



SPARE MULE

Missouri State Poetry Society Newsletter
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Strophes, the national newsletter, is available online at <http://www.nfmps.com/> Click *Strophes* online.



FROM YOUR PRESIDENT:

The hustle and bustle of Christmas is behind us. Hope you all had a nice holiday. As we move forward into 2015, try getting out of your comfort zone.

How much fun is it to enter a poetry contest? But what is even better is when you get that letter saying you were a winner. If you never enter, you can never win. Take advantage of the contests posted in *Strophes* and *Spare Mule*. I have even experimented with new forms and styles which are categories in some contests. It will stretch your mind.

Nancy LaChance

Look for a place to publish one of your poems. You know we have to toot our own horn at times. It is called marketing. *Spare Mule* is one place you can be published. We will not publish any author until he or she tells us to.

I will be traveling around the state to visit our local poetry chapters during the year. I just attended Poets and Friends chapter in Springfield. During their meeting, they announced winners of the poetry contest they conduct each year.

We need to keep the arts alive. How can you help? Recruit new members, hold poetry readings, and encourage your members to keep writing. Until next time, *Nancy LaChance*



CHAPTER REPORTS:

Brenda Conley, President, Kansas City Metropolitan Verse

Kansas City Metropolitan Verse is on winter break from our regular actual meeting but connect virtually. Literally. Poetically. Daily. Through Facebook and email all or some of our membership "meet" and share our love for poetry. Snow nor sleet nor gloom of night will stop these poets from their passion.

Many of us met in October at the Unity Temple on the Plaza to hear/see Billy Collins. Ralph Acosta wins the prize for most miles driven to attend a reading...KC to Fairfield, Iowa and back in one day to share this experience.

Frank Adams, kcmetroverse VP, was nominated by the American Association of University Women- Kansas City Branch- for the Thorpe Menn Award for Literary Excellence for his latest two books of poetry.

At the present we are compiling our 9th annual chapter anthology to be presented at a launch party celebrating National Poetry Month. Hooray for Spring! We look forward to Spring. Spring! Isn't that the time of year when there is little to no snow on the ground... crocus peek out seeking sunlight... feral kitties creep from under the porch in search of food ... Spring! Hang in, it will come.

Terrie Jacks, President, On the Edge, DeSoto, Mo.

In May I, Terrie Jacks, took over as the leader of On the Edge. I missed a few of the meetings due to some things happening at home, however we are on a roll now. With the new leadership the group moved to a new location, Winsor Library, and had a change in the day the meeting is held. It is on the second Friday of the month. Anyone looking to join a group near that area, please attend one of the meetings, we are very informal. Remember, that is the second Friday of the month, Winsor Library, Barnhart at 10:00 AM.

Now that the commercial is over, the group has a few kudos to brag about, (done alphabetically): Faye Adams has had several book signings for her book *You Want Hushpuppies with That?* She also placed and won prizes in several poetry contests. Dr. John Han held an open mic at Missouri Baptist University and read a number of his Haikus to the students and a few visiting poets. He also is reading his work at the Wolf in Chesterfield. John is the editor of *Canto's*, the Missouri Baptist Literary Magazine. Faye and Billy Adams, Don and Carol Horstman, Terrie Jacks, Elaine Becherer and, of course, Dr. John, all contributed work to the 2014 publication. Linda O'Connell was part of a Second Friday program at Whole Foods several months ago. She entertained the listening audience with a number of her poems.

The Grist for 2014 contained work from Billy and Faye Adams, John Han, Carol and Don Horstman, Terrie Jacks, Mort Levy, Linda O'Connell and Anna Wells.

Those of you who attended the September Conference held by On the Edge know what a great job Anna Wells did organizing and running the show. Thank you.

In December, On the Edge held a small Christmas meeting at Bob Evans. We ate, shared some of our work and exchanged a loved book with each other. It was a pleasant and filling morning.

That's pretty much all we have been up to that the group informed me of. One of members is a snow bird and will be returning to warmer climates. Have fun and be warm.

Poems by Members

**Rich Eskew: Poets and Friends,
Springfield, Mo.**



A Collection of Feathers
My collection is almost complete
The weathered box – full to lid.
Perhaps more than two yet to float
And rest atop my wilted feathers.
Dad was first to impart the appeal
With shiny black spines of Raven wing
Highest on Totem – this astute bird
Of myth and poetry – the teacher.
I've held the Jay's blue, tarnished
By peanut butter – blackberry juice,
Laid deep in my box beside Owl's
Speckle plumage, broken by rage.
Scarlet Cardinal – his trill long silent
Draws dust even in spring's return.
Green Mallard and dusky goose
Dreary in dried, stained blood.
Would one dare to open before the wind
For gusts to scatter all – to where?
Never shall I search to the bottom
Where yesterday's tears reside. ~~

**Pat Laster: Crawford County
Bombadils, Benton, Ark.**

JANUARY WEATHER

Dakota deep freeze
cutting hay with his chain saw
to keep herd alive
~~
river standing
where the house was
tree vine dangles
~~one payment shy--
the fellowship hall
now gone
~~
school scattered
beyond the wall
bearing its name
~~
kick-standing bike
still on the porch--
house gone
~~
after the ice storm
collegiate grandson calling
to check on me
~~
into the path
of an oncoming blessing--
sun's rays through the tree
~~

**Janetta R. Lower: Author Unknown,
Bolivar, Mo**

Shadow Dancer

"Come on in. I can see you're cold. Come closer to the fire. Doesn't it smell good? The cedar burns clean and righteous and its sharp pungency make you feel holy, safe and simple inside our circle, doesn't it? Go ahead. Relax. Stretch your fingers and mind over its warmth as my words pull you closer to its heat. Don't mind the winter storm outside. I know you hear its gritty blasts protesting against our stained glass windows, but you're safe by our fire. Western winds howl above our heads and seeps into our chimney cracks, sending a chilly whisper across your neck and a delicious shiver down your spine. Your pulse thrills as shadows gather in the far corner of our room and an ink-jet of blood stains your cheeks with roses. Please don't worry. You're safe inside our circle; with me, there is nothing to fear. Your first time is my best time to latch rhythm with the right line. But tonight, I won't tell you about the first time, nor scare you with the worse time-when lurching pale and blue: No, wait. I'll hold that terrible true- and share this tale with you:

A tap against my window pane - one dark and stormy night, set my heart to racing, I paled with sallow fright - a glowing specter of a girl poised in baleful woe, floated from the frozen pines and begged to cross the flow. She flung my name into the howls, above the shrieking cry; of banshees thrashing in the woods - where midnight madness grows. Her ruby lips shone in the dark; rose petals wrapped in ice, she longed to press them on my throat; Why? I now suffice. For in the pale milk orphan, a demon spirit grew; it's evil hovered in the night – whose secret I'll share with you. Our pacing marks a frosty thought, a frame of dark conspire; hints of how our story ends, a dance of ice and fire. You see my friend, a frosty wind, hid deep within our eaves, I wrapped my lips around these words and brought you close to me. Perhaps you should have used your mind, before you snuggled close; and used your eyes to check the time, for that's what matters most. A time of warming to the hearth, may not so innocent be; when in your haste you gathered close and placed your trust in me. I failed to see, the icy girl before it was too late, I let loose my window pane and met my chilly fate. Now I see you've done the same, when in your eyes I mattered, and brought a tale upon your heart while on the roof she clattered. Do not try to pull from me, for in your mind I know – you've placed too much in this tale, to ever let it go. Open up your frosty pane, and cry into the night; breach the deep within your grief and rage the frightful sight. The icy girl waits for you, just behind my rhyme; my job was to bring you close through stealth and rhyming line. I hope you wrest a righteous jig - for now I bid adieu - and leave you will the icy girl who longs to dance with you." ~~

**Ralph Acosta: Kansas City
Metropolitan Verse**

Flying

He wanted to fly.
Maybe it was Disney's Peter Pan,
Impressed when he was a boy.
Maybe it was seeing birds' freedom.

He tried jumping off the porch
While thinking happy thoughts,
While flapping his arms.

Trial after trial.
He never worried about the neighbors,
He just wanted to fly.

Between launching from the porch
And hitting the ground
He barely had time to try.

He needed more time
For those happy thoughts,
For the arms to gain traction.

Trees were higher
But harder to climb
So he climbed to the garage roof.

It hurt his feet,
Just looking at the ground,
But he wanted to fly.

He readied his mind,
Loosened his arms,
Lifted them up.

Start the happy thoughts,
Begin the flapping.
Leap!

Mind floating,
Arms a blur,
Too brief a time.

Squatting there
On the ground
He knew it was over.
A tall building might work.
But even young,
He knew that was folly.

Yes, there were planes,
Loud, large objects,
Crutches for the wingless.

And jumping with chutes
Only took you down,
No better than flapping arms.

He wanted to chase birds through the trees,
Race them across the endless sky.
He wanted to really fly.

It didn't happen then,
Nor in all the decades later.
But the dream remains.

**John Wheeler: Poets and Friends
Springfield, Mo. (3 poems)**

Blue 1950 Chevy Pick up

Nice truck, I say, what year is it?
The truck, beautifully restored, metallic blue.

1950, he says, I did it for my oldest son.
Do you know old Chevy's? he says.

I used to own a 1952 deluxe cab,
a tractor-trailer rig jack-knifed and totaled it.

The day of the tornado, I was at Camp Pendleton
bringing the truck home...
My son was a Navy corpsman assigned to Marine Infantry.
He did three tours in Iraq, one in Afghanistan;

PTSD caught him at Pendleton.

I am quiet.

This place was my Mom and Dad's, mine blew away
with my wife on May 11th....
Did the tornado get you?

We just lost a few trees, I say. It just barely went south of us.
I spent the summer working with volunteers, cleaning debris.

I started to remodel this place, he says, pointing
toward a wall partially done in vinyl siding.
I don't know. I don't care much...

quiet and a gentle breeze

I miss the trees he says, pointing south.

I do too.

I guess the truck will go to number three son,
but not until I am done, he smiles and says.

It is a nice truck, I say, very nice.
I like the blue.

Anticipation

Crepe myrtles slap outside my bedroom
walls, keeping rhythm with discordant beats
carried on gusting wind. Lightning,
thunder and hail offer more

percussion as Earth awakens herself
from the dearth of winter. Pear, elm
and forsythia open their blooms,
joining daffodils and jonquils

brightly welcoming life. Winter not
releasing death's hold, resurrection
still a month away.

John Wheeler (cont.)

The Sad Child

Days begin and end, yet remain
unaltered by the changing season.
Leaves in red, gold and brown fall all around.

The sad child considers his empty wagon.
He wonders why the storybook says,
"love is good" when all he feels is hurt.

His breath forms small clouds in front of him
while growth pauses in unchanging days.
Thinking simply, but honestly, a slight
smile resurrects his face.

He begins placing leaves one by one

Pat Berge: Kansas City Metropolitan Verse (2 poems)

I'LL MISS YOU TREE

For Gavin

The brim of his safari hat bent
Against your trunk
His cheek caressed you
His eyes closed
He wrapped his arms around you
He whispered,
I'll miss you tree
I love you
His tears soaked your bark
Near the split in your trunk
Grandma tried to explain,
We lost two limbs in the storm
She will have to come down
He ran down the hill
Ducked under the railing
Wrapped around you and held on tight

GREETINGS ALL

Four Grands and Amanda, fiancé
of Tanner, my oldest, and Grandpa, too
went on our annual tree cutting at a
local farm open for 80 years.
Oh what fun!

This one! This one!
Touching trees. Laughter,
falling on the ground together,
playing on century-old tractors,
and riding on the hay truck!

Loved the 63 degrees!
Home for hot chocolate and
lifting out old fav decorations.
Oh! Remember this one!
I made it when I was three!

Merry Christmas to all

Ted O. Badger
Honorary Member

CERTITUDE

"The coming of the seasons always waits."
--Laurence Thomas

On our small speck in the cosmos
there are two dimensions to life --
the predictable and unpredictable.
As has been observed, seasons occur;
we can count on their arrival yearly,
prompted by the spinning and tilting
of the earth as it migrates the universe.

Another certainty that never mutates;
apples will always fall ground-ward.
The unseen force holding us to earth
makes it possible for us to exist here.
One of the greatest challenges in life
is dealing with the constant downward
pull of gravity, starting day we're born.

Another unbending law is reciprocity --
for every action there is equal reaction.
If I hammer a nail into a wooden surface,
my action has a predictable reaction.
This law makes it possible to drive a car
as the engine reacts to exploding gasoline;
makes it possible for airplanes to go aloft.

We experience these cosmic rules early on
as we go from crawling to walking upright.

Brenda Conley:
Kansas City Metropolitan Verse

They Are a Poem

they are three
and he is five
with trains and pigs
and bears all around
toys litter the floor
words soar through the air

he: don't worry my friend
the message consoling
she: but i don't have a choice
laments her reply
he: just go! you'll be safe
urgency demands
she: but i cant ... i cant leave papa
she cries

soon they "board" the train
chug off into the distance
to the land of the little room
jingling cow and Odie (the squirrel) in hand.

Alta Leah Emrick:
Poets & Friends, Springfield, Mo.

Bald Isn't Beautiful

Ten thousands hairs I wish I had upon my head and scalp
But modern life has placed a price, of this there is no doubt
Gadgets, doomauggies and such, create a lot of waves
Like micro, macro, mini, man's definitely out of the cave

There are wondrous things, for every time span has its good
There are fruitless things, for every time span has its bad
Since we are, oh! so very sorry for the tiny A-bomb, God
Couldn't You, for our sake, leave our heads more furrier clad

Bernita Pettit:
Kansas City Metropolitan Verse

The Denim Jacket

...a year after his death
it was still hanging
in a dark corner of the closet
dad's faded denim jacket

its sagging shoulders clinging
to an old wire hanger
bent from time forgotten
too small for the heavy weight it held

gently pulling the jacket from the closet
i placed it around my shoulders
and slowly pushed my hands
through oversized sleeves

straightened the frayed brown corduroy collar
and with open palms I
brushed at the worn denim
the stale odor of work-sweat stirred

both hands went deep into the flannel lined pockets
where the remains of dried tobacco leaves
and the faint aroma of a sweet bourbon blend
still held its sweetness...

Freda Baker Nichols
Crawford County Bombadils
Clinton, Ark.

Seldom in the Red

Some poets burn their candles to the snuff.
It makes me shout that I have read enough!
I scan their lines for something new to learn.
They craft their works with words I can't discern.
They write of politics, expose love scenes.
In outer space, they claim, they grow green beans.
They speak of chemo rooms like vintage wine
and pen a parody on porcupine.
A freeway runs along the coast to Maine--
they bus me there through sheets of coldest rain.
They guide me to the quaint brush arbor meets.
I pray for soldiers on Iraqi streets.
The poets tell of trains that dance the rails,
then paint the ships at sea with wind-torn sails.
Like wheels, they roll to publish what they know.
Some win awards and stash their dabs of dough!

Mike Perkins
Member at Large (2 poems)

Each Night

each night
he walks with his child at dusk
pushing a stroller
still in his office clothes
I imagine he rushes home
to eat before dark
then he gets the stroller
straps his son in
leashes up the dog to go with them
then out the door
mostly the three of them
the mom seldom joins in
but something has gone wrong
something technical
with a latin name
and the boy is broken
twisted and growing older
but not growing up
he will never walk
but they walk
the father pushes the son
who will never push him
and with each step
they leave behind
another dream
and there is a hush
as they walk by
a respectful silence
dutifulness and a dignified rectitude
the shadow of an awful aloneness
what do I say
after hello?
as one father to another?
it is not right to feel pity
but don't know
what to do with my sorry
I refuse to curse G-d
but don't know
where to send my anger
so
each night he walks
with his child at dusk
pushing a stroller
but something has gone wrong
something technical
with a latin name
and the boy is broken
twisted and growing older
but not growing up
and there is quiet

Jive

please don't try to sell me
or back me into a corner
with fancy footwork
leaning forward from the balls of your feet
as you stretch
to make the point
making me back peddle
before your virtual jabs
and verbal reproach
behind questions
used as statements
based on predetermined whys
no soul shines from your eyes
only the heatless fire
of the cold blood predator

John J. Han: On the Edge
DeSoto, Mo. (3 poems)

Doing Math
(Cherita)

a fellow Korean has died at eighty
hoping to reach that age
I do the math—
80 minus 58 equals 22
at the café I order a hot drink
picking longevity tea

Baffled Twice
(Cherita)

at the bank he counts money three times
later I notice him
in a grocery store nearby
picking a speedy check-out lane
he dumps
a cartful of items

Still Wondering
(Etheree)

I
open
an e-mail
from a copy
center clerk who broke
his promise to contact
me yesterday—there is no
trace of remorse in his dry note
what puzzles me even more is the
sender's salutation, which reads, "Hell John"

Terrie Jacks: On the Edge
DeSoto, Mo. (3 poems)

My Amusing Muses

I'm giggling with my muses
my giggling, little muses
and when my muses giggle
they tend to tickle me
and while I'm being tickled
by my amusing amuses
uncontrollable giggles
are gushing out of me.

Chicken Chatter

What prowls about the chicken coop
That makes the chicken squawk?
What prowls about the chicken coop
That triggers all their talks?
What prowls about the chicken coop?
It's just the neighbor's cat.
Seems the chickens in the coop
They don't think much of that!

~~

Here's to you
And here's to me
And happy, happy
New Year's Eve



Wanda Sue Parrott
Honorary Life Member,
Monterey, Calif.

Good News as I Turn 80

Doctor Chang's dental experts include
a hygienist whose picks don't intrude
when she slathers great shine
on these old teeth of mine.
I can still chew -- I don't gum -- my food!

John Crawford
Member at Large

Encounter

When daily moments grow too tense,
when riot pace is strong,
I step into a quiet place
and seek to find a song.
But human melody is weak
when man is still the choice;
the music lacks true harmony
without the Master's voice.
Only when I turn to Him,
when we meet face to face,
does Heaven seem to open wide
and share its loving grace.

Marie Asner

Crawford County Bombadils (2 poems)

Reaper

the quiet battered sun tries so hard
to form blackness into something tangible
but night still begins to carve its way
across the horizon like an tipped over beer can
sliding across a parking lot

this silence is a thick and midnight curtain
being slowly pulled across a window

air shivers and birds change direction
casting shadows in our moonlit minds

we will, in the end, go where we have to go, alone
and ride the leviathan across a boiling sea
but, in the meantime, I catch my breath
in hopes that Reaper’s rumbling pick-up
on raised tires with dragging chains
will glide past, leaving me hidden by dirt
saturated with prayer

way back, when Magi looked into the future
wondering if their golden presents
were enough for safe passage home

they barely made it ahead of the spiked whirlwind.

~~

ladies who write poetry

The ladies who write poetry
have a special relationship with the Almighty,
who helps them navigate life
with notebooks, watching for that special inspiration
like a scent of frankincense on the twilight air
or the rounded edge of a rising golden-coin moon
with Harry James on the radio
and the first glimpse of the morning sun
reflected in dew on the street rose
of a neighbor’s bouquet tossed out in anger
from a late night lover’s quarrel

~~

Todd Sukany

Second Tuesday and Author Unknown

Airport 2014

Inside the terminal, people
peer into their phones
instead of books. Smart

phones aren’t all that easy
to hide in, though we manage.



KUDOS

Faye Adams

On the Edge

Faye Adams received word that her essay “I Love Snow” will be included in *Solstice: A Winter Anthology*, scheduled to be published by Rocking Horse Publishing in January 2015. IDEALS Magazine has accepted a poem for publication in their Easter issue, 2015. Also, Faye Adams’ poem “Old Claw Hammer” was published in Ted Badger’s latest issue of *Lucidity*, and her story “an Undeclared War” won first place in a recent war poetry contest.

MARIE ASNER

Crawford County Bombadils, and Kansas Senior Poet Laureate, wrote two poems for a special occasion at her church -- the retiring of one minister and the welcoming and installation of the new pastor.

LEE ANN RUSSELL

Poets & Friends, Springfield

POETS ROUNDTABLE OF ARKANSAS

2nd Place for Sonnet, “Reward”

INDIANA STATE POETRY SOCIETY

3rd Place for “After the Storm”

HM for “Crossroads”

POETRY SOCIETY OF TEXAS

Honorable Mention for “Sands of Time”

OHIO POETRY DAY

Honorable Mention for “Sweet Thing”

SPRINGFIELD’S POETS & FRIENDS

1ST place in Free Verse for “Swinging in the Shed”

2nd Place in Formal, Structured Verse for

“Iridescence”

LEBANON POETS’ SOCIETY

Honorable Mention in Rhymed or Blank Verse for “Who Says Neatness Counts?”

Honorable Mention in Poet’s Choice for “Bag Lady”

Other Kudos are contained in the Chapter Reports on page one.

Spare Mule is a publication of the Missouri State Poetry Society, and is published January, April, August and October.

Announcement: Please be sure to send in your dues to your local chapter or to bill.lower@gmail.com Deadlines for dues was October 2014

Missouri State Poetry Society Winter Contest 2015

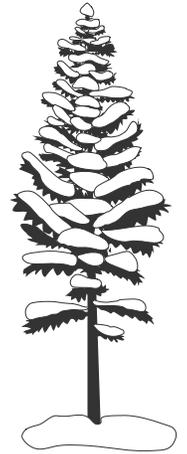
A word from Bill Lower -- Everyone who reads this issue of Spare Mule should break out their writing instruments—be they pen, pencil, desktop computer (PC or Apple), tablet (Android, iOS, or Big Chief), or even smartphones. Take them and create one or more poems, transfer them to 8 1/2 X 11 paper (that's the way we still do it here), and send them off to our Winter Contest. February 15 is the postmark deadline.

Okay, Okay, I just looked it up and see that the fifteenth is a Sunday this year. I will grant an Executive Order allowing those postmarked on the sixteenth to be granted clemency and be accepted for the competition. That excuse is now gone.

Now, are you saying that one measly extra day does not give you enough time to get a masterpiece written and in the mail?. Look through your archives. You do have archives, don't you? Scavenge around through them and get some of them in the mail by the deadline. All entries are welcome and wanted, and you just might be one of the winners.

All the info you need can be found on our website. Here is the link that will take you right to the Winter Contest page. <http://www.nfsps.com/mo/winter.htm>

- Deadline:** Postmarked February 15, 2015
- Format:** Submit two copies of each entry, category number and category name in the upper left-hand corner of one copy. If you are a member, put "Missouri State Poetry Society" below your address. Put "Non-member" if you are not. Note there are special rules for student submissions.
- Limits:** Poems may be 40 or fewer lines. They may be unpublished or previously published if the poet retains the rights to the poem. Poet may enter each category as many times as they wish. No poems will be returned.
- Categories:**
1. Rhymed verse or blank verse (unrhymed iambic pentameter)
 2. Free verse
 3. Humorous verse
 4. Any form, winter subject
 5. MEMBERS ONLY: Poet's choice: any form (including open-field, shaped, or concrete poetry), any subject.
- Prizes:** \$25, \$15, \$10, and three honorable mentions in each category.
- Fees for categories 1-4:** Non-Members pay \$2.00 per poem. Members pay \$1.00 per poem.
- Fees for Category 5:** (Members only) 2.00 per poem. Make money order or check payable to MSPS.
- Mail to:** **Bill Lower, 21010 S. Hwy 245, Fair Play, MO 65649**



23rd National Annual 2015 Senior Poet Laureate Poetry Competition for American Poets 50 and Older

- Deadline:** June 30, 2015, Published and Unpublished Poems OK
No limit to the Number of Entries
- Rules and Info:** <http://www.greatspiritpublishing.yolasite.com/golden-words.php>
- Accepted by:** U.S. Mail or Electronically
- Contact:** Barbara Callahan Quin at bquin@ymail.com
- Open to all American poets age 50 and older who are U.S. citizens regardless of where they are in the world. Native American heritage isn't required, but writing in the spirit of Great Spirit is necessary. Privately administered by Barbara Callahan Quin, sponsored by Great Spirit Publishing, Springfield, Mo.

Officers Missouri State Poetry Society

Nancy LaChance, President Lebanon Poets' Society lachancenancy@outlook.com	Velvet Fackeldey, Vice President Honorary Member velpoet@gmail.com	Dawn Harmon, Secretary and Editor, Grist Crawford County Bombadils inafieldofdaisies@hotmail.com	Bill Lower, Treasurer Honorary Member bill.lower@gmail.com
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