



Missouri State Poetry Society

Spare Mule

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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 3rd 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

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 12th Night with Ozark Penmasters on January 19. This supper tradition has been ongoing for a number of years.

POEMS by MEMBERS

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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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*.]

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

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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