the Eric Hoffer Book Prize and was nominated for a Hurston-Wright Legacy Award. With Big Lucks, he released a limited-edition chapbook, *Vintage Sadness*, in summer 2017 (you cannot get it anymore and he is very sorry.) His first collection of essays, *They*



Photo by
Andrew Cenci

They is a collection of essays, *They*

Can't Kill Us Until They Kill Us, was released in winter 2017 by Two Dollar Radio and was named a book of the year by *Buzzfeed*, *Esquire*, *NPR*, *Oprah Magazine*, *Paste*, *CBC*, *The Los Angeles Review*, *Pitchfork*, and *The Chicago Tribune*, among others. He released *Go Ahead In The Rain: Notes To A Tribe Called Quest* with University of Texas press in February 2019. The book became a *New York Times* Bestseller, was a finalist for the Kirkus Prize, and was longlisted for the National Book Award. His second collection of poems, *A Fortune For Your Disaster*, was released in 2019 by Tin House, and won the 2020 Lenore Marshall Prize. In 2021, Random House released his book, *A Little Devil In America*. He is a graduate of Beechcroft High School in Columbus. Learn more at abdurraqib.com.

CONVENTION HOTEL

Join us at the award-winning Nationwide Hotel & Conference Center, tucked in a 15-acre park-like setting adjacent to the beautiful Highbanks Metro Park. The hotel is conveniently located only 20 minutes from the John Glenn Columbus International Airport and downtown Columbus.

All rooms are priced at \$139/night and include complimentary breakfast. For reservations, mention the special NFSPS room rate when you call (614) 880-4300. Or reserve your room via the hotel booking site at <https://tinyurl.com/2p9rww6v>.

TRANSPORTATION INFO

Complete airport and travel information is available at flycolumbus.com. Taxis, Lyft, and Uber operate at John Glenn Columbus International Airport (CMH). A shuttle runs to the rental car area. Please note that the Nationwide Hotel does not have shuttle service available to/from CMH.

To extend your stay, get tourism and other travel information for central Ohio, visit experiencecolumbus.com.

NFSPS MEMBER SOCIETY NEWS

POETS ROUNDTABLE OF ARKANSAS:

Suzanne Rhodes was selected by Governor Asa Hutchinson to be the new Arkansas Poet Laureate. Susanne is a member of PRA and was the featured speaker for the 2021 PRA Spring Celebration. Her most recent published work, *Flying Yellow*, takes readers on a journey through the intricacies of emotion and spirit. She holds a Bachelor of Science in English from James Madison University and a Master of Arts in Writing Seminars from Johns Hopkins University where she also served as a teaching fellow. The Dr. Lily Peter Spring Celebration is scheduled for April 2, 2022, in the River Market area of Little Rock. The featured speaker is Paulette Guerin Bane of Harding

University. PRA members are hard at work spreading the word about their annual collegiate poetry contest and the Sybil Nash Abrams Memorial Student Contest for middle and senior high school students. Learn more about Poets' Roundtable of Arkansas: poetsroundtableofarkansas.org. ~ Laura Bridges, PRA Vice President

CONNECTICUT POETRY SOCIETY:

Isn't it wonderful how poetry thrives even in trying times like these. In fact, it's times like these that make us recognize our strongest passions and deeply feel our reactions to life. Poetry is alive and thriving in Connecticut! CPS, our State's longest-running poetry organization, has been prolific this past year, as always. Thank the god of Zoom! Our monthly educational programs, POPs (Poets on Poetry) and MOMs (Monthly Open Mics) continue to grow and attract new audiences. In February we offered our first "POPx" – Typography for Poets. Did you know that what is "not there" (white space) is just as important to your poem as what "is there" (text)? In January we instituted the "President's Workshops" where members can sign up and Zoom in to receive comments and suggestions on their drafts from fellow CPS members; these workshops are led by CPS President Pat Mottola and award-winning Poet Vivian Shipley. Our new poetry reading/workshop series, *conneCTions*, is launching in March, bringing poets from U.S. North, South, East and West to read their work and offer craft workshops. So many of our CPS members have been selected as Poet Laureates for their respective towns! We are planning our Spring Fling Gala (in person!) on June 5th. Submit to our upcoming contests via Submittable: The Connecticut Poetry Award (April 1–May 31; \$400 first place); Experimental Poetry Competition (June 15–July 31; \$1000 first place); The Vivian Shipley Award (August 1–September 30; \$1000 first place). CPS welcomes new members from any State. Please visit us at ctpoetry.net. ~ Pat Mottola, President

ILLINOIS STATE POETRY SOCIETY

members had the opportunity to read their poems at our first attempt to have an open mic via Zoom on January 23. It was a successful event with the goal to offer another future reading. The Addison Center for the Arts invited ISPS poets to an ekphrastic collaboration exhibit and reading on February 19. Another collaboration will take place with the Artists' Association of Elk Grove Village for an ekphrastic event entitled "Colors in Nature." This had been scheduled for February but will now be on April 30 at the Elk Grove Public Library. A Zoom production of Edgar Lee Masters' *Spoon River* poems will be included in

celebrating National Poetry Month. Performance artists Paddy and Jon Lynn will present a selection of the poems of this Illinois poet followed by a Q&A. Another April event will be the continuing display of members' poems in various libraries for the month. Plans to have the sixth volume of our poetry anthology, *Distilled Lives*, are still ongoing. Board meetings continue on Zoom which allows for participation from all over the state, and chapter meetings are in-person or by Zoom, as decided by the chapters. Manningham contest submissions have been going well as have the ongoing monthly readings at the Brewed Awakening coffee house. Check illinoispoets.org for ISPS information and membership details. ~ Susan T. Moss, President

POETRY SOCIETY OF INDIANA: In preparation for National Poetry Month, plans are underway for our Annual Spring Fling to be held in-person on Saturday, April 30, 2022. In addition to our Premier Poet Sarah E. Morin-Wilson's "Writing Workshop," we will be celebrating our student winners of the Manningham Competition. Registration forms are available on our PSI website: poetrysocietyofindiana.org. Throughout these winter months, we have continued to meet via Zoom on "First Tuesdays" to offer a topic of interest to our members and an opportunity for a round robin sharing of poems. We also have coordinated a Critique Circle contact for those who would like to meet and receive/give feedback on their works. And we are currently collecting video-biographies of our poets who will then become the "Featured Poet" during the month of April for National Poetry Month. This, along with the Daily Writing Prompts, are just a few of the activities and events for this time. Many of our poets have been quite productive recently. A handful of our members were featured at an art gallery exhibit in Indianapolis offering ekphrastic works. We have had several poets contribute to our Valentine Collaborative Poem, which will be published in our PSI anthology, *Ink to Paper*. And a few poets are celebrating recent book publications and community poetry gatherings. We have a very active and creative group of wordsmiths here in Indiana and welcome all others to join us in our activities. ~ Deborah Petersen, President

MASSACHUSETTS STATE POETRY SOCIETY after many months is finally able to have an in-person meeting on April 5th at the Beverly library. The workshop will be on acrostic poems. Hopefully, this meeting will begin our regular scheduled events. Our National Poetry Day brochure, listing 20+ contests, is available by sending a SASE to President Jeanette Maes, 64 Harrison Ave.,

Lynn, MA 01905. Jeanette's advice for writing great poems: 1) Paint a picture with words, imagery is key. 2) Use more verbs, less adjectives. 3) Don't explain everything, trust the reader to interpret (show, don't tell). 4) Remember, your first communication is with yourself, the second is at least one other. ~ Beverley Barnes, Reporter

MISSISSIPPI POETRY SOCIETY members look forward to the 2022 Spring Festival at Lake Tiak O'Khata near Louisville, Mississippi, on April 29-30. North Branch, this year's host group, has been busy planning an exciting program. The keynote speaker will be Dr. Benjamin Morris from Hattiesburg. The suspense is building as we anticipate finding out winners in our 2022 Spring Contest. Ann Carolyn Cates, our 2022 Poet of the Year, will introduce her chapbook. We take advantage of opportunities to share our poetry publicly. Mr. Ted Evanoff, who is starting a weekly newspaper in Tunica, will include poems by poets living in Mississippi. Nineteen MPS members have agreed to submit their work. Central Branch participated in an open mic event at the Pacesetter Gallery in Flowood. Also, Central Branch has kicked off the "For the Record" poetry project in co-operation with USM's Center for Oral History and the Mississippi Dept. of Archives and History. Spearheaded by Jason Ervin, this effort will include recordings from all three MPS branches. Congratulations to Janice Canerdy, Linda Watson Owen, Mary Beth Magee, and Dr. Emory Jones, who have had new publications. ~ Jeanne Kelly, MPS Secretary

NEBRASKA POETRY SOCIETY: We are currently working on a poetry journal for beginning poets that should be on sale by mid-April. Proceeds from the book will all go back to the Nebraska Poetry Society. The monthly Nebraska Poets Reading Series is a huge hit. It is a free, virtual event open to the public. In our second month we had 95 people register, 45 attend, and a handful watched the recorded version later. The growth is predominantly due to the poets promoting the series to their audience. The monthly workshop series is growing. In February, we had 36 register and 29 attend. Last year our workshops averaged 10-15 attendees and we hope this year is twice that. The workshops are \$35 or free with an annual membership of \$35. We received our first grant from Humanities Nebraska and are thrilled with our new partnership with them. The funds help us pay our workshop leaders. You are welcome to attend any of our events as they are all virtual. Information and links to sign up on NEpoetrysociety.org. Winners of our Poetry Contest will be announced soon. ~ Charlene Pierce, President

NEVADA POETRY SOCIETY continues to meet in-person monthly. The long hiatus of printed newsletters and computer contact now feels like a thing of the past and there is a new appreciation for coming together. We began 2022 with two new members and multiple "inquiries", which affirms that being more visible and open to the community was a good move for us. We had one sad loss and that was the passing of our Beatyenne. A talented life-long English teacher who we affectionately called 'The Grammar Police', she knew "punctuation" and would tell you where to put it! Fellow member Tom Sloan wrote a tribute to our departed friend. ~ Phyllis Peacock, President

NEW MEXICO STATE POETRY SOCIETY plans an exciting virtual convention for April 16th via Zoom with a keynote address given by the fabulous Ana Castillo, featuring readers Darryl Lorenzo Wellington, Scott Wiggerman, Dana Levin, and Lauren Camp, workshops, and more. More information and registration are available at nmpoetry.com. Our chapters are busy celebrating the poetic work of our members through virtual and limited in-person events and workshops. The Albuquerque chapter has spent the past few months learning about poetry forms, including the limerick, pantoum, and sestina. The Santa Fe Poetry Trails Chapter enjoys an open mic once a month, and the Multimedia & Songwriting Chapter work with allied groups throughout New Mexico, nationally and internationally, in monthly events. Our Rio Grande Valencia and River Poets Chapters enjoy meeting virtually for now and plan to hold in-person meetings and events as soon as possible. ~ Jannetta Lamourt, NMSPS Communications

POETRY SOCIETY OF OKLAHOMA was not able to hold our annual banquet in March again this year, but we still had our Annual Poetry contest winners and awards. The following month (April), people all over the world will celebrate National Poetry Month. Each year PSO looks forward to the Oklahoma City Council presenting a Proclamation that proclaims April as National Poetry Month in the city (eleventh year in a row!). And our Oklahoma State Legislators will present a Resolution stating that April is National Poetry Month in the state as well (again, eleventh year in a row!). And on another positive note, we welcomed several new members to our Poetry Society of Oklahoma. Sadly, we had several members pass away. We continue to keep in touch and abreast of all happenings through emails and snail mail as several members do not have computer capabilities. The board discussed using Zoom but not everyone could

participate. We will always have communication among our members and are looking forward to our July workshop. For information, check angelfire.com/poetry/ps/ and our PSO Facebook page. Until next time, *Keep writing those poems!* Come and Grow at PSO! ~ *Patti Koch, President*

POETRY SOCIETY OF TENNESSEE: Greetings! The big news from us is that all three of our chapters are now holding their monthly meetings virtually. This is something we started because of the pandemic with good results. Covid-19 is not the problem it was but as spread out as each of our chapters are, Zoom is a great way for us to get together. In May we will be asking all our members who are now listed as at large to choose the chapter that best fits their needs. Most of our meetings are open to anyone, so check out poetrytennessee.org for the times and dates and join us. We would love to have you. ~ *William Hill, President*

POETRY SOCIETY OF TEXAS: After the excitement of seeing many of our poet friends in person at our PST Centennial Celebration on the evening of November 5, 2021, and our Annual Awards Banquet the following day, we resumed our monthly meetings on Zoom in December. Each January we have a Memorial Program in which we remember poets that we have lost during the past year. Seven outstanding poets passed away in 2021, and the program was presented by past PST President Catherine L'Herisson. Following the memorial, we had our annual Poem-A-Thon, in which poets in attendance read one of their poems or a favorite poem. At the end of our regular monthly meeting in February, President Irene Robertson surprised us when a special guest, Harold Schultz, an Elvis impersonator from Atlanta, sang "Love Me Tender" and wished us *Happy Valentine's Day*. Those who stayed on-line read a love poem. February is also Black History Month, and for many years, several poets from Mansfield, Texas, have presented a program for Black History Month at the Mansfield Activity Center for seniors. Due to covid restraints, there were only two poets presenting this year, one was William "Buzz" Wilson, a Cowboy Poet, and the other was Jeannette L Strother offering Black History Poetry. On February 5th, the Mockingbird Chapter in McKinney hosted "Art Meets Poetry: A Pandemic Perspective," in which poems and art by local artists were paired. Admission was free with a donation of canned or dry goods to benefit the community. The submission period for the 2022 William D. Barney Memorial Chapbook Contest offered by the Fort Worth Poetry Society in cooperation with the Poetry Society of Texas was extended to March 15,

so the winner may not be announced at the April PST monthly meeting as originally planned. Plans were also underway for a special PST event at the Dallas Arboretum in April to celebrate Poetry Month, but due to overbooking, that event has been changed to May 22nd. ~ *Catherine L'Herisson, Reporter*

UTAH STATE POETRY SOCIETY announces, with a heavy heart, the death of our president, Steven Leitch, who died on January 31, 2022 (age 72) from a rare form of cancer. Besides being an excellent poet and a dedicated advocate for poetry, he was a professional photographer whose photographs documented medical history and research at the University of Utah. Steven took photos of one of the university's biggest medical breakthroughs when in 1982, Dr. William Devries transplanted the Jarvik-7, the first permanent artificial heart, into the chest of 61-year-old Seattle dentist, Barney Clark. Steven was a member of the United States Air Force (1969-1973) and later served in the U.S. Army Reserve from 1979 to 2009. He graduated from Weber State University where he received a BS in Art and Photography. It has been a tough four months for the Utah State Poetry Society, because in addition to Steven's death, we have also lost two other past presidents: Kolette Montague and Eric Read. Michael Spears has been announced as the Acting President. We are looking forward to holding our annual poetry conference on April 8-9 via Zoom. Marjorie Wentworth, former Poet Laureate for South Carolina will be the guest speaker. Winners of our 2022 poetry contest will be announced at the conference. We again sponsored the annual Poetry in the Park on March 4th at Zion's National Park. On March 5th the UTSPS Redrock Writers chapter also held their writing seminar in St. George, where the winners of the 2022 Chaparral contest were announced. Lola Haskins, a past winner of the Emily Dickinson/Writer Magazine award from the Poetry Society of America, was the guest speaker (at both events). We look forward to returning to in-person chapter meetings very soon. ~ *Michael Spears, Acting President*

WYOPOETS: It is here! WyoPoets' big conference will be held on April 29th and 30th in beautiful Douglas, WY. It will be held in the gorgeous Douglas library. This year our presenter is the award-winning poet and editor, Camille Dungy. She is a professor of creative writing at Colorado State University. The workshop, "Sprout your Seeds," will explore new ways to see our own work in relationship to the living world. April 29th will see the launch of the chapbook, *Emergence*. It features 31 poems from 20 poets. Thanks to a generous grant from

Wyoming Arts Council with support from the National Endowment for the arts and the Wyoming Legislature. In other news we are happy to welcome Sarah Reichert as our new webmaster and Nolcha Fox as our new Newsletter Editor. They have been doing an amazing job. I hope to see many of you in Douglas soon and for those who can't attend, I highly recommend Camille Dungy's works. I am reading her memoir and finding it riveting. Happy Poetry Month. ~ *Angel Mizner, Strophes Correspondent*

POETRY CONTESTS



**BLACKBERRY PEACH NATIONAL
SLAM POETRY COMPETITION
DAYTONA BEACH SHORES, FLORIDA
OCTOBER 20-23, 2022**

\$5,000 in Prizes, Sponsored by NFSPS

Slam and spoken word poetry will take center stage October 20-23, 2022, when the first annual BlackBerry Peach National Slam Poetry Competition is held in Daytona Beach Shores, Florida. Internationally acclaimed performance poets and statewide slam winners will converge on the beachfront city for three nights of slam competition at the Marriott Residence Inn, leading to a final showdown on Saturday night. The first-place winner will pocket \$2,000, with cash prizes awarded through 12th place.

The National Slam is open to all qualified performance poets from around the world, with first preference given to poets representing the state chapter societies of NFSPS, past winners of the BlackBerry Peach Poetry Prizes: Spoken and Heard, and poets representing established slam venues. A total of 48 slots will be available, and slam poets not included in the categories listed above can enter by submitting a performance video. The entry fee for all competitors is \$150.

The slam organizers have established the following dates and deadlines:

March 1-April 30, 2022: NFSPS affiliated state chapters must submit their intention to send a representative, along with entry fee.

March 1-April 30, 2022: Past winners of the BlackBerry Peach Poetry Prize competition (from 1st through honorable mention) must apply and include entry fee.

May 1-June 30, 2022: Registration opens for poets affiliated with established slam venues and long-running poetry organizations other than State Poetry Societies. "Established" or "Long-running" entities should be able to show proof of

regular (minimum monthly) programming going back to October 2020, making those entities at least two years old by October 2022, the month when the BlackBerry Peach National Poetry Slam takes place.

July 1-August 31, 2022: Individual poets should submit their intention to compete and pay the registration fee. (If necessary, a waitlist will be established to fill any slots that may reopen.)

Registration will close at 11 p.m. (Eastern Daylight Time) the last day of August, with the final field (and waitlist if applicable) announced the second week of September (registrants from state societies and venues will be notified upon acceptance).

More detailed information regarding state guidelines, how to enter, and rules for the slam is available on the NFSPS's website at nfsp.com/bbps.html.

Email bbpslam2022@gmail.com with your inquiries and questions.

OHIO POETRY DAY 2022

The Ohio Poetry Day contest, now in its 85th year, offers 26 contests, open to all poets for a \$10 fee, which entitles you to enter all contests you are eligible for. Contest submissions from March 1st to May 15th (deadline for postmark date). Prizes are awarded in October when we have our annual celebration of Poetry Day. If you have not entered in the last five years, you need to send a #10 SASE for the rules or download the rules from the Ohio Poetry Day Association's website: ohiopoetryday.blogspot.com. Be sure to read and follow all the rules. Amy Jo Zook, Contest Chairman, 3520 State Route 56, Mechanicsburg, OH 43044.

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. See winning poems on: wildamorris.blogspot.com.

POETRY ARTICLES & NEWS

PENNSYLVANIA POET WINS STEVENS MANUSCRIPT COMPETITION

Carol Clark Williams' manuscript, "Unpacking for the Journey", was chosen winner of the 2022 Barbara Stevens Poetry Manuscript Competition. Judge Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer, who served as Colorado Western Slope Poet Laureate, stated that this book is "filled with powerful poems, experimental, in touch with their own emotion" Williams, from York, PA, will read a selection of poems from her manuscript at the 2022 NFSPS Convention, where the book

will be offered for sale. Carol is a member of the Pennsylvania Poetry Society. Finalists were M. Palowski Moore (Kansas), Chris Boldt (Texas), Ellen Hirning Schmidt (New York), Steven Concert (Pennsylvania), and Kathy Cotton (Illinois). Twenty-five NFSPS members entered and 20 non-members. The contest was advertised in *Poets and Writers Magazine*, Facebook, via email, and on Duotrope. ~ Julie Cummings, Acting Stevens Chair

POETRY ARTICLES & NEWS

PUT IT IN PRACTICE

By Emiliano Martín, Pennsylvania Poetry Society President

For any poet, just writing for the sake of writing cannot be a bad idea to put it in practice. That will help to engage the brain with the person's skill, but if writing a good poem is important to the poet, a great effort must be placed with knowledge and heart, besides an attitude to wisely revise the poem without shame or shades of neither fear nor contempt. The rest ... time will tell.

FOUND POEM

By Jon Sebba, Utah State Poetry Society

The Poetry Foundation defines a "Found Poem" this way:

Found poem: *A prose text or texts reshaped by a poet into quasi-metrical lines. Fragments of found poetry may appear within an original poem as well. Portions of Ezra Pound's Cantos are found poetry, culled from historical letters and government documents. Charles Olson created his poem "There Was a Youth whose Name Was Thomas Granger" using a report from William Bradford's History of Plymouth Plantation.*

I am always on the lookout when I read (anything) for found poems. To catch my eye, the words should be image-heavy, colorful, emotional and metaphorical, or at least rich in similes. Use of the five senses is a definite plus. Other poets, as in the above definition, found inspiration in scientific, technical, or political prose.

My favorite authors for "poetic prose" are Margaret Atwood, Michael Ondaatje and Louis de Bernierés, among others.

De Bernierés' *Corelli's Mandolin* was made into a popular movie, but the original book and others he wrote are replete with beautiful writing. The following is a poem I formed from a paragraph in *Corelli's Mandolin*. Go to books.google.com and search for "42 How like a Woman is a Mandolin", then select the search result: **Corelli's Mandolin: A Novel**. This will bring up chapter 42 with its title, "How like a Woman is a Mandolin".

I made a few changes by removing the names of the girl, mandolin and village where it takes place, so as not to have to include a glossary. Then I changed De Bernierés' WWII setting, a Greek village girl confronting an Italian soldier, to a current situation with which I am personally more familiar. In addition, I rearranged the stanzas to provide a stronger ending, in my opinion. See what you think.

A Woman—a Mandolin

(a found poem*)

Distant dogs howl, crickets chirr,
the moon hoists above this occupied village.
I take my sweet mandolin,
brush her strings softly.
Can she be made of wood?

With my eyes I ask a vision of a girl,
gracious and lovely in evening light,
*Are you made of flesh or fire,
or a trace of angels—
surely not bone and blood?*

I catch her eye in passing, her gaze,
frank and quizzical, holds mine.
Her head turns, she smiles
an arch, knowing smile.
Then she's gone.

Her wrists remind me
of my mandolin's slender neck.
Her hand broadens from the wrist
like the head that holds the pegs.

The swell where the heel
meets the soundbox follows
the contours of her neck and chin,
and glows the same with soft polish
of youth and pine.

She returns, water urn
upon her shoulder,
a living caryatid, she passes,
splashes my uniform,
apologizes laughing.

I say, *Accidents will happen.*
She knows I know
it was no chance.
She did it.

She did it
because she is funny,
because she likes to tease,
because she likes me,
because it is contact.

She did it
because I am an Israeli soldier,
and it's an act of resistance,
because we are brother and sister
before she is Arab and I am occupier.

* Adapted from *Corelli's Mandolin*
by Louis de Bernierés.

POETS ON POETRY

By Sarah Wood, Poetry Society of Texas
Corresponding Secretary

When *Strophes* Editor, Paul Ford, sent out a call for an article on the topic, I thought how convenient! We have a winter storm arriving tonight in Texas and it will last a few days. I can write an article in that time when I am sequestered in my house. Although I have a pretty humble attitude about my own process, I imagine that I will learn something by reading what famous writers of poetry have said on the topic.

Robert Pen Warren said that a poem is a reaction by a speaker, who is the poet himself or someone into whose mouth the poet has put the poem, to a situation, scene, or idea. He adds that it is a dramatic situation—that indeed the poem is a little drama. When I think of the craft of writing poetry, I can describe my own process simply as beginning with specifics as opposed to generalities or ideas.

So, starting with my process, I begin with particulars. If I am at home, I usually start by listing emotions I am currently experiencing and the situations that they are associated to. I work with those feelings to see if a poem emerges from my own life. Another approach involves going somewhere to write; often I go to the lake near my home or to a coffee shop. Sometimes I end up writing about something I observe. Rarely do I start with an abstraction like friendship or loneliness. Not that it is not possible to start with an idea, but I don't often do it. The final draft usually is written in my living room with an ordinary dictionary (on my phone), a thesaurus and a rhyming dictionary (both on the coffee table) beside me.

In *Upstream*, Mary Oliver writes that what she learned from Walt Whitman is that a poem is a “temple—or a green field—a place to enter, in which to feel.” I think that most of my poems are centered on feeling realities but Warren cautions against attempting to merely bring some sensation clearly into the reader's experience and says that, instead, an interpretation of the experience by the poet is desirable as in, for example, Keats' “Ode to a Nightingale.” The speaker is not simply wanting a glass of wine but he wants a certain quality of life associated with the wine.

Oliver also comments that a writing schedule is a good suggestion. I have found that I can build up my writing schedule. Starting, for example, with two sessions a week, and then after some months I find I can move to three (but that also, sometimes, I have to scale back for one reason or another).

Whitman advised “to carry a pencil and a piece of paper and constantly jot down striking events in daily life” (Jones). This gets to the idea that specifics are a good place

to start. Things people say, or things that happen can be a lovely springboard. Sylvia Plath echoes this penchant for the particulars when she said, “I love people. Everybody. I love them, I think, as a stamp collector loves his collection. Every story, every incident, every bit of conversation is raw material for me” (Johnson).

In a letter to Richard Woodhouse in 1818, the poet John Keats writes of the “chameleon Poet,” who experiences “relish of the dark side of things” and “taste for the bright one” and as such has “no identity”. There is in this letter the idea that all manner of experience is a proper subject for poetry. He speaks of the “poetical Character itself” which “lives in gusto, be it foul or fair, high or low, rich or poor, mean or elevated—it has as much delight in conceiving an Iago as an Imogen” (Keats). So there are no proper subjects or improper subjects.

These are just a few ideas on writing poetry. I think I have learned from my forays into the comments of famous writers that the habit, note-taking, and an open mind about subject matter is a good beginning. Oliver spoke of her decision to veer towards positivity and Plath plumbed the depths of dark feelings and thoughts. Both were great writers from which there is much to learn.

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CREATE POEMS FROM LISTS

By Pamelyn Casto, Poetry Society of Texas

In everyday life, lists are important. We make grocery lists, to-do lists, guests lists, and more. Our culture makes lists as well, such as: most-wanted, best-dressed, best-schools, best-books. Lists also play a large part in history too. Some famous lists, ancient lists still explored today, include the Bible's list of ten commandments (and its

genealogical lists), the list of heroes of the Trojan War in Homer's *The Iliad*, the genealogy, and the origin of the Greek gods in Hesiod's *Theogony*.

Clearly, lists are important to human culture. According to noted literary critic, philosopher, and novelist Umberto Eco, lists create culture.

Lists are also important to the literary world because lists can make effective and memorable poetry as well.

There are many poems written in list form. An older one is the catalogue of Christopher Smart's “Jubilate Agno” about what his cat Jeffrey did each morning; see poetryfoundation.org/poems/45173/jubilate-agno. Both Walt Whitman in “Song of Myself” and Allen Ginsberg in “Howl” make extensive use of lists. There are also the poetic prose lists compiled by Sei Shônagon in *Pillow Book (Makura no Soshi)*, the classic tenth century portrayal of Japanese court life.

A shorter, more modern-day poem done as a list is Raymond Carver's “The Car.” The forty-nine-line list of the cars he's owned can also be viewed as a prose poem. Carter gives his list a surprise ending; see cultureshockpdx.blogspot.com/2009/04/car.html.

Another Carver list poem is titled “Fear.” Each of the twenty-seven lines, except for the last line, begins “Fear of . . .” This poem, too, has an unexpected ending; see raymondcarver101.blogspot.com.

Shel Silverstein wrote wonderful children's poetry. Two favorite list poems from his *Where The Sidewalk Ends* are: “Sick,” see poets.org/poem/sick?mbd=1 and “Mr. Gumpdump's Song,” see poets.org/poem/mr-grumpedumps-song.

Artist and writer Joe Brainard, part of the New York School of poetry, wrote his cult classic lyrical prose poem, an autobiography titled *I Remember*, in the form of one long list. Each item in the list begins with “I remember”; see poets.org/text/joe-brainard-i-remember.

Maggie Nelson's “Bluets” is a long list telling a story of love, loss, and grief. While it can and is viewed by many as a short book or lengthy essay, it is composed of 240 brief prose poems, or, as Nelson calls them, propositions. For this work, Nelson was inspired by Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Remarks on Color* and by pre-Socratic philosophical fragments; see pen.org/from-bluets.

To get you started, here are a few topic possibilities for building poems out of lists.

1. List the things that led to losing your best friend.
2. List the things that led to the failure of your diet.

(Continued on page 8)

President's Message (continued from page 1)

I used many of the systems put in place by my predecessors to keep our organization going strong and will continue to do my part. I love NFSPS, its members, and most of all, I love poetry. During the convention this year, I will be handing off the President's gavel. I have agreed to become *Strophes* editor, and I hope I can perform even half as well as Paul Ford, First Vice President, has in this role.

I hope I can get to meetings in the rest of the states over the next few years. I have retired from my teaching job and as COVID restrictions ease, I want to attend a meeting in each state. I will start with the BlackBerry Peach Slam in October in Florida. Joe Cavanaugh, 2nd Vice President, has led an amazing team of volunteers to help make this new event a reality. Who can resist Florida in October?

I will continue to be involved with NFSPS if you will have me. As NFSPS moved into its 61st year, I wrote that there could never be a more crucial time for the poetry community to engage in bold and brave conversations about the current state of poetry: "These dialogues are vital as we continue to see challenge after challenge in our organization, all the way down to the state and local levels." Our membership and our participation in events are decreasing. We need to glean ideas from each other and brainstorm new ideas. If an organization is not growing, it is dying. We need to come together to establish a plan for growth, not only for state societies and the national federation, but to save our poetry mission.

I would be remiss if I fail to thank the board again. Eleanor Berry graciously continued as Presidential Advisor. Paul Ford has been invaluable as *Strophes* Editor. Joe Cavanaugh has led the charge for the BlackBerry Peach. Charmaine Donovan has presented many special awards that highlight member contributions. Steven Concert has served as CUP Chair, Stevens and CUP editor, Sponsors Co-chair; anything he does is amazing! Polly Opsahl has led the Convention Committee through an online convention and is assisting with the return to an in-person/hybrid convention. She also sends out past winning books that are not available through Amazon. JoAn Howerton has contributed her vast experience with NFSPS to many projects. Loretta Diane Walker has been a valuable board member as well as serving on committees. Linda Harris first served as Secretary and now as Treasurer and has kept our funds organized. Jessica Temple is an excellent Secretary and has taken over the CUP Chair role. Susan Stevens Chambers continues to inspire youth with the Manningham Competition. She also keeps us all in "order" as legal advisor. Catherine L'Herisson, as our Librarian, continues to stock the NFSPS Library. Kathy Cotton edits and publishes the *Encore* in record time and creates a beautiful book. Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer writes articles for those working with youth.

Nancy Baass continues to gather state histories. Amy Zook reminds us to celebrate Poetry Day. Billy Pennington maintains nfsp.com. Lisa Toth Salinas tweets for us. Each of these volunteers completes their duties and serves on multiple committees. Thank you so very much! We are in our 63rd year and now that we are moving toward a new normal, perhaps you want to help NFSPS? Please, begin a conversation with me or any Board member! A conversation is not a commitment! Maybe you want to help but don't want to be on the board. That's okay, too! Please feel free to reach out to any of the other Board members or me for information you would like to have. We wish you the best in 2022 and hope you can join us for our annual meeting and Convention, June 23-27, at the Nationwide Convention Center in Lewis Center, Ohio, and online via Zoom.

Thank you for all you do for poetry!

Your sister in words,

Julie Cummings, 34th NFSPS President

CREATE POEMS FROM LISTS

(continued from page 7)

3. List the ways you coped with Covid.
4. List the things you keep forgetting (start with simple things then build to serious things).
5. List the things you want to remember.

List poems can be humorous or serious. They can use single words or single sentences and when put together they can offer a story or commentary. Works done in list format can be effective because they arrest reader attention by defamiliarizing the usual ways of perceiving a poem. When a poem is presented in an unfamiliar way, it can push readers to overcome their habitual perceptions and lead them to activate their imaginations. From short to long, from simple to complex, it is clear that lists have an important role to play in our everyday lives, in our culture, and in the poetry world. There is no better time than now to start putting together . . . another list. It just might be your next poem struggling to be born.

STROPHES EDITOR CHANGE

Having been involved in *Strophes* since the October 2009 issue, I value the many connections to poets across NFSPS and in formatting the submitted poetry news, events and open contests in each issue to reflect well on NFSPS and our state societies. Being able to support poets in their challenges and celebrations has been an honor for me.

I am in debt to many past NFSPS board members, too many to name here except Julie Cummings (NFSPS President). Not only has she been willing to serve two terms as NFSPS President (Maybe the only member to do this?), but she agreed to take on the *Strophes* Associate Editor with the intent of transitioning into the Editor role come the August 2022 issue.

My heart is filled with admiration and gratitude for Julie's dedication to poets, poetry and NFSPS state societies. I hope to continue in service to the same. ~ Paul Ford, Editor

ENCORE PRIZE POEMS 2021

The anthology of 160 prize-winning poems awarded at the "Anywhere and Everywhere" virtual NFSPS convention is available on amazon.com. The 2021 cover gives a

nod to the Federation's first "sky-borne" annual gathering of poets. All royalties from *Encore* sales support NFSPS. ~ Kathy Cotton, *Encore* Editor



REGISTRATION

2022 NFSPS Convention, Columbus, Ohio

Renewal through Poetry

Thursday, June 23–Sunday, June 26, 2022

Registration Deadline: May 23



Convention registration fee for in-person attendees is \$75 NFSPS members/\$125 non-members; for virtual attendees \$45 NFSPS members/\$75 non-members. There are no single-day fees. There are no registration fees for guests, though meal and tour fees DO apply. Registration fee gives attendees access to all on-site workshops and programs. Guests, friends, and family of attendees and of prize winners (Stevens, CUP, BlackBerryPeach) may attend award ceremonies for free and purchase meals if they select them by May 23. Guests will not receive registration packets or be permitted to attend workshops, but they will be welcome at after-meal presentations by prize winners and the keynote.

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

REGISTRATION FEES

| NFSPS Member | Qty. | Fee | Subtotal | Non-Member | Qty. | Fee | Subtotal |
|---------------------|-------|------|----------|-------------------------|-------|-------|----------|
| In-person | _____ | \$75 | _____ | In-person | _____ | \$125 | _____ |
| Virtual | _____ | \$45 | _____ | Virtual | _____ | \$75 | _____ |
| Member TOTAL | | | | Non-Member TOTAL | | | |
| \$ _____ | | | | \$ _____ | | | |

MEALS: All meal prices include drink (coffee, tea, water), dessert, taxes, and gratuities.

| Lunch Buffet (incl. meat & veg options) | Qty. | Price | Subtotal |
|---|-------|-------|-----------------|
| Fri. 6/24 (Manningham winner) | _____ | \$30 | _____ |
| Sat. 6/25 (Stevens winner) | _____ | \$30 | _____ |
| Sun. 6/26 | _____ | \$30 | _____ |
| Lunch TOTAL | | | \$ _____ |

| Dinner | Meal Choice (enter qty. for each) | Price | Subtotal |
|------------------------------|---|-------|-----------------|
| Fri. 6/24 (CUP winners) | Buffet (incl. meat and veg options) _____ | \$53 | _____ |
| Sat. 6/25 (banquet, keynote) | Pork loin _____ Chicken _____ Veg _____ | \$46 | _____ |
| Sun. 6/26 (BBP winner) | Buffet (incl. meat and veg options) _____ | \$53 | _____ |
| Dinner TOTAL | | | \$ _____ |

Special dietary needs: Gluten-free _____ Veg _____ Allergies _____ Non-dairy: _____

Other (e.g., vegan): _____

TOURS: Additional tours may be scheduled. Visit the OPA website for updated tour information.

| Program | Qty. | Fee | Subtotal |
|---|------|------|----------|
| Thurs. 6/23: Highbanks Metro Park * Poetry Hike | | \$10 | \$ |

* Learn more at www.metroparks.net/parks-and-trails/highbanks

CONVENTION PURCHASE TOTALS

| | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| Subtotal for registrations | \$ _____ |
| Subtotal for lunch purchases | \$ _____ |
| Subtotal for dinner purchases | \$ _____ |
| Subtotal for tours | \$ _____ |
| TOTAL ALL ITEMS | \$ _____ |

PAYMENT

Make checks payable to
Ohio Poetry Association
and mail with this form to:

**Convention Registrar
c/o Chris Minton
159 Windrow Ct.
Gahanna, OH 43230**

Pay online: For your convenience, registration and payment can be made online with PayPal or a personal credit card via the OPA website: ohiopoetryassn.org.

REGISTRATION AND PAYMENT MUST BE RECEIVED BY MAY 23 whether by mail or via online registration.

Questions? Contact team@ohiopoetryassn.org

TRANSPORTATION INFO

Complete airport and travel information is available at flycolumbus.com. Taxis, Lyft, and Uber operate at John Glenn Columbus International Airport (CMH). A shuttle runs to the rental car area. Please note that Nationwide Hotel does not have shuttle service available to/from CMH.

For tourism and other travel information for central Ohio, visit experiencecolumbus.com.