



*On the Edge Chapter of
the Missouri State Poetry Society
Members' Anthology 2023*

The On the Edge Chapter of the Missouri State Poetry Society serves member poets in St. Louis and Jefferson counties. The group meets at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Manchester on the second Friday of each month for fellowship, poetry critique, and discussions of other matters related to poetry.

President: Terrie Jacks (Manchester)

Members: John J. Han (Manchester), Georgie Herz (Ballwin), Carol and Don Horstman (Fenton), Idella Pearl[†] (Fenton), Anna Roberts Wells (Festus), Juanita Wittu (DeSoto)

Honorary Members: Billy and Faye Adams (Cherokee Village, AR)

On the Edge

Editor: John J. Han

Editorial Assistant: Terrie Jacks

On the Edge is a members' anthology published every December. Submit seven poems via email to john.han@mobap.edu by November 15, and the editor will select five for inclusion in the anthology.

The Chapter reserves the right to publish accepted submissions in *On the Edge*; upon publication, copyrights revert to the authors. By submitting, authors certify that the work is their own. All submissions are subject to editing for clarity, grammar, usage, and propriety.

Cover art & design: John J. Han

Front cover photo: The Meramec River flowing through Castlewood State Park in St. Louis County, MO. Photo taken in October 2023.

Printed and bound in the United States.

ISBN-13: 978-0-9898370-3-3

Salt Mountain Publishing
St. Louis, Missouri

Table of Contents

- 5 **Editor's Preface**
7 **Obituary of Idella Pearl**

Members' Poems

- 8 Faye Adams
Visitors
Red Birdfeeder
Giving Thanks
Uninvited Guests
Unnumbered
- 13 John J. Han
Commuting
Football Fan Blues: A Senryu Sequence
Five Kyoka
[A Korean translation of Aldine Kieffer's "Twilight Is Stealing"]
[A Korean translation of Tolkien's "I Sit Beside the Fire and Think"]
- 20 Georgie Herz
Dining Room Table
health report
I am a planner
learning perspective
thank you for shopping
- 25 Donald Horstman
herby
turtles
hawk
the nut
Timmy
- 30 Terrie Jacks
Medicare statements
a good night for fishing
a twinge of loneliness
gps
family portrait
- 34 Idella Pearl
The Owl
Solar Eclipse
Each Leaf Must Fall
A Vacation to Remember
Open the Door
- 39 Anna Roberts Wells
The Aunts
Crone wisdom
Ancestry
Food Chain
Banner year
- 44 Juanita Wittu
A Nature Study Out My Window
Jay at the Feeder
Moving On
Old Friends
Reflection at the Pond

Poems by the 2023 MSPS Youth Contest Top Winners

- 49 Elanyna Gilbertson (Grade 11), Jackson High School, Jackson, MO
Nalilito
- 50 Riley Ott (Grade 8), Good Shepherd Catholic School, Hillsboro, MO
Thinking About My Future
- 51 2023 MSPS Youth Contest Winners
- 52 **Year in Review December 2022-November 2023:
On the Edge Photos by John J. Han**

Editor's Preface

Welcome to the new issue of the On the Edge anthology! A whole year has flown by since we resurrected the annual On the Edge anthology in December 2022. It seems like our last Christmas luncheon at Bob Evans in Fenton, MO, happened only a few months ago. Here we are near the end of yet another year.

Having met my fellow On the Edge poets for more than 15 years, I feel that our appearances have changed little. I am sure we have changed over the years, but it is hard to notice many changes in personal appearance as we meet at least once a month for fellowship, poetry critique, moral support, and laughter. Writing poetry keeps all of us young, and it is a blessing to share our poems in progress with those who appreciate and care about them.

Sadly, in October, we lost Idella Pearl, a relatively new member of On the Edge, to cancer. At our critique meetings, she shared with us her poems steeped in Christian faith, which inspired the rest of us. As in her poems, her life with cancer was marked by faith, hope, and holy resignation. The graceful way she faced her imminent death was deeply instructive, and her presence will be missed. (You will find her obituary on page 7.)

Under the tireless leadership of Terrie Jacks, the On the Edge poetry group, which is based in St. Louis and Jefferson counties, continues to march forward. We meet at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Manchester on the second Friday of every month. In this age of materialism and social media, our group recognizes the value of living a creative life, the power of language, and the joy of sharing and responding to poetic words. In this year's anthology, readers will find some of the fruits of our creativity this year.

One of the strengths of our poetry group lies in the diversity of poetic styles and tones as is illustrated by the works collected in this anthology. Faye Adams's poems reflect the influence of the natural world, Christian faith, and the history of the United States. Georgie Herz's poems exude humor and incisive yet warm critique of happenings in life. Donald Horstman continues to delight us with his illustrated limericks which demonstrate his humor and a keen eye for detail. Terrie Jacks's verses and drawings are also filled with humor, and words seem to be ready to come out of her head anytime without effort.

As usual, Anna Roberts Wells writes free verse poems that are thoughtful and nostalgic, and they reflect her upbringing in a close-knit, happy family in Arkansas. It is always a pleasure to read Juanita Wittu's Ozarks poems that reflect her appreciation of nature and her kind heart. Finally, I continue to write Japanese-style short poems which aim to capture some haiku, senryu (satiric, humorous haiku), tanka, and kyoka (satiric, humorous tanka) moments in life.

As we did last year, we have also included the top two poems that won the senior and junior divisions of the Missouri State Poetry Society Youth Contest, respectively. This year's top winners are Elanyna Gilbertson, an 11th-grader at Jackson High School, Jackson, MO, and Riley Ott, an 8th grader at Good Shepherd Catholic School, Hillsboro, MO. Their poems appear on pages 49-50, and you will enjoy reading them very much. They are followed by a list of the top ten winners of each division. The high number of entries shows that poetry continues to attract young talents, which gives us hope for the future of poetry in this nation.

Finally, this year's issue includes some photos that I have taken since the Christmas luncheon last December. You will find photos from Bob Evans, some of our critique sessions at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, and the annual convention of the Missouri State Poetry Society in Springfield, MO.

Happy reading!

JJH
Manchester, MO
December 3, 2023

Obituary of Idella Pearl

(<https://www.tributearchive.com/obituaries/29794905/idella-pearl-edwards>)

Idella Pearl Edwards

Saint Louis, Missouri

October 27, 2023

After 83 years of love and service to others, Idella Pearl Edwards went home to be with her Lord and Savior.

Idella was born January 5, 1940, in Aurora, IL, the daughter of the late Wilbert and Esther (Chapin) Liskey. After a short bout of pancreatic cancer, she died peacefully on 10/27/2023.

She was married to Jack G. Edwards for 63 joyful years. He preceded her in death. Surviving are four of their children: Bruce D. Edwards and wife, Mary of Bloomfield, IN, Rhonda B. Andersen and husband, James of Marion, IL, Karen L. Malone and husband, David of Fenton, MO, Kerry Jo Montoya of West Fargo, ND; and daughter-in-law, Amanda Benson of Sandusky, OH.

She had twelve grandchildren: Benjamin Edwards and wife, Courtney, Bradley Edwards and wife, Rachel, David Andersen, Christine Andersen, Jacob Murphy, Meghan Malone, Colleen Malone, Jacqueline Edwards, Samuel Edwards, Joseph Montoya, Destiny Benson, Zachariah Benson, three great grandchildren: Violet Edwards, Emmett Edwards, Douglas Edwards, and two more on the way.

Besides her parents and husband, Idella was preceded in death by son, David E. Benson, of Sandusky, OH, brother, Robert Liskey, and son-in-law, Keith Montoya.

Idella was exceptionally talented. She loved jigsaw puzzles, photography, oil painting, writing poems, bird watching, and has written 43 poetry, devotional and children's books. She also enjoyed writing a weekly column for *The Marion Star* newspaper. However, her favorite pastime was spending time with her husband, spoiling her grandchildren, and providing love and support for her children. During her final time, she was content, often stating that her life was full of blessings and that she was ever so grateful to be surrounded by her loving family.

Idella's Celebration of Life service will occur Saturday, Nov. 11 at 11:00 AM central time.

Mt. Olive General Baptist Church
1849 Hawkins Pl, Fenton, MO 63026

The service will also be live-streamed on FB Live: <https://www.facebook.com/MtOliveGeneralBaptistChurch>.

Idella requested all memorials in her honor be sent to The Promise in Marion, IL.

FAYE ADAMS

Visitors
(A tricube)

Two felines
thrown away
came to stay.

Orange fur
hungry eyes
through the snow.

Food and drink
set in bowls
on the porch.

Red Birdfeeder

On my usual perch
at the computer
I sit alone today
gazing out the window
on a winter world
of numbing brown and gray

Touches of green
provide slim respite
from the cloddish chill of day
Arched wild onion tops
cede to the west wind
in fluttery eastward sway

Feathered friends flock
warm in their covering
of myriad bright array
lending glossy pigment
over the seed banquet
in a full-winged ballet

Previously published in Cantos, MBU Annual Literary Journal, April 2015.

Giving Thanks

(You are the Potter, I am the Clay)

Thank you, Father,
for keeping me poor,
thereby instilling in me
appreciation for what I have.

Thank you for hard work,
teaching me the value of rest.

Thank you for illness,
nurturing empathy for others.

Thank you for difficulty,
opening opportunity for growth.

Thank you for weakness,
causing me to draw
on your unfailing strength.

Thank you for my bumbling ways,
forcing me to seek your wisdom.

Thank you, Father, for who you are,
and who you've allowed me to become.

Uninvited Guests

Early this morning, I found,
much to my chagrin,
the flowers in my garden
were as if they'd never been.

Bitten off above the soil,
green stubs left aground.
Mad enough to spit nails,
I fussed and stomped around.

It was easy to discover
who the culprits were.
They left telling evidence
indented in the dirt there.

Their hoof prints tracked
all around the flowerbed;
no blossoms for my soul today,
food in their stomachs instead.

*First published in Pearls of the Pen Poetry Anthology, 2003.
Published in elizaPress Eclectic Anthology Series, No. 3, DIGGING, April,
2007.*

Unnumbered

In 1790, the first U.S. Census counted four million heads. An inaccurate number, wholly deceptive.

Women were rarely named except those widowed. "Free White Males" were tallied, weighing the draft.

A slave numbered as three/fifths of a person. American Indians didn't make the count.

Fast forward 220 years:
2010 Census

Nose count, 310 million. Absolutely everyone made the list.

JOHN J. HAN

Commuting

Some days
red lights all the way.

Other days
green lights all the way.

Like life.

Football Fan Blues: A Senryu Sequence

National Signing Day
every team wins
a trophy

football field
a possum faster than
our running back

my team lost again
the urge to
butt heads

feeling euphoric
my rival team's
loss today

raking leaves
this football Saturday
time well spent

my team's freefall
freeing up time
for golf

another loss
I'm glad I was
going abroad

the worst league team
no way to sink
deeper

the soothing effect
of sleep music
no more distress

Five Kyoka

sightseeing trip
I forgot to bring my
phone charger...
with regrets, I wake up
from my dream

once a country boy
I live in a nice suburb
my complaint:
having to manicure
the lawn

office microwave
set to three minutes
it dings
I open it
to find nothing

vanity of vanities—
mountain goats
survive a bear attack
only to be killed
by an avalanche

famous landmark
filled with litter
the tourist booklet
shows
pristine scenes

[An English-to-Korean translation by John J. Han]

Twilight Is Falling
By
Aldine S. Kieffer

1.
Twilight is falling over the sea,
Shadows are stealing dark on the lea;
Borne on the night winds, voices of yore
Come from the far off shore.

[Refrain]
Far away beyond the starlit skies,
Where the love-light never, never dies,
Gleameth a mansion, filled with delight,
Sweet happy home so bright!

2.
Voices of loved ones, songs of the past,
Still linger round me while life shall last;
Lonely I wander, sadly I roam,
Seeking that far off home.
[Refrain]

3.
Come in the twilight, come, come to me!
Bringing some message over the sea,
Cheering my pathway while here I roam,
Seeking that far off home.
[Refrain]



Portrait of Aldine Sillman Kieffer in the public domain.
(b. Miami, Saline County, Missouri, 1840 – d. Dayton, Virginia, 1904)

황혼이 내리고 있네
앨던 S. 키피

1.
바다 위에 황혼이 내리고
그림자가 몰래 가고 있네 숲을 어둡게 하며
밤바람에 실려 온 옛 목소리
먼 해안에서 오네.

[후렴]
별빛 가득한 하늘 너머 저 멀리
사랑의 빛이 결코, 결코 죽지 않는 곳
기쁨으로 가득찬 저택이 빛나네
사랑스럽고 행복한 집 너무도 밝은!

2.
사랑하는 사람들의 목소리, 과거의 노래들
내 삶이 지속되는 한 떠나지 않네.
외롭게 방황하네, 슬프게 떠도네
멀리 떨어진 본향을 찾아.

[후렴]

3.
황혼 속에서 오라, 어서 어서 내게로 오라!
나를 위한 메시지를 가지고 바다 위로
여기서 떠돌며 먼 본향을 찾는
나의 길을 응원하며.

[후렴]

[An English-to-Korean translation by John J. Han]

I Sit Beside the Fire and Think

**By
J.R.R. Tolkien**

I sit beside the fire and think
of all that I have seen
of meadow-flowers and butterflies
in summers that have been;

Of yellow leaves and gossamer
in autumns that there were,
with morning mist and silver sun
and wind upon my hair.

I sit beside the fire and think
of how the world will be
when winter comes without a spring
that I shall ever see.

For still there are so many things
that I have never seen:
in every wood in every spring
there is a different green.

I sit beside the fire and think
of people long ago
and people who will see a world
that I shall never know.

But all the while I sit and think
of times there were before,
I listen for returning feet
and voices at the door.

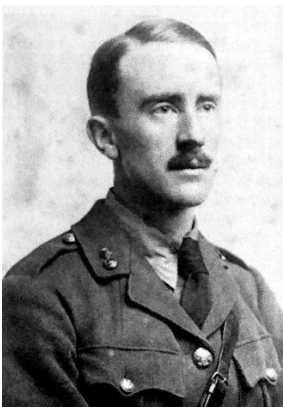


Photo of J.R.R. Tolkien in the public domain.
(b. Bloemfontein, South Africa, 1892 – d. Bournemouth, England, 1973)

난로 옆에 앉아서 생각하네
J.R.R. 톨킨

난로 옆에 앉아서 생각하네
내가 본 모든 것들을
지난 모든 여름의
초원의 꽃과 나비들을

지난 모든 가을의
노란 잎과 거미집들을
아침 안개와 은빛 태양
그리고 내 머리털에 불어오는 바람을

난로 옆에 앉아서 생각하네
세상이 어떻게 될지
나에게 다시 봄을 맞을 기약 없이
겨울이 오면

아직은 볼 곳이 너무 많은데
매년 봄마다 숲들이
각각의 다른 녹색으로
단장하기 때문에

난로 옆에 앉아서 생각하네
오래 전부터 알아온 사람들을
나는 결코 알지 못할 세상을
보게 될 사람들을

앉아서 지난 날들을
생각하는 동안
나는 귀 기울여 기다리네
돌아오는 이들의 발자국 소리를
문밖에서 들려오는 목소리를

GEORGIE HERZ

Dining Room Table

Holiday dinner coming soon
Will I ever find the room?

Where does this go?
How did it pile up?
I don't know

Bills and stamps go on the desk
Coupons - catalogs the trash is best

Coins, a receipt, one lone earring
Six inches deep, can't find a thing

Old wrappers, candies and such
Yuck! orange peel, husband's I trust

Coffee mug, that's from me
Bottle of half full of ice tea

Broken pizza box
No, way! a pair of socks

Holiday's soon. How will I get it clear
Before the family get's here

health report

(I love to read the latest)

there is no need to refrigerate honey
knowing the rules can save you money

coffee is good for you, but eggs might be bad
could change next week, it's so sad

bone healthy calcium might be
the reason you often must pee

recommended for any age
vitamin D is now the rage

I devour the articles, it's true
always reports of something new

exercise is always best
get up, give the screen a rest.

I am a planner

can't help it I always plan
month, week, day it's who I am

parties, I count every fork and plate
keep food warm if someone's late

plenty of chairs inside and out
won't let the weather cause a default

as a teacher, my lessons were set
never a blank moment or regret

forget doctor appointments, theater, dance?
wouldn't happen under any circumstance

does all this planning make a fool of me
others have different theories I see

"If you want to make God laugh
tell Him your plans" anonymous

"I had a great plan until I got punched
in the face," Mike Tyson

these quotes don't go with my poetry style
my plan is to remember them a while

learning perspective

I loved learning perspective drawing
both art and math were fun for me
our ruler and pencil may be the same
each student's drawing will be different
pick 1, 2 or, 3 points to use
we observe the same scene from our perspective
each drawing will have its own look
the picture is how we see it

similar to different views of the
daily news

thank you for shopping

at stores everywhere
self-checkouts now there

“thank you for shopping,” she says so clear
I wish you were a person my dear

you like to take a picture of me
am I allowed to charge you a fee

weather or sports, you haven't a clue
you're just a weird box, i don't like you

fast and faster is not what I need
not all satisfaction comes from speed

I'd like to hear a man's voice
will I ever have a choice?

I'd like to complain so much more
but in a hurry to leave store

OH, remember to take your receipt

DONALD HORSTMAN

herby

herby the little hermit crab
outgrew the shell he had
the shell was way too small
he could not fit in it at all
this situation made him sad



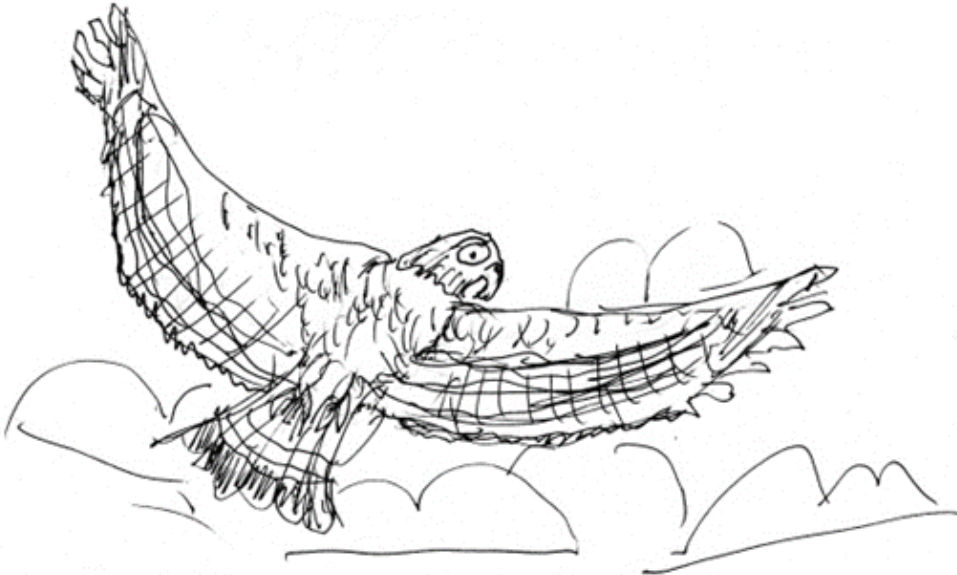
turtles

one turtle two turtles three turtles four
sitting on a log outside my door
floating in the lake
their shells to bake
a sunny day who could ask for more



hawk

the hawk flies high
way up in the sky
that way he can see
what his dinner might be
hide miss mousey till he flies by



the nut

the little squirrel found a nut
he was very hungry but
thinking it would be better
to save it for dinner later
he secured it in a rut



timmy

timmy the tiny tadpole was fond
of telling his friends in the pond
just you wait and see
in time i m goanna be
the grandest frog around



TERRIE JACKS

(A kyoka)

Medicare statements,
insurance papers,
two cards
anniversary
mail

(Cherita)

a good night for fishing

standing on a rock
near pond's edge

casting a long line
it snags the moon
how do I unhook it?

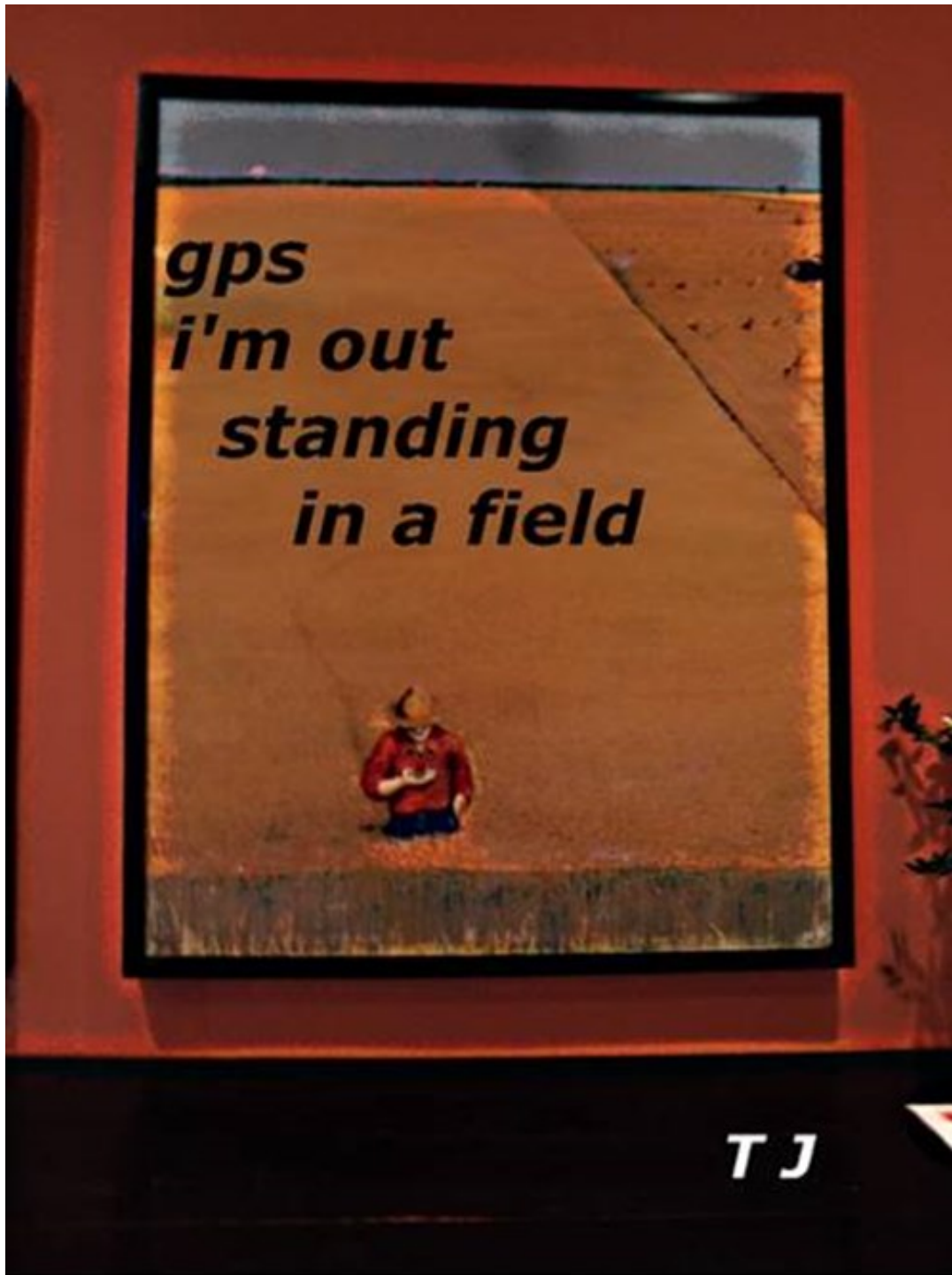
*

a twinge of loneliness

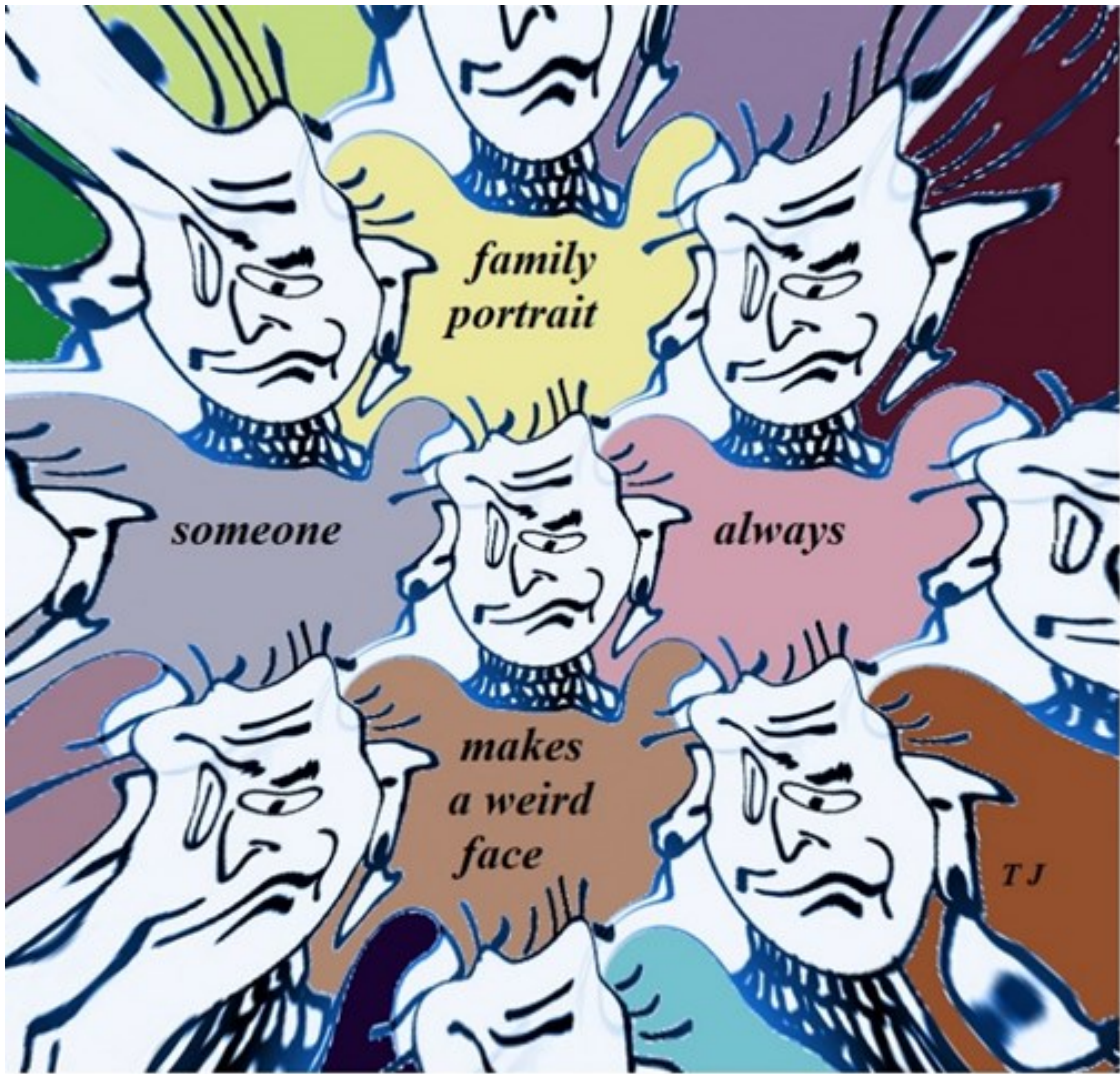
the wind and
I remember you

on the porch
the empty chair
rocks

(A haiga)



(A haiga)



IDELLA PEARL †



Photo by Michael Winger

THE OWL

While other birds fly with noisy flapping,
 The owl has a silent flight.
 It softly glides its way through the air
 Into the still of the night.

This silent flight is a symbol of peace,
 The absence of turmoil and strife.
 It gives us hope for graceful passage
 Through the trials and troubles of life.

The owl's listening skills are finely tuned
 Its sensitive ears hear all.
 We too can master the art of listening,
 As we strive to hear God's call.

Look closely at the owl and you will see
 Wisdom in its round saucer eyes.
 "O majestic owl, show us the way.
 Teach us and make us wise."

The owl cries out, "Who! Who! Who!"
 The answer, of course, is, "Me!"
 I'll be the one to learn from the owl
 And be all I can be.

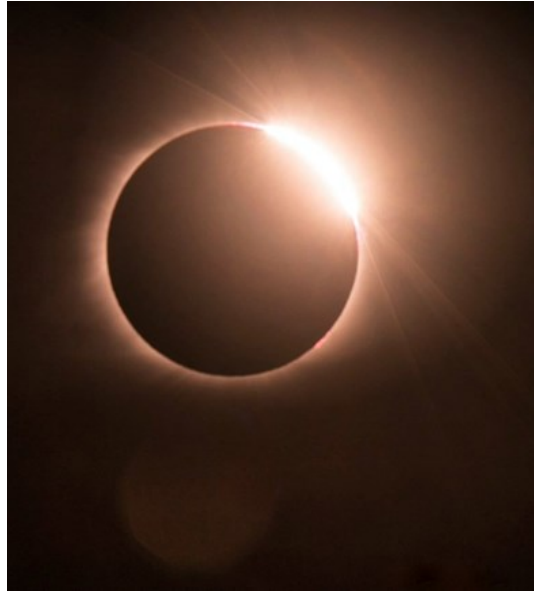


Photo by Tom Rabideau,
Shawnee Dreams Photography 8/21/2017

SOLAR ECLIPSE

You are a mystery to me, O Sun.
Through the ages you continue to burn.
Today you will hide your face from me,
But I know you will return.

In addition to life-giving rays, you give
The blessings of brightness and light.
How depressing and sad it would surely be
If it were forever night.

Your cheerful rays not only brighten my day
But warm my spirit as well.
When you enlighten the faces of the ones I love,
It causes my heart to swell.

God knew what we needed when He placed you in the sky.
Your presence makes me smile.
So goodbye for now, my dear, bright sun,
You'll only be gone a short while.



Photo by Allen Gibbs

EACH LEAF MUST FALL

Red and yellow, orange and brown,
Leaves flickering in the light,
Gently falling to the earth,
Displaying an awesome sight.

All seasons are special and yet it's clear,
Autumn is best of all.
It seems a shame that in the end,
Each colorful leaf must fall.

And yet, to everything there is a season,
Our Creator has a plan.
Seasons come and seasons go,
Ever since time began.

And so it is with each of us,
Our eyes will eventually dim.
But in the end, we find the beginning
Of eternity with Him.



A VACATION TO REMEMBER

My parents told me we were going on vacation,
 Oh what exciting news!
 But they didn't tell me their choice of location,
 So I wondered where they would choose.

When they told me all of their final plans
 It made me wish again
 That we would stay home and forget our vacation
 To the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

I didn't want to camp with the bears.
 In my mind, I had a hunch
 That a large black bear would come for a visit,
 And I'd end up as his lunch.

But I didn't have a choice, so off we went.
 My parents set up our tent
 Right in the middle of the dense dark woods,
 Much to my discontent.

But I never saw a bear and after we came home,
 It really made wish again
 That we would vacation every year
 In the Upper Peninsula of Michigan!



Granddaughter Jackie Edwards

OPEN THE DOOR

Life is filled with many doors,
 Designed to open wide,
 We'll never know what might have been
 If we don't go inside.

Beyond each door, new life awaits
 For each brand new endeavor,
 Not meant for the weak or faint of heart,
 It could change your life forever.

Sometimes by habit we say, "I can't."
 Or "It was never meant to be."
 But how will we know unless we try
 This new opportunity.

Go forth, be brave, open the door,
 Adventure is found within,
 And you'll never again have to worry and fret
 About what might have been.

ANNA ROBERTS WELLS

The Aunts

My mother's spinster aunts lived
gently in the family home
supported by a generous trust.
They stitched garments for the Ladies Aide,
played chess, read good books
which they discussed at length,
soft, round Southern vowels
tumbling over each other
as the spoke and somehow
listened all at once.

When we visited them, they kissed
our foreheads with a dry pip
and told us all the family stories
but one.

After the last aunt died, we found
an old valentine box, its sweets
consumed yet faintly present.
It held a dance card, each line signed
with excited hope, a simpering
love poem tucked into a thin bundle
of love letters tied in blue,
a scrolled document praising penmanship,
and an old family photo with
the second brother's image torn away.

Crone wisdom

Though none would heed her words,
truth dropped from her tongue
like rich flavored plums ripe for the picking.
She prophesied the ruin of wars
fought on continents, in homes.
She hailed the truth of forgiving,
the resolution of hateful grief.
Round her, younger generations
smiled knowing that the old
are given to melancholy musings.

Ancestry

Layer on layer of ashes and dust
a family forms from moments:
a glance with a shy smile,
a next-door friendship growing to love,
or something convenient or necessary.
Some of its builders left bits of paper:
a deed, birth or death certificates,
marriages recorded in an old church
registry or cherished Bible,
all scraps for building history.

There is more than paper at work.
Somehow a stance, a grace of hand,
a slant of eyes, a temperament is passed
down so that the ghost of a thousand years ago
could recognize their grandchildren's grandchildren
if they were to come looking for them.

Food Chain

Respect what you kill.
Eat it prayerfully
knowing it did not give up its life,
you took it.
It is the way of things.
Just because your mind
is crammed with analytical
constructs and apologia
does not exempt you from the food chain.
So, go gently into the woods and backyards.
Go reverently through the butcher shop
knowing that you and the pork chop
are separated only by cunning, agility,
and an opposing thumb.

Banner Year

I remember nine,
all arms and legs,
scabby knees, braided hair,
a thousand freckles spangling the nose.

Trying to figure out life,
learning the nine timetables,
smiling to see the product
of all nines will reduce to nine.

Working out a calendar
to carry in my head,
finding that one good friend
is better than those nine acquaintances.

JUANITA WITTU

A Nature Study Out My Window

A large woodpecker flew to a tree.
I watched out the window
He couldn't see me.
He busily pecked away.
Finding bugs I would say.

His red head bobbed up and down.
Mesmerized, I made not a sound.
Another joined him, it was bigger for sure.
Was the first he a she and this be a pair,
Anyway, I was glad to be there.

A squirrel arrived next.
I didn't know what to expect.
Birds nor squirrel seemed not vexed.
This encounter appeared routine.
How blessed to be at this scene.

Jay at the Feeder

The majestic Blue Jay
appears at the scene.
Lands on the bird feeder
Emperor Supreme.

Scatters the seeds
like a defiant teen.
Takes what he wants
flies away redeemed.

Moving On

A walk to the pond to write
Write I did but nature moved in

A squirrel on a log checked me out
It started to rain, I moved on

Stopped under a cedar tree, got a picture of golden rod
Heard a deer start snorting, I moved on

Raining harder at the next cedar tree, but
I got a picture of its berries next to me

More snorting from the woods
I moved on

Finally, a little wetter I got near the house
Under a big oak tree, took a picture of the field

No snorting as it rained harder
I moved on

Inside I smiled about my adventure
I moved on

Old Friends

Old friends come to mind
They touch your life from time to time

Old friends make you smile
They even laugh with you a while

Old friends share throughout your life
Whether it be happy or maybe strife

Old friends retain memories too
Especially the ones important to you

Old friends are good it's true
May we all be blessed with a few

New ones too

Reflection at the Pond

A visit to the pond to ease stress of the day
The old bench was inviting for my stay

Peepers all around...singing their song
Birds chiming in filled my heart with calm

In a blue sky, fluffy white clouds rolled along
Then my heart skipped a beat as I glanced down

Those rolling clouds appeared on the water
The reflection at my feet was like no other

ELANYNA GILBERTSON
(Grade 11, Jackson High School, Jackson, MO)

Nalito

My wall sits
Layered again and again
with various colors of paint
Now it's nothing but a scrambled piece of art
Its once-delicate features
now lie far beneath the surface
Struggling to ever see the light
My wall sits
As people gaze upon its blemishes
Judging every mark it has
Tarnished by harmful actions
It can never be as it once was
All that beauty stripped away with
"You're not pretty enough"
What's worse?
The action
Or the fact that it was left mangled
For someone else to fix.

RILEY OTT
(Grade 8, Good Shepherd Catholic School, Hillsboro, MO)

Thinking About My Future

A mechanic was what I thought I would be.
My father's footsteps seemed the fit for me.

My dream started to switch gears:
This happened at the age of 9 1/2 years

The day I knew I would never forget
The day I knew I was meant to be a vet.
My love for animals has always been.
They have been my most wonderful friends.

My heart changed when my dog got shot:
How to care for him mattered a lot.
I watched as the vet gave him great care.
Loving and kindness the vet did share.

That is the day I finally knew
That to my heart I must be true.
My life is devoted to care for pets,
And this is why I must be a vet.

2023 MSPS Youth Contest Winners

Junior Division:

1. Riley Ott- Good Shepherd Catholic School, Teacher: Rhonda Chiles
2. Hershhal Alcala- Good Shepherd Catholic School, Teacher: Rhonda Chiles
3. Noelle Donathan- Good Shepherd Catholic School, Teacher: Rhonda Chiles
4. Aiden Bullock- Good Shepherd Catholic School, Teacher: Rhonda Chiles
5. Kevin Michal Dix- Good Shepherd Catholic School, Teacher: Rhonda Chiles
6. Preston Bell- Good Shepherd Catholic School, Teacher: Rhonda Chiles
7. Elijah Elmer- Good Shepherd Catholic School, Teacher: Rhonda Chiles
8. Racje; Rezac- Good Shepherd Catholic School, Teacher: Rhonda Chiles
9. Sawyer McDaniel- Good Shepherd Catholic School, Teacher: Rhonda Chiles
10. Lizzy Alhoff- Good Shepherd Catholic School, Teacher: Rhonda Chiles

Senior Division:

1. Elanya Gilbertson- Jackson High School, Teacher: Laura DeJournett
2. Carter Strickland- Jackson High School, Teacher: Abigail Beckwith
3. Emily Burks- Jackson High School, Teacher: Laura DeJournett
4. Jameson Gowan- Jackson High School, Teacher: Jessica Koon
5. Rylie Surface- Jackson High School, Teacher: Abigail Beckwith
6. Elijah Huston- Webster Groves High School, Teacher: Rita Chapman
7. Shaniya Hill- Webster Groves High School, Teacher: Rita Chapman
8. Sadie Middleton- Jackson High School, Teacher: Abigail Beckwith
9. Teddy Woldow, Webster Groves High School, Teacher: Rita Chapman
10. Anna Ahrens- Jackson High School, Teacher: Laura DeJournett

**Year in Review December 2022—November 2023:
On the Edge Photos**



(From left to right) Carol and Don Horstman, John J. Han, Georgie Herz, Terrie Jacks, Billy and Faye Adams, Juanita Wittu, and Anna Roberts Wells, 12/9/22. Billy and Faye, former residents of DeSoto, Missouri, drove all the way from Cherokee Village, Arkansas, for this reunion.



Critique meeting at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Manchester, MO, 3/20/23.



Critique meeting at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Manchester, MO, 5/12/23. (From left to right) Georgie Herz, Don Horstman, Terrie Jacks, Idella Pearl, Anna Roberts Wells, and Juanita Wittu.

On the Edge participants in the annual convention of the Missouri State Poetry Society, Springfield-Greene County Library, Springfield, September 29-30, 2023:









Critique meeting at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Manchester, MO, 10/13/23. (From left to right) Georgie Herz, Terrie Jacks, Logan Jacks, Juanita Wittu, and Anna Roberts Wells. In the photo below, Logan enacts her grandma's poem "Dancing Grandmas."





A group photo taken after the critique session on 10/13/23.

ISBN-13: 978-0-9898370-3-3

