



Spare Mule

Missouri State Poetry Society
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Fellow Poets

Winter is almost in the past, although if you would have stepped out of my front door a few days ago—observing a couple inches of snow— that would not have been the first thing that came to mind, and that's after a month of what was balmy for February. By the time this is read, it will be April and Poetry Month. Hopefully you or your chapter have something planned.

With Spring comes a sense of renewal, hopefully with our writing as well. So if you aren't working on anything new right now, let spring inspire you to take an old poem out of your collection, dust it off and take a new look—change is the nature of things; so with that in mind, with a fresh look we might find something new in the poem, that might have been inspired enough, in a certain line or even a couple lines for us to have kept the poem. Now might be the time to breathe new life into the poem, (its resurrection) so to speak.

Speaking in terms of seasonal changes, today as I finish this article, it's actually the first day of spring and guess what (it's a beautiful day), but more like summer than spring, because it's eighty three degrees. With this summer like day a couple things come to mind: our summer contest, and the annual convention of the National Federation of State Poetry Societies. All the information on entering the contest can be found on our website, there is also a link to their website with all the information about the convention—perhaps I will see you at our (MSPS) convention this fall, always a good place to visit with fellow poets and old friends.

Dale Ernst—MSPS President

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Missouri State Poetry Society Winter Contest 2016 Winners

CATEGORY 1. RHYMED OR BLANK VERSE

1. *First Friends*, Wanda Sue Parrott, Monterey, CA, MSPS Member
2. *Winter Sparkles*, Sara Gipson, Scott, AR
3. *December*, Becky Alexander, Cambridge, Ontario, Canada
 - 1st Honorable Mention, *October's Song*, Becky Alexander, Cambridge, Ontario, Canada
 - 2nd Honorable Mention, *Rain on the Porch*, Nick Sweet, Shepherd, TX, MSPS Member
 - 3rd Honorable Mention, "Fond memories fill my golden years" Don Crowson, Benton, AR

CATEGORY 2. FREE VERSE

1. *A Gift of Poems*, Pat Laster, Benton, AR, MSPS Member
2. *Rear View Mirror*, Sally Clark, Fredericksburg, TX
3. *Microscopic Investigation*, Barbara Blanks, Garland, TX, MSPS Member
 - 1st Honorable Mention, *Hold Your Horses*, Gail Denham, Sunriver, OR, MSPS Member
 - 2nd Honorable Mention, *Listening for a slam*, Catherine Moran, Little Rock, AR
 - 3rd Honorable Mention, *Going to Egypt*, LaVern Spencer McCarthy, Blair, OK

CATEGORY 3. HUMOROUS

1. *How to Make it Rain*, Sally Clark, Fredericksburg, TX
2. *No Mistletoe in Our Tradition*, Dennis Patton, Alexander, AR
3. *Baptizing Hole Revenge*, Dewell Byrd, Central Point, OR
 - 1st Honorable Mention. *Don't Put Spinach in Your Pocket!*, Von S. Borland, Happy, TX, MSPS
 - 2nd Honorable Mention, *Sittin' Sue*, Terrie Jacks, Ballwin, MO, MSPS Member
 - 3rd Honorable Mention, *Aeration Service Provided*, Terrie Jacks, Ballwin, MO MSPS Member

CATEGORY 4. WINTER SUBJECT

1. "snowy owl calling," LaVern Spencer McCarthy, Blair, OK
2. *Divine Revelation*, Wanda Sue Parrott, Monterey, CA, MSPS MEMBER
3. *Jim's Bleakest Winter*, Don Crowson, Benton, AR
 - 1st Honorable Mention, *Strangers at Lunch*, J. Thomas Wheeler
 - 2nd Honorable Mention, *February Night*, LaVern Spencer McCarthy, Blair, OK

3rd Honorable Mention, *Snow Kisses*, Sara Gipson, Scott, AR

CATEGORY 5. POET'S CHOICE

1. *The Distance Between Us*, Dewell Byrd, Central Point, OR, MSPS Member
2. *When I had another name*, Pat Laster, Benton, AR MSPS Member
3. *Dance a Little*, Gail Denham, Sunriver, OR, MSPS Member

1st Honorable Mention. *Scar Tissue*, Velvet Fackeldey, Columbus, NM, MSPS Member

2nd Honorable Mention. *Judiciary Committee Hearing*, Billy J. Adams, De Soto, MO, MSPS Member

3rd Honorable Mention. *Mysterious*, Anna Roberts Wells, Festus, MO, MSPS Member

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL THE WINNERS! Thank you to everyone who entered, and please enter our future contests. Remember our [Summer Contest](#) with a deadline of September 1, 2017.

2017 Youth Contest Winners

Junior Division:

1. Mesa Miller
8th gr. Kelli Huhl
Clever Elemiddle School
2. Heather Nicole Hartgraves
7th Grade, Ashley Murrell
Ozark Middle School
3. Mary Keene
7th gr. Jody Dalton
Ozark Middle School
4. Arin-Christina Hawk
7th gr. Kirstin Sanning
Lewis and Clark Middle School
5. Alicia Elrod
7th gr. Ms. Vieveli
Jarrett Middle School
6. Johanna Gilkeson
Antioch Homeschool Co-op
7th gr. Lori Chally
7. Ian Smith
6th gr. Emily Seiler
George Washington Carver Middle School
8. Haylea Richardson

Senior Division:

1. Natalie Renfroe
12th gr. Abigail Beckwith
Cape Central High School
2. Briann Fraize
9th gr. Danielle Kimball
Cape Central High School
3. Hayden Carrico
12th gr. Mrs. Adiputra
Fort Zumwalt North High
4. Danielle Altschul
Plattsburg High School
5. Jamie Sampson
12th gr. Hayley Fraser
Kickapoo HS
6. Alexis Simmerman
10th gr. Kelli Hilton
Stanberry R-II
7. Paeton Outman
12th gr. Abigail Beckwith
Cape Central High School
8. Caleb McBrearety
10th gr. Alexis Smith
Cole County R-V

6th gr. Emily Seiler
George Washington Carver Middle
School

9. Joseph Long
12th gr. Adiputra
Fort Zumwalt North High

9. Grace Morris
7th gr. Haylee Rethman
Lewis and Clark Middle School
10. Bayley Heider
7th gr. Mrs. Martin
Archie R-V

Karen Kay Bailey has a new collection release, *Where Once A Willow*.

Janice Cannerdy has a new publication, *Expressions of Faith* available on Amazon and at Barnes and Noble.

Carla Kirchner's chapbook, *The Physics of Love*, won the Concrete Wolf Press 2016 Chapbook Contest. Her book will be published in the fall and will be available through Amazon and the Press website.

New Members

Chandler M. Bryan
Amanda J. Dodson
Sarah K. Fortna
Curtis Goss
Megan R. Graham
Jessica A. Huck
Carla Kirchner
Emma Kirksey
Sarah Anne Wruck

Missouri State Poetry Society

MSPS President: Dale Ernst
Author Unknown, President Mark Tappmeyer
Crawford County Bombadils, President Dawn Harmon
KC Metropolitan Verse, President Brenda Conley

Lebanon Poets' Society, President Nancy LaChance
On The Edge, President Billy Adams
Poets and Friends, President MJ Becco
The Great River Bend Gang, President Anne Wickliffe
Second Tuesday, President Mark Tappmeyer
The Write Place, President Jan Kroll

Chapter News

John Crawford won 1st in OWL poetry contest in November with a haiku. He was the featured poet in February at Hot Springs Wednesday Night Poetry 28th birthday. He had his new poetry book "Female Voices from the Bible," accepted for summer publication by Christian Faith Publishing, Pa. He will be reading poetry at the Mississippi Poetry society in April and at Hot Springs Arts and the Park Festival in April.

Barbara Blanks has a new book out. *Not Quite Leaping Puddles*. Information can be found at her website - www.barbara-blanks.com

Springfield's Poets and Friends

P&F is having a great spring. The group studied the style and biography of William Carlos Williams and used his versatile "Triversen" as a poetry prompt with some very nice results. And the newly remodeled Schweitzer-Brentwood Library of Springfield sponsored a three Sunday poetry event with readings from various city-wide poets, including P&F members. And finally, P&F sponsors a "Poetry in the Library" for the community to celebrate our favorite month, April, National Poetry Month.

The Author Unknown poets have entered into an unusual campus project. They are writing poems in response to two student paintings. On April 6, they will have an opportunity to present their poems to the wider campus community and discuss the relationship between the poems and the paintings.

Larry Thomas has been named Honorary Chancellor of the Poetry Society of Michigan. He says he takes the appointment seriously and will try to earn the honor.

Dr. John J. Han has accepted two more chapters of Faye Adams' book, *Sharecropper's Daughter*, to be published in the 2017 issue of *Cantos*, the annual literary journal of

Missouri Baptist University, St. Louis. Faye Adams has also entered 23 of the 2017 NFSPS Poetry Contest Categories.

The **On the Edge** Chapter met several times since January. The weather in January caused a cancelation. We had a very productive meeting this March, talking, reviewing and assisting each other with our work. Faye Adams has entered several National Federation Poetry Contests. Good luck to her. A story was shared about several police cars (like 20) exiting Highway 44 onto 141 heading North and John Han wrote an Etheree poem on incident that ended with Billy's comment about donuts. Don Horstman shared a verse that ended in lines from Hit the Road Jack. The March meeting ended with a song. Several of us are planning to attend the Lucidity Poetry Retreat in April, safe travels. While Carol and Don Horstman will be doing their art thing. Good luck to them. Thanks for stopping by and reading about what we do. You all come back, now.

POEMS By Members



Picture taken by Terrie Jacks

AFTER MANY POLICE CARS
—For Terrie Jacks and Billy Adams
(Etheree)

A
police
car zooms by.
Then, more than two
dozen cars follow—
all with their flashing lights

COUNT DOWN

I
am
one
that
likes
to list
numbers
and words

and sirens on. There must be
an accident. At home, I watch
TV, but there's no accident news.
Were the cars heading to a donut shop?

--John Han

with close
management.

--Frieda Risvold

SEDENTARY

Gravity works its downward drift
on jowls and spreading cheeks,
its geologic urgings toward the sea.

A shortcut through my neighbor's yard
cuts the walk around the block in half.
Pushing keys aids with the daily mail

easing the strain of memory, the pother
of procrastination. Monthly, laundry
vies with national championships,

dishes with reclining in comfort. Routines
obtrude, the daily demands of feeding
the cat, the birds, the body in conflict

with the obligation to reload the larder,
to pass an evening with friends or family,
to settle back with TV or a good book.

--Laurence W. Thomas

CICADAS' SONG

A fine-spun shell clings to the weed
my arthritic fingers yank from soil
of the same drab cast.

My ears ring
with the constant humm-m-m—
insistent joy—familiar music
from thirteen years past.

Invisible cicadas sing as they mate,
unaware of their fate, unconcerned
with the weight of time,

while my work-worn joints
made me painfully aware of mine.

--Faye Adams

Japonica blooms
before the shoots of green come --
resurrected life.

My dog Bear is good --
a true friend near me always.
His lick is warm love.

New Orleans in the Spring,
Jackson Square alive with mimes,
silent stories bold!

TEENY MOUSE AT THE DEALERSHIP

Her pink feet scurry
swifter than potato chips.

Mouse moments are nip and tuck
in a land of new cars and big shoes.

In the customer lounge a little girl
(decked in every shade of pink and purple)
sits by her mother. She waves unnoticed

--John Crawford

to her new best friend who sits poised
under the cookie and candy machine.

--Mary Spottswood

BOOPLE SCHNOOT

My flufferbun
Is so coodelute
He has a sweaching boople schnoot.
My flufferbun
Is so coodelute
He has a fuzzer boodelute.

--Sarah Anne

PETIT JEAN IN APRIL – a cameo

Slender
path stretches skyward; at its feet
three pale blue
Phoenix violets rise above
winter's leafy, brushwoody
blanket.

--Pat Laster

*Author's Note: "Seeing any adorable pet
can inspire a gibberish language brought
on by the common condition of cuteness
overload. This particular poem captures the
essence of being a happy rabbit owner."*

FIREFLY WISHES ALWAYS COME TRUE

That's what Sally, the new girl, said.
Until then I thought they were
Called lightning bugs and smelled
Rancid in a Kerr fruit jar and

On my blue-stained fingertips.
All us guys chased bugs on a still
Summer night when the wind slept
And dew was forming on the grass

Down at the skinny-dipping pond.
Then we'd chase each other with
Our bug-filled jars as headlights
Pretending to be Flash Gordon.

Sally moved in next door. Everybody
Stopped. Stared. Blinkered.
Twelve years of stark, raving G I R L.

SIXTY-SIX HOURS AND FIFTY-SEVEN
MINUTES

My rejection arrives much quicker
and far less global
than the resurrection of Jesus.
The New Yorker has no page

for the musings of a mid-western poet
extolling the virtue of a life
braved between two cow pastures,
written in language as equally simple.

--Todd Sukany

We hardly breathed in her presence.

We couldn't talk much neither. When
She spoke about fireflies... how they
Blinked to attract mates... like holding
Hands, talking soft and secret

And if you made a wish, a firefly wish,
It's sure to come true if your heart
Is true. I guess us boys got true of
Heart just watching words flow from her
lips.

All the lids came off the jars that night
And fireflies wished for true love.

--Dewell H. Byrd

WHEN SPRING ARRIVES

Upon Spring's entrance Winter must
depart,
but not until, with one last strong
command,
she bids us turn the heat up, wear our
coats,
and change those very early springtime
plans.

At last, with Winter's back in sight, Spring
starts
her lengthy reign. Sun's rays and showers
bring
the earth to life. The leaves and blossoms
clothe
the naked trees. Winged entertainers sing

sweet melodies and flit from limb to limb.
With Winter doldrums banished, spirits
soar.

The parks, back yards, and playgrounds
teem with life
and joy not even grumblers could ignore!

IF I LIVE

Imagine --
Facing an ocean
wondering
How will I cross that?
Water
from shore to horizon
swelling and
surging.
Heart pounds --
The breeze brushes my hijab
God's
fingers caress my face.

I need to leave this sand,
this shore.
My boat, my body, is small;
my resolve immense.
Let us go north
towards homelessness
and
refugee camps, flee --
today's
diaspora.

As daylight hours increase, schools close
their doors,
releasing celebrants who dash away
to claim the season—no more books and
tests—
and relish fully every springtime day.

All those at work look often at the clock.
so eager to take part in springtime fun,
to get outside and feel the balmy breeze
and claim the last warm rays of waning
sun.

Some folks like me, with allergies, view
spring
through bleary, itchy eyes, but still we sing
her praises. Pass the meds and tissues,
please.
Excuse me as I turn my head to sneeze!

--Janice Canerdy

Away from war,
famine, horror.
Towards unknown hope
for a better life tomorrow.
Imagine --
What courage is born on a
wave,
My spirit, my life ...
a small drop of water is my spirit
in an ocean of souls
set
adrift towards
a promise.
If I live.

--Teresa Klepac, Crawford County Bombadils

SPRINGTIME IN MISSOURI

Seventy degrees one day and twenty the
next,
No wonder my allergies are in such a mess.
Tornados and storms and hail crashing
down
While rivers swell with thundering sound.

One day we swelter in the heat
And the next shiver as we freeze
With icicles hanging from our nose
And frostbite nipping at our toes.

The seasons crowd into one single week,
(Not for the timid or the weak).
Mother nature's such a, well.
That's not a word I'm allowed to tell.

AT THE CIRCUS

When I was six
I went to a circus.
A handsome man
swung on a trapeze,
as clowns juggled
elephants danced
and tigers paced
inside their cages.
It was great at six
before I learned
elephants were chained,
beaten, made to perform
and that tigers
hate cages.

--Frank Adams

--Paul D. Rauch, Second Tuesday

IN THE LIGHT

Take care to watch
Not only the terrors in the night,
but also the brightness of day.
Monsters under the bed
cover in the light.
Perhaps the night will try you
but,
the day reveals you.

--Sarah Anne

FROM STARS JUST OUT OF REACH

Trees grow thick leaves that spread out
making July afternoon shade,
then turn brown and fall at our feet

The river flows under our bridges,
a noisy current in the Spring,
soft murmur in late Summer

Our night sky also changes,
clouds thick or thin, moon bright or hidden
yet stars are always there, untouchable

Dull smudges of light between clouds in
summer,
after a rain

crystals that sparkle brightest on clear winter
nights
air so thin we can hear planes above our
heads
trains from miles away

coming close, fading out
as they head out of town
their exits routine; unwitnessed

--T. Wagner

GARDEN VIGIL

I wonder at you
wondering where the bee
will land in our garden.

I note your small hand
held by your other
to hold your self back.

THE NAP NOT TAKEN

Two assignments appeared on my desk
And sorry I could not procrastinate
And take one nap, long I sat
And gazed at my bed as long as I could
Until I had to begin my homework.

I did the first, was a simple task,

You tuck your excitement
of discovery and awe
just below your chin.

I watch your eyes move
to guide the bee to a
flower of your choosing.

Your pursed mouth pouts;
your chin drops to your chest.
You breathe out disappointment.

Your eyes glance my way
pleading to follow the bee.
We rise from our knees.

--Carol Louise Moon, Crawford Co.
Bombadils

And then did the other with trembling hand
Because I was tired and wanted a nap.
I did the assignment as best I could
Though sleep was all that was on my brain.

And though that morning long I lay
In my bed that was nice and warm,
Oh, how I wished to sleep again
Yet knowing I might be late to class
I hauled myself out of bed and left.

I am telling this tale with a sigh
As I sit here at my desk.
Two assignments appeared on my desk, and I-
I did not procrastinate and take a nap,
And that has made such a difference.

--Lauren Alexander

LADIES WHO WRITE POETRY

The ladies who write poetry
have a special relationship with the
cosmos,
that helps them navigate life
with fine leather notebooks and matching
pens.
They watch for special inspirations
like a scent of jasmine on the twilight air,
the rounded edge of a rising gold-coin
moon
with Harry James on the radio
or the first glimpse of the morning sun
as reflected in dew on the rose
of a neighbor's bouquet tossed out in anger
from a late night lover's quarrel.

--Marie Asner, Crawford County Bombadils

SHE'S NOW TWENTY-FOUR (An Etheree poem based on a dream)

My
daughter
and I stand
on stage, singing
the song "Arirang."
Deserting me, my love
travels over Arirang
Pass. Her feet shall hurt in three miles.
A three-year-old girl, she smiles. I too
smile, thankful that stage lighting hides my
tears.

*Author's note: "Arirang" is the most popular
Korean folk song whose tone is typically
Asian: both sorrowful and sadly humorous.*

--John Han

A SUCCULENT DELIGHT

FRANCE 1927

Picked an apple off a tree
Took a hefty bite for me
It was luscious and fresh
With a crispy reddish flesh
An eject button on the stem
Face on ground, I was pinned
Downward in a vortex strong
Was the apple evil and wrong

--Leah Emrick

The outside world crowds, shouts,
and competes for room to stand.

But here, timid fog wraps around stone walls
shutting out past and present.
Shafts of morning light peer through leaded
windows
as it tendrils around cypress and silent grass.

Moss tries to hush clanging roots
of soft mulberry thorns gentle to the touch.

Morning leaves its place to noon,
uncovering a lonely path remembering
footsteps
amid flowers woven with scarlet, orange,
and in the sun, birds drinking from bowls of
coral fire
near a sundial revolving like a lazy carousel.

Afternoon clouds roll like low notes on a cello
as women come in from their fields
past wild roses grown from roots
thrown over the wall to fend for themselves.

--Marie Asner, Crawford County Bombadils

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Lauren Alexander - Editor