



## Missouri State Poetry Society

Spare Mule

Vol. 20, No. 1

[www.mostatepoetry.com](http://www.mostatepoetry.com)

January 1, 2017

## KUDOS and ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please be sharpening up your pencils, gliding your ink pens across paper, or clacking away at your keyboards producing some poems for this upcoming Winter Contest. All the details are online at our website <http://mostatepoetry.com/winter.html>

Just as they say about Powerball, you can't win if you don't play. Although I am mathematically handicapped, I am sure your odds are much better with our contest.

Also, while you are looking up our rules, click on over to the Youth Contest link. Familiarize yourself with that, then contact your local schools and encourage their submissions. Wouldn't you be excited to see one of your local students has won a state prize, or even one of the national ones? --Bill Lower



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<http://www.unshelved.com/2016-12-27> (Thanks for the link Bill)

Don't forget the Lucidity Poetry Retreat in Eureka Springs April 4-6, 2017.

The Missouri Baptist University, St. Louis Literary and Arts Journal, *Cantos*, 2016, has been delivered. Many Lucidity regulars have work included in the current issue.

Two *On the Edge* Chapter members, Carol Sue and Donald W. Horstman, were the featured poets/Artists of the 2016 issue of *Cantos*.

Faye Adams has submitted two more chapters of her memoir, "Sharecropper's Daughter," for the 2017

John Han's latest book is a translation of classical Korean poems:

***Like the Wind, Like the Water: Korean Sijo (Allahabad, India: Cyberwit, December 2016).***

Marilyn Smith's "WWII Veterans Marched in Protest in 1946," in *Proud To Be: Writing by American Warriors*, Vol. 5, is published by Missouri Humanities Council and Southeast Missouri State University Press.

Book signing event was Dec. 3, at the Fair Grove Gift Bazaar.

issue, with photos. Dr. Han has accepted her submission. She has been reading a book of poems by Emily Dickinson, which has inspired her to write more poems, such as the one submitted for publication in the *Spare Mule*.

John W. Crawford, won First place in the haiku poetry award, Ozark Writers League, November, 2016

Kudos to Nancy LaChance, Lebanon Poets for:

1. Galaxy of Verse contest: 2 honorable mentions and 3<sup>rd</sup> place for "Nearing the Finish Line" in Cento category
2. Honorable Mention: National Federation of State Poetry Societies for "Birthing a Nation" in Contest 45; San Antonio Poets Assn Award

Spoke to 80-plus Fair Grove School second graders, on the subject "Then and Now" concerning the history of Fair Grove, MO.

Sandra Knife, just joined Missouri State Poetry Society, moved here from Ohio, been writing since age 12, has a children's book on sale at Amazon called TALE OF WITCHY MULDOON and always working on something.

The Spare Mule editor position will be transitioning to a Southwest Baptist University internship beginning in January of 2017. Hopefully, this will be a return to a "colorful" newsletter in April and August. -Todd Sukany (acting editor)

## CHAPTER NEWS

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**On the Edge** news from the group that meets and shares their works at the library in Barnhart.

Faye Adams is always busy writing and submitting verses. She also sponsors a contest through *Galaxy of Verse*. The On the Edge chapter has one there as well.

Carol Horstman has a poem on display in a Manchester Park. This one is for keeps, it is in metal. It's there for children to read.

John Han just put out *Cantos*, Missouri Baptist University Literary Journal. Many of us are in it. Carol and Don Horstman are featured.

The *Oasis Journal 2016* published in October has some poems by John Han and three by Terrie Jacks.

November's meeting found us standing in the library parking lot, it was Veteran's Day, we adjointed to Cracker Barrel. It was a noisy meeting but we read, ate, and shared our creative approaches.

We all enjoyed ourselves in December, shared a meal and some books over breakfast, yum and fun.

So till next time, write on, write on, write on.

**Lebanon Poets** lost two members this year due to moving away. They will be missed. We will again sponsor the Seventh grade poetry contest in April open to all Laclede County students. We will celebrate 12<sup>th</sup> Night with Ozark Penmasters on January 19. This supper tradition has been ongoing for a number of years.

# POEMS by MEMBERS

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## Growing Up

*One stops being a child when one realizes that  
telling one's trouble does not make it better.*  
— Cesare Pavese, 1937

At confession, I got what I expected, no more  
than to repeat by rote some phrases  
trivialized by being dredged up from ancient lore  
laced with intermittent praises

addressed to a father I wasn't akin to  
and who, so far as I could tell,  
needed only adoration before he would begin to  
shield me from the gates of Hell.

Hell, at that age what did I know about sin?  
— and couldn't have committed one  
had it given me a written invitation  
asking me to join in on all the fun.

Not that I didn't have troubles  
like any other kid, and I would share  
them with my friends hoping that, like bubbles,  
they would simply burst in air

which they would have done in any case.  
The fish that doesn't get caught by keeping  
its mouth shut, starves. So I would erase  
my problems, not by sleeping

on them but by telling them. Troubles arise  
when making choices — the list's not long:  
the right one and the selfish one are no surprise  
because who would knowingly choose the wrong?

I've since learned to keep my problems close to me,  
whether they be sins or upsets or things that I regret  
because telling about them only makes reality  
of those things that otherwise I might easily forget.

--Laurence W. Thomas.

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## Covert Action

These streets are cold at three am.  
at five the world turns gray.  
Listen to the frost still trying to etch the moon.  
in this frigid air as stars fall in pairs across the sky  
Somewhere, a storm is churning a darkened sea.

We begin with a day so foggy  
the world ends where neighboring fields begin.  
Dawn is rude---  
nudging young maples from snow's warmth.

A red arrow of unwanted cheer,  
the cardinal tries to keep his balance  
on tree branches mantled in ice  
that are covertly plotting  
to toss this intruder into a corn field.

Marie Asner  
Crawford County Bombadils

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## Red Ribbon

Wind was raw against our cheeks,  
a frosty day to look for a Christmas tree.  
Poppa pulled the sled with an axe tied on it.  
Easy to get lost here, behind the falling sun.  
A white-tailed deer leaps over drifts  
and we follow singing carols.

This tree too short, that one too tall,  
then we found one.  
When the tree was tied to our sled  
Poppa took a red ribbon from his pocket,  
"I'll come back in the spring  
to plant another one here,"  
and he tied the ribbon nearby.  
In the world I live in now  
holiday trees are polyvinyl chloride,  
snow comes from a spray can  
with no fluorocarbons and ornaments  
are made in Hong Kong.  
I stare from my steel and concrete balcony  
longing for a piece of earth  
in which to find my tree...  
tie my red ribbon..

--Marie Asner  
Crawford County Bombadils

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**Waits the Day**

*(A Salute to Emily Dickinson)*

I lie in bed this early morn  
with no clear thought of noon,  
with darkness swelling like the tide  
and pulsing round the room.  
Oh, come the day, my silent cry  
to light this smothered tomb!

My thought whirl, like dervish swirl  
which threatens sleep away.  
Wild thunder rolls across the sky  
as though God walks this way,  
and lightning flashes in my eye  
to signal starless sway.

Though forces all around me furl,  
they hasten not the light.  
The lilies yearn, cocooned in dark,  
to burst upon my sight.  
The Phoebe waits to raise her song  
yet lingers still the night.

--Faye Adams

**Pecan Pie**

*Poetry Form: Hexadual*

It's bad  
It's rad  
we greet it as a friend  
don't want to see it end.

Its presence we have missed so much  
all winter long without its touch  
its praise unsung  
kissing our tongue.

Yet our faces would pale  
if we stepped on the scale  
In self-abuse  
we must refuse.

--Faye Adams

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**TIS THE SEASON**

Reds and greens throughout the hall,  
Gather 'round, please do not stall,  
Celebrate and have a ball,  
It's Christmas time ya'all.

--Marilyn Smith

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**On Highway 55**

**—For Terrie Jacks**

(Etheree)

My  
antique  
friend tells me  
to follow her.  
Deciding to pass  
a slow truck uphill, she  
switches lanes. How valorous!  
Once she passes, her car doesn't  
pick up speed. Soon a sports car tailgates  
her. Gasp! She barely changes lanes on time.

-- John J. Han, On the Edge

**Gaining Memory at Sixty**

(Etheree)

Up  
from sleep  
at four in the  
morning, I shut  
my eyes, counting  
sixty with my fingers.  
Years passed like a swift stream, but  
oh-so many people crossed my  
path. This dawn brings one more person's face  
and name that remained elusive for years.

-- John J. Han, On the Edge

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**A Short Winter Poem**

Four bluebirds,  
a sparrow,  
balancing  
in winter's wind  
on the thin  
beautyberry  
twigs, eating  
what's left

of the purple  
frozen fruits.

--Pat Laster, Bombadilis

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## **I Love Christmastime**

I love the sights of Christmastime  
from manger scenes to mistletoe.  
Sweet, joyous sounds pervade the air  
from "Praise the Lord" to "HO HO HO!"

I give to those who are in need,  
for God says, "Love your fellowman."  
Then when I shop for family,  
I buy them every gift I can.

The carolers and choirs perform  
"O Holy Night" and "We Three Kings,"  
while celebrants in living rooms  
sing tunes about what Santa brings.

A prayer precedes our Christmas feast;  
the smorgasbord brings great delight.  
The kids soon snuggle near the fire  
enrapt as Dad starts, "'Twas the Night . . ."

This season is a splendid time  
that bears a special, holy name,  
so as I'm singing "Jingle Bells,"  
I won't forget why Jesus came.

-- Janice Canerdy

## **New Year's Day Interlude**

Each year I spend a portion of this day  
relaxing, still, in quiet solitude.  
Reflecting on the past twelve months, I pray  
for strength and wisdom for the brand-new year.  
Included in my silent interlude  
are pleas to face life's changes without fear.

Expressing thanks for blessings I've received  
comes naturally at this special time.  
Life is so good, and I've always believed  
my blessings are far more than I have earned.  
With family and friends, life is sublime.  
I'm stronger, thanks to last year's lessons learned.

Each year I spend a portion of this day  
expressing thanks for blessings I've received.

-- Janice Canerdy

## **Far From the Home I Love**

It sits awash on a faraway hill  
A million yards from me  
I toiled the field and valley  
Plush green grass fills the dell  
Yet far from the home I love

Wildflowers weave a tapestry  
Daisies all around each tree  
Golden-red maples strut  
Their branches and shiny leaves  
Still far from the home I love

Air fresher than a baby's breathe  
Hollows aglow with rustic orange  
Cedar mulch around honed out logs  
Beaver dams across rustling brooks  
Though far from the home I love

Purple lilacs perfume the hillside  
Honeysuckle vines to the tundra  
A season of toil but what beauty  
Splendor beyond words of sound  
Yet far from the home I love

Awnings of silver-white clouds  
Hang from the sky-blue ceiling  
Azaleas cry out in awesome wonder  
Dandelions' skirts dance the polka  
Still far from the home I love

The wordless woodpecker  
Pauses, a teardrop fills his eyes  
Yellow beak wrinkles in a smile  
Sparkles of admiration in his sight  
So far from the home I love

Grabbed my paisley toolbox  
Packed with seeds and saws,  
Rakes, pruners and shears  
Upward bound over the horizon  
Close to the home I love

If He allows my gardening in  
I will toil deeper with my hoe  
And longer through daylight hours  
'Til it's Eden green up there  
Inside the home I love

--Alta Leah Emrick ©2016

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**The Real Blues**

They were new, those two,  
part of the changing scene in Jackson Square  
as season moves into season,  
as summer's hot breeze passes into fall's cool winds,

both in orange convict suits,  
dressed in pretended poverty with worn shoes  
and floppy, soiled hats,  
the two black men played and sang the real blues  
from backyard courts in the Vieux Carre':

raucous line of "I Am Yo ' Backdoor Man"  
and Don't Run from Me Woman" broke  
the noontime mass and wedding vows  
at St. Louis Cathedral on Jackson Square

with soft strains of harmonic harmonica  
floating gently through the November air,  
all interrupted by brash tourists  
taking photos of timid females  
sitting taut between the two players.

It is hard to keep some things pure.

--- John W. Crawford, *A Galaxy of Verse, 2003*,  
Fall-Winter, First place in the Texas Poetry Society  
Award

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**BLANKETED**

On the first cold night of the Fall,  
a blanket is placed on our bed  
so we can cope with coming chill.  
The blanket itself has no warmth  
but it entraps our body heat,  
retaining warmth for our comfort.  
As we slip beneath the covers,  
there's a special inward feeling:  
We have dealt with the cold weather!

In fact, Life sends us other chills  
having nothing to do with Fall.  
Some things occur chilling our bones:  
unexpected calamities,  
accidents, illness unplanned for.  
We can no more control our fates  
than we control where lightning strikes.  
But if we're blanketed with love  
from family and friends who care,  
we can deal with the chills life brings.

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**MOONLIT GARDEN**

This night a golden discus rolls  
along my ivied garden wall  
of russet bricks, a wall so tall,  
where my green-eyed tabby cat strolls.  
Dim white lights of the streetlight poles  
aren't a match for the moon that glows  
on the moonlit house. This cat knows  
her old moon friend is here tonight  
though he might not stay. She sits upright  
on the moonlit wall in moon-cat pose.

Carol Louise Moon

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**A STONE UNTURNED**

(A child's tombstone was discovered  
fifty-one years later in a freight room  
on the GM&O Line in Mobile)

What curiosity  
would but turn  
to stone in grief  
so long delayed?

What curiosity  
recalling the child  
pried open the lid  
when the low box  
came to light?

What words now  
in a resumption  
of the broken  
narrative?

--Henry Spottswood

--Ted Badger 11/21/16

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**BRRRRRRRRRR!**

Looking for  
something to wear  
got to find my  
long underwear

fifteen degrees  
and a layer of snow  
wind chill factor  
two below

a winter clipper  
grips St. Louey  
goodness gracious  
my lips are bluey!

**BRRRRRRRRRR!**

-- Terrie Jacks

**Here We Go a Wintering**

Here we go a wintering  
Among the leaves so brown  
Here we go a wintering  
Predicting snow to coat the ground

The snowplows know the route  
Salt is spread about  
So no sliding you will do  
For its winter that is true  
Yes, its winter that is true

Here we go a wintering  
Snow wear does appear  
Here we go a wintering  
Boots clomp everywhere

And schools will not be in  
On hills sledding will begin  
Yes, sledding will be done  
We'll have loads and loads of fun  
For winter has begun  
Yes, winter has begun

Here we go a wintering  
The store shelves all are bare  
No milk or bread is there  
The forecast - a snow scare

Here we go a wintering  
Snowflakes have begun  
Here we go a wintering

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**Between the Vast Eternities**

A girl-woman travels this world  
from first breath  
journeying  
between vast eternities.  
It is joy, it is pain.

Wherever she goes  
—be it muddy or rocky—  
she touches holy ground.  
At times, barefoot,  
hands held high, up and out  
like tree limbs stretching  
toward light in the sky.

She dashes through life.

The woman crosses over  
to the next world, but she  
can still be traced  
by the shine on faces  
of those left behind.

-- Pat Durmon

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Ten flakes and the snow is done

The weatherman jumped the gun  
The snowflakes didn't come  
The kids they head to school  
The forecaster plays "Winter Fool"  
Ten flakes only fell  
And the snow... *Oh, well!*

-- Terrie Jacks

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## YOUNG LOVE

Magic thoughts of wayward songs  
Pursued by lovers looks so long  
Like ships that are homeward bound  
Sailing safe and anchored sound  
Ahead life's tasks like a deep blue sea  
Inside the compass of a poet's dream

--Sandra L. Knife

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## Folded

I am like  
origami  
folded first one way  
into perhaps  
a swan  
then  
another shape  
maybe a flower

but, maybe something else

then deconstructed  
into my basic form  
flat and plain  
waiting for the next  
transformation

--Mike Perkins

## God Doodles

we are the doodles made  
when God daydreams

## On December 15th--

Springfield Poets and Friends

We had the annual Christmas bash  
Good things to eat like last week's hash  
Camaraderie was the order of the time  
And all enjoyed the reading of the rhymes.

Of course not all attended, some were not there  
But others arrived with a flourish and fanfare  
The music was lively, the songs we all know  
The best was sung: *Let it Poe, Let it Poe, Let it Poe!*

(Rich and Gloria Eskew hosted this poetic  
madhouse!) Thanks!!

-- Rich Eskew

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## Awaiting Ideas

I have nothing to say,  
no thoughts to narrate.  
I could speak of lives close to mine.  
My mind is emptied, filling time.  
I sit and listen as Bruce sings "Eyes on the Prize".  
I remember old ambitions,  
to become as famous as Picasso  
and to write as well as Frost.  
I stretch out on my seat.  
I await ideas.

--J Thomas Wheeler

## Loss

Do shirts that lost a button  
or pants with fabric stained  
suffer their own grief?  
Do they fear isolation,  
no longer hanging in the closet,  
surrendering to plastic bags  
filled with other grieving clothes

scribbled on the margins of divine foolscap

--Mike Perkins

**The Amateur Zoologist**

once upon a time  
many years ago  
at the St. Louis Zoo  
I stood as a child  
alongside others  
at an exhibit dominated  
by a massive sea lion  
one woman had just exclaimed  
in loud wonder  
how ugly their faces  
when the best turned around  
to look at us  
revealing she had  
misjudged her directions

nobody said a word

--Mike Perkins

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**Homeless Woman's View** (Etheree)

They  
paid twelve  
bucks for the  
Charity Tour.  
American Dream:  
Fine homes for everyone.  
Persian Rugs, Handcut Crystal,  
Porcelain Under Glass, Silver Spoons.  
Genteel twitter spilled aahing, oohing.  
No one lined up to view my cardboard shack.

--Wanda Sue Parrott  
[This poem also appeared in the *Cedar Creek Times*.]

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and being donated to Goodwill?

--J Thomas Wheeler

**Strangers at Lunch**

They are hungry.  
Two strangers, alone.  
Cold outside brings them inside,  
the warm restaurant.  
The common food  
and loneliness...  
delivered efficiently  
between two tables.  
Each facing  
different walls.

--J Thomas Wheeler

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***Dog Songs***

I spent time with Mary  
for Christmas. We met  
not in person, much deeper.

--Todd Sukany

\*\*\*\*\*

## **Trimming the Tree**

The lights,  
the blasted lights  
must go on first then you  
decide on your theme for this year's  
decorations. Shall I use only reds and golds or put  
on a mishmash and call it eclectic. The last step for me is putting  
on the garland and plugging in the lights. The magic happens as I step  
back and remember little boys placing ornaments haphazardly, beautifully on  
our family  
tree

--Nancy LaChance

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